



# Promising Futures

Capturing Program Evidence with Storytelling



# Capturing Program Evidence with Storytelling

## Series Overview

1. Introduction to Storytelling for Change
- 2. Storytelling for Evaluation**
3. Selecting Your Storytelling Approach
4. Developing Implementation and Facilitation Guides
5. Ethical and Trauma Informed Data Collection
6. Exploring & Sharing Storytelling Data



# Module #2: Storytelling for Evaluation



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# Objectives

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## Members will be able to:

- Describe the different strategies for using storytelling for program development and evaluation
- Identify the main characteristics of stories used for evaluation
- Decide when to use storytelling approaches



# Storytelling for Program Evaluation

Evaluation involves the systematic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness and efficiency of a program, a program's components, or an organization's strategy.

Evaluators may also refer to storytelling as qualitative approaches or “methods” used in evaluations.

Evaluation methods refer to the collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of information (data).

Two primary approaches in program evaluation include quantitative and qualitative methods:



Quantitative methods involve looking at numbers to describe data or answer questions about the relationship between different data points.



Qualitative methods concern with how phenomena work to understand parts of the story that cannot be told through numbers

# Sources of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data can be collected from individuals or groups of adult and child survivors, staff members and others who have experiences with the program.

Common forms of qualitative data include:

- Interviews of individuals one-on-one or via focus groups
- Observations (e.g. of program activities, behaviors, procedures)
- Document review (e.g. organizational or programmatic records)



# Benefits of Storytelling for Program Evaluation



Storytelling or qualitative approaches to evaluation place an emphasize on peoples lived experiences and the meanings they make from those experiences<sup>1</sup>



Storytelling in narrative form are powerful ways of communication and are likely to resonate with various audiences<sup>2</sup>.



Storytelling better captures the **“how”** and **“why”** rather than “how much” or “how many”<sup>3</sup>.



The information captured in storytelling is often deeper and richer than what numerical data can tell us alone.



When used with quantitative data and it can provide a fuller picture of a program



Storytelling can help uncover unintended consequences or unexpected outcomes from a program.

# Storytelling and Equity

Storytelling approaches can be particularly helpful for programs serving historically marginalized communities. BIPOC/ People of the Global Majority have often been left out of research about “what works” that define evidence-based programs or “best practices”.

Consider using storytelling when:

- unclear about the “fit” of a particular program model or strategy with a community
- adapting a program developed for one community to another
- established indicators of change do not exist for a particular community
- working with communities who may be more comfortable with storytelling and narratives (e.g. Indigenous and Tribal communities<sup>4</sup>)



# Storytelling and Equity

The voices of children and youth, individuals with low-literacy, or who have disabilities are also often missing from program evaluations.

Storytelling approaches can reduce barriers to participation for these individuals especially when designed to meet participants developmental age and literacy levels.

Visual and art-based strategies for storytelling may be particularly helpful.



# Uses of Storytelling for Program Evaluation

Storytelling can be used at any stage of a program's development

- When deciding on a program model or approach  
How well does this program fit with the community?
- When clarifying your program's theory of change  
How well defined are the programs activities, strategies, and expected outcomes?
- To understand program implementation  
How well are the program activities being conducted?
- To capture program effectiveness  
What are the results or outcomes from participating in program? How effective is it in achieving these outcomes?

# Storytelling for Program Design

Storytelling can be used to design or select new programming that is responsive to the needs of survivors.

Stories help us better **understand the context for change**, such as an organization's own readiness to implement a new program, their relationships with the community and the experiences and needs of the survivors themselves.

Stories about:

- Staff experiences working with the community that will be served  
Lessons learned from past efforts to serve this community
- Important worldviews  
The role of family, the meaning of safety and well-being
- Survivors' experiences with victim service and similar organizations  
Current & historical barriers and successes
- Survivors needs and assets  
The specific services that will meet their needs and build on their assets

# Storytelling for Program Development

Storytelling can help us **clarify how the program works**.

Stories can be used to identify the core program activities or strategies being implemented, and if these core components are leading to the expected outcomes.

Stories about:

- What participants actually do in the program
- Survivors' experiences with the various activities, what they like and dislike
- Staff and survivors' perceptions about the expected outcomes of the program
- Adaptations made to programming

# Storytelling for Continuous Quality Improvement

Storytelling can be used **to improve emerging or established programs.**

Stories can identify how well the program is in meeting its objectives and identify barriers and facilitators to implementing program services and activities.

Stories about:

- Survivors' experiences getting connected to services  
Challenges, things that worked well
- Survivors' experiences with receiving services  
Satisfaction with programming  
Identifying gaps in services and if needs were met
- Staff perceptions of successes and challenges implementing the program

# Storytelling for Capturing Program Outcomes

Storytelling can be used to both **identity and capture programs outcomes**.

Stories can also help organizations explain the links between the program activities and strategies and outcomes (i.e. the “how” and “why” of a programs impact).

Stories about:

- Important changes experienced
  - Changes in knowledge, behaviors, skills, attitudes, stability or in relationships
- Applying skills learned in the program to their everyday lives
- The differences parents see in their children
- Aspects of the program that were most helpful

# Final Considerations

Careful consideration of:

- The specific aims and goals of an evaluation
- The questions you are trying to answer about the program
- A deep understanding of the community members and survivors reached by the program

Qualitative approaches have the following drawbacks:

- May be more resources intensive (time, compensation, recording, transcription, analysis time)
- Survivors may feel they can only share positive results of the program and less likely to share critical feedback
- Smaller sample may not be representative of all program participants experiences

# Key Takeaways

- ❑ Storytelling, often referred to as qualitative evaluation methods, is rich in context and emphasizes peoples lived experiences and the meanings they make from those experiences
- ❑ Storytelling for evaluation can help organizations learn about communities' important world views and their needs and assets to improve the chance for creating effective programs.
- ❑ Storytelling can be used to monitor program progress, identify and remove barriers to participation during program implementation.
- ❑ Storytelling offers a flexible approach to capture emerging, and unanticipated outcomes occurring as a result of programming.



# Reflection

- ❑ What are my goals for storytelling?
- ❑ How will I use the findings?

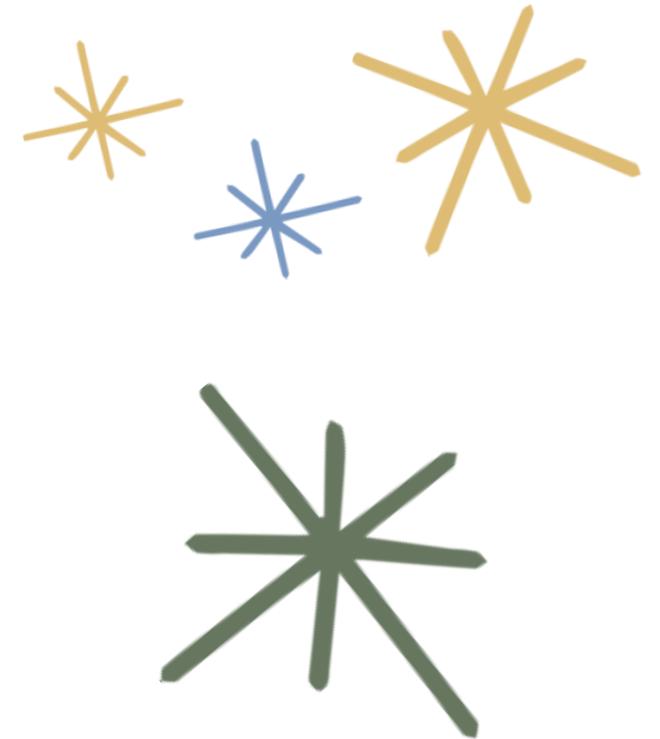


# Next Module

## Module #3: Selecting your Storytelling Approach

### Objectives:

- Identify the information needed to begin the development of a storytelling strategy
- Understand the pros and cons and considerations for using various storytelling approaches
- Select among various types of storytelling approaches



# Module 2: References and Resources



## Resources on storytelling for evaluation:

- [Using Narrative Methods to Link Program Evaluation and Organization Development \(McClintock\)](#)
- [A popular method of collecting success stories is the Most Significant Change \(MSC\) strategy](#)
- [Context for Change in Evaluation \(Snow\)](#)

# Module 2: References and Resources



## References

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The development of this resource was supported by Grant Number 90EV0434 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services