

Exploring personal and structural factors that affect how children with disabilities access community aquatic therapy

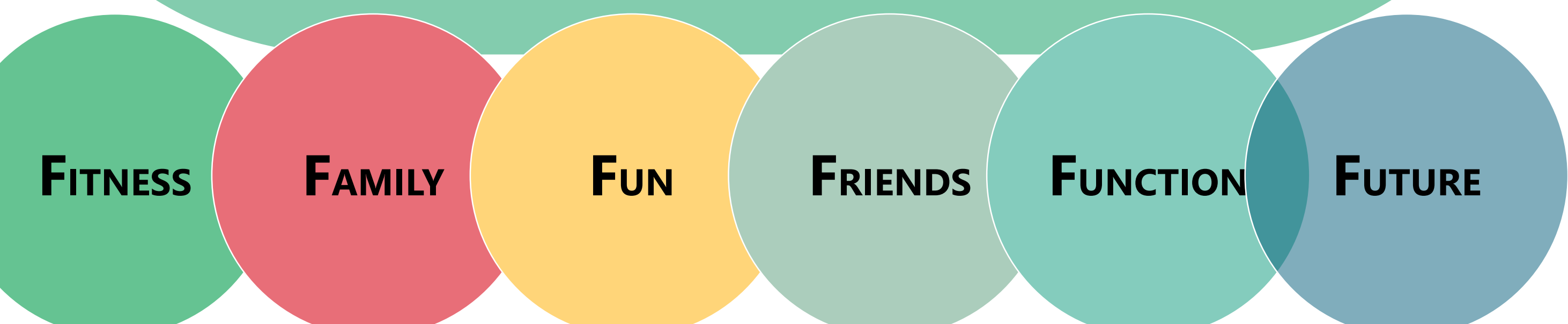
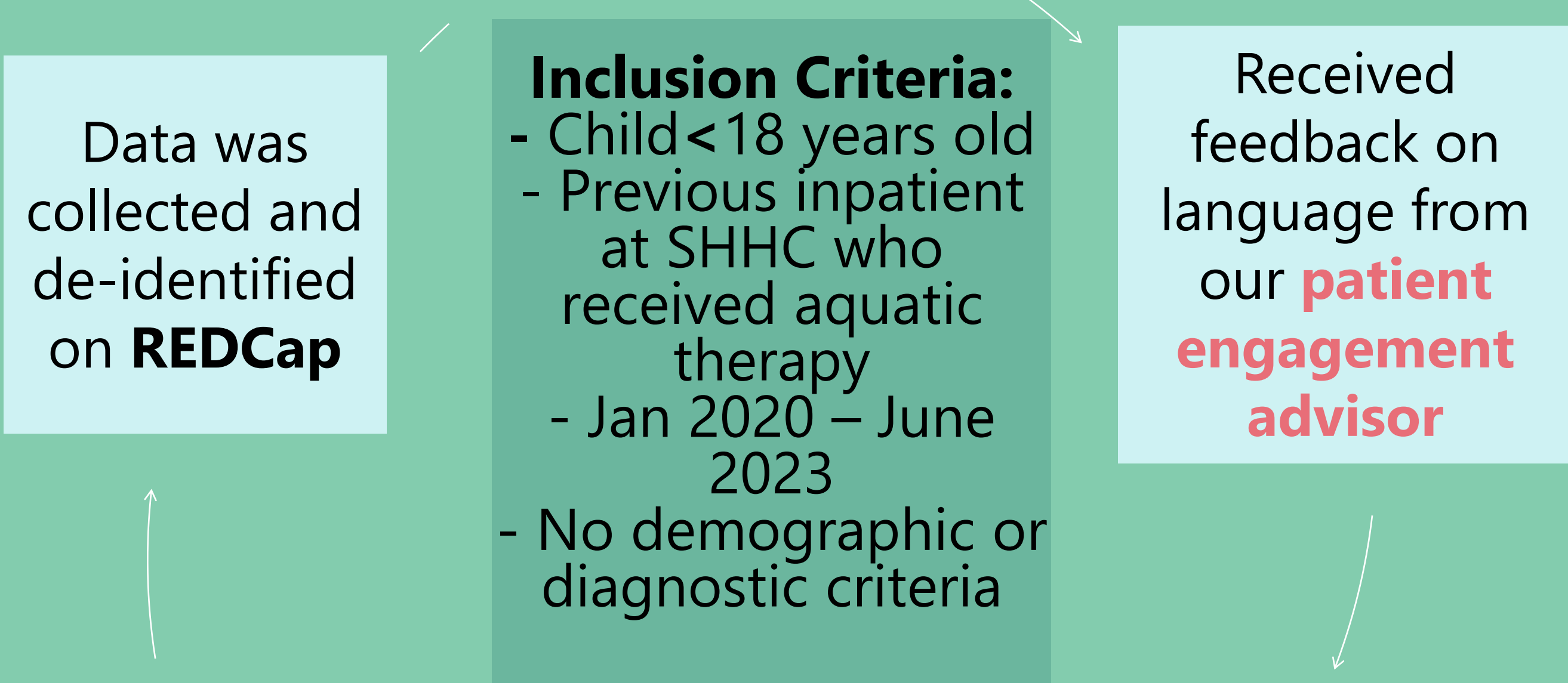
PRESENTER: **aquatic therapy**

Stephanie Rohn

Background: Swimming has been used as an effective rehabilitation tool with **motor, social and emotional benefits**. At the Acute Rehabilitation Unit at Sunny Hill Health Centre, there is a **notable drop** in patients who access community based aquatic services on discharge.

Our **objective** was to identify factors that **facilitate or impede the decision to swim in the community**, including exploring the perceived utility of swimming in their rehabilitation goals

The survey was designed using the **F words, ICF framework, and PPPAS tool*** for guidance



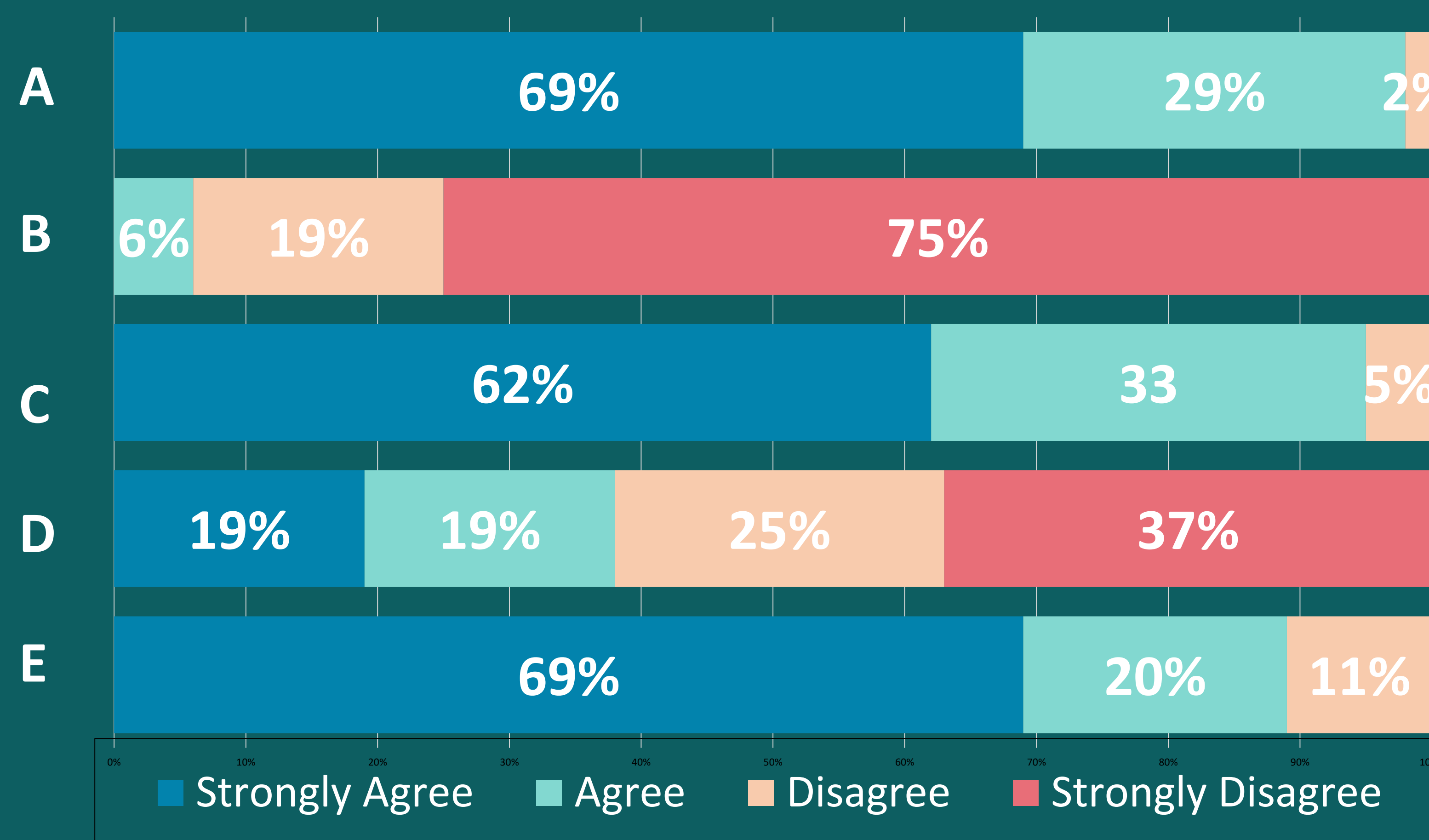
KEY FINDINGS

Parents noted largely **positive social, emotional and physical benefits of swimming**. Continuation is largely **limited by cost, parental fears, lack of community resources and adapted programming**

Participation



Key Results



Grouped Likert scale responses into themes:

- A – Body structure/function - **benefit**
- B – Personal factor - **barrier**
- C – Personal factor – **benefit**
- D – Participation/activity - **barrier**
- E – Participation/activity - **benefit**

Environmental factors:

- 67% identified a **significant cost** associated with swimming
- 33% **needed another adult** to support getting to the pool
- 52% could not access **community instructor-led sessions**
- 100% of respondents had another family member **who could swim**

Implications & Next Steps

There is a major need to advocate for **community resources** (and Sunny Hill outpatient program) and **reduction of barriers for families**, including pool accessibility and coverage for private therapists

Quotes from parents...



- "There simply are **not enough classes** for all those that want to register in our community"
- "Can't attend community lessons as there is **no adaptive program**"
- "...**not having a care aid** or someone to help"
- "Many pools do not allow (an) option to bring an **outside therapist.**"
- "In my daughter's words- " **I think swim therapy is one of the best things they could include in the recovery process**"



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