


An idiographic evaluation of the Unretiring pilot programme



Oliver Robinson, Associate Professor of
Psychology, University of Greenwich

**the
Unretiring.**

*With thanks to Aneta Sahely, Josie
Fenton and the Unretiring team*





Methodology

Design: Mixed methods triangulation / explanatory design

Sample: 7 participants, 6 female & 1 male (ages 63-82), all based in the USA. All coaches and facilitators.

Quantitative evaluation: Pre-post measures using the Ryff wellbeing questionnaire (42 item version) + post-workshop question: “Do you feel that participating in the course has had a positive impact on your life?”

Qualitative evaluation: 3 post-workshop open-ended questions (triangulation), post-workshop follow-up email questions about quantitative data

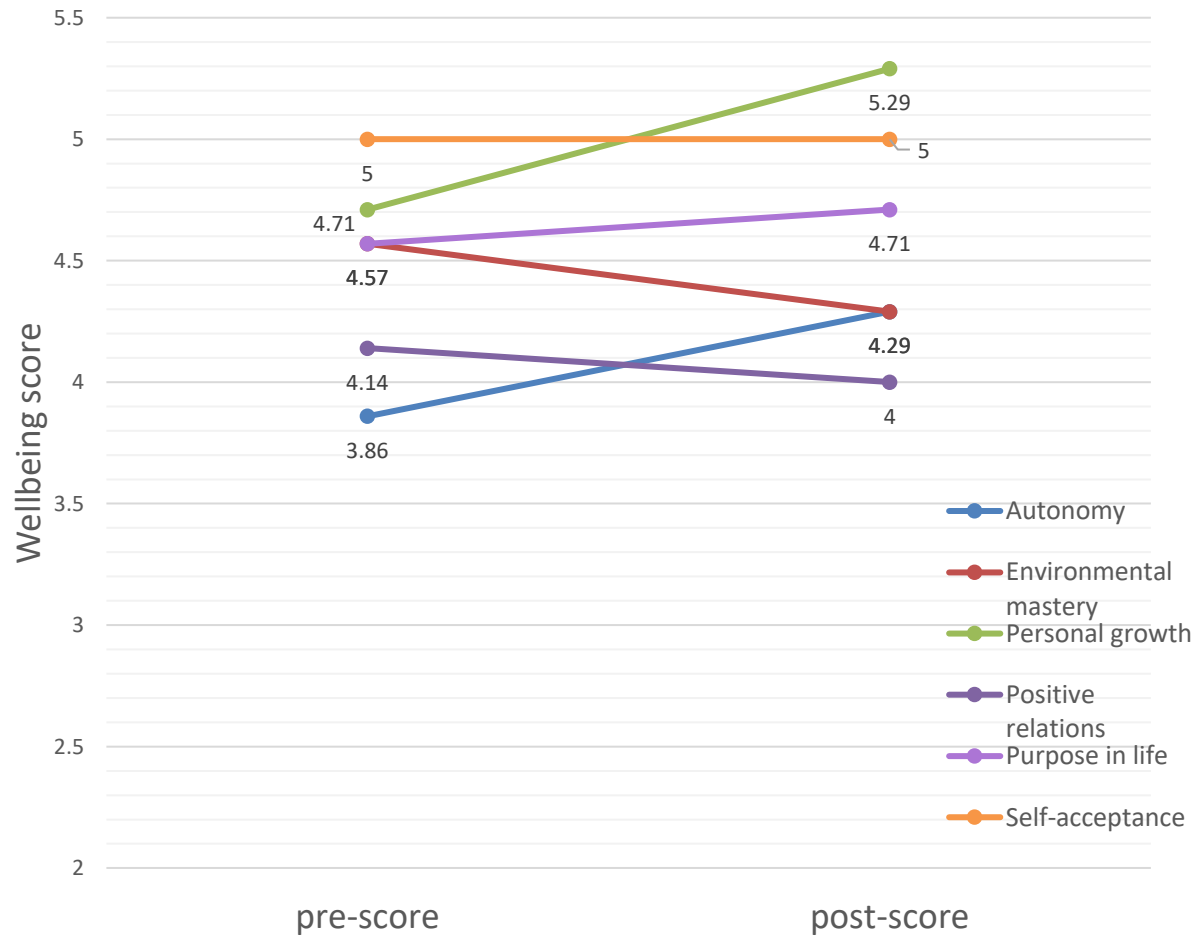
Analysis: Descriptive-interpretative case-by-case analysis
Statistical significance vs. personal significance

The 6 dimensions of the Ryff model of wellbeing:

- 1) Self-Acceptance
- 2) Personal Growth
- 3) Purpose in Life
- 4) Positive Relations With Others
- 5) Environmental Mastery
- 6) Autonomy



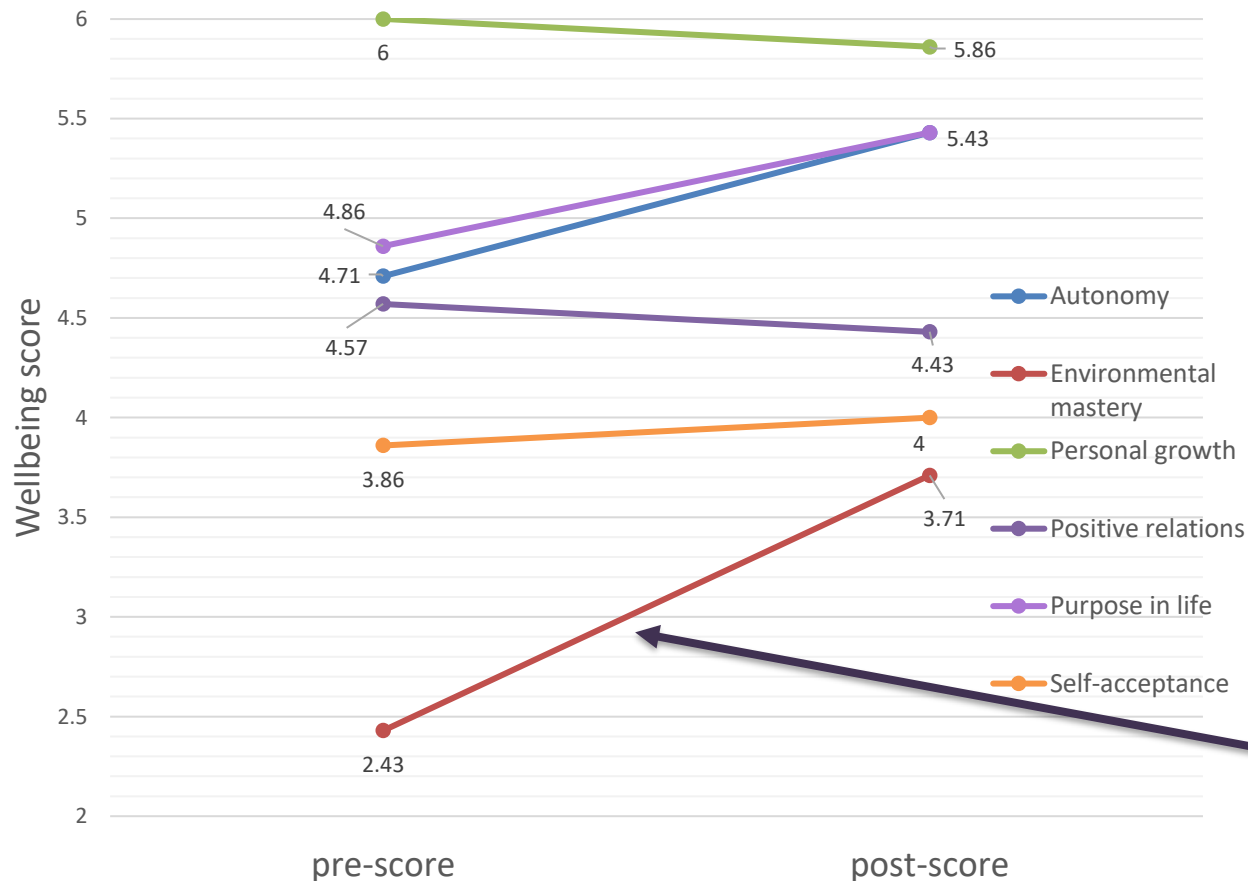
Participant 1



“This helped to solidify some thoughts in my mind, even though I've done a fair bit of work on this already.”



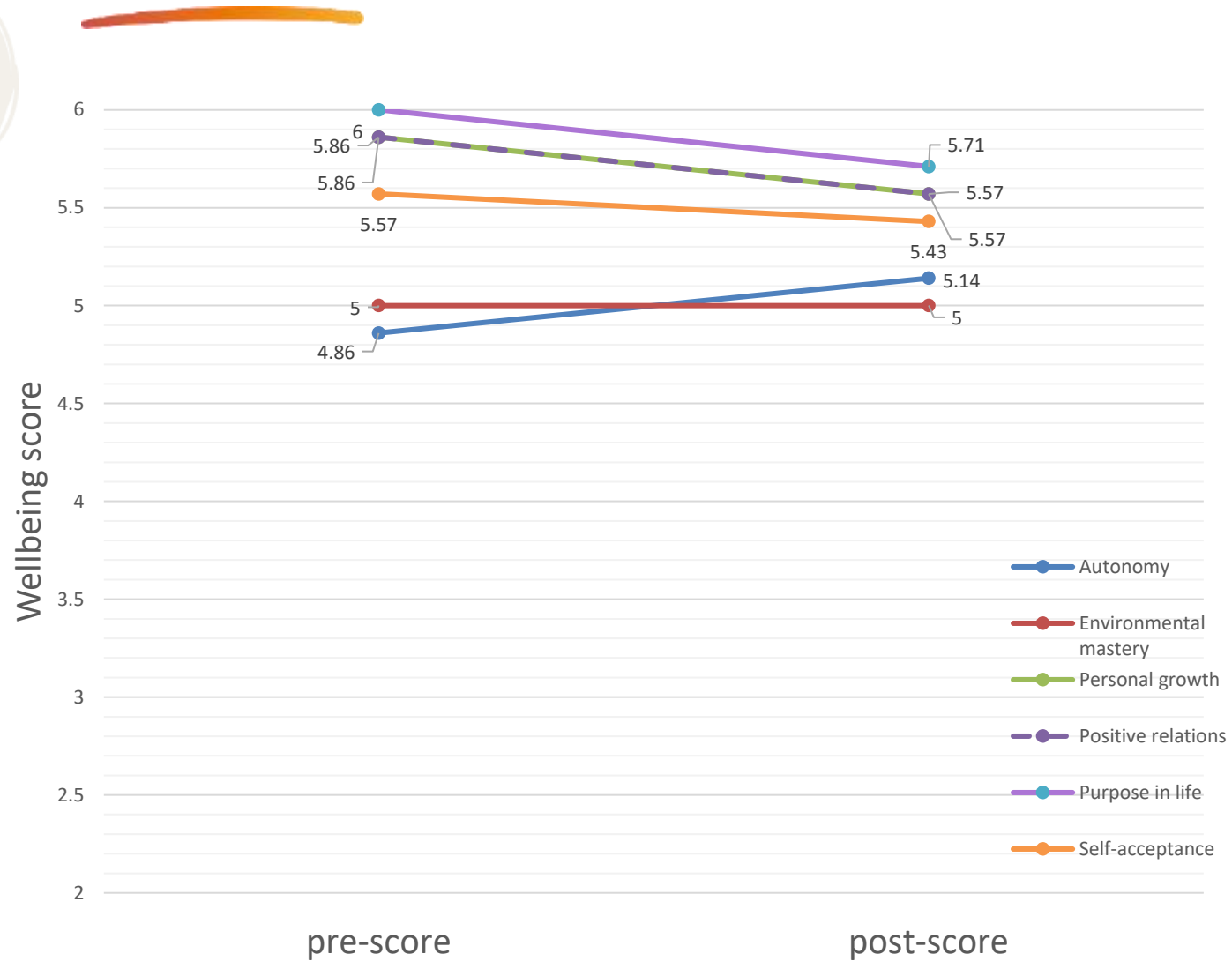
Participant 2 – follow-up data



“What the training did is that it brought to light my insecurity about being the oldest person in the room and my efforts to compete with younger people. I realized that I can't go where they are going; however, my learning, experience, and wisdom can make a difference for them and I can be proud and comfortable with that. In olden times when people became free of family obligations, they were honored as mentors to the community. We need to get back to that. So, this training has made a huge difference in how I look at "ageism," not as a liability and rather as an asset. I think this plays on all of those categories that are represented in the graph. My sense of purpose is definitely more aligned with who I am and I've, perhaps, developed more self-compassion, a realization that I can only be who I am at any given point in time.”



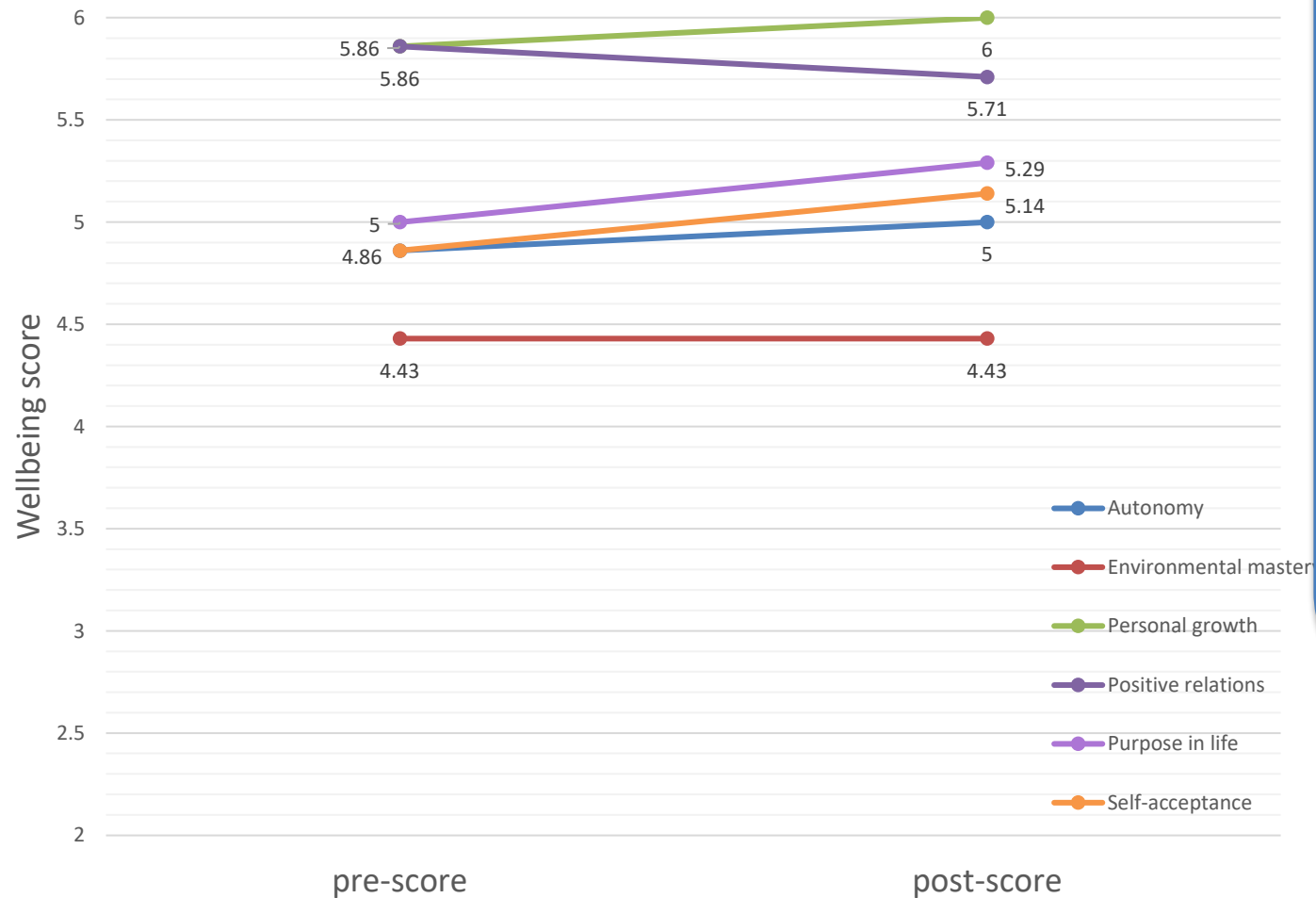
Participant 3



“It was encouraging to see how desirous folks are of productive activity regardless of age or a paycheck.”



Participant 4



“I feel that not retiring has been normalized for me, rather than feeling as if I'm swimming against the current (at 67). Reinventing my business and my identity is something to celebrate, not apologize for! I've also been using some of the concepts with clients and inviting them to imagine their possibilities as Unretired or retired elders.”



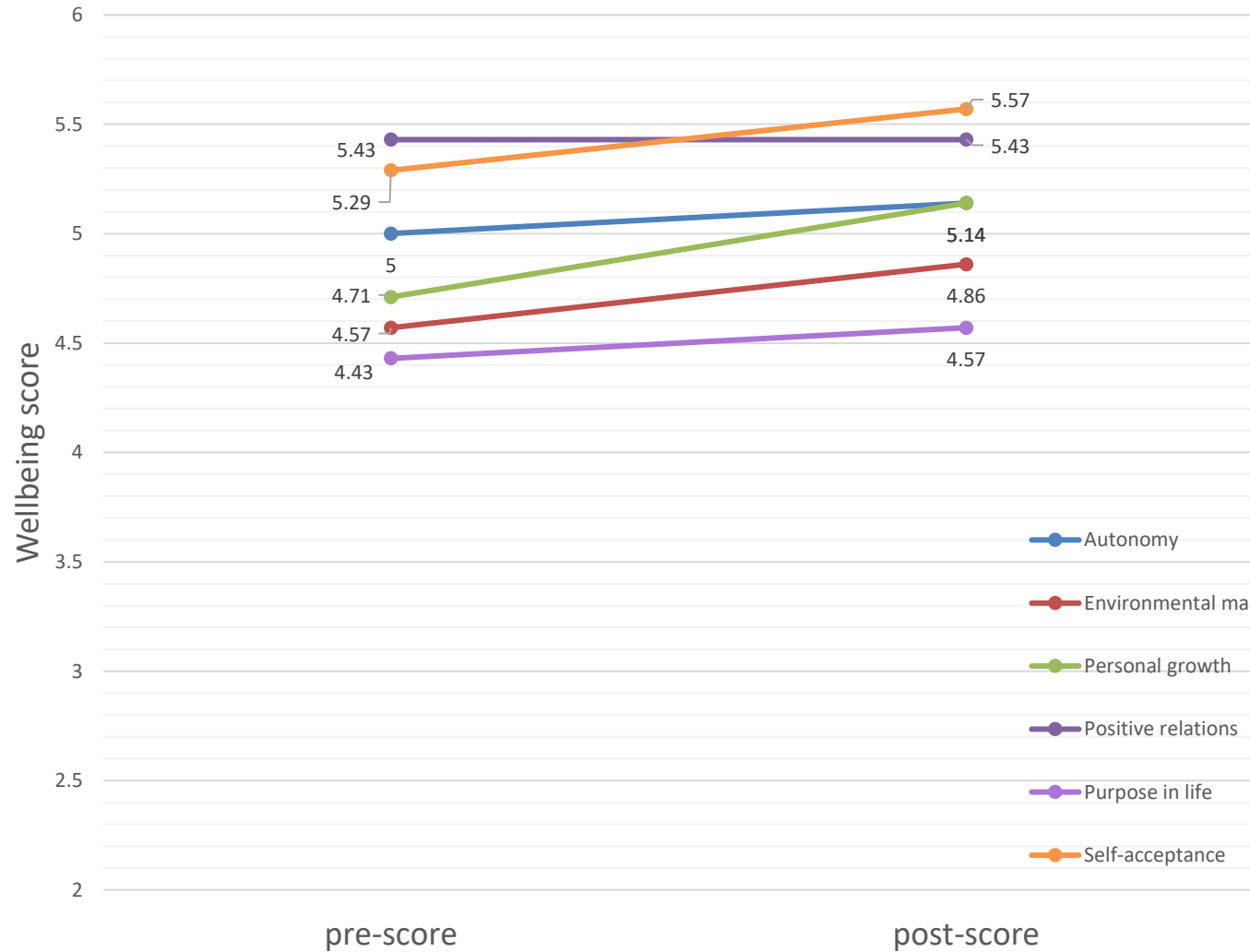
Participant 5 – follow-up data



“In the course we talked a lot about the myths that are circulated regarding aging, in fact there were a number of videos addressing that situation. There was one gentleman, an author, who spoke a lot about this. That was very helpful to me. I know that my physical age has nothing to do with my ability to contribute and it is very good to have that affirmed. In fact my experience helps me be an even greater support to those I am coaching, mentoring and speaking to.”



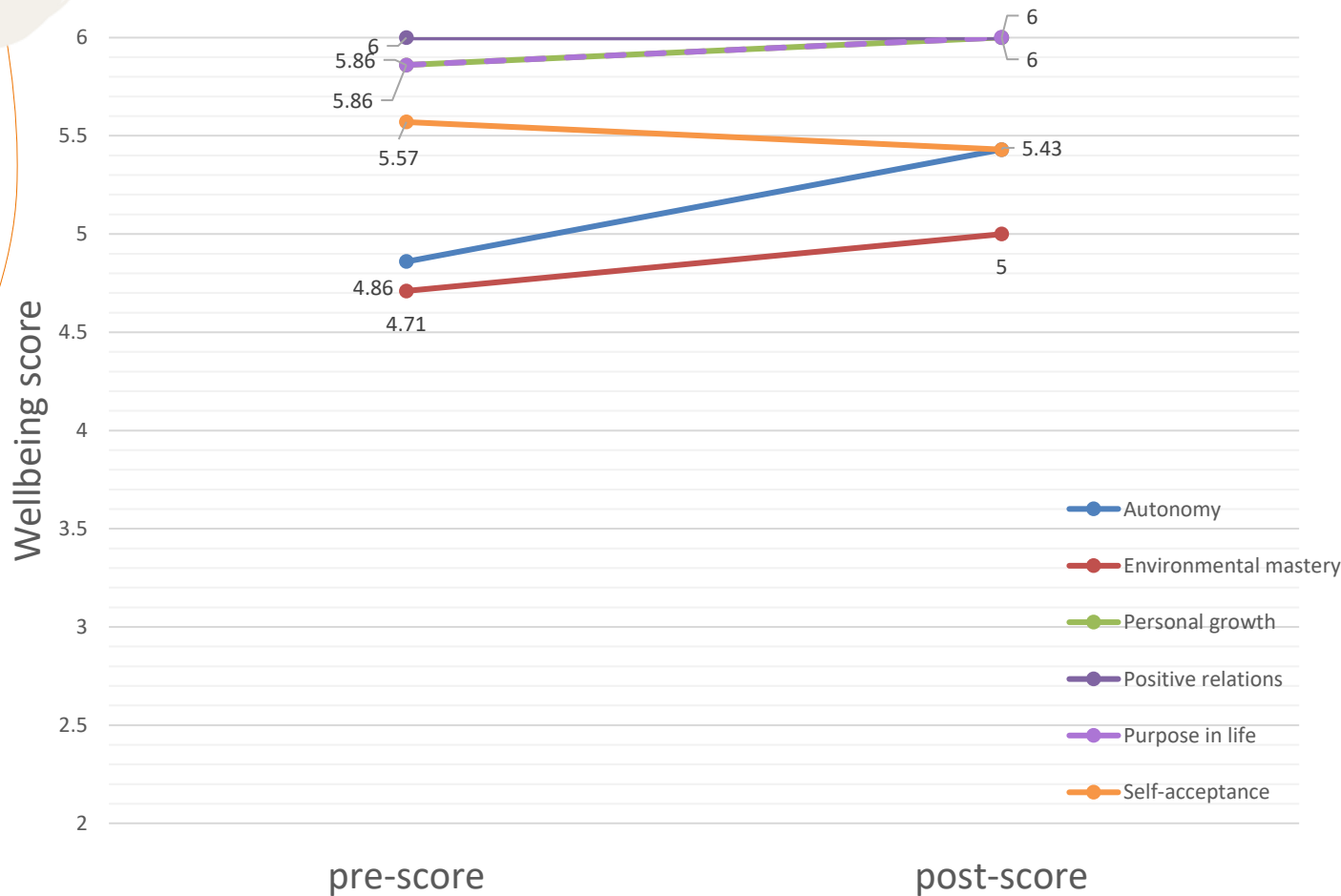
Participant 6



“I have been in unretirement, a new phase of my career, for about 12 years and it is time for another transition. I have been somewhat confused about needing to give up and what to keep and what to add. This course led me to realize what I need to do next to help me make those decisions.”



Participant 7



“I have emerged with a greater awareness of and appreciation for how privileged and blessed I have been to have spent the majority of my adult life doing work that I love and from which I have no interest in retiring. I am also more deeply aware of how my perspective and the work I do can be of great benefit to those who are seeking a sense of meaning and purpose as elders.”

Discussion and Next Steps



- All seven participants experienced the workshop to have a positive impact on their life, and described these impacts in varying ways
- Two showed notable shifts in a facet of wellbeing over the 10 day period
- It is unclear to what extent these findings will be replicated in the eventual official roll-out of the Unretiring courses, given the different in participant profile
- Idiographic methods for evaluation remain an important counterpoint to methods where participant data is lumped together into a single averaged group
- **Next steps:** Gain funding for ongoing evaluation of the Unretiring courses. Evaluation needed over longer time period



Any questions?