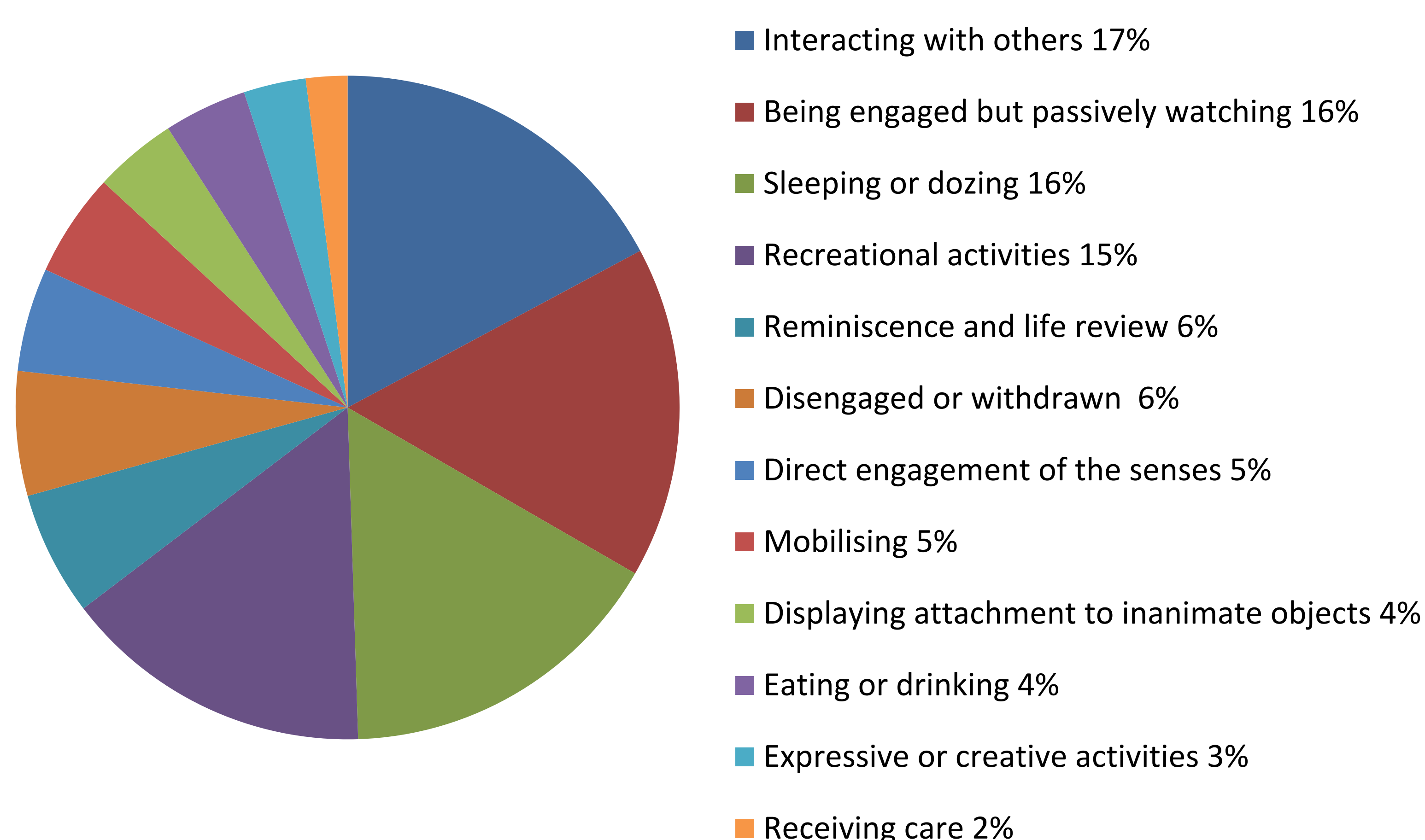


Evaluation of museum-based resources for care home residents with dementia

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“Memory Plus”, is an innovative resource developed by Leicestershire County Council. It incorporates a training programme for care home staff and a series of themed “memory boxes” containing historical objects which aim to promote cognitive stimulation, reminiscence and meaningful activity amongst care home residents with dementia. The facilitated use of this resource was evaluated using an observational method called “Dementia Care Mapping” in order to assess its impact on residents with dementia. These observations took place over five sites, lasted for five hours and incorporated 45 residents. This data was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with five care home staff in order to explore their attitudes and practices. Overall results are summarised below.

Overall Activity Profile (Dementia Care Mapping)



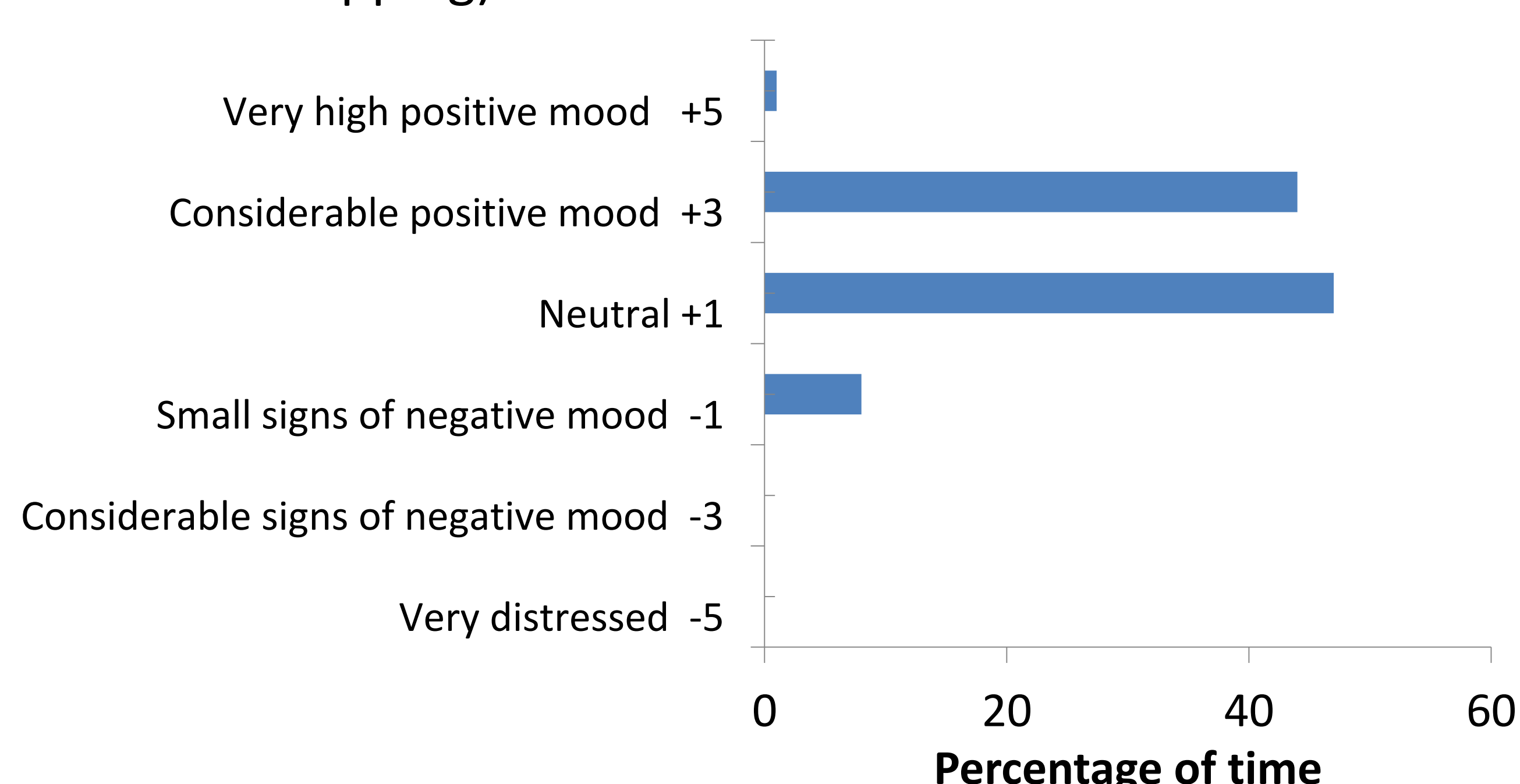
Findings

It was found that the use of Memory Plus had an impact on three levels:

- It promoted the general well-being of residents.
- It gave staff practical ways of promoting person centred care.
- Changes in individual staff practice had the potential to permeate into the wider culture of the care home.

Resident and staff responses to the sessions were overwhelmingly positive and during the observations, positive staff behaviour (enhancers) outnumbered negative staff behaviour (detractors) by a ratio of 14:4. There were, however, some contextual barriers to implementation, such as staff shortages.

Overall levels of mood and engagement (Dementia Care Mapping)



Photograph of one of the memory boxes on display in a care home

Quotes from semi-structured interviews with care home staff:

“...we have students from overseas – and it gives them a different look at it as well – something they’re not used to. And students don’t normally ...get to see the more social side...”

“... the residents’ families have pointed out how nice it was to see the display and they were also bringing up memories which help them to interact with the resident”

“...we had the statue of the queen in the corner... One of our residents ...he will interact, but only if he’s approached, but with the queen... she became quite a figure for him and he became quite attached, he interacted with her and he was beckoning her to come with him, and in the end he was taking her with him round the house...”

Conclusions

Recent years have seen the emergence of many innovative interventions within mental health practice which are not limited to medical frameworks of understanding and encompass diverse ways of promoting health and well-being. Such approach is reflected in this evaluation which indicates that, for a small investment, this type of intervention has the potential to realise benefits on multiple levels.

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