

# MAKING A CASE FOR WOMEN'S- CENTERED PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

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# PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION

- ▶ Define “Women’s Centered” PA approaches
- ▶ Highlight the value of physical activity (PA)
- ▶ Specify trends and barriers for women in PA settings
- ▶ Provide theoretically based concepts for creating a “Women’s Centered” approach for college/university setting PA classes

# DEFINING A WOMEN-CENTERED APPROACH

- ▶ Why not same sex classrooms?
  - ▶ Legal requirements and history of discrimination (Office for Civil Rights, 2013)
  - ▶ Educational purpose vs. Elite performance (Women's Sports Foundation, n.d.)
- ▶ Women's Centered Approach
  - ▶ Unpacking teacher bias and challenging gender stereotypes (Berg & Lahelma, 2010)
  - ▶ Incorporating appropriate instructional strategies
  - ▶ Understanding and addressing barriers
  - ▶ Providing enjoyable, quality experiences that will enhance adherence

# VALUE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION

- ▶ **Physical Benefits** (American College Health Association, 2006; Egli, et al., 2011; Segar, et al., 2002)
- ▶ **Social Benefits** (Egli, et al., 2011; Lindsey, 2012; Hultquist et al., 2009)
- ▶ **Mental/Emotional Benefits** (Lindsey, 2012; Segar, et al., 2002)

# TRENDS IN WOMEN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

- ▶ Physical activity subsides for females after high school (Han et al., 2008)
- ▶ Sedentary patterns later in life (Hultquist et al., 2009)
- ▶ Positive correlation between group exercise and long term PA (Hultquist, et al., 2009)

# BARRIERS TOWARD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR WOMEN

- ▶ **Social evaluation and comparison** (Salvator & Maracek, 2010)
- ▶ **Lack of self-efficacy and confidence** (Salvator & Maracek, 2010)
- ▶ **Issues of life balance and transition** (Appleby, Dieffenbach, & Peterson, 2012; Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008; Hultquist, et al., 2009; Arikawa, O'Dougherty, & Schmitz, 2011)
- ▶ **Ecological and safety issues** (Kascynski, et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2011; Arikawa, O'Dougherty, & Schmitz, 2011)

# INVESTIGATING ALL-FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE

## Purpose:

- ▶ Investigate comfort level, body image concerns, and future intentions to pursue PA in a women's centered fitness course

## After Human Subjects Approval:

- ▶ Surveys to females university students enrolled in \*All-Female classes
  - ▶ 9 classes: Zumba, Pilates, Core Fitball, Toning & Conditioning, Spinning
  - ▶ 102 participants
- ▶ 8 general questions; 2 open ended questions

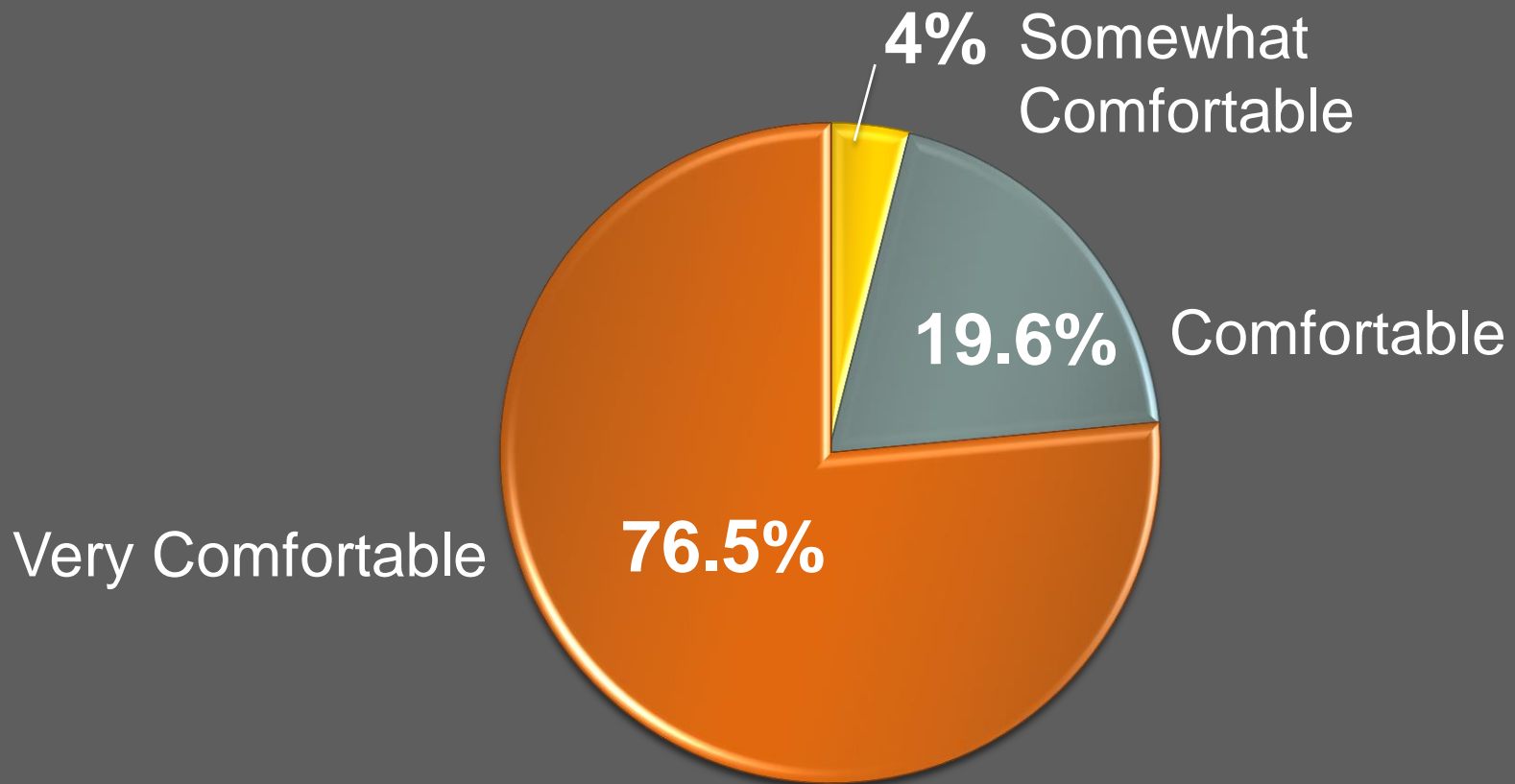
\*The classes happened to have only female students. Classes were not advertised as female only and did not exclude males from registering.

# HYPOTHESIS

- ▶ All-female PE classes would be more women-centered therefore increasing participation and decreasing barriers:
  - ▶ Comfortable atmosphere
  - ▶ Less body image concern
  - ▶ Higher motivation

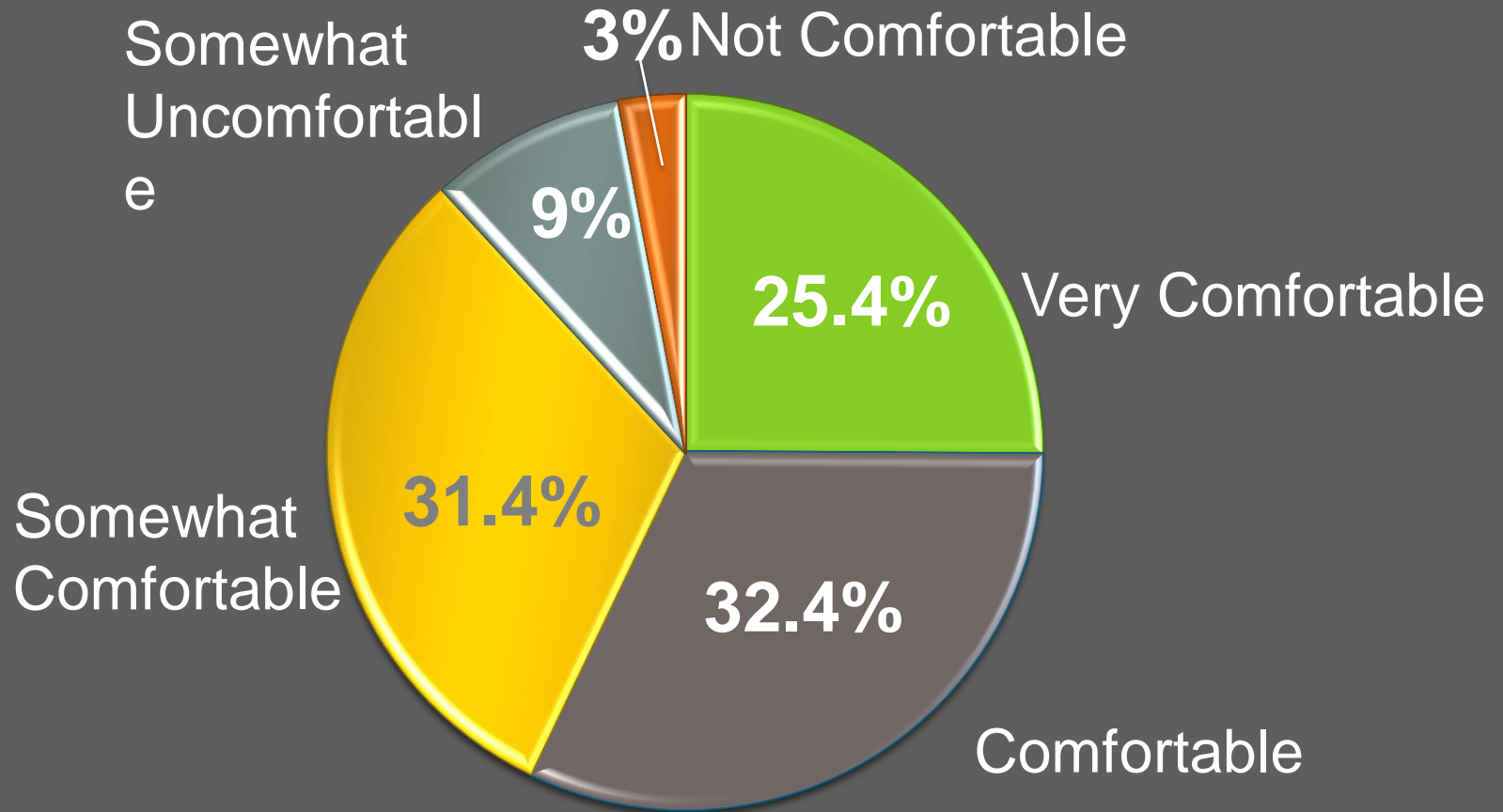


# 1. COMFORT LEVEL IN ALL-FEMALE CLASS?



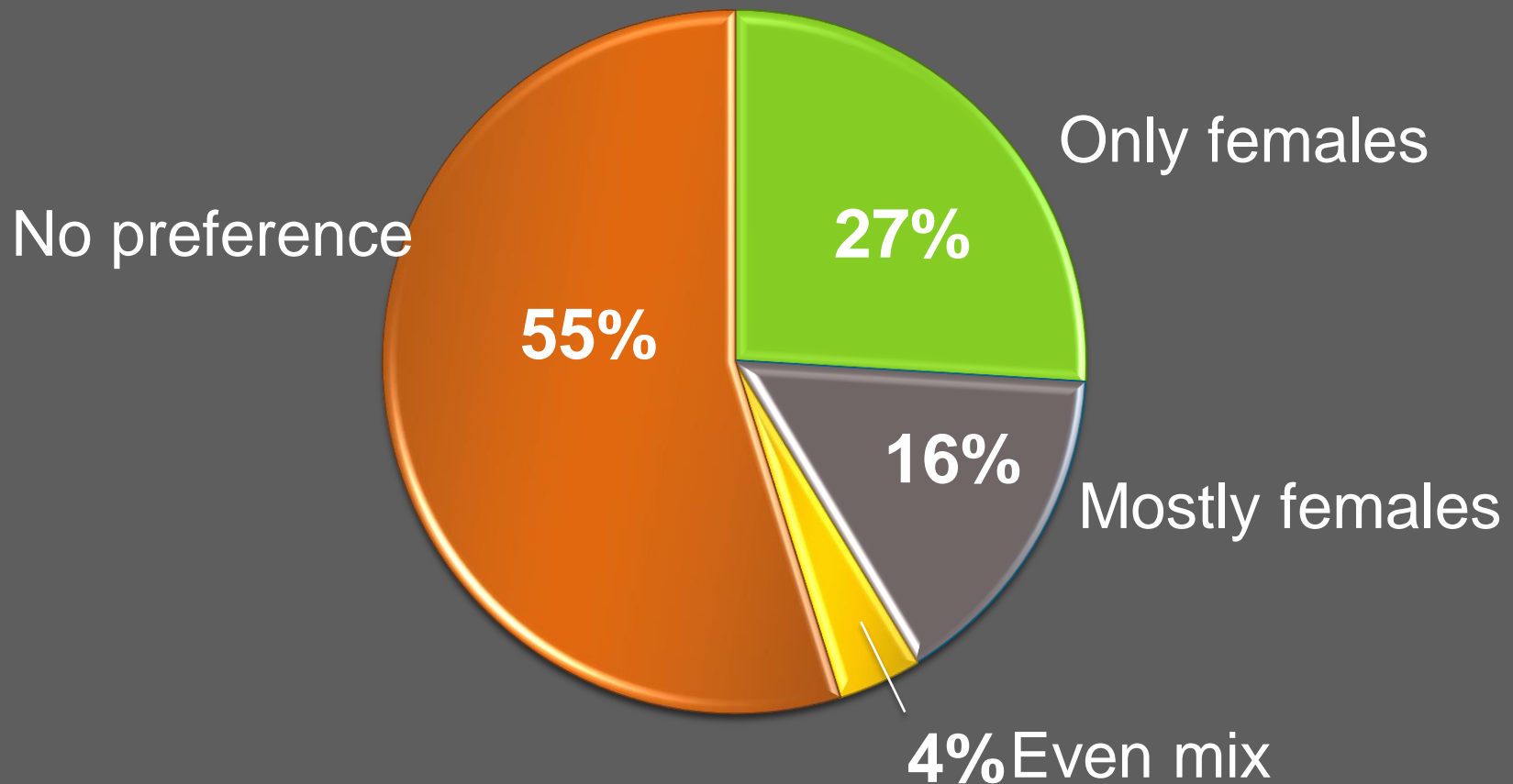
- ▶ *Tends to be more relaxed and friendly. Not as much pressure to look attractive.*
- ▶ *I feel a lot more comfortable in [an] all-female class. I feel a strong camaraderie with my classmates.*
- ▶ *This was my first all-female class and I have to say I enjoyed it. It was like having “girls night” every Monday night.*

## 2. COMFORT LEVEL IF MALES IN CLASS?



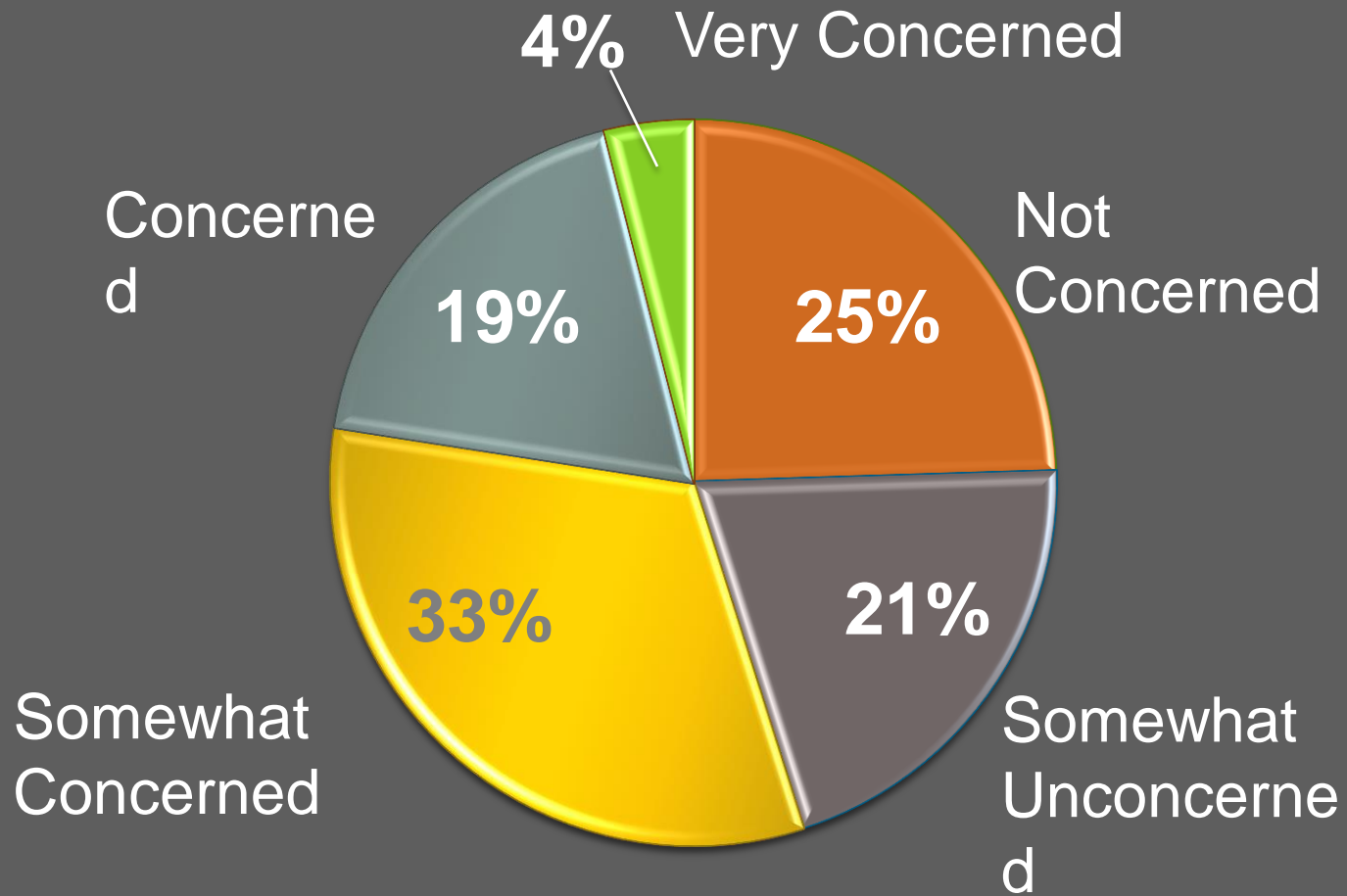
- ▶ *I w[ould] feel extremely uncomfortable!*
- ▶ *It would depend on the activity. Doing weights or something like that wouldn't matter. But with something like Zumba, I would be very self-conscious.*
- ▶ *These guys better be able to keep up!*

### 3. I AM MOST COMFORTABLE IN PE CLASSES WITH:



- ▶ *The all-female class does seem to have a more “understanding” atmosphere.*
- ▶ *I was in a yoga class and 3 boys sat behind me, I hated it at first but halfway through I got over it. It is more comfortable with most females. Honestly [it] depends on how the males act.*

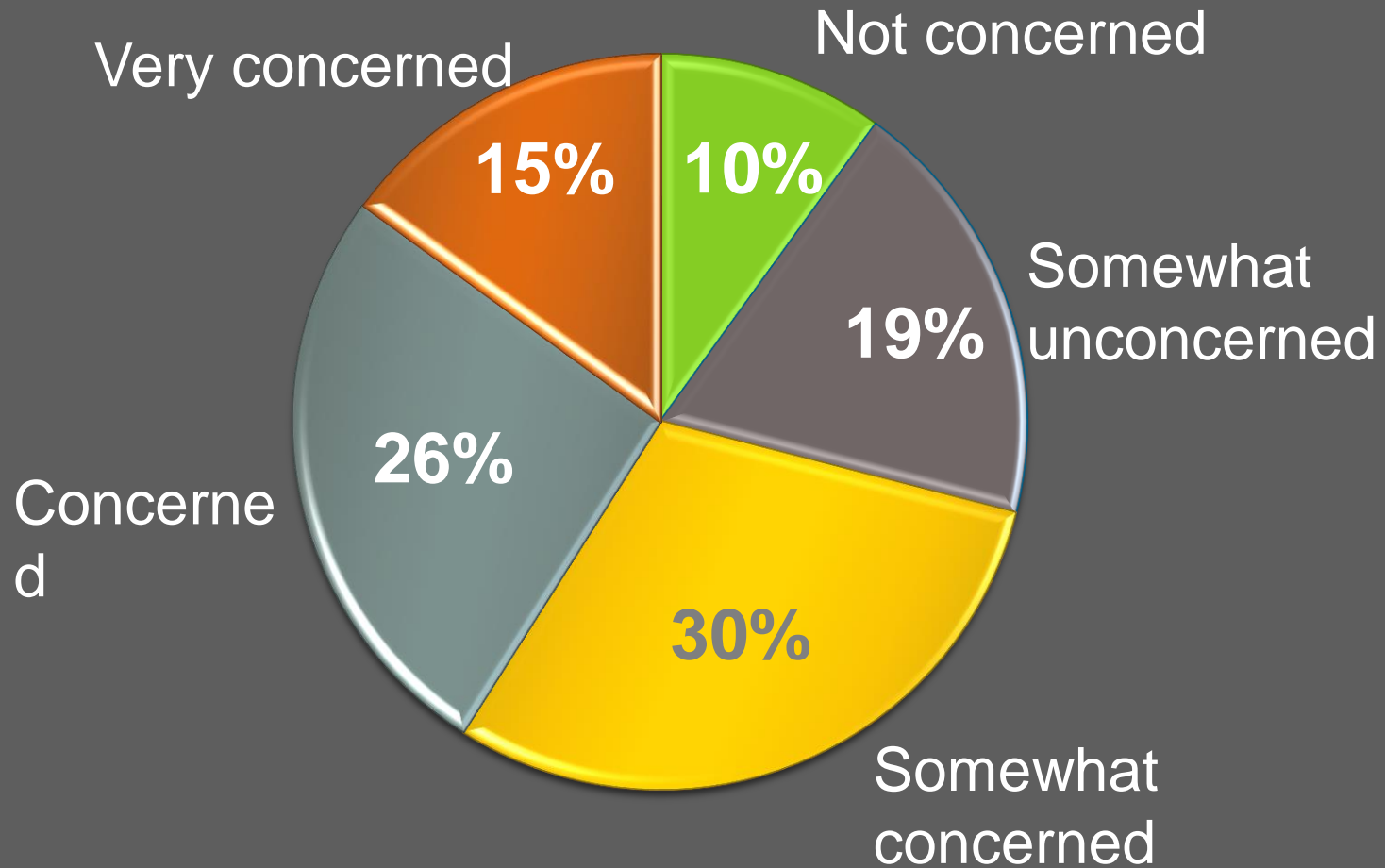
# 4. BODY IMAGE CONCERN IN THIS CLASS?



- ▶ *I have found that the all-female classes hold a more positive [attitude] for the females that are shy or over concerned with physical appearance. [T]he environment of no males does allow the females to not be so conscious and to be able to get more out of the class, mentally and physically.*
- ▶ *Sometimes I feel girls are more judgmental than boys.*

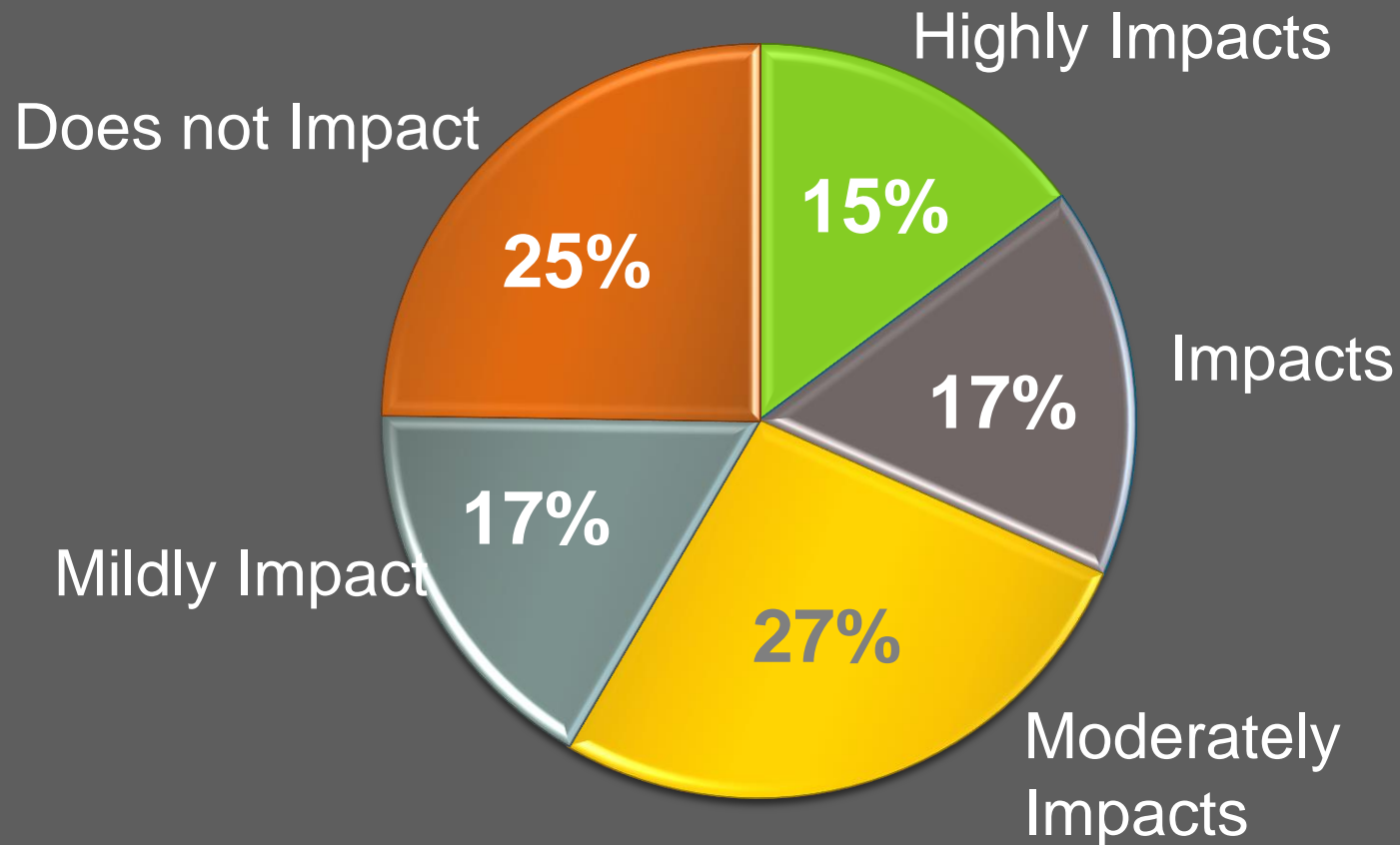


# 5. BODY IMAGE CONCERN IF MALES IN CLASS?



- ▶ *If there were males in this course. I would not be as confident with my dancing and more self-conscious.*
- ▶ *Males don't judge body image more, just differently. To deal with both at the same time can be overwhelming.*
- ▶ *I don't really mind having co-ed class[es]. I feel that I am judged more in all female classes.*

## 6. DEGREE OF INCREASED MOTIVATION IN ALL-FEMALE PE CLASS?

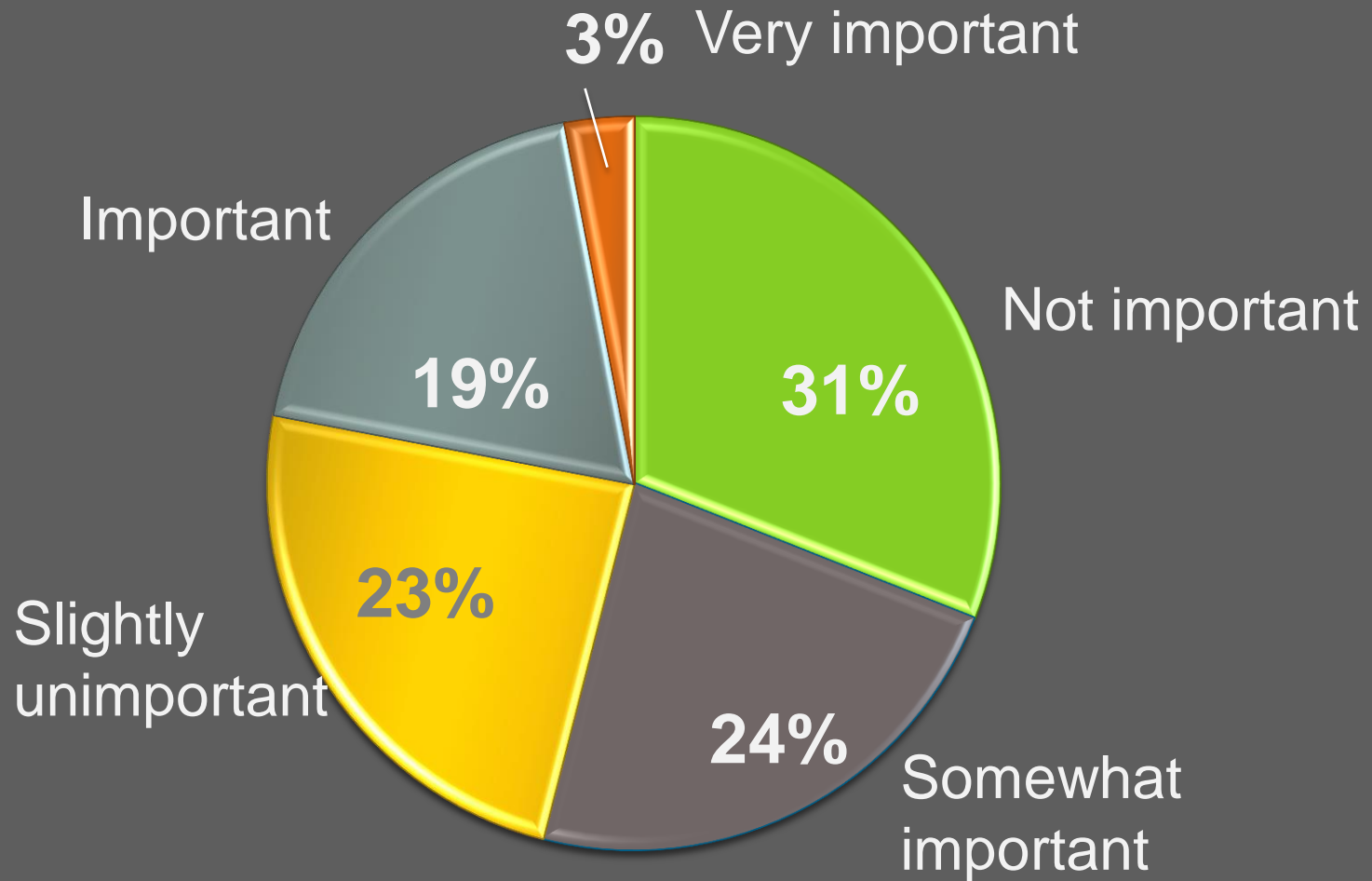


- ▶ *It's more motivational.*
- ▶ *We have a great time working out and pushing each other and we have developed some great friendships 😊.*
- ▶ *I have no preference. I might actually be more motivated to work hard if it was a mixed class. I like it when I'm stronger than the boys!*
- ▶ *I would instantly feel more self aware and look in the mirror more often. I would also have more motivation to work out harder.*

## 7. EXERCISING IN A PA COURSE WITH ALL FEMALES...

- ▶ 46% “creates a positive atmosphere that would not be found if males also attended the class”
- ▶ 43% “enhances my learning in the course”
- ▶ 38% “increases my motivation to attend the course”

# 8. IMPORTANCE ATTENDING ALL-FEMALE PE CLASS IN FUTURE?



- ▶ *I really enjoyed this class. At first it was uncomfortable seeing how I compare to all the other types of women in the class, but as the semester went on, I became more comfortable and really loved this class in the end. I plan to participate in more all-female PE classes in the future.*

# SUMMARIZE:

- ▶ All-Female PE Environment:
  - ▶ Very Comfortable
  - ▶ High Social Support
  - ▶ Body Image still a concern
- ▶ “Women’s Centered” environment may help break barriers



5 WAYS TO CREATE A  
“WOMEN’S CENTERED”  
APPROACH FOR COLLEGE/  
UNIVERSITY SETTING PA  
CLASSES

# APPLICATION

- ▶ Fitness Courses:

- ▶ Zumba, Toning and Conditioning, Spinning, Pilates

- ▶ Training Courses:

- ▶ Triathlon, Marathon, Jogging and Personal Fitness

- ▶ Traditional Male-Oriented Courses:

- ▶ Weight Training, Basketball, Touch Rugby

# 1. FOCUS ON INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS

## ▶ Our study found:

- ▶ Motivation was high when social atmosphere was supportive

## ▶ Intrinsic Motivators

- ▶ Learning, Effort, and Improvement vs. Competition, Outcome, and Social Comparison (Weinberg & Gould, 2011)
- ▶ “One of the greatest things about physical activity and play is that they make our lives go better, not just longer. It is the quality of life, the joy of being alive, the things we do with our good health that matter to us as much or more than health itself” (Kretchmer, 2006, p.6)

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## 2. PROMOTE LIFELONG FITNESS

- ▶ Our study found:
  - ▶ Participants were interested in taking a future PE class due to positive experience
- ▶ About 60% of females do not meet PA recommendations (CDC, 2012)
- ▶ 83% college females have tried to lose/control weight (Malinauskas et al., 2006)
- ▶ Don't get caught riding the "FAD" bandwagon

### 3. BE A PROFESSIONAL ROLE MODEL

- ▶ Our study found:
  - ▶ Mixed results related to body image confidence
- ▶ Attitude and behavioral modeling promotes PA
  - ▶ Be a mentor!  
(Adams, 2006; NASPE, 2009)
- ▶ Help create an atmosphere focused on activity and increased self confidence
  - ▶ Attire and language

## 4. ENHANCE SOCIAL (NON-EXERCISE) OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Our study found:
  - ▶ 50% said Comfortable Atmosphere/  
Friendships/ Camaraderie
- ▶ Social support motivating and helps to eliminate issues with life transition (Appleby & Fisher, 2009, Arikawa, O'Dougherty, & Schmitz, 2011; Hulquist et al., 2009; Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008)
- ▶ Help “create” social connections and opportunities in your classes!

## 5. PROVIDE QUALITY ASSESSMENT/FEEDBACK

- ▶ While we did not specifically ask about feedback, WE KNOW quality outcomes are linked to best practices!
- ▶ Assessment of students' abilities, strengths and areas of improvement (NASPE, 2009, p. 2)
- ▶ Monitor and reinforce student learning (NASPE, 2003)
- ▶ Improve and/or maintain their physical well-being (NASPE, 2003)



# IN SUMMARY: CREATING A POSITIVE EXERCISE ATMOSPHERE

- ▶ Focus on intrinsic motivators (Strong et al., 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2011)
- ▶ Encourage social support (Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008)
  - ▶ Help provide support during key life transitions (Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008)
- ▶ Use quality assessments and feedback (NASPE, 2009)

QUESTIONS?

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