

ACTIVITY | Data Storytelling



GOAL | To capture the story behind the data and facilitate the connection between the staff's work and family outcomes.



RELEVANT FOR

- Middle Manager
- Supervisor
- Caseworker



DESCRIPTION | This activity was originally created by Mary Kay Collins, Director of Licensing and Adoption with The Center for Youth and Family Solutions, Peoria, Illinois



MORE INFO

[Results-Oriented Culture](#)

[The Caseworker's Role in a Results-Oriented Culture](#)



Data Storytelling Activity Guide

Plan this activity for a team meeting, staff retreat, or a staff meeting. Prior to the meeting, gather the following supplies:

1. 8x10 index cards
2. Chart paper
3. Markers
4. Outcome data reports

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

Record outcome data numbers for your unit/program/department on 8x10 index cards. Hang them on the wall around the room. Hang blank chart paper next to each index card.

1. Explain: The numbers on the wall are outcomes, work that is measured (but not reflective of all the work staff do). Today, we will have the opportunity to explore the stories behind the data and focus on areas for improvement.
2. Ask staff to make their way around the room and write down other successes that would help reveal a more complete story of the outcome data represented on the index cards. Ask them to write one sentence for each index card. For example, one index card may read: # of placement changes of children in residential care; on the chart paper one person may write “spent 4 hours working with a teenager to prevent placement breakdown and need for emergency shelter” OR another index card may read: # of removals in past 30 days; on the chart paper staff may write “spent all day Friday locating family to prevent removal of 4 children due to the parent being pulled over and arrested for an outstanding warrant for unpaid traffic tickets.” The intent is to reflect on the narrative behind the data (what work goes into these outcomes) to connect practice to data and assist staff in understanding the value of the work they do and how client families benefit from what is done well. Allow time for staff to rotate to each station.
3. Ask participants to move around for a gallery walk, reading the index cards and the accompanying narratives. Allow sufficient time for all participants to move around the room.
4. Debrief the activity. Offer validation about the work behind the numbers, for example “some of the numbers might not be where you want them to be,” or if more than one unit’s numbers are represented, there may be differences in numbers noted, connections of work they do to positive outcomes for children and families, etc.
5. Ask participants to do another gallery walk and this time pick an outcome they want to improve or work to build sustainability for, e.g., perhaps all service plans were completed timely for the first time. Have staff, individually or as a unit, identify a goal(s) to support their effort of improving or sustaining an outcome.
6. Debrief the activity. Note that approaching outcomes in a more inclusive way will help staff be more open to seeing the connection between their work and family outcomes and be empowered to identify and act for outcome improvement or building sustainability.
7. Determine action steps to follow up on the activity.

