

# Survey on Ethics Teaching in Public Health Schools and Programs in Canada: Preliminary Results

March 2018

## Purpose

This document presents a preliminary, graphic summary of results from a survey of university directors of population and public health programs, or professors responsible for ethics teaching, within population and public health schools or programs in Canadian universities on the subject of teaching ethics in public health in their institutions. A research team from the Université de Montréal's School of Public Health partnered with the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP) in launching this survey. The goal was to add to current knowledge of the extent to which public health ethics figures into postsecondary population and public health training in Canada, and if so, what that entails. In particular, we wanted to learn about the use of ethics resources, what is taught, who is teaching, and how. We also set out to identify barriers and opportunities for implementing ethics training programs for public health. This is a picture that we want to share as part of a collective effort to support ethics in public health practice.

## Target participants and outreach

We were seeking feedback from Canadian university directors and professors responsible for public health ethics education. Our efforts focused on outreach to schools of population and public health in Canada. In May 2017, we sent 401 email invitations to participate to directors and professors of schools of population and public health at 32 Canadian universities. We encouraged potential respondents to forward our email invitation to others in their departments. The survey was open from May 16 to June 23, 2017. A total of 49 responses were received: 35 in English and 14 in French, representing 20 universities and 7 provinces.

## The project

Following a review of Canadian and international public health and bioethics literatures with respect to public health ethics education by a team at the Université de Montréal, resulting in the article, *Ethics education in public health: where are we now and where are we going?*<sup>1</sup> (Doudenkova, Bélisle-Pipon, Ringuette, Ravitsky, & Williams-Jones, 2017), two surveys were conducted. This first survey was undertaken by the team at the Université de Montréal and the NCCHPP. The second survey focused on the practices and needs of Canadian public health practitioners with regard to public health ethics. It was led by the NCCHPP with the help of graduate students from the Université de Montréal. More information about the second survey is available here [http://www.ncchpp.ca/127/Publications.ccnpps?id\\_article=1776](http://www.ncchpp.ca/127/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=1776).

## Ethics approval

Ethics approvals of the Ethics Committee of Health Research of the Université de Montréal (15-057-CERES-D, March 23, 2017) and the *Comité d'éthique de la recherche en Dépendances, Inégalités sociales et Santé publique* (CER-DIS) of the *Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal* (DIS-1617-29, May 9, 2017). Responses were depersonalized and security measures are in place to ensure confidentiality.

<sup>1</sup> We encourage readers to consult the original article: Doudenkova, V., Bélisle-Pipon, J.-C., Ringuette, L., Ravitsky, V., & Williams-Jones, B. (2017). Ethics education in public health: where are we now and where are we going? *International Journal of Ethics Education*, 2017. DOI: 10.1007/s40889-017-0038-y. Available here (open access): <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40889-017-0038-y>.



## Presenting the preliminary analysis

This document offers a quick, graphic overview of the results. As the survey was offered in both English and French, we have combined the results from French and English respondents in each graph. We have not included every question in this summary, and some response fields have been summarized for clarity in presentation. The survey results will be further analyzed by the research team, notably by considering them in light of the findings from the literature review. This is a preliminary analysis, and further analysis may lead to minor variations from the results presented here based on how the data are interpreted.

**For further questions or to share comments,  
please contact:**

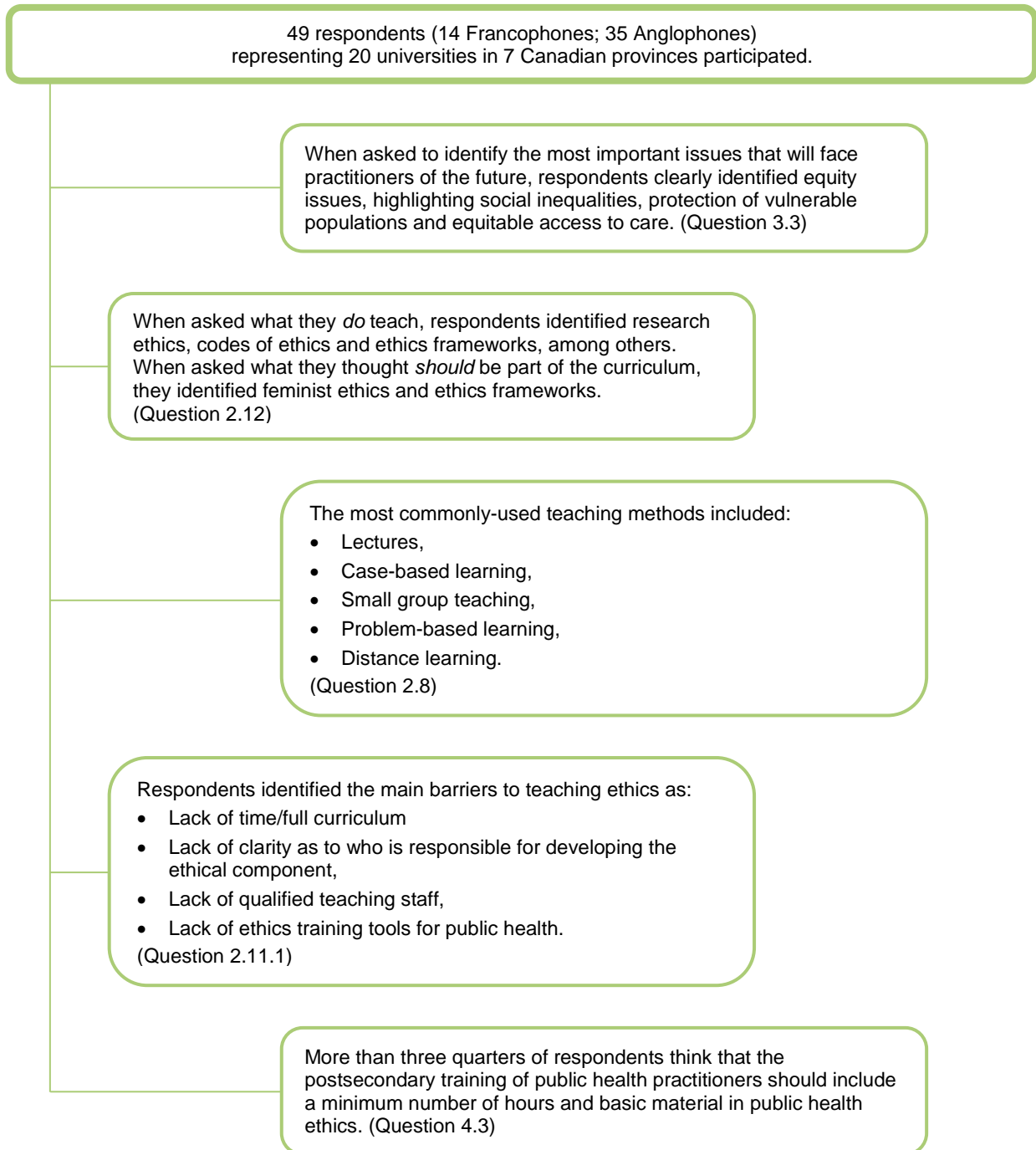
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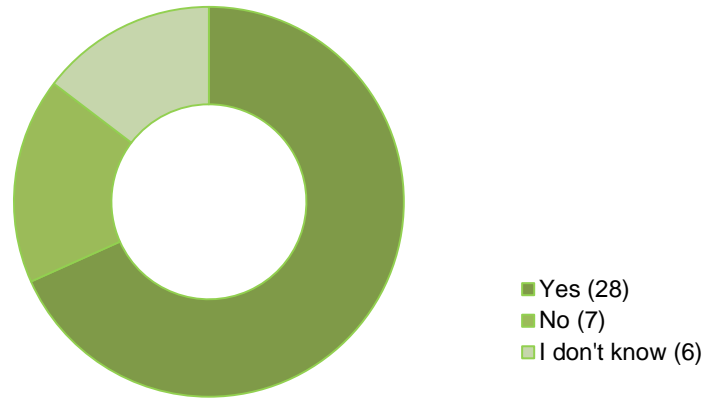
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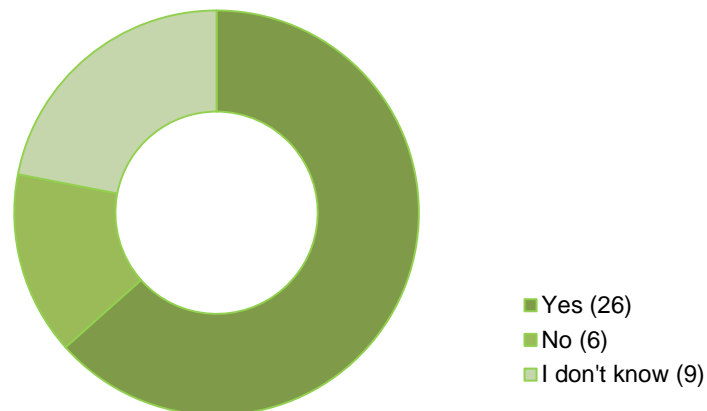
## Highlights and key points drawn from the survey responses

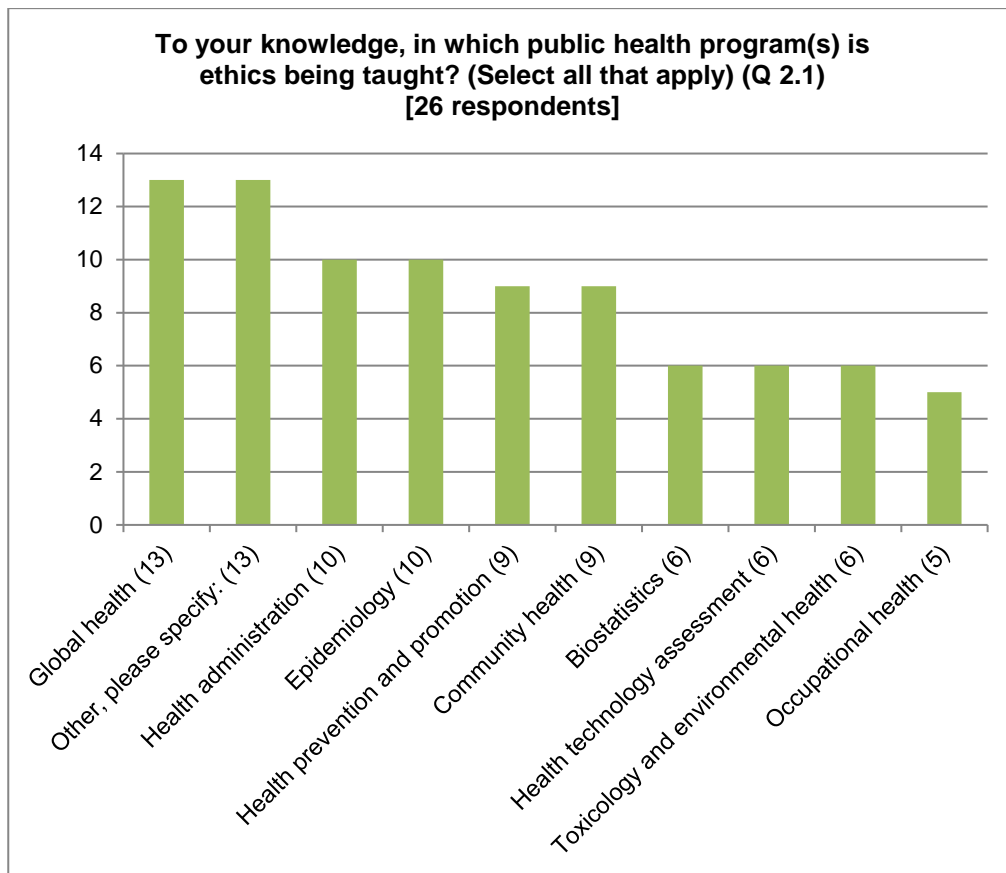


**Are there any bioethics education programs within your institution (including, medical ethics, clinical ethics, public health ethics, research ethics, etc.)? (Q 1.9) [41 respondents]**

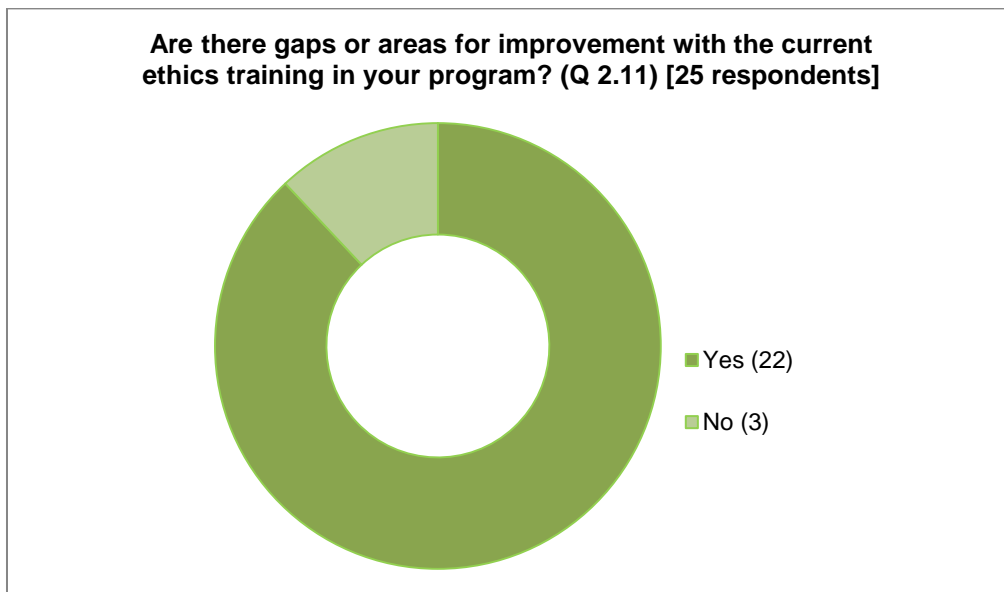
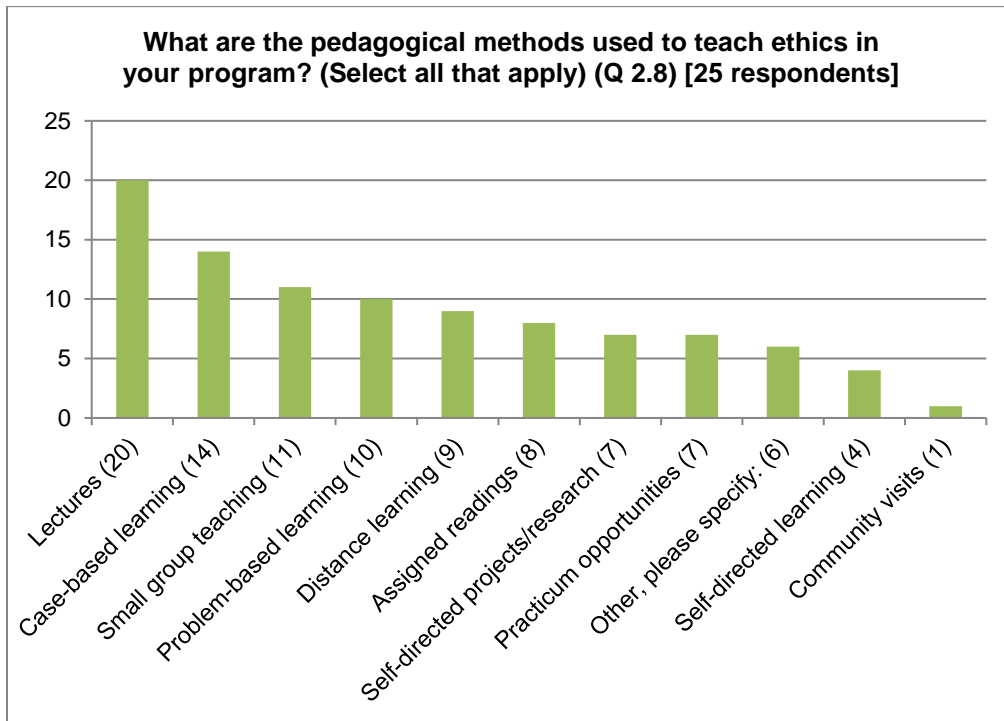


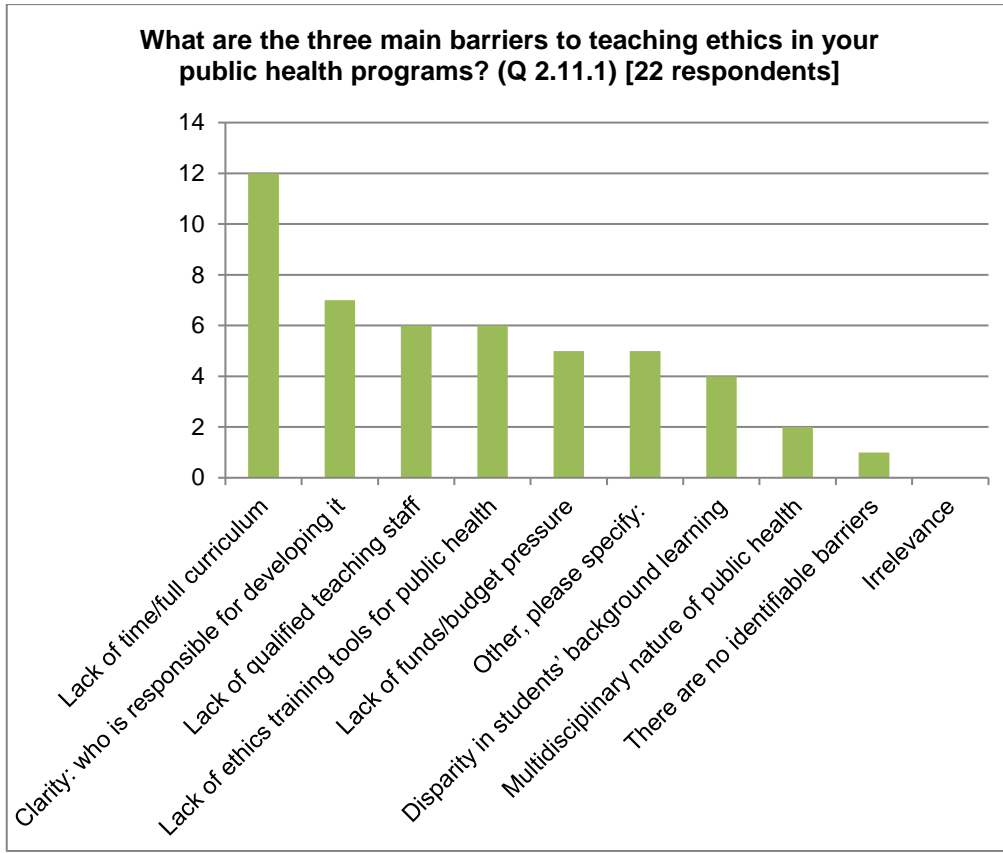
**Is ethics teaching integrated into your public health training curricula? (Q 1.10) [41 respondents]**



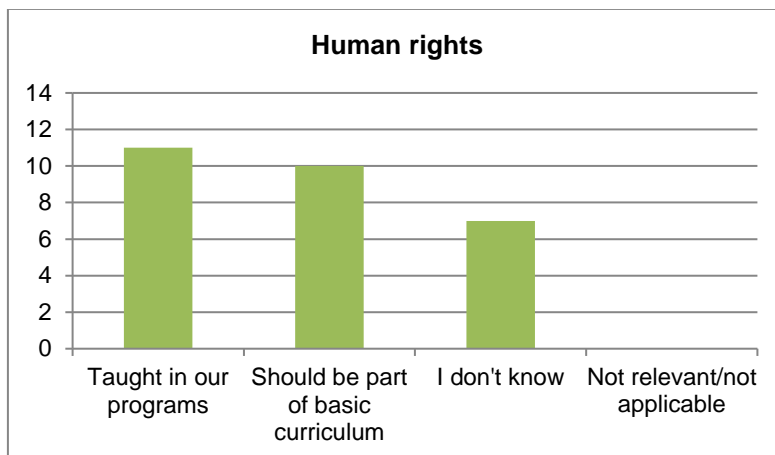
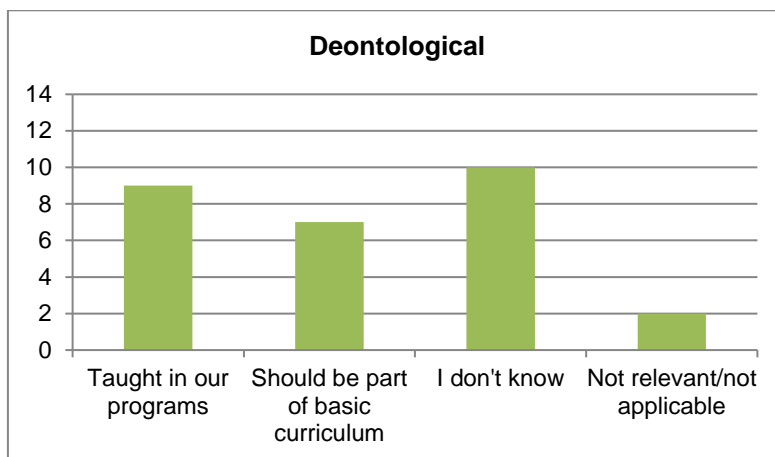
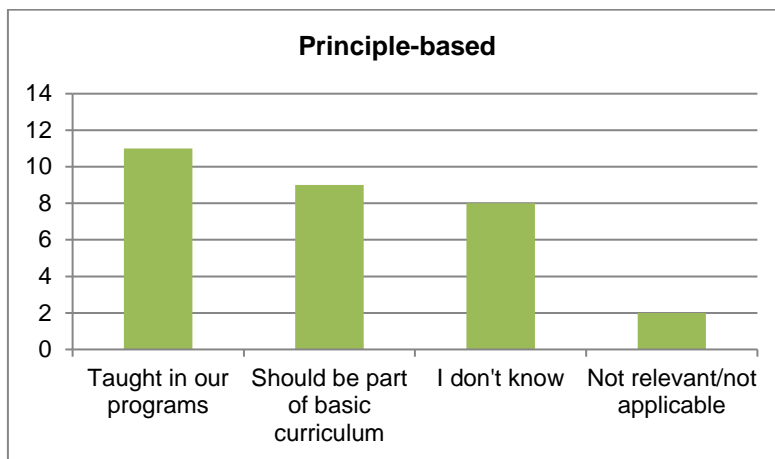


Note: Of the 25 respondents, 4 indicated that it is a mix between some mandatory, some optional. Given that this means that there is some mandatory ethics training, we classified these 4 in mandatory. One respondent was not teaching in a specific program in public health—as such, this response was not included in mandatory or optional.

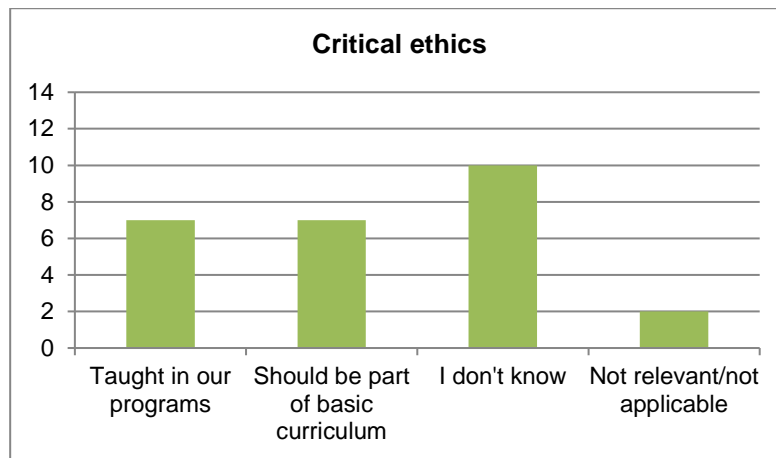
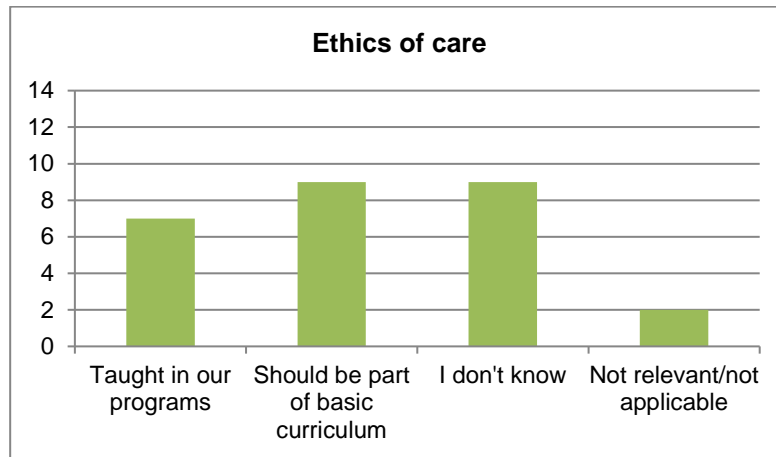
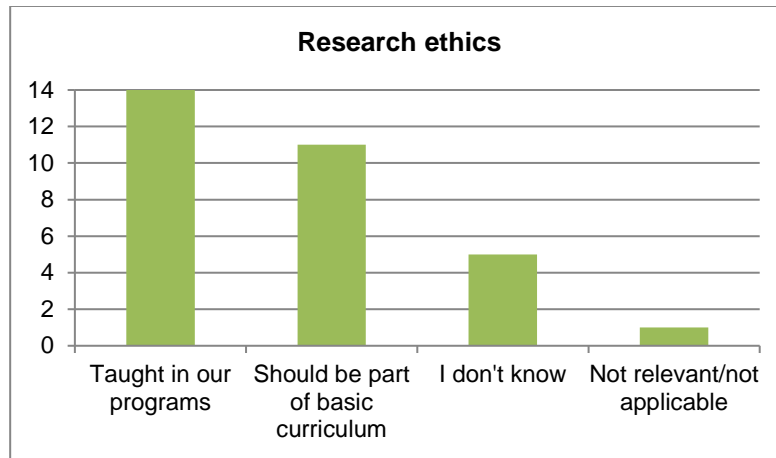


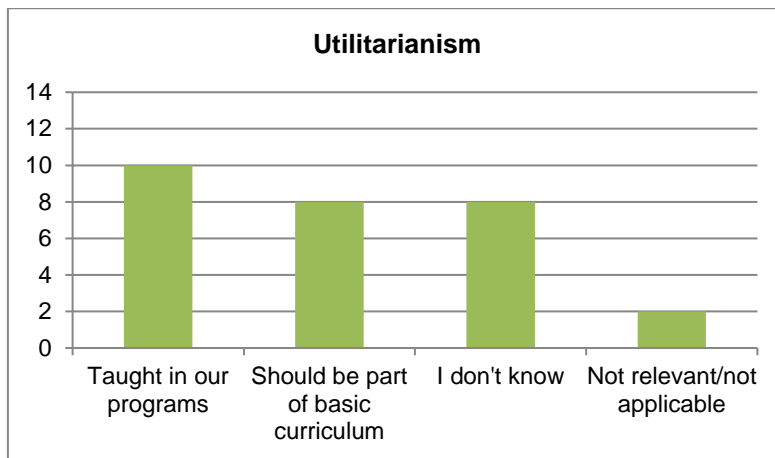
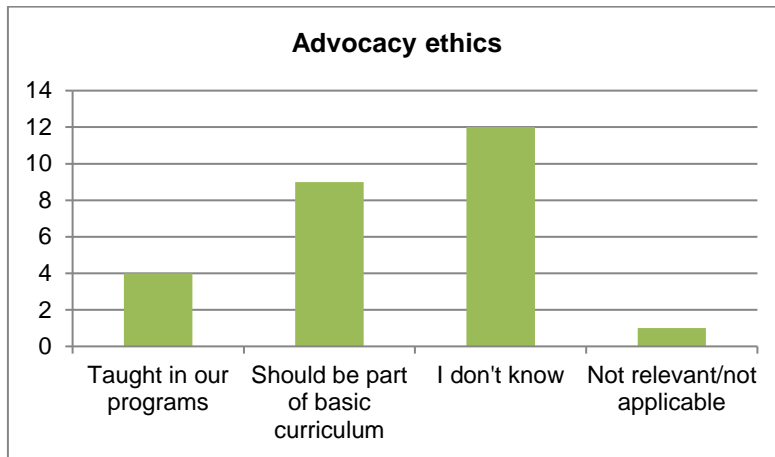
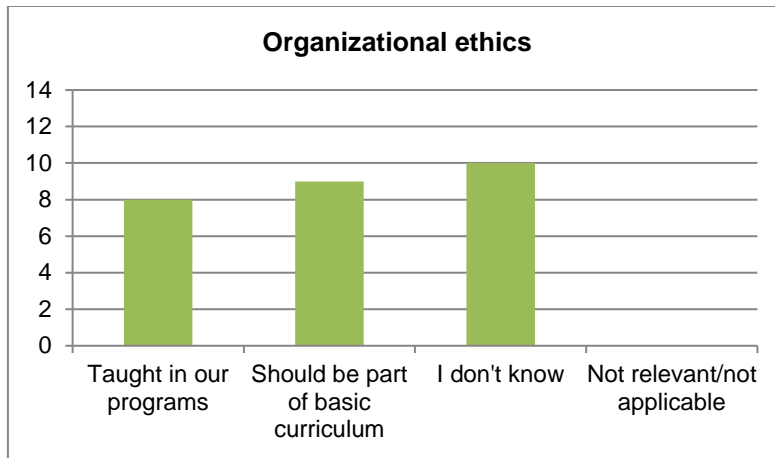


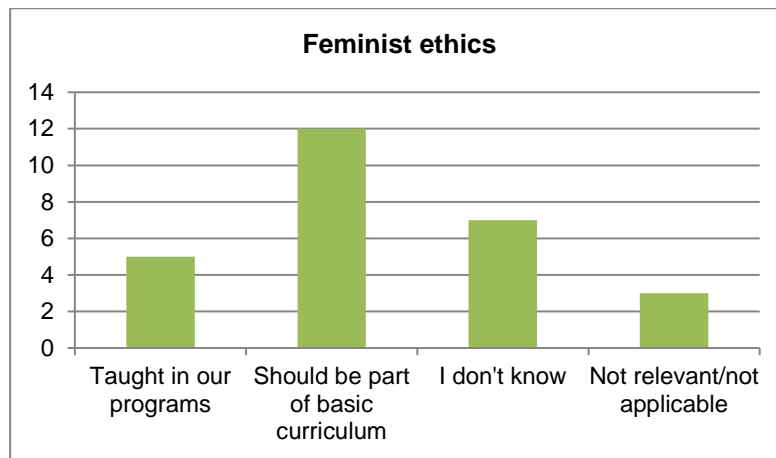
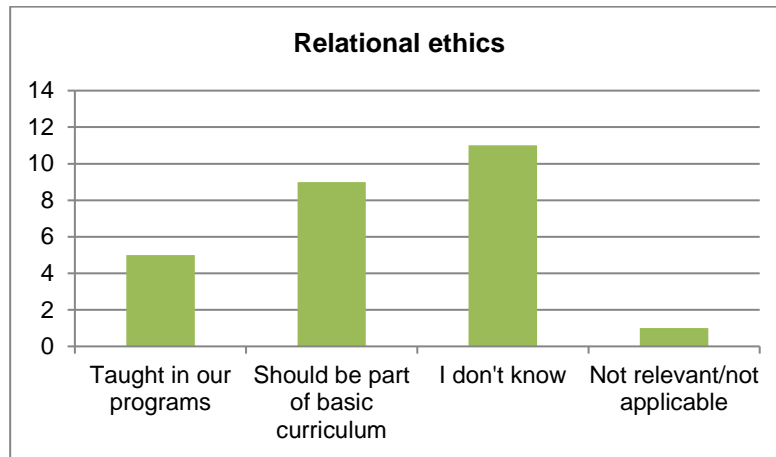
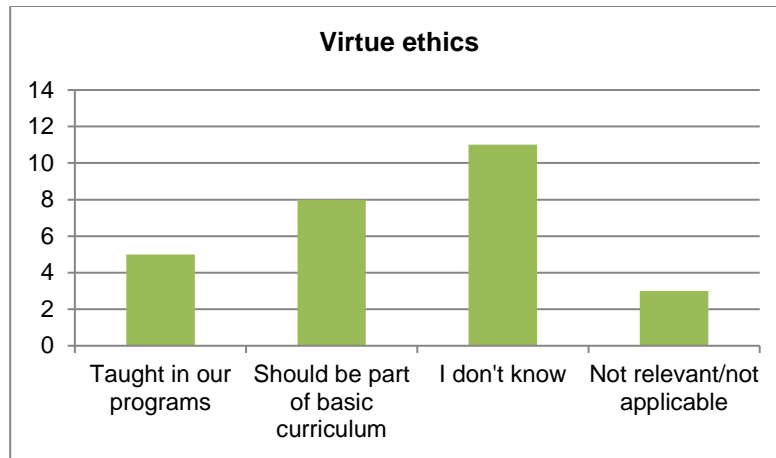
**Which of these approaches (theoretical or practical) is taught in your programs? In your opinion, which should be part of a basic curriculum in public health ethics? (Select all that apply) (Q 2.12 in 16 sub-questions) [25 respondents]**

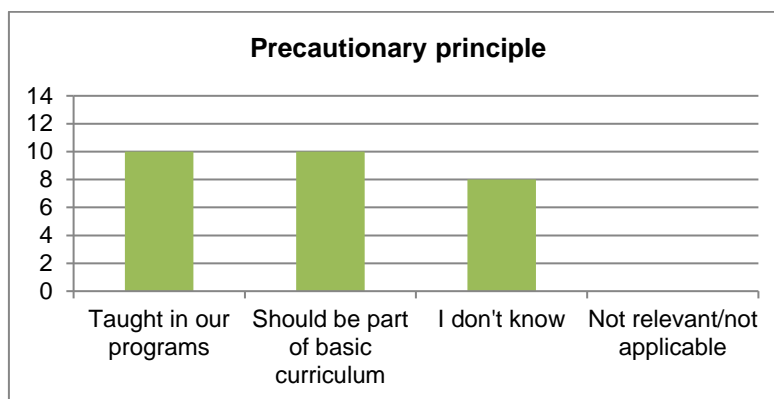
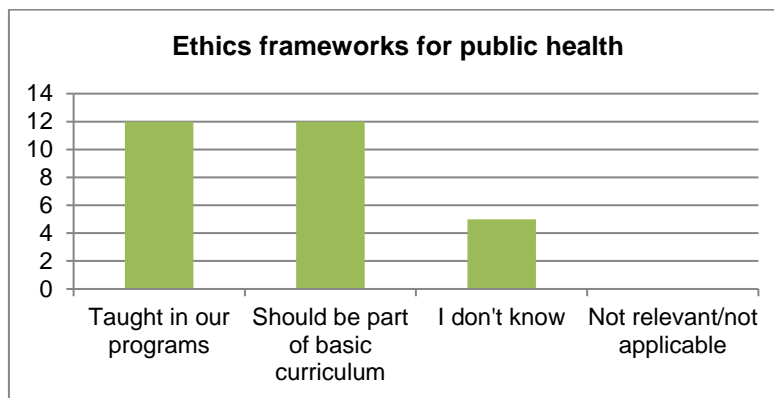
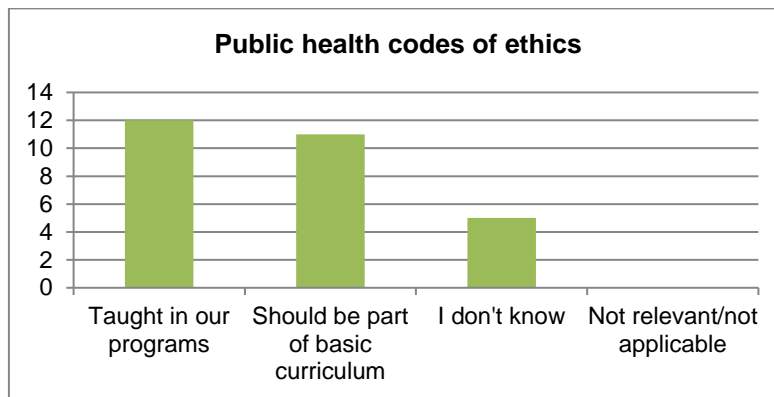
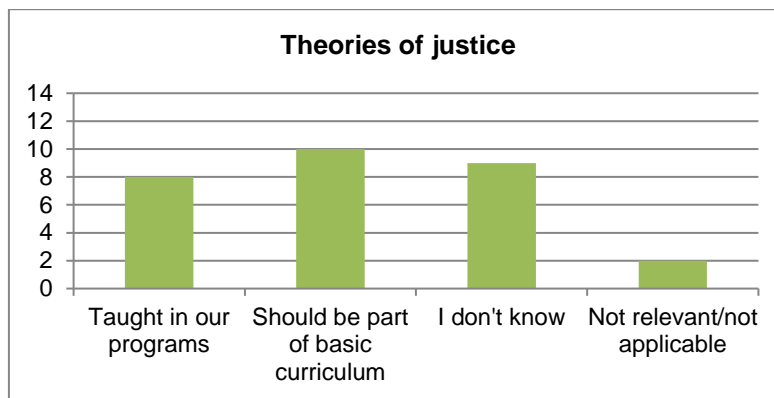


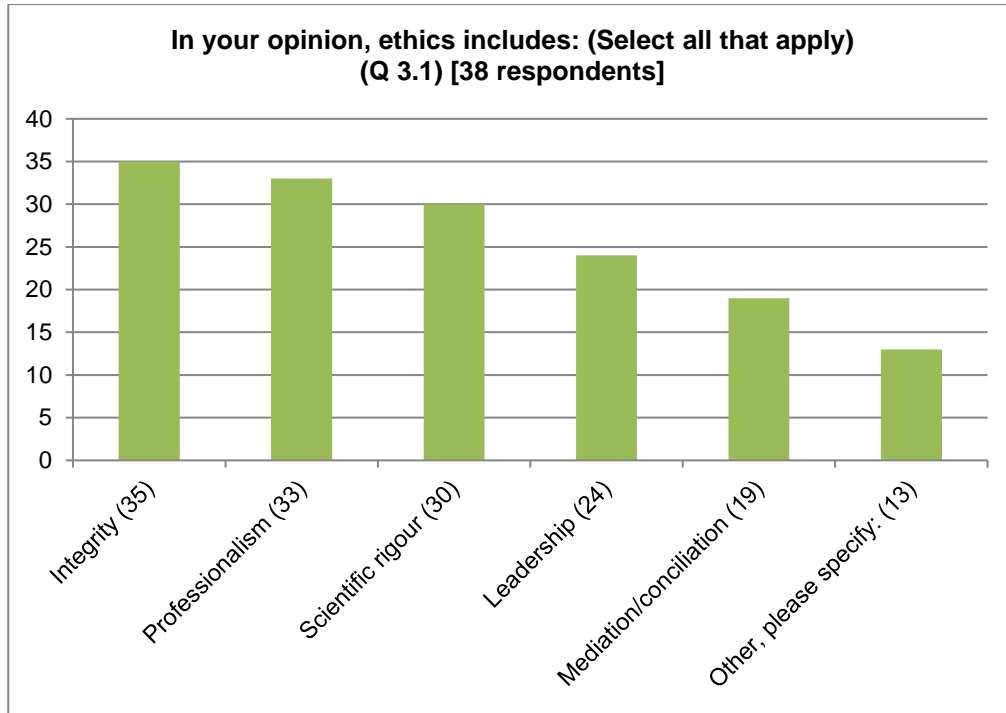


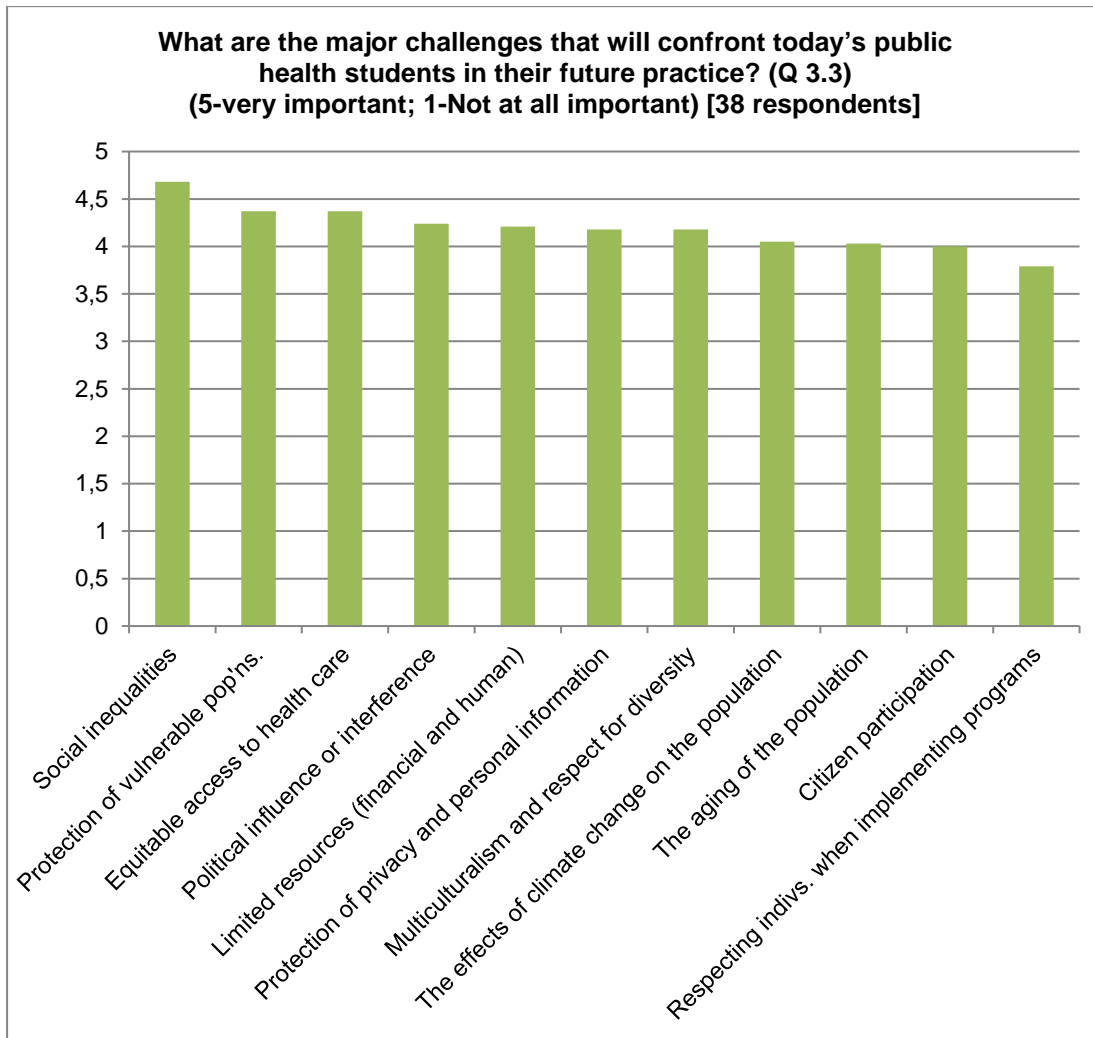






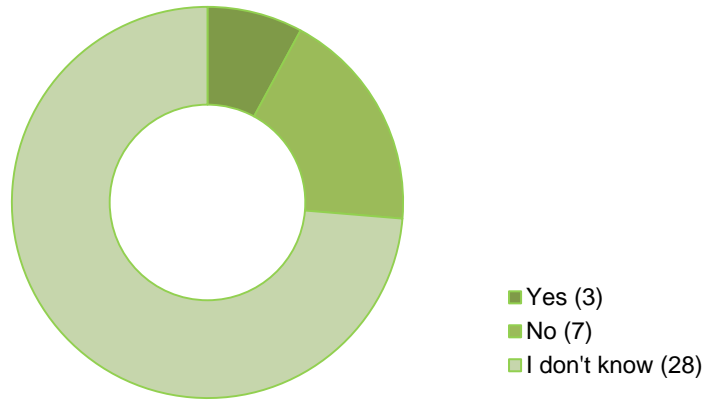




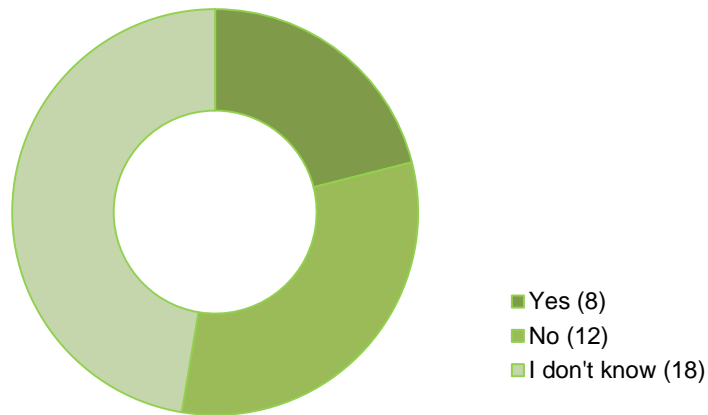


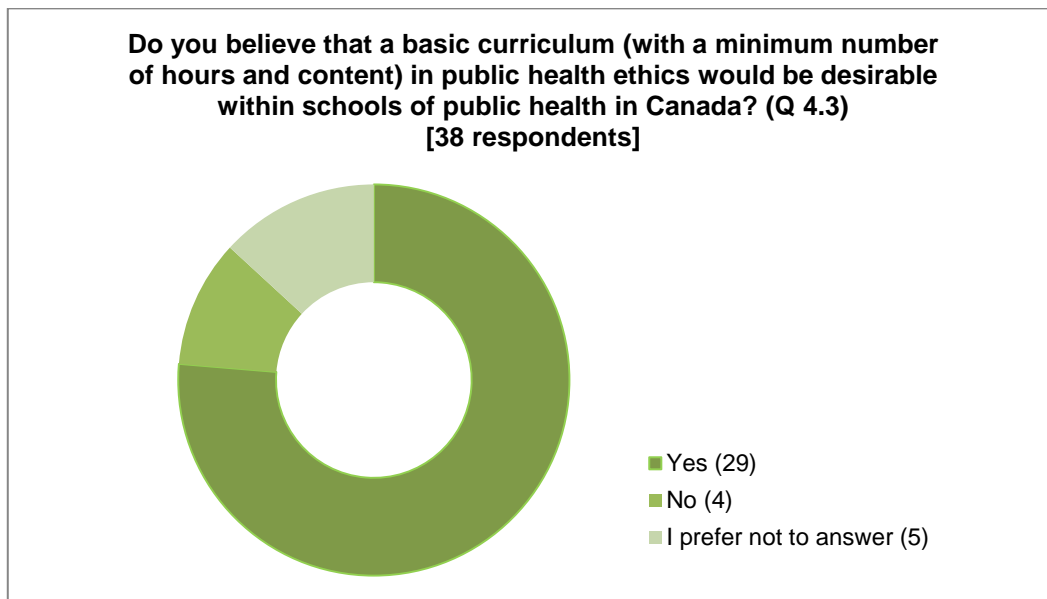
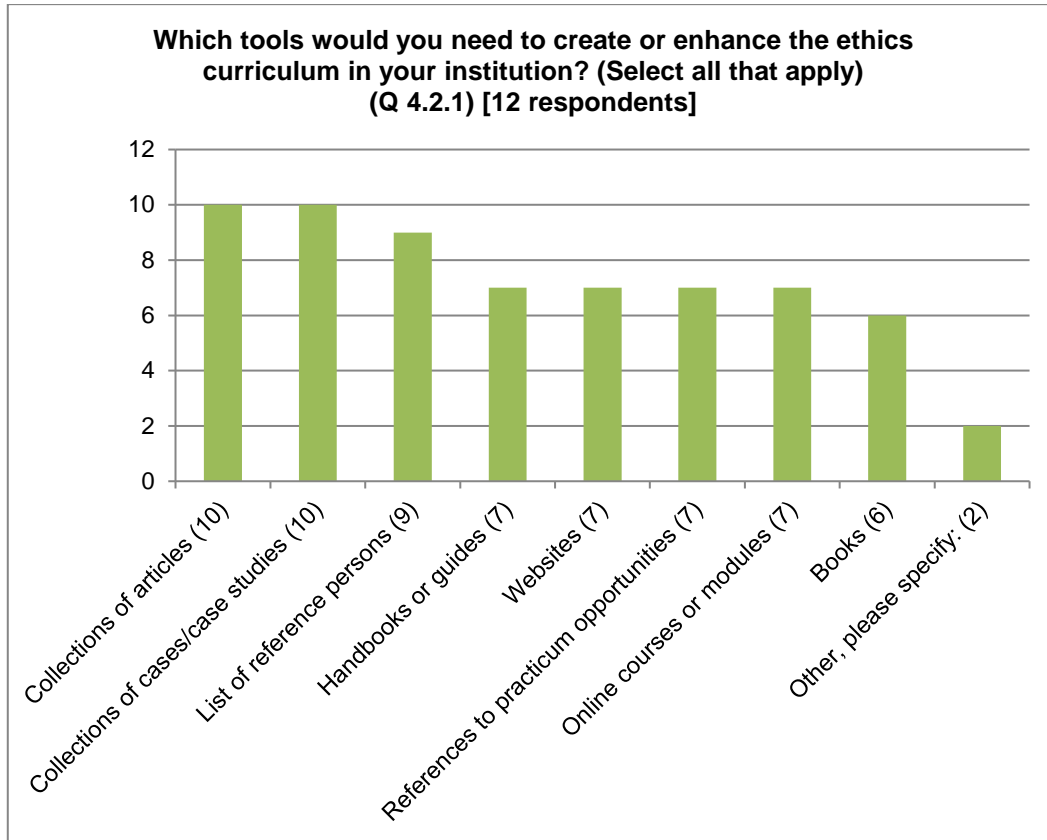
Note: The bars represent weighted averages.

**Within your institution, are there any plans to develop future courses in public health ethics? (Q 4.1) [38 respondents]**



**Do you think that there are enough practical tools (e.g., guides, books, etc.) to support schools of public health in developing their ethics curriculum? (Q 4.2) [38 respondents]**







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