

## Fact Sheet 2

# Measuring Client Outcomes

## What makes outcome data different?

We are so used to collecting quantity and quality driven data that many times we have not been asked to provide or even collect data that tells us what we are really doing with our clients and the difference that our service or program is making in the client's life as a result of their engagement or participation. This type of data tells a story that is greater than the number of clients you are seeing and the number of activities that you are providing. Outcome data tells your funders, your clients, your stakeholders about the important outcomes that are being achieved for your clients as a result of their participation in your service/s.

Outcome data tells you the change in your clients in areas such as: circumstance, situation, behaviour, attitude, skills and knowledge etc related to your client group and the objective/purpose of the service or program that you are providing.

## Why collect outcome data?

Collecting outcome data requires you to identify tools and processes that will assist you to implement the collection of outcome data. However once you begin the process you will be able to not only track the outcomes for your clients but implement quality improvement practices that will enable you to improve the programs and services that you are offering. You can also use this data to demonstrate the work that you are doing as it strongly talks to the outcomes that your service is achieving, this leads to increase sustainability in your organisation as you can clearly demonstrate the work that you do and have the data on hand to provide in submissions, tenders and reports for funding.

Funders are now asking for outcome data and are requesting submissions that clearly state what the outcomes are that you will expect from the program/service you provide. In order to outline this you need to understand how to identify the outcomes that you expect to achieve.

## How can we determine what outcome data we should be collecting?

In order to determine the outcome data that you should be collecting it is important to understand the purpose of your program or service and who your customer or client group is. Once you can identify this you then begin to determine what outcomes would tell you if your client group are doing better as a result of being involved in your service/program. Remember these are related to the purpose of your service. These might be things such as: increased confidence in parenting; improved attachment and bonding with their child; parents have increased skills in relation to playing with their child; families have achieved their articulated case plan goals; and sustainable housing. These are just a few examples.

## How do we collect outcome data?

Depending on the service or program that you are providing will depend on the type of data that you will be collecting. However in the community sector outcome data for clients is generally collected through surveys, client case plan goals, and observation data. Whilst much of this data is self-reported it is still valid and reliable data and tells a strong story as to work that you are doing with your clients.

When developing surveys it is important to ask the following questions:

- What is it that we are wanting to collect? (relate this to your performance measures for your client outcomes)
- When do we need to collect this data? (pre, post and then 6-12months later)
- What questions do I need to ask? (do not have more than 5 questions in a survey, ensure the questions you have are directly related to your client performance measures)
- Where will we store and collate the information that we have collected? (So often data is collected but then nothing happens with it until it is requested and then there is a great deal of work. Consider a spreadsheet or process for the collection of the data and then analysis).
- Software like the Results Scorecard can assist your organisation in managing your performance and encourages quality improvement and organisation effectiveness. For further information click on this link: <http://resultsscorecard.com/>

## We want to start collecting client outcome data, how do we find out more about this?

If you would like to find out more about how to do this work, our team at RLG Australia would be very happy to discuss this with you and assist you in this work, please contact us at [info@resultsleadership.org.au](mailto:info@resultsleadership.org.au)