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The Silent Impact:

Education & career disruptions
among AYA with a parent or sibling
with cancer

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Disclosures

I have no disclosures



Education & Career Service (ECS)

We understand that:

- Cancer can disrupt education, career pathways and confidence.
- Education and career goals provide purpose, independence and opportunities for the future.

We support young people to:

- Understand themselves – identifying values, motivations, strengths, and interests.
- Explore career possibilities – developing a personal concept of ‘career’ beyond traditional job titles.
- Navigate uncertainty – supporting decision-making in a fluid and unpredictable job market.

We believe:

- Career development isn’t just about picking a job—it’s about lifelong adaptability and self-awareness. Instead of asking, “What do you want to be?” we focus on: “How do you want to be?”



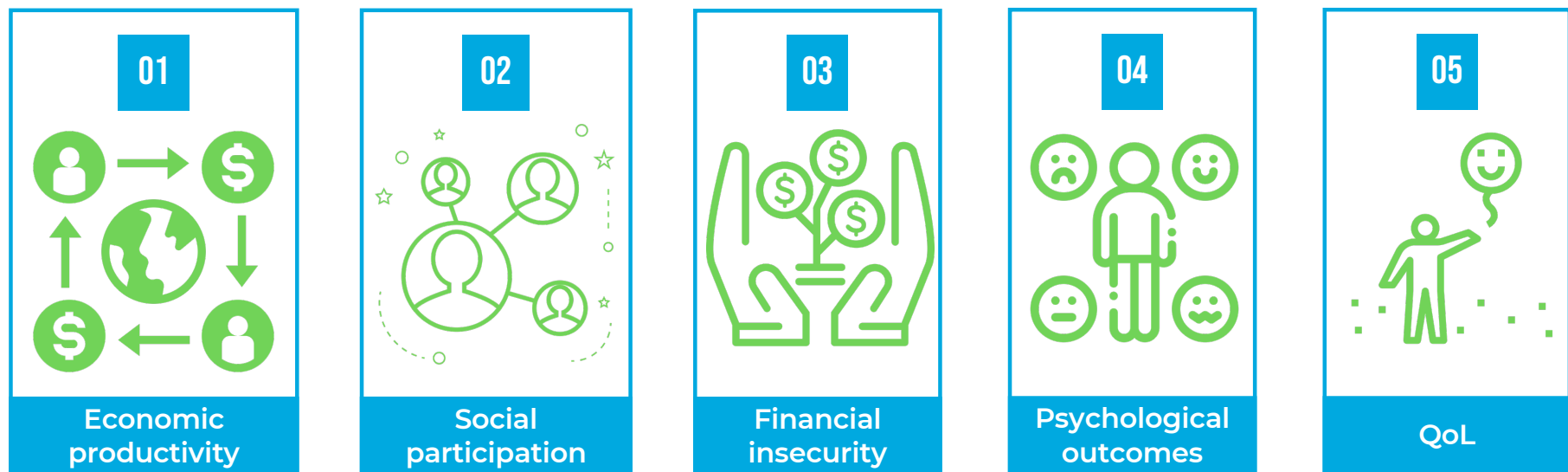


23,000

Young people are
affected by cancer
every year



Education & Career Disruption Impacts



Study Rational & Aims



During the co-development of the Education and Career Service participants discussed expanding the service to other clients within Canteen



There is a dearth of literature about the education needs of young people impacted by a parent or sibling's cancer diagnosis



The aim of the study was to describe the education and employment participation, goals, and information and support needs of young people with a parent or sibling with cancer





Method

Cross-sectional survey of current
Canteen service users (n=62)

Young people with a parent or
sibling with cancer (12-25 years)

Participation in education & employment
Goals and confidence to achieve their
goals
Barriers to education and employment
Support needs

Results: Demographics



Age

Mean age: 17.6
12-17 years: 54%
18-25 years: 46%



Gender

Female: 68%
Male: 22%
Non-binary: 10%



Cancer Experience

Offspring: 92%
Sibling: 8%



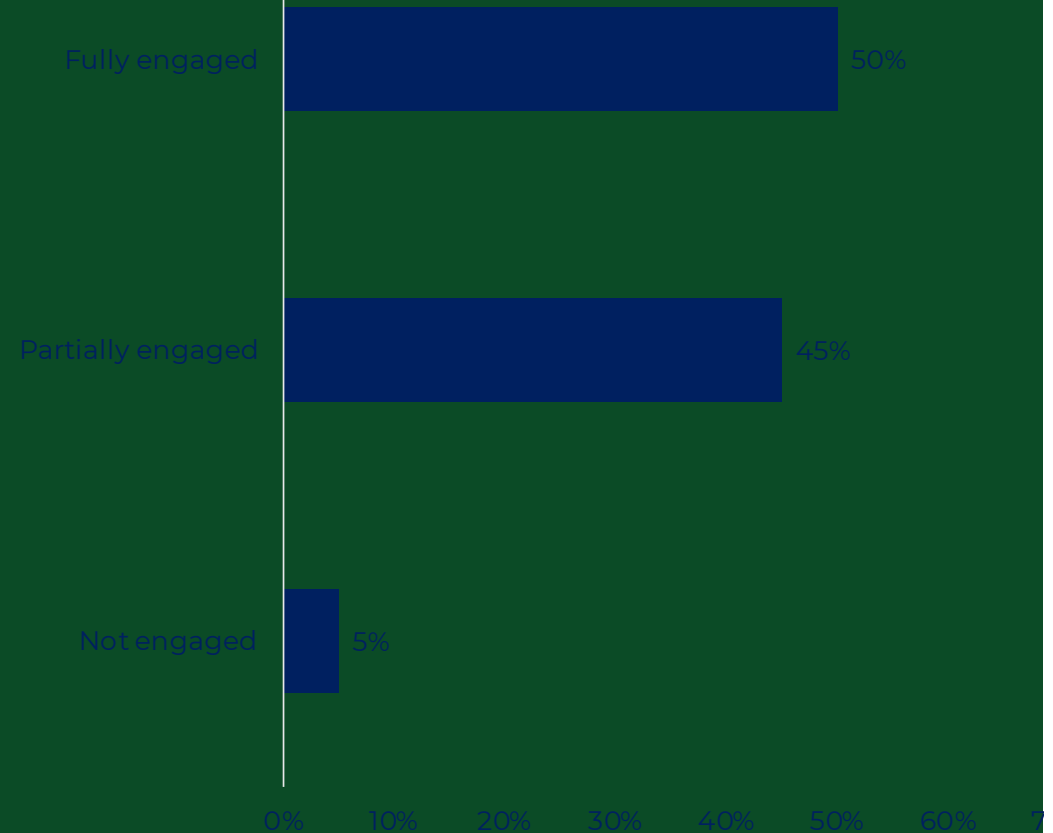
Disability

Neurodivergent: 28%
Learning: 12%
Physical: 8%
Psychiatric: 7%
Intellectual: 3%

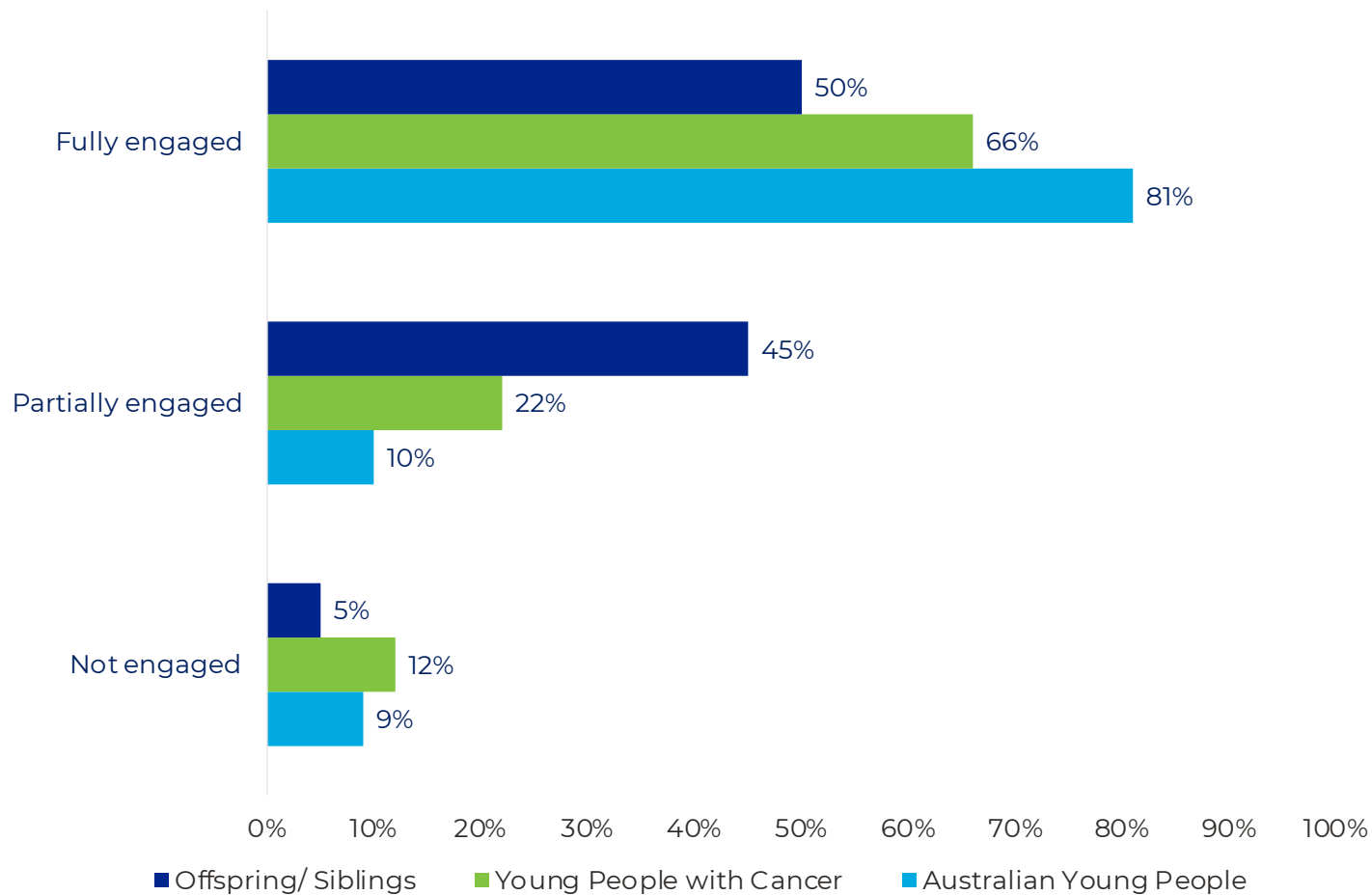




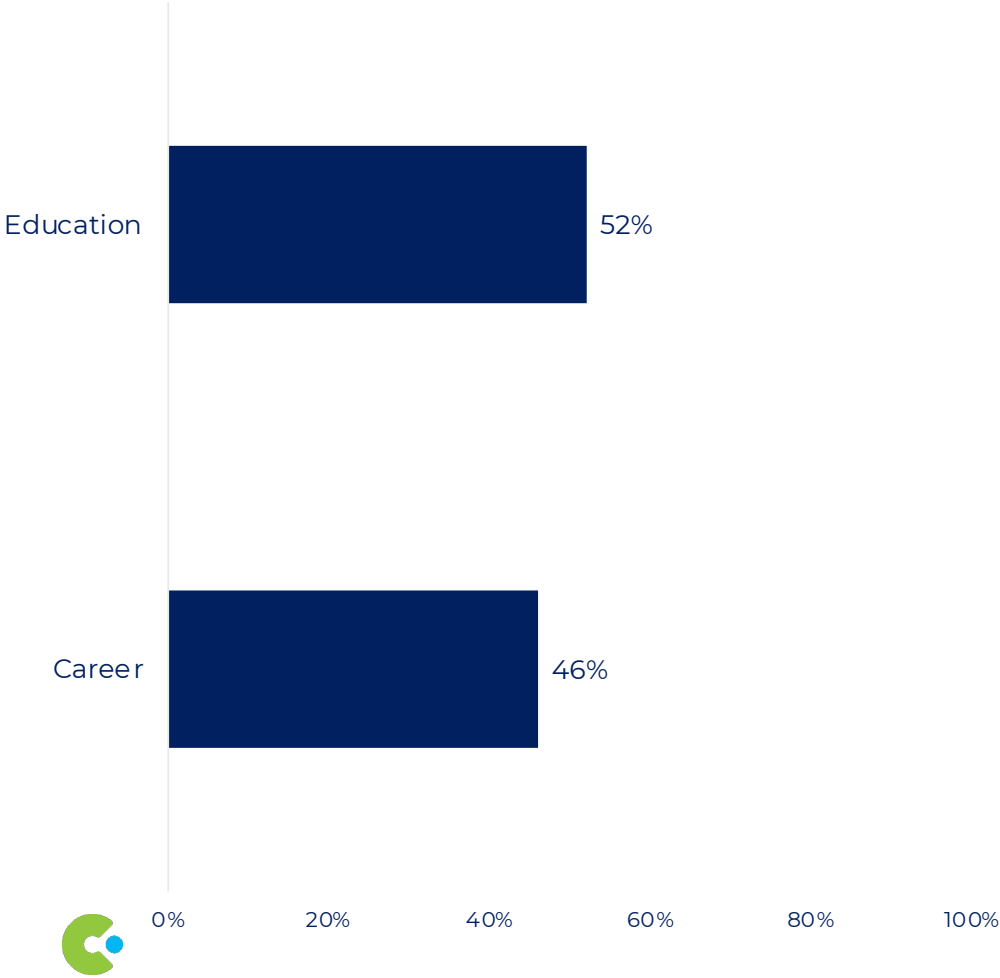
Education & Career impacts in Education and Employment



Education & Career Impacts



Change of goals due to cancer experience



Education & Career Impacts



Education Goals

How goals changed

- Delay in education, dropped out or falling behind
- Changing study field related to cancer
- Changing study field with a shift toward helping others

Mum needs me more now as her carer than before therefore I'm unable to fully complete my placement hours in time

I am now looking to study to work in a field where I can use my cancer experience to help others going through the same thing.



Employment Goals

How goals changed

- Time off, opt out, reduce hours or and stay home to care for a sick parent/sibling
- Urgency to be employed for financial needs
- Shift toward a more meaningful job

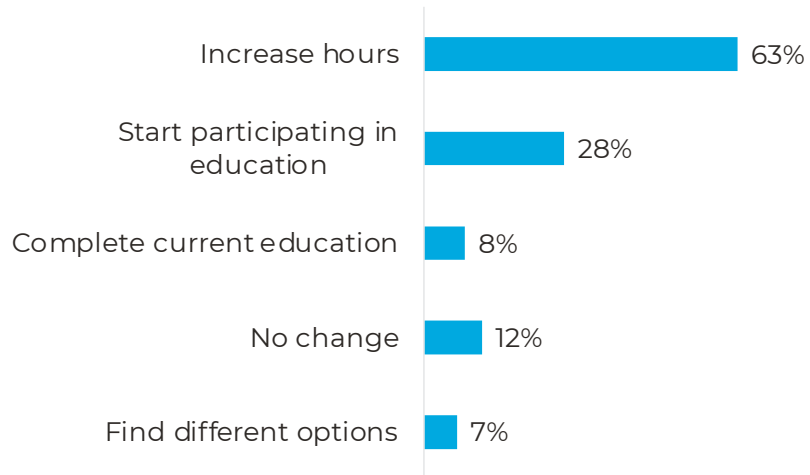
I wanted to make sure that I take time off work to have more family time, have family birthdays off and be able to take time off work to go on family holidays it just to spend some family time

More urgency to find a job due to having to support myself.

Education & Career Current Goals



Education Goals

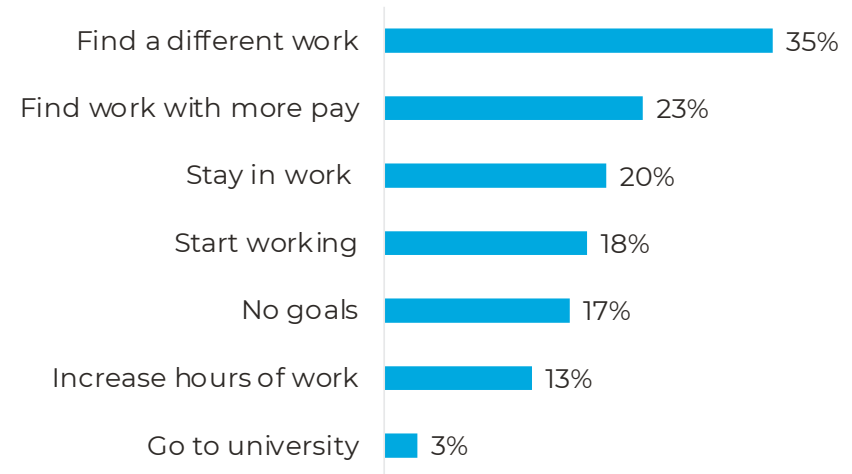


38%

Reported high confidence in achieving their goals



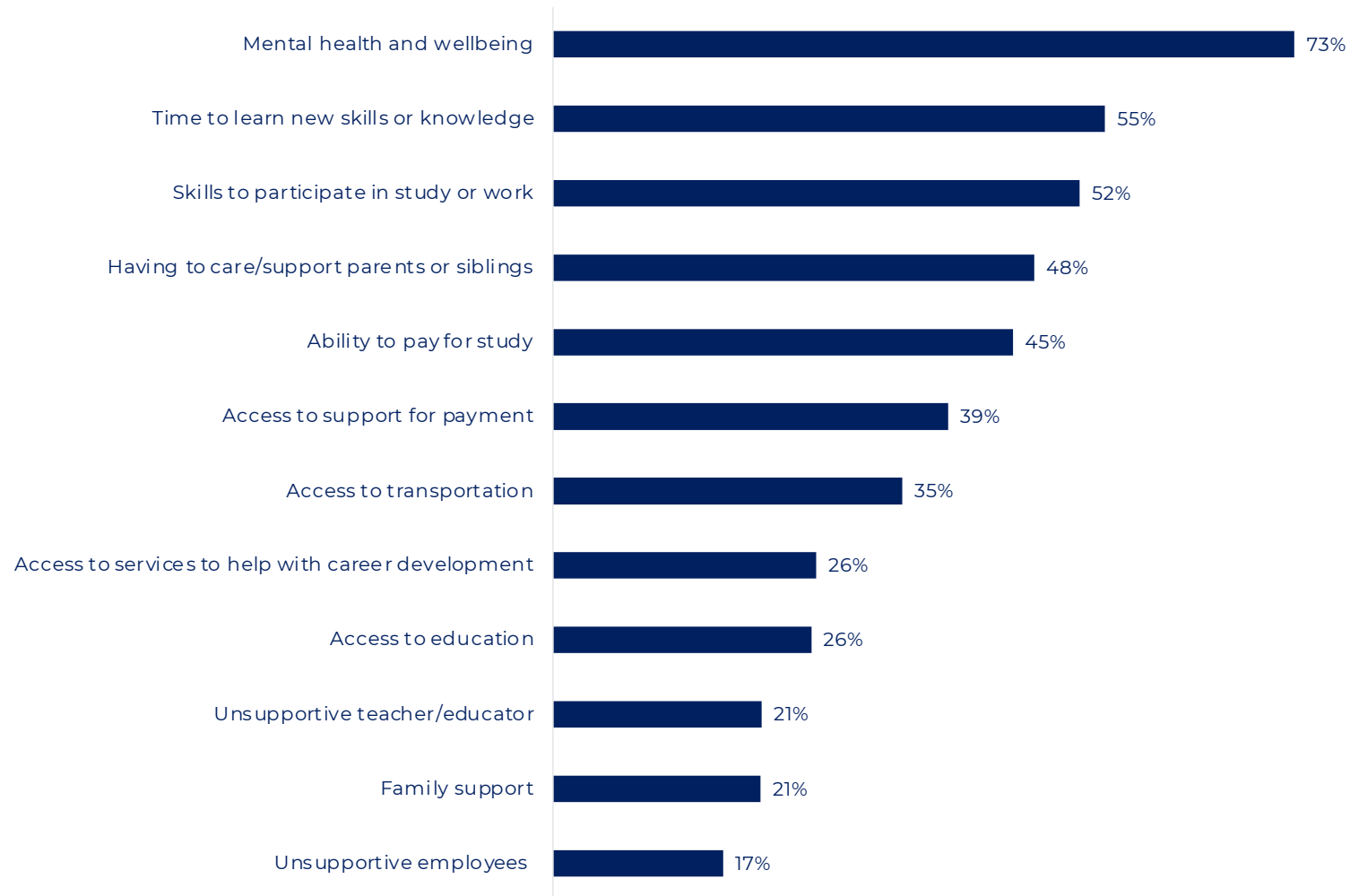
Employment Goals



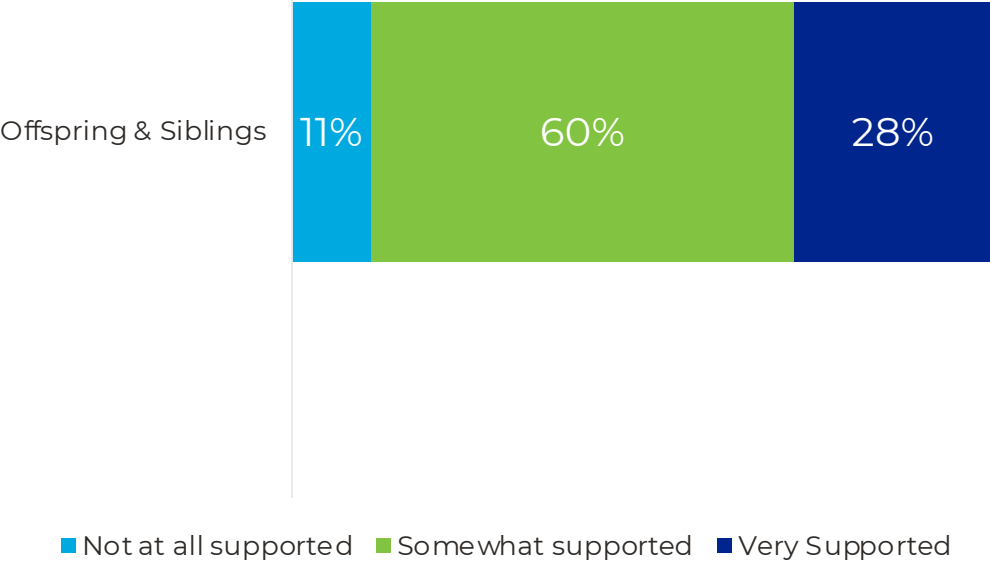
24%

Reported high confidence in achieving their goals

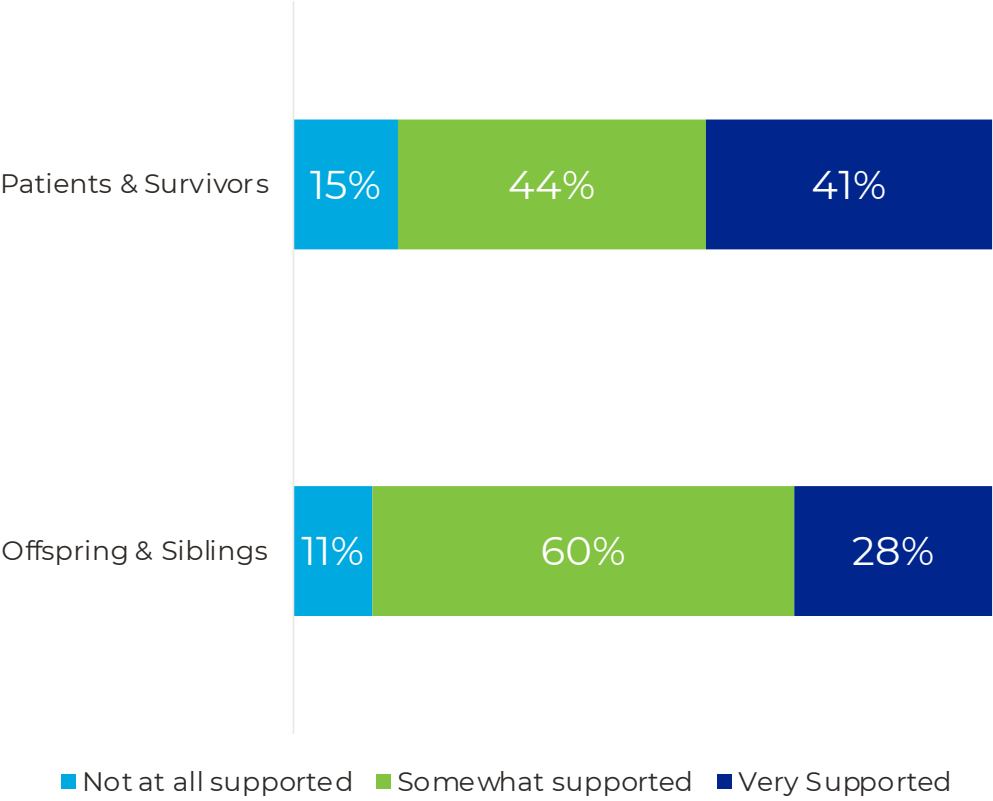
Barrier to achieving goals



Support Needs



Support Needs

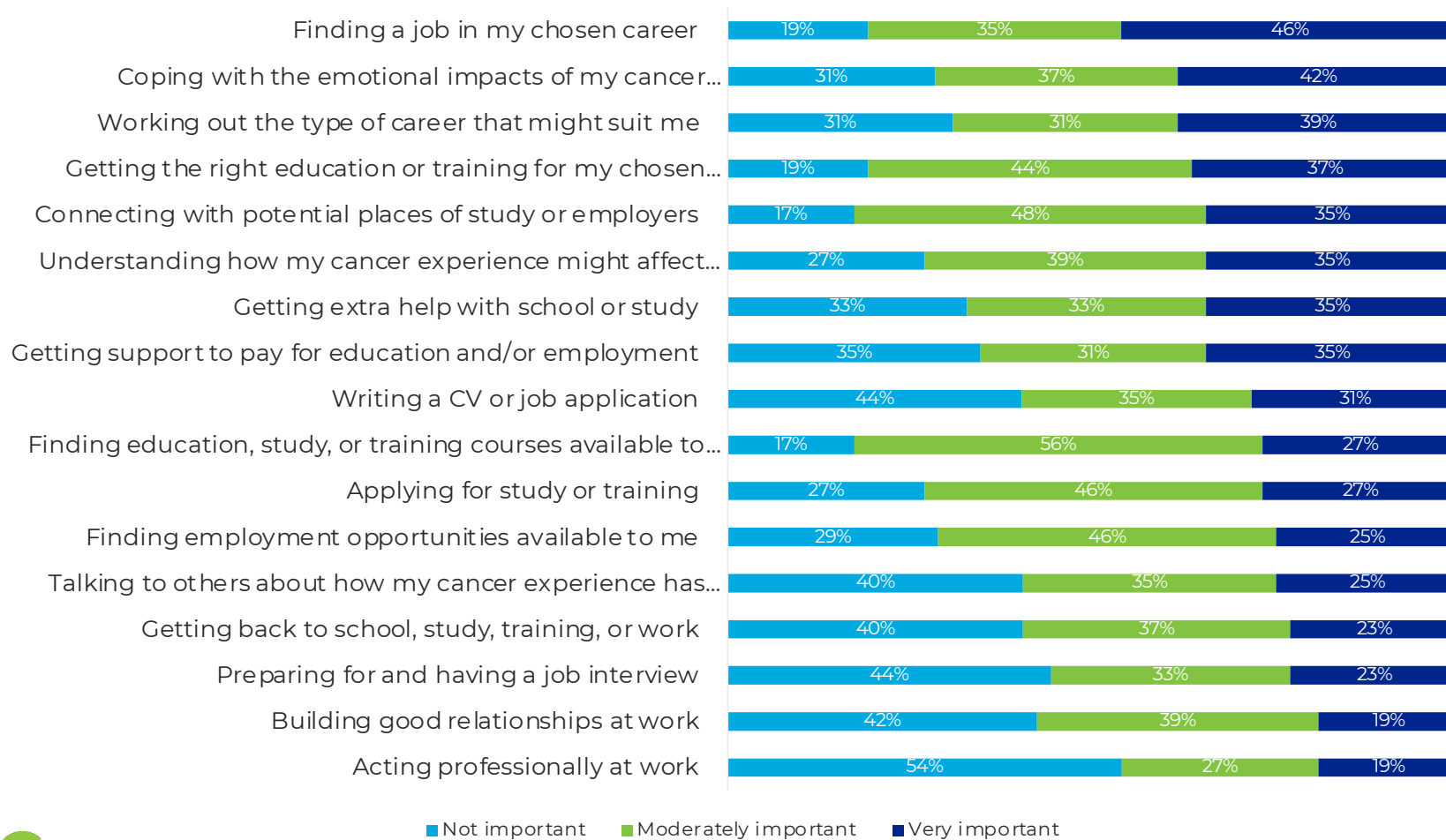


Unmet Support Needs

- 63%** Coping with the emotional impacts of my cancer experience when studying or working
- 53%** Getting extra help with school or study
- 51%** Talking to others about how cancer has affected education and/or employment
- 51%** after Getting back to school, study, training or work my cancer experience
- 40%** Working out the type of career that might suit me



Service Needs: Importance of Support Service



ECS Service Needs

Themes

I feel like I have a good knowledge of the career that I want and how to get there I'm just waiting to finish my degree before I start looking for a proper career. I had a bit of trouble going back to school after my dad's cancer diagnosis and my school wasn't very helpful so that made education a bit difficult especially since I did have times where I lacked motivation and had trouble concentrating at school when I would rather be having family time at home. If canteen had an education or career opportunity that was relevant to me and if I felt like it would be beneficial, I would use it.



Conclusion



Siblings and offspring engagement with education & employment is significantly impacted by a cancer diagnosis in their family



Young people have low confidence and feel unsupported to achieve their goals



Poor mental health and wellbeing is a major barrier to achieving their goals



There is a need for a services to support siblings and offsprings education and career with a focus on the impacts of cancer, career awareness and skills and confidence to participate in work or study



Referral Process

- Submit referral through Cancer Hub
- Young person undertakes Canteen intake process
- Allocated to a Career Consultant
- Career Consultant contacts young person within a few days to book an Intro to ECS session

<https://cancerhub.org.au/healthservices-referral/>

