

Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact

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Content

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Activity is what we did. Impact is what changed.

- Activity: staff trained, policies reviewed, meetings held, requests answered.
- Impact: disparities reduced, access improved, people who felt excluded now feel included, outcomes that no longer track with race or disability.

Both matter, but do not confuse them. Training a hundred people is an activity. Whether those people now make fairer decisions is the impact. A program can be very busy and change nothing.

How to measure honestly.

- Break results down by group, because an average can hide the gap that is the whole point.
- Set a baseline first. You cannot show change without knowing where you started.
- Give every measure an owner, a threshold, and an action. A number nobody acts on is just decoration.
- Watch for measures that flatter you. If a metric only ever shows success, it is probably measuring the wrong thing.

The honest question. Not did we do the work, but did the work change the lives and outcomes it was meant to change. Keep asking it, and let the answer, even when it is uncomfortable, guide what you do next.

Set a baseline first. You cannot show change without knowing where you started.

Map impacts and readiness, assign owners, pilot supports, and adapt from feedback using Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact.

Confirm the current purpose, audience, and decision authority before using Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact to map impacts and readiness, assign owners, pilot supports, and adapt from feedback.

Choose the sections of Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact that match the situation; do not apply unrelated guidance as a blanket rule.

Document the action taken from Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact, the people affected, unresolved questions, and the responsible follow-up owner.

Check the stated limitations and evidence status for Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact; escalate when current authority or individual context is missing.

Review the result with the affected person, team, or community and revise the plan and lead change approach when it creates a barrier or unintended effect.

For all staff, use Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact to map impacts and readiness, assign owners, pilot supports, and adapt from feedback; use the guidance in the immediate task, check impact and access, and ask for help when authority is unclear. Start by set a baseline first. You cannot show change without knowing where you started.

Do not replace official legal, policy, clinical, supervisory, program, or Tribal authority.

Do not infer an individual's identity, preferences, needs, or experience from group-level information.

State uncertainty, use current authoritative sources, and escalate when the decision exceeds the user's role.

It is easy to measure how busy we are. It is harder, and far more important, to measure whether anything changed. Equity work fails quietly when we count activities and call it progress. The discipline is to separate activity from impact. Step 1. Set a baseline first. You cannot show change without knowing where you started. Step 2. Map impacts and readiness, assign owners, pilot supports, and adapt from feedback using Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact. Step 3. Confirm the current purpose, audience, and decision authority before using Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact to map impacts and readiness, assign owners, pilot supports, and adapt from feedback. Step 4. Choose the sections of Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact that match the situation; do not apply unrelated guidance as a blanket rule. Step 5. Document the action taken from Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact, the people affected, unresolved questions, and the responsible follow-up owner. Step 6. Check the stated limitations and evidence status for Measuring What Matters: Activity vs. Impact; escalate when current authority or individual context is missing. Step 7. Review the result with the affected person, team, or community and revise the plan and lead change approach when it creates a barrier or unintended effect.