Evaluating Arts, Health & Wellbeing Initiatives

Project evaluation remains a key challenge for practitioners and organisations. This course will provide an overview of evaluation techniques to support those managing and delivering arts, health and wellbeing initiatives and introduce participants to the theoretical concepts and practical tools they need to undertake their own evaluations. Our watchwords are Appropriate, Ethical and Credible, but we also encourage participants to think creatively about the approaches they use.

Led by expert practitioners, the course will include teaching and case studies as well as group activities providing opportunities for discussion and feedback. Practical skills development will be combined with teaching and reflection. A suggested reading list will be provided.

Who should attend?
The programme is open to project and programme managers working in the field of arts and health or arts and wellbeing, as well as artists, arts practitioners and creative professionals currently working in, or seeking to develop their practice in, arts, health and social care. It will also be of interest to a range of healthcare professionals including arts therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, doctors, activity co-ordinators and managers.

What will the course contain?
Day 1: Appropriate, Ethical and Credible: An Introduction to Arts and Health Evaluation
Day 2: Anecdote to Evidence: Understanding, Accessing and Using the Evidence Base
Day 3: Making Sense of the Numbers: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis
Day 4: Making Sense of What People Say and Do: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis
Day 5: Getting the Message Out: Credible and Effective Reporting
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Who’s delivering it?

Dr Karen Gray, Research and Evaluation Manager, Willis Newson

Karen is responsible for research and evaluation in Willis Newson, both internally as well as for clients. Her arts and health evaluation experience is underpinned by research experience gained in studying for the doctorate she holds from Cambridge University. Karen has a good understanding of the needs of the arts and health sector, a passion for words used accurately and persuasively, a keen analytical brain and an eye for detail. She works closely with our academic partner, Professor Norma Daykin of the University of the West of England.

Jane Willis, Director Willis Newson

Jane is the founder and director of Willis Newson, the UK’s leading independent arts and health consultancy which delivers creative and arts-based approaches to improving individual and community health and creating environments that support wellbeing. Jane has been a pioneer of the arts and health field since 1994, when she set up and ran Vital Arts, the arts programme for Bart’s Health NHS Trust. Jane has nineteen years experience delivering award-winning, large scale, integrated arts programmes in healthcare. She has an excellent knowledge and understanding of healthcare, the needs of patients, and of the arts. She is able to marry these areas of expertise to produce inspiring creative programmes that improve health and wellbeing, enhance healthcare environments and support the patient experience.

Meg Attwood

Meg has extensive experience of applying both quantitative and qualitative research skills within an arts and health evaluation context. As Willis Newson’s Research and Evaluation Lead she was responsible for developing the evaluation framework that Willis Newson currently uses. This work was made possible through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the University of the West of England. An experienced presenter, she has also developed course materials and taught and assessed students at a Master’s level. A former professional ballet dancer and teacher, Meg also has a Master’s degree in the Psychology of Education.

Course Dates / 2014

The course will run fortnightly from 9am – 3.30pm on:

Tuesday 11th February
Tuesday 25th February
Tuesday 11th March
Tuesday 25th March
Tuesday 8th April

Venue

Bristol Folk House
40a Park Street
Bristol BS1 5JG

Programme Fees

£450 for the full 5-day programme
£110 per day for individual days

While you can choose whether to attend the full five days or pick and choose individual sessions, we do recommend that all participants take the first Introductory session.

Book a place

For further information about the course, contact:
Christina Sadler
christina@willisnewson.co.uk

All images from Willis Newson projects. For further information please visit:
www.willisnewson.co.uk
Evaluating Arts, Health & Wellbeing Initiatives

Professional Development Opportunities

The Training Programme

Day One: Appropriate, Ethical and Credible: An Introduction to Arts and Health Evaluation

You will:

- Gain a broad understanding of the theories, models and techniques underpinning research and evaluation for arts and health
- Understand how to set appropriate aims for your evaluation and clarify what you can and can’t measure and why

We recommend that all participants attend this day. It will provide a strong foundation for all the concepts, methods and terminology introduced throughout the course.

It will help you to situate the needs of your project or programme within the general context of arts and health research and evaluation.

You will leave it able to set aims for your own evaluation and with a clear understanding of what it is possible and appropriate for you to measure and why.

“The first session really inspired me to get myself organised and I feel more determined already! I got a lot out of it! A great deal of information to take in but all so relevant. Looking forward to the next session....”

“This was a very good session covering the bigger picture and putting things in perspective, but it has also given me a clearer idea of how to go about evaluating my projects.”
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Professional Development Opportunities

The Training Programme

Day Two: Anecdote to Evidence: Understanding, Accessing and Using the Evidence Base

You will:

• Get to grips with what evidence is and how to judge its credibility
• Understand the difference between research and evaluation and the hierarchy of evidence
• Find out where to go and how to search for specific evidence
• Establish how to use evidence to support, guide and advocate for your project
• Understand what is meant by cost benefit analysis and how to position your work in relation to potential cost savings

There is a growing body of research that supports the contribution of arts in healthcare and wellbeing, but practitioners often report they find it difficult to access and judge the evidence base. This session will give participants the tools they need to find, assess and use the evidence that is relevant to them. It will also provide more detail on the thorny subject of cost benefit analysis and how to use the evidence available to conduct it on your own projects.

“I found the session really informative and engaging – it highlighted that there’s still lots for me to learn but I have a clear idea of where to go and how to access the information and learning. A good introduction to something I knew very little about beforehand.”

“I didn’t really understand about evidence... I had ideas about [big] outcomes, like reducing reoffending... I’ve got more of a sense now about what we can measure and therefore realistically achieve.”
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Professional Development Opportunities

The Training Programme

Day Three: Making Sense of the Numbers: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

You will:

• Explore a range of appropriate quantitative tools and approaches for use in evaluating arts and health or wellbeing initiatives
• Gain the knowledge to enable you to develop your own tools
• Understand how to collect and analyse effective quantitative data including monitoring, feedback forms, questionnaires and validated scales
• Explore best practice issues around avoiding bias, ethics and data protection
• Understand methods that are used to report findings from quantitative data, including visual and infographics

Most arts and health projects will collect some form of numbers based data. This can range from simple attendance records to the application of a validated scale such as the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. This session explains how to make the numbers work for you and your project and how to judge which tools will be appropriate. We will be exploring creative and practical best practice approaches to gathering, analysing and representing data.

“We have gone from years of gathering masses of data but with no tools to collate or assess it, let alone a process to share it or reflect on it, to having a much clearer rationale for collecting data, tools to collate it, criteria to assess it against and a plan for reviewing and sharing it.”

“It’s really helped my practice and has changed my approach to evaluation fundamentally – very timely and helpful.”
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Professional Development Opportunities

The Training Programme

Day Four: Making Sense of What People Say and Do: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

You will:

- Explore a range of appropriate qualitative tools and approaches for use in evaluating arts, health or wellbeing initiatives
- Gain the knowledge to enable you to develop your own tools
- Understand how to collect and analyse effective qualitative data including feedback forms, reflective diaries, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, case studies and photographic/video documentation
- Explore best practice issues around avoiding bias, ethics and data protection
- Understand methods that are used to report findings from qualitative data and how to use it credibly to advocate for your project

Qualitative data can be highly effective when it is credibly applied and analysed. This session will cover a range of evaluation tools and approaches that may be appropriately applied in your projects. It will give you an understanding of how to extract credible findings, including analysis of impacts, from qualitative data. We will be exploring creative and practical best practice approaches to gathering, analysing and representing data.

“It’s not that we wouldn’t have thought about doing case studies, but by combining them with focus groups and the quantitative data, we learned so much more.”

“Jane pitched the presentation perfectly so that all could take something away. People were excited and energised by her spirited presentation. The involvement of people worked extremely well and people felt that they had contributed to the debate.”
The Training Programme

Day Five: Getting the Message Out: Credible and Effective Reporting

You will:

- Understand how to report the findings of your evaluation credibly and effectively
- Explore how to use your findings to advocate for your project
- Explore creative approaches to dissemination
- Review the evaluation cycle and understand how your results can be used to inform the sustainable development of your organisation or professional practice

Evaluation should form part of a cycle of development and improvement and this session demonstrates how you can do this effectively.

We will explore ways of reporting and sharing your findings to enable you to grow as an organisation or as individual practitioners, including how to use evaluation to advocate credibly for your work.

“I just wanted to say that this session was so very helpful and without it, I doubt I would have seen the bigger picture to have the confidence to develop and pitch this project proposal.”

“Working with Willis Newson on the evaluation has changed people’s perceptions of the project. It says a lot about the way we work... that we are thorough...”