

Data Storytelling: How CBOs Can Share Their Impact
From Numbers to Visuals: Unleashing the Power of Data to
Create Narratives for CBO Impact
FAQ Sheet

Data Visualization in Action

1. What is the most used data visualization technique or top 3 I need to focus on to simplify the process if I don't have a data specialist?

For keeping things simple and effective in data visualization, especially when you're working without a dedicated data specialist, focusing on the most straightforward and widely used techniques can be particularly beneficial. Here are the top three:

- **Bar Charts:** Ideal for comparing quantities across different categories. Bar charts are intuitive to read and can be used to show changes in data over time or differences between groups. They're especially useful when you want to compare data across categories, such as the attendance rates of different workshops or the number of clients served by month.
- **Line Graphs:** Best for displaying data trends over a period. Line graphs are perfect for showing changes and trends over time, making them ideal for illustrating how your CBO's funding or client numbers have evolved across different periods.
- **Pie Charts:** Effective for showing proportions and percentages within a whole. Pie charts provide a quick visual representation of the makeup of a dataset in a way that is easy to understand at a glance. They are most effective when you want to show how different parts contribute to a whole, such as the breakdown of your program's expenses or the demographic distribution of your clients.

2. How can you show contextual interpretation on a bar graph? Can it only be done via text under the graph?

While text annotations directly under the graph are common and effective, there are several ways to integrate contextual interpretation:

- **Title and Labels:** Use descriptive titles and axis labels to explain what the data represents and the units of measurement.

- **Annotations:** Point out specific data points with text annotations to highlight trends, exceptions, or important findings.
- **Color Coding:** Use color to differentiate data segments or to highlight specific bars, making the context visually intuitive.

This approach makes your graph not just a display of numbers but a compelling story about your data.

Data Visualization on Social Media

1. How can data visualization be leveraged in social media?

Leveraging data visualization in social media can significantly enhance your messaging impact, making complex information accessible and engaging to a broad audience. Here are three ways to do this:

- Use eye-catching graphics like infographics and charts to highlight key facts and trends, making them easy for followers to understand and spread.
- Optimize visuals for each platform to ensure clarity and impact and encourage interaction by asking followers to share their thoughts or insights on the data presented.
- Create a series of data visualization posts around a theme or cause your organization supports. This builds audience anticipation and encourages followers to engage with your content regularly.

External Support

1. How can states support CBOs with this process?

States can support CBOs in the whole process of data storytelling by offering:

- **Training and Workshops:** Providing education on data analysis, storytelling techniques, and visualization tools to enhance CBOs' capabilities.
- **Access to Data:** Sharing relevant, anonymized state data sets that CBOs can use to identify trends, needs, and outcomes related to their missions.
- **Funding and Resources:** Allocating grants specifically for developing data analysis and visualization projects, including software and hardware.
- **Partnerships:** Facilitating collaborations between CBOs and local universities or tech companies for expertise in data handling and visualization.

- **Platforms for Sharing:** Creating online spaces where CBOs can share their data stories, increasing visibility and impact.

These efforts can empower CBOs to tell compelling stories with their data, driving awareness, funding, and policy changes.

Data Collection

1. How do we navigate the "anonymous" issue when trying to gather data?

Navigating the "anonymous" issue when gathering data involves balancing the need for valuable insights with respecting individuals' privacy and ensuring data protection. Here are key strategies:

- **Clear Communication:** Inform participants about the purpose of data collection, how the data will be used, and the steps taken to ensure anonymity. Transparency fosters trust and can increase participation rates.
 - **Anonymization Techniques:** Apply methods like removing identifiable information (e.g., names, addresses) or using aggregate data that doesn't single out individuals. For example, instead of showing specific responses with names in a report on youth program satisfaction, summarize the overall trends or group responses by age or location without giving away who said what. This approach ensures confidentiality while allowing valuable insights to be shared and applied.
 - **Consent and Choice:** Provide participants with options regarding the data they share. Ensure they understand their participation is voluntary and they can opt out without consequences.
 - **Secure Data Handling:** Implement strict data security measures to protect the data collected, limiting access to authorized personnel only and using encryption for storage and transmission.
2. What guidance can you provide on dealing with small amounts of client feedback (such as low survey responses) and ethics of interpreting a few data points as representative, how to assess what's "enough" data to present?
 1. **Be Transparent:** If only 15 out of 100 clients responded to a survey, be clear about this when sharing results. State that the insights come from a limited but valuable perspective, emphasizing the data's exploratory nature.

2. **Use Qualitative Insights:** Supplement quantitative data with stories or quotes from respondents. For example, if a few clients mention the importance of a supportive environment in feedback, highlight this alongside the numbers to provide depth and context.
3. **Ethical Caution:** Remind stakeholders that these findings are based on limited data and should be considered as initial insights rather than sweeping conclusions. This approach respects the data's limitations and avoids overgeneralization.
4. **Iterative Approach:** Use the initial small dataset to guide further questions or focus areas for subsequent feedback efforts, aiming to gather more comprehensive data over time.
5. **Benchmarking "Enough" Data:** Assessing what constitutes "enough" data depends on your goals. In early or trial stages, even a small amount of data can provide crucial direction. Measure your findings against established benchmarks or studies to check if small data patterns hold up. This method helps ensure your insights are grounded and valuable, even from limited data.

Example on How to Apply This Recommendation

Imagine a community-based organization (CBO) launches a new after-school program and wants to evaluate its impact. Due to timing and resource constraints, they only receive feedback from 10% of participants—a small, but crucial, dataset.

Applying the Recommendation:

1. **Objective Setting:** The CBO's immediate goal is to gather initial reactions to the program's effectiveness and areas for improvement, understanding that this small dataset won't provide exhaustive insights but can highlight significant initial perceptions and experiences.
2. **Data Presentation:** In their report, the CBO clearly states, "Feedback was obtained from 10% of our participants. While this represents a small fraction, the insights offered valuable directional guidance on how the program was received and areas where adjustments may be beneficial."
3. **Comparative Analysis:** They notice that despite the small sample size, there is consistent praise for the program's mentorship component. The CBO then compares this feedback against studies in

educational journals that highlight the benefits of mentorship in after-school programs, finding their initial data aligns with broader research indicating the value of mentorship.

4. **Actionable Steps:** Based on this comparison, the CBO decides to strengthen the mentorship aspect of their program in the short term while planning to conduct a more extensive survey in the next cycle to validate these findings further and explore additional areas for development.
5. **Communication:** When sharing these insights with stakeholders, the CBO emphasizes the preliminary nature of the findings but also points out the promising alignment with existing research on mentorship. They propose a plan to expand data collection efforts to substantiate these early positive signals and refine the program based on broader participant feedback.

This approach demonstrates how CBOs can responsibly utilize small datasets to inform program development while acknowledging the limitations and planning for more comprehensive data collection and analysis in the future.