Disaster Recovery Star™

The Outcomes Star for people affected by natural disasters

The Outcomes Star™
This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Contents

Introduction

The Outcomes Star tools

The Outcomes Stars are a suite of person-centred tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people. They are both keywork and outcomes tools, supporting effective interventions and providing management data on progress towards the end outcome. Because of this dual role, they bring together measurement and service delivery and can provide a shared language and framework across operations and data management for departments and between commissioners and service providers.

All versions of the Outcomes Star have five- or ten-point scales arranged in a star shape. Each point on each scale has detailed descriptors setting out attitudes, behaviour and sometimes skills or circumstances typical of that point on the scale. Underpinning these scales is a model of change (the Journey of Change) describing the steps towards the end goal that both the service and service user are trying to achieve.

The Outcomes Star tools are different to other approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement[1]. They are designed to empower service users within a collaborative process of assessment that supports a positive conversation and is integrated with support work, rather than being a separate activity. The Star is closely aligned to person-centred, strengths-based, co-production and trauma-informed approaches and can support people and organisations to put those values into practice:

- Person-centred: The Star encourages and enables workers to listen to the perspective and priorities of service users and to work with them collaboratively. It helps engage service users to develop realistic action plans based on where they are on the Journey of Change

- Strengths-based: The Star is holistic and enables people to focus on aspects of life that are going well rather than being focused entirely on areas of difficulty. The scales focus on what services and service users can change, rather than the severity of their problems or circumstances

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[1] The Outcomes Stars share the core principles of Participatory Action Research (O'Brien, 2001; Carr & Kemmis, 1986) – empowerment, collaboration and integration – extending these beyond research into assessment and outcome measurement. Participatory Action Research seeks to empower the subjects of research, collaborate with them and integrate research into practical action to improve people's lives. The Outcomes Stars seek to empower service users within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work rather being than a separate activity.

- Co-production: service users and those who support them are involved in the development of the tool, and the collaborative approach to completion means that the service user and worker produce the readings together and build a shared perspective as a basis for action. This contrasts with expert assessment or self-report approaches in which the two perspectives remain separate

- Trauma informed: the collaborative nature of the Star helps to give the service user control, which has been shown to be important in building a sense of safety for people who have experienced trauma. The focus of the tool is primarily on how things are now, rather than past experiences that might trigger someone's trauma and put them outside their safe "window of tolerance". In addition, the guidance for use emphasises the importance of building of a trusting relationship and a shared perspective as an essential foundation to moving forward.

For a fuller description of the values and approach underpinning the Outcomes Star suite of tools, see MacKeith (2011).

Background and further information about the Outcomes Star suite of tools can be found at **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

The Disaster Recovery Star

The Disaster Recovery Star is the Outcomes Star for people affected by natural disasters such as a bushfire/ forest fire, flood, earthquake, or storm.

The Disaster Recovery Star includes the following resources:

- The Disaster Recovery Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan
- The Disaster Recovery Star User Guide, with brief visual scales and detailed scales
- Short illustrated scales and flashcards
- Guidance for professionals completing the Disaster Recovery Star collaboratively with service users
- A web application for online completion and analysis at www.staronline.org.uk

This Development Report provides a detailed description of the process of creating the Disaster Recovery Star.

Development process for the Disaster Recovery Star™

Methodology

The methodology for developing all versions of the Outcomes Star is based on Action Research (O'Brien, 2001) and the Existential Phenomenological research method (McCall, 1983). Action Research is a collaborative process of identifying issues, trying out solutions and assessing what works. This phenomenological method places a strong emphasis on understanding the subjective experience of the people being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The development process comprises four main stages:

Stage 1: Exploring the scope and need for the tool
Stage 2: Creating the pilot version of the new Star in consultation with the working group
Stage 3: The pilot and revising the Star
Stage 4: Revising and finalising the new Star

Below we describe how this process was applied to create the Disaster Recovery Star.

Stage 1. Exploring the scope and need for the tool

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH) approached Triangle to develop a new version of the Outcomes Star for people they support in their Bushfire Case Support Program. Emergency Recovery Victoria provided the funding for the development and also invited three other agencies they funded to be involved - Co-health, Windermere Child and Family Services and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

Triangle then carried out a scoping process, involving:

- A market scoping to assess the likely uptake of a Star focused on natural disasters, in the UK and elsewhere as well as in Australia.
- A literature review examining the similarities and differences across a range of different types of disaster in terms of impact, support needs etc.
- Checking prior interest and enquiries from other services for a similar or the same version.

As with any new version of the Star, this phase also included scoping the capacity for both Triangle and the collaborators to undertake the development within the budget and timescale needed. Based on this, Triangle's conclusion was to proceed with a version of the

Star specifically for people affected by natural disasters, designed to encourage best practice across the sector.

Stage 2: Creating the pilot version of the new Star in consultation with the expert working group

An expert working group was formed to collaborate in the development of the new Star, comprising around 20 managers, support workers and people with lived experience from GLCH, Emergency Recovery Victoria, Co-health, Windermere Child and Family Services and VACCA.

This expert group played a central role in the development process, providing in-depth knowledge of the issues faced by people affected by natural disasters, the intended outcomes of service delivery and the process of change towards those outcomes. The working group's input was organised around three workshops. The first two workshops contributed to the creation of the draft version of the tool. The third workshop reviewed the results of the pilot and contributed to refining the tool to create a final version (see Stage 4).

Workshop 1 (August 2021): This online workshop was held to identify intended outcomes and processes of change in work supporting people affected by natural disasters. It included a series of focus groups to provide insight into the experiences of workers and people with lived experience and to understand the outcomes that services aim to help the people they are supporting to achieve.

The key questions explored were:

- What are the main areas in which services and the people they support are seeking to create change? *These areas become the points of the Star*

- What is the desired outcome of the change process? *This becomes the end point on the Journey of Change that underpins all the scales*

- What model of change describes the steps that people take on the journey towards that end point? *This is described in a series of steps – the Journey of Change – showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.*

A range of techniques was used to draw out participants' subjective experience and knowledge including:

- Using the "outcome triangle" tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific outcomes they are trying to achieve and the activities they carry out to achieve these changes

- Workers and people with lived experience pairing up to discuss the key steps in their process of change

- Hearing feedback about suggested outcome areas and discussing how they would work in different situations and with different people.

Triangle compiled all the material gathered from the working group at Workshop 1 and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. On the basis of this, combined with the literature review carried out in Stage 1, a provisional model of change and outcome areas for the Disaster Recovery Star were developed. These were then used as an outline or "skeleton", from which the first draft of the Disaster Recovery Star was created.

Once the first draft was completed there was an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again to hone the outcome areas, Journey of Change and descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area until they resonated with the client group and workers participating in the development process. The process included checking that the first draft took into account key themes that emerged from the literature review, and a second workshop with the expert working group.

Workshop 2 (October 2021): A one-day workshop was held to present the first draft of the Disaster Recovery Star to the expert working group and to hear feedback to inform the pilot version of the Star. Based on this feedback and the other activities listed above, the early draft was refined to create a pilot version of the Disaster Recovery Star with the Journey of Change and outcome areas listed below:

The pilot Disaster Recovery Star **Journey of Change**	1. Managing well 2. Making progress 3. Moving into action 4. Taking it in 5. Not ready
The pilot Disaster Recovery Star **Outcome Areas**	1. Home and essentials 2. Finances 3. Daily life, work and routine 4. Health and well-being 5. Family and close relationships 6. Community 7. Hope and trust

Stage 3: The pilot and revising the Star

Triangle trained workers to use the Disaster Recovery Star in December 2021. The pilot Star data was provided to Triangle by GLCH, who completed the Star with 132 service users completed the Disaster Recovery Star during the pilot.

Service users and workers at GLCH also completed brief feedback forms on their experience of using the Star and to submit the Star data to Triangle for initial exploration of the psychometric properties of the pilot Star. More informal feedback was provided by the other organisations.

Summary of analysis of patient feedback forms

Of the 86 service users who completed feedback forms about their experience of using the pilot Disaster Recovery Star:
- 88% agreed it was 'a good summary of my life right now'
- 85% said it 'highlighted my support needs'
- Only 13% felt the pilot version 'did not reflect changes I had made'
- Only 4% felt it took too long to complete.

The open-ended responses were also positive, with feedback including:

'The Star is amazing. You don't realise your state of mind or position you were in. The Star was a good idea, which shows your mind and thoughts'.

'I found the Star surprisingly accurate. I liked that it took into account how it all affected my belief system (spirituality) as well as the practicalities of living'.

'It was easy to read and complete, not too intrusive and covered the areas that needed to be covered'.

'Able to see change that has happened. Able to reflect on the past and bring me to today. I found it therapeutic to do and has made me feel good about myself'.

'I found the Disaster Recovery Star to be a beneficial tool to establish definite areas where goals were needed to support moving forward'.

There were some service users who found it hard to think about the traumatic experiences they had gone through when completing retrospective first Stars. Others felt some changes were need when creating the final version, for example, 24% reported that they 'needed support in areas not covered by the Disaster Recovery Star'. The open-ended responses included some comments that the Journey of Change stages needed more differentiation, and specific suggestions about the content of the outcome areas (e.g., that it should be

specified whether the accommodation was suitable, and that grief about the environmental impact should be added).

Summary of analysis of worker feedback forms

Fourteen workers completed feedback forms, with all agreeing that the Disaster Recovery Star 'helped open up better conversations', 'reflected the changes that service users made' and that they 'found it encouraging to see the progress service users made'. Thirteen of the fourteen workers (93%) felt that it gave them a better overview of service user's situations, and their support needs and reported finding it 'easy to see where service users were on the Journey of Change'. There were also many positive comments in the open-ended feedback, including:

'It is perfect for the needs of disaster recovery'

'The Disaster Recovery Star is a wonderful tool to assess and analyse where the client is on their journey'

'Intuitive provided that worker is familiar with assessment processes and 'How to use the Star' material'

'It served as a springboard into side conversations that were often quite personal yet occurred quite naturally and easily in this context'

'It was good for residents to be able to see the changes they have made on paper. Often, they feel stuck and that progress hasn't been made but using this tool has helped show them that change has occurred'.

However, half of the 14 workers reported that service users had needs not covered by the Disaster Recovery Star and there were mixed opinions on whether it took too long to complete (21% felt it did). The open-ended feedback revealed that some workers had found the detailed scales too wordy to use directly with service users, and that some service users had found it hard to grasp that the Star is not a continuous measure of the severity of the situation. It also showed that workers agreed that there needed to be more emphasis on the effect of environmental changes on people.

Psychometric analyses of the pilot Star data

Analyses of the Star data from 132 first Star readings and 125 second readings showed the following:

Distribution: Initial readings on the Family and close relationships and Community areas were normally distributed. While the other five outcome areas were moderately or highly skewed to the bottom of the Journey of Change (as one might expect for people affected by natural disasters), the 125 second readings were skewed towards the top of the Journey of Change, so the full range of Journey of Change stages was used (see Appendix).

Internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha was .82 – above the threshold of .70, suggesting good internal consistency. A unidimensional factor structure was advised, with one factor explaining a good proportion of the variance (59.7%).

Responsiveness: The change between first and second readings was statistically significant in all outcome areas (p <.001), and effect size was medium for Family and close relationships, medium-large for Community and large for the other five outcome areas. indicating good responsiveness to change. A minimum of 57% of clients moved forward in each outcome area.

Further research into the psychometric properties of the final published version of the Disaster Recovery Star was initiated following publication. For the latest information on this, please contact anna@triangleconsulting.co.uk**.**

Stage 4: Revising and finalising the new Star

Workshop 3 (May 2022): The third workshop gathered further information needed to finalise the Disaster Recovery Star, resources, and guidance. The responses to specific questions about the Disaster Recovery Star are briefly summarised below.

What worked in the pilot Disaster Recovery Star?

The Disaster Recovery Star worked really well and there was high engagement from service users. It worked especially well when completed in person, whether seated or discussing it when walking around new properties.

Some workers reported that it was particularly helpful for opening up conversations with older men who tended to want to pack away traumatic experiences and not talk about them. The language worked well and encouraged reflection, including on the amount of progress made. One worker noted:

'In the face of another disaster, being able to go in and use this tool would be epic in terms of understanding the client and working out what they want to focus on. It gives us all direction'.

What didn't work in the pilot Disaster Recovery Star?

- It worked less well in the service completing the Star over the phone, though this service was also new to the Outcomes Star concept

- Some service users found completing retrospective Stars looking back at the time of the disaster traumatic, though others liked seeing the progress. Normally first Stars would be completed at the time or shortly after the disaster, so this was partly an artefact of the pilot setup

- As alluded to in the feedback above, it was felt that more focus was needed on the environment – loss of wildlife, wild landscapes, trees and forest/ bush

- In the Family and close relationships area, some felt there needed to be more emphasis on the household as opposed to families specifically to be relevant to different types of households

- It was suggested that 'Home and essentials' should be changed to 'Home and property' and should include more about damage to the land, fencing, barns and other outbuildings as well as the main home or property

- It was suggested that the Community area should be renamed 'Connection and community'.

Changes made to finalise the Star based on learning from the pilot

On the basis of the findings from the pilot, a number of changes were made to create the final version. The main changes are summarised below:

- 'Home and essentials' was renamed 'Home and Property' and there was more explicit mention of land, fences etc. References to 'essential services' were reduced, though keeping the reference to lack of water, power, communications and other essentials

- Daily life, work and routine were amended to include activities that give people a sense of purpose or normality

- Dealing with stress, grief, loss and trauma were drawn out more explicitly in the Health and well-being scale, including reference to reliving the disaster at the start of the scale

- The Family and close relationships area was amended to add more mention of household members as well as family

- The Community area was renamed 'Connection and community' and specific references were added to connecting with people who had similar experiences

- Grief and trauma in response to witnessing environmental destruction in the area where people lived was added to the Trust and hope area.

The final Disaster Recovery Star **Journey of Change**	1. Managing well 2. Making progress 3. Moving into action 4. Taking it in 5. Not ready
The final Disaster Recovery Star **Outcome Areas**	1. Home and property 2. Finances 3. Daily life, work and routine 4. Health and well-being 5. Family and close relationships 6. Connection and community 7. Hope and trust

Completion

The draft version of the Star went through final checks:

1. The expert working group was invited to review and comment on the final draft
2. It was reviewed again by Triangle to ensure clarity of descriptions and distinctions between each stage of each scale
3. It was edited and proofed before being typeset

References

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. London: Falmer Press.

MacKeith, J. (2011). The development of the Outcomes Star: A participatory approach to assessment and outcome measurement. *Housing, Care and Support*, *14*(3), 98-106.

McCall, R. (1983). *Phenomenological Psychology*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

O'Brien, R. (2001). An overview of the methodological approach of Action Research. In Roberto Richardson (ed.) *Theory and Practice of Action Research*, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English version).

Appendix: Details of the psychometric properties of the pilot Disaster Recovery Star™

The distribution of initial Star readings across the Journey of Change stages during the pilot of the Disaster Recovery Star™
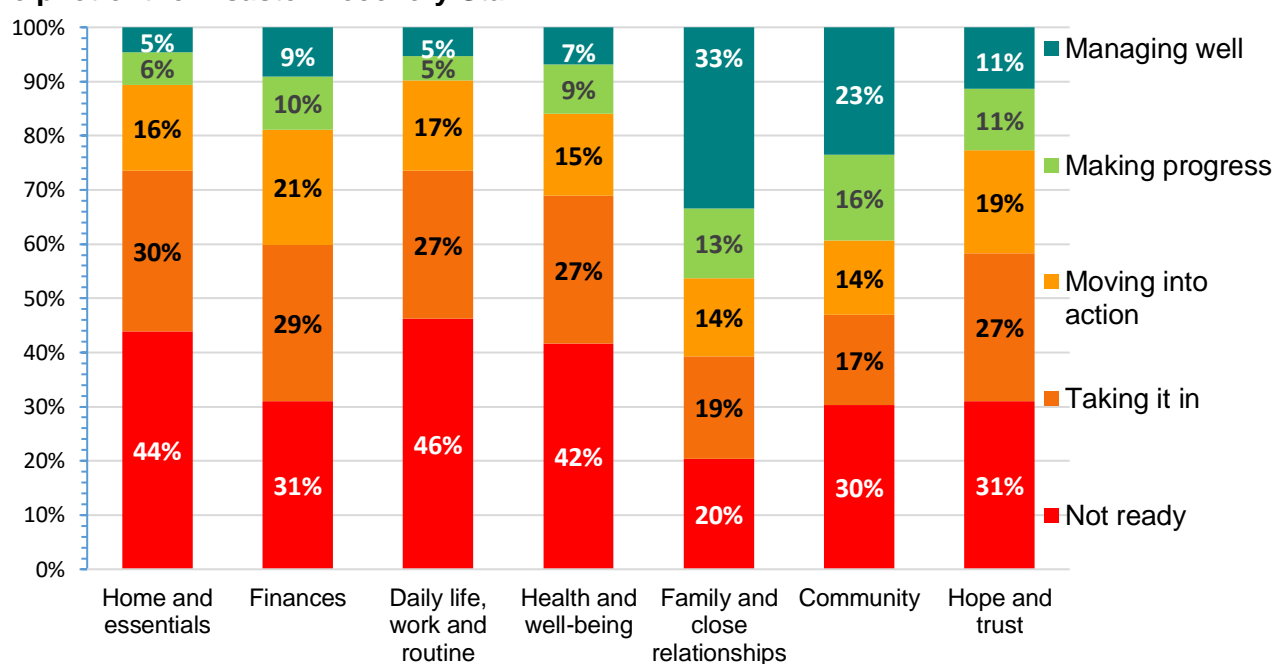
	Skewness statistic	Result[1]
Home and essentials	1.10	Highly skewed to the lower end
Finances	.66	Moderately skewed to lower end
Daily life, work and routine	1.16	Highly skewed to the lower end
Health and well-being	.93	Moderately skewed to the lower end
Family and close relationships	-.14	Normal distribution
Community	.13	Normal distribution
Hope and trust	.59	Moderately skewed to the lower end

[1]-1 or greater than 1 = skewed. -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5 and 1= moderately skewed. -0.5 and 0.5 = normal (NB. Final Stars are all at least moderately skewed towards the higher end so the whole scale was being used)

Responsiveness between first and second readings of the Disaster Recovery Star™

	First Star median	Final Star median	Z***	Effect size r[1]	size
Home and essentials	2	4	-9.36	.59	large
Finances	2	4	-8.88	.56	large
Daily life, work and routine	2	4	-9.05	.57	large
Health and well-being	2	4	-8.48	.54	large
Family and close relationships	3	4	-5.96	.38	medium
Community	3	4	-6.42	.41	medium-large
Hope and trust	2	4	-7.88	.50	large

***All effect sizes were statistically significant (p <.001)

[1] Cohen provided rules of thumb for interpreting these effect sizes, suggesting that an *r* of .1 represents a 'small' effect size, .3 represents a 'medium' effect size and .5 represents a 'large' effect size.

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