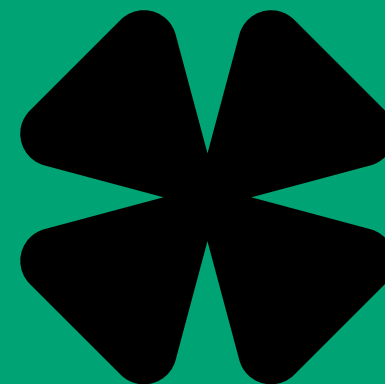
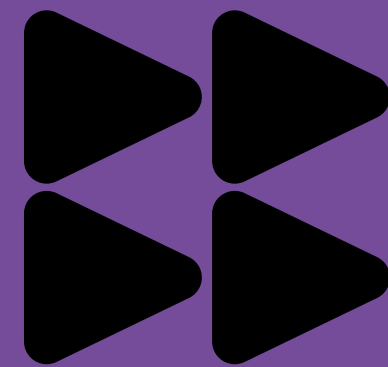
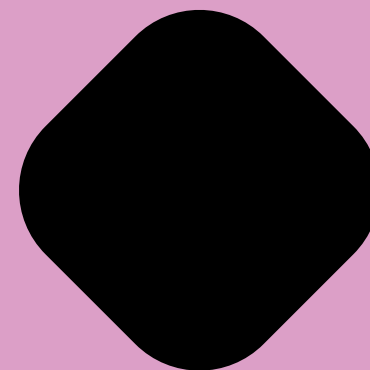
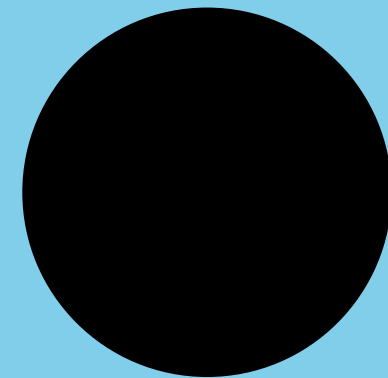




Mountain Training Disability Survey

December 2025



Executive Summary

812

Survey responses

71%

Of responses were from disabled and or neurodivergent people.

72%

Hold a Mountain Training Qualification

57%

Of responders were men.

Key Findings

Disabled and Neurodivergent people enjoy and value walking and climbing activities

- 78% of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents said walking and climbing activities help with their disability, impairment or neurodivergence.
- 85% of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents said they felt confident taking part in walking and climbing activities.

Disabled and Neurodivergent people experience significant barriers to taking part in Mountain Training Courses

- 54% of respondents felt neutral or disagreed that adjustments were made for their impairment.
- 59% of respondents felt neutral or disagreed that trainers/assessors understood their impairment.
- Barriers included: Qualification prerequisites, assessment formats, digital admin, course design and pace.

Disabled and Neurodivergent people don't feel represented or understood by leaders/instructors

- 58% of respondents felt neutral or disagreed that they were represented in walking and climbing activities.
- 22% of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents said a lack of trained leaders/instructors was a barrier to them taking part in walking and climbing activities.
- Respondents expressed wanting leaders/instructors to create an inclusive, psychologically safe environment where their support needs are met and understood.

Non-disabled and/or neuro-majority leaders/instructors felt less equipped to work with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients

- 66% of leaders and instructors said they were working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.
- Non-disabled and/or neuro-majority leaders/instructors' levels of confidence (66%), knowledge (64%) and ability (67%) to be inclusive were lower than those of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents.
- Respondents highlighted the importance of equipping leaders with skills, knowledge, and confidence to support a diverse range of participants,

Recommendations

Further Insight Gathering

- Further analysis of survey data to understand differences between each activity, e.g. CWIs, RCIs, MLs.
- Gather qualitative insight from instructors and participants in different activities to gain a deeper understanding of nuances for Disability and Neurodiversity inclusion.

Upskill the Workforce

- Much of Mountain Training's ethos is based on creating supportive and inspirational leaders and creating equal opportunities. This can only be achieved through upskilling the workforce to support the development of disabled and neurodivergent adventurers.
- Use the insight and experience of disabled and neurodivergent members who responded to this survey to create a DI/ND training offer aimed at instructors and assessors.

CPD Accreditation

- Access Sport is currently upskilling the indoor climbing workforce in Disability Inclusion and Neuro-inclusion. To date, we have upskilled 394 instructors and volunteers across the UK.
- To increase the number of indoor climbing instructors who will benefit from this training, Mountain Training to accredit a CPD point to the courses through their platform and promote the workshops on their website.

Review the course design and systems for inclusivity

- Use qualitative insight from disabled and neurodivergent members to review the inclusivity and accessibility of course design.
- Review the accessibility of Mountain Training's platform and systems to ensure increased usability for disabled and/or neurodivergent members.

Walking and Climbing Activities

94%

Of responders said they did Walking activities.

40%

Of responders said they hold a Mountain Leader qualification.

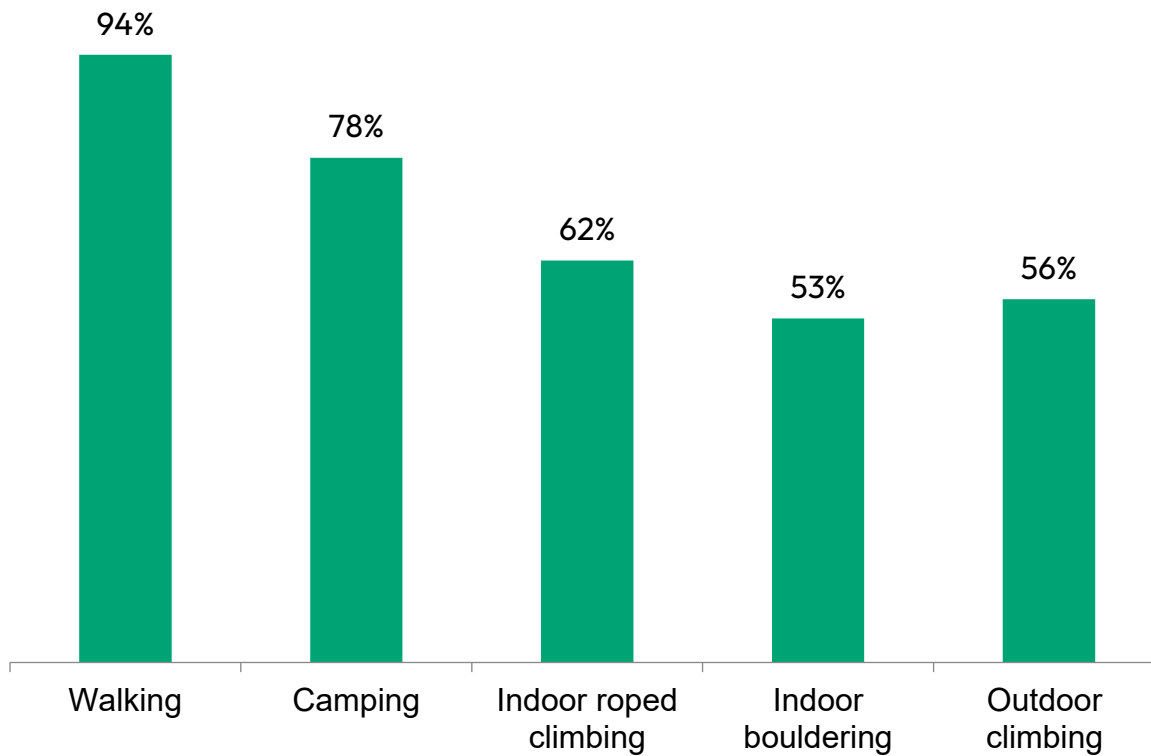
66%

Of responders said they haven't attended any skills courses.

73%

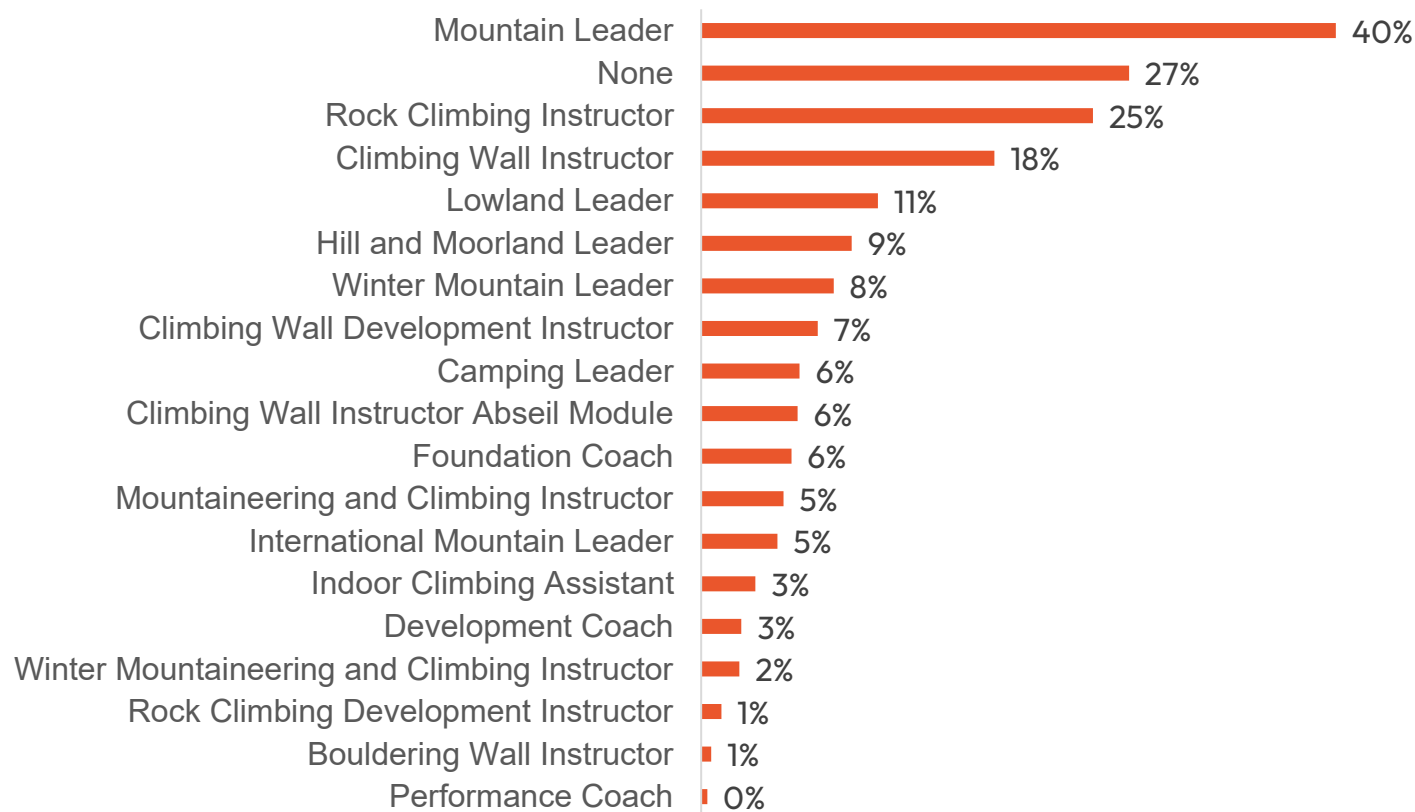
Of responders are members of the Mountain Training Association

Activities Respondents Take Part in



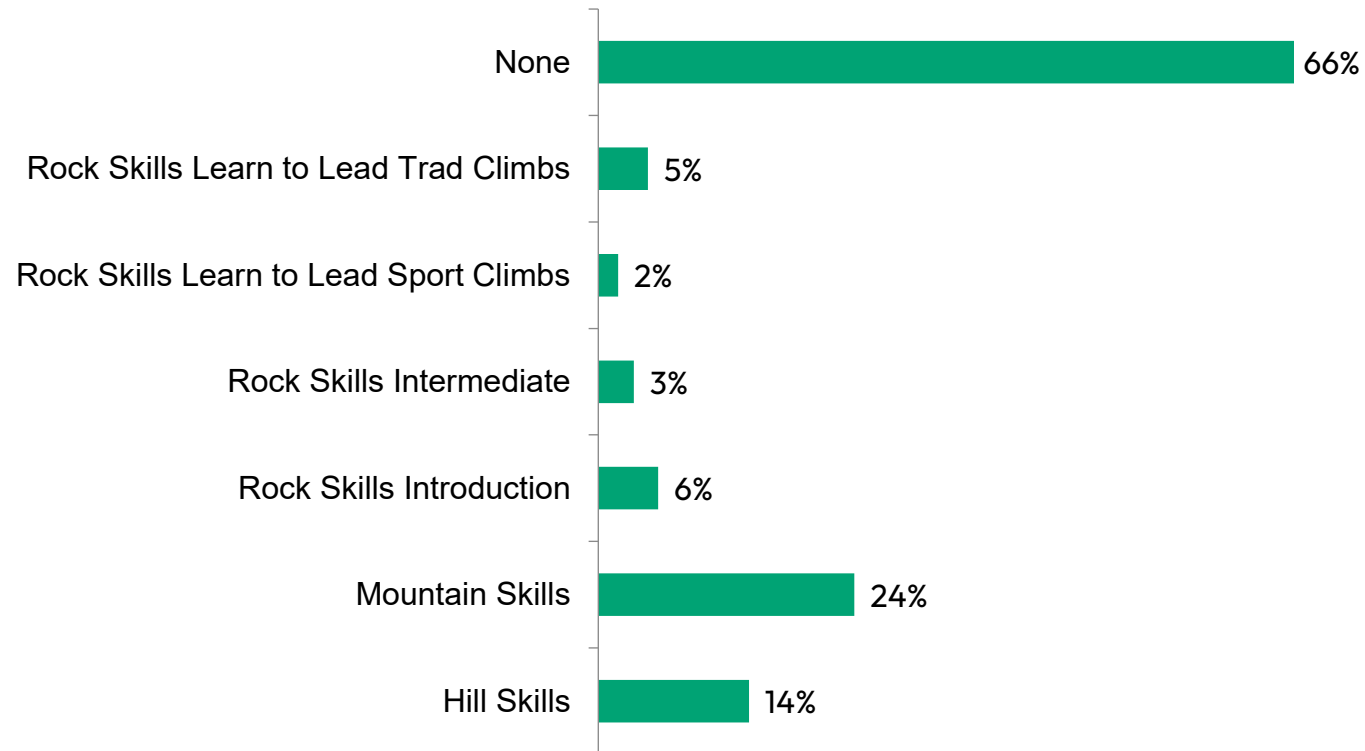
- Walking and camping were the most popular activities.
- 25% (207) of respondents said they take part in two activities.
- 35% (288) of respondents said they take part in five activities.

Mountain Training Qualifications Held



- The Mountain Leader qualification was the most held by respondents (40%).
- 31% of respondents held one qualification.
- 28% of respondents didn't hold any qualifications.
- 21% of respondents held two qualifications.
- 21% held three or more qualifications.

Mountain Training Skills Courses



- 66% of respondents said they had not attended a Mountain Training Skills course.
- 24% said they had attended the Mountain Skills course.
- 32% of respondents said they had attended one or more skills courses.

Disabled and/or Neurodivergent Experiences

59%

Of respondents felt neutral or disagreed that trainers/assessors understood their impairment

69%

Of respondents said they could participate in all elements of Mountain Training courses.

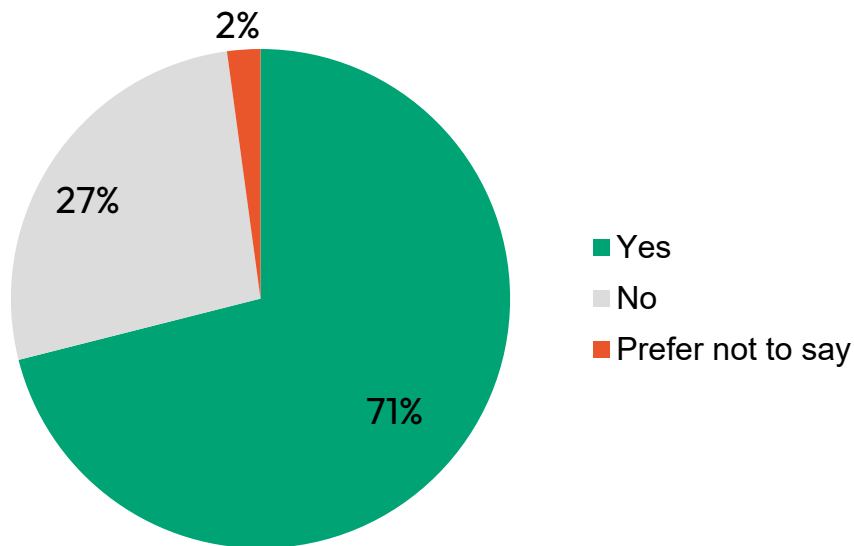
36%

Of respondents said their impairment negatively affect them taking part in walking and climbing activities.

26%

of respondents said low confidence prevented them from taking part

Disabled and/or Neurodivergent respondents



Effect on daily activities

- 71% of respondents said they had a disability and/or are Neurodivergent.
- 51% of respondents said their impairment, illness or health condition has a substantial effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- 44% of respondents said their impairment, illness or health condition doesn't have a substantial effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

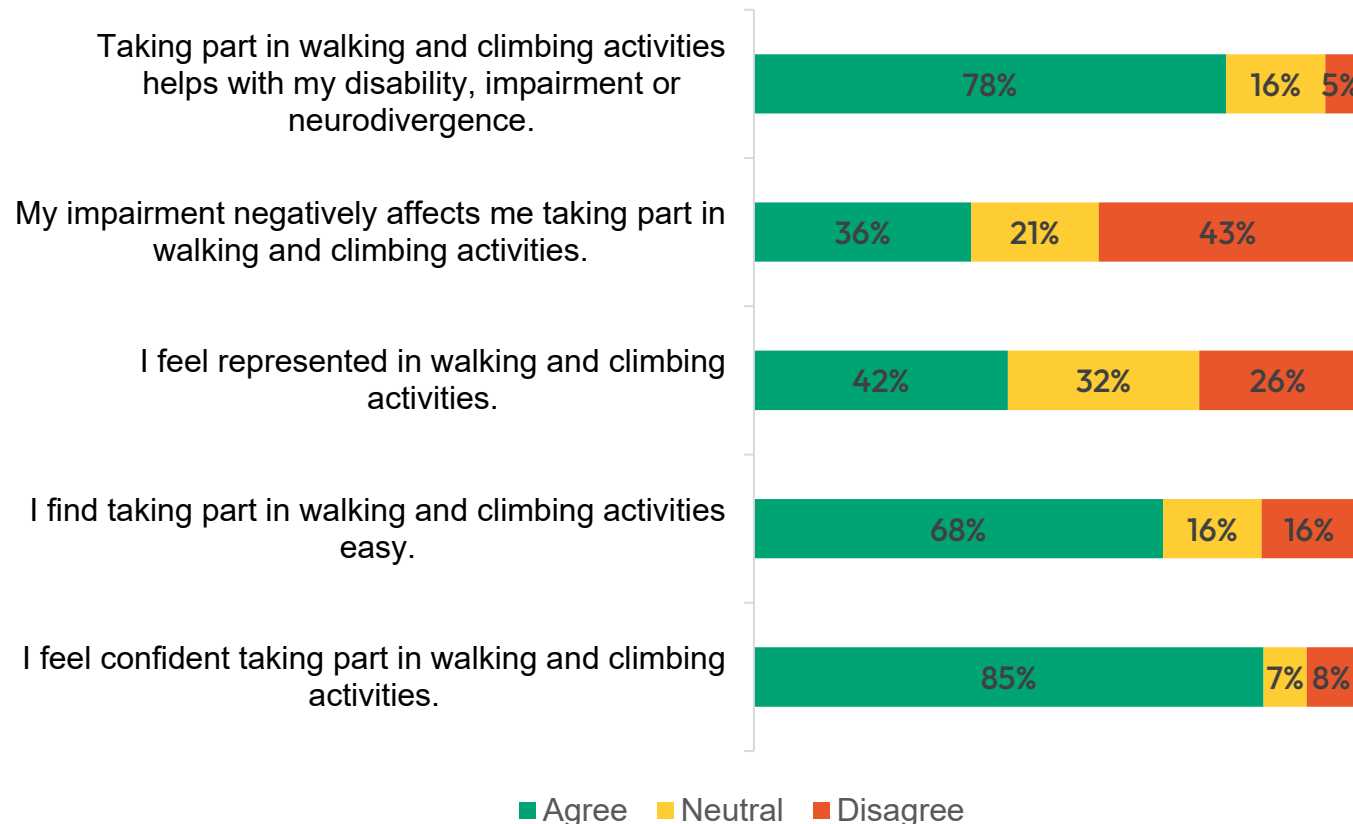
Impairment Types

- The majority of respondents said they had one impairment (41%).
- 32% of respondents said they have two impairments.
- 11% of respondents said they had three or more impairments.
- Neurodivergence was the most cited impairment type by respondents – 44% ADHD, 35% Autism, 22% Dyslexia.
- 29% cited having a mental health condition
- 20% cited other as their impairment. This included a wide range of impairments such as Long Covid, Arthritis, Diabetes, Sleep apnoea.

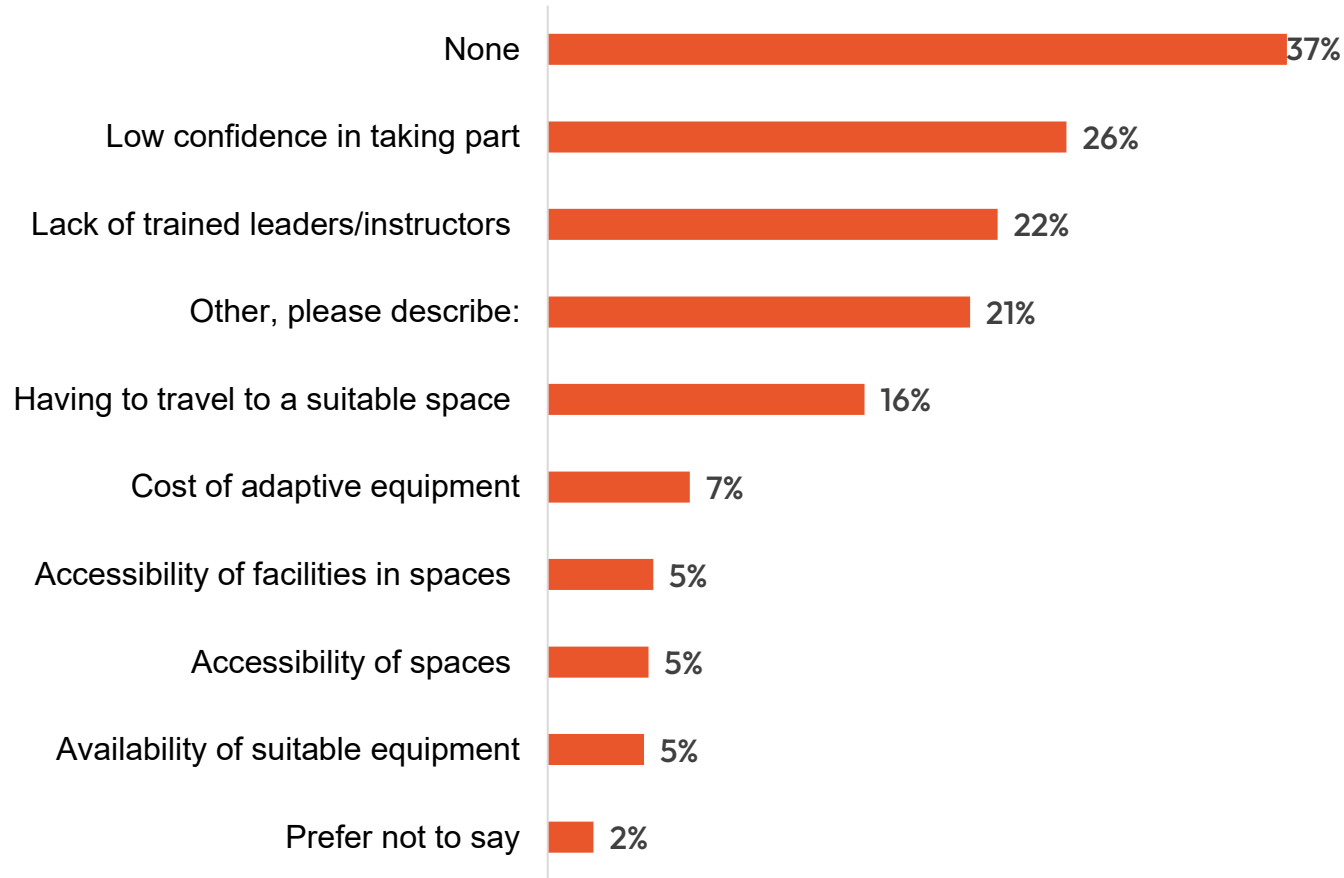
Experiences within Walking and Climbing Activities

Overall, disabled and neurodivergent survey respondents had a positive experience of walking and climbing activities.

- 78% said that walking and climbing helps with their disability, impairment or neurodivergence.
- 43% said their impairment doesn't negatively affect them taking part in walking and climbing activities.
- 58% of respondents felt neutral or disagreed that they were represented in walking and climbing activities.
- 68% said they found taking part in walking and climbing activities easy.
- 85% felt confident taking part in walking and climbing activities.



Barriers



37% of respondents said they didn't experience barriers taking part in walking and climbing activities.

26% of respondents said low confidence prevented them from taking part.

22% of respondents said a lack of trained leaders/instructors stopped them from taking part.

21% of respondents said other reasons prevented them from taking part. There was a range of other respondents. Other responses included: their impairment, lack of adjustments made for their impairment and a lack of inclusive spaces/cultures within walking and climbing activities.

Overall Themes

What would or has made it easier for disabled and/or neurodivergent people to access walking and climbing activities?



Inclusive Delivery and Learning Environments

Responses under this theme focus on how delivery, people, and environments are managed in practice.

This overarching theme includes four key sub-themes:

1. Learning environment and delivery.
2. Instructor/Leader expertise
3. Psychological safety and inclusive environments.
4. Environmental and sensory accessibility.

Accessibility at all levels

This theme focuses on the enabling infrastructure that determines whether participation is feasible in the first place.

This overarching theme includes three key sub-themes:

1. Structural and organisational support.
2. Physical and sensory accessibility.
3. Administrative support.

Inclusive Delivery and Learning Environments

Learning environment and delivery

Responses under this theme focus on how information is presented and skills are taught in learning environments. Example responses under this theme include:

- “Show me and let me try rather than just telling me.”
- “Practical training works better for me than theory-heavy courses.”
- “I need as much detail before attending as possible; route, schedule, pace, expectations.”
- “Video tours, pictures of centres, maps of how to get there would reduce my anxiety”

Instructor/Leader expertise

Responses under this theme focus on instructor understanding of neurodiversity, disability awareness, adaptive coaching, and emotionally intelligent leadership. Example responses under this theme include:

- “Leaders who understand different brains make all the difference.”
- “Most instructors don’t really understand neurodiversity yet.”
- “Trainers should have disability and ND inclusion training.”
- “Please understand I process written words slowly and get embarrassed.”

Psychological safety and inclusive environments

This theme relates to creating inclusive and psychologically safe environments where everyone feels safe, accepted, and not judged. Respondents cover peer dynamics, representation, and the ability to unmask or disengage when overwhelmed.

Example responses under this theme include:

- “I need to feel seen and not judged.”
- “Don’t force me to socialise – it exhausts me.”
- “Feeling like part of a team makes me stay engaged.”
- “I need private spaces to disclose my needs.”

Accessibility at all levels

Structural & Organisational Support

This theme refers to the systems and resources that underpin the delivery of walking and climbing activities, determining whether disabled and neurodivergent people can realistically access, afford, and sustain participation. Examples under this theme include:

- “Subsidised places would allow me to participate.”
- “We need more awareness campaigns for ND/outdoor access.”
- “Simple route boards would help me choose safely.”

Physical and sensory accessibility

Responses under this theme cover the barriers, both physical and sensory, that stop disabled and/or neurodivergent people from taking part. Examples include:

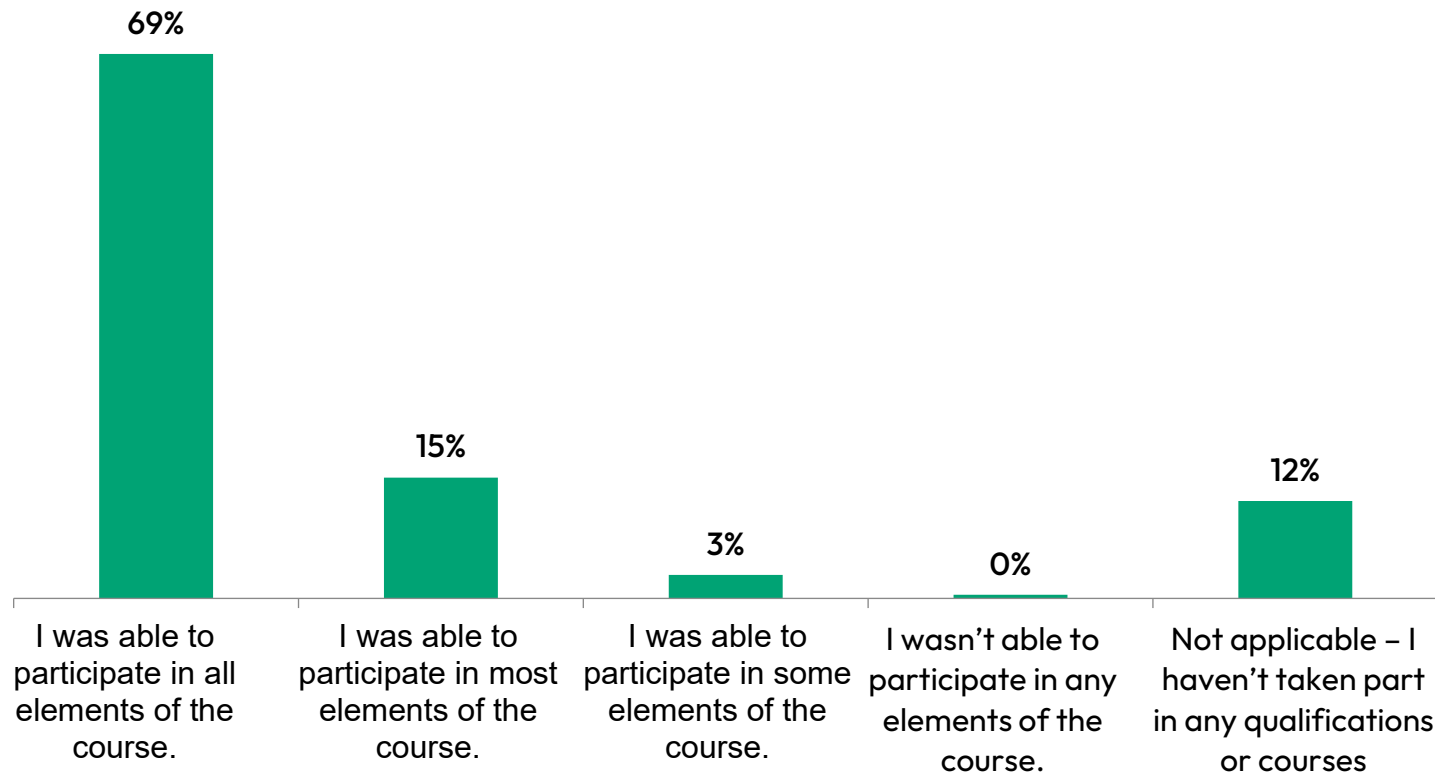
- “I need mobility accommodations on courses.”
- “Adaptive climbing routes let me actually participate.”
- “Quiet hours at climbing centres would make it accessible for me.”
- “Too much sensory input makes me shut down.”

Administrative, Logistical & Decision Support

This theme encompasses processes and cognitive load associated with planning and participation. Examples include:

- “Monthly route suggestions would really help me get outdoors.”
- “Packing lists, travel options and weather summaries would stop me freezing up.”
- “Booking info needs to be clear and simple.”
- “Be explicit about qualification requirements.”
- “Maps for public transport users would help me plan my journey.”

Experience of Mountain Training Qualifications or Skills courses 1



Participation in qualifications and skills courses:

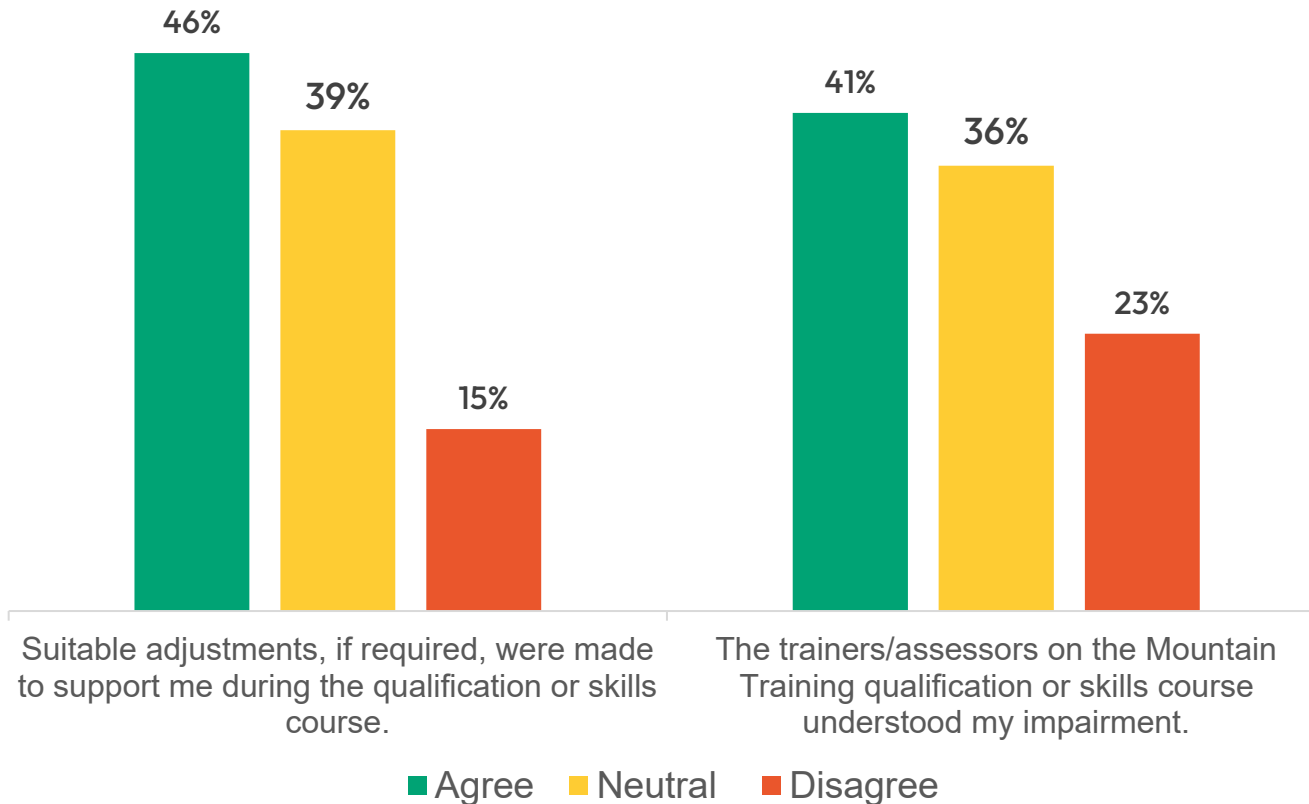
There was a range of recent qualifications and skills courses that respondents shared their experience of. The most frequently mentioned were:

- Mountain Leader
- Rock Climbing Instructor
- Climbing Wall Instructor
- Lowland Leader.

The majority of respondents said they could take part in all elements of the course (69%).

- 15% of respondents said they could take part in most or some of the elements of the course.
- 12% haven't taken part in a qualification or course.

Experience of Mountain Training Qualifications or Skills courses 2



Adjustments and understanding of impairments:

- Overall, respondents felt adjustments for their impairment were made (46%), and trainers/assessors understood their impairment (41%).
- Many respondents felt neutral or disagreed that adjustments were made for their impairment (54%) and, 59% felt neutral or disagreed that trainers/assessors understood their impairment.

Respondent feedback on the accessibility of Mountain Training's qualifications or skills courses 1



Mountain Training Systems:

Respondents outlined several barriers within Mountain Training's systems that felt inaccessible to disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents. Three key areas respondents highlighted were:

- Qualification prerequisites, e.g. multiday courses, night navigation or lead grades.
- Assessment formats, e.g. respondents mentioned military style instruction, and assessments felt punitive.
- Digital admin, respondents outlined that this often felt overwhelming or difficult to navigate

Learning design, pace and cognitive load:

Respondents highlighted that courses were often delivered in ways that overloaded or overwhelmed them. This was particularly felt by neurodivergent candidates. Key areas include:

- Long days and multiday intensity left respondents dysregulated or unable to consolidate learning.
- Verbal instruction and written materials were inaccessible and did not support neurodivergent candidates' learning.
- Insufficient time for thought processing, breaks, decompression or reflection.

Respondent feedback on the accessibility of Mountain Training's qualifications or skills courses 2



Leaders and Instructor capability:

Respondents highlighted that whether a course feels accessible depended heavily on the people leading it. The key areas respondents highlighted were:

- Wide variability of instructor and assessor awareness, empathy and confidence around disability and neurodivergence.
- Disclosing impairments and support needs often felt unsafe due to experiences of being dismissed or not being handled effectively.
- Respondents outlined that they would mask difficulties or avoid courses altogether due to fear of exclusion.

Need for an inclusive culture and greater representation:

Respondents felt the current system is outdated and wanted a more accessible and inclusive one. Key areas include:

- Respondents felt there was an underrepresentation of disabled and neurodivergent leaders.
- A strong appetite was expressed for adapted and inclusive courses, or courses specifically aimed at disabled and neurodivergent people.
- There was recognition that the outdoors is already a haven for many neurodivergent people, but the qualification system doesn't meet their needs.

Leaders, Instructors and Coaches supporting disabled participants

66%

Of respondents currently work with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients

67%

Of respondents wanted to work more often with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.

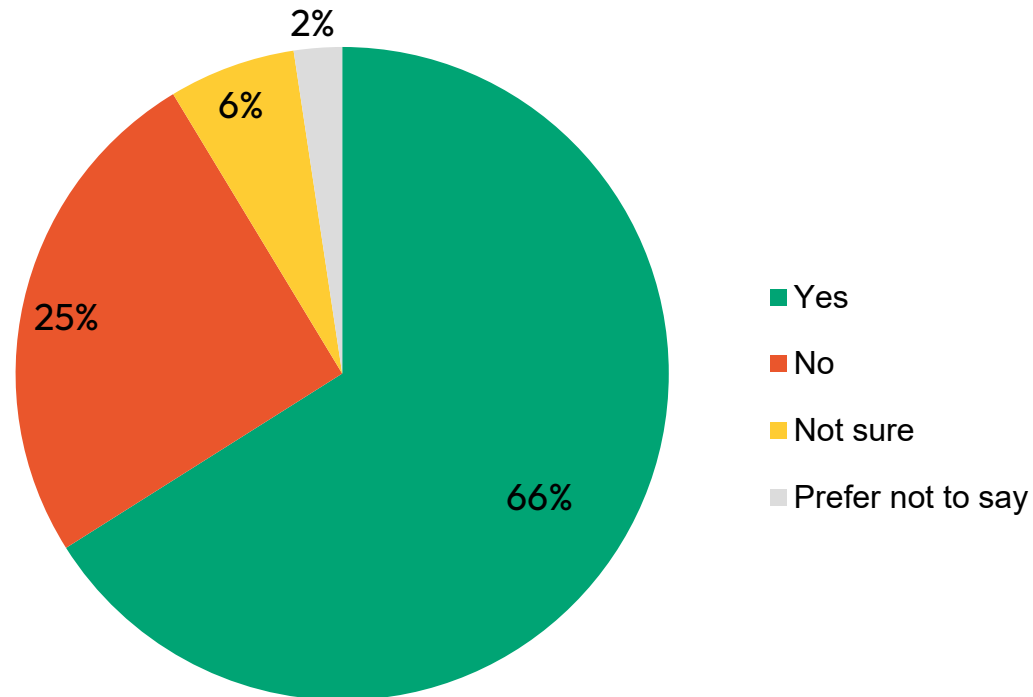
73%

Of respondents felt confident in including disabled and/or neurodivergent clients

29%

Of respondents felt neutral or unsure of how to tailor their activities to disabled and/or neurodivergent clients

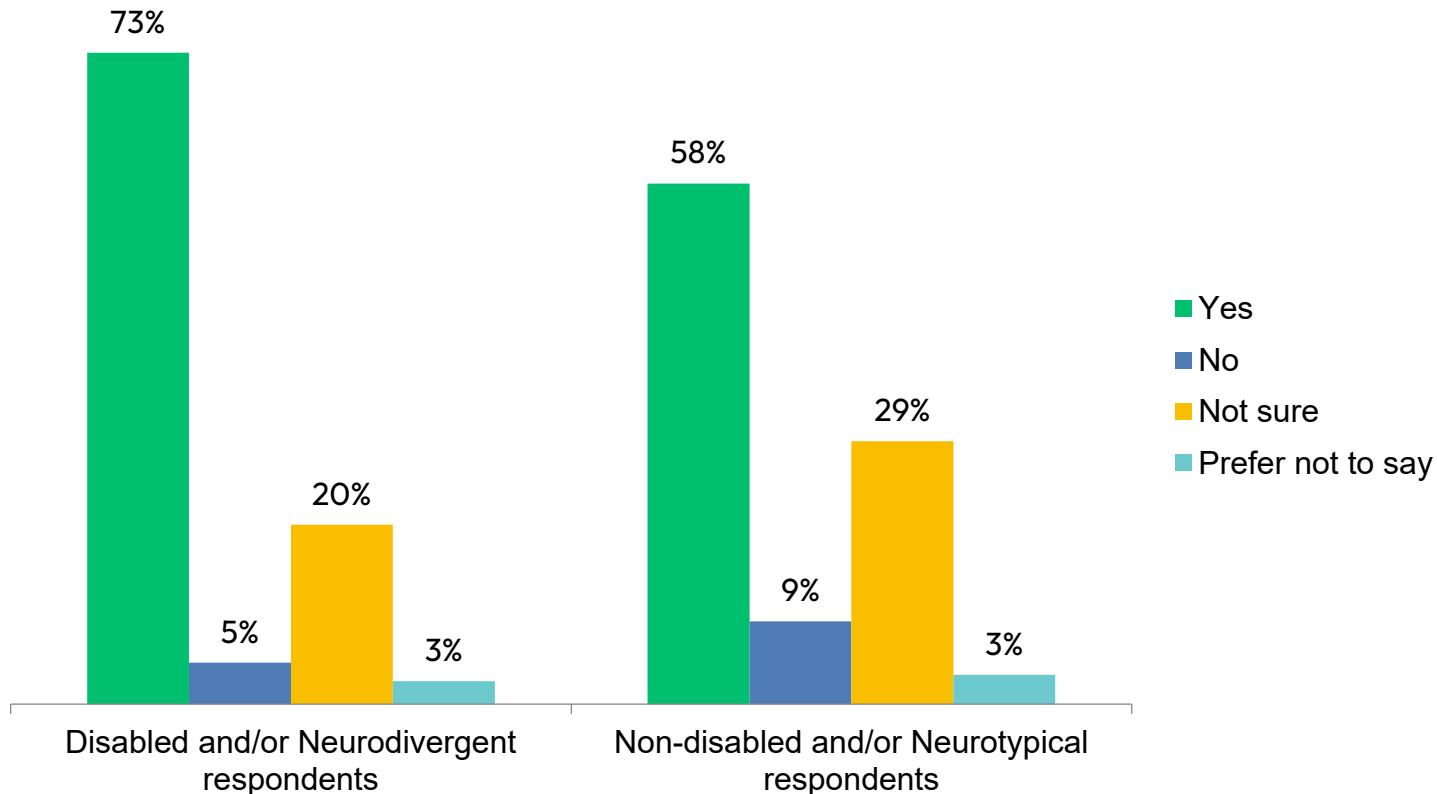
Working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients



Currently working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients:

- 66% of respondents said they were working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.
- 25% of respondents said they weren't working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.
- 6% of respondents were unsure if they were working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.

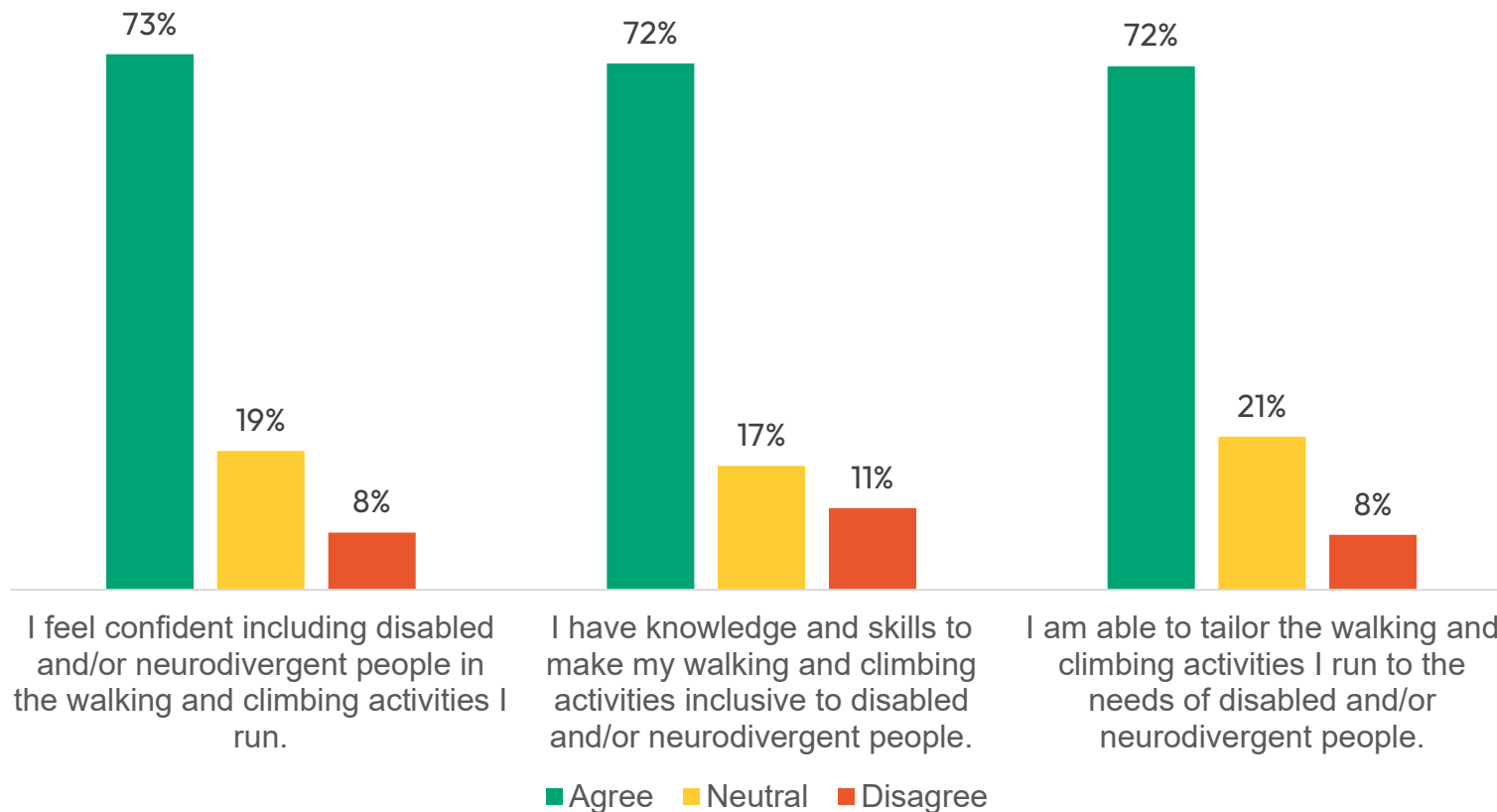
Working with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients more often



Working with more disabled and/or neurodivergent clients:

- 73% of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents said they wanted to work more often with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients compared to 58% of non-disabled and/or neurotypical respondents.
- 29% of non-disabled and/or neurotypical respondents said they weren't sure if they wanted to work more often with disabled and/or neurodivergent clients compared to 20% of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents.

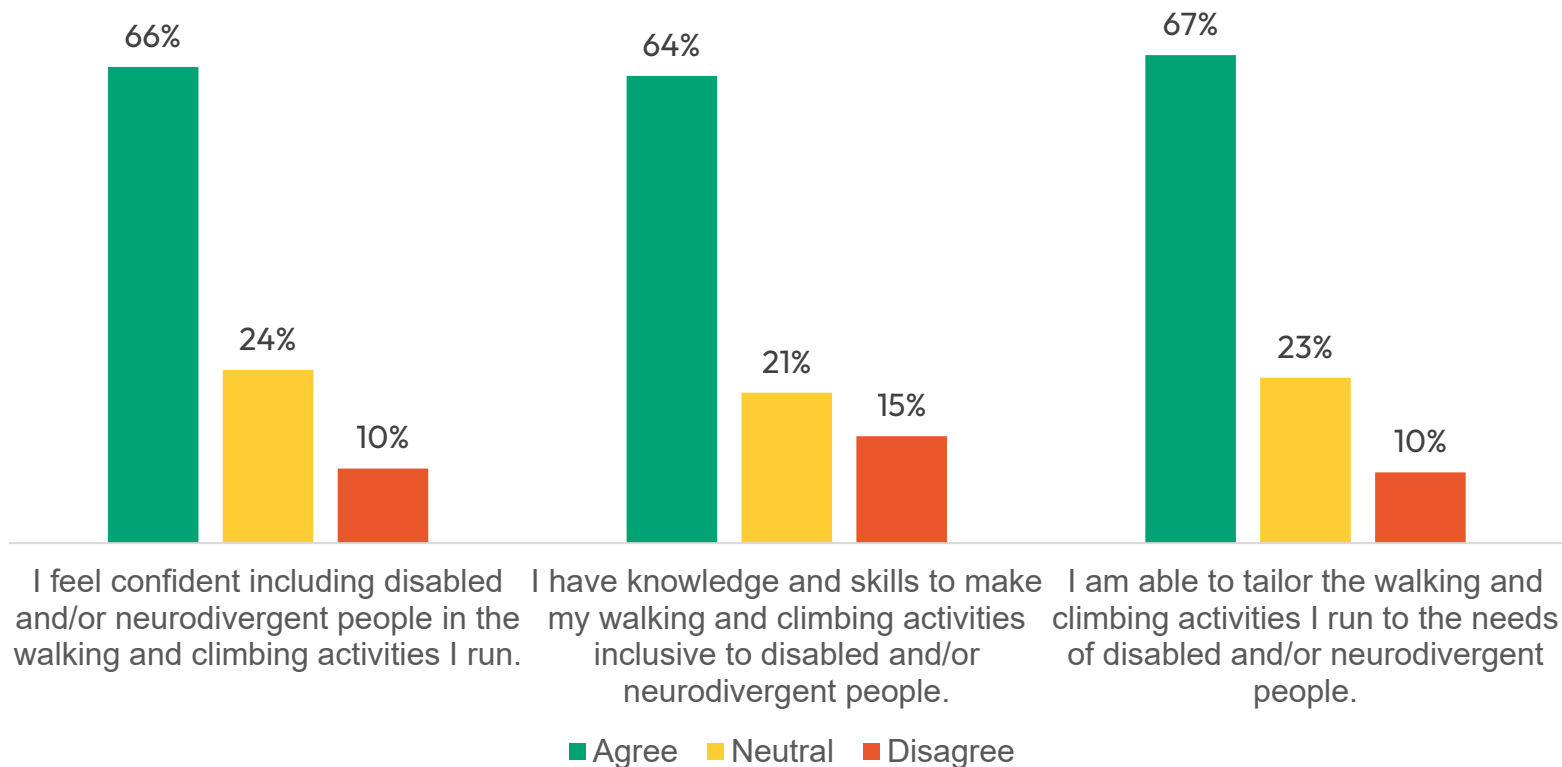
Confidence and skills to support disabled and/or neurodivergent clients



Working with more disabled and/or neurodivergent clients:

- Overall, respondents felt confident (73%), had the knowledge and skills (72%), and can tailor their activities (72%) to be inclusive to disabled and/or neurodivergent clients.
- Out of the 577 respondents that answered this question 65% (376) were disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents.

Confidence and skills of non-disabled respondents



Working with more disabled and/or neurodivergent clients:

- 184 non-disabled and/or neuro-majority respondents answered this question.
- Overall, their levels of confidence (66%), knowledge and skills (64%) and ability to tailor activities (67%) to be inclusive were lower than the overall sample, which had a high representation of disabled and/or neurodivergent respondents.

Ways Mountain Training can support leaders, instructors and coaches to be more inclusive.



Inclusive Instructors and Assessors:

This theme covers the respondents identifying the need for comprehensive training for Mountain Training instructors and assessors on disability and neurodiversity awareness.

Respondents highlighted the importance of equipping leaders with practical skills, knowledge, and confidence to support a diverse range of participants, including understanding different needs and adapting their approach accordingly.

Course development and design:

Responses in this theme focus on the creation and enhancement of courses and qualifications that specifically address inclusivity.

Suggestions include developing new modules or resources on inclusive practices, updating existing courses to reflect best practices, and ensuring that inclusivity is embedded throughout all training materials.



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