

# COMFORT IN COUNSEL: RECEIVING ADVICE PROMOTES WELL-BEING & FEELINGS OF BELONGING AMONG POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

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## BACKGROUND

SFU admitted ~7,000 new undergraduate students in 2022-2023 (SFU Institutional Research and Planning, 2023)

New students face significant social and academic uncertainties which can make their transition to university difficult

We conducted a well-powered, pre-registered field experiment to investigate whether receiving advice from another student can help newcomers in their transition to university

## METHODS

941 current SFU students ( $M = 19.7, SD = 3.4$ ; 55.2% female; 48.8% first-year) were assigned to receive:



an SFU campus map (*map condition*)



a piece of written advice from a former SFU student (*advice condition*)

Then, participants reported (a) their well-being on a set of validated well-being measures, (b) if they had received advice before starting university, and (c) if they did not, whether they wished they had

## PRE-REGISTERED HYPOTHESES

Students who received advice will report greater (a) happiness, (b) belonging, (c) social connection, and (d) appreciation, than students who received a map

Most students will report that they *did not* receive advice before starting university

Most students who did not receive advice before starting university will *wish* they had

## RESULTS

Most students (72%) received advice before starting university,  $\chi^2(1) = 174.13, p < .001$

Most students (76%) who did not receive advice before starting university wished they had  $\chi^2(1) = 67.15, p < .001$

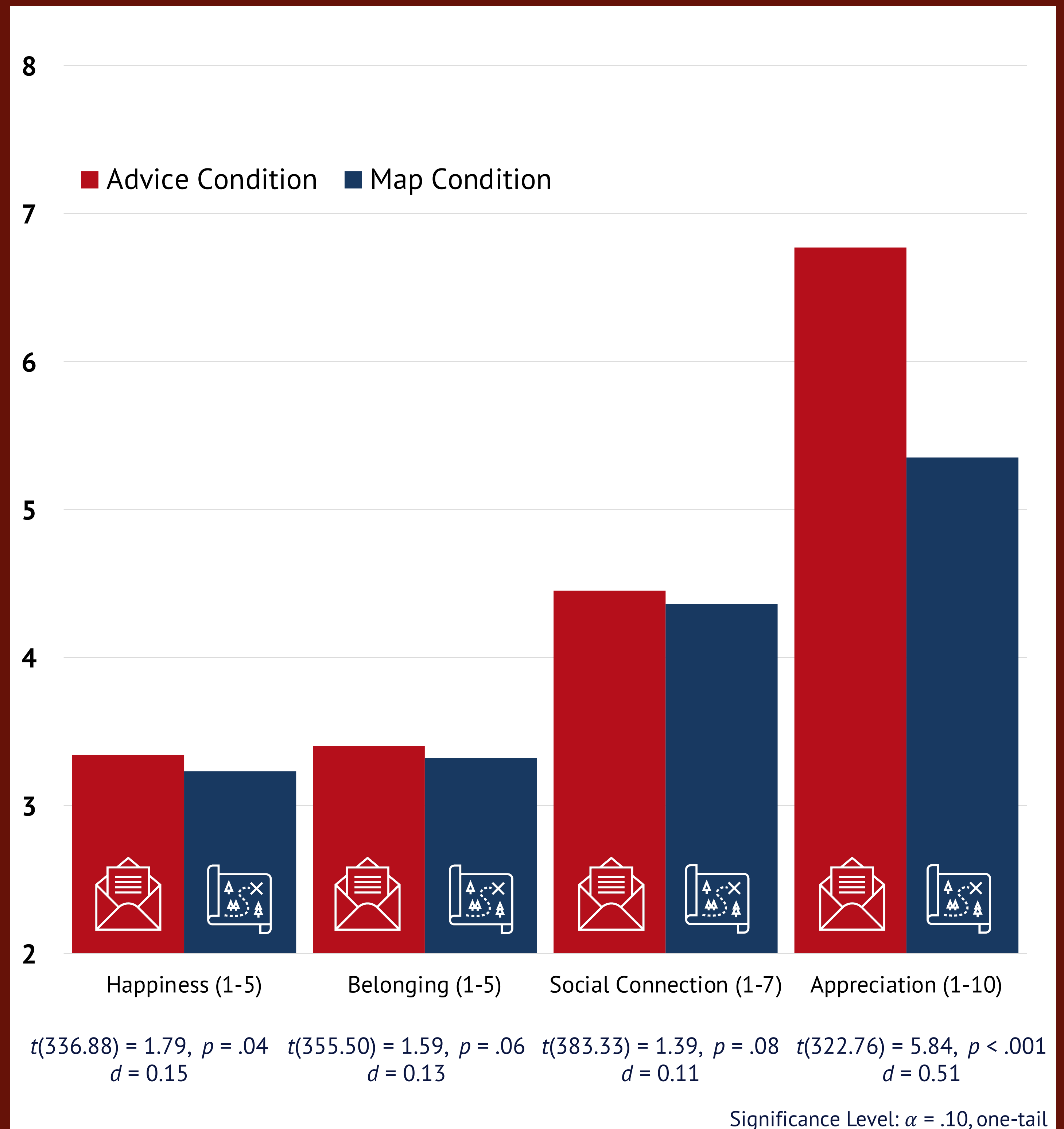
## DISCUSSION

Receiving advice can have greater well-being benefits than other forms of practical support

Universities should consider programs to provide new students with advice. Doing so will enhance their well-being during a difficult life transition.



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## Students given advice from a recent graduate reported greater well-being and belonging



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