



REDUCING ANXIOUS STRESS IN YOUTH USING THE COPING CAT PROGRAM

Margie Borawska, School Psychologist, Rundlett Middle School



What made Coping Cat a Reality at Rundlett Middle School?

- Rundlett Middle School adopted PBIS in 2012
- Concord Trust Grant
 - School psychologist applied for grant to purchase the Coping Cat program (manual and student workbooks)
- Safe Schools/Health Students (SS/HS Grant)
 - Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) made the convergence of education and community mental health systems possible
 - ISF is a framework for designing, organizing, and monitoring NH's SS/HS implementation
 - Mental Health Counselor from Riverbend Community Mental Health available to co-facilitate groups

Convergence of Education & Community Mental Health Systems

- Schools are recognizing the importance of creating a continuum of evidence-based mental health supports to the academic and social/emotional outcomes for all students.
- Community mental health is recognizing the importance of the system of care framework and of schools as key, if not primary, environments for the delivery of evidence-based prevention, early intervention and tertiary supports to children, youth and their families.

Emphasis on Evidence-based Practices

Evidence-based interventions

- Using a continuum of integrated policies, strategies, activities, and services whose effectiveness has been proven or informed by research.

EBIs can be identified through the following sources:

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>

- (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices” [NREPP])

http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm

- (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, “Model Programs Guide”)

<http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>

- (U.S. Department of Education, “What Works Clearinghouse;” Safe Schools/Healthy Students RFP, June 2013)

6TH, 7TH, & 8TH GRADE

ENROLLMENT:

1,010

RACE/ETHNICITY:

WHITE: 85.8%

BLACK: 5.6%

ASIAN: 5.9%

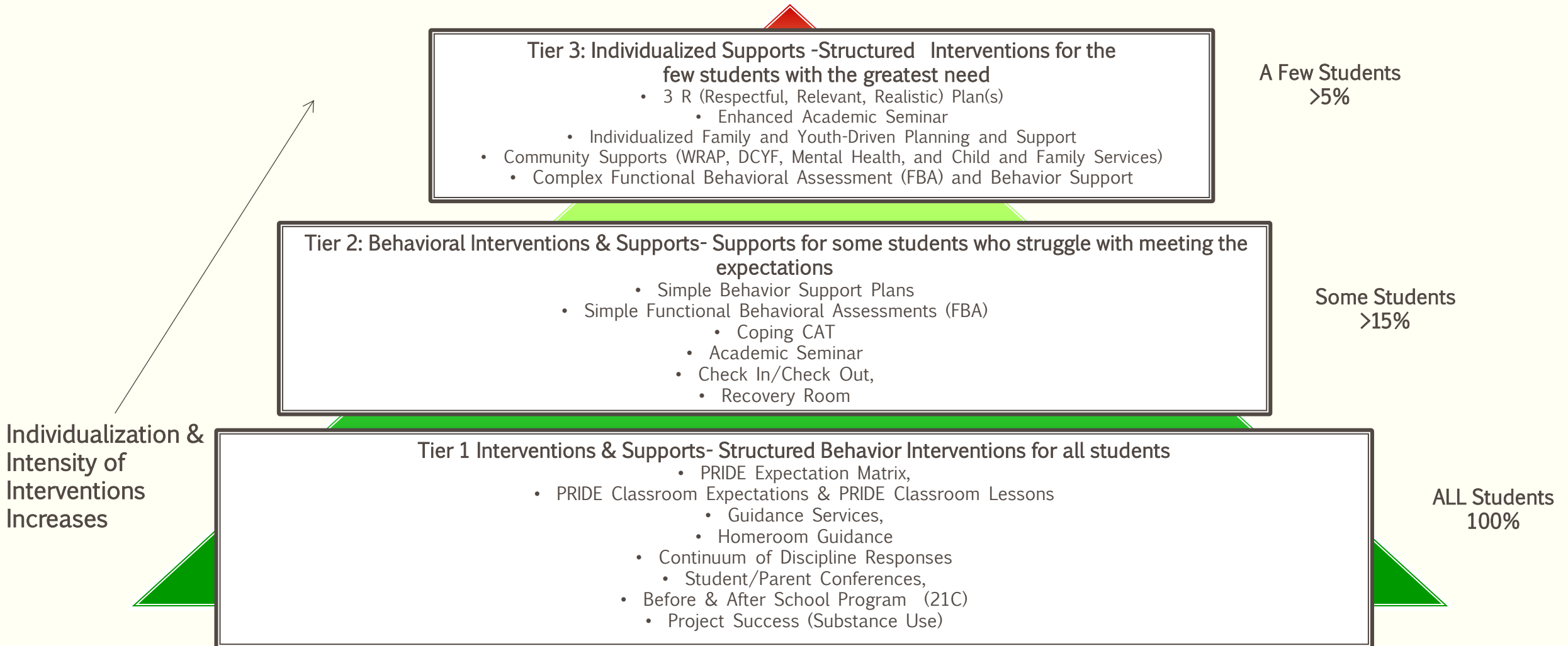


Rundlett Middle School PBIS Implementation

- Began implementation in 2012
 - “PRIDE” Universal System
- Tier 2 Behavior Systems Team
 - Behavior Intervention Team (BIT)

The mission of the RMS BIT is to provide additional, practical, organized and timely support to students in conjunction with PBIS Universal school-wide systems. This team also serves as a support system for faculty in guiding these students to make behavioral progress in school-wide settings.

Rundlett Middle School Pyramid of Interventions



Nomination Criteria for Tier 2 Supports

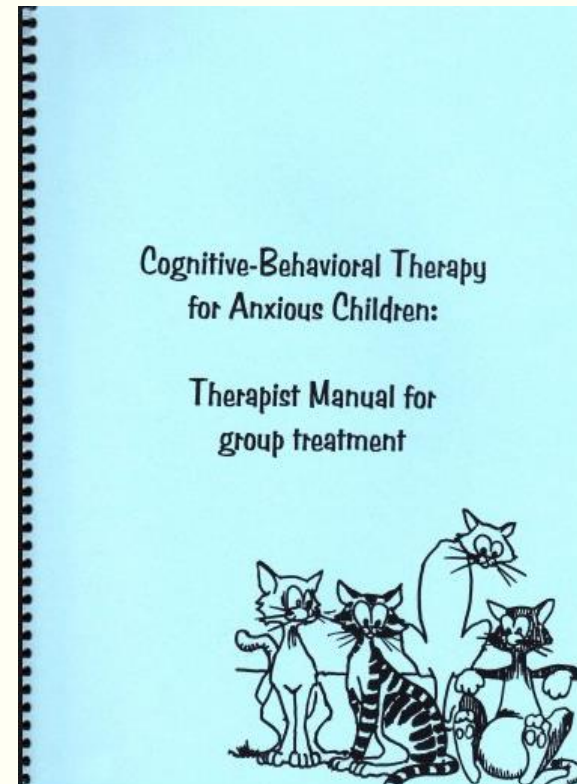
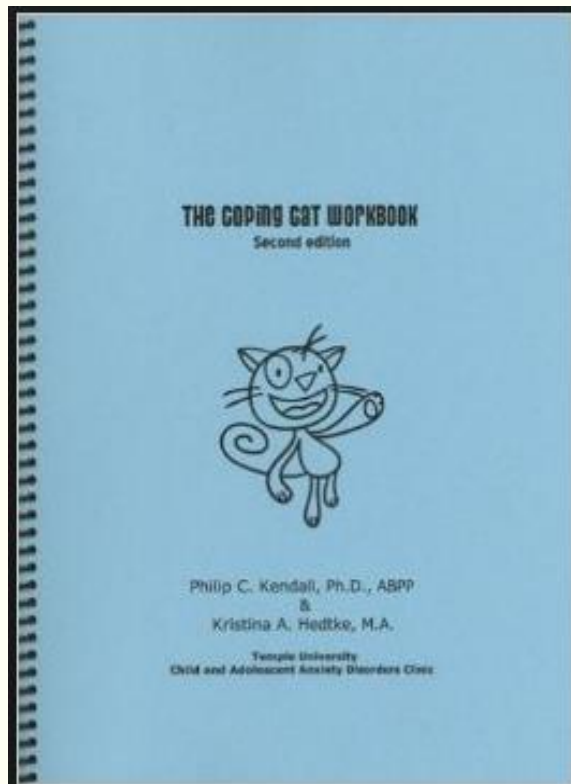
- Absences (5 days in a quarter)
- Tardy to class (5 office discipline referrals in a quarter)
- Tardy/Dismissed from school (5 events in a quarter)
- Office Discipline referrals (3 ODRs resulting in 6 days out of class [ISS and/or OSS])
- Nurse Visits (excessive requests when compared to peers)
- Academic Failure (not due to lack of ability or skill deficit)
- Counselor Visits (frequent and unscheduled)
- Out of School issues that impact the student's ability to "do school"

Spring 2014: Identified Need

- A small group of students were asking to go to the office on a daily basis or were frequently absent.
 - Most behaviors were internalizing: anxiety, withdrawal, avoidance of others.
 - These were students who performed academically, not special education.
- School psychologist researched small group (evidence-based) interventions for students who present with problematic levels of internalizing behaviors.
- Found Coping Cat
 - Applied for Concord Trust Grant to purchase the program materials

Coping Cat Program Overview

- Coping CAT is a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
- The focus is to help students recognize and analyze feeling related to stress and develop strategies to cope with stress provoking situations.



Elements of the Coping Cat Program

- Affective education
- Awareness of bodily reactions when anxious
- Identification and modification of anxious self-talk
- Relaxation training
- Mastery and coping modeling
- Role plays
- Homework assignments (“Show That I Can” tasks)

Cognitive/educational component of treatment

- Cognitive-behavioral strategies are presented as a 4-step plan to cope with anxiety.
- To facilitate recall of the steps, the FEAR acronym is used:
 - Feeling Frightened?
 - Begins with awareness of bodily reactions to feelings and developing recognition of those reactions which are specific to anxiety
 - Physical reactions become “cues” to the presence of anxiety
 - Expecting Bad Things to Happen?
 - Focus on analysis of self-statements
 - Attitudes and Actions that will Help?
 - Making modifications to self-talk
 - Ratings and Rewards
 - Self-rating and rewards
 - “Show that I Can” tasks are assigned to practice and reinforce

Coping Cat Program at Rundlett Middle School

Coping Cat

- 18 sessions
 - Skill-building segment (9 sessions)
 - Practice segment (9 sessions)
- Recommended group size
 - 3 to 5
 - greater than 5, requires a co-therapist
- Gender
 - Single-gender groups recommended
- Each session projected to last an hour and a half

Adaptation at RMS

- 8 sessions
 - Skill-building and practice combined
 - Students had weekly “homework” assignments that focused on practice and generalization of skills
- Group size
 - group size ranged from 7 students to 3 students per group
 - each group co-facilitated by a Riverbend Community Mental Health Counselor and either an RMS grade-level counselor or school psychologist
 - total of 18 students; 4 groups
- Groups met on a weekly basis for 45 minutes

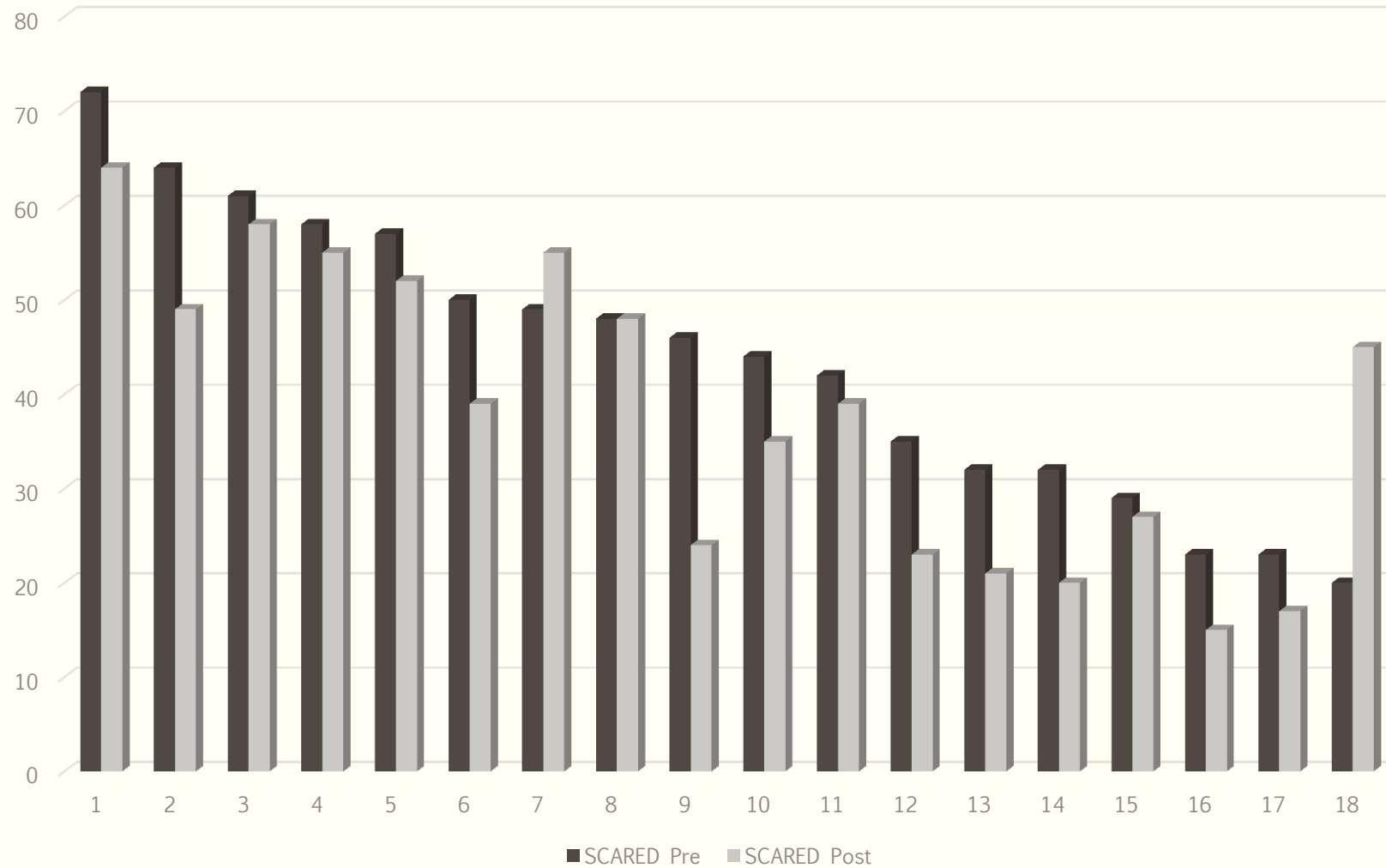
Responsibilities Associated with the Intervention

- Student responsibilities include participating in weekly group sessions, completing homework assignments (using coping strategies), and self-monitoring progress.
- Teacher responsibilities include prompting students to use their coping strategies and a willingness to participate in professional development regarding stress management and/or anxiety.
- Coping Cat instructor responsibilities include implementing the Coping Cat curriculum with fidelity and monitoring student progress with students and teachers.

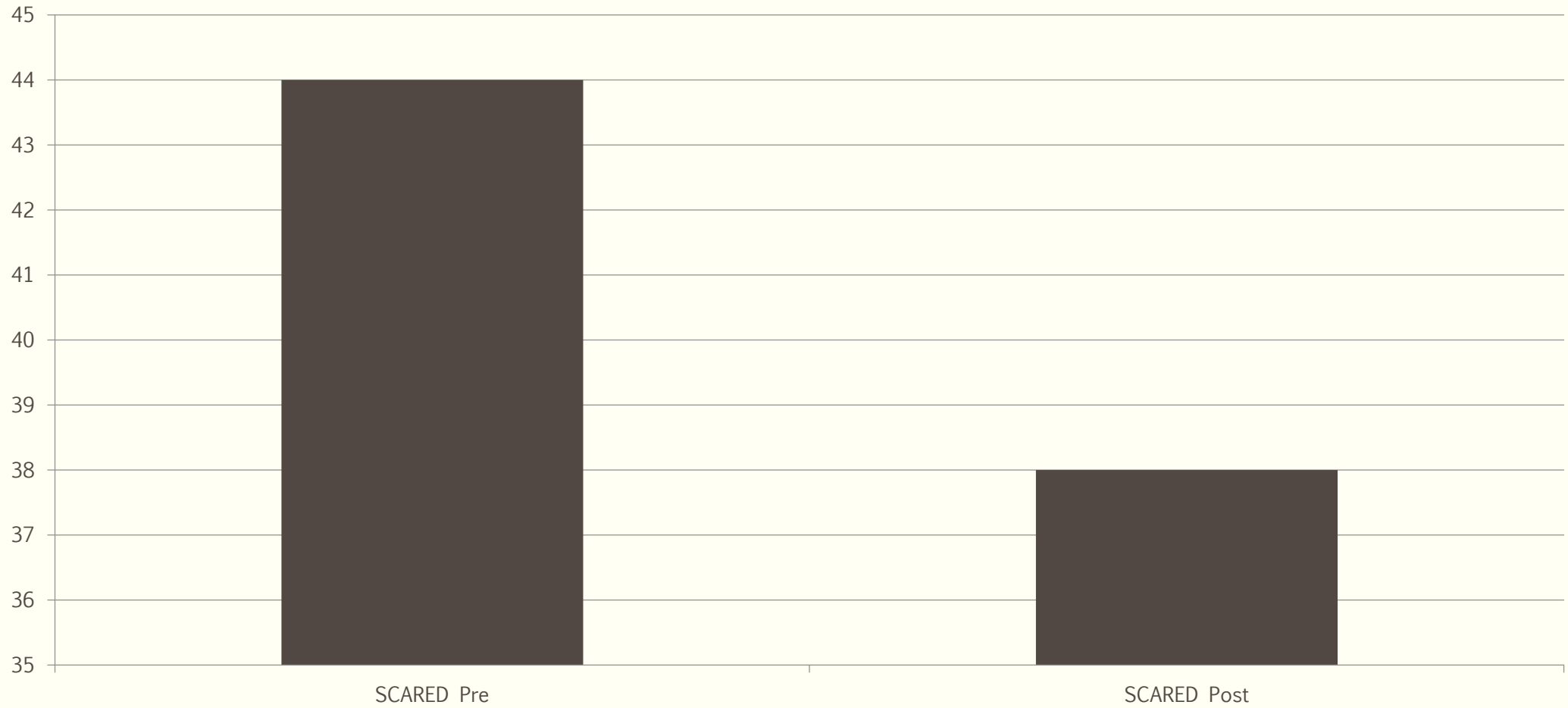
Data Sources

- Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED)
 - Author: Birmaher, B
 - 41-item inventory rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale
 - Purpose of the instrument is to screen for signs of anxiety symptoms/disorders in children
 - non-proprietary (public domain)
- Absences (frequency)
- Nurse Visits (frequency)

SCARED Pre/Post Student Report

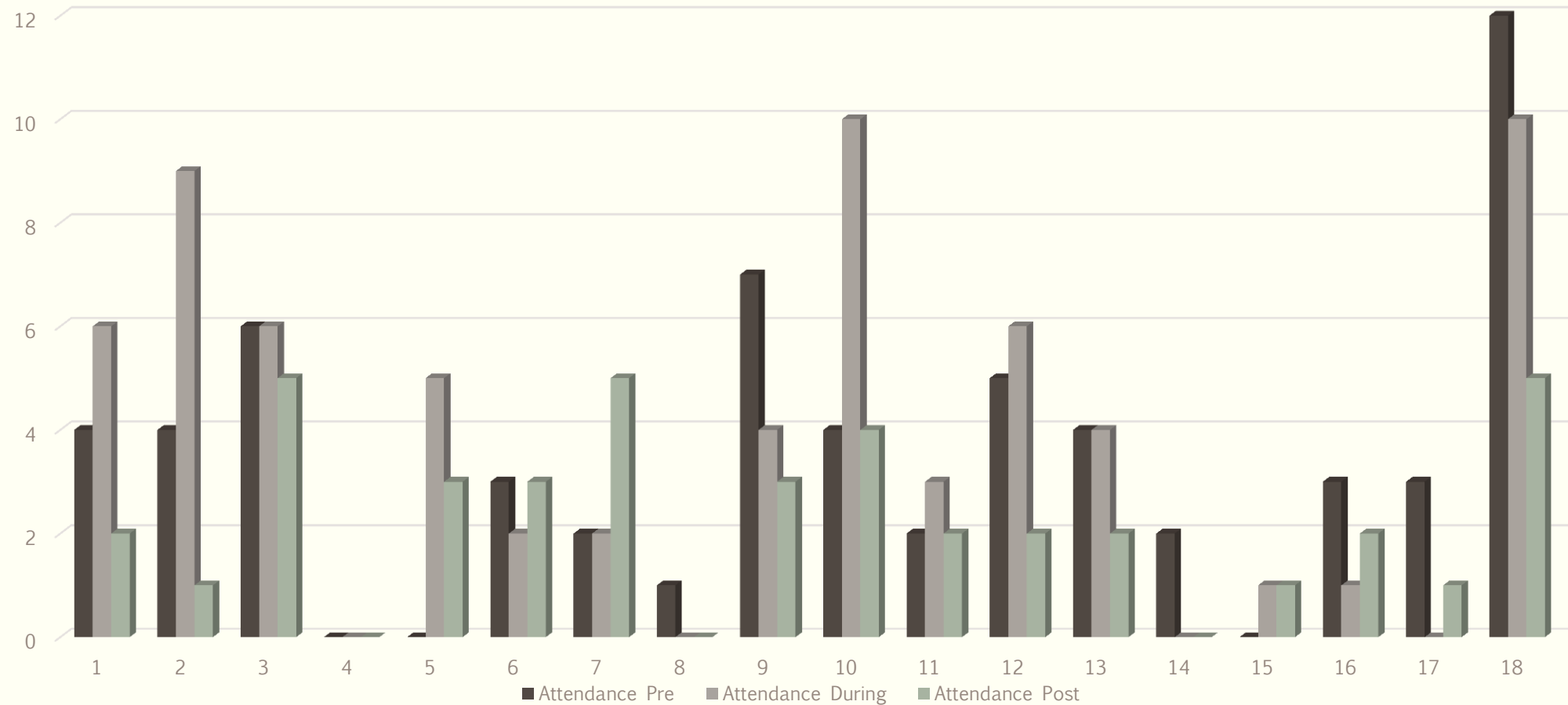


SCARED Pre/Post Student Report [Rate]

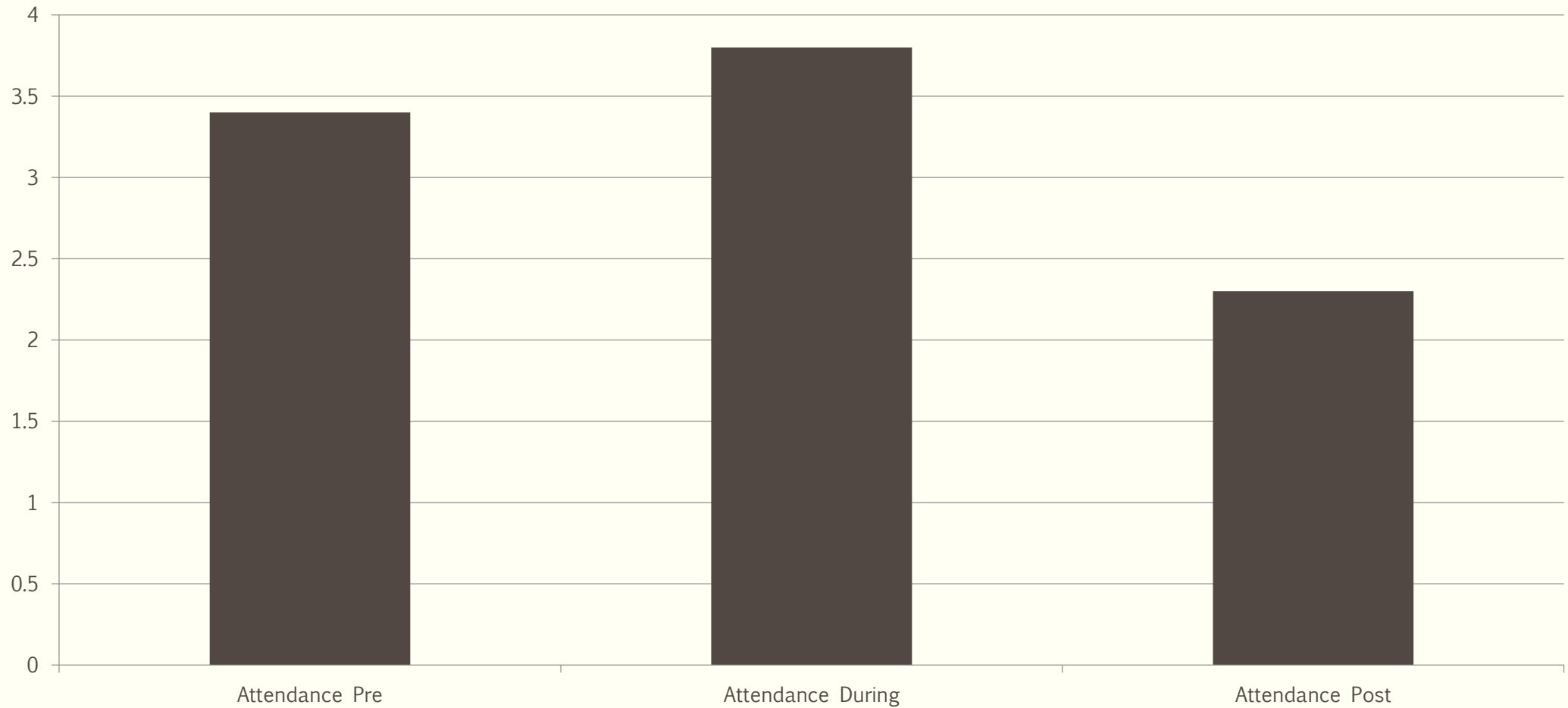


Number of Absences (Full Days)

Pre (7 weeks prior to group); During (8 school weeks of intervention); Post (7 weeks after group)

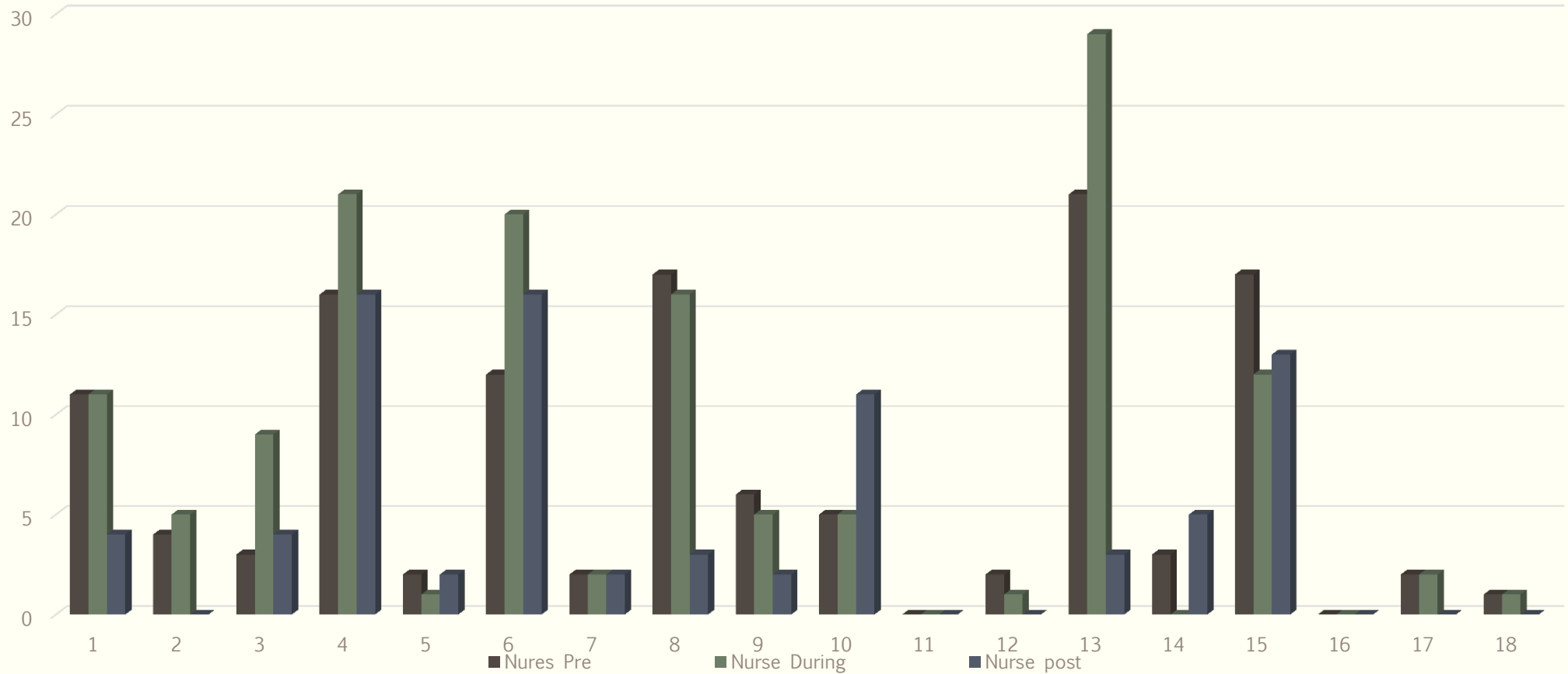


Number of Absences (Full Days) [Rate]

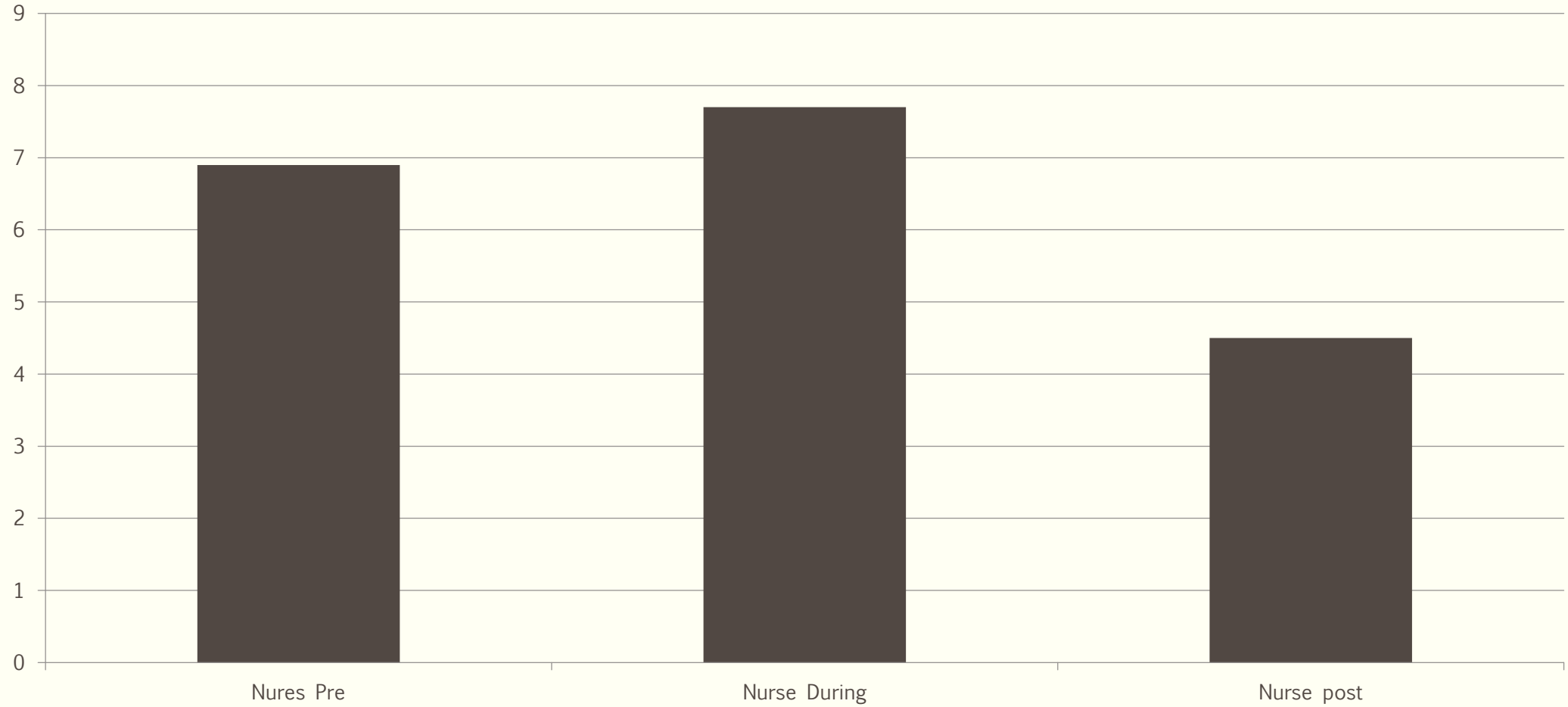


Number of Nurse Visits

Pre (7 weeks prior to group); During (8 school weeks of intervention); Post (7 weeks after group)

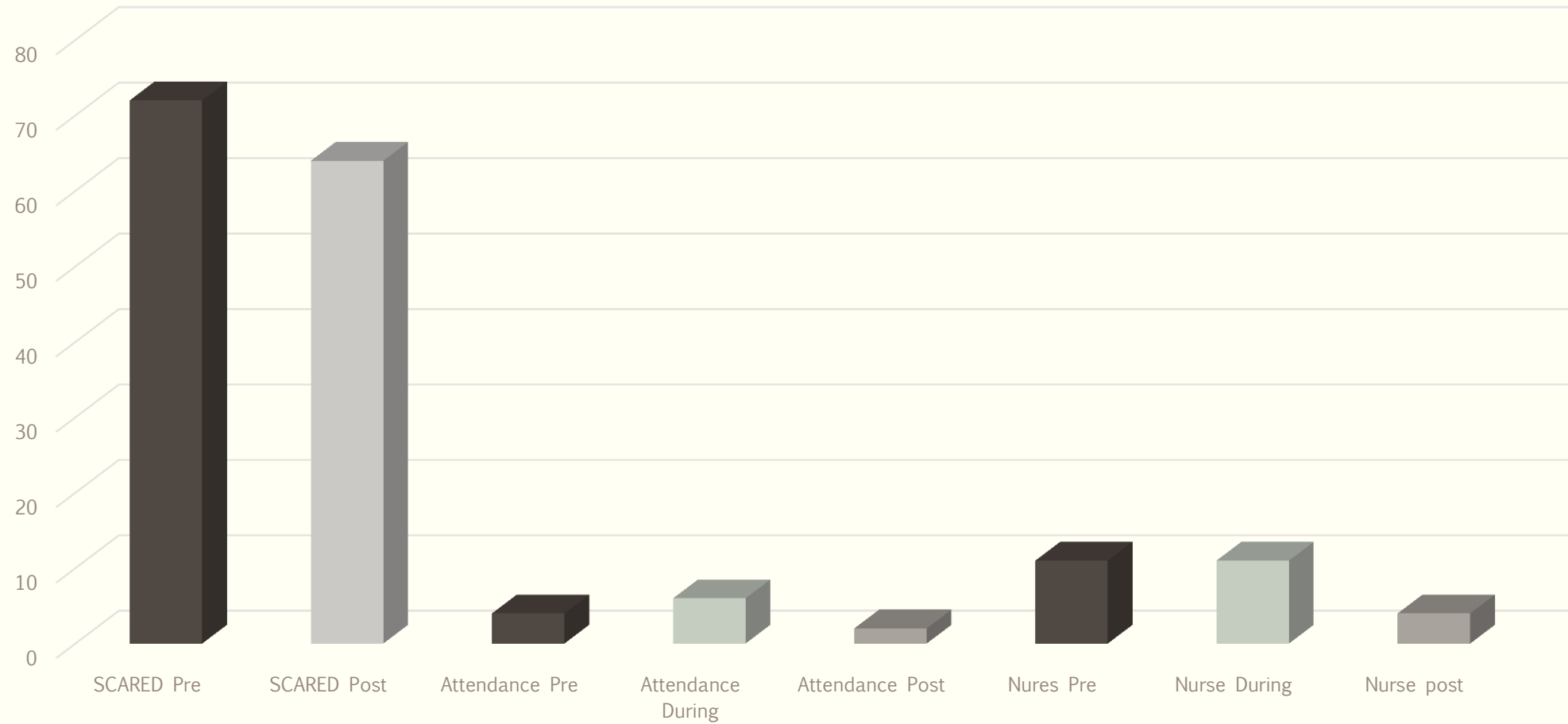


Number of Nurse Visits [Rate]



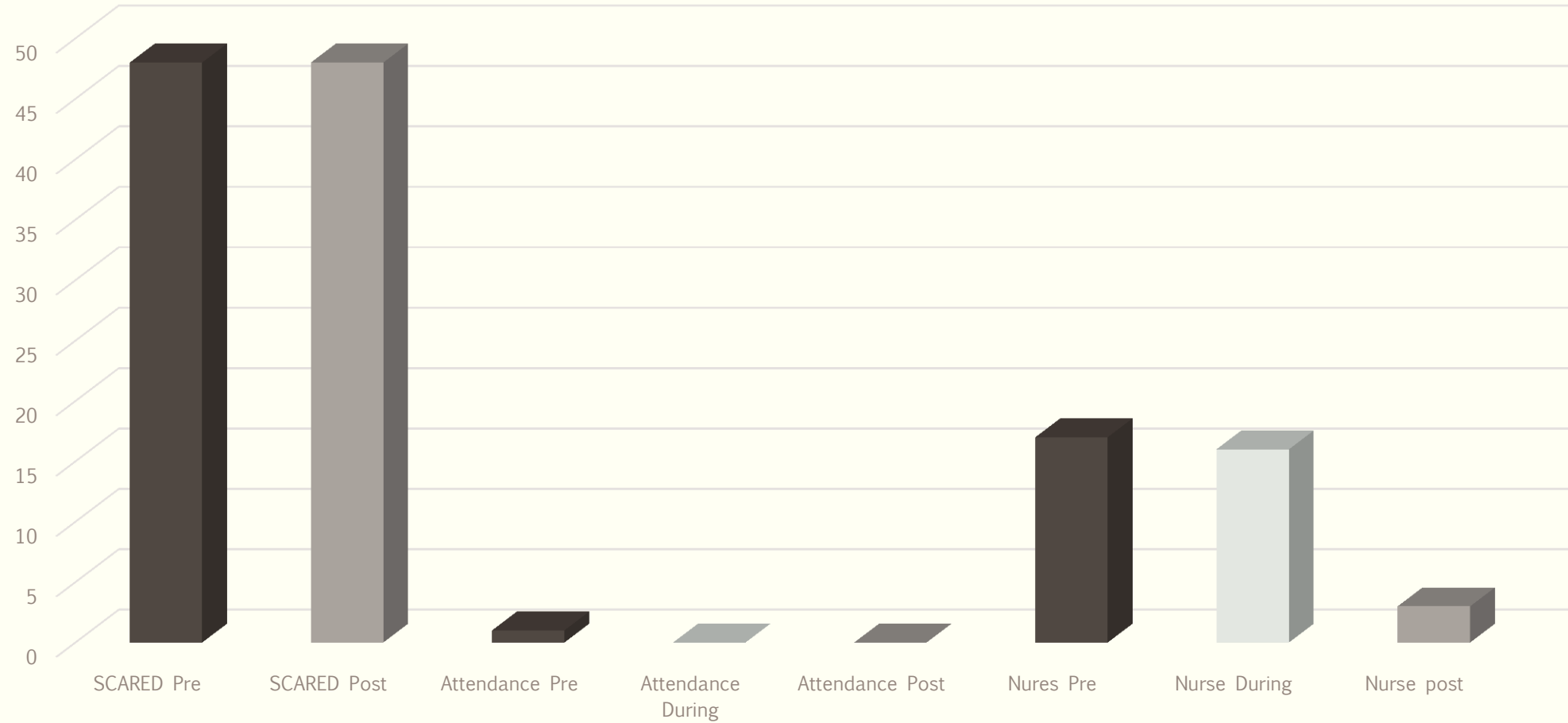
Case Example # 1

8th Grade Female Student



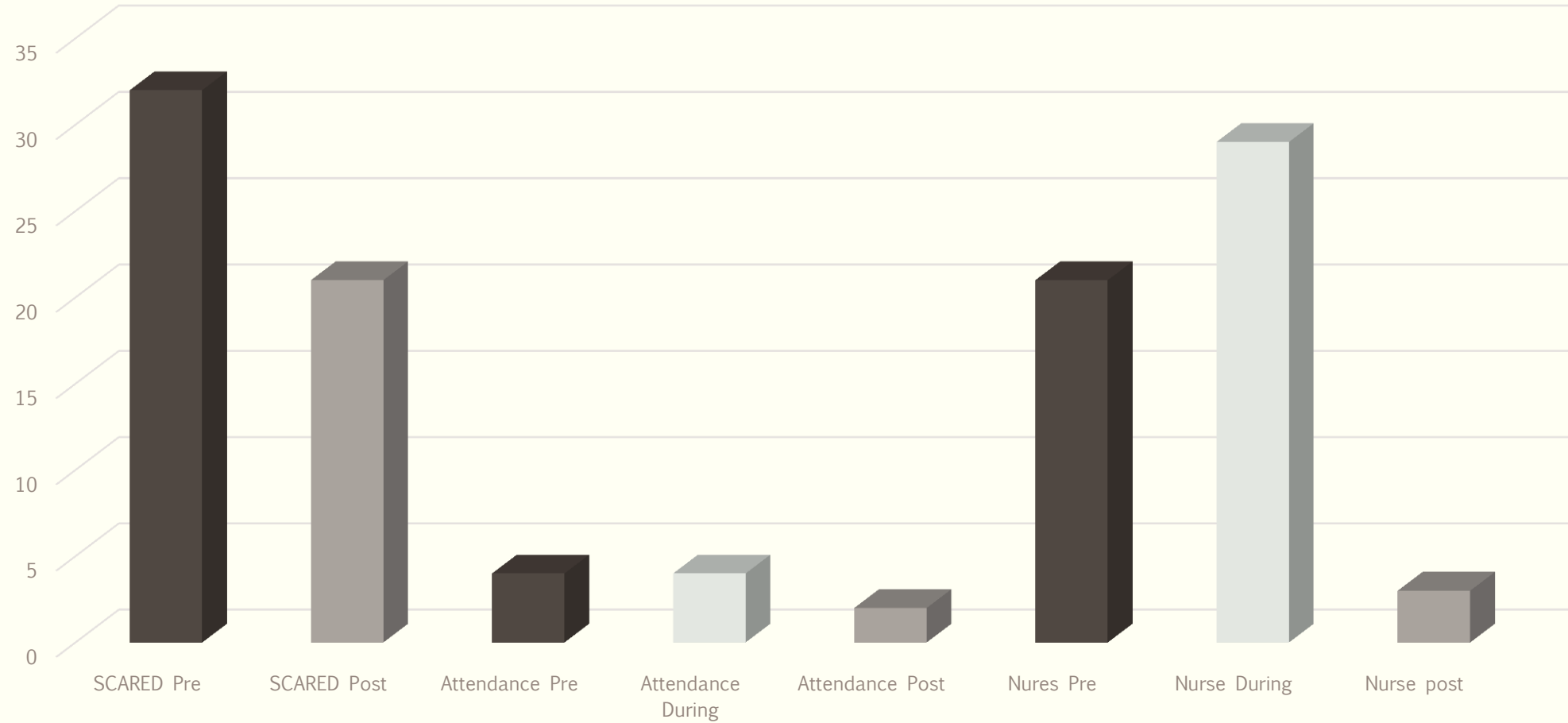
Case Example # 2

6th Grade Female Student



Case Example # 3

6th Grade Female Student



Thank you!

- Margie Borawska

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