Storytelling Evaluation Methodology

26 November 2020

How we came to use storytelling

Introduction to Storytelling Methodology

Most Significant Change (MSC)

- Collecting stories from participants about what's changed for them, and the participatory interpretation of these stories.

- Teller decides what change looks like for them.

- Good for measuring change that is unexpected, emergent, personalised or diverse, and understanding how change happens.

Storytelling at AOFS

1. Recruit and train a team of story collectors.

2. Story collectors meet with storytellers and discuss - what changed for the storyteller as a result of their involvement.

3. Conversation is recorded and transcribed.

4. Edited down into a 1-2 page story.

5. Discussion session to analyse learning.

6. Stories and learning shared publicly.

How we've used storytelling

- Looking for Change, 2017
- Our Place, 2018
- **ICON, 2019**
- Lankelly Chase Systems Change, 2019
- **Oxford Together, 2020**

> In the photo I was Emmeline Pankhurst. And yes, it gave me another life. Yes. I feel that I have Pankhurst opened for me, really opened my eyes. Pankhurst made my world get wider.

ICON PARTICIPANT

#ICONstories

> Being involved in the ICON project, give me much better understanding of empathy and trust. I feel ICON at all times as a warmth in my heart. It's real, I feel it.

ICON PARTICIPANT

#ICONstories

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ICON...

1. COLLABORATED
"I was much happier being part of that group than I ever thought I would be."

2. FELT A PART OF SOMETHING
"There was real camaraderie and encouragement towards each other."

3. DISCOVERED NEW THINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES
"I used to think I didn't really have expressions..."

4. DEVELOPED CREATIVELY
"I was an empty vessel, desperate to be filled up again."

5. DEVELOPED TECHNICAL SKILLS
"It's something I would like to pursue in the future."

6. MADE CONNECTIONS
"One of the members in the Q&A, his mum said, 'I've got my son back'."

7. DEVELOPED CONFIDENCE
"It's taken myself out of myself. The introverted side to me is long gone."

8. FELT A SENSE OF PRIDE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT
"I felt a little bit taller, even though I'm not, but I felt a little bit taller"

9. FELT ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD
"What does this mean I can do, if I've done this?"

10. PEOPLE HAD FUN
"I feel ICON at all times as a warmth in my heart. It's real, I feel it."
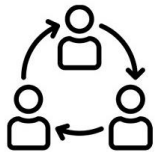
WHY WAS ICON SUCCESSFUL?

1. THERE WERE HIGH EXPECTATIONS

"It weren't 'yeah, this is as good as we're going to get', it was like, 'no, this is good'."

2. PEOPLE FELT VALUED AS PART OF A TEAM

"Everyone felt very committed to pulling it off against the odds."

3. HIERARCHIES WERE BROKEN DOWN

"It felt like they were everybody's photographs."

4. PEOPLE LEARNED THROUGH DOING

"It got me looking at things in a different way and thinking critically."

5. THE PROJECT WAS FLEXIBLE

"The freedom to go with the flow, take risks and make mistakes..."

6. THERE WAS CLARITY AND STRUCTURE

"I used to look forward to coming in every Thursday morning, half past ten."

7. PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH THE PROJECT IN DIFFERENT WAYS

"I saw the whole thing through to the end, and that was good knowing I could do that."

8. PEOPLE FELT SUPPORTED

"I feel like I'm actually 'seen'. Here, I actually feel like a real person."

Oxford Together Stories
What we learned

Arts at the OLD FIRE STATION · Oxford Hub

"It's a two-way street. Someone benefits from someone else giving, and the person who's giving benefits from knowing that they're contributing, not just sitting on their jacksie and letting the world go by."

- from *Two-way Street* (practical support volunteer)

Artwork by Thomas Radclyffe, based on *The Council For Me Is The People On The Grond*

Arts at the OLD FIRE STATION | Oxford Hub
Bringing people and organisations together to build a better Oxford.

We collected stories from people involved in Oxford's community response to Covid. These stories told us the key questions to ask if we want to provide support which is responsive, joined-up, and specific to each individual's needs and context.

Find out more:
www.oxfordtogetherstories.com

1. Are we investing in relationships?

2. Are we keeping sight of the fact that the small things matter?

3. Are we collaborating with others?

4. Are we enabling less hierarchical decision making and involving people who bring different voices and perspectives?

5. Are we being creative and taking risks?

6. Are we empowering and giving agency to local groups, communities and volunteers?

Collecting stories

Collecting Stories

Four guiding Questions:

1. What did you do?
2. What changed for you?
3. Why was this change important?
4. What were the main things that made this change happen?

Storytellers

- Tellers guided by what you want to learn, whose voices needs to be heard, and who wants to share their story.

- Important to include diverse perspectives – staff, volunteers, artists etc.

- Making sure teller and collectors are supported and comfortable is key

Transcribing and editing

Editing stories

Transcripts are edited down into 1-2 page stories which aim to:

- Faithfully reflect the teller's insights into impact and its significance for them.

- Accurately keep the teller's 'voice' in the story – telling it in their own words.

- Vividly capture the reader's attention.

I felt a little bit taller

'I felt very privileged to do this project and it really did give me a bit of a confidence boost, you know? I felt valued, I felt valued to help create this. Even years after I will always remember and take away with me that feeling, the sense of accomplishment - I belong, I have a place here, I have much to contribute, yeah you did that, you. I felt a little bit taller, even though I'm not, but I felt a little bit taller, I felt a very strong sense of pride.'

Discussion Session

- Facilitated meeting to help us reflect on the stories.

- Participative process.

- Involves people with different relationships to the focus of the evaluation and the organisation.

Sharing stories

Why storytelling has worked for us

- Starts with listening
- Holistic
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Meaningful

Why storytelling has worked for us

- Learning
- Communications
- Creativity
- Reporting to funders

Group discussion

Discuss:

- Thoughts and reflections on what's been shared?

- How might it relate to your own practice?

- What questions do you have?

Oxford Together Stories and report - https://www.oxfordtogetherstories.com/

Storytelling guide & previous reports and stories – https://oldfirestation.org.uk/project/storytelling-evaluation-methodology/