

OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT IN DISABILITY SERVICES

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Outcomes refer to the impact or the effect that a service or support has on users (Miller, Cooper, Cook, & Petch, 2008). For individuals, having access to outcomes data can help them track changes and determine whether results have been achieved (Batty et al., 2012). For service providers, this data can provide information about whether a service is achieving its objectives and it can help identify areas for service development (Garralda, Yates, & Higginson, 2000). From a Government perspective, outcomes data can provide insight into the effectiveness of policy and investment value (Department of Health, 2014). Despite the obvious advantages of collecting outcomes data, it is not a particularly consistent or widespread practice in disability services. Since the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), there has been increased interest in outcomes measurement, which has raised many questions for service providers, including what types of outcomes should be captured and practical ways to achieve this.



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At Scope, our research into outcomes has spanned more than a decade. We have conceptualised outcomes from a ‘whole of life, whole of person’ lens in which the impact of services and supports can occur across a range of important areas of the person’s life (e.g., wellbeing, social, economic) and adopted an approach that is sufficiently versatile to allow measurement across the range of services and supports a person might seek (e.g., therapy, supported accommodation, community inclusion). This includes an emphasis on self-report so that, as far as possible, a person’s own perception of his or her life is captured and their agency is affirmed, inclusive of people with intellectual disability.

Although there are a number of outcome measurement tools in existence, their use is limited by the following issues:

- Very few focus specifically on the outcomes of service provision and so conclusions about services cannot be made;
- Few take a whole of life, whole of person approach, instead they focus on narrowly defined outcomes or are clinically oriented;
- Many have been designed to obtain information from proxies or, because of complexity, rule out use by people with disability,

particularly intellectual disability; and

- Validity and reliability have not been established and so measures cannot be used with confidence.
- Many involve complex or lengthy administrative procedures or require specialised training, which may not be feasible for many providers.

In order for disability service providers to use outcomes measures more consistently, these issues need to be addressed. Further, in order to build outcomes measurement into day-to-day practice, measures and processes need to have minimal impact on the provision of services, which means they must be practical, affordable, require minimal training, low effort and time for administration, analysis and interpretation scoring.

To this end, we have developed and validated two outcomes measures specifically for disability service providers: The Outcomes and Impact Scale – Revised (O&IS-R; Wilson, Hagiliassis, Koritsas, & Caldwell, 2014) and The Measuring Outcomes in Services and Supports Tool – Short Form (SF-MOSS; Hagiliassis, Nicola-Richmond, Wilson, & Mackay, 2014). The O&IS-R was developed to elicit information directly from a person with disability and measures the impact of a service across nine life domains identified from the literature and review of Government policy directives. It takes between 5-10 to complete, is available in both a standard and Easy English, and has been found to be reliable and valid (Koritsas, Hagiliassis, & Cuzzillo, 2017). The SF-MOSS is an instrument to set person-directed goals and evaluate the extent to which they are realised in the course of service delivery. It is administered as an interview to the person with disability by a staff member and measures the progress of a goal (performance and satisfaction) at pre and post-service points (and other time points if needed). The results of research have indicated good face, content, and concurrent validity (Hagiliassis, Koritsas, & Cuzzillo, 2017). Both surveys are now available for use online within an outcomes measurement app ([Outcomes Measurement Frameworks | Socialsuite](#)) which enables the collection, compilation and analyses of outcomes data in one single, easy-to-access location.

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Summary

- Outcomes data about services assist with service development, and planning and reporting back to funders about the impact of services.
- Processes and measures for measuring outcomes of disability services are limited, which makes routine collection of outcomes data difficult.
- Outcomes measures need to be inclusive of people with intellectual disability and include Easy English versions
- Online surveys that measure outcomes need to be valid, reliable, affordable, practical and quick to administer

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