

What Good Looks Like – Evaluation/Telling Your Story

Background

The Survivor Support Innovation and Development Fund is managed by Inspiring Scotland on behalf of Scottish Government. The Fund aims to enable third sector and other organisations to support the delivery of the Scottish Government’s strategic outcomes for survivors of sexual abuse. The key outcomes are that survivors feel safe and secure, have health have choice and control over the services they access, and survivors feel safe and secure. There are 25 charities supported by the current fund, receiving around £1.3m in 2019-20 and supporting over 2300 survivors a year across 32 local authorities.

This guide to service delivery has been prepared in collaboration with survivor charities who are supported by the Fund. A significant strength of portfolio working is the ability to share good practice across charities. A workshop took place in August 2019 and was attended by 14 staff from 13 different charities. The workshop involved a facilitated discussion on how survivor charities evaluate their services to improve effectiveness, tell a full and clear story to key stakeholders and to understand the impact they have on survivors and their families.

The discussion was prompted by the following questions

- How do you currently tell your story?
- What are the benefits of a full and clear impact analysis?
- What barriers or challenges have you experienced and how have you overcome them?
- What will inspire success going forward?

Co Produced in Partnership

Our thanks go to the following organisations who consulted and contributed to the preparation of this guide:

Addaction	Cornerstone
Mind Mosaic	Break the Silence
Thriving Survivors	Linkliving
Glasgow Council on Alcohol	Talk Now
Western Isles Rape Crisis Centre	Moving on Ayrshire
Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis	Moirra Anderson Foundation
Health in Mind	

How do you currently tell your story?

- **Do what you say you will do** - start with what you said you would do for your funder, i.e. in the application form you may have set out your vision and planned outcomes, review the numbers and explain any variance. Focus on planned outcomes, what has been achieved and explain anything unexpected
- **Know the difference you have made** - ensure your report addresses what you achieved, the difference you made and what you have learned. Acknowledge that your service doesn't make a difference to all users
- **Use of evaluation questionnaires** – using pre and post service evaluations can help tell the story of the difference your service has made to survivors. Scoring of these makes clear the extent of the improvement or otherwise
- **Case studies/voice of service users** - use relevant case studies, be sure to set out the context as to why you are using that case study i.e. be clear on the point being made, say if this is a typical case study or an exceptional one. Using quotes and photos helps to bring things to life and set context, confidentiality should be a key consideration and GDPR guidelines should be adhered to
- **Cost/Benefit analysis** – this can be a powerful tool when applying for funding or demonstrating the benefits/costs saved by your service
- **Impact measurement, qualitative/quantitative tools, data and reports** – clarity of your story supported by data is important, as are the reliability of the tools and data used and the ease with which you can source data
- **Credibility of reports/applications** – it is important to be open and honest in your submissions. Be honest about what hasn't worked and why and explain what you have done to improve
- **Input/feedback from others** – it is vital to seek feedback and input from others in your team, your Board or Trustees and anyone else who can add value
- **Staff training and education** – ongoing training and development of your team, particularly where the team is small is important to ensure there are no single points of failure and that they can contribute to reports etc, remaining motivated and engaged

What are the benefits of a clear impact analysis?

- **Understanding what works and what could be improved/stopped** – regular reviews of progress against objectives is helpful in understanding quickly what is working and what is not
- **Building survivor and others trust and confidence in your organisation** – if you are clear about the impact your services have and this is articulated well e.g. on your website, this will encourage people to engage with you more readily
- **Attract partnerships** – prospective partners will seek credibility and how they can best work with you are more likely to partner with you if it is clear what your strengths are and on the flip side what you don't do
- **Effectiveness and quality** – ongoing review of your process and impact will help you quickly understand where there are gaps, risks, or where changes are required. It will also give you and prospective funders/partners confidence that you will deliver what you say
- **Sharing success** – articulating your story well and ensuring your team have a voice will help to engage them

What barriers/challenges have you experienced and how have you overcome them?

- **Data/support tools** - extracting data can be time consuming and not having the right approach and/or tools can hinder your progress. Some reported using Warwick Edinburgh and Evaluation Support Scotland – see links below
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>
<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/>
- **Costs and time** – it is always tricky balancing the day job with completing reports and applications however one way to tackle this is to actively invest in planning and preparation. That means not leaving it until the last minute, booking out time in your diary dedicated to the task, seeking help/input/review from others, ensuring data is readily available, and sharing tasks and deadlines with your team
- **Staff motivation** – often paperwork tasks are seen as an inconvenience however if staff are supported, developed, empowered and given the time to prepare or contribute to reports/applications they will quickly adapt to using new skills
- **Process issues eg counselling/support unplanned endings** – pre and post questionnaire data can provide vital information, however this assumes all survivors will see the process through to the end. Using your knowledge and experience it is helpful to understand where people drop out and put in place regular evaluations and process reviews to consider other ways in which you can obtain the information you need
- **Matching different stakeholder needs** – it is recognised that stakeholders may have different needs, having a clear understanding of the needs, finding synergies and setting/managing expectations is key

What will inspire success going forward?

- **Plan and prepare** - be aware of how often a funder wants a progress report and diarise a reminder. Plan enough time, taking into consideration all the supporting evidence and data you will need. Signpost to others who will contribute and review when you will need their help
- **Ask for help/input or review from others** -seek support and advice from other stakeholders and use evidence from various sources, give them plenty of notice of your requirements
- **Be clear and concise** – avoid using jargon and try to be clear and concise. Link what you say to the outcomes you promised and focus on what the funder is looking for
- **Tell the full story and tailor to your audience** – using all sources of information, it helps if you can tell the full story supported by data or examples. For example, if you say that you wish to improve referrals from statutory/other services then provide the data, showing the numbers. The data should show the actual numbers and be clear about how much they have changed
- **Bespoke training and development** – different skillsets may be required for report writing, data analysis – seek expert help through Inspiring Scotland or other sources to meet your needs
- **Consider using different supporting tools** - use graphs, pie-charts, photos or videos to support your message if appropriate. Some organisation such as The Big Lottery now seek applications via video which can help bring to life your organisation
- **Use other resources** - such as your website, the trustees annual report, social media to tell your story. This will improve public confidence in your charity and provides an opportunity to spread the word on your good work