



A Guide to Reporting Service Evaluations for Community Organisations



Guide 3

This document is part of Ending Loneliness Together's Outcomes Measurement Framework series. This is document three of three.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the dreams of Indigenous Australia.

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Introduction

This guidance is designed to help community organisations tackling loneliness to report on their service evaluation outcomes – to help ensure that evidence on ‘what works’ is easily shared and fully used by others. **In this guide, the term “service” refers to any activity, program or intervention that aims to reduce loneliness.**

Conducting regular evaluations of your service allows you to quantify and track the impact you are having on people’s lives. The information you collect can help you demonstrate if the aims and objectives of your service have been achieved, or not, such as whether your service is effective, efficient, and engaging. Consequently, service evaluation findings provide vital data to guide decision-making and future recommendations, such as whether your service needs to be modified or discontinued, whether it needs different resources, or merits further funding. Ongoing evaluation reports can also help your organisation discover which service options are more effective for reducing loneliness, and compare your service’s performance with that of other service providers. In turn, by sharing your findings you will be helping to improve the evidence on solutions for loneliness across the sector.

Reporting your outcomes is therefore a vital part of service evaluation. It provides transparency about your findings so that your organisation can learn and improve, and allows other services to benefit from your achievements and experiences. This Guide has been developed to provide a clear and consistent way of presenting outcomes of services for managing loneliness, regardless of differences in content, service design or duration, or the service users involved. In adopting this guidance, you will be helping to build the evidence on solutions for loneliness and showing your commitment to improving the lives of lonely people across Australia.

Further information on measuring loneliness and the procedures for evaluating service outcomes is provided in related Ending Loneliness Together guides within our Outcomes Measurement Framework:

- Guide 1. Ending Loneliness Together (2021): A Guide to Measuring Loneliness for Community Organisations.
- Guide 2. Ending Loneliness Together (2021): A Guide to Evaluating Loneliness Outcomes for Community Organisations.

Evaluation Reporting

Outcomes evaluation can be conducted across a service as a whole or for particular aspects of a service. The focus in this Guide is on reporting specific outcomes of a service, namely the **effectiveness** and **level of engagement** (completion and attendance) with community services **tackling loneliness**, using ELT’s outcomes indicators recommended in Guide 2. Reporting these outcomes is central to i) internal strategic planning of future activities and good governance, and ii) external communication of service outcomes and impact with key stakeholders and the general public. Since many organisations have limited funding and resources, two templates are provided to assist with consistent and accessible reporting of ELT outcomes indicators. These templates have been designed to be as brief and clear as possible, to suit different audiences (formal, informal), and minimize the reporting burden. Examples are included to assist users in their reporting.



Reporting on your service (program, activity, intervention) evaluations is influenced by a range of factors, including the overall purpose of the evaluation and the needs of the audience. This means you need to be clear about your service goals, evaluation questions, and intended users of your report. The templates provided can easily be modified to support consistent reporting of ELT's optional outcomes indicators, or other outcomes of interest to your service (e.g., user satisfaction).

Best practice in evaluation reporting involves communicating outcomes in ways that lead to *actionable* findings for the intended user. For example, evaluation reporting may prompt a change in practice, or improvements in service delivery.

Benefits of evaluation reporting

To service users: Reporting outcomes back to service users and the general public is important. People are more willing to try services, and more motivated to stick with them, when they can see evidence of impact or benefit.

To organisations: Using consistent reporting templates can help different organisations and agencies to share, compare and learn from each other's achievements and drive improvements in the design and delivery of effective services that are informed by evaluation.



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The process of reporting outcomes

Before you begin

It is useful to check if there are any specific reporting requirements set out by your organisation, agency or funding source, to ensure full compliance in reporting evaluation findings. Similarly, it is important to establish if your organisation or service setting requires specific approvals (for quality assurance, evaluation activities or ethics review) to be granted *before* you conduct and report on service evaluations.

1. Identify the audience of your findings (who)

1. Who are the primary users of your evaluation outcomes: service users, program managers, funders, the public, others? Do the primary users have specific needs when reporting evaluation outcomes? Identify your reporting requirements early in the evaluation process
2. Develop a plan that sets out the strategies that you will use to communicate your results. Mock-up reports are useful in this process, but check that the structure of the report meets the needs of the intended users and service.

2. Identify the outcomes to be shared (what)

3. ELT Recommended outcome indicators can be used to report on the effectiveness of, and level of engagement with, your service. These are described in *Ending Loneliness Together (2021): A Guide to Evaluating Loneliness Outcomes for Community Organisations*.
4. Will you supplement the recommended outcomes indicators with other information? If so, what other outcomes will be shared, who will collect the information and how will the findings be reported?

3. Identify the timeframe for reports (when)

5. How often/when will your service outcomes be reported? What are the reporting needs or timeframes of intended users? Develop a plan of when, and how often, you will communicate your evaluation findings?

4. Identify the best format for reports (how)

6. What is the best format for presenting your evaluation outcomes? Will a written, visual, or face-to-face presentation be most appropriate? Are multiple reports needed, in different formats, for different audiences?
7. How will you ensure that your evaluation reports are accessible and useable for diverse audiences? Will outcome reports be accessible for audiences with sensory, language or cognitive difficulties, or those with limited digital access?

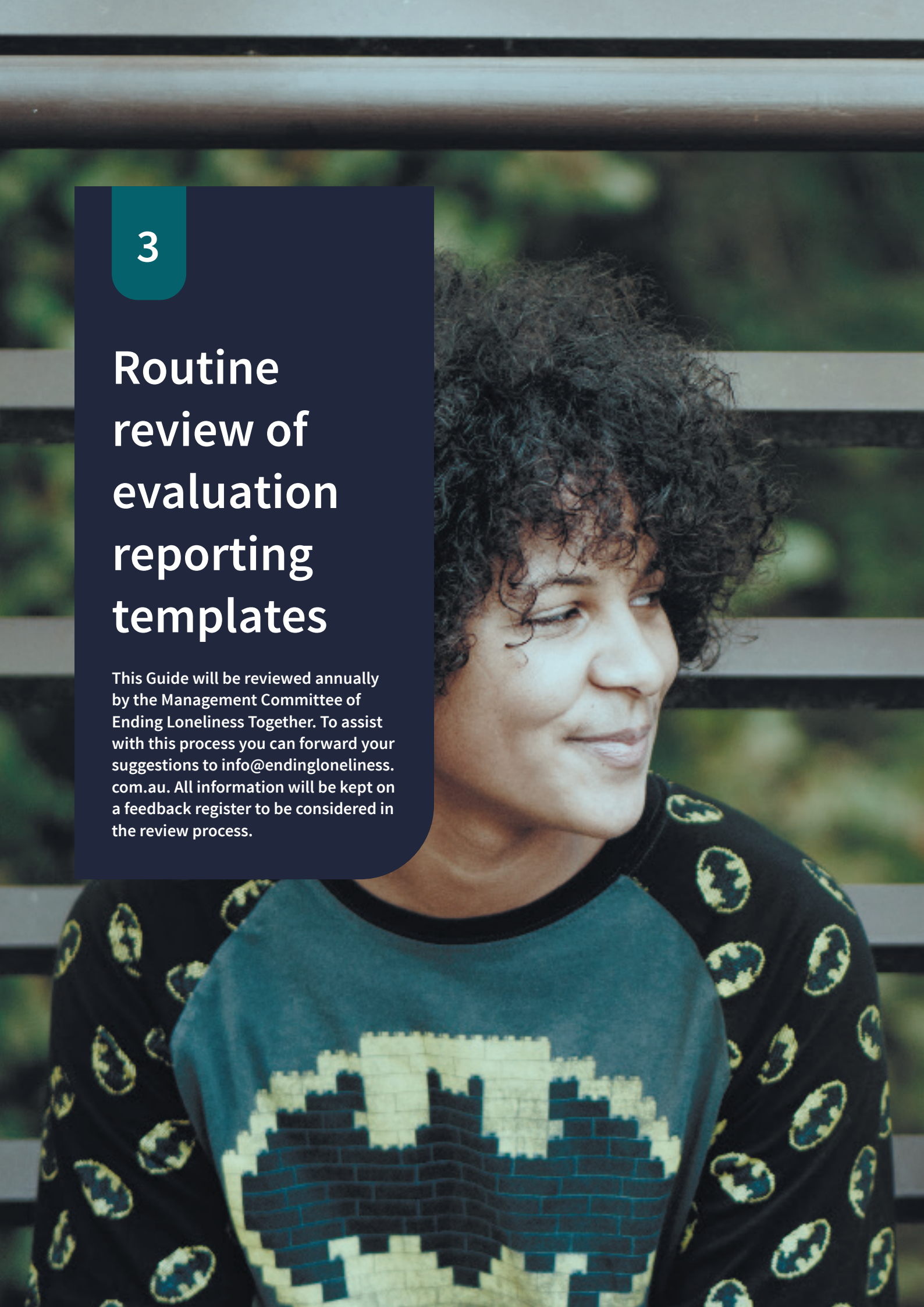
5. Develop recommendations (if... then...)

8. Will your outcome report include recommendations? Have you set a target for your service? How will you judge if your service is successful (or not)? What criteria will be used to develop recommendations? (E.g., At the end of your service, if 60% of service users report very high levels of loneliness would that influence your decision to stop the service?) Who will be involved in this decision-making? How will intended service users be engaged in developing recommendations?
9. How will you support the use of your service evaluation outcomes? Clear and consistent reporting of evaluation findings can help public, private, and third sector service organisations to develop evidence-based policies and practice to reduce loneliness.

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Routine review of evaluation reporting templates

This Guide will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee of Ending Loneliness Together. To assist with this process you can forward your suggestions to info@endingloneliness.com.au. All information will be kept on a feedback register to be considered in the review process.





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Evaluation reporting templates

In the following pages, two example templates are provided, followed by two blank templates (to edit text and images using Adobe Acrobat DC).

1. Formal reporting template

Summary Report of Service Evaluation					
Organisation Name	[Example - WayAhead]				
Service (Program/Activity/Intervention) Name	[Example - PositiveConnect]				
Program Description Provide a brief description of the service aims, format, duration and anticipated outcomes of evaluation. Be clear and specific. State if it is a new or existing service; who is it for? who is eligible? how often is it offered? Is it a face-to-face or online service? Is there a cost? Note the number of service users who attended; When was the service evaluated? What is the anticipated outcome of service evaluation [service effectiveness, engagement, satisfaction, ongoing funding]?	[Example – PositiveConnect is an existing 12 week program for loneliness in early parenthood; any parent with a child under the age of 3 years is eligible; 1 session per week; delivery face to face only; no cost; 46 service users started, 23 service users completed, the program. Service evaluation was completed at the end of the program. The focus of the outcomes evaluation was to examine service effectiveness. Outcomes will be used to support recommendations to continue the program and request ongoing funding.]				
Service Location	[Example c/o WayAhead, 33 Saunders St., Pyrmont, NSW 2009]				
Online Address	[Example - www.PositiveConnect.com.au – listed in ELT service directory Yes/No]				
Service Evaluation Dates	[Example - 1 March 2021 (start date) – 21 May 2021 (end date)]				
Service Effectiveness					
Indicator used with UCLA-Loneliness Scale# 4-item version ¹	Start of service %				
Percentage of service users reporting very high* levels of loneliness	(Insert Indicator 1...)				
Indicator used with single item measure of loneliness	(Insert Indicator 3...)				
Percentage of service users who report 'often/always' feeling lonely	(Insert Indicator 4...)				
During/end of service %					
Completion: % of users completing all parts/sessions of your service	(Insert Indicator 5...)				
Attendance: average number of service sessions attended	(Insert Indicator 6...)				
Optional Outcomes Indicators (See Guide 2)					
Recommendations: % of service users who would recommend the program to someone feeling lonely	(Insert optional Indicator 3...)				
Other Outcomes Indicators					
Insert any relevant outcomes indicators measured by your service, E.g., user satisfaction with the service (insert specific outcomes indicator)					
Recommendations					
Recommendation (Date)	Who was involved?	What was involved?	Management response	Action Officer/unit	Review of Action Taken (Date)
E.g., Continue and implement at other sites (02/02/2020). E.g., Increase staffing, examine costs of service delivery (02/02/2020). E.g., Program judged not effective – end service (02/02/2020). E.g., Advertise service more broadly in the community.	E.g., Service users, program staff, service manager.	E.g., Review and discussion of program evaluation results with staff; On-line chat room forum; post-program survey of service user experiences; Input from external reviewers.	E.g., Program judged sufficiently effective, but too costly to sustain. E.g., Positive impact summarised in newsletter for users; shared with other [named] agencies.	E.g., Sydney office, Evaluation unit [name of contact].	E.g., Executive committee - final decision: continue program but find ways of reducing costs and re-evaluate within 6 months (02/04/2020).

1. Russell, D.W. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 66, 20-40.
*For ages 45yr or under, a score of 14 or more; for ages 46+yr, a score of 13 or more. For more details see Guide 2.

2. Informal reporting template



Ending Loneliness Together

[Organisation Name]

[Name of your service/program and its purpose]



[indicator 1]%
of people felt very lonely before starting our program



[indicator 2]%
of people felt very lonely after completing our program



[indicator 3]%
reported they were often lonely before starting our program



[indicator 4]%
reported they were often lonely at the end of our program



[indicator 5]%
of people who started our program completed all sessions



On average, people attended **[indicator 6] sessions** out of a maximum of **[max no. of sessions]**



[other indicator]%
E.g., of people said they were satisfied with the program



[optional indicator 3]%
of people said they would recommend **[name of service]** to others

FOR MORE INFORMATION: [PHONE NUMBER] | [WEBSITE ADDRESS]

Summary Report of Service Evaluation

Organisation Name			
Service (Program) Name			
Brief Program Description			
Service Location			
Website			
Program Evaluation Dates			
Service Effectiveness			
Indicator used with UCLA-Loneliness Scale# 4-item version 1	Start of service		During/at end of service
Percentage of service users reporting very high* levels of loneliness			
Indicator used with single item measure of loneliness	Start of service		During/at end of service
Percentage of service users who report 'often/always' feeling lonely			
Service Engagement			
Percentage of service users completing all parts/sessions of your service			
Average number of service sessions attended			
Recommendations			
Rec Date	Who was involved?	What was involved?	Management
			Action Officer/unit
			Review of action

[Name of your service/program and its purpose]



%

of people felt very lonely
before starting our program



%

of people felt very lonely
after completing our program



%

reported they were often lonely
before starting our program



%

reported they were often lonely
at the end of our program



%

of people who started our program
completed all sessions



On average, people attended
sessions
out of a maximum of **# sessions**



%

E.g., of people said they were
satisfied with the program



%

of people said they would recommend
name of service to others

Contributors

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