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**A CASE STUDY REPORT OF RIBBE AYE TEK0 (URBAN) AND TAM LONYO  
(RURAL) DANCE+THERAPY YOUTH GROUPS**

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## Introduction

Dance+Therapy (D+T) is a program that enables integration of dance into mental health and psychosocial support. The D+T groups were formed from pre-existing Youth Empowerment Groups formed and established by THRIVE Gulu. Youth Empowerment groups are youths mobilized and supported by THRIVE Gulu to form into groups, save money, borrow loans and be able to grow and develop economically through individual and group investments. After the 12 weeks sessions, post-assessment is carried out to determine symptoms reduction and the D+T members carryout community outreaches in which they share about positive changes that they have experienced because of the sharing, tasks they carried out during the sessions, and how they perceive themselves and their positive views of life.

Ribbe Aye Teko is a Youth Empowerment Group located in Kirombe Village, Techo parish, Layibi badege division, Gulu city. The group is comprised of 12 participants (6M, 6F) with 1 person with disability. It represents groups in the Urban context.

Tam Lonyo is a Youth Empowerment Group located in Akoyo Village, Lamola parish, Odek sub county, Omoro district. The group 15 participants (4M, 11F) with 2 persons with disability. It represents groups in the Rural context.

## Key Events/Activities that happen during the 12 Weekly Sessions of the Dance+Therapy Program

### Week One

- Getting to know group members.
- Creating awareness of the group's purpose.
- Identifying and clarifying member's expectations.
- Introduction of the concepts and routine practices of group sessions.

### Week Two

- Creating a group environment that is warm, inviting, and safe for all members.
- Building group conditions for safety, trust, and a sense of belonging among group members, and between the group members and their Peer D+T Leaders.
- Beginning to learn coping strategies, namely Grounding.

### Week Three

- Helping group members understand the importance of thought processes, feelings, and behaviors and how they affect each other.
- Supporting group members to develop a more positive self-image, specifically, as persons who have courage, strength and who can take charge of situations to survive.

#### Week Four

- Helping group members recognize their internal and external resources that they can use in times of difficulty.
- Increasing group members' knowledge of coping behaviors and skills that can be used in difficult situations.
- Supporting group members to recognize and validate each other's strengths.

#### Week Five

- Helping group members further understand how the body and mind affect each other, such as how past experiences are stored in the body as memories which can surface as both emotional and physical sensations.
- Helping group members recognize and name feelings and relate it to how it affects them.
- Expanding group members' toolbox of coping techniques with a movement breathing dance.
- Reminding group members that their toolbox contains resources that they can use anytime they feel stressed, discouraged, overwhelmed, or face a difficult situation.

#### Week Six

- Helping group members appreciate their lives-past, present, and future, acknowledging the occurrence of both painful and joyful moments.
- Initiating and sustaining motivation towards the future.
- Reminding group members of the importance and power of their toolbox for facing challenges and threats with resilience.

#### Week Seven

- Providing a supportive environment for the group members to express their grief over their losses and accept losses that cannot be recovered.
- Helping group members reflect on multiple internal losses in life due to war, torture, and displacement and how these losses have affected their beliefs, self-image, emotions, behaviors, and ability to reclaim their own goodness and self-worth.
- Reducing feelings of self-blame, guilt, and shame and begin the process of self-forgiveness.

#### Week Eight

- Helping group members face their fears, avoid avoidance, and share their painful experiences in a safe and supportive environment.
- Allowing group members to give and receive emotional support to and from one another.
- Informing group members about how mental health counselling works and encourage them to seek professional counselling if they require additional support to work through their traumatic experiences.
- Helping group members practice new coping skills when faced with strong emotions, threats to their emotional well-being, numbing, and dissociation.

### Week Nine

- This week builds on week 7 and week 8. It involves members follow-up of the group work conducted in those last two weeks.
- Helping group members identify the positive characteristics in their loved ones that have been passed onto them, and to utilize these memories and character traits as supports that are part of their own identity.

### Week Ten

- Providing a supportive environment for group members to express their grief over their losses and accept losses that cannot be recovered.
- Helping group members develop practices for positive grieving and keeping memories alive (pictures, sayings, symbols).
- Helping group members recognize how positive memories of loved ones build resiliency and can be internal resources for rebuilding their lives.
- Motivating group members to explore new endeavors, interests, and relationships as a way of recovering from some losses.

### Week Eleven

- Helping group members to reconnect with themselves by recognizing and appreciating their inherent dignity and value.
- Helping group members develop increased hope for their future lives and build connection to their communities.
- Supporting group members as they prepare to face future challenges.
- Facilitating group members' exploration of their personal goals.

### Week Twelve

- Reviewing the gains that group members have made through the group process (learning and support/healing).
- Helping group members to create a behavioral plan for applying coping skills to their lives.
- Discussing plans for two post-group community outreaches to share their learning with others and bring awareness about mental health to their communities.
- Emotionally processing and symbolizing the end of the cycle and model a healthy, appropriate process for saying goodbye.

## Highlights of Sharing by Ribbe Aye Teko and Tam Lonyo Dance+Therapy Participants during the 12 Weeks D+T Sessions

### Group Expectations Mentioned by the Youths

- Freedom of expression
- Knowledge
- T-shirts
- Ability of each of them to help each other
- They expect to be happy
- They expect to get relieved from stress
- They expect to get vocational trainings
- They expect to learn how to deal with situations
- They expect to forget about the past bad situations they went through
- Capital to start a business after the 12 weeks sessions

### The Different Acholi Cultural Dances and their Meanings which the youths are familiar with in their communities as part of the introductory sharing in the Dance+Therapy program.

- **Larakaraka**  
This is performed during celebrations like weddings and traditional marriages.
- **Otole**  
Otole is a kind of dance that expresses sorrow during war. They usually use bows and arrows when performing it.
- **Dingi dingi**  
This is also danced during celebrations, but it is only performed by very young girls.
- **Bwola**  
Bwola dance is performed during royal celebrations. For example, when welcoming the Rwot (“chief”) for an event. The dance is a symbol of royal power.
- **Ajere**  
This is danced by young girls and boys. In the process, we see the dancers expressing their love feelings for one another. This act is called *moko*.
- **Apiri**  
This is performed by elderly women.
- **Myel lyel**  
This is only danced during funerals.
- **Nanga**  
Nanga is used for expression of feelings, instrumentals like flutes are used and songs are also sung. The words in the songs tell what they are singing about. It could be happiness or even sorrow.

## 1. Why they love dancing as youths?

- Helps to release stress
- For unity
- Leisure
- Expression of emotions
- Helps to exercise and maintain good health
- Helps to develop an additional skill
- Expression of emotions
- Dancing is a potential income generating activity (IGA) especially in groups
- Helps to relieve the brain and body from mental and physical stress
- Strengthening bonds amongst friends
- Building confidence in oneself

## 2. Why they feel being in a group is important?

- Helps to enhance mental health
- Helps to have sense of belonging
- Helps to develop self esteem
- For purposeful living
- Protection factor
- Helps to fight loneliness/isolation
- Providing information

## 3. What members benefited from the 12weeks sessions -- Testimonies

- Learnt how to get rid of anger
- Learnt how to overcome certain situations in life
- Learnt how to create friendships during the sessions
- Learnt self-encouragement as women
- Meditation breathing while meditating upon their life also worked best for the members
- There was unity during the sessions
- Dance and entertainment
- Learnt use of good language

## 4. Challenges noted during the 12 weeks D+T program implementation

- The program emotionally reminded some of the participants of their past, but the members came to understand that it is part of the healing process in Mental Health.
- Some expectations from the youths were beyond the project scope such as startup capital for income-generating activities and vocational trainings.
- Some people were fearing to tell their stories at group level but eventually opened to our professional counsellors during the training.



- Sometimes participants take long to arrive at the training venue due to competing priorities.
- Abrupt weather changes made it difficult to attend training at times.

### Statistical Findings from Ribbe Aye Teko and Tam Lonyo Dance+Therapy Groups

Ribbe Aye Teko: The group is comprised of 12 participants (6M, 6F) with 1 person with disability. It represents groups in the Urban context.

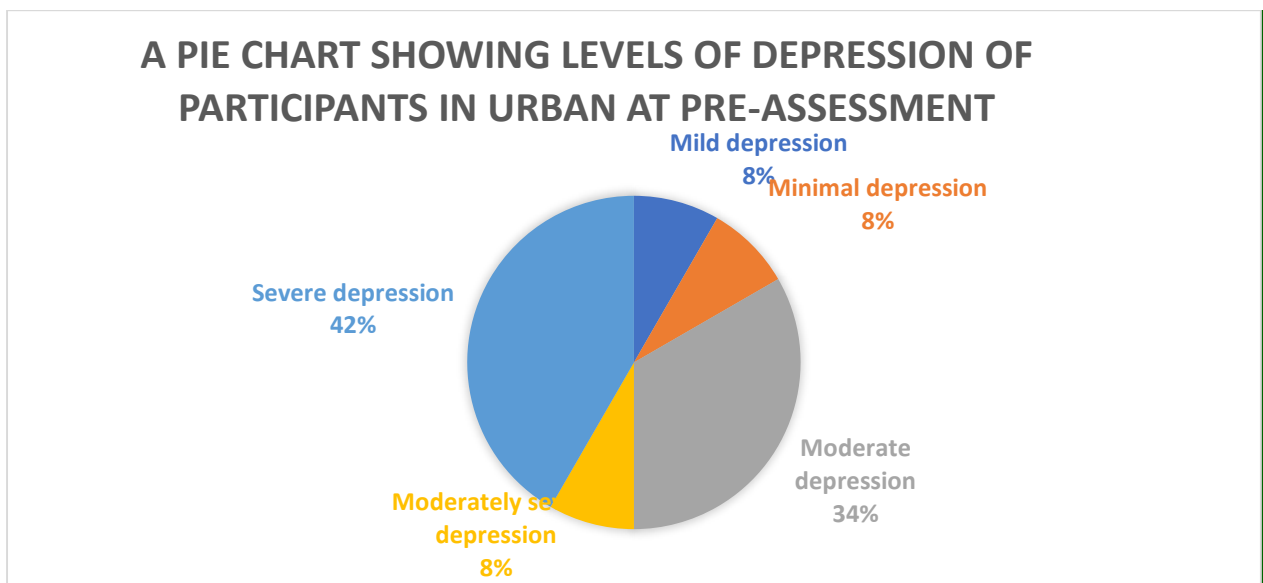
Tam Lonyo: The group 15 participants (4M, 11F) with 2 persons with disability. It represents groups in the Rural context.

### Variable One: Depression

#### Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Pre-assessment results

The results show that 84% of participants presented with severe, moderately severe, and moderate levels of depression while 16% presented mild and minimal level of depression. The presentation is as shown below;

Level of Depression at Pre-assessment	Frequency
Mild depression	1
Minimal depression	1
Moderate depression	4
Moderately severe depression	1
Severe depression	5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>



**Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Post-assessment results**

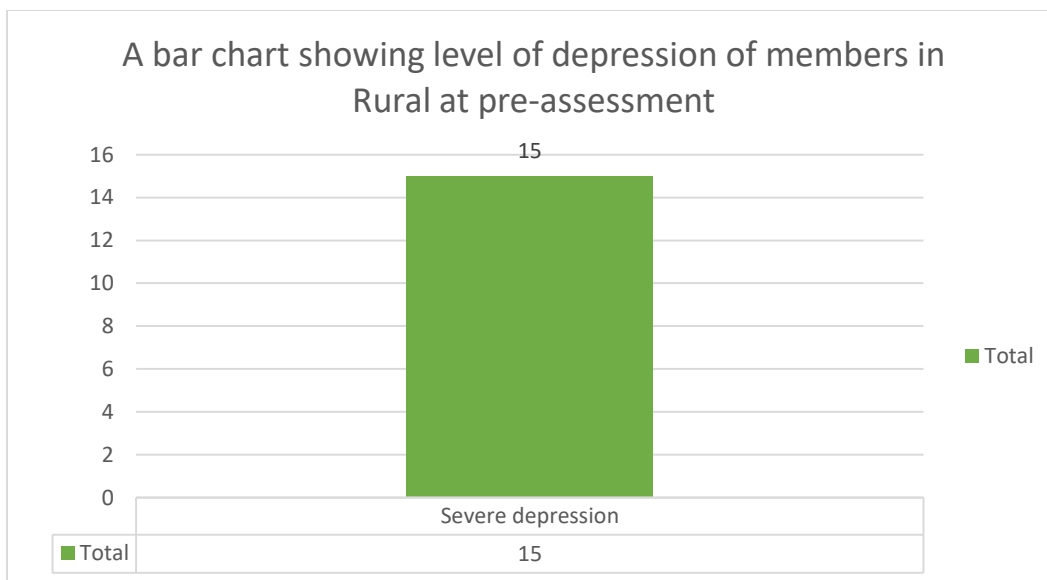
The results show that 100% of participants presented with minimal level of depression. The presentation is as shown below;

<b>Level of Depression at Post-assessment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Minimal depression	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>

**Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Pre-assessment results**

The results show that 100% of participants presented with severe level of depression. The presentation is as shown below;

<b>Level of Depression at Pre-assessment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Severe depression	15	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Post-assessment results**

The results show that 93% of participants presented with no depression, while 7% presented moderately severe level of depression and is being supported through individual counseling by THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors. The presentation is as shown below;

Level of Depression at Post-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
Moderately severe depression	1	7%
No depression	14	93%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Comparative analysis of findings on Depression

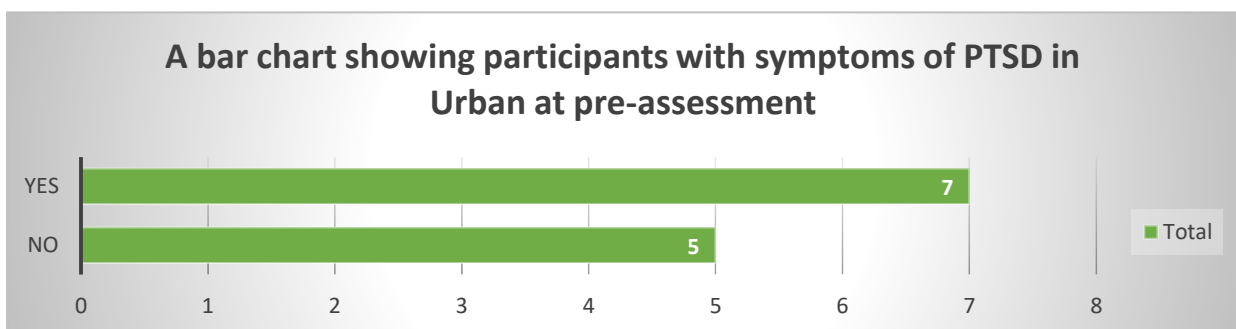
- ✦ 84% of youths in the urban context presented with severe, moderately severe, and moderate levels of depression at pre-assessment while in the rural setting, 100% of youths presented with severe depression. This means that the rural youths experience relative higher level of depression than the urban youths.
- ✦ 100% of youths in the urban setting presented with minimal level of depression at post-assessment while in the rural setting, 93% of the youths presented with no depression. This means that all the urban youths received healing through the weekly sessions while 7% of the rural youths are yet to fully recover after the 12 week's D+T sessions and still receiving continuous support from the THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors.

#### Variable Two: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

##### Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Pre-assessment results

The results show that 58% of participants presented with symptoms of trauma while 42% of the participants did not. The presentation is as shown below.

Client symptomatic PTSD at Pre-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
No	5	42%
Yes	7	58%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>



### Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Post-assessment results

The results show that 100% of participants did not present any symptoms of trauma at post-assessment as shown in the table below;

Client symptomatic PTSD at Post-assessment	Frequency
No	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>

### Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Pre-assessment results

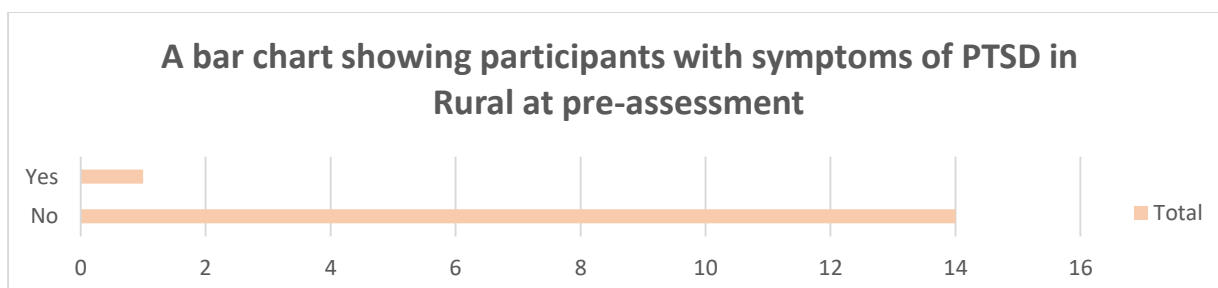
The results show that 100% of participants presented with symptoms of trauma. The presentation is as shown below.

Client symptomatic PTSD at Pre-assessment	Frequency
Yes	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>

### Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Post-assessment results

The results show that 93% of participants did not present any symptoms of trauma at post-assessment, while 7% did and is being further supported by THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors through individual therapy. Presentation is as shown in the table below.

Client symptomatic PTSD at Post-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
No	14	93%
Yes	1	7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>



### Findings and Interpretation-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- ✚ 58% of urban youths presented with symptoms of trauma at pre-assessment while 100% rural youths presented with symptoms of trauma. This means that the rural youths are relatively more traumatized than the urban youths.

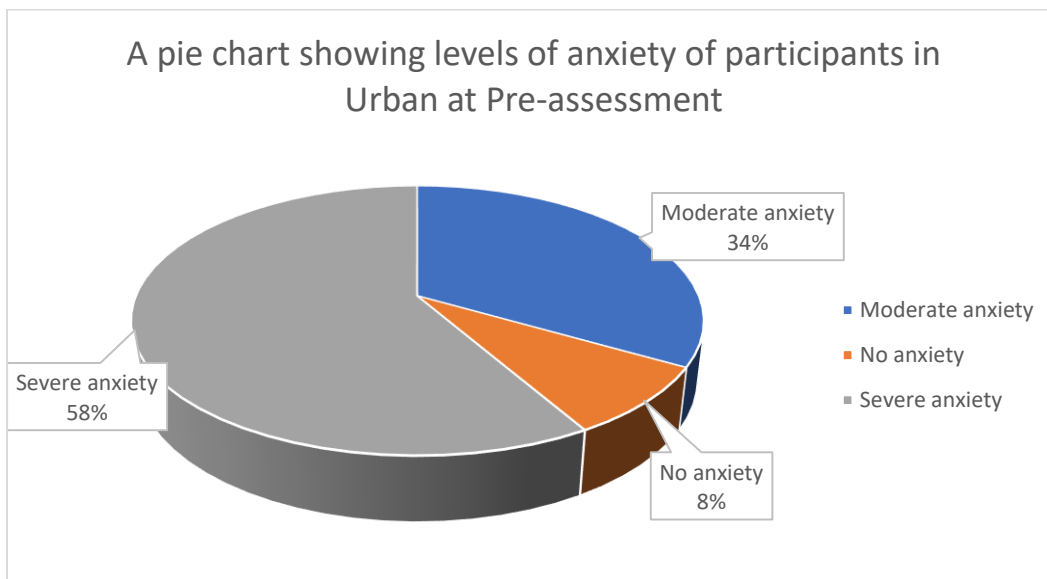
- ✦ 100% of the youths in the urban setting reported no symptoms of trauma at post-assessment, while the rural youths reported 93% with no symptoms of trauma. This means that all the urban youths received healing through the weekly sessions while 7% of the rural youths are yet to fully recover after the 12 week's D+T sessions and still receiving continuous support from the THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors.

### Variable Three-Anxiety

#### Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Pre-assessment results

The results show that 92% of participants presented with severe and moderate levels of anxiety, while 8% presented with no anxiety. The presentation is as shown below;

Level of anxiety at pre-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
No anxiety	1	8%
Moderate anxiety	4	34%
Severe anxiety	7	58%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>



#### Ribbe Aye Teko (Urban)-Post-assessment results

The results show that 100% of participants presented with no anxiety and mild level of anxiety at post-assessment. The table presentation is as shown below;

Level of anxiety at post-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
Mild anxiety	2	83%
No anxiety	10	17%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Rural-Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Pre-assessment

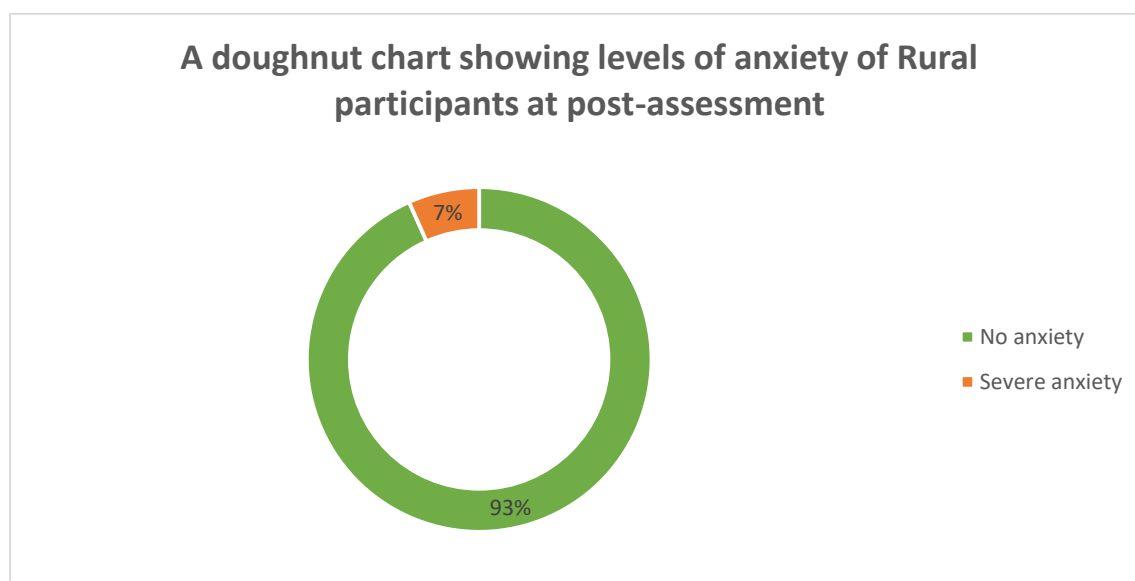
The results show that 100% of participants presented with severe level of anxiety. The presentation is as shown below;

Level of anxiety at pre-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
Severe anxiety	15	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Rural-Tam Lonyo (Rural)-Post-assessment

The results show that 93% of participants presented with no anxiety while 7% presented with severe level of anxiety and is being supported through individual counseling by one of the THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors. The presentation is as shown below;

Level of anxiety at post-assessment	Frequency	Percentage
No anxiety	14	93%
Severe anxiety	1	7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>



### Comparative analysis of findings on Anxiety

- ✚ 92% of the youths in urban setting presented with severe and moderate levels of anxiety, while in the rural setting, 100% of the youths presented with severe anxiety at pre-assessment. This means that the overall level of anxiety was high among rural youths as compared to the urban youths.
- ✚ 100% of the youths in the urban setting reported no and mild levels of anxiety at post-assessment, while the rural youths reported 93% of the with no anxiety. This means

that all the urban youths received healing through the weekly sessions while 7% of the rural youths are yet to fully recover after the 12 week's D+T sessions and still receiving continuous support from the THRIVE Gulu professional counsellors.

### Overall Level of Satisfaction of the Rural and Urban Youths with the Dance+Therapy Program

Overall, the client's level of satisfaction was measured against six variables, including ease of access to sessions, staff relationship, confidentiality, appropriateness and relevance, length of support and the location of the sessions. The findings from the survey show that 68% of the clients are very satisfied with the services, 24% are somewhat satisfied, 6% are somewhat dissatisfied, and 1% very dissatisfied with the services as measured against the six mentioned variables. This therefore means that **92% of the Dance+Therapy participants feel well pleased with the services they received from THRIVE Gulu through the Dance+Therapy program.** Below is a pie chart presentation of the findings.

