

# Emergency Responders' Training in Working with Individuals with Disabilities

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(LEND)

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# Background

- Disability is common in modern society (Boyle et al., 2011)
- Law enforcement receives little training in how to effectively serve and interact with individuals with disabilities (McAfee & Musso, 1995)
- Little research available on training that other first responders receive
- Lack of training can have devastating impacts, up to and including death
  - Paul Childs (Osborn, 2008)
  - Evacuation during natural disasters (Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities, 2006)

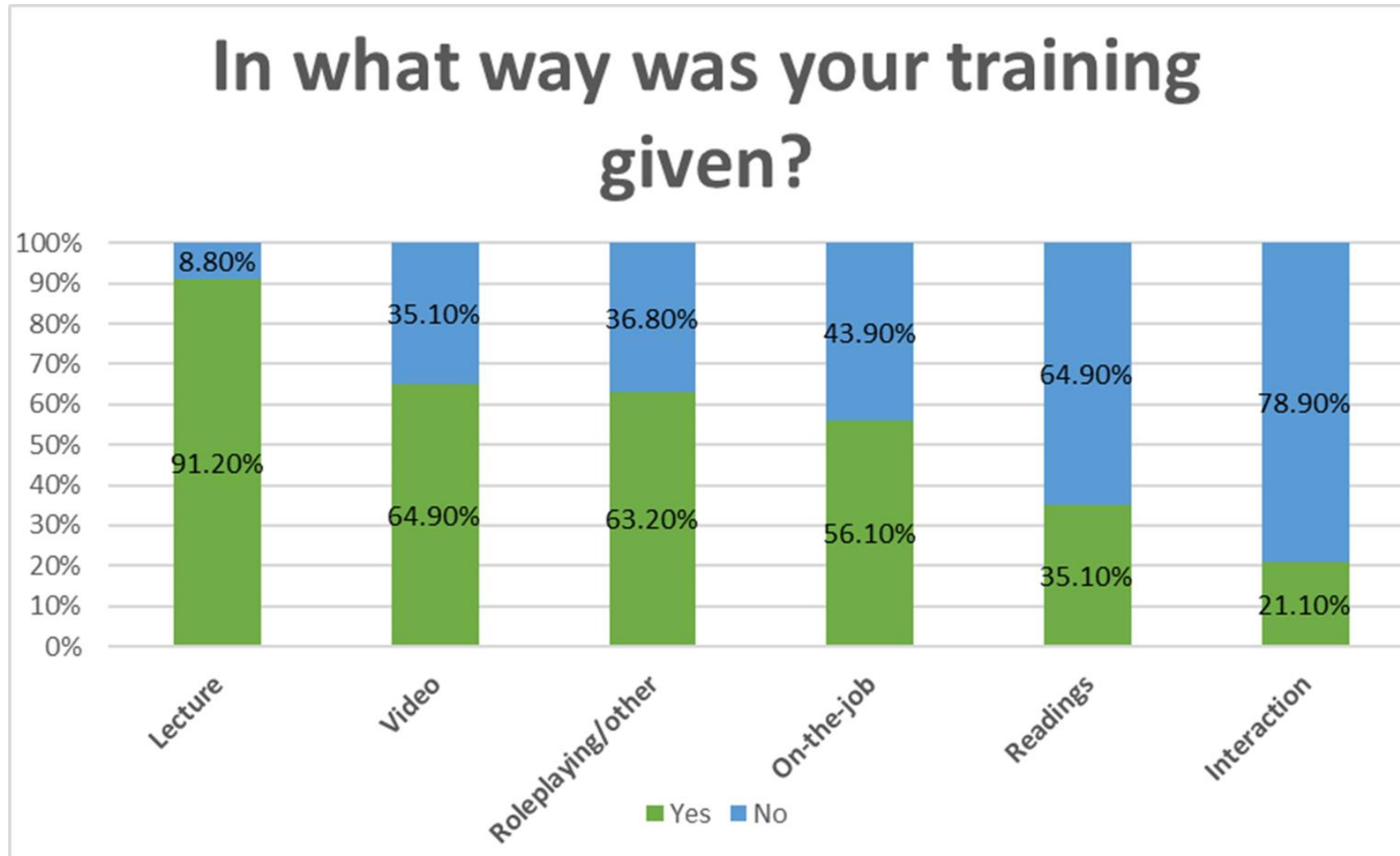
# Purpose

- RQ1: What training do first responders in Connecticut receive on characteristics of individuals with disabilities and on how to effectively interact with these individuals on the job?
- RQ2: Do first responders feel adequately prepared for interactions with individuals with disabilities?
- RQ3: Is disability training for first responders useful in helping them to better serve individuals with disabilities in their communities? [Brief description of your research- what was your main research question? Why did you decide to research this topic?

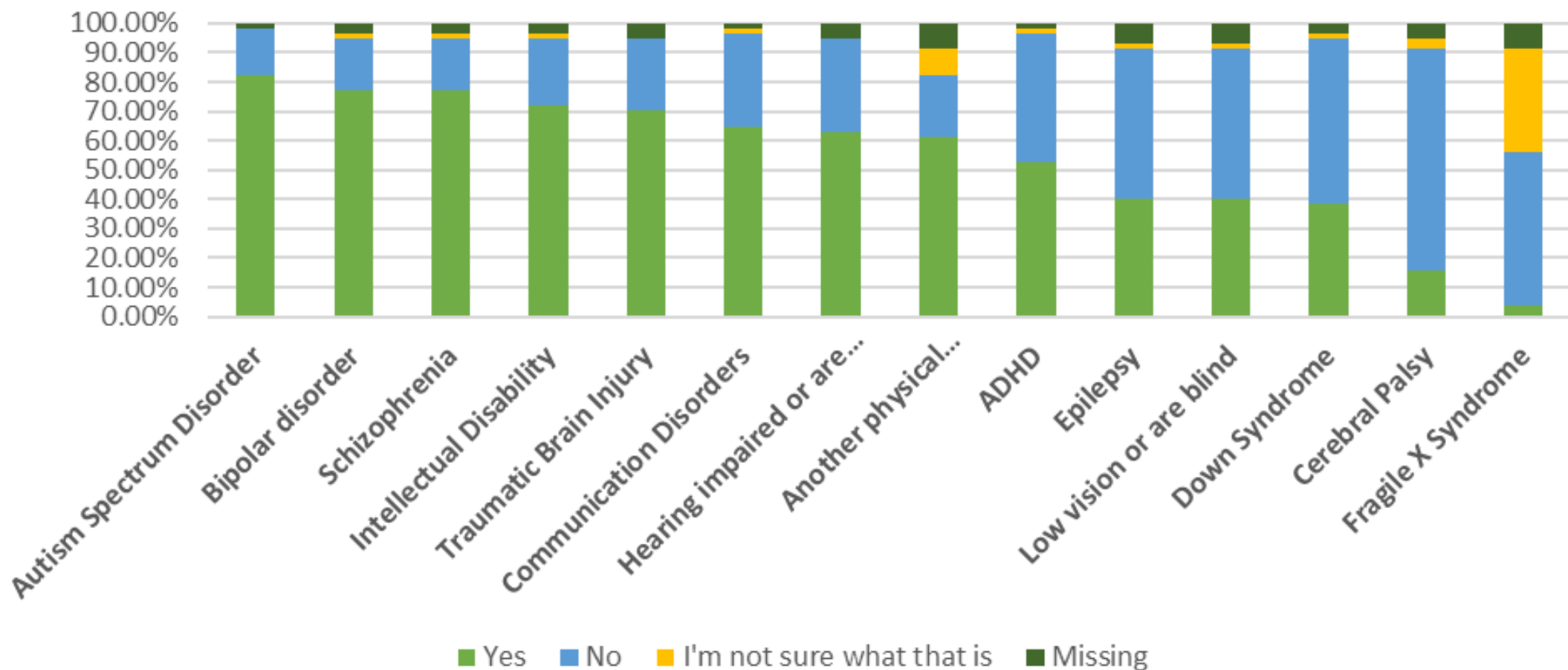
# Methods

- Recruitment: E-mailed surveys to employees listed under the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection on CT.gov
  - Inclusion criteria: Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, CT State Police, or Police Officer Standards and Training Council
  - Exclusion criteria: working at a different agency under the Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection
  - Final sample  $n=65$
- Analysis
  - Descriptive Statistics
  - Chi-square

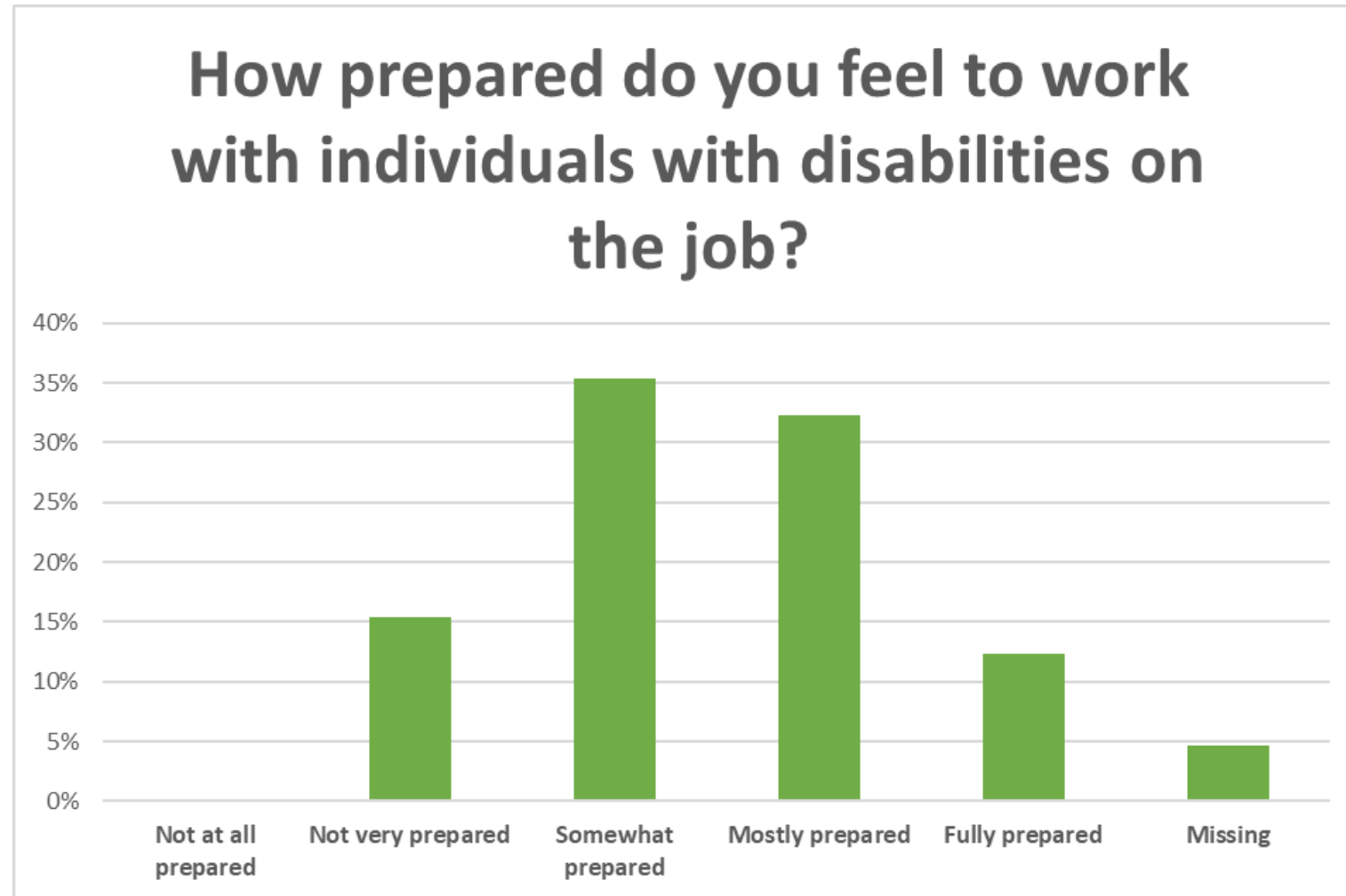
# RQ1: What training do first responders receive?



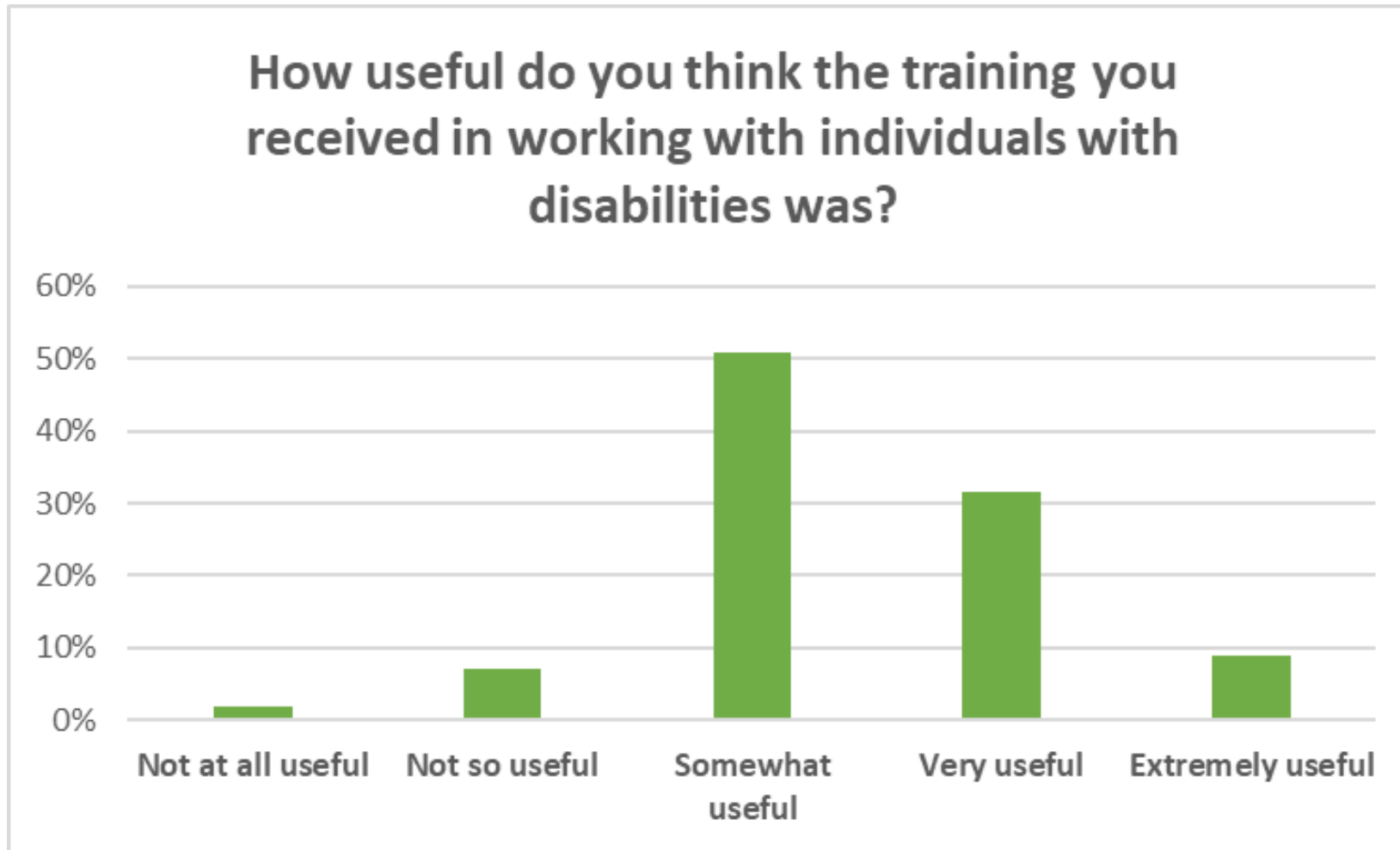
# Have you received training in interacting with individuals with...?



# RQ2: Do first responders feel adequately prepared?



# RQ3: Is disability training for first responders useful?





# RQ3: Is disability training for first responders useful?



# Discussion

- Training appears inadequate
  - Only 40% found the training they received very or extremely useful; 40% stated their training was inadequate, and 14% stated they weren't sure
  - Training primarily given in less effective ways; interaction rare
  - Primarily focuses on major mental illnesses, intellectual disability, and ASD
- Limitations
  - No fire safety officials responded; primarily descriptive; entirely self-report
- Future directions
  - Address limitations around self-report and lack of fire safety officials
  - Provide training for law enforcement officials and study effectiveness
  - Policy advocacy

# References

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- McAfee, J. K., & Musso, S. L. (1995). Training police officers about persons with disabilities: A 50-state policy analysis. *Remedial and Special Education*, 16(1), 53-63.
- Osborn, E. H. (2008). What happened to Paul's law: Insights on advocating for better training and better outcomes in encounters between law enforcement and persons with autism spectrum disorders. *University of Colorado Law Review*, 79(1), 333-379.

QUESTIONS?