How to gather and share stories of significant change?

For your Impact Self-Reflections and for the Winter Count, you will share stories of meaningful change and impact on well-being. There are many different ways to gather stories of significant change. Here, we outline a few examples, and encourage you to use what is helpful and feasible in your practice.

Collecting stories

Talking circles with youth and families

This involves bringing youth, caregivers, or staff together to share stories of change as a result of the program or support. You can involve an Elder to have the sharing validated with smudging. Each person in the circle responds to an open question such as "Looking back, what do you think has been an important change for you that was a result of coming to the program?". If the participants are comfortable with it, you can record the audio or video.

▶ **Listen to a youth worker speaking about the ways youth share their story.**

Visual storytelling with children and youth

Instead of verbal stories, consider inviting children to draw about their dreams for the future, their family or home, or their feelings. Photovoice is a visual storytelling methodology well-suited to youth. Youth receive a camera or use their cellphones to take pictures that answer a question, for example, 'what does family mean to you?'. After the child or youth has drawn or taken their pictures, ask them to tell you about the pictures.

Reflective sessions with staff

Ask staff to gather together to share stories of impactful experiences with service users, whether as a success story or a learning opportunity. This could be incorporated into weekly team meetings.

Exit interviews

Many agencies have participants fill out surveys at the end of a program or service. Consider also having an in-person discussion with the family or individual to hear their story of how the program was for them in their own words.

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Documenting stories

Create a file that serves you as a story bank. This can be a word document or a spreadsheet, or a folder where you save media files and notes. You can add a short reflection to each story indicating which domains and outcomes the story speaks to. Compiling stories in one document allows you to use a search function and filter stories and your reflective notes by key words. Make sure you de-identify stories by removing names, locations, or other details that could identify an individual.

> ▶ **Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias speaking about sharing stories weekly in an agency's regular work schedule.**

Selecting stories

Sort the stories into the seven domains of well-being. Explore with your team how you want to select one story for each domain to enter in your Impact Self-Reflection. Which story best describes what changes happened for children, youth, caregivers, and staff in each domain?

Ask staff to provide context to each of the selected stories: how do they understand this story? How do they understand the role of the support in that change? For each story, include what your agency or staff did, their reflections, what changes youth, families or staff noticed, and what the impact was on their well-being. This will be your story of abundance that you can leave at each lobstick for other agency's inspiration.

Taking into consideration all stories you have gathered, decide with your team what story to share at the winter count that best represent the most significant change or impact on well-being for your agency for the calendar year.

Sharing stories

In the Impact Portal you can copy-paste your stories of abundance into the text field under each well-being domain. There is also a text field to share anything you would need to better support each domain. You can share a story that exemplifies this need or list supports or resources you would like.

Once ever year in fall, Align will host a winter count. The winter count will be a gathering to share stories of impact and change to support well-being. It is to support and learn from one another, to share the gift of stories.