Outcomes Star™

Empowerment Star™

The Outcomes Star for women who have experienced domestic abuse

" People really open up and sometimes it leads to whole new conversations

" Service users really enjoyed the interaction – and there were statistical results!

" I could feed back to my head office some really impressive results

...as made the ...port plans more ...ginative and ...re individual

" The Outcomes Star is an invaluable tool for our sector

Support is more systematic and structured

...e to ...d, even ... is ...needed

" We have incorporated it into assessment and three monthly reviews

" It helps identify training needs for staff and volunteers

" We can now assist clients better - we love the Star!

" Some people can't understand written reports, but can understand this

" The Star is collaborative, rather than something that is done to people

" It enables a clear direction for collaborating with a client

...olistic approach ... direction to the ...port

" The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in some cases life changing

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The Outcomes Star™
This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

Contents

Introduction

Introduction to the Empowerment Star™

The Empowerment Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a family of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people.

The Star is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change made across a range of services by people with different needs. It is also a keywork tool that can support service users to make changes by providing them with a clear picture of their progress towards empowerment, breaking it down into manageable steps and enabling them to plot their progress along the way.

The original version of the Outcomes Star was developed for the homelessness sector and tailored versions are now available for a wide range of client groups including people with a mental health condition, people receiving support with work and learning, teenagers and vulnerable families. These can all be viewed and downloaded at **www.outcomesstar.org.uk.**

The Empowerment Star focuses on nine core areas that have been found to be critical in empowering women with experience of domestic abuse to build a new life:

1. Safety

2. Accommodation

3. Support networks

4. Legal issues

5. Health and well-being

6. Money

7. Children

8. Work and learning

9. Empowerment and self-esteem.

For each of these core areas, there is a ten-point scale that measures where the woman is on her journey towards independence and choice in that area. These ten points are based on an underlying model of change: an understanding of the steps women go through on their way to empowerment, independence and recovery. This model of change is called the Journey to Independence and Choice and it comprises five stages:

- Not ready for help

- Accepting help

- Believing

- Learning and rebuilding

- Independence and choice.

The full Journey to Independence and Choice is described in detail in part two of this guide and the Empowerment Star User Guide provides the detailed scales for each of the nine core areas.
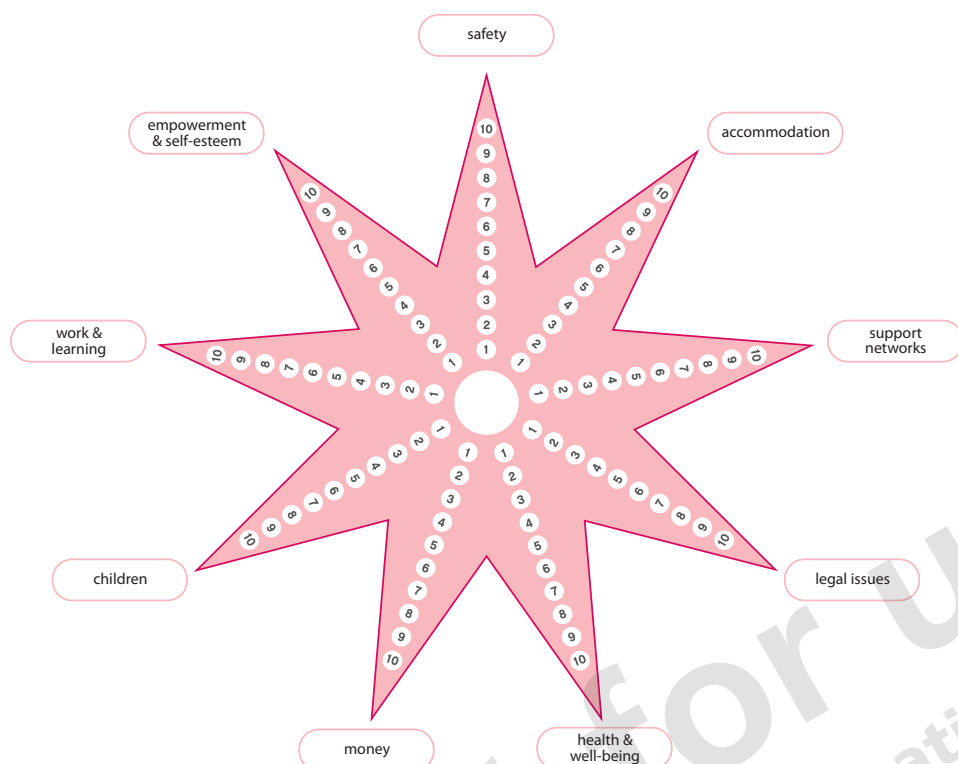
Figure 1: The Empowerment Star

Theoretical foundations

The approach underpinning the Outcomes Star family of tools is, we believe, an original approach to assessment and outcomes measurement. The Star approach can be described as Participatory Assessment and Measurement (PAM) because it draws on and extends Action Research and Participatory Action Research (PAR), which places empowerment, collaboration and integration at the core of research methods[1]. In the same way, the Outcomes Star seeks to empower people within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated into support work, rather than a separate process.

Empowerment

Underpinning the Outcomes Star is an understanding that, in order for change to take place in people's lives, service providers need to engage people in the motivation, understanding, beliefs and skills that are needed for them to create that change themselves.

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[1] 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)

While practical changes in a person's circumstances, such as new accommodation, may be important, by themselves they are not enough to bring lasting change. Change within the person is a key active ingredient and it is therefore the relationship of the individual to the challenges they face that is the primary focus in most versions of the Outcomes Star. This value recognises societal or other external factors beyond people's control, while empowering them to change the things they can.

This contrasts with other assessment and outcomes measurement tools that focus on the severity of the problem, such as the number of units of alcohol consumed in the case of substance misuse, or on external circumstances, such as whether a person has a job or a home or not. The Outcomes Star approach assumes that these things are important and should be measured, but that on their own they give a limited picture.

Service users and front-line workers report that the Outcomes Star provides a much more empowering context for their keywork because they are active participants in the process rather than having assessment done to them. This involvement in their own process and validation of their experience and perceptions is often critical to the changes they are seeking to make (Burns, MacKeith and Graham, 2008)[2]. In contrast, being the passive recipient of assessment and measurement by experts can reinforce the disempowerment and lack of self-worth that may have contributed to a person's need for help in the first place.

Collaboration

When using the Outcomes Star, the worker and the service user assess the service user's needs together. The service user bases their assessment on their knowledge and understanding of themselves and the worker utilises their experience of working with others generally and their observations and reflections on this person's behaviour in particular. The intention is that the assessment emerges through a dialogue between service user and worker and this may include both people shifting their views.

The Outcomes Star makes the model of change explicit and the information that is collected (the Star reading) is immediately presented back to the service user in the form of the completed Star. This makes it possible for both the service user and worker to take an overview together and to reflect on the completed Star as a basis for deciding what action to take.

This contrasts with extractive approaches to assessment and measurement in which the worker, in the role of expert, collects data from the service user and takes that data away to make an assessment on their own. The expert may then decide what course of action is most appropriate and try to persuade the service user that this is the best way forward for them.

Integration

The process of completing the Outcomes Star is an integral part of working with the service user and it is intended to support as well as measure change. The process of completing the Star, engaging with the model of change and reflecting on the data as presented in the Star can, in and of itself, result in a change of attitude within the service user. As a result, the assessment is also part of the treatment. In addition, discussion of where a service user is on the scales or on the Journey to Independence and Choice naturally lead to discussions about next steps and action planning. This is why it is recommended that the Outcomes Star is used as an integral part of keywork.

[2] Burns, S., MacKeith, J. and Graham, K. (2008) Using the Outcomes Star: Impact and Good Practice, London: Homeless Link

This contrasts with traditional approaches in which the collection of data is seen as a separate process to treatment and may be regarded as intrusive by workers and service users.

Values and assumptions underpinning the Empowerment Star™

Building on the above, there are a number of specific values and assumptions that underpin the Empowerment Star.

All women deserve and can achieve a life free from abuse

The Empowerment Star is underpinned by the assumption that empowerment and a life free from abuse is a possible and realistic goal for all women who have experienced domestic abuse. The Star emphases the woman's assets and strengths rather than her problems to enable her to achieve her full potential.

Understanding power and abuse in relationships helps women stay safe

The Empowerment Star is underpinned by the understanding that creating a life free from abuse is as much about the empowerment of the woman as it is about addressing practical issues, such as accommodation or injunctions. Women will continue to be at risk and may possibly move from one violent relationship to another unless they come to understand how power operates in relationships, to recognise abuse and to establish and maintain safe boundaries. The journey to develop this understanding is therefore a core element of the Empowerment Star.

Independence and choice is the intended goal for all service users

There are many different reasons why women find themselves in an abusive situation and why they may have stayed with an abusive partner or found it difficult to leave. For some women, it is because their culture attaches a lot of stigma to leaving a relationship and therefore they are persuaded by their families to stay with an abusive partner. For others, a mental health, substance misuse or learning disability may be a contributory factor. The Empowerment Star takes account of these different starting points and is built on the understanding that, no matter what the starting point, the intended destination is always independence and choice and always involves the key stages described in the Journey to Independence and Choice.

Women victims of domestic abuse share a common journey and this is different from the journey for male victims and trafficked women

From the beginning of the development of the Empowerment Star, the intention was to make it relevant to as wide a range of people as possible, including men who are victims of abuse and women who have been trafficked. For this reason, the workshop group that supported the development of the Empowerment Star and piloted the draft tool included Galop, an organisation challenging homophobic hate crime and abuse in London, and the Poppy project, an Eaves Housing project supporting women who have been trafficked as sex workers.

However, the pilot showed that the issues faced by gay, male victims of abuse and trafficked women are different from those experienced by female victims of abuse. The decision was made, therefore, that the Empowerment Star should focus on women who have experienced domestic abuse as this would create a coherent tool and match the reality that most victims of domestic abuse are women and most perpetrators are men.

It is recognised that trafficked women and both gay and straight male victims of domestic abuse also require support and also undergo a journey in freeing themselves of abuse, but the Empowerment Star is built on the belief that these are different journeys and they would be best supported by different versions of the Star.

How the Empowerment Star™ was developed

The Empowerment Star was developed in collaboration with Eaves Housing, an organisation providing women's refuges, outreach and other services for women experiencing domestic abuse and women who have been trafficked. Eaves Housing were successful in obtaining funding for the development from London Councils. Bromley Women's Aid, the Latin American Women's Resource Centre (LAWRC) also took part in a development and tested the pilot Star.

Eaves drew together a working group of managers and workers from five Eaves Housing projects and the other service providers who were invited to collaborate. The participating projects were:

- Eaves:

    - Serafina Kensington and Chelsea (a refuge and support service)

    - Serafina Westminster (a refuge and support service)

    - Scarlett Centre (a drop-in, outreach and short-term crisis support service)

    - POPPY project (supporting women trafficked into sex work)

- Bromley Women's Aid (a refuge, resettlement, outreach and support service)

- Latin American Women's Resource Centre (offering support and advice for Latin American Women affected by poverty and abuse).

In addition, managers and workers from Galop attended two development workshops but did not take part in the pilot on the grounds that it was not sufficiently suitable for their work. Eaves invited two other BME service providers in the sector to participate but they were not able to do so. The pilot version of the Empowerment Star was also tested in a number of services run by the Asha Women's Centre in Worcester, which works with a range of vulnerable women, including those experiencing domestic abuse.

Versions of the Outcomes Star are developed using a methodology that draws on Action Research and the Existential Phenomenological (PE) research method. 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 person or people being researched and the meaning of the experience for them (McCall 1987).

The development of the Empowerment Star was based on this methodology and the process consisted of three main stages.

1) Data gathering

An initial all-day workshop was held in May 2010 with a working group comprising managers and front-line workers from a range of services. Although no current service users took part in the working group, some of the workers were also ex-service users. The workshop explored the following key questions that are common to all versions of the Outcomes Star:

- What are the main areas in which services and service users are seeking to create change? These outcome areas become the points of the Star

- What is the desired end point of the change process? This becomes the end point on the model of change that underpins all the scales

- What model of change describes the core steps that service users take on the journey towards the end point? This is described in a series of steps showing a clearly discernable, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.

A range of techniques were used in order to draw out participants' experience and knowledge including:

- Using an outcome triangle tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific changes they are trying to bring about and the activities the service carries out to achieve these changes

- Bringing to mind an individual who has undergone a substantial change and identifying the key areas of change

- Structured questioning exercises to draw out the steps, one by one, in each outcome area. The focus with this session is on concreteness – drawing out information about the signs of change in great detail.

2) Data analysis and the development of the draft Empowerment Star™

Triangle then wrote up all the material that had been gathered at the workshop and reviewed it to allow the meanings and common strands emerge. Existing material on domestic violence including outcomes frameworks, workshops and course content along with other versions of the Outcomes Star were born in mind, but the intention was to allow the raw data to speak for itself rather than to organise it according to existing models or frameworks. On the basis of this material, a draft version of the Empowerment Star was developed.

3) Consultation and piloting

Through an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again, the outcome areas, the Journey to Independence and Choice and descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area were honed until they truly resonated for front-line workers and managers participating in the development process. This involved three main steps:

- Another workshop in July 2010 at which the first draft of the Star was presented to workers and managers from collaborating projects, feedback was gathered and, in light of this, improvements were made

- A four-month pilot, from October 2010 to January 2011, when workers and service users tested the Star

- A final workshop in February 2011 at which the results of the pilot were reviewed and the experience of participants was shared. On the basis of this, further revisions were made to the Empowerment Star in advance of the first edition being published.

Pilot findings

A total of 46 women completed at least one Empowerment Star and 21 of those completed a second Star during the pilot period.

	Women who completed an initial Star	Women who completed two Stars
Westminster Refuge	23	6
K&C Refuge	9	3
K&C Floating Support	3	1
Scarlett Centre	6	6
Bromley Women's Aid	5	5

Highlights from the pilot data

- The average overall starting point on the Star at the beginning of the pilot period was 6.1, indicating that people were in the **believing** stage and moving towards the **learning and rebuilding** stage of the journey

- Service users needed the greatest support at the start with Accommodation, Safety and Empowerment and Self-esteem

- The starting points for Life Skills, Parenting and Legal Issues were relatively high, because a large proportion of women had no issues in these areas, giving them a 10 from the start and pulling up the average

- All the women showed an increase in their overall Star readings and overall progress made was an average of 1.9 across the ten areas of the pilot Star

- The areas in which most change was made were Safety (3.5), Housing (2.4) and Empowerment (2.9)

- Less change was made in Life Skills, Parenting, Health and Well-being and Work and Learning.

Key points from participants' feedback

- The pilot Star worked really well for all the domestic violence (DV) projects in the pilot

- All DV projects reported that the women they worked with really liked the Star and that it supported keywork

- They particularly appreciated the visual aspect as a way to engage women in the process and show progress

- They reported that the Journey to Independence and Choice described, and made explicit, the change process they were supporting women with while they were at the service and beyond

- The Star did not work well for the Poppy project who support trafficked women as their service users faced significantly different issues

- It did not work well for the Scarlet Centre because their work was too short-term for people to complete two Stars. Service users are seen for up to six weeks, with many single interventions and no ongoing keywork relationship

- It only worked for some service users at the Asha Women's Centre because their work was with vulnerable women with a broader set of needs than those the Empowerment Star covers. The pilot highlighted the need for a version of the Star for vulnerable women generally and/or women in the criminal justice system.

The main changes made after the pilot were:

- Clarification that the Empowerment Star is the Outcomes Star for women who have experienced domestic abuse and that it is not intended to cover trafficked women, men or vulnerable women who have not experienced domestic violence

- Some changes were made to the scales, the key ones being:

  - The Empowerment and Emotional Well-being scales were combined with a clearer focus on self-esteem. The focus of the empowerment scale in the pilot version was safety in relationships

  - Money was created as a new scale, building on the money management aspects of the pilot Life Skills scale

  - The other aspects of Life Skills were combined with the Housing scale to create Accommodation, which also covers looking after the accommodation

  - The Health scale was expanded to include well-being

  - The Parenting scale in the pilot was renamed Children and more explicitly focuses on enabling children to thrive.

Which services it is suitable for

The Empowerment Star is suitable for use in services where:

- Domestic abuse is the main factor in women using the service and all service users have experienced domestic abuse

- There is an ongoing support or keywork relationship[3] between a worker and the woman using the service

- The aim of the service is to empower women to make their own choices and live a life free from abuse, independent of the service

- The service is holistic and the woman and professional take an overview of her life rather than focusing in-depth on just a few aspects

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[3] The term 'keywork' is used in this document to refer to an ongoing one-to-one relationship between a worker and a woman in which the two people take an overview of the person's situation and needs, set goals, make plans for achieving those goals and periodically review progress.

- The underlying model of change employed by the service reflects an understanding of the steps towards independence and choice.

The Star is therefore most likely to be useful in:

- Women's refuges

- Outreach services working with women over a period of months, particularly those settling into new accommodation.

The Star is not likely to be suitable for:

- Drop-in services or those providing one-off or short-term advice

- Services for trafficked women

- Victims of rape and sexual abuse outside a domestic abuse situation.

The Empowerment Star is useful in a floating support setting because women living on their own often have no real reflection of how confident they have become and the Star can provide that for them.
Manager, Eaves

How the Empowerment Star™ fits with other tools and models

Assessment and risk assessment

The Empowerment Star does not replace a risk assessment and is not a replacement for risk assessment tools such as CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) in the UK. Organisations are free to determine the most useful process but it is anticipated that the CAADA would be completed before a woman came into a refuge or other domestic violence service. The Star would be completed once she was in that service. It would be a core part of the assessment and would be the basis on which a support plan was developed.

In cases of high risk, when it is necessary to take very immediate action, such as appointing an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) or holding a Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in the UK, the appropriate action would be taken first. The Star would not be a substitute.

> The Empowerment Star is useful in a floating support setting because women living on their own often have no real reflection of how confident they have become and the Star can provide that for them.
>
> Manager, Eaves

The Empowerment Star may replace a substantial part of assessment and review paperwork. However, the Star does not provide specific information, such as a woman's financial situation, whether she is in work, her family context or any current legal issues that need to be addressed. This information still needs to be gathered by the service as part of their assessment.

We recommend that agencies using the Empowerment Star identify the core information that they need but that they cannot acquire by completing the Star and create a streamlined assessment sheet that can be used to record this information. Preferably, this sheet would be used alongside the Star and would use the same headings.

Reporting frameworks

The nine points on the Empowerment Star are the nine areas for which this Star measures change in women receiving a service. These are likely to be similar but not identical to other outcomes frameworks that funders and commissioners may use to plan and report. However, it is possible to map the nine points of the Empowerment Star onto the outcomes frameworks used by others. For example, these nine areas can be mapped onto the five Every Child Matters (ECM) areas used by Supporting People and other central Government departments in the UK, as follows:

Every Child Matters (ECM) areas	Empowerment Star areas
Achieve economic well-being	Money Work and learning
Stay safe	Safety Accommodation Children Empowerment and self-esteem
Be healthy	Health and well-being
Enjoy and achieve	Support networks
Make a positive contribution	Legal issues

Awareness workshops and courses

There are a number of domestic violence awareness workshops, courses and programmes used by services. Most of these are designed to raise awareness of abuse and control and to help women identify abuse and take more control. The Empowerment Star also supports these goals but it fills the wider role of giving an overview of all the areas of a women's life, and measuring change in each of these areas during her time with a service. It complements these workshops and courses, which go into more depth about issues of power and control, and can be used alongside them.

Empowerment Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help organisations use the Empowerment Star effectively.

Empowerment Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan is a four-page document including the Star Chart itself, on which the Star reading is marked, a summary of the Journey to Independence and Choice for quick reference, space for notes and a simple action plan that your organisation may also choose to use. It is completed with women when using the Empowerment Star as a paper-based system.

Empowerment Star™ User Guide

The Empowerment Star User Guide contains brief visual scales and detailed scales. There is also a brief introduction to the Empowerment Star for service users. The User Guide is essential for all workers using the Empowerment Star and is designed so that it can also be given to clients, when appropriate.

The Empowerment Star™ Online

This is an intuitive, online version of the Empowerment Star. It has a facility for on-screen completion of the Star Chart with women, incorporating the scales from the User Guide and guidance for workers and service users. Alternatively, the Star Online can be used in conjunction with paper versions of the Star. Workers and women can complete the Star on paper and then input the reading on the Star Online later.

The Star Online is secure and provides a wide range of features allowing organisations to analyse and report on the outcomes data that workers and managers have added to the system and to compare their outcomes with averages for similar services and client groups. The Star Online is available to organisations using the Empowerment Star for an annual license fee based on the number of keyworkers and managers using the Star.

For more information, or to sign up to the Empowerment Star Online, go to **www.staronline.org.uk**.

This Organisation Guide

The guidance that follows is intended to support the implementation and use of the Empowerment Star. Part one is for service managers and provides guidance and good practice examples in implementing the Empowerment Star across a service or organisation. Part two presents guidance for support workers in using the Empowerment Star with service users.

Outcomes Star™ website

The Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** – contains all versions of the Star along with supporting information. Specific areas covered by the website include:

- How the Star was developed

- Research and validation material about the Star

- What people say about using the Star

- Good practice on implementation

- Use of Outcomes Star data for outcome measurement

- Use of the Star as a keywork tool

- Information for commissioners on using the Star.

Training

It is recommended that workers receive training before using the Empowerment Star. Triangle can provide in-house training for managers or staff teams and runs a licensed trainer scheme for trainers wanting to cascade training within their organisations. See the Outcomes Star website: **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** or email **training@triangleconsulting.co.uk**.

Triangle

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

Want to use this tool?
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or 020 7272 8765

Part 1: Implementing the Empowerment Star™ in your Service or Organisation

Implementing the Empowerment Star can affect the way a service is delivered and managed in a number of ways. For instance, it can:

- Provide greater clarity about what the service is trying to achieve and the process of change for service users and keyworkers, resulting in more focused keywork

- Change the way that keyworking is carried out, documented and supervised, depending on your existing systems

- Introduce new data collection and therefore the need to consolidate paperwork, avoid duplication, integrate with IT systems and ensure all levels of management have the information they need

- Demonstrate effectiveness and highlight the areas where improvement is needed with which workers and managers need to engage

- Provide a focus for discussion with commissioners about the role and contribution of the service in the wider local strategic context.

Implementing the Star effectively and achieving the full benefits of using it can therefore take time as well as continuous attention and a commitment to follow the process through and address issues as they arise. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the implementation of the Empowerment Star is led from the top of the organisation. Only in this way will the Star receive the profile and backing it requires for developments to be co-ordinated across the organisation.

There are eight steps to introducing the Star to your organisation:

1. Review your reasons for introducing the Star

2. Assess the suitability of the Star for your service

3. Run a pilot

4. Integrate the Star into your ways of working, paperwork and IT

5. Train all staff to use the Star

6. Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Star

7. Analyse and interpret the data

8. Share and act on the learning.

> My advice is to see the implementation of the Outcomes Star as a change management process. It is vital to communicate to keyworkers how it will help them to do their job and that it will help the organisation as a whole to make its case to the outside world. It is also vital to integrate the Star fully into keywork processes and training.
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> **St Mungo's**

1 Review your reasons for introducing the Star™

There are a number of reasons why organisations decide to introduce the Star.

Internal reasons:

- They want to take an outcomes approach to their work in order to measure success for individual service users, for services and for the organisation as a whole and to use this information to inform their service delivery

- They feel it will improve keywork.

External reasons:

- To demonstrate the value of the service to funders or commissioners

- Because a funder or commissioner requires that they use the Star as a condition of contract.

Our experience and research indicates that implementation is smoother and satisfaction is higher when organisations are motivated by internal reasons primarily. Even if you are introducing the Star for external reasons, we recommend that you adopt it in the spirit of learning and service improvement and capitalise on the internal benefits, too.

2 Assess the suitability of the Star™ for your service

Firstly, you will need to be confident that the Empowerment Star is the right tool for your service. There are four key questions that will help you do this.

i) Do you have an ongoing keywork relationship with service users?

The Star has been designed to be used in situations where a service user and worker are engaged in a one-to-one keyworking or other support relationship over a period of time. We would suggest at least six weeks.

If you only see a service user once or twice for a short period of time, or have a drop-in service with little or no one-to-one contact, then it is probably not suitable for your service.

> Things are very chaotic for women coming into a refuge but the Empowerment Star gives them a structure and helps them think about other things besides getting a roof over their heads and their children. The Star shows them the bigger picture.
>
> **Manager, Eaves**

ii) Are you aiming to help service users make changes in their attitudes, behaviour or skills and abilities?

The Star is designed to help you and your service users assess changes that they are making in their attitudes, behaviour and skills. If your service is not intended to work on changes like these, the Star is not suitable for you.

iii) Do you work holistically with service users?

Do you aim to support women in a number of aspects of their life? If your service focuses on one or two aspects of a person's life, the Empowerment Star will not be suitable as it is holistic, covering a number of aspects. However, it will work well if you are aiming to help service users with all or most of the areas described in the Empowerment Star.

Your service may aim to help women make changes in areas that are not included in the Empowerment Star. If this is the case, you may wish to assess your service users' progress towards this goal in another way.

If you are not sure that the Empowerment Star is right for your service, have a look at the Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** – to see what other versions are available. If there is currently no version that fits your service adequately, please contact Triangle to enquire about new versions in development or the possibility of working with us to create a new version to meet your needs.

Organisations are not allowed to make changes to the Star under the terms of copyright for the tool. For more information, please refer to the copyright statements on the Star Chart and guides or on the Outcomes Star website.

iv) Does the Journey to Independence and Choice describe the journey you help women to take?

The Journey to Independence and Choice underpins the scales for each outcome area. If this journey does not fit with your understanding of the steps you are helping people to take then the Star is probably not suitable for your service.

Some services concentrate on one or two parts of the journey. It is helpful to have a sense of which part of the journey your service or services focus on. If you only work with service users on a very small part of the journey, say at the **learning and rebuilding** stage, you may find that the Star will not pick up the small and subtle changes people make within one stage. In this case, you may want to supplement the Star with some additional measures.

If you have answered yes to these four questions, it is likely that the Outcomes Star will be appropriate for your service. If you have answered no to one or more of them, it may not be. You may wish to contact Triangle to discuss how to proceed.

3 Run a pilot

It is advisable to pilot the Empowerment Star in one or more services before rolling it out across your whole organisation. The benefits of running a pilot are that:

- It enables you to test how the tool works for you in practice
- It helps you to answer the practical questions set out below about how to integrate the Star into your ways of working prior to full implementation

- If it goes well, it creates a demonstration project and staff with experience of using the Star who can reassure, motivate and train others

- If there are problems, these can be addressed before the Star is rolled out across the organisation.

Research on the implementation of the Star found that there was resistance from workers within over half of the 25 organisations interviewed. However in nearly all cases this was quickly overcome. The following are examples of tried and tested options for addressing worker resistance effectively:

- **Taking time to allow people to realise the benefits** so that keyworkers see that the Star makes their job easier and better – it is not another administrative loop. This can be done through formal training and/or discussions in team meetings.

- **Allowing people to express reservations and ask questions.** The Star represents a significantly new way of working and staff may need to have their concerns and questions heard and addressed.

- **A flexible approach at first.** Allowing the more willing and enthusiastic workers to give it a try can work well. If these workers come back to the team with positive experiences, this can enthuse others. In addition, feedback from the women they work with can provide invaluable concrete evidence of the benefits and popularity of the Star and offset fears that women will find it lengthy or intrusive

- **Involving service users in the process.** This not only means that women understand and have a say in what is happening but their support also adds credibility and legitimacy to use of Star within the service.

> Workers were unsure at first but my approach was to give the Star to those workers likely to be most open and encourage them to just have a go with it in their own way. Almost immediately, positive feedback from those workers and their clients encouraged others to try it too.
>
> **Croftlands Trust**
> **(Refers to the Outcomes Star for Homelessness)**

4 Integrate the Star™ into your ways of working, paperwork and IT

The Star works best as an integral part of the keywork process and recording systems with Star readings taking place at the point when assessment and action planning would normally occur in your service, and Star Charts stored along with other client data. It is important that the Star is fully incorporated into this process so that it does not duplicate other discussions or paperwork, such as needs assessments.

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

Outcomes Star™

When to use the Star™

It is up to your organisation to set a policy specifying when women should complete the Star and how that fits with other processes. This policy will depend on the length and intensity of a service and how quickly people are anticipated to change. For most types of service, the following is recommended:

- A first reading is completed at the point of developing a support plan and within the first four weeks ideally

- Using the Star every three to six months, linking it to reviews of support or action plans

- On exit from the service.

It may not be appropriate to complete the Star the first time workers meet new women coming into the service, this may be too soon for something as in-depth as the completion of the Star.

There is a balance between getting to know a service user better before completing a Star and the need to record an accurate start point before too much change happens. If the woman is not able to engage in keywork or with the Star in her first month, you could ask workers to record a worker-only initial reading to provide a baseline. This can be recorded as such on the Star Chart and when entering the data on the Star Online.

For most domestic violence services and particularly refuges, it will be appropriate to complete the Star every three months. However, the frequency can be decided by services and depends on:

- **How quickly people change.** With service users where a considerable amount may happen in as little as three months, readings could be more frequent. In services where change is slow or maintenance is the norm, the gap between Star readings is normally longer.

- **The intensity of service delivery.** With intense and residential services, it may be appropriate to complete a Star more often. For services seeing people less frequently, for instance monthly within floating support, a longer gap would be appropriate.

- **How long women stay with your service.** For short-term services of 6-12 weeks it is recommended to complete Stars at the start and end of the service. Longer-term services, such as those of over a year, may allow six months or more between readings.

Comparing the first and last Star will give a clear picture of the outcomes for that person.

Online or paper-based completion

Stars can be completed with service users on paper, using the Star Chart and Action Plan, or online, using the Star Online web application.

Paper completion is best where desktop computers, laptops, iPads and other mobile devices are not available for use in keywork or where service users prefer pen and paper. Where this technology is available to workers, many service users will find the interactive experience of completing the Star online as engaging as using the paper version and some may find it more stimulating. A notable advantage of online completion is that the data is simultaneously captured within the database during the keywork session, eliminating the usual need for data entry later, and providing immediate, up-to-date, service-wide and organisation-wide reports for analysis.

To find out about online completion, visit **www.staronline.org.uk.**

Can the Star™ replace other paperwork?

The Star is not intended to increase the amount of paperwork an organisation requires service users and workers to complete.

Services may find that completing the Star Chart, Notes and Star Action Plan can fully or partially replace their existing assessment forms and action or support plans. This may mean replacing existing forms or amending paperwork to cover the same areas as the Empowerment Star. It is important to ensure that key information on accommodation, children, work or legal issues is gathered additionally. It could be attached to the front of the Star Chart and Action Plan, for example. If your organisation decides to continue to use an existing action plan format, it is not necessary to complete the Star Action Plan in addition to this.

The Star will not, however, replace a risk assessment and many organisations may find they still need to complete a separate risk assessment.

It is strongly recommended that the Star is not used in parallel with other outcomes tools.

How will the information be recorded and summarised?

The Star Online enables you to record Star readings, notes and action plans on screen, and to analyse your outcomes data at individual, caseload and service level. It also enables you to summarise outcomes across a number of services and to make comparisons within your organisation, and against an average of all organisations using the same Star. It can be used on its own or integrated with an existing client management system.

If you operate paper-based files, it is advisable to keep a copy of each Star reading and the Star Notes on the woman's file. She may also want to have her own copy. Even on a paper-based system, it is also necessary to enter the Star readings onto a database of some kind so that the information can be summarised and analysed for a whole organisation or project. We recommend that you use the Star Online for this.

You can access the Empowerment Star online on the Star Online:
www.staronline.org.uk.

5 Train staff to use the Star™

The Star is as good as the workers who use it, so it is vital that all members of staff working directly with service users receive some training. This can be provided by Triangle, see the resources section of this guide for details.

We must never assume that workers can use the Star without training. This is about worker confidence, support, training and about taking the Star seriously as an organisation, not just putting it on the table.

Manager, Eaves

Outcomes Star™

You might find it helpful to set up a steering group made up of managers, workers and, in some cases, service users, to oversee the introduction of the Star.

It is important to make clear how the Star fits with other initiatives and training that staff have received. For example, if your organisation uses Motivational Interviewing, it will help workers if you can integrate the Star into this approach.

Effective use of the Star requires that those using it are skilled in working with service users. Introducing the Star may be an opportunity to review the training needs of your staff in this area and address any outstanding concerns.

6 Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Star™

Star data will only provide an accurate picture of women's progress if those using it have a good understanding of the tool and apply the scales consistently. We recommend that you ensure this happens in the following ways.

Staff supervision

When discussing a worker's caseload, draw on the service users' completed Stars using all of them or just a sample, depending on the caseload. This will help managers to ensure that the Star is being used as planned and is completed accurately and with an understanding of the Journey to Independence and Choice. It can also provide the manager with a quick, visual overview of a worker's caseload.

File auditing

As part of the normal process of auditing files, managers should ensure that Star records are present, accurate and stored confidentially.

Team meetings

When discussing service users in team meetings, look at their Stars and explore where they are on the Journey to Independence and Choice. This kind of discussion enables the team to develop a shared understanding of how to use the scales and the Journey to Independence and Choice and become familiar with the framework.

Data quality

Users of the Star Online will need to confirm that the quality of the data being entered is ensured through the measures described above or that plans are in place to do this.

Early on, we found that some clients had surprisingly high readings on the Star and we discovered that they were making unrealistic assessments about where they were and staff were just agreeing with them. Training helped considerably. Staff now understand the Journey of Change and readings are more consistent and realistic.

Croftlands Trust
(Refers to the Outcomes Star for Homelessness)