



FIRST PERSON
CONSULTING

To Tinker, Tailor, or Craft from Scratch? Tensions with validated tools

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Navigating change



Master's house



Complex systems



Navigating transitions

INFORMATION
20 YEARS AGO



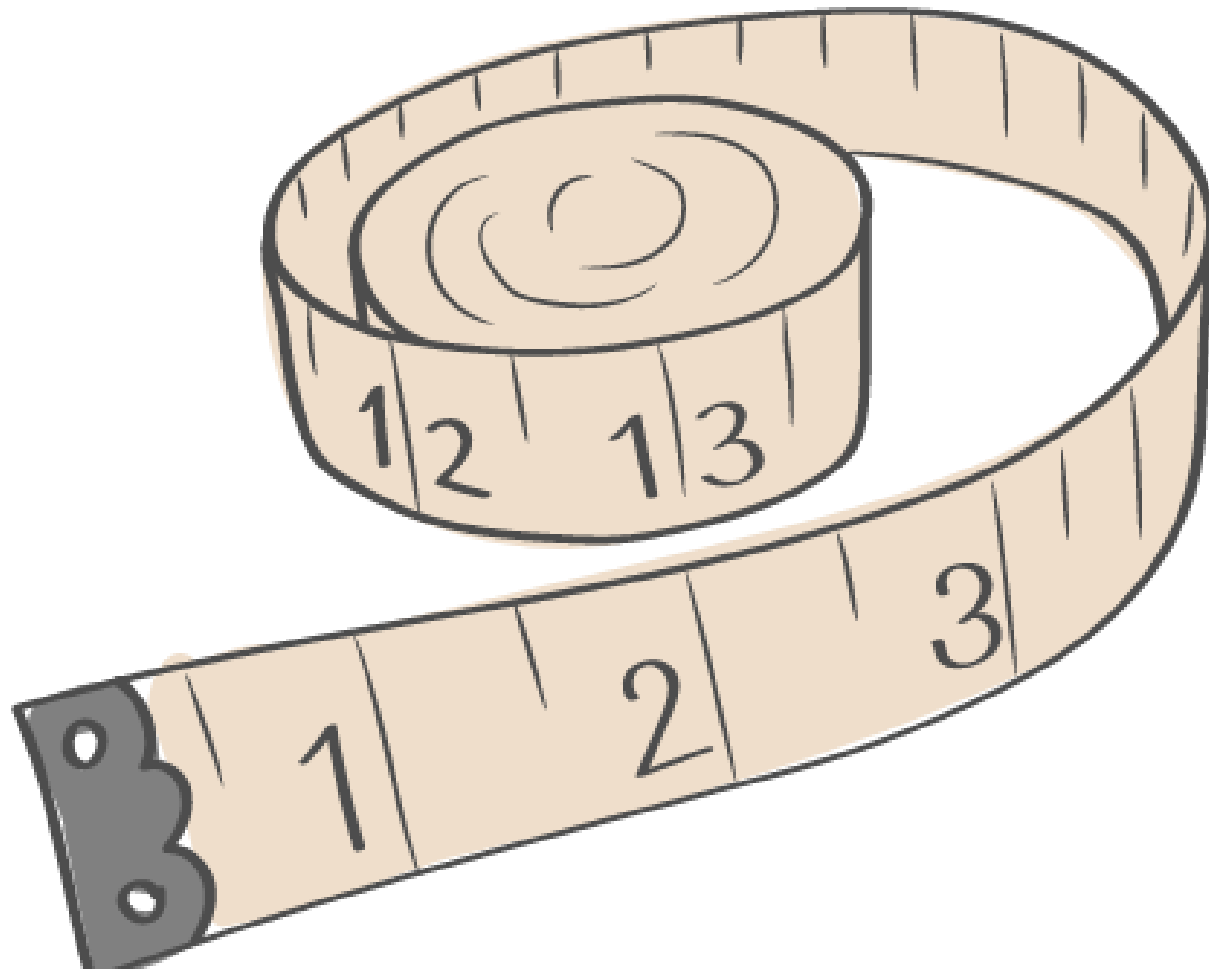
INFORMATION
NOW



@LINESBYLOES

A bit of rationale for this talk

- There is so much information out there – including on evaluation
- Whilst its easier to access – the volume is a challenge to meaningfully absorb
- Thus, this is a package of thoughts – which may be new to some but not others



Structure

- A bit about validated measures
- Insights into their use in a large-scale innovation program
- Discussion on when to tinker, tailor, or craft

What is a validated measure?

- A **validated measure** is one that accurately captures the concept it is intended to measure and does so consistently.
- Typically developed through pilot testing, empirical testing, it gets a **label** and then off it goes.
- This process is providing us with (a degree) of **certainty**. It does what it says on the tin.



Social Innovators Challenge

- Research found that as men age / transition through different life stages they lose social connections
- There was little evidence on ‘what works’ to support either the retention, establishment, or strengthening of those connections
- The Social Innovators Challenge is an eight-year, multi-site, multi-country response



Program structure



Our scope

- Work in partnership with funder and projects to scope the evaluation approach
- Undertake data collection, independent and analysis
- Support learning processes
- Knowledge translation, dissemination, etc



Proving 'what works'

Instrument	Reliability	Validity	Gender Apt	Positive	Permission	Practical	Population	Familiar
Duke Social Support Index	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y	N	Y
Berkman-Syme	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N

Instrument	Reliability	Validity	Gender Apt	Positive	Permission	Practical	Population	Familiar
SWEMWBS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Life Satisfaction Scale	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Our approach

QUANTITATIVE

Phase 2

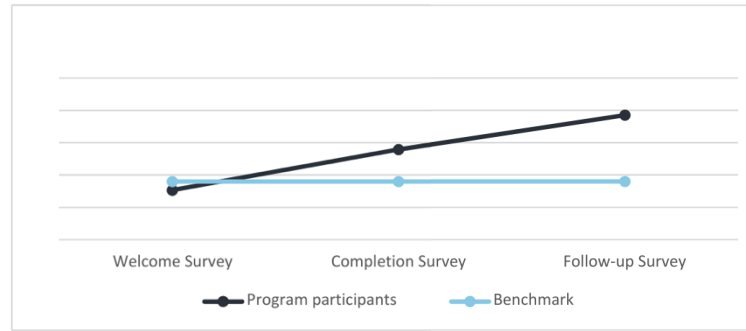
- Time 1 and Time 2 surveys, incorporating three validated measures

Phase 3

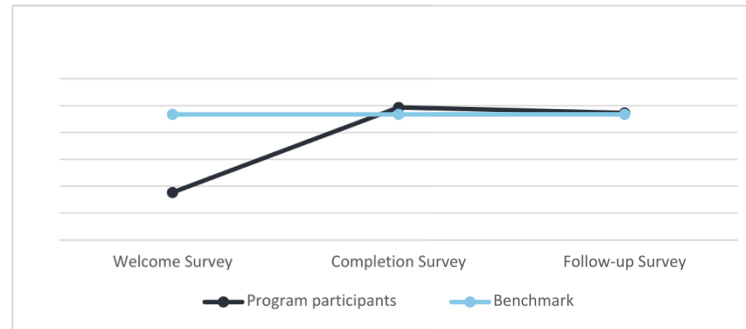
- Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 surveys, incorporating three validated measures

QUALITATIVE

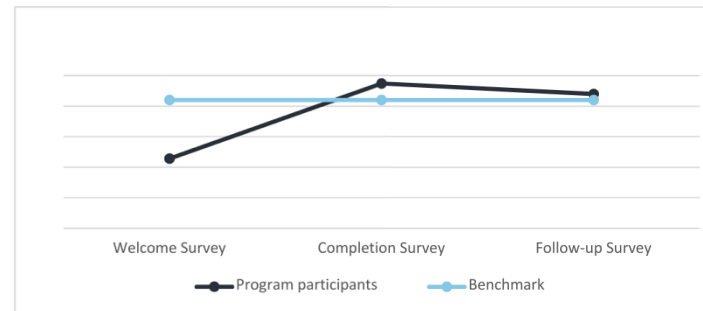
- Interviews / focus groups with participants across projects to understand the **mechanisms** for change (amongst other things)



Time 1: n=882; Time 2: n=497; Time 3: n=155



Time 1: n=900; Time 2: n=502; Time 3: n=157



Time 1: n=889; Time 2: n=499; Time 3: n=157

Challenges

- Another iteration was launched
- This, focusing on **digital contexts** highlighted a range of questions and challenges
 - Relevance of individual items to context
 - Relevance of scales to population
 - Our 'why'... is this still the right approach, or are we 'doing the easy thing'?



My provocation

- The constructed nature of the validated tool – whilst cognisant of context in its development – is lost when we take them across scales
- Relevance starts to creep in, and a range of other contextual factors influence how we make decisions about the measures to use
- When designing or commissioning evaluations and we consider the use of validated tools we need to consider...
- To what extent does the use of the tool allow us to understand the broader environment
- What factors of the context that influence the outcome / area (e.g. mental wellbeing) are also changing, and what does that mean?
- How do we understand the feedback loops of the context?

Consider...

1. Explore the context for the original tool's development, not just the who, but when how and worldview?
2. Consider the relevance of the items
3. Is the primary goal a point in time change, or a change that is emergent or more dynamic in nature?

