Demonstrating Impact: A Guide for Perinatal Mental Health Organisations

Made using notes from workshop entitled "Making the Most of EDEI Research: An interactive workshop supporting you to demonstrate the impact of the work you do" at

'Strengthening the Roots' Hearts and Minds National Meet-up May 2025

Core Principles

Consider pushing back— You can question funders when data collection processes don't fit your organisation. Ask why specific data is wanted and how it will be used. You have the right to advocate for meaningful measurement approaches.

Meet people where they are – Remember power and privilege dynamics. Data collection should be accessible and respectful of service users' circumstances and needs.

Getting Started

Choose the right tools carefully – Selecting appropriate measurement tools takes time. Don't rush this process, the right tools will serve you better in the long run.

Provide adequate training – Ensure staff delivering services have proper training to support data collection measures effectively.

Test different approaches – Try various measurement methods, such as social connection scores, to find what works best for your service users.

What to Measure

Quality over quantity – Do you really need to collect everything you're asked for? Can each data point be justified? Focus on what truly demonstrates your impact.

Balance quantitative and qualitative – Use mixed methodologies. Rating scales need context and specificity, qualitative data provides essential supporting information.

Ask service users directly:

- "How does this feel to you?"
- "Are you getting what you want out of seeing us?"
- "What do you need?"

Practical Implementation

Build in follow-up processes – Incorporate checks after service users leave the service to capture longer-term impact.

Use technology thoughtfully – Consider automated texts, online platforms, and tools like Salesforce with tablet interfaces to streamline data collection.

Incentivise participation – Small incentives like £5 vouchers can improve response rates.

Enable local comparisons – Collect data that allows comparison with local area statistics to demonstrate relative impact. *Example: Compare your outcomes against IDACI scores to show funders that achieving good results in high-deprivation areas represents exceptional impact.*

Equalities and Anti-Racist Practice

Centre power and privilege – Always consider how power dynamics affect data collection. Who is being asked to provide data and why? How might cultural differences impact responses?

Make data collection accessible – Ensure your measurement approaches work for people from all backgrounds. Consider language barriers, cultural contexts, and different ways of expressing wellbeing and distress.

Challenge assumptions – Be aware that standardised measures may not reflect the experiences of all communities. Supplement with culturally appropriate tools and community-led evaluation methods.

Working with Others

Partnership is key – Collaborate with other organisations and peer researchers. Shared learning strengthens everyone's impact measurement.

Capture stories creatively– Consider interviews and video testimonials to bring qualitative data to life in compelling ways.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Data can be skewed by service uptake and completion rates** – account for this in your analysis
- **Don't let perfect be the enemy of good** – start measuring and refine your approach over time
- **Remember that new organisations often self-report differently** – build this understanding into your evaluation framework

Remember: *Effective impact measurement should serve your organisation and service users, not just satisfy funders. The goal is to understand and improve your work, not just tick boxes.*

Technology Platforms Discussed (mixed experiences)

Plinth – An AI-powered platform specifically designed for charities and community organisations. It helps with grant applications, impact measurement, automated report generation, and data management. Features include AI-powered survey tools, secure data handling, and integration with funding processes. Free forever for small charities.

Salesforce Health Cloud with tablet interface – A comprehensive patient/service user management system that allows data collection on mobile devices and tablets. Particularly useful for organisations needing to capture data in various settings, with secure messaging, progress tracking, and integration with other healthcare systems. Offers mobile-compatible interfaces that bridge the divide between staff, service users, and data.