Stretch2Engage evaluation toolkit
Summary Theory of Change

This summary Theory of Change (ToC) for the Stretch2Engage Framework identifies links between engagement activities and intended outcomes and impact for different stakeholder groups. The ToC forms part of the Stretch2Engage Evaluation Toolkit, which supports organisations to evaluate engagement initiatives. A detailed version of the ToC is also available.

The ToC was developed by Lirata Consulting as part of the Evaluation of the Stretch2Engage Framework Pilot in 2019. The Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC), the Stretch2Engage Partnership (Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health and Enlightened Consultants), and pilot organisations participated in developing and iterating the ToC with support from Lirata.

The Stretch2Engage Framework

Stretch2Engage is a contemporary set of best practice principles to guide the engagement of people using services and their friends and families in service design and re-design. Stretch2Engage acknowledges engagement as a human right fundamental to citizenship, as well as highlighting the benefits to services who engage effectively.

The Stretch2Engage Framework outlines principles and processes that organisations can adopt to offer more contemporary, inclusive and comprehensive engagement practice in direct service settings. Stretch2Engage's focus is not on therapeutic engagement, but on engagement in service design, improvement and evaluation.

Evaluation toolkit

Meaningful engagement asks organisations to think and act differently, which requires a significant investment of resources. It is important that organisations monitor and evaluate the progress of their service engagement initiatives in order to:

- Understand their engagement capacity and how it changes over time.
- Identify whether new engagement approaches are having positive outcomes.
- Learn from the engagement processes that are tested, and identify how to further strengthen them in future.

The Stretch2Engage evaluation toolkit is a collection of resources that helps organisations to monitor and evaluate service engagement initiatives. The toolkit includes:

- **Brief guide to monitoring and evaluation of service engagement initiatives**
- **Stretch2Engage Theory of Change**
- **Organisational survey template**
- **Brief staff survey template**
- **Service engagement capacity wheel template and instructions**
- **Significant change story template and instructions**

More information about the Stretch2Engage Framework and the evaluation toolkit is available at: www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/engage-enable/lived-experience-led-reform/stretch2engage.

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About this Theory of Change

Purpose of the ToC

QMHC is committed to better including people who use mental health (MH) and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services in the design of these services. To progress this goal, QMHC funded the development of the Stretch2Engage Framework and in 2018-19 oversaw the Stretch2Engage Pilot Project. The pilot explored how organisations could build their capacity to better engage people who use their services in designing and evaluating these services.

The Theory of Change consists of a diagram (below) and accompanying explanation. Together, these describe how QMHC, the Stretch2Engage Partnership and other stakeholders believe the Stretch2Engage Framework and associated activities lead to increased engagement capacity, better engagement and broader positive impacts.

The ToC helps to articulate the purpose of the Stretch2Engage Framework, and the pathways through which outcomes are expected to occur. This is useful in communicating the intent of the Framework. It also provides a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework overall, and of engagement capacity building initiatives undertaken by specific organisations.

What is the problem that Stretch2Engage aims to fix?

QMHC believes that people who use AOD and MH services in Queensland need more of a say in the way these services are designed. QMHC would like to increase engagement of people who use services by making changes within organisations. These include changing attitudes, culture, systems and practices to enhance engagement of people using their services, and their friend and families.

The Stretch2Engage Framework does not expect or require service users to do anything different. The onus is on organisations to make changes which improve engagement of people using their services.

What is a Theory of Change?

A ToC is a description of 'program theory' – how an intervention achieves a set of effects. A ToC links the intervention (in this case, the Stretch2Engage Framework and associated capacity building and engagement activities) with its intended impact, through a causal pathway of intermediary outcomes.

A ToC is designed to demonstrate the causal relationship between factors which are hypothesised to contribute to intended outcomes. A key intended outcome of the Stretch2Engage Framework is improved capacity by AOD and MH organisations to engage people who use their services in service design activities. The TOC summarises stakeholders' views on the component parts of this outcome, the activities which enable it to occur, and the other outcomes and impacts to which it contributes.

How to read the Theory of Change diagram

The ToC diagram should be read from the bottom up. The ToC begins with an outline of the activities believed to be influencing the changes we want to see. These are the *'S2E Partnership Activities'*.

The headings on the left side provide context to the boxes along each horizontal block relating to it. The colours show which block relates to which heading. As you work up the document, the Stretch2Engage ToC assumes that each horizontal block below influences the ones above it.

Activities and outcomes

Moving up the diagram, the ToC outlines activities and intended outcomes for multiple stakeholder groups. These are arranged in blocks.

1. **S2E partnership activities:** These are the activities, resources and development opportunities which were provided during the Stretch2Engage Pilot Project and are believed to improve AOD and MH organisations' capacity to better include people using their services in service design activities.

2. **Foundation outcomes: Changes in understanding and attitudes:** These are changes in the way people think, which are expected to flow from participation in Stretch2Engage capacity building activities.

3. **Organisational activities:** These are the activities that organisations undertake to improve engagement processes and practices within their own operations.

4. **Earlier outcomes: Changes in practice, changes in culture:** These are changes in the ways that organisations undertake engagement, which are expected to result from the organisational activities and to lead to better engagement of people who use services in their organisations service design activities.

5. **Later outcomes: Changes in services and systems:** These are improvements within individual services, and across sectors and systems, that are expected to result from improved engagement processes, practices and culture over time.

6. **Later outcomes: Benefits for people using services:** These are positive outcomes that are expected to occur for people using services, as organisations strengthen their engagement practices and action resulting service improvements.

7. **Later outcomes: Benefits for organisations and staff:** These are positive outcomes for staff and organisations that are expected to result from better engagement capacity and practices.

8. **Impact:** Broad, long terms results that are anticipated to emerge from widespread use of the Stretch2Engage Framework in the AOD and MH sectors over time.

Definitions of additional terms used

- **Stakeholders:** The different groups of people who are participating in, or impacted by Stretch2Engage Framework initiatives and associated engagement activities. They include people using services; their families and supporters; operational staff; managers; organisational project leaders, and the Stretch2Engage Partnership and QMHC.

- **Champions:** People who advocate for and lead improvements in engagement capacity and practice within their organisation or sector.

- **Organisational culture:** The underlying beliefs, assumptions, values, behaviours, and ways of interacting that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment in an organisation.

Factors influencing success

In addition to the Stretch2Engage Framework and its associated capacity building activities, a wide range of contextual factors may influence the extent to which organisations improve their service engagement capacity and practices. These include:

- Organisation type (e.g. public, private, government)

- Organisation size

- Organisational governance and leaderships

- Organisational agility

- Competing organisational priorities

- Motivations to participate

- Funding and funding requirements

- Level of external support

- Organisational permission to trial new ideas
- Which stakeholders are engaged
- Identity of champions within the organisation.

Detailed and summary versions

This document provides a summary version of the ToC which is suited to general communication of engagement capacity building activities and intended outcomes.

A detailed version of the Stretch2Engage ToC is also available, which is intended to be used for in-depth evaluation of engagement initiatives.

Further information

For further information about Stretch2Engage or the evaluation toolkit, please contact **Queensland Mental Health Commission:**

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Stretch2Engage Framework – Summary Theory of Change

Stretch2Engage (S2E) Framework - Summary Theory of Change

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IMPACT

| Policies & services are shaped to meet the needs of communities & people using services | | Goverment bodies understand & integrate Stretch2Engage at system level |

LATER OUTCOMES

Medium to long term

Changes in services & systems

- Programs are more relevant & appropriate to the needs of people using services
- There are increased opportunities for people to exercise rights to individual & collective self-determination
- Organisations design products & services around the needs of people using services. Pain points are reduced & gain points are maximised

Benefits for people using services

- People are more likely to have improved health & wellbeing outcomes
- People using services have better experiences
- People using services have increased expectations of services & organisational responsiveness

Benefits for organisations & staff

- Organisations better understand community needs enabling them to influence policy & service design
- Organisations have more productive & engaged workforce with higher morale & wellbeing
- Staff have new transferable skillsets relating to engagement, improving career prospects

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EARLIER OUTCOMES
Changes in practice

Changes in culture

- Champions, leaders & staff have improved engagement skills
- Organisations take the lead in engaging people using services
- Organisations develop multiple, creative ways of building conversations with people using services
- Leaders & staff take responsibility for service engagement
- Service users more openly share their ideas & experiences
- Service users believe organisations are interested in their ideas & experiences
- Organisations have better information about the wants, needs & pain points of people using services
- People using services have more power to make decisions about service design

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ACTIVITIES Organisational

- Champions plan & implement new service engagement activities
- Champions communicate S2E concepts to leaders, staff & people using services
- Organisations take responsibility for engaging people using services
- Organisations use new service user engagement tools & processes
- Organisations manage & work through change issues & resistance

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FOUNDATION OUTCOMES
Changes in understanding & attitudes

- Champions & leaders identify clear purposes & motives for change. They are willing to try new things.
- Leaders & staff understand service engagement is a part of normal business & will be good for business
- Champions understand the S2E Framework. Leaders & staff recognise & use the 7 value domains of engagement (7Cs)

ACTIVITIES S2E Partnership

- Share materials & tools for sector use
- Facilitate workshops & events
- Provide coaching
- Teach skills & processes
- Create opportunities for peer learning

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