



Strand² Squared



A Paradigm Shift Solution

Program Evaluation: Making the most your agencies voice

*“The term **“Institutional Betrayal”** refers to wrongdoings perpetrated by an **institution** upon individuals dependent on that **institution**, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g. sexual assault) committed within the context of the **institution**.”-Dr. Jennifer Freyd*

For many, the worst part about experiencing victimization happens long after the actual assault and is wrapped up in the reactions of others. It is so difficult to take all of that vulnerability and shame and find the words to describe such complicated and tangled up experiences. Often, victims’ voices are lost or ignored in the criminal justice system for a variety of reasons. We build programs based off of *“best practices*, “but fail to *“hear”* and *“understand”* what victims are trying to tell us about our programs.

Having a voice gives an individual agency and power and a way to express their beliefs, their thoughts and to articulate their experiences. It is essential that we find ways to institutionalize gathering “meaningful” data from victims because victims inherently understand our systems better than we do because they had to function and live within them. One aspect of being human centric, trauma informed is to create “meaningful” opportunities for victims to provide feedback to drive service delivery partially based on their expertise.

For many, a survey is administered to victims asking them “on a scale of 1 to 5” was the program successful in helping (or some variation of the sentiment). I wonder, is this “meaningful”? Do we really get information that will allow us to improve upon service delivery?

“Meaningful data” is high quality information that can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a program. It has the ability to be analyzed for actual opportunities for improvement. A truly meaningful evaluation process would give us new insights towards program improvement based off of lived and organic experiences. We assert that client surveys are amongst the least effective forms of evaluation.

Qualitative research seeks to interpret meaning and to explore the depths of experience. For example, there is profound depth to be found in the construction of image. Photo elicitation is a way for clients to reflect upon important experiences pictorially giving important and unexpected insight. This presentation will discuss many types of qualitative research methods designed to create depth and could be utilized in an effective program evaluation design. Let’s open the doors to survivor driven services where they are actual leaders in the field.

Objective:

- to provide various program evaluation models
- to explore various forms of qualitative methodology
- to understand the power of the client’s voice through the human centric, trauma informed lens
- to use data to inform program improvement
- to use data to leverage funding opportunities with respect, without client exploitation and confidentiality