

Tools for success: impact assessment

Telling your impact story: Tools for story telling

Stories of people your charity works with, developed for these purposes are often blended case studies. They need to pick up aspects of those stories that may not occur in every case but are typical of a group of cases. Tools you can use to help develop those stories include:

Story stems	The starts of stories of typical service users, that can be developed further in conversation to follow 'what happened next?'
Naming the 'person'	Which can make it easier for participants to identify with them and explore their lives around the core intervention.
Story archetypes	Outlines of more complete series of events, which can be presented by one workshop participant, and then expanded in conversation.
Real life case studies	Which can be blended and used as foundations for archetypes.
Five Whys	A tool borrowed from management consulting – challenging why disadvantages happen or needs arise by tracking back to the root cause: you keep asking 'why?' until you get to the root cause.

Presenting your story

How you present your impact story is key to how your audience engages with, and is influenced by, the information. Having collated and analysed all the information you gathered, you need to make the presentation of your findings relevant and helpful, focused on the needs of your intended audience.

Things to remember when preparing to present your impact stories

- Make the information clear and succinct
- Use diagrams and infographics as well as explanatory text to keep it engaging
- Include the impact stories you developed, to bring the whole thing to life
- Explain your methodology and information sources, to build confidence in what you are presenting
- Don't be afraid of emotive language that describes, fairly and helpfully, the reality of the needs and outcomes you are describing
- Don't be afraid of uncertainty: it is in every situation, so recognise that
- If you are going to publish any findings externally, ensure information has first been through the appropriate channels for buy-in and approval.