

### Storm Taming: Sensory Modulation within a Mental Health HDU Minister for Mental Health Award for Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services

#### Introduction

A flexible and creative staff training model utilised an innovative, cost effective approach to providing access to sensory modulation equipment while empowering patients with access to techniques for self-regulation.

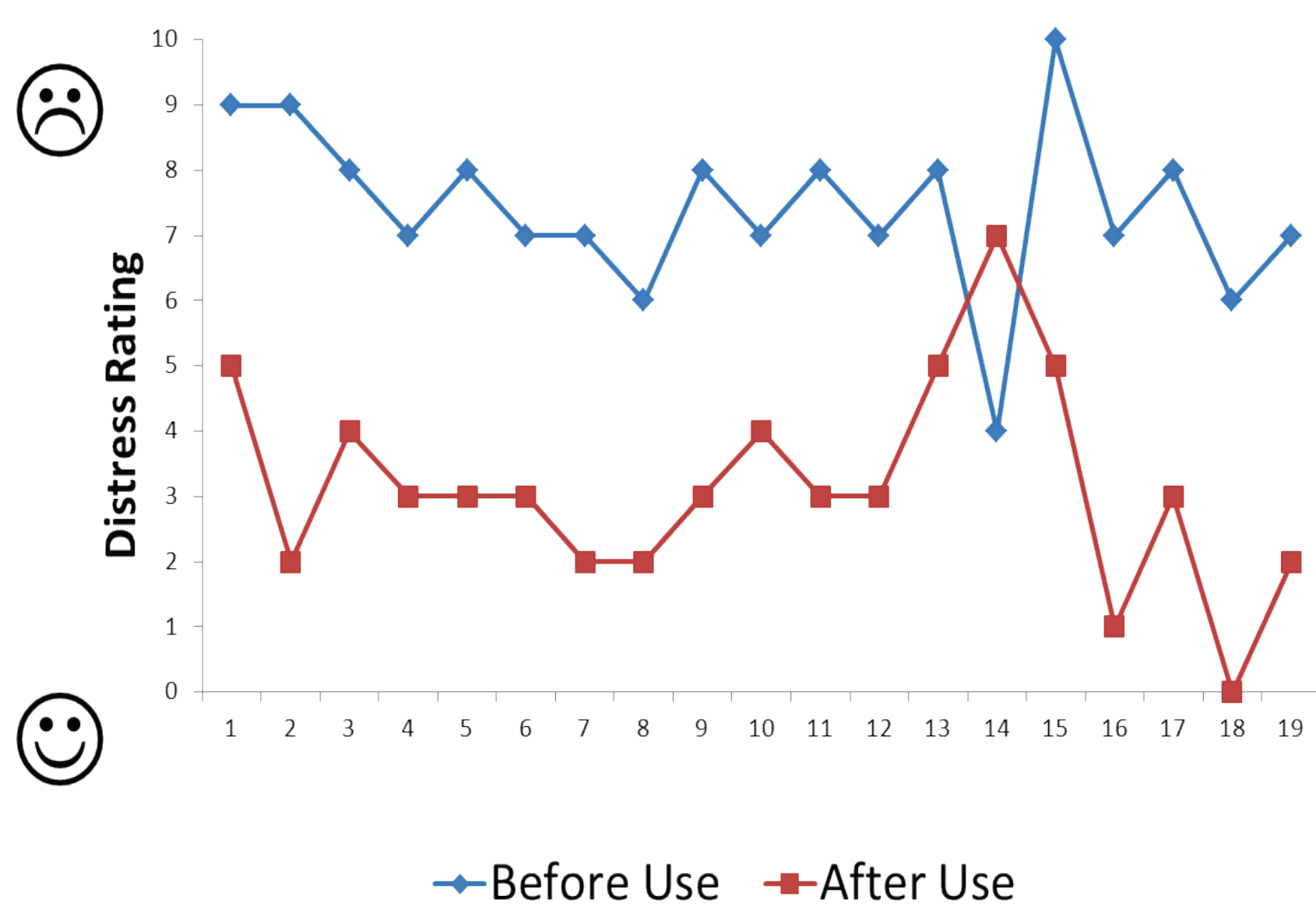


Figure 1: Patient Distress Levels Pre and Post Sensory Modulation Use

#### Aim

Clinicians, in concert with patients, identify individual sensory needs and/or stress responses and provide opportunities to learn self-soothing behaviours aimed at reducing distress thus minimising coercive interventions.

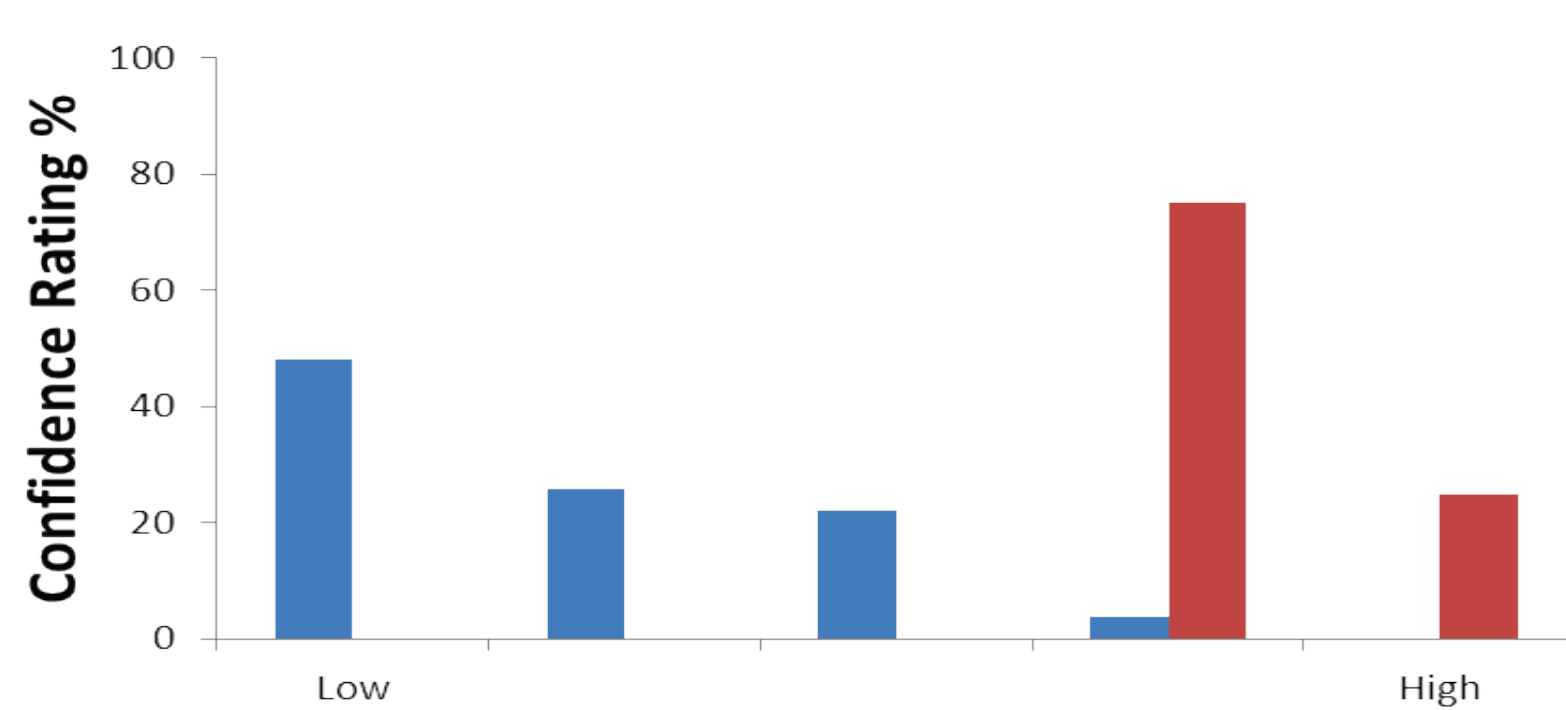


Figure 2 and 3 Pre and Post measures evaluating the staff training program aimed at developing staff competence and confidence related to use of sensory modulation tools/techniques

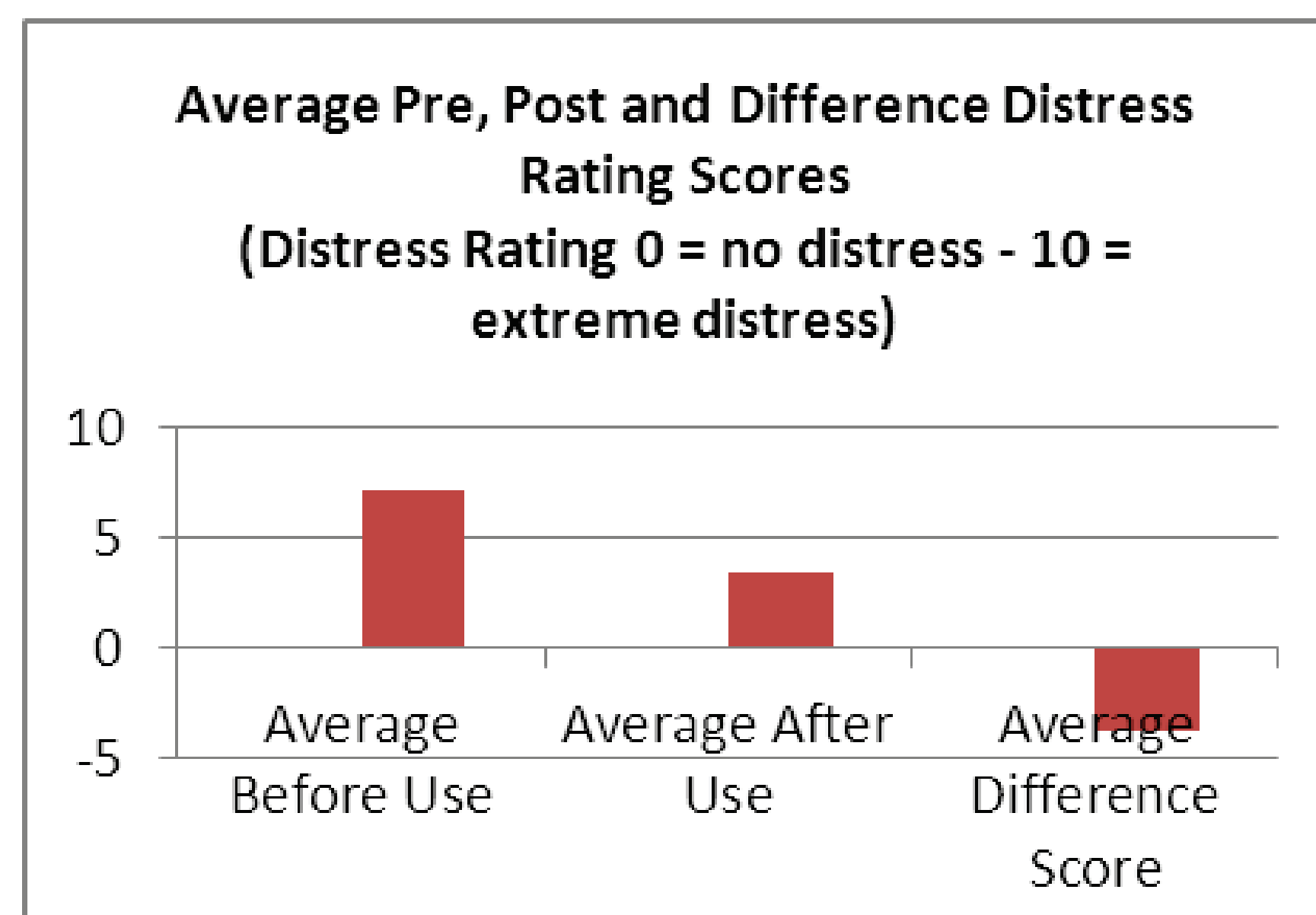


Figure 4: Demonstrates significant reductions in patient distress after sensory modulation.

#### Method

A working party of key stakeholders developed and implemented:

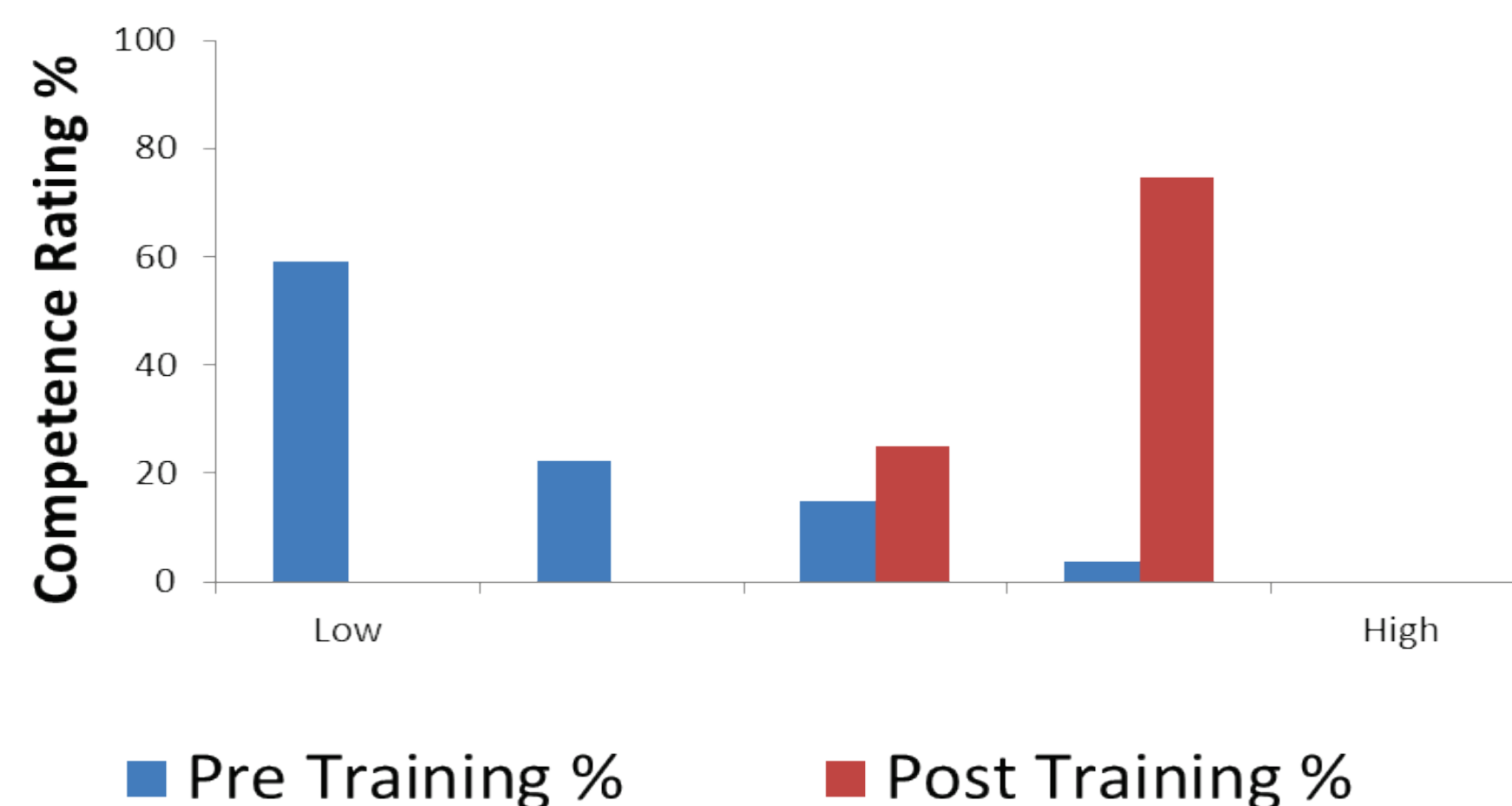
- a resource folder containing supporting articles and procedures for safe equipment use.
- sensory modulation specific training initiated via the unit's rostering and education plan.
- a modified pre and post distress rating scale to rate the success of the intervention.

#### Results

Staff identify significant reductions in patient distress levels post equipment use, with an average reduction in distress of four units on a 10 unit scale.

Delayed post training ratings indicate that competence, experience, knowledge and confidence obtained during the training is maintained across time.

The seclusion rate post project indicates a significant reduction when compared to seclusions pre project.



#### Conclusion

Accessing staff for training has been a significant barrier and has resulted in the implementation of innovative rostering processes to ensure an ongoing critical mass of trained staff.

Implementation has now extended to the Low Dependency Unit and roll out across the Mid North Coast Local Health District is underway.

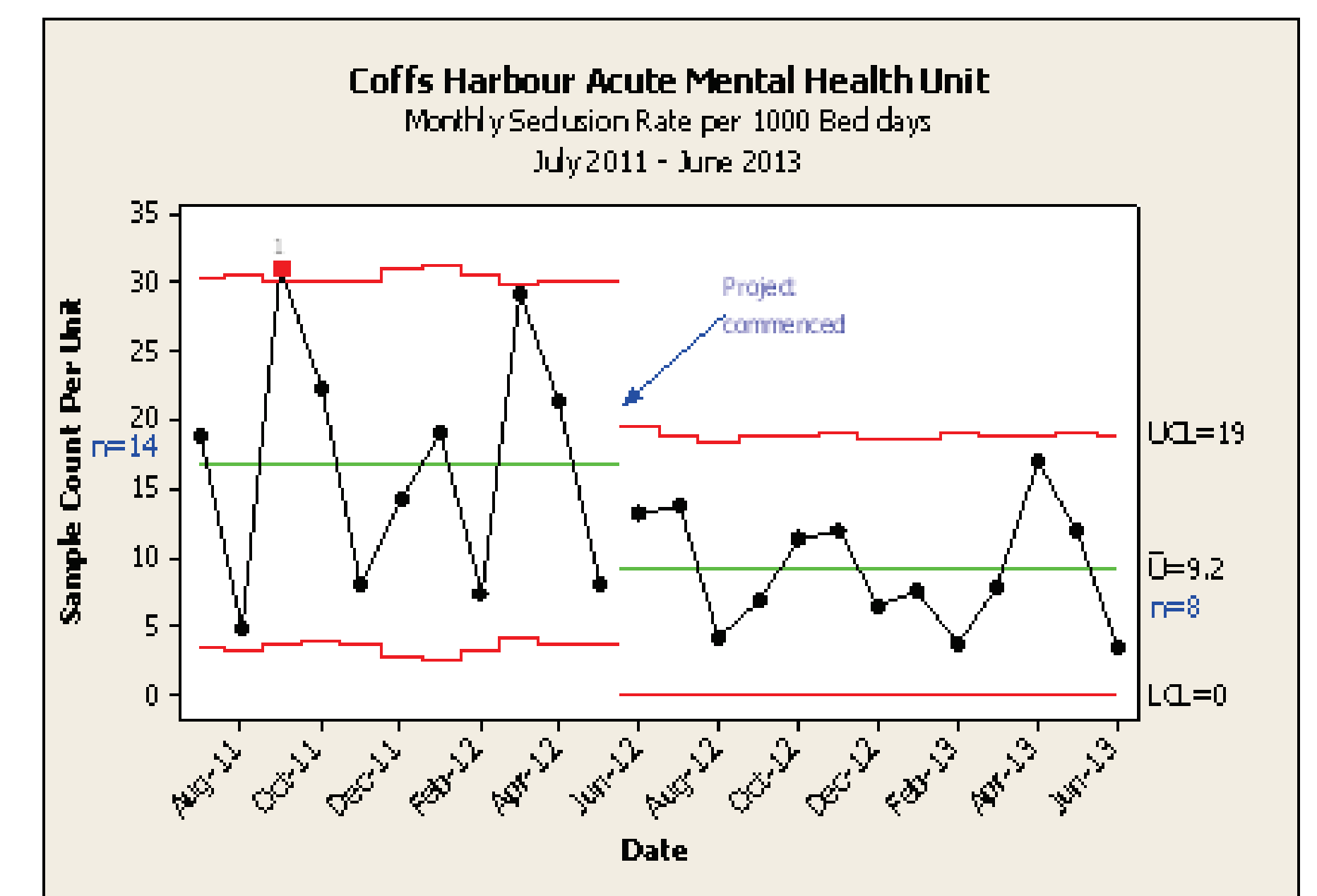


Figure 5: Variation in the second part of the chart demonstrates a statistically significant decrease in seclusion rates with an average:
• Count of 8 seclusion episodes (reduced from 14);
• Rate of 9.2 seclusion episodes per thousand bed-days (reduced from 17).

#### Acknowledgements

Coffs Harbour Acute Mental Health Unit staff

