

'The Mindful Hand' Anxiety Management Tool

Used with palliative patients with breathlessness & anxiety.

By Anna Finlay – Senior Occupational Therapist in Specialist Palliative Care.

AIM: To enable 80% of palliative patients referred to therapy with anxiety related respiratory distress in palliative and oncology inpatients services at CGH & with Hannah Colgan (PT) in-patient respiratory services at GRH, to self-manage their symptoms using 'The Mindful Hand Tool' by April 2018.

Opportunity: After some patients helped manage their respiratory panic attacks use 'The Calming Hand Tool', there was no tool to help prompt and educate patients experiencing longer term anxiety with longer term management techniques that would help reduce the risk of panic attacks and anxiety. The aim is to help patients have more autonomous control and self-management of their anxiety related respiratory distress.

VISUALISATION - Imagine going to a happy place that will calm you. Think of a happy place – somewhere you feel really calm. It may be a favourite place you went on holiday to or your garden or a walk. Imagine yourself there and look out at the view. Look all around you feeling calm, taking in the view, listening to calming sounds, pleasant smells, and nice sounds. Feel that nice happy relaxed feeling.

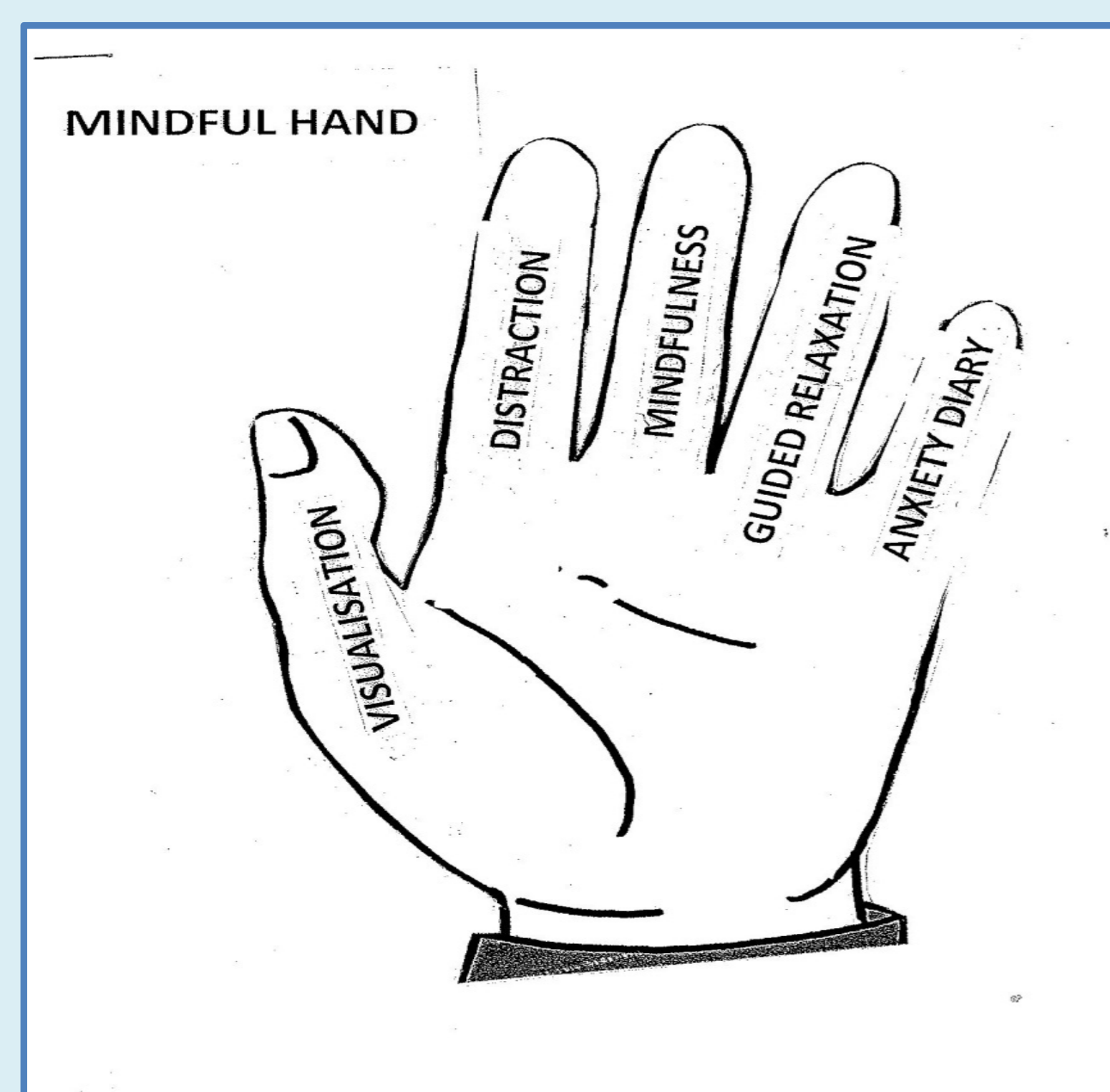
DISTRACTION - Find an activity that helps distract you from feelings of anxiety. These activities are personal to you and are things that you enjoy doing. This may be listening to the radio, listening to music, watching TV or a DVD, reading, looking at photos, looking at birds in the garden, talking to a friend, taking a small walk, using a fiddle toy, etc. Do the activity until you feel calmer.

MINDFULNESS

- Sitting quietly for 10minutes – use of 'Take 10'. See 'Headspace' App.
- Being mindful while doing an everyday task – walking, washing up, cooking.
- Having reassuring phrases to hand to repeat. For Example – The name of a safe place or 'I'm in control of my breathing'
- Shifting focus to breathing – counting breathes in and out – one to ten.
- Focusing on the environment around you – colours, smells, sounds, objects.
- Looking out of the view out of the window.

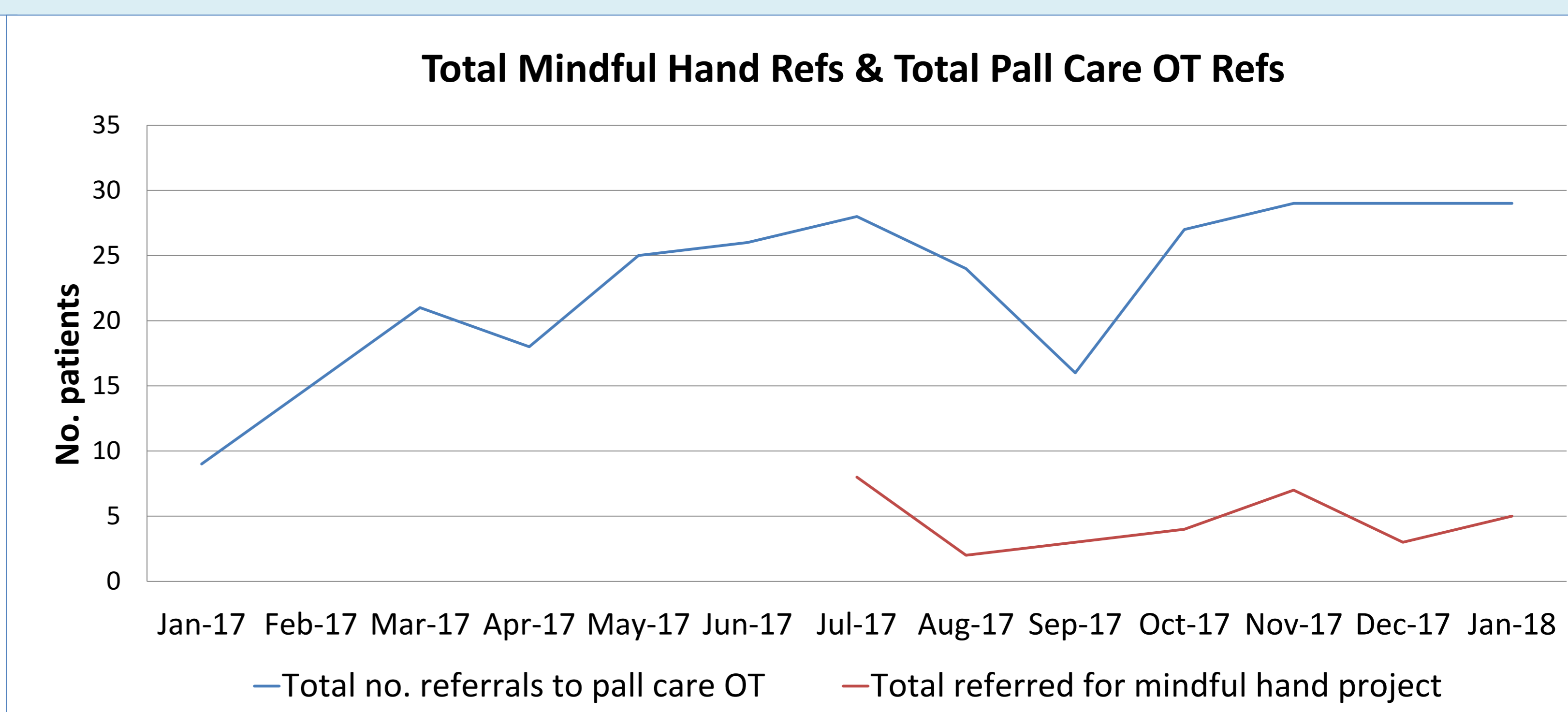
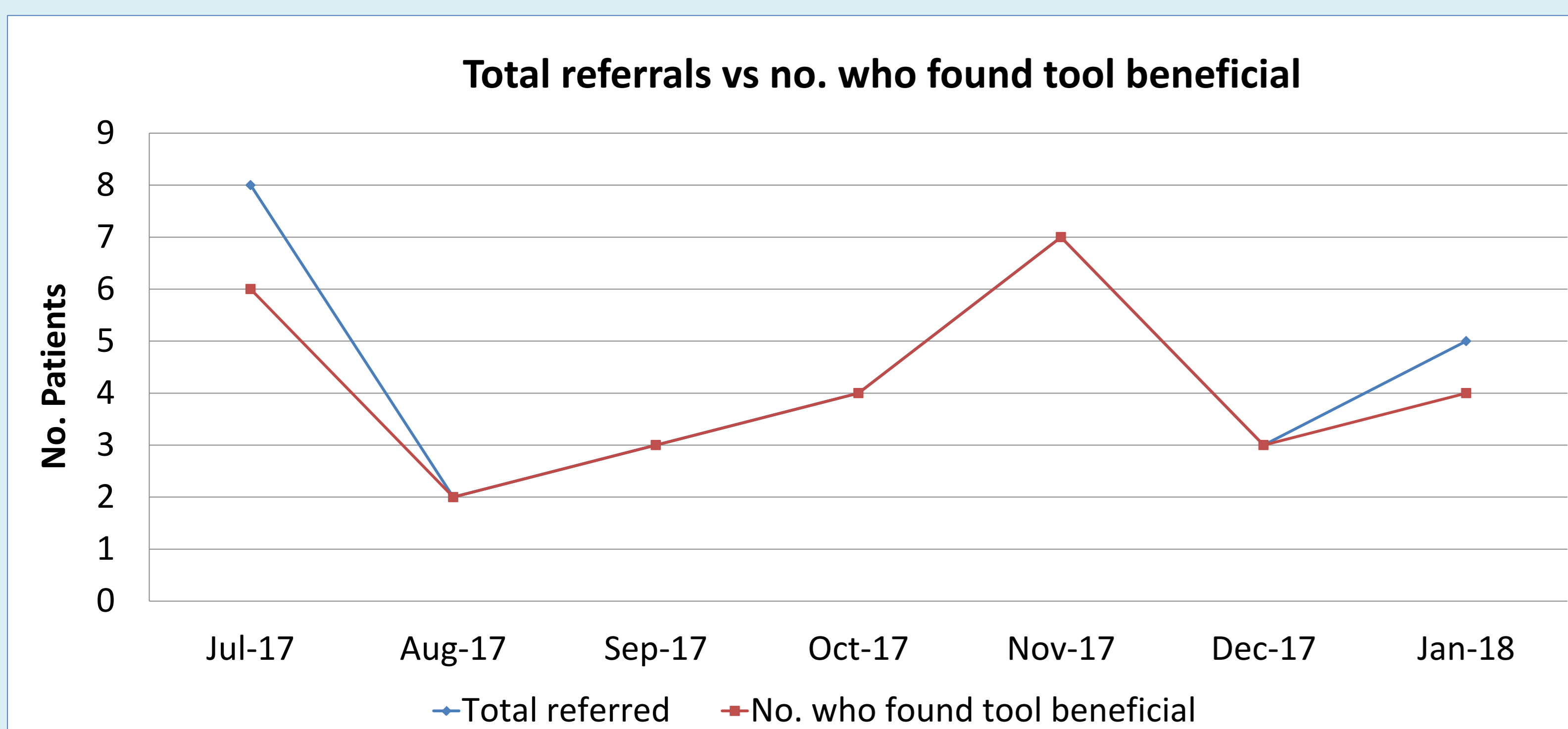
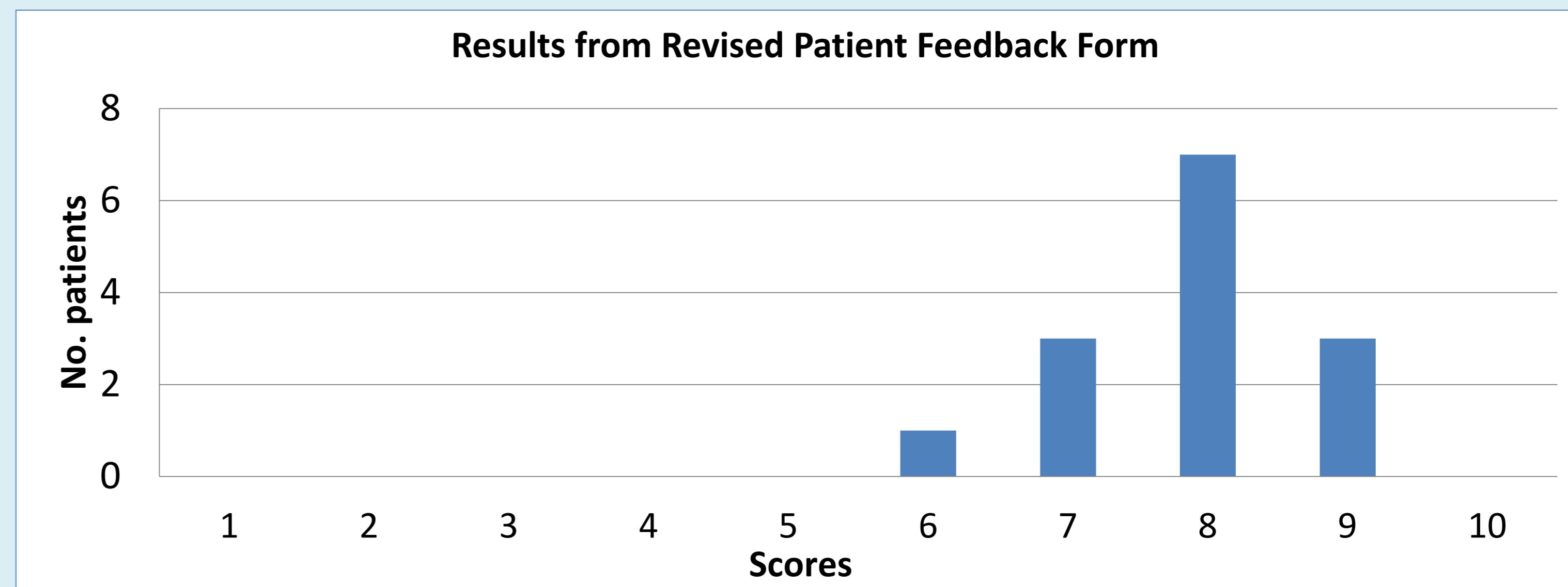
GUIDED RELAXATION - Listen to guided relaxations on CDs/online/Apps. These will help you through a guided relaxation and help calm you physically and emotionally. Speak to your therapist or health practitioner about where to access good guided relaxation for you.

ANXIETY DIARY - Get out your anxiety diary and write down how you are feeling – what is on your mind, what is worrying you, how you are feeling emotionally and physically. Write is as a letter to someone else or yourself if that helps. You can reflect on the diary when you are feeling better and look at ways to break your anxiety cycle in the future. Identify what time of the day or night you feel most anxious.



RESULTS:

- Over 80% of patients & families seen with 'The Mindful Hand' Tool found it helpful in managing anxiety related to breathlessness in palliative care.
- Data is summarised in the graphs included.
- Both patients, families/friends and healthcare staff found this quick anxiety management prompt tool helpful in the management of anxiety from breathlessness.



THE FUTURE:

- To launch 'The Mindful Hand' tool within the Trust for general use by Therapy from 2018.
- To present it at The RCOT National Conference 2019.
- To launch the tool nationally from 2019.