



The Development of an Outcomes Model

The following comment from a leading provider of services to children in Australia (The Lighthouse Foundation) captures the importance of this development work, and the global development of outcomes based approaches.

I agree that there is a need for an outcomes focus, we can see the benefits of the approach in our young people, but how do we demonstrate it to government? This is one of the challenges we are facing. It would be great to get some feedback about how you measure the success of the therapeutic programs? We have survived without any government funding for 18 years, but we are now in discussions with government about funding. The need to demonstrate these outcomes is vital. (Rudy Gonzales, Director)

Potential Benefits and Value

It is extremely important to identify the potential benefits and value of developing your organization's model and outcomes. These are some of them, but there may be more that emerge as we explore things more closely.

1. The primary benefit that underpins all further benefits will be improved outcomes for the service user.

2. The development of a coherent model will unify and further distinguish your organization's work. It is essential that the model is conceptualized so it is clear to everyone.

3. Improvements in relationships with referring agencies and funders by providing clearer information on services and outcomes. This will lead to improvements in funding retention and the development of new funders.

4. A coherent model will support long term sustainability of your organization as it will become embedded, providing continuity and consistency through any period of change.

5. Improvements in your organization's understanding of an outcomes based model and alignment between the organization's activity and outcomes.

6. A clear focus on outcomes can inform your organization's strategic decision making on how to best use its resources, where to make investments and where to make cut backs. How does every aspect of your organization's activity best support positive outcomes?
7. A shared understanding of your organization's outcomes can greatly improve the team's sense of purpose and be highly motivating for employees to see clear evidence of the outcomes of their work.
8. The model, with all supporting processes and materials, will strengthen your organization's brand – for example, if you work with children, each child's case review can be provided with a clearly recognizable and distinct report based on outcomes achieved by the child.
9. A consistent model used across the organization will be more efficient in terms of administrative systems.
10. Existing systems such as quality assurance and case work records, etc can be used as a source for outcomes information - adding meaning to the already established systems.
11. Larger organizations are in an excellent position to evidence the outcomes of their work. Large amounts of data will be available for analysis. The first thing that is necessary for practice development and continuous improvement is consistency of practice. A consistent approach with a good size group is ideal for academic research and publication.
12. A well designed outcomes approach can provide opportunities for service user's involvement in their own development and in the wider organization.
13. The process of assessment and planning will strengthen the professional networks by everyone being involved in the same processes and speaking the same language.
14. Once established, the process of assessment, outcome evaluation and planning will lead to clear identification of the best and most effective practice, and hence contribute to the culture of continuous improvement.

Feasibility Study

Given the potential benefits of this development work a feasibility study is essential to ensure that whatever work may follow, will maximize these benefits in the most effective and efficient manner.

The study will help determine that such a development is useful to your organization and a worthwhile investment of resources. It will ensure that the development project, should it proceed, will fully utilize what is already in place and that the opportunity is used to provide benefits across your organization.

For an informal discussion on this service please Contact us at www.patricktomlinson.com