

the
**outcomes
star**

Using the Outcomes Star:
A one-day training course

2nd Edition

homeless
LINK

Published by

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First Floor
10-13 Rushworth St
London
SE1 ORB
020 7960 3010
www.homeless.org.uk

Authors

Joy MacKeith, Sara Burns and Kate Graham
Triangle Consulting
26 Sparsholt Road
London, N19 4EL
020 7272 8765
www.triangleconsulting.co.uk

In this second edition of the Outcomes Star, the tool itself - the scales and Star Chart - remain unchanged. However, this version incorporates improvements to the introductory text and guidance made possible by feedback from a wide range of organisations who have implemented the Outcomes Star and helped develop good practice. It also incorporates the on-line version, the Outcomes Star System, which streamlines the number of documents and further improves aspects of the design.

This version is published by Homeless Link who now manage www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk where the Outcomes Star is published. Homeless Link is responsible for its promotion within the homelessness sector.

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Foreword from Homeless Link

We are very pleased to have been asked by the London Housing Foundation to take on the outcomes programme they have developed since 2003. We would like to pay tribute to the vision of St Mungo's in initiating the Outcomes Star and to Triangle Consulting for their work in its development.

We see this as a major opportunity to promote the value of an outcomes approach in helping services to focus on the needs, potential and development of each individual person. Our ambition is to see our country free from homelessness. We see the amazing work that our members do to change lives by providing the right support to the people they serve. This outcomes tool will help them provide the evidence of their impact and success to commissioners, partners and their staff. Most importantly it supports informed discussion between the person using services and their support worker over a plan that works for them as an individual and enables a shared understanding of progress and remaining challenges. We at Homeless Link also look forward to joining up information at a national strategic level to build evidence of what works to support the case for intelligent investment in homelessness and housing related support.

Jenny Edwards, Chief Executive, Homeless Link

Foreword from Triangle Consulting

We have been delighted and overwhelmed by the level of interest in the Outcomes Star. We are very pleased that Homeless Link is now taking the lead role in promoting the Star within the homelessness sector and hope that this new, improved version meets the need for a practical, usable outcomes tool even better than the previous edition.

We believe the Outcomes Star and the new Outcomes Star System for on-line completion and analysis have enormous potential to support change and develop evidence of effectiveness. We are committed to continuing the development and promotion of the Star for the benefit of the sector and ultimately the people who use its services.

Joy MacKeith, Sara Burns and Kate Graham, Triangle Consulting

Acknowledgements

We are aware that we would not have been able to publish such an accessible and effective tool without an enormous amount of feedback and input along the way from managers, workers and clients in many organisations: people who have enthusiastically participated in developing and testing versions of the Star and made many helpful suggestions for improvements.

We would particularly like to thank St Mungo's for their role in developing the original Star. Without their energy and vision the Outcomes Star may never have been born at all.

Other organisations that have embraced, tested and contributed include Thames Reach, The Passage, Single Homeless Project, Rochdale Council's Supporting People Team and SP funded service providers in Rochdale. We would also like to thank the Mental Health Providers Forum and its members, who, by commissioning a mental health version of the Star, provided a rich new forum for developing the Star and made a significant contribution to the improvements.

Lastly we would like to thank the London Housing Foundation for initiating the Impact through Outcomes Programme which made the development of the Star possible, and for commissioning and funding the first and the second edition of the Star.

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Introduction

Welcome to Using the Outcomes Star - a One-Day Training Course

This guide has been produced to enable managers, trainers or a suit-able member of staff to train key workers in how to use the Star. It contains the materials and instructions you will need to run a one-day course.

The guide includes:

- an overview of the day
- guidance on how to run each session
- handouts for participants.

We hope that this guide provides you with everything you need for a stimulating and successful day.

Preparing to train others in the Outcomes Star approach

We strongly recommend that you attend a training course on using the Star before training others. Homeless Link run regular open training and their contact details are on the back page of the document. You should also read the Organisation Guide which contains good practice for keyworkers in using the Star, answers to frequently asked questions and guidelines for managers implementing the Star. We recommend that you work through the guidelines on implementation before running the training so that you can brief workers on the details of how it will be used in your agency.

Who should be involved?

This Organisation Guide sets out guidance on the use of the Star in keywork and its implementation across an organisation. It contains two main sections. The first is aimed at keyworkers using the Star directly with service users. The second is for managers who are implementing the Star within a project or across an organisation.

It may be helpful to have two trainers if you want to train larger groups.

What materials will we need?

Each participant will need a copy of:

- The Outcomes Star: User Guide (circulated to participants before the day if possible)
- Two copies of the Star Notes and Action Plan
- The overview of the day
- The six handouts at the back of this document.

You may also want to give each participant a copy of The Outcomes Star: Organisational Guide as this includes guidelines for using the Star in keywork. However this is optional. If you do not give participants a copy each it is a good idea to have a copy of the Organisation Guide available to show participants so that they know it is available and for the trainer to refer to as necessary.

You will also need:

- A flipchart with flipchart paper
- Different coloured marker pens and Blu-Tak
- Extra pens and paper for participants
- A room large enough for people to work in small groups during exercises.

The guidance notes for each session highlight the amount of time required and the materials to be handed out.

Overview of the Day

The aim of the course is to equip key workers and managers to use the Outcomes Star approach effectively within their service. The day is divided into seven sessions:

Arrival, registration, refreshments

Session 1: Introduction to the day (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To understand why the agency is using the Star
- To understand the outcomes approach
- To create a positive learning environment.

Content

- Presentation: Putting the training in context
- Short Exercise: Hopes and concerns
- Presentation: Overview of the Day.

Session 2 : Introduction to outcomes (45 minutes)

Purpose

- To understand what an outcome is
- To identify the outcomes of your service.

Content

- Exercise: Describing service user change
- Exercise: Identifying your outcomes (Optional)
- Presentation: Linking project outcomes with the Star.

Session 3 : Introduction to the Star (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To understand the main features of the Star and how the Star measures change
- To understand the Journey of Change.

Content

- Presentation: Introducing the Star
- Exercise : The Journey of Change.

Session 4 : Completing the Star Chart (45 minutes)

Purpose

- To gain familiarity with the Star, particularly the ladders and detailed scales.

Content

- Exercise : Completing the Star Chart.

Session 5 : Using the Star in keywork (60 minutes)

Purpose

- To build skills and confidence in introducing the Star and using it within keywork.

Content

- Group Discussion: Introducing the Star
- Exercise : Using the Star in keywork.

Session 6 : Outcomes information (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To understand what information can be collected using the Star and how it can be used.

Content

- Exercise: Learning from Star data for a whole project.

Session 7: Making it work in your agency (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To understand how the Star will be introduced into the agency and used within current ways of working
- To identify any issues that may arise as part of the implementation process.

Content

- Group discussion: Implementing the Star.

How to run the sessions

Session 1: Introduction to the day

Purpose of this session

- To understand why the agency is using the Star
- To understand the outcomes approach
- To create a positive learning environment.

Timing: 30 minutes

Handouts: Timetable, overview of the day and handout one

Presentation: Putting the training in context

Explain the context of the training. Why has your agency decided to measure its outcomes? Why has it chosen to use the Star? At this point you might want to make some general points about the Star. Alternatively you can make these points in Session Three.

- The Star is a tool for measuring client change
- It was designed for use by service providers as a way of measuring the changes that service providers believe are important
- It is designed to be used as an integral part of keywork and has been found positively support service user change
- It focuses on service user potential rather than problems
- It looks at the whole person.

The purpose of the day is to equip key workers to use the Star effectively with their service users. Describe what will happen after the day and how this training fits into a process of implementation. If the participants don't know each other then ask them to introduce themselves and briefly describe the project they work in.

Short exercise: Hopes and concerns

Ask participants to pair up and to spend about five minutes discussing their hopes and concerns for measuring outcomes using the Star.

Reconvene and starting with concerns, ask each pair to share one concern, and then once these are exhausted, go round again to share one hope. Record their contributions in two lists on the flipchart until everyone feels their ideas have been listed. Acknowledge the participants' concerns and say where they will be addressed in the programme, or by the organisation. If you feel they haven't suggested enough of the potential benefits, try and prompt these, or add them as your own hopes as their manager or trainer.

Keep the flipchart for reference later in the day.

Presentation: Overview of the Day

Ask people to look at Handout One, 'The Outcomes Approach'. Briefly describe what it means, pointing out that the approach is about learning and service improvement. Explain that the programme for the day follows this broad outcomes approach. First they will learn about and identify their outcomes. Then they will learn how to measure them using the Star. In the afternoon, they will look at data from the Star and how it can be used by them and by the service. Refer to the Overview of the Day if you want to give further details. Allow time for people to ask questions about what you will be doing.

Session 2 : Introduction to outcomes

Purpose of this session

- To understand what an outcome is
- To be able to identify the intended outcomes of your service

Timing: 45 minutes (less if triangle exercise is omitted)

Handouts: Handout Two (optional) and Handout Three

Exercise: Describing service user change

STEPS:

1. Ask people to bring to mind a service user who has made considerable positive improvements in the time they have known them.
2. Ask people to pair up and describe to their partner what the service user changed in their life or themselves, between the time when they first met him or her to the present day, or when they left the service.
3. Alternatively you can ask people to reflect individually and then share with the group.
4. Give them about five minutes in pairs or on their own and then reconvene the group. Ask one or two people to share the changes they saw, such as increased confidence, increased stability, starting to volunteer and so on.
5. List the changes they describe on a flipchart.
6. If people start talking about why the change took place, steer them away from this and focus on describing the change itself.
7. Explain that the changes you have listed on the flipchart are outcomes - outcomes are changes service users make over time.

Note to trainer: If you think that participants need further help with their understanding of what an outcome is, use Hand out Two to clarify this further. With many groups this wont be necessary.

Exercise: Identifying your outcomes(Optional)

This exercise helps participants clarify the intended outcomes of their project(s) and see how these link with the changes that the Star measures. It is particularly helpful if participants are not familiar with working with outcomes or are concerned that the Star doesn't fit with the aims of their service. However, if you feel this is not necessary for your course you can omit this exercise to make more time for working with the Star itself.

STEPS:

1. Divide into groups of two or three people. If you have several different projects attending the training it is best if people work in project groups.
2. Distribute Handout Three
3. Explain the purpose of the exercise
4. Allow 10 minutes to complete one triangle per group
5. Walk around the room, checking that participants are on track
6. Reconvene the group. Ask two or three groups to share their triangle, talking through the top and middle only.

Presentation: Linking project outcomes with the Star

Explain that the changes described in the middle of the triangle are the intended outcomes for that project - what the service is aiming to achieve with service users. The Star was developed by workers, managers and service users in a range of services using the same planning triangle and it is the areas that appeared in the middle of these triangles led to the 10 points on the Star. Compare the specific aims that participants have written in the middle of their triangles to the points on the Star. There should be a high level of overlap which confirms that the Star will measure the things this project (or these projects) are aiming to achieve.

Session 3 : Introduction to the Star

Purpose of this session

- To understand the main features of the Star and how the Star measures change
- To understand the Journey of Change.

Timing: 30 minutes

Handouts: The Outcomes Star: User Guide

Presentation: Introducing the Star

Invite participants to look at the picture of the Star, the ladders and detailed scales in the User Guide. Mention the key features of the Star:

General points (if not already made in the introduction):

- The Star is a tool for measuring client change
- It was designed for use by service providers as a way of measuring the changes that service providers believe are important
- It is designed to be used as an integral part of keywork and has been found positively support service user change
- It focuses on service user potential rather than problems
- It looks at the whole person.

Detailed points:

- It is based on ten outcome areas
- Each outcome area has a ten-point scale
- The behaviour and attitudes associated with each point on the scale are described in the ladders and detailed scales
- Show how each scale is based on the same journey of change.

The key worker and service user discuss and agree the service user's position on each ladder and these points are then plotted on the Star Chart to give an overall picture of where the service user is on their journey.

Note to trainer: If there are questions at this point you might find it helpful to refer to the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of the Organisation Guide.

Exercise: The Journey of Change

The aim of this exercise is to enable the group to really understand the Journey of Change - intuitively as well as rationally. Make sure before you start this that you yourself are fully comfortable with the journey and that you can walk it through without needing to look at the notes.

STEPS:

1. Start with a story about someone making a change in their life This is best if its something you yourself have experienced - maybe deciding to change a habit like smoking or taking more exercise. Practice the story beforehand and make sure it illustrates the journey of change, but when you tell the story, don't be too literal about referring to it.
2. Then reflect on the story, and show how it fits five broad stages - Stuck, Accepting help, Believing, Learning, and Self-reliance If you like you can ask people to reflect on a change they have made, and explore how it fits.
3. Move to the star Journey of Change and explain that it underpins each of the ten ladders.
4. Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the room and walk through the journey... Ask them to stand somewhere where there is plenty of space for them to walk forwards. Ideally they will start in the least attractive part of the room and end somewhere nicer like a window, or by the door (symbolizing the fact that they are now ready to leave the service). Invite the other participants to think of themselves as the keyworker for this service user.
 - Tell them that they are at the start of the journey - at step one
 - Describe how they are likely to be feeling at this point and what they may be doing. Tell the other participants what it might be like to work with this service user at this point
 - Invite your volunteer to take a step forward to step two and describe what this point on the journey is like
 - Continue to step three, in the same way, but invite them to physically change direction as they move from the Stuck stage to Accepting Help
 - Ask them to change direction at the other two turning points, step five and seven
 - Keep going in this way until they have reached point ten - the end of the journey
 - Ask the volunteer how it felt - do they have any reflections on the journey. Do they recognise it from their work with service users?
 - Invite comments from the other participants, then summarise the key elements of the journey
 - If there are questions at this point, draw on the frequently asked questions in the User Guide. List on a flipchart any questions about exactly how the Star will be used in your agency. These will be addressed in the final session in the afternoon.

People often have lots of questions at this point - which is great. However, we suggest that you encourage people to hold on to these questions and try using the Star first, as many of the questions will be answered by actually working through the Star for a service user.

Session 4 : Completing the Star Chart

Purpose of this session

- To gain familiarity with the Star, particularly the ladders and detailed scales

Timing: 45 minutes

Handouts: The Outcomes Star User Guide - Star Notes and Action Plan

Exercise: Completing the Star Chart

STEPS:

Instructions for participants. You could write these up on a flipchart:

- Work in pairs
- One person to decide on a service user that both people know, if possible
- Complete the Star Chart for that person, using both the ladders and the detailed scales in the User Guide
- Join the points to give an overall shape
- Repeat the exercise for the same service user as they were when they first came to the service (or when the participant first knew them)
- Join the points to give a starting shape.

Before they start explain to participants that the Star measures a person's relationship with the issues they are dealing with rather than the severity of the issue. So if they find they are not sure what score to give, the thing to focus on is their attitude to this area of their life - will they talk about it and face the problem? (if not they are at the Stuck stage). Do they take initiative in relation to addressing it? (if not they are at the Accepting Help Stage). It is possible for someone with a very severe physical health problem (eg life threaten illness) to have a higher score than someone with a less severe problem if they are doing all they can to manage their condition.

Reconvene the whole group. Ask them how they got on.

Was the task possible?

Did each pair manage to complete the Star Chart on the service user they discussed?

Invite brief comments on the process or the completed Star Charts.

Session 5: Using the Star in keywork

Purpose of this session

- To build skills and confidence in introducing the Star and using it within keywork

Timing: 60 minutes

Handouts: Star Notes and Action Plan (second copy)

Group Discussion: Introducing the Star

Ask the group to imagine that they are service users. What would they want to know if their keyworker asked them to use this new form? How might they feel? Write up their concerns on the flip chart. Then ask the group for suggestions about how they would introduce the Star to service users. Ask what sorts of things they have done in the past to successfully introduce a new process. Note suggestions on the flipchart.

Exercise: Using the Star in keywork

STEPS:

For this exercise, make sure there is enough room for people to spread out, and that you have a watch or can see a clock to manage the timing for the exercise.

Instructions for participants:

- Get into pairs, ideally with someone you DON'T work with.
- One person will play the part of the service user, the other will play the key worker
- The service user should briefly tell the keyworker who they are (age, gender, very brief history).
- The key worker will introduce the Star to the service user and then complete the Star Chart together, referring to the ladders in The Users Guide. You are unlikely to cover more than a few scales, depending on the relationship you build up and the service user.
- The service user then gives feedback on how they felt and what the keyworker did well
- To swap roles. stand up and physically change seats, and then repeat the exercise.

Reconvene the whole group and ask for comments and learning points.

Session 6: Outcomes information

Purpose of this session

- To understand what information can be collected using the Star and how it can be used

Timing: 30 minutes

Handouts: A completed Star Chart and Handouts Four, Five and Six

Group Discussion: Interpreting an individual Star Chart

Explain that the Star gives useful information, both about an individual service user and about a whole project. In this session you will look first at an individual service user and then at a whole project.

Ask someone to share a completed Star Chart from the morning's session (Session 4) - it should have both a current reading and a previous reading on it.

It can be helpful to copy the Star and markings up on the flipchart before the session if you have time. Ask the group to look at the completed Star Chart and to say what the shape tells them about this service user:

- Which areas are going well?
- Where do they need most support?
- Where has the most progress been made?
- What questions does it raise?

Exercise: Learning from Star data for a whole project

STEPS:

- Break into groups of three or four. This is a good opportunity to mix people up as there is no need to work with colleagues. If there are more senior staff in the room make sure they are split between the groups
- Look at the data in Handout 5. Central Street Hostel is fictional but the data is based on real data from a number of hostels using the Star. Read Handout 4 to put the data in context and answer the questions set out there
- Reconvene the group and ask participants to share their answers
- Refer to Handout Six, which provides answers to the questions.

Discuss as a group how this outcomes information could be useful for your service.

Session 7: Making it work in your agency

Purpose of this session

- To understand how the Star will be introduced into the agency and used within current ways of working
- To identify any issues that may arise during implementation of the Star

Timing: 30 minutes

Group Discussion: Implementing the Star

The Outcomes Star: Organisational Guide provides advice on introducing the Star to your agency, and the kinds of decisions that need to be made. We recommend these decisions are made in advance of the training, with some room for discussion and change if needed.

In this session, you need to communicate the following to staff who work with service users:

- When to take the first Star Chart reading. This could be at assessment, during the first key work session, or within a month of joining the service
- Whether the Star will be used for new service users only, or for all service users
- The paperwork and procedures that will change as you introduce the Star, in particular whether the Star Action Plan will be used to replace existing action plans or support plans.
- What workers should do when service users refuse to complete the Star Chart, or when the worker judges that completing it would be impossible or inappropriate for a particular service user
- How the information gathered from using the Star will be recorded, analysed and used, and who will have access to it.

Discuss and agree:

- What will happen to the views expressed by the group
- What the next steps should be in adopting the Star.

If there are no major issues needing action in advance, agree:

- When staff will get the paperwork
- On what date they are expected to start using the Star
- Where to go if they experience difficulties
- How the outcomes data will be recorded and kept.

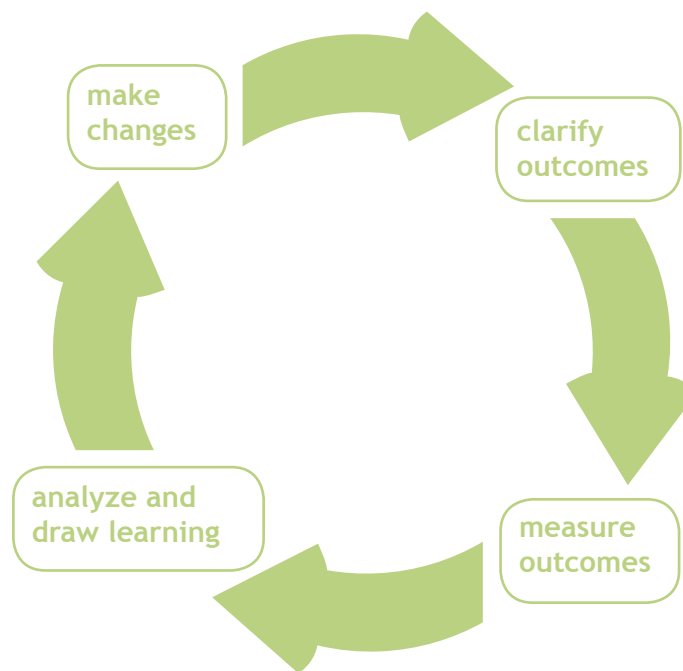
Leave time for any final reflections and questions. A good way of rounding off the day can be to briefly refer back to the hopes and concerns flipchart. How are people feeling now about the Star?

Handouts

Handout 1: The Outcomes Approach

Taking an outcomes approach to service delivery means more than simply adding another piece of paperwork to your systems. The outcomes approach is a continuous cycle of enquiry and service improvement based on factual information about what is being achieved.

The Outcomes Learning Cycle:



To fully adopt this approach, your organisation must:

- Clarify outcomes - what are we trying to achieve? Agree on the intended outcomes of an activity, service, or programme.
- Measure outcomes - what are we actually achieving? Record the outcomes that you achieve in a systematic way to enable the information to be collated.
- Analyse and draw learning - what can we learn from the outcomes achieved? Collate the information and draw learning about what is and what is not working.
- Make changes - what changes should we make as a result of this learning? Plan and implement changes to service delivery.

Outcomes information can be shared with funders to demonstrate the achievements of a service, but its primary purpose is to enable learning and service improvement.

Handout 2: Defining Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes your service users make as a result of your activities.

These changes can take place in many different areas of a person's life. They include things that can be measured by ticking a box, such as whether someone is registered with a GP or not, and less concrete changes, such as a change in attitude.

There are end outcomes and intermediate outcomes. Intermediate outcomes are the steps along the way to achieving the desired end outcome. Your agency's end outcome may be that service users find and maintain a permanent home. An intermediate outcome might be that they have good budgeting skills and spend money within their means.

Table 1: Typical outcomes in different areas

Area	Examples of outcomes
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registering with a GP • Better self-care, including healthier diet and exercise
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More satisfying or meaningful use of time • Reducing drug or alcohol intake
Attitudes and self-perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking responsibility • Increased self-worth and confidence
Knowledge or skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of housing options • Improved budgeting skills
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving away from harmful relationships and being able to establish positive contact and friendships • Re-established contact with family

Outcomes are not:

- Output statistics, such as how many service users you have or how many support sessions you deliver
- Customer satisfaction data, such as whether your service users like the service you provide
- Quality assurance information, such as whether you provide the service to agreed specifications, for instance having appropriate policies and procedures in place.

Handout 3: The Outcomes Triangle

Answer the questions and complete the Outcomes Planning Triangle. This will help you identify your project's outcomes.

The Outcomes Planning Triangle is a simple tool for identifying the intended outcomes of your service, such as the change you are intending to achieve with your service users.

Questions

1. What is the overall aim of your project?

What is the big change you aim to bring about? And to whom?

This is the overall point of your project.

Example: Maximize the independence of homeless people in Richmond. This statement would tell you whom you want to change and the change you want to bring about.

Write your project's overall aim in the top section of the triangle.

2. What are the specific aims?

What changes need to happen in order to make progress towards achieving that overall aim? These are your intended outcomes.

Write them in the middle section of the triangle.

3. What do you need to do in order to help bring about these specific changes for the service users or target group?

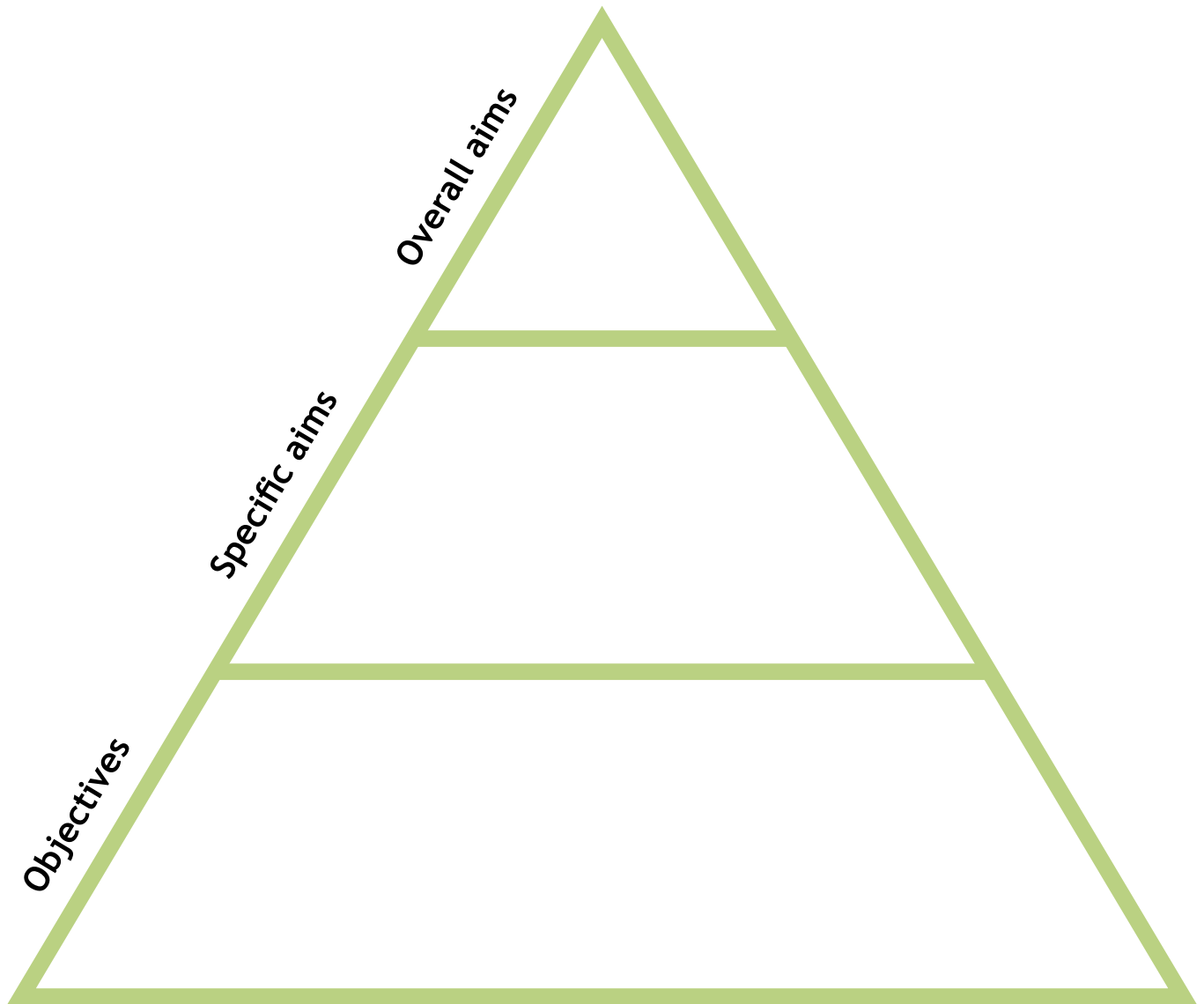
These are your objectives, the activities you carry out.

List them in the bottom section of the triangle.

The bottom of the Outcomes Planning Triangle is about what you, the workers, do. The middle and the top of the triangle are about how your service users change. This is a very important distinction. If you measure what you do, you are measuring outputs. If you measure what changes your service users make, you are measuring outcomes.

The Outcomes Planning Triangle

Complete the Outcomes Planning Triangle for your project.



With kind permission from Charities Evaluation Services who developed the Outcomes Planning Triangle Charities Evaluation Service.

Handout 4: Star Chart data from the Central Street Hostel

Your service, Central Street Hostel, has gathered outcome data from service users using the Star. The information for individual service users has been collated to produce average outcome scores across your service.

The hostel takes people of the streets, houses them for a few months and aims to resettle them in more appropriate accommodation within approximately six months, though their stay is frequently longer than this.

During this time the hostel provides individual key working. It aims to help people to abstain or minimize the harm of drug or alcohol misuse and manage physical and mental health conditions.

As the main focus is on helping people to reach a stable enough state to be able to find a home in which they can live more independently, less attention is given to use of time and finding new employment. Some people need to live in supported accommodation on a long-term basis. Others only need help in finding a place of their own.

The first table on Handout Five shows Star Chart data for Central Street Hostel. It gives the average starting scores on the Star Chart and the average scores after the service user has been with the service for six months. The second table shows the percentage of service users moving forwards, staying the same or moving backwards for each of the outcome areas measured by the Star.

Answer the following questions:

- What does this data show about service user needs when they join the project?
- Does the data show that people are entering the project with an appropriate level of need?
- What does the data show about the progress service users make whilst they are with the project?
- Where are the greatest improvements and are there any areas of concern?
- How would you interpret this data and what changes might you make in the light of this interpretation?

Handout 5: Central Street Hostel Star data

Table 2: Average increase and decrease in score

This table shows the average level of need of the service users as recorded on the Star during their first month in the project (column one) and their most recent reading (column two). Column three shows the difference between the two scores - the outcome of the project for those service users at this point in time.

	Average score at assessment	Average score at six month review	Average change (outcome)
Motivation and taking responsibility	3.4	4.5	1.1
Self care and living skills	3.7	4.8	1.1
Managing money and administration	3.8	4.3	0.5
Social networks and relationships	3.4	4.2	0.8
Drug and alcohol misuse	3.0	5.1	2.1
Physical health	4.8	6.3	1.5
Emotional and mental health	3.9	3.5	-0.4
Meaningful use of time	3.6	3.7	0.1
Managing tenancy and accommodation	2.8	4.6	1.8
Offending	5.1	6.7	1.6
Overall average	3.8	4.8	1.0

Table 3: Percentage of service users showing change

This table shows the percentage of service users who have made a positive or a negative change or stayed the same in each outcome area.

	Positive change	No change	Negative change
Motivation and taking responsibility	75%	13%	12%
Self care and living skills	66%	29%	5%
Managing money and administration	60%	23%	17%
Social networks and relationships	71%	6%	23%
Drug and alcohol misuse	73%	17%	10%
Physical health	47%	32%	21%
Emotional and mental health	30%	35%	35%
Meaningful use of time	50%	19%	31%
Managing tenancy and accommodation	80%	8%	12%
Offending	65%	244%	11%
Overall average	71%	12%	17%

Handout 6: Interpreting Star data from Central Street Hostel

- 1. What does this data show about service user needs when they join the project? Does the data show that people are entering the project with an appropriate level of need?**

The data presented above indicates that people are joining the hostel at the Accepting Help stage. This may well be appropriate for a hostel. However the average starting point is higher for offending and physical health. This is probably because a significant number of service users do not have issues in these two areas and hence have higher starting scores which would then raise the overall average.

If the data had shown that service users had fewer needs or more needs than your project intended, then it might be necessary to review your referral routes and selection process. Alternatively you might decide to review your ideas about who the project is intended for.

- 2. What does the data show about the progress service users make whilst they are with the project? Where are the greatest improvements and are there any areas of concern?**

The data presented above indicates that service users are progressing well at the project. In many of the outcome areas the average score has moved from around 3 - the Accepting Help stage to around 5 - the Believing stage. This is a very significant step.

Service users are making particularly good progress in Drug and Alcohol Misuse, Offending and Physical Health. But Emotional and Mental Health has declined overall and Meaningful Use of Time is not showing any significant progress. The data in Table 2 shows that 35% of service users have experienced a decline in mental health and a further 35% have not changed at all.

- 3. How would you interpret this data and what changes might you make in the light of this interpretation?**

One interpretation of this data is that the hostel is being very effective in helping service users tackle their substance misuse and that improvements in physical health and offending are linked to this. It may be, however, that for a significant number of service users the substance misuse was linked to mental health or emotional difficulties which are now coming to the fore. Also, with reduced substance misuse and reduced offending, service users may now be very much in need of more constructive things to do with their time. If this interpretation is correct then the project should celebrate its success in addressing substance misuse, and take action to put in place more support on mental health issues and use of time.

The data also shows very good improvements in Managing Tenancy and Accommodation but less improvement on Managing Money and Personal Administration. The project could consider whether the lack of progress on money was something it wanted to address. It might decide that this area was less of a priority for their client group as they were still some way away from independence, or it might put in place additional services to help people with this aspect of their lives

Further Resources and Information

The Outcomes Star, User Guide: gives an introduction to the tool for service users including a description of the journey of change which underpins the tool and contains the ladders and detailed scales describing a ten point scale for each of the ten outcome areas covered by the tool.

The Outcomes Star, Organisation Guide: Provides guidance for key-workers in using the Star as an integral part of key-work and guidance for managers on implementing the Star in a project or across an organisation

Star Chart and Action Plan: this contains the Star form itself on which the scores for each of the ten outcome areas are plotted, two Star Notes page for recording comments relating to each of the scores, and an Action Plan for recording specific goals and actions to achieve them arising out of the process of completing the Star.

The Outcomes Star System: an on-line resource that makes it possible to complete the Star online. The system generates an instant Star for the client with previous Stars also displayed. It can also provide a summary of the outcomes achieved by a project and across an organisation and can provide benchmarks with equivalent project.

Star Impact: a research report on the impact of the Star on service delivery.

To register to use the Outcomes Star System or to download the User Guide, the Organisation Guide and the one day training course go to www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk

The website also contains a wide range of information about using outcomes including demonstrating outcomes to commissioners and a review of outcomes tools.

All resources on www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk are available free of charge.

Training

Homeless Link offer regular courses and both Homeless Link and Triangle Consulting can provide in-house training.

Homeless Link

For more information about the work of Homeless Link please visit www.homeless.org.uk

Triangle Consulting

For more information about Triangle Consulting please visit www.triangleconsulting.co.uk

Other Versions of the Outcomes Star

To download a version of the Star tailored to the needs of projects working with people with mental health problems please visit www.mhpf.org.uk

For information on other Stars tailored to the needs of specific client groups please visit www.starsolutions.org.uk