



THE LOWER HUTT WOMEN'S CENTRE SURVEY 2019/2020

All women, teenage girls and children reaching their full potential.

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Biennial Evaluation 2019/2020

Every two years the Women's Centre in Lower Hutt asks the local community to voice their opinions on the issues that women face in their day-to-day lives. This lets the Women's Centre stay informed of issues important to its staff and visitors, and how the Women's Centre plays a role in the community.

The main philosophy of the Lower Hutt Women's Centre (the Centre) is to always ensure a safe, vibrant, forward-thinking and empowering space for women and their future generations, while working in spirit of Tiriti o Waitangi.

To achieve this, the Centre works as a community resource for education, the promotion of mental health and wellbeing, healing and recovery, self-development and empowerment. The vision is for all women, teenage girls and children to reach their full potential¹.

Therefore, the main goals of this survey are:

1. To gain insight into the current needs of women in the local community
2. To investigate the known role of the Centre in the local community
3. To evaluate what can be improved about the Centre to ensure the self-development and safety of local women

Upholding its philosophy is very important to the Centre. The on-going lack of representation of women in Aotearoa, the normality of traditional patriarchal values, and the ever-changing needs of women of different generations means that conducting a biennial survey is essential in validating the need for a women's-only space in the community.

This survey was based on the questions asked in the 2013 Lower Hutt Women's Centre biennial survey. However, 4 additional questions were added to gain an understanding of who was answering the survey, the outreach of this biennial survey, and how women would prefer to be contacted by the Centre in the future. These 4 questions were influenced by the 2019 Nelson Women's Centre Survey, found using the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BFM7SXL>

The Light House Cinema also kindly donated x2 movie vouchers as an incentive for the respondents of the survey, which meant that space for the last question was made for women to provide us with their email address to go into the draw to win. A winner was selected at random and the vouchers were posted to her.

Question 8 also had space for women to provide their email if they wished to receive the Centre's quarterly newsletter. 62 new emails were added to the mailing list in total.

¹ Lower Hutt Women's Centre, 2019. Te Pūrongo-ā-Tau Annual Report 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://lhwc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Annual-Report.pdf>

Survey Questions

1. Do you know what the Lower Hutt Women's Centre is for?
(Multi-Choice Answer, select one only)
2. **For you as a woman, what are the important issues you face today?**
(Written Answer)
3. **Lower Hutt Women's Centre is a women-only space, why do you think there is a need for a women-only space?**
(Written Answer)
4. **What do you need for your own self-development?**
(Written Answer)
5. **What role do you think the Lower Hutt Women's Centre plays in the community?**
(Written Answer)
6. **If you or someone you know has used the services provided by the Lower Hutt Women's Centre, in what ways was this helpful?**
(Written Answer)
7. **How could the Lower Hutt Women's Centre services be improved?**
(Written Answer)
8. If the Lower Hutt Women's Centre were to communicate services, workshops & events with you, what would be your preferred method of communication?
(Tick all that are applicable).
(Multi-Choice Answer, select multiple that apply)
9. Please describe your age, gender and ethnicity (if you wish to remain anonymous, you do not have to answer this question).
(Multi-Choice Answer, select two that apply (age and gender), written answer)
10. If you would like to go into the draw to win 2x Light House Cinema vouchers, please add your email below.
(Written Answer)

The highlighted questions were taken from the 2013 Lower Hutt Women's Centre biennial survey. These questions will also be prioritised in their analysis. The remaining were questions added in this 2019/2020 biennial survey, and hadn't featured in previous surveys.

The written answer format allowed for women to respond however and to whatever length they wanted. This meant that many answers were detailed, and insightful. The answers to these questions were then categorised and counted accordingly, for the purpose of analysis.

Methodology

Format of Survey:

The current survey was created in two formats; digital copy using the website 'Survey Monkey', and a hard-copy based on the digital copy. The digital copy was created and published online on 15/11/19.

Method of Distribution:

A link to the digital copy of the survey was then emailed to 200+ women on the Centre's mailing list on the 04/12/19, as well as being posted to the Lower Hutt Women's Centre Facebook page.

The hard copies of the survey were sent out with the hard-copy newsletter roughly around the 05/12/19; this format encouraged women subscribed to the newsletter to either drop the responses back to the Centre in person, or to scan the response and email them to us.

The digital link to the survey was also posted on the following Facebook community pages via the Lower Hutt Women's Centre Facebook account, on the 18/12/19:

- Vic Deals
- Upper Hutt Community Page
- Lower Hutt Community Page
- Petone Community Page
- Wainuiomata Community Page

A digital link to the survey was posted on all 5 of these Facebook community pages, on 3 separate occasions, before the 31/01/2020. Anybody able to access this link could complete this survey.

On the 1/02/2020, staff and volunteers of the Centre surveyed women at the Te Ra o te Raukura festival at Te Whiti park. Women were asked questions, and staff/volunteers would collect their responses using the hard-copies of the survey.

Rate of Response:

Respondents did not have to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with, nor did they have to provide us with an email address for the movie voucher draw if they wished to remain anonymous. Several respondents chose to do this, meaning that some responses only had certain questions answered (the # of skipped responses will be specified with each question). On average, it took 8 minutes to complete the survey.

Digital Copy: 136 responses

Hard Copy Newsletter: 2 responses

Hard Copy Festival: 28 responses

The biennial survey for 2019/2020 had a total of **166 responses**.

Analysis of methodology

In this section, the rate of responses and methodology for this Lower Hutt Women's Centre biennial survey will be compared to the surveys of previous years (2013 & 2017). This will give us an insight into whether the additions and changes to the questions and distribution methods were effective in gaining responses.

This biennial survey achieved 166 responses total; the 2017 survey achieved 60 responses total, and the 2013 survey achieved 175 responses in total. The rate of responses for this survey were on par with the rate of responses for the 2013 survey, but close to triple the amount achieved in the 2017 survey.

The 2013 biennial survey had an out-reach objective of the Centre's members or newsletter subscribers, and women who had attended workshops/drop-in services within the last 18 months, community organisations and interested women. This meant that 800 survey forms were sent out, 600 via the post. However, comparing the effort in the distribution to the actual yield of responses suggests that appealing this survey to the masses is effective, but that hard-copies and postage are no longer the preferred method of contact. This supports the recent decision to create a wide-spread appeal for this survey using digital means of email and social media.

The 2017 biennial survey decreased the number of questions to three with multi-choice answers, in order to reduce the amount of time it takes to complete the survey, making it simpler and more appealing to respondents. However, it was evident that women either didn't like the multi-choice aspect to answering, or that the out-reach wasn't wide-spread enough. This digital survey took on average 8 minutes to complete, which could be considered long, but still gained significantly more respondents than in 2017. Therefore, reducing the amount of questions seemingly has no effect on the rate of responses, but will have an effect on the amount of useful information received.

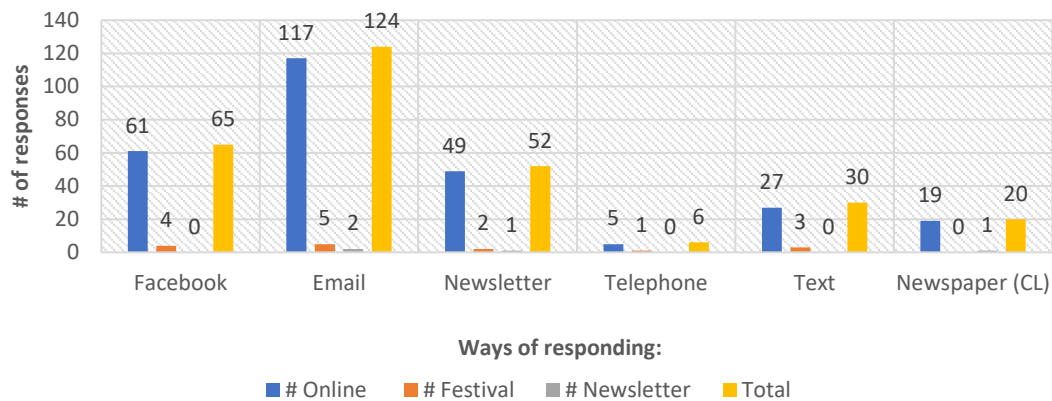
Both this survey and the 2017 biennial survey also had the incentive of entering into the draw to win a prize; 2017 had the incentive of a selection of teas, and 2019/2020 had Movie Vouchers. Incentives are useful in gaining responses (133 women added their email to go into the draw), but it depends on whether the incentive will tailor to the type of women that will complete the survey. Movie Vouchers are appealing to the self-development need of "personal time". Incentives that help promote the ideology of the Centre are helpful for women that use its services.

Summary of analysis:

- Prioritise the wide-spread promotion of the survey through email/social media; this saves resources/time, and is the most convenient method for respondents to give information, and for curators to receive and analyse this information.
- The amount of questions/time it takes to complete a survey will not affect the rate of responses; it will however affect the ability to gain valuable insight.
- Invest the money saved by prioritising the digital format, into having an incentive that is useful to the survey audience; this could even be a means of promoting the Centre, i.e. free classes/workshops.

QUESTION 8

8. If the Lower Hutt Women's Centre were to communicate services, workshops & events with you, what would be your preferred method of communication? (Tick all that apply)



297 usable answers, 147 respondents, 19 skipped

This question is designed to evaluate the methods that the Centre uses to communicate services, workshops and events with women in the community.

The most preferred method of communication as indicated in the survey is Email (42%), followed by Facebook (22%), and then the Newsletter (18%).

The majority of women who completed the survey online prioritised digital means as their preferred method of communication. The Centre currently has an email mailing list, website, Facebook page and digital newsletter. While this is supportive of what women prefer, the out-reach of these technological means needs to be increased to appeal to the wider community. The survey found its biggest increase in interested women using the Facebook community pages, adding 62 new emails to the mailing list.

Through the use of technology, women can now access information instantaneously, creating opportunities for education, support and personal growth. Technology also appeals to younger generations of women who will inevitably be the ones to evolve feminist ideology and continue the development of female empowerment, and therefore the Centre².

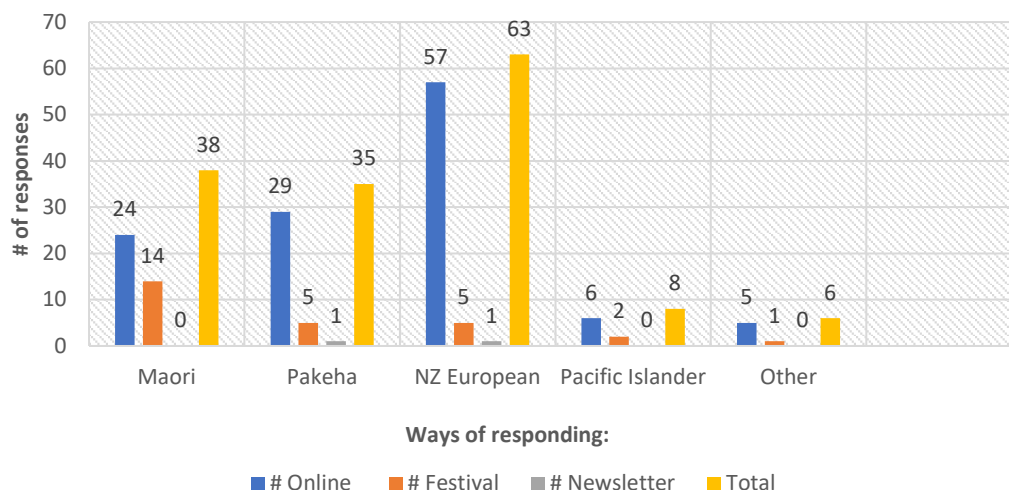
Despite this, having the option of Computer Skills classes and hard-copy newsletters is still inclusive of generations who are not used to technology.

In order to increase visibility (and potential support) within the community, gain more members and appeal to younger generations of women, the Lower Hutt Women's Centre should focus on its digital means of communication, and increase its uses of social medias and website functioning. This suggestion is based on the yield of responses and out-reach gained using digital means for this biennial survey, compared to the 2013 biennial survey, and also the most popular means of communication indicated in the responses to this question.

² World Economic Forum, 2018. Here's how we can use technology to rebuild communities. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/here-s-how-we-can-use-technology-to-rebuild-community/>

QUESTION 9

9. Please describe your age, gender and ethnicity (if you wish to remain anonymous, you do not have to answer this question):



150 usable answers, 164 respondents, 2 skipped

This question is designed to investigate the age, identified gender and identified ethnicity of the women who may visit the Centre, and who answered the survey.

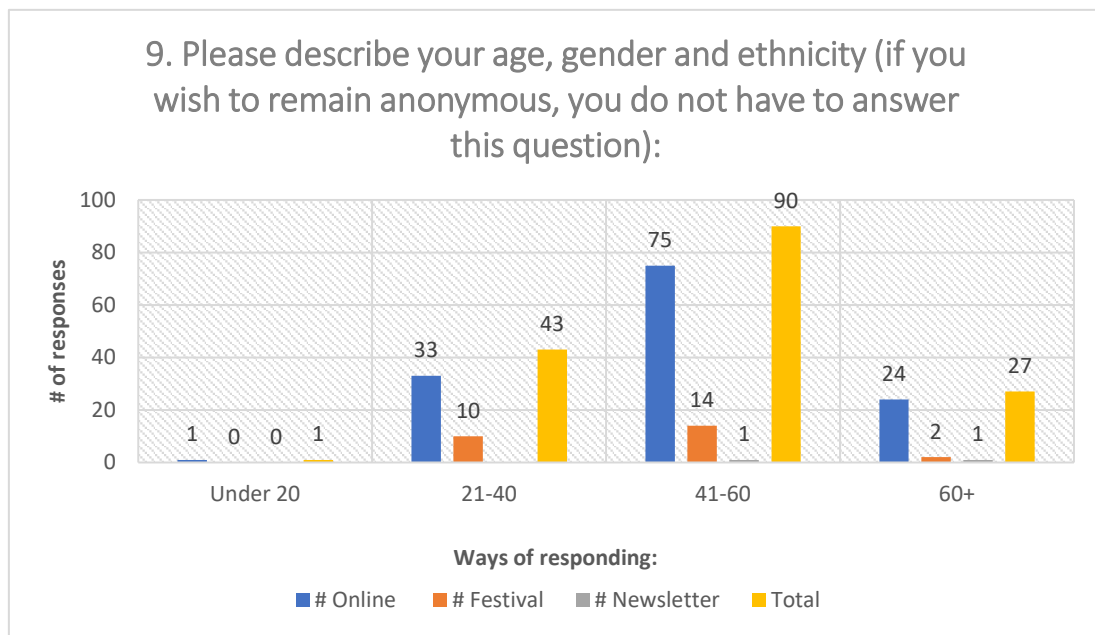
The majority of respondents identified as NZ European (42%), followed by Māori (25%) and then Pākehā (23%). A small percentage of women identified as Pacific Islander (6%), as well as 'Other' (4%), which included British, Chinese, and Indian. A large majority of women also identified as two ethnicities, mainly Māori and Pākehā.

It is evident that the Centre caters to women from a wide range of backgrounds. Despite the majority of women identifying as NZ European, the Centre is also a safe and supportive space for women from minority backgrounds. Māori women are overrepresented in domestic violence, sexual violence and oppression statistics, most typically while having tamariki in the home. However, domestic violence in Aotearoa is dominated by explanations originating from a western worldview, that differ from a Māori perspective. Many services aimed specifically at helping Māori women take punitive approaches, leaving them feeling demoralised and dehumanised³. Therefore, the need for an inclusive Wāhi Wāhine is vital for the community.

To support the inclusivity of women from all backgrounds, the Lower Centre currently offers a safe, non-judgemental space for all their courses/services, and have run culturally-centred courses in the past (i.e. Te Reo Māori workshops, weaving workshops). The Centre also has a Māori Focus group.

³ Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, Sherwood, Cootes & Jackson, 2019. Wāhine Māori: keeping safe in unsafe relationships. Retrieved from https://niphmhr.aut.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/330302/REPORT_E-Tu-Wahine,-E-Tu-Whanau-Wahine-Maori-keeping-safe-in-unsafe-relationships.pdf

QUESTION 9



161 usable answers, 164 respondents, 2 skipped

The majority of respondents are between the ages of 41-60 (56%), followed by the age range of 21-40 (27%). This age range of respondents is a good reflection of the women who use the Centre, and the type of services that are available and tailored to the needs of those women.

Between the ages of 21-60, most women experience the major life stages associated with female gender conformity: they mature sexually, they meet/marry life partners, they bear/raise children, they gain a career, they become housewives etc.⁴ (see fig.1). Influenced by sociocultural expectations, these life events can be strenuous on women, mentally, emotionally and physically. Therefore, offering services to women centred around self-development, self-esteem, resilience, assertiveness and motherhood is reflective of what women would commonly experience within this age-range of a gender-normed lifestyle.

This age range of respondents is also insightful of the means used to create out-reach for this survey. 81% of these women were online respondents, meaning they gained access to the survey either through email, the Centre's Facebook page, or online community pages. This shows that the majority of women who use the Centre's services also have access to, and basic knowledge of, communication technologies. This supports the suggestion that the Centre should focus on its digital means of communication, and increase its uses of social medias and website functioning.

It is also acknowledged that all respondents (except one) identified as female during this question. One respondent identified as gender non-binary. It did not feel necessary to include graphed analysis of this demographic question as it would be assumed that respondents would identify primarily as female.

⁴ Takeda, 2010. Understanding the Life Stages of Women to Enhance Your Practice. Retrieved from https://www.med.or.jp/english/journal/pdf/2010_05/273_278.pdf

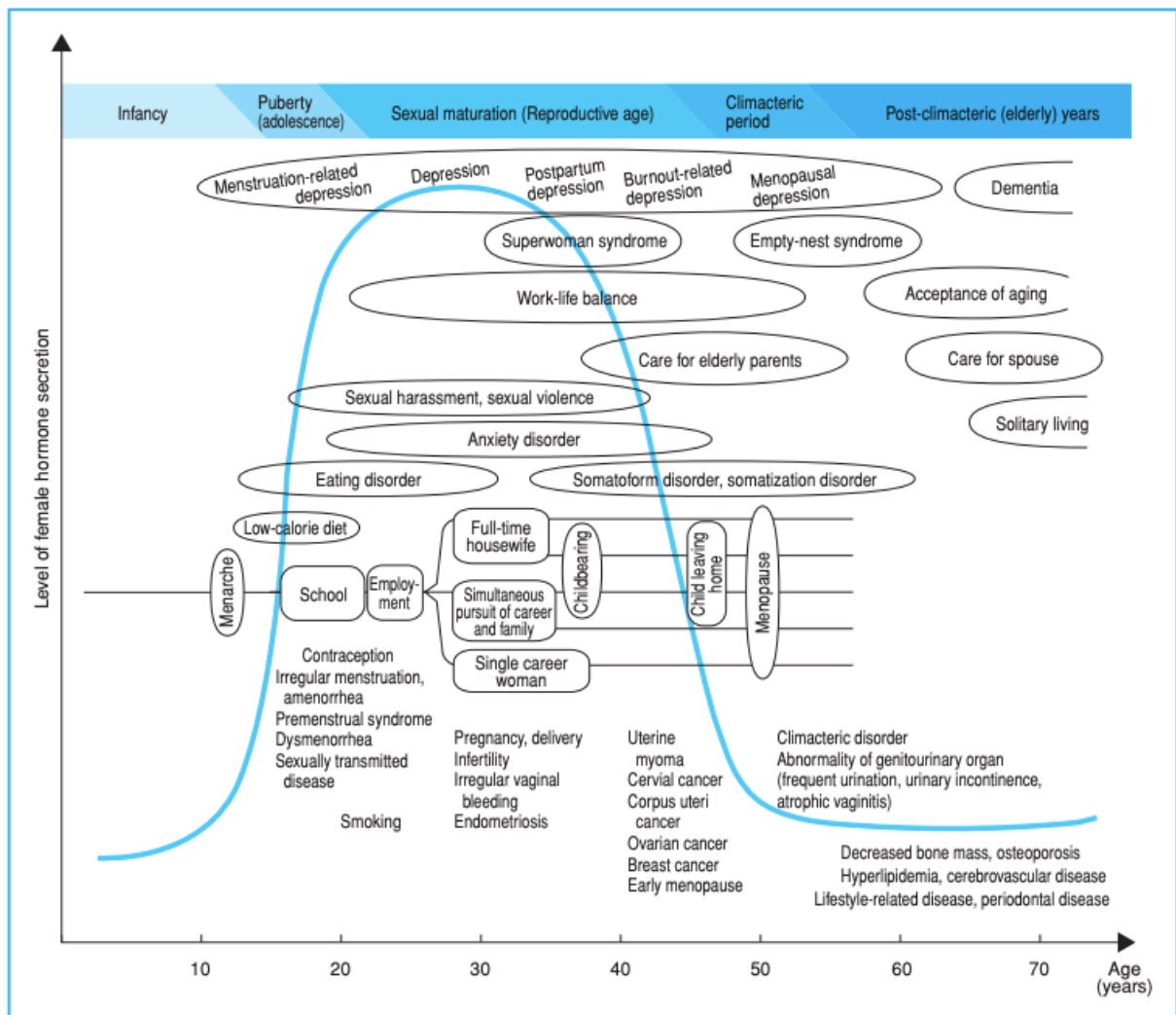
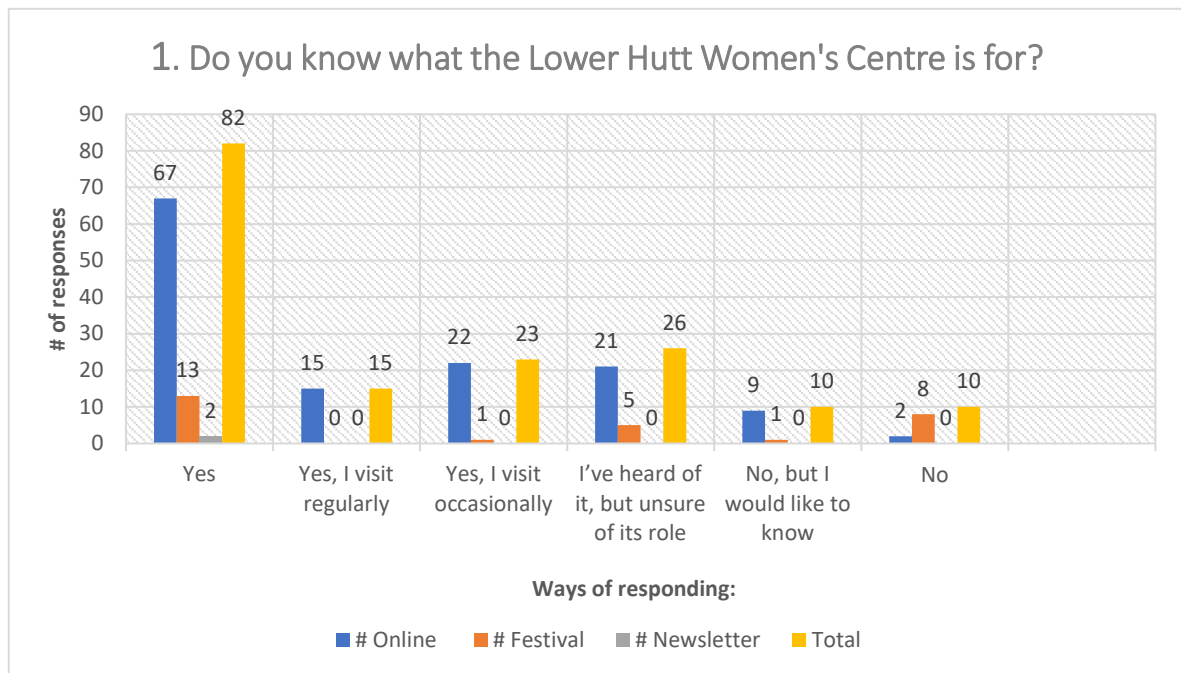


Fig. 1 Life stage related mental health issues and diseases unique to women

QUESTION 1



166 usable answers, 166 respondents, 0 skipped

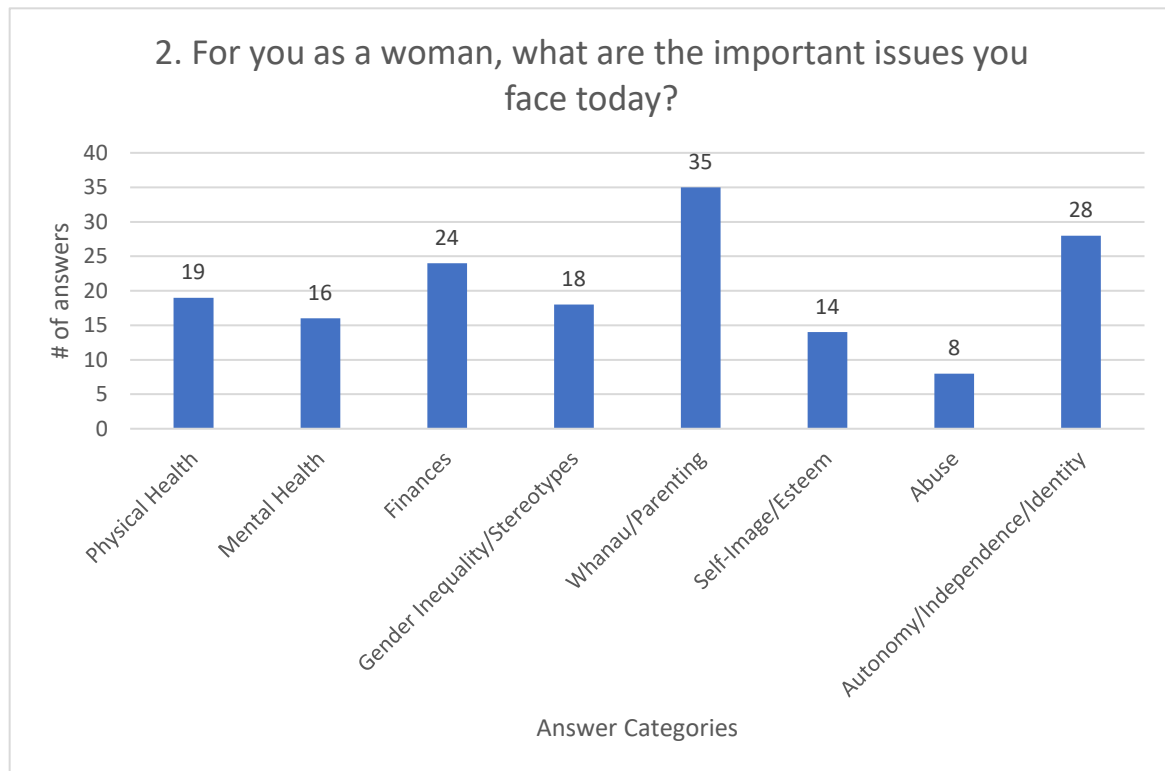
This question is designed to evaluate the known presence of the Centre in the community, and whether participants are familiar with the Centre and its services.

The majority of respondents (49%) know what the Centre is for, with 9% indicating they visit regularly, and 14% indicating they visit occasionally. 16% of women were aware of the Centre but unsure of its role. 6% of women who answered the survey didn't know what the Centre is for but would like to know, and 6% of women also indicated that they did not know what the Centre is for all together.

Knowing that a total of 72% of respondents knew the role of the Centre before answering the survey gives us confidence that their written answers derive from informed knowledge or personal experiences of the Centre. This proves more proficient and genuine in evaluating how women use the services provided, what is found to be useful, and what can be improved upon. It is also apparent that women who are familiar with/have visited the Centre are still able to see services that are being advertised, and feel comfortable revealing personal information.

Knowing that a total of 28% of respondents were unsure of the role of the Centre is exciting for the out-reach and future potential of the Centre. Over a quarter of women who answered the survey were able to access the link, and would've seen an introduction to the Centre at the start of the survey. This means that increasing the use of technology has also increased the outreach of the survey compared to previous years; this could suggest that women who were previously unaware of the Centre might be motivated to find out more, and potentially access services after completing the survey.

QUESTION 2



162 usable answers, 164 respondents, 2 skipped

This question is designed to assess the needs of women in the local community, by giving them a chance to express the issues that they experience. Having analysed the written responses, the categories chosen are: Physical Health, Mental Health, Finances, Gender Inequality/Stereotypes, Whānau/Parenting, Self-Image/Esteem, Abuse, and Autonomy/Independence/Identity. Most women included many answers from each category per response. The top three identifiable categories were: **Whānau/Parenting (22%)**, **Autonomy/Independence/Identity (17%)**, and **Finances (15%)**.

Assessing the needs of women in the local community is vital for the functioning of the Centre. It allows for the Centre to prioritise services that are crucially needed for women to reach their full potential. Staying informed on the important issues that women face determines the type of correspondence, workshops, classes and services that the Centre provides on weekly, monthly and annual basis. It also secures the long-term continuation and financial support of the Centre. Assessing the current needs of local women also indicates if any improvements/change is needed so that the aims and philosophy of the Centre are always being upheld, or whether the needs of women have changed generationally, or over time.

Whānau/Parenting:

The majority of answers that indicate issues with whānau and parenting were based on being a solo parent, having a work/family balance, prioritising the needs of family first, and being a good mother. The time and effort put into not only caring for children and family members, but also the cultural expectation to earn a living, have a career and be productive, means that many aspects of women-hood are

compromised for many women⁵. It was indicated that for some individuals, the stresses of family life directly affected their autonomy, need for personal care and their individuality—a direct result of the incompatibility between traditional gender roles, and modern demands and expectations.

“I work for the Hutt Valley DHB...one thing I have noticed is that women put their whānau’s health before their own, and many find it difficult to be looked after”.

Autonomy/Independence/Identity:

The majority of answers that indicated issues with autonomy, independence, and/or identity were based on prioritizing individual needs, maintaining self-care, time management, a lack of education, and the traditional views of a women’s place in society. The compromising of a woman’s autonomy, independence and identity can be directly linked to stressors in her personal life and surrounding environment (such as those indicated in the other categories). However, a lot of these stressors derive from sizeable socio-economic disadvantages, gender discrimination and societal gender roles that are still prevalent in New Zealand. There are also discrepancies between being an independent woman and maintaining a sense of cultural identity, as some cultural values derive from the objectification and oppression of women⁶.

“I need to stop allowing others to take advantage of me because I’m seen to be the inferior gender, and put myself and my independence first more”.

Finances:

The majority of answers that indicated issues with finances were based on managing finances/budgeting, unstable incomes/housing, and paying for childcare and healthcare. Financial issues and worries typically affect everyone. However, many women are solo-parents and the only source of income for their household; others in joint income households may still be disadvantaged because of their lower socio-economic backgrounds. In these circumstances, expensive necessities such as childcare, healthcare, education and travel are prioritised for their children rather than themselves, or may be unobtainable all together. This leads to a decrease in personal autonomy and female independence, as many women stay in unwanted relationships for financial support⁷. As indicated in the verbatim responses for question 4, the free/subsidised services that the Centre provides lessens the financial stresses for women who want to reach their full potential but find it financially difficult to do so.

“I worry about unemployment, having a secure income and a stable place to live...I don’t want to be dependent on a man for these things”.

⁵ Escalante, 2019. Mothers Are Drowning in Stress: New research suggests saving mothers should be a national priority. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/shouldstorm/201903/mothers-are-drowning-in-stress>

⁶ Sharma, 2018. Female Autonomy and Women’s Welfare: An Introduction. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/rode.12542>

⁷ Pande et al., 2019. Technology to Facilitate Women’s Financial Autonomy. Retrieved from <https://epod.cid.harvard.edu/project/technology-facilitate-womens-financial-autonomy>

QUESTION 2: VERBATIM RESPONSES

Physical Health: Women put their Whānau's health before their own, support for aging and menopause, free and accessible sexual/reproductive health care, weight gain, contraception, ovarian and breast cancer.

Mental Health: Depression, stress, workplace bullying, overcoming anxiety, drug dependency, unravelling effects of childhood trauma, body image, dealing with separation, struggling to raise emotionally stable children, loneliness, grief.

Finances: Managing money and budgets, financial positions and obligations, maintaining secure income as a 'mature' worker, unstable housing, the cost of raising a family, paying for childcare, paying for healthcare.

Gender Inequality/Stereotypes: Discrimination, feeling objectified, struggling to claim importance as an equal to men, equal pay, gender stereotypes, status inequality, greater diversity in retail/marketing images, women being acknowledged and better supported in the workforce.

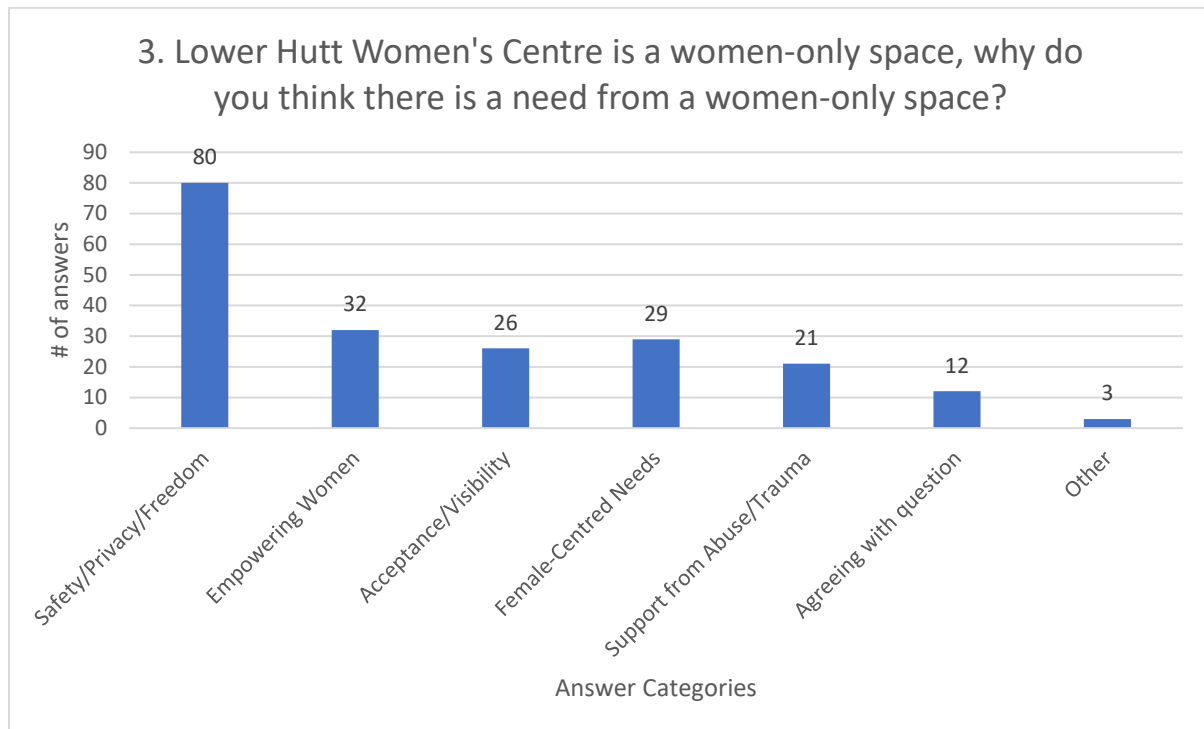
Whānau/Parenting: Being a solo parent, trying to find personal time when looking after family, work/family balance, maintaining friendships, breaking the cycle of abuse, embracing culture as a parent, guilt of being a working mother.

Self-image/Esteem: Low confidence, body image, feeling objectified, social pressures, low self-esteem, low value and worth as a person, stigma around my culture, self-worth issues.

Abuse: Addiction, substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, gender-based violence, wanting to secure a violence-free home for children.

Autonomy/Independence/Identity: Solo parenting, time management, finding time for myself, maintain hobbies, maintain self-care, traditional views around a woman's place, lack of education, considering the unique needs of women, prioritizing own needs, people making decisions on your behalf, maintaining my culture, finding the time to bond with other women.

QUESTION 3



203 usable answers, 164 respondents, 2 skipped

This question is designed to assess the community perspective of the Centre, and understand the necessity for a women's only space and the value it holds for local women. Having analysed the written responses, the categories chosen are: Safety/Privacy/Freedom, Empowering Women, Acceptance/Visibility, Female-Centred Needs, Support from Abuse/Trauma, Agreeing with Question, and Other. Most women included many answers from each category per response. The top three identifiable categories were: **Safety/Privacy/Freedom (39%)**, **Empowering Women (16%)**, **Female-Centred Needs (14%)**.

Understanding the necessity for a women's only space, and the value that holds for the community, is important in evaluating whether the perspective of local women aligns with the philosophy of the Centre. All responses indicated that a women-only space is needed, with overwhelming support for a 'safe-haven' that challenges social gender norms and caters to the individual needs of women. The Centre is also a space for women to realise their own potential in a safe and supportive environment. The answers given all indicate that, even if respondents were previously unaware of the Centre, they still understand the necessity of a women-only space based on their own perspective.

Safety/Privacy/Freedom:

The majority of answers that specified safety, privacy and freedom as the need for a women-only space were based on having a welcoming space, having the freedom to be authentic, feeling respected and supported, being around other women, and having freedom from the patriarchy. Women-only spaces are a justifiable necessity, as traditional patriarchal values still determine common social ideals. Having a space that supports all women and their needs allows for visitors to realise the power and worth that every woman holds, in an environment that lets this

flourish and grow⁸. The exclusivity of women at the Centre upholds the belief that “women have the right to their own space”, as women have specific needs that require specific services. The Centre also provides support and counselling services to women who have experienced abuse and trauma at the hands of a man; a women-only space is vital for those women who feel uncomfortable around men, and who have been made to feel disrespected by the patriarchy.

“This provides an environment for women to feel safe, respected, secure, and welcome, when seeking information, support, education, counselling, and connection with others”.

Empowering Women:

The majority of answers that specified empowering women as the need for a women-only space were based on having somewhere free from discrimination and gender frameworks, being assertive in determining your own future, having the support of women solely, and being provided with the tools/services to grow. The Centre provides many services to women that may be obtained elsewhere. However, the women-supported-by-women environment that the Centre provides is unique, and useful in not only empowering women, but for connecting with culture, and having female-centred education that may not be prioritised otherwise⁹. For many women, the safety and freedom the Centre provides is enough to allow growth. The Centre prides itself on its confidentiality, and for women who have especially experienced trauma, being comfortable in a safe space encourages openness, confidence and empowerment.

“Women need to be able to hear themselves, to REALLY hear ourselves separate and distinct from all other influences”.

Female-centred needs:

The majority of answers that specified female-centred needs as the need for a women-only space were based on sharing uniquely female experiences with other women, having female-focused support, and prioritising the needs of women. Many other places may recognise that women have different and specific needs to men on a surface level, but the Centre uses the women-only space to make those needs the primary focus of its functioning. The Centre considers female-centred needs from an emotional, spiritual, physical, environmental, practical and intellectual perspective. In return, the needs of women are the basis for all classes/workshops, which are adapted as needs change. It is apparent that the primary purpose of a women-only space is for safety, privacy and freedom; this is the basis for initiating the focus of female-centred needs. Once those needs are met, women feel more empowered.

“It gives space to women’s wants, needs, thoughts in a place that better understands women’s issues and has support and info”.

⁸ Huval, 2019. No boys allowed: why we still need women only spaces. Retrieved from <https://relate.zendesk.com/articles/no-boys-allowed-why-we-need-women-only-spaces/>

⁹ Lower Hutt Women’s Centre, 2019. Te Pūrongo-ā-Tau Annual Report 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://lhwc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Annual-Report.pdf>

QUESTION 3: VERBATIM RESPONSES

Safety/Freedom/Privacy: Absolute safety from the patriarchy, freedom to talk openly, feel respected, welcoming space, safe haven from male judgement, freedom to be authentic, support from other women, to gain strength, because inequality still exists for women, high rates of domestic violence, sharing common problems, safe space for children, calm energy.

Empowering Women: Overcoming challenges with the support of women, no discrimination or bias against women, we need a wāhi wāhine in order to develop korero/language/conversation for life, less attachment to a gender framework, working towards finding oneself, women need to control their own destiny, women can be provided with the support, education, counselling and information they need for development.

Acceptance/Visibility: Truly be oneself, authentic to self, environment dedicated to wellbeing, feeling comfortable, acceptance amongst peers/community around other women, concentrate on efforts to support and share with one another, self-expression, simplifies process for women to be honest.

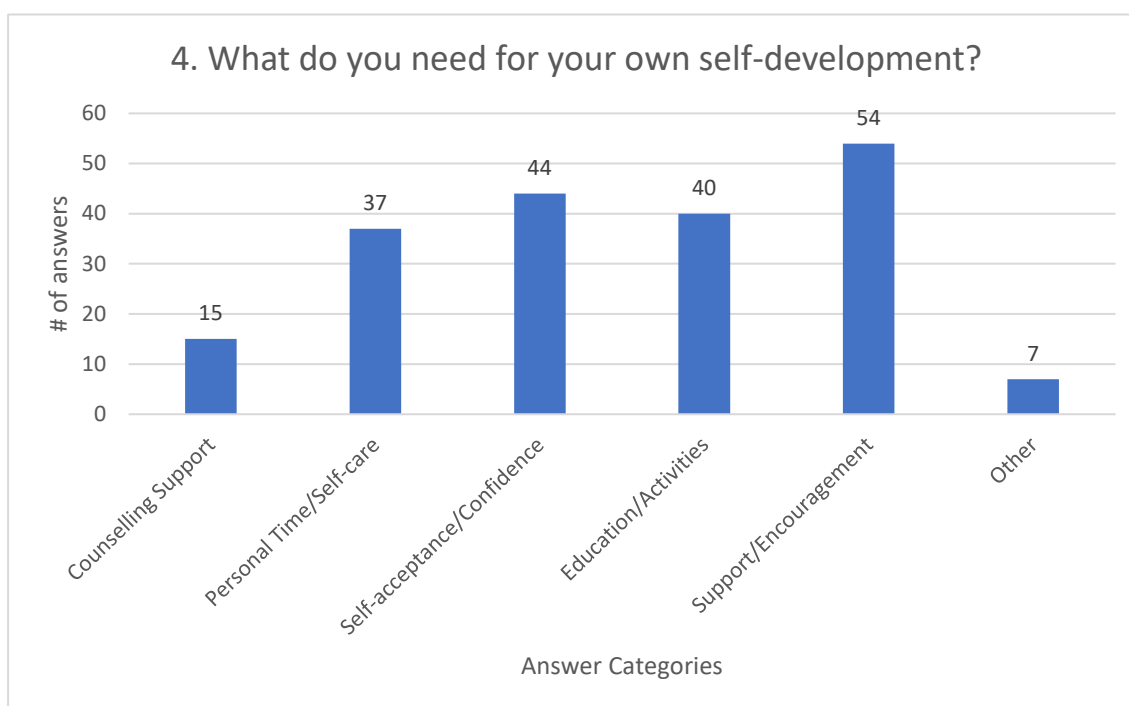
Female-centred needs: Support from people with similar challenges, be able to relate to one another, mixed spaces can be intimidating when talking about female vulnerability, women have specific needs and requirements, uniquely female experiences, female-centred ways of dealing with trauma/challenges, because women's needs are often put below men's needs.

Support from abuse/trauma/victimisation: women deal with systemic issues such as violence/discrimination, too much domestic violence, women who have been abused by men will feel comfortable around just women, to consider other forms of abuse such as emotional, verbal and financial, LHWC is the only place that confidentiality and support assures strength to open up on personal issues otherwise silenced, safety for children.

Agreement with question: The majority of responses for this category were a lot of "yeah", "yes I do think there is a need", and answers generally agreeing with the need for a women-only space. This suggests that the question was misread as "Lower Hutt Women's Centre is a women-only space, *do* you think there is a need for a women-only space?".

Other: It is not important to me personally, more chances for women to participate in the Olympics, I do think trans women have different issues from those raised as women.

QUESTION 4



197 usable answers, 157 respondents, 9 skipped

This question is designed to assess what women in the local community need for their own self-development, and evaluate how the Centre caters to those needs. Having analysed the written responses, the chosen categories are: Counselling support, Personal Time/Self-care, Self-acceptance/Confidence, Education/Activities, Support/Encouragement, and Other. Most women included many answers from each category per response. The top three identifiable categories were: **Support/Encouragement (27%)**, **Self-acceptance/Confidence (22%)**, **Education/Activities (20%)**.

Assessing what local women need for their own self-development is important in evaluating if the Centre is adequately responding to those needs, and measures any improvements needed to meet growing/new demands. Having women personally recognise how they can control their own development prevents the Centre from making any false assumptions about the services needed. Services that align with the Centre's philosophy is the priority, promoting empowerment, strength, openness and healthy, functional lifestyles. Currently, the Centre addresses the main concerns for female self-development in weekly self-esteem classes, and workshops/courses that cover more specific issues, such as assertiveness, anger management, meditation, parenting, and mental health. All services are held in a women-only environment that promotes support, safety and unity.

Support/Encouragement

The majority of answers that specified support and encouragement as a need for self-development were based on having a female community, encouragement to deal with issues, supporting oneself and family, and gaining motivation through non-

judgement support. The Centre strives to provide all women with respect, support and safety, to help them reach their full potential. Support and encouragement are vital in giving women the strength to assert positive inner-change. Gender inequality and social norms surrounding womanhood means that a lot of women compromise their self-worth, self-acceptance and self-confidence by adhering to patriarchal views; this is typically a generational perspective taught to women from other significant female figures¹⁰. Support and encouragement from women who seek to challenge gendered norms allows others to break free of social conformity, seeing themselves entirely from their own perspective. The uplifting of women encourages empowerment, and a growth in confidence, assertiveness, expression and self-care. This means that support and encouragement is ultimately a basic necessity for female self-development.

“I need to feel welcome, and held, included, to be in the process rather than processed.”

Self-acceptance/Confidence

The majority of answers that specified self-acceptance and confidence as a need for self-development were based on assertiveness, feeling worthy of respect, self-expression, self-reflection and learning to become a better person. Anything less than total self-acceptance is conditional self-acceptance; this means we accept who we are but still strive to be better. Conditional self-acceptance then allows for self-esteem and self-compassion to be evaluative measures of self-acceptance, as women still judge themselves. The willingness for self-acceptance is conditional upon self-rumination behaviours, and unknowingly striving to perfect gendered stereotypes¹¹. The Centre not only offers services to improve women’s self-esteem and self-compassion, but also aims to introduce feminist ideas that challenge social norms. By doing so, women have more of a guided path to finding the confidence for self-development. There is no stable foundation for growth if women still practice self-loathing ideas and behaviour.

“I need to feel worthy of respect and comfortable enough to admit to and embrace my mental health issues”.

Education/Activities

The majority of answers that specified education and activities as a need for self-development were based on having the ability to access community connection and education, learning useful life skills and having hobbies as self-care. As alluded to, self-development for women is a process best achieved when supported, with aspects that could stunt growth being recognised and challenged. The Centre offers services support the self-development of women with not only specific issues, but also in the realms of confidence, self-esteem, self-care and assertiveness to initiate change. This is done in an environment that fully prioritises and respects the autonomy of women, with the services the Centre provides being at the heart of its functionality.

“The biggest hurdle is trying to find the time or the appropriate gap to step away from the family to attend appointments, exercise, time out etc”.

¹⁰ Spry and Marchant, 2014. How a personal development program enhances social connection and mobilises women in the community. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1033855.pdf>

¹¹ Hernandez, 2014. The Right Reflection: Improving Women’s Self-Acceptance. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=mapp_capstone

QUESTION 4: VERBATIM RESPONSES

Counselling Support: Help with grief and addiction, counselling groups for personal development, resilience training, reflective and supportive counselling, childhood trauma counselling, more access to ongoing mental health support (rather than acute crisis support), accessible and non-judgemental counselling.

Personal time/Self-care: More sleep, self-regulation, trying to find the time or the appropriate gap to step away from the family, self-motivation, time to achieve my wellbeing, mindfulness, patience and time, healthy self-care boundaries, regular routines, positive self-talk, allocated time to focus on self-development, self-expression.

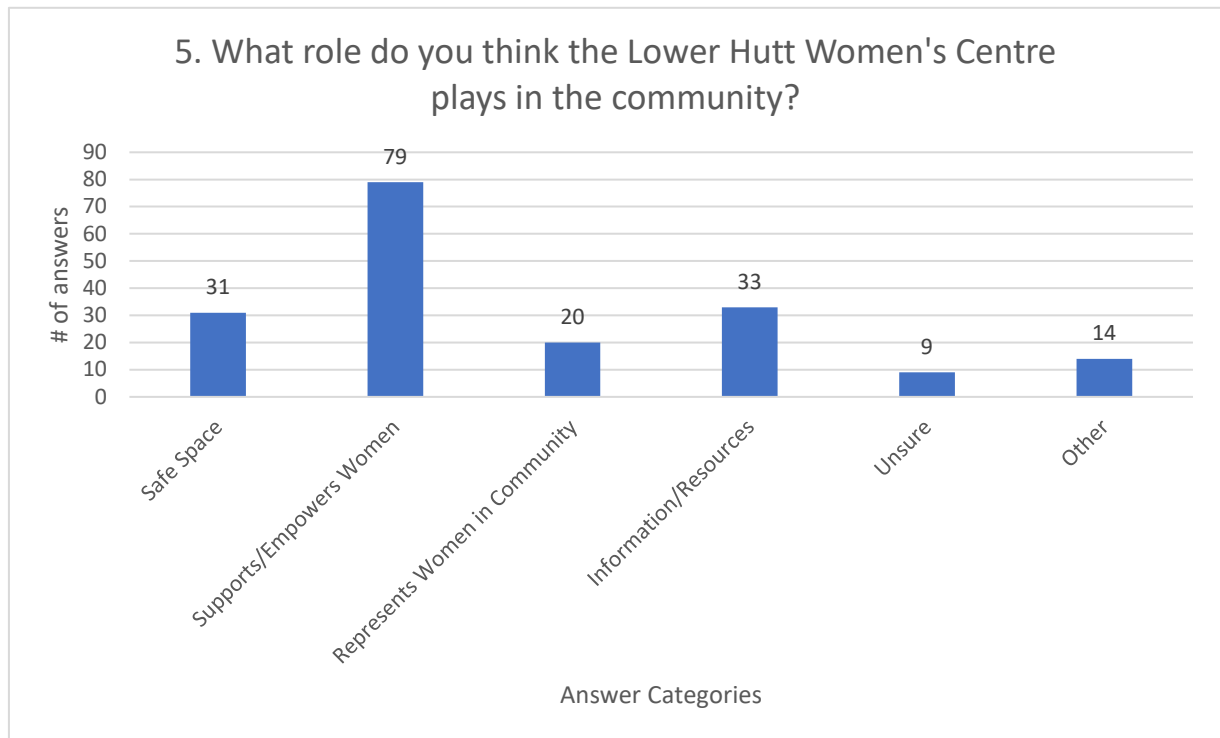
Self-acceptance/Confidence: Sense of identity, practice what I preach, self-expression, self-love, self-esteem, assertiveness, self-reflection, working towards becoming a better person, learning to adapt and grow, self-approval and recognition, courses to focus on my self-worth, need to feel worthy of respect, to be in the process rather than processed.

Education/Activities: Accessible community connections, learning Maori, to be able to research and read, attending workshops/classes at no/very little cost, computer skills, accessible resources to help with self-care, more courses on self-empowerment, courses that address co-dependency, learn how to be more self-sufficient, night classes that I can attend after work, fun physical activities, learning to budget my money, education about sexual identity/safety, art therapy.

Support/Encouragement: Solo economic stability, help with adjusting to living on my own, motivation, non-judgemental support, encouragement to deal with issues, connections with women who have similar issues, encouragement for regular attendance, support to build resilience, learn to support my friends and family as well as myself, safe space for support, support from other women my age, sense of female community, shared experiences, mentorship.

Other: Unsure, free massage, nothing, no current needs, I already have it.

QUESTION 5



186 useable answers, 145 respondents, 21 skipped

This question is designed to assess the perception of the Centre from the perspective of the community and the women who utilise its services, and what value that holds. Having analysed the written responses, the chosen categories are: Safe space, Supports/Empowers Women, Represents Women in the Community, Information/Resources, Unsure, and Other. Most women included many answers from each category per response. The top three identifiable categories were: **Supports/Empowers Women (43%), Information/Resources (18%), and a Safe Space (17%).**

Understanding the community's perception of the Centre is important in evaluating whether the perceived functioning of the Centre matches the philosophy it aims to uphold. Women may access the Centre through specific agencies, but it is available for all women when they need it, to seek out help, support and information. The wide variety of services, and the diversity of women who attend the Women's Centre means the role the Centre has is subjective to each individual woman who accesses it. However, to be appealing and approachable for potential visitors, the reputation the Centre holds within the community must be positive. In order to uphold its philosophy, maintain its functioning and gain sponsorship, the Centre must be deemed useful and valuable to the community and the women who use its services.

Supports/Empowers Women

The majority of answers that specified support and empowering women as a role that the Centre plays in the community were based on receiving leadership and guidance, unconditional support, acceptance and respect, and creating a safe haven for vulnerable women. The Centre acts as a community resource and information centre for women. The Centre is mainly recognised for a place of workshops,

classes, counselling, childcare and services that encourage the personal development of its visitors. The Centre also works in conjunction with local organisations such as addiction services, mental and physical health services, legal services and advice services¹². Many women are referred to the Centre to receive support specific to women's needs, in an environment that is non-discriminatory and safe. Others choose access services themselves, meaning that the Centre remains approachable, with a good reputation. Furthermore, the number of "Unsure" respondents (4%) indicates the start of potential community outreach that the Centre could focus on, to make more women aware of the value of the Centre, and potentially enhance the lives of those women.

"It delivers unique and affordable opportunities for self-reflection, self-development and safe spaces".

Information/Resources:

The majority of answers that specified information and resources as a role that the Centre plays in the community were based on having services that are catered to women's needs, a place of encouragement for growth and learning, workshops/classes at little to no cost, and the community around learning at the Centre. The Centre recognises that women need support in order to reach their full potential; this is the basis for their services provided. These services are catered to the recognised needs of women in the community, and follow forward-thinking, inclusive feminist ideals. The Centre has aimed to make these services as accessible as possible to all women; workshops/classes/counselling run frequently throughout the week, and the Centre also has an on-site creche. Many services are tailored to specific issues and needs, while other are hobby and life skill courses that aim to give women their own personal time and freedom. The Centre is also in touch with the types of women who use their services, and the issues that may affect their lives, with the services being changed accordingly.

"It is a safe place for women to learn about looking after themselves, improve mental health, and the range of courses is excellent. The Centre is really a precious taonga."

Safe Space

The majority of answers that specified a safe space as a role that the Centre plays in the community were based on supporting women and their whānau, unconditional respect, connections with women and encouragement for openness and authenticity. The Centre recognises that for women to learn, develop, or grow in any sense, they must first feel safe and comfortable to allow support into their lives. There are many services in the local region that are capable of providing this level of support to local women. However, not many are exclusive to women, and cater to women's needs. They also don't follow feminist ideals and don't encourage women to challenge gendered stereotypes as a recognised means of self-acceptance and self-development. The safe, women-only space that the Centre provides is essentially a service in itself, as many women appreciate a space to call their own.

"Has a huge community role as it provides a safe space and a voice for all women".

¹² Lower Hutt Women's Centre, 2020. Support Organisations in Lower Hutt and Wellington. Retrieved from <https://lhwc.org.nz/support-organisations-lower-hutt-wellington/>

QUESTION 5: VERBATIM RESPONSES

Safe space: Safe haven, a place of coming together, place when women can feel safe and relax, a haven for openness, safe space for all women, safe place to support women and their whānau, women need to know there are safe spaces, a place woman can turn to without fear of judgement, necessary haven for those in need, a safe space with no obligation for ongoing involvement, a sanctuary in the storm of life.

Supports/Empowers women: Unconditional support, a lighthouse of empowerment, delivers unique and affordable opportunities for self-reflection and self-development, a place where women can be accepted and valued for who they are, safe haven for support and acceptance, support for refugees, looking out for women, to assist women to function and cope well, provides a valuable space for vulnerable women, support women's needs, uplifting women, leadership, giving women a space with like-minded people, provides role models.

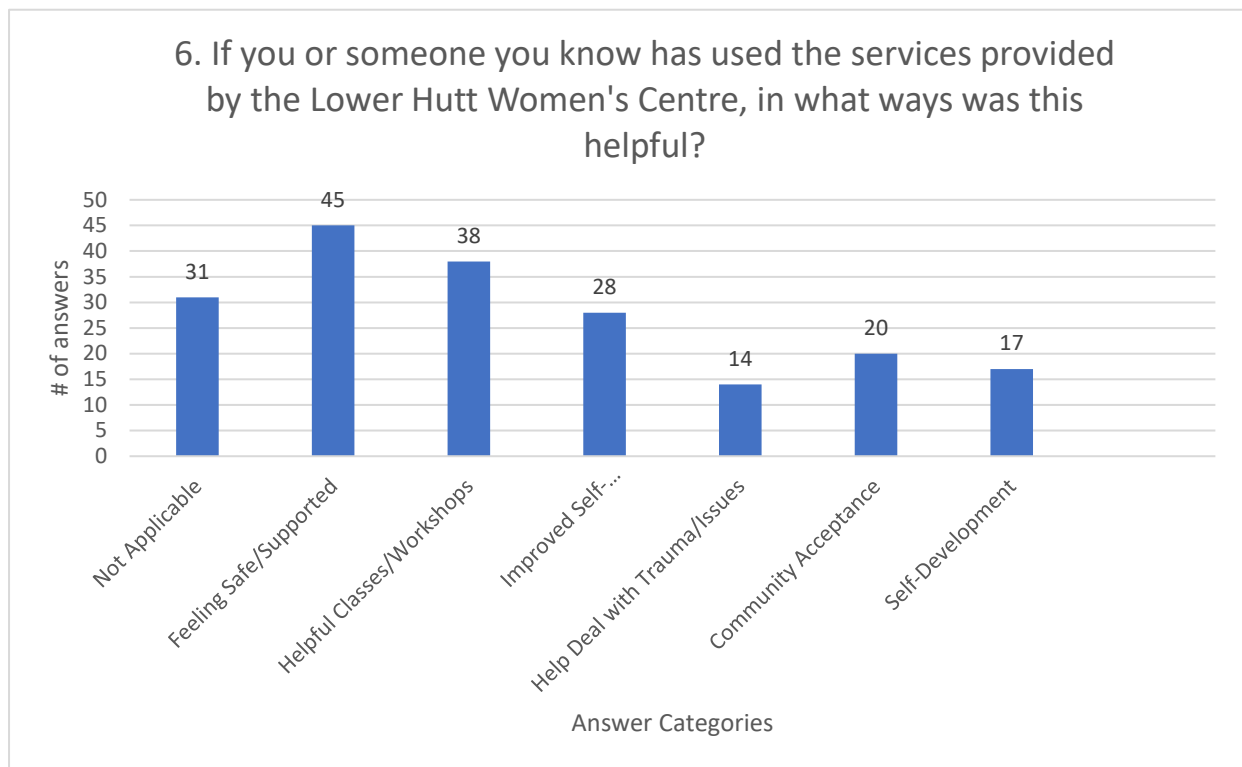
Represents women in the community: Listening to and noticing what women need, strengthening the voice of women/mothers in the community, absolutely essential for women in any community, bringing the community together, central point in the community for resources/connections for not only women but also organizations, plays an important role for change in the community, it is vital that all women know that the LHWC exists.

Information/Resources: It's a place of learning and provides knowledge and support, safe haven of exploring and learning, great courses that allow for networking opportunities, programmes that enhance women's wellbeing's, access to so much more via the connections, assertiveness and parenting courses at reduced cost, providers of resources and education, wonderful tutors, useful for women seeking specific support such as trauma counselling, access to resources at little to no cost, the presence of a creche so we can attend courses is unique, resources that are catered to a female voice.

Unsure: I didn't know about the Centre but am exploring the website now, I don't know much about the centre, not sure what they do.

Other: Support for a limited number of women, a whole deal, encouraging women to participate in the Olympics, to be available for women of all ethnics and cultures, an important one, I am aware that many people have not heard of it and its offerings.

QUESTION 6



193 usable answers, 137 respondents, 29 skipped

This question is designed to assess the known benefits of the Centre, and determine exactly which services women find the most useful. Unlike the 2013 survey, we opened this question to all women, regardless of familiarity with the Centre. This let us determine exactly how many women had used the Centre's services, and evaluate the out-reach of the survey with women who had not used the Centre before. Having analysed the written responses, the chosen categories are: Not Applicable, Feeling Safe/Supported, Helpful Classes/Workshops, Improved Self-Esteem/Confidence, Help Deal with Trauma/Issues, Community Acceptance, and Self-Development. Most women included many answers from each category per response. The top three identifiable categories were: **Feeling Safe/Supported (23%), Helpful Classes/Workshops (20%), and Not Applicable (16%).**

Understanding how women have utilised the Centre, and their experiences with the services provided, is important in ensuring that the Centre is adhering to its philosophy, adequately catering to the needs of women, and is still perceived positively in the community. The Centre values the opinions of its visitors, and from local women; without them, there will be no means to evaluate if changes are needed. This creates a greater variety in services provided by the Centre, and greater diversity in its visitors. Evaluating the number of women who responded to the survey, and who indicated that this question is not applicable to them (this also includes those who skipped the question), is useful in understanding the out-reach of this survey, and the potential outreach of the Centre's promotions in the future.

Feeling Safe/Supported

The majority of answers that specified feeling safe and supported by the Centre were based on having an accessible and honest environment, feeling respected and safe, having a sense of female community, and having specific needs met by the services provided. As discussed previously, the first step in initiating any form of self-development is allowing women to feel safe and comfortable, in an environment that provides support and resources. This is at the heart of the Centre's philosophy. Respondents have overwhelmingly indicated that not only do they perceive the women-only space of the Centre to be safe and supportive, but have experienced this first-hand in many ways. The Centre is valued by many local women and organisations, whose experiences (particularly when vulnerable) have given them treasured life lessons and skills. The safe and supportive environment of the Centre can be directly attributed to the staff and volunteers who maintain its functioning, and whose knowledge and wisdom create positive role models for local women. Many respondents have spoken highly of the staff and volunteers at the Centre, and have indicated that they are the reason why the Centre is so successful. **"The Lower Hutt Women's Centre helped me make sense of my distress and develop strength to find a pathway towards healing, hope and freedom".**

Helpful Classes/Workshops

The majority of answers that specified finding the classes and workshops helpful were based on specifying which services individual women found useful, and how these services helped their self-development. While analysing the responses, it was clear that the majority of women found the services they utilised supportive, hence the two categories having a similar rate of response. The Centre prides itself on its workshops, classes and services; all are held in the spirit of Tiriti o Waitangi, in a women-only space, run by women who are trained, professional and passionate about what they teach. Along with childcare and counselling services, the Centre runs classes and workshops in: self-esteem, assertiveness, parenting, meditation and various hobbies/skills. Women have indicated that these services have helped them understand their own behaviour, modify self-beliefs, improve their relationships with others, enabling positive empowerment.

"Because the courses and group sessions are excellently planned and facilitated, I know I will gain valuable insight into myself through listening and observing others".

Not Applicable

31 women answered 'Not Applicable' to this question, along with 29 women skipping this question entirely. This data is useful in understanding the out-reach of the survey. 60 women in total had not used the Centre's services, yet were motivated to access and respond to the survey. A handful of women had stated that they had "not known about the Centre until now", and that they were "going to do some research into the Centre afterwards". 62 new emails were also added to the mailing list from the survey. This supports the idea that to improve the local out-reach of the Centre, gain more promotion, become accessible to more women, and gain potential sponsors, the Centre should really focus on its digital means of communication.

QUESTION 6: VERBATIM RESPONSES

N/A: 31 women stated not applicable.

Feeling Safe/Supported: Helped me & others understand ourselves better through support and encouragement, gave me gentle but appropriate challenges, sense of peace and friendship, great support from those who attended the same sessions, I felt very welcomed, help with food and baby clothes and items, loving and caring environment where I came together with other women, enormous sense of safety and love, physical space of safety and understanding, positive honest and supportive people in a safe environment, my specific needs were met in a helpful manner, I feel safe as I can trust my councillor, accessible and easy.

Helpful Classes/Workshops: All the courses I have attended have made a huge impact on my own trajectory, the power of group work and learning is fundamental to the LHWC real dynamic of personal and social change, meditation was very calming and retrained thought patterns on bigger picture, many years ago I did a menopause workshop-I think it was helpful, but mostly remember hearing stories that I couldn't relate to, the painting classes with Linda and the computer lessons with Jenny were both fantastic, nowhere else has the courses run by the LHWC, the facilitators embody and model the values and life skills they are working with you on, I attended the self-esteem course for a few years and the boost to my wellbeing and self-esteem was amazing.

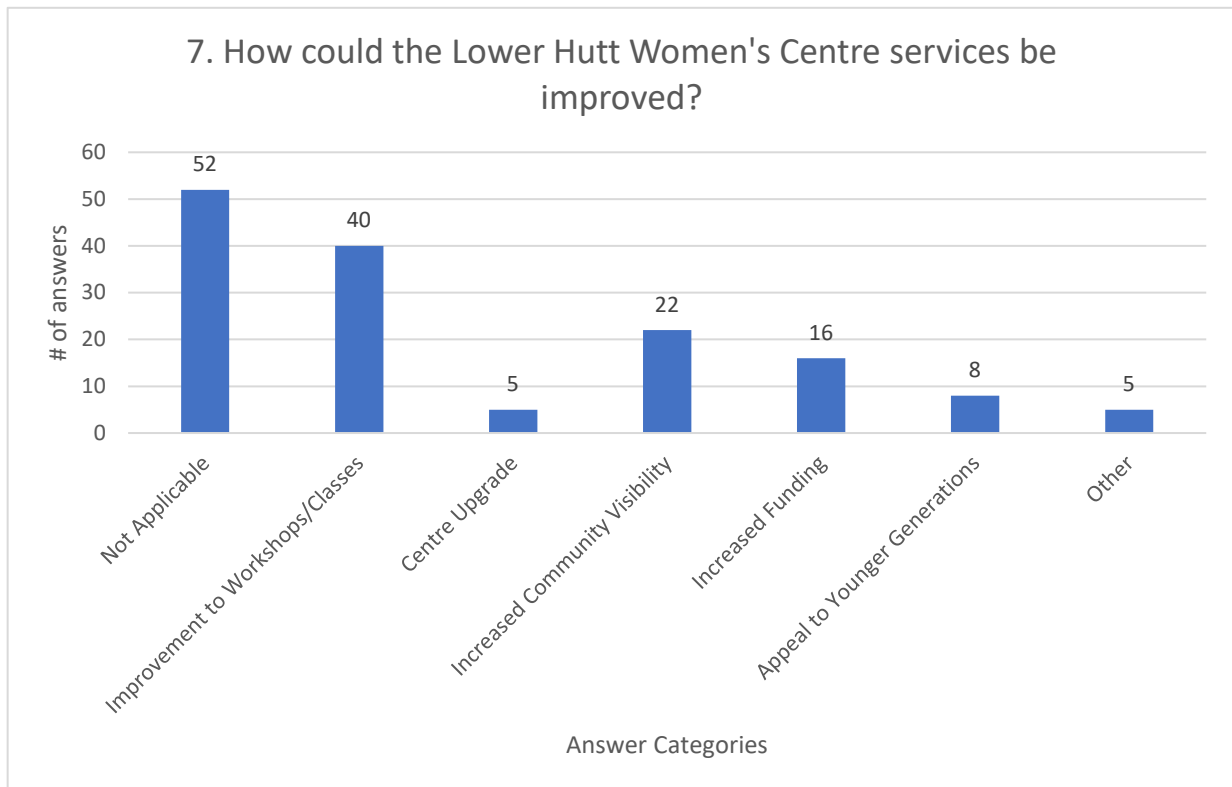
Improved Self-Esteem/Confidence: Helped me to make sense of my distress and develop the strength to find a pathway towards healing, got me out of my comfort zone, gaining insight into myself, to make sense of my distress and develop the strength to overcome this, LHWC built self-confidence and determination, I regularly refer clients to you (I'm a social worker) and I have seen increased confidence and self-esteem, helpful for my emotional connection with myself, gave me time and space to think about my goals and intentions.

Helped Deal with Trauma/Challenges: Focusing on one issue and hearing different perspectives, saved me from self-destruction, deal with some major life challenges, counselling courses were so helpful, it helped to provide me with tools to assist with my recovery from trauma, connecting with other trauma survivors, did courses that helped me deal with past issues and reframe them.

Community Acceptance: Removed sense of isolation, increased my sense of connection with other women, courses were great for meeting others, made long-lasting connections and friendships, connecting with other trauma survivors, a welcoming and communal space.

Self-Development: Empowering courses, encouragement to move forward successfully, allowed for new ways of thinking which helped my personal development, helped develop a greater awareness of my own feelings and emotions, the group work at the centre has changed my life trajectory and is having flow down effects in the next generation already, great for self-growth and understanding, huge help with my mental health.

QUESTION 7



148 answers, 136 respondents, 30 skipped

This question is designed to give women who utilise the Centre a chance to express what they think could be improved about any aspects of its functioning. Unlike the 2013 survey, we opened this question to all respondents, regardless of familiarity with the Centre. Having analysed the written responses, the chosen categories are: Not Applicable, Improvement to Workshops/Classes, Centre Upgrade, Increased Community Visibility, Increased Funding, Appeal to Younger Generations, and Other. Many women included many answers from each category per response. The top three answers would typically be analysed; however, discussing the 'Not Applicable' answers would not be beneficial, nor would discussing "Increased Funding" as the majority of this is outside the Centre's control. As a result, the top three answers being discussed are: **Improvement to Workshops/Classes (27%), Increased Community Visibility (15%), Appeal to Younger Generations (5%).**

Creating an opportunity to let women voice what they believe could be improved about the Centre is one of the most important aspects of this survey; women can tell us directly what they want to gain from the Centre, make suggestions, and talk freely about any negative experiences, all while remaining anonymous. This is some of the most valuable information the Centre could receive; constructive criticism is useful in making sure the Centre upholds its philosophy and remains a valuable asset to the community.

It is really positive to see that the majority of responses indicated 'Not Applicable'-this category includes responses such as 'no idea', or 'doesn't need improving'. This indicates that the Centre is successful in meeting the needs of its visitors, that the staff are continuing to be friendly and helpful, and that the Centre

has a good reputation in the local community. The majority of responses that did include suggestions that were based on improving services that the Centre currently offers, which may mean that improvements could be minimal. Despite this, many women used this question as a space to express their gratitude for the Centre, and indicate that they believed nothing could be improved, which is much appreciated by the staff and volunteers of the Centre.

Improvements to Workshops/Classes

For direct suggestions on improvements to workshops/classes, please see 'Q7: VERBATIM RESPONSES' below.

Appeal to Younger Generations

This survey has indicated that many women would like to see the Centre advertised in high schools or tertiary education, providing similar education about self-esteem, self-respect and assertiveness to younger women and teenage girls. A few mothers also indicated that they would like workshops/classes that were specific to mother-daughter relationships, to create positive female role models and weaken generational cycles of negative behaviour. The need to appeal to younger generations of women is also apparent in 'Question 9' (pg.9), as only one respondent was under the age of 20; this means that older women are currently speaking on the younger generation's behalf, despite those being the ones to develop feminist ideology and ensure the future survival of the Centre. This is evident in my own personal experience. I was 19 when I was first made aware of the Centre after seeking counselling services, and found the Centre calming, friendly, and approachable; my counselling has given me valuable advice that I still refer to during tough times. When talking to friends of a similar age about my experiences, all of them were unaware of a local Women's Centre. I found this rather upsetting, as the Centre had been really beneficial to my own empowerment. It made me wish that I had been aware of its presence during my especially impressionable years of development (13-17 years).

"Need to future-proof the centre and mentor new trained therapists into taking groups to stand solidly into the new decade and beyond"

Increased Community Visibility

Increasing the community visibility of the Centre has so many potential benefits; it can increase the number of, and age range of its visitors, advertise services to a diverse range of women, and appeal to in the wider wellington region. In turn, this could potentially increase funding of the Centre, allowing for a wider variety of services for women's needs. The out-reach created in this survey supports the idea that the Centre should focus on its digital means of communication, and utilise social medias to advertise classes and workshops. This digital out-reach should also extend to the wider wellington region, especially if the Centre is providing services that are not obtainable elsewhere, or even just to work in conjunction with other Women's Centres' in Wellington. This digital out-reach could also be used to regularly keep up-to-date with the needs of women, but creating informal digital polls, and encouraging women to correspond with what they would like to gain from the Centre.

"Advertise more. I have recommended TWC to a lot of people and most have never heard of it".

QUESTION 7: VERBATIM RESPONSES

N/A: 52 women stated Not Applicable

Improvements to Workshops/Classes: More free courses, longer hours and a volunteer covering the weekend so it can open, more exercise-based activities, a follow up phone call when people fall off the radar from the courses, open for a few hours on the weekend for individual sessions, have more self-esteem workshops as the sessions get very full, offering more night classes, one on one chats if just to check up on people in courses, more practical skills workshops for women wanting to get back into work, provide groups more suitable to women who work late hours, more counselling offered, offering something new each year, more classes on confidence, creche for more day time groups, would love to see Mosaics start up again.

Centre Upgrade: Upgrade toilet and bathroom, having a centre makeover, bigger premises with more space, more room to redecorate, building needs updating-it can feel a bit stale and needs a new life.

Increased Community Visibility: More social media advertising, keeping up with today's issues and creating a community network, more recognition in the community, more advertising of available courses, promoting wider than Lower Hutt, greater publicity, satellite hubs for women who can't make it to Lower Hutt, advertising in schools and health centres, provide newsletter to a wider audience than just subscribers.

Increased Funding: Appropriate level of government funding, more funding to full time staff, reach out to other community networks to receive sponsorships, more volunteers and more company support, more funding for more workshops.

Appeal to Younger Generations: More workshops for kids, love to see more art workshops/ workshops, I'd love to see connections with youth spaces to get info about women's centre into high schools, mother/son event workshops, less old-world feminist image (not anti-men but how to work appropriately with other genders), changes ideas to withstand the new decade and beyond, more programmes for teens, fresh energy, more education for younger women, more services for school children.

Other: I think it is great, people are friendly and make you feel welcome, keep doing what you are doing, I am really happy with the services I receive and do not have any further suggestions-I love the new website additions, I think it's doing an amazing job as is.

2013 and 2019/2020 Comparative Analysis

Although categorised differently, a comparative analysis between this 2019/2020 biennial survey, and the 2013 biennial survey can help recognise any changes over the last 7 years in the needs of women, and the role of the Lower Hutt Women's Centre (The Centre).

The needs of local women, and the issues they face, have stayed relatively the same between the two surveys. For the question "For you as a woman, what are the important issues you face today?" (Q2), the 2013 top seven categories included: Coping with life, Financial Security and Gender Issues & Discrimination. These are comparable to the 2019/2020 top three categories of responses, which were: Whānau/Parenting, Finances and Autonomy/Independence/Identity. 'Coping with Life' encompasses our 'Whānau/Parenting' category, as many of the 2013 verbatim responses included prioritising the needs of children and family. Similarly, 'Gender Issues & Discrimination' encompasses 'Autonomy/Independence/Discrimination', as it was discussed that issues surrounding these three concepts can be directly linked to patriarchal values, and gender roles. The verbatim responses for the 2013 'Financial Security' and the 2019/2020 'Finances' category were very similar, with the majority both focusing on having stable incomes, supporting other people, and having financial independence.

For the question "What do you need for your own self-development?" (Q4), the 2013 top seven categories included: Support, Knowledge & Education, and Self-esteem/Personal Development & Growth. These are comparable to the 2019/2020 top three categories of responses, which were: Support/Encouragement, Self-acceptance/Confidence, and Education/Activities. 'Self-esteem/Personal Development & Growth' encompasses 'Self-acceptance/Confidence', as self-acceptance is needed for personal development, and confidence is gained as a result of growth. Despite this, these three categories are practically identical, indicating that nothing has really changed in regards to what women think they need for their own self-development. This is most likely due to the fact that the issues they face have not changed either, meaning that methods of overcoming issues and enabling personal growth have not changed.

This could be due to many reasons. Firstly, the issues that women face have not changed, because societal values have not changed; there is still a prevalent lack of female representation in many aspects of women's lives. This is continuing to compromise how society views the role of a woman, a woman's access to equal opportunities and respect, access to female education, and the lack of improvement in the rate of female-centred trauma/abuse in New Zealand¹³. As these societal aspects have not improved, it could be assumed that the issues women face are the same.

What women recognise they need for their own self-development has not changed either. This could indicate that the used ways of personal growth have proven useful, and are still relied upon to overcome issues. However, the same use

¹³ Politico Magazine, 2019. What Are the Biggest Problems Women Face Today? Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/03/08/women-biggest-problems-international-womens-day-225698>

of these methods is most likely due to resources for women not especially improving in the last 7 years; the unique needs of women are still not recognised as requiring separate entities to assist them. This means that not only do women have to overcome the same issues as 7 years ago, but still have to use methods within their means to overcome them.

In terms of the Centre, the number of visitors between 2013¹⁴ and 2018¹⁵ is approximately the same (5,000), with women still primarily use workshop/classes and counselling services. This indicates a lack of drastic change in the services provided by the Centre. This is actually useful, especially if women still have to overcome the same issues, and rely on the same methods to do so. It is assumed that the years of assisting women with their personal development has created finely-tuned, reliable sources of support at the Centre.

These assumptions are supported by the similarity between the two surveys for question 6: “If you or someone you know has used the services provided by the Lower Hutt Women’s Centre, in what ways was this helpful?”. In 2013, the top seven categories were: Workshops and Courses, a Safe Space, and Support. In 2019/2020, the top three categories were Helpful Classes/Workshops, Feeling Safe/Supported, and Not Applicable. The ‘Not Applicable’ category differs, as this survey had opened up this survey to all women. Despite this, the other categories are practically the same. This is most likely because the needs of women are the same, which means that what is needed for personal development is the same, creating little change to the services necessary to help women reach their full potential.

The similarity between these categories also shows that women still hold the perspective that the Centre has a safe and supportive environment, which is at the heart of its philosophy and the basis for its functioning. It also shows that women still find the Centre’s workshops and classes useful for personal growth, despite there being no apparent change in the needs of women between 2013-2019/2020. This is important for the Centre, as its reputation and popularity depends on the usefulness of its classes, workshops, counselling and services.

¹⁴ Lower Hutt Women’s Centre, 2013. Annual Report 2012-2013. Retrieved from https://lhwc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2013_Annual_Report.pdf

¹⁵ Lower Hutt Women’s Centre, 2018. Te Pūrongo-ā-Tau Annual Report 2017-2018. Retrieved from <https://lhwc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Annual-Report-2018.pdf>

Overall Summary

Who answered this survey?

- Primarily women, aged between 21-60, who identify as NZ European, and who answered the survey online.

What are the current needs of women in the local community?

- This survey has recognised that the current issues that local women face involve: Physical Health, Mental Health, Finances, Gender Inequality/Stereotypes, Whānau/Parenting, Self-Image/Esteem, Abuse, and Autonomy/Independence/Identity.
- This survey has allowed women to recognise that their current needs for self-development involve: Counselling support, Personal Time/Self-care, Self-acceptance/Confidence, Education/Activities, and Support/Encouragement.

What is the role of the Lower Hutt Women's Centre in the local community?

- The answers given by respondents indicated that they were aware:
 - The Lower Hutt Women's Centre currently address the main concerns for female self-development as a 'drop-in' Centre, but also holds weekly self-esteem classes, individual counselling services, and workshops/classes, such as assertiveness, anger management, meditation, parenting, mental health, hobbies and life skills. These are run frequently and with an on-site creche, to make them more accessible.
 - The Centre always recognises and respects the needs of local women, and continues to support them in a safe, women-only space, that upholds the philosophy of helping all women, teenage girls and children reach their full potential.
- This means the Centre has a good reputation, and is still a valuable asset to the community.
- Many respondents were unaware of the Centre before answering the survey; we hope this new out-reach of women were encouraged to investigate the Centre after responding.

What improvements can be made to the Lower Hutt Women's Centre to ensure the self-development and safety of local women?

- Aside from specific suggestions to improve the classes and workshops, the main improvement recognised from this survey were:
 - Appealing the Centre to a younger audience of impressionable women/teenage girls who could benefit from its services
 - Increase the community visibility of the Centre, so more local women are aware of its existence and the services it provides.

Have the needs of women changed between 2013 and 2019/2020?

- Not especially. The normalised gender roles that affect every aspect of a woman's life have not changed significantly in the last 7 years, nor have the inequalities women experience frequently. As a result, this survey has found that the needs of women have remained relatively the same, as the issues women face have remained the same.

Copies of the survey, full verbatim responses and tables of data available upon request. Please email info.lhwc@gmail.com

**Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey.
Thank you to the Staff and Volunteers at the Lower Hutt Women's Centre who made this biennial evaluation possible.**

All women, teenage girls and children reaching their full potential.

