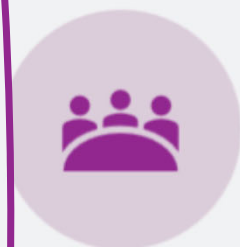# The Contribution to Change Framework

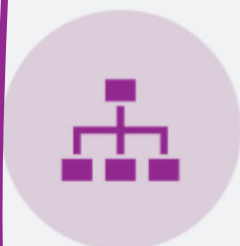## Supporting community-based organisations to demonstrate their impact
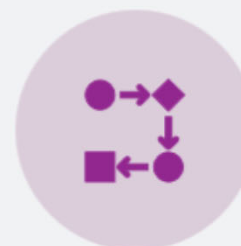
Collective Action

Community-driven: We see ourselves as facilitators not experts. We support community organisations and the communities they serve to drive the project.

Evidence-based: We bring together different ways of knowing – lived experience, practitioner experience, technical expertise

Relevant: We start where an organisation is and develop tools that are realistic and practical

Long-term view: Social change takes time, and we're there to support our clients over the long-term

Meridian

Peer-led organisation working with people living with HIV, LGBTIQA+ people and sex workers

Established by the community in response to the AIDS epidemic

Provides health and social support services to reduce health inequities

Create safe and inclusive spaces and services to reduce stigma, discrimination and abuse

What is the Contribution to Change Framework?

Whole-of-organisation system for measuring outcomes and demonstrating impact

Uses a theory-based approach to build a credible and compelling story of the organisation's impact

Integrates diverse sources of expertise to build evidence-based pathways from outcomes to impact

Uses a monitoring approach to collect data as we go

Data is collected at a program level and aggregated up under shared outcome domains

Staff and service users guide the framework to ensure it is safe, inclusive, relevant and meaningful

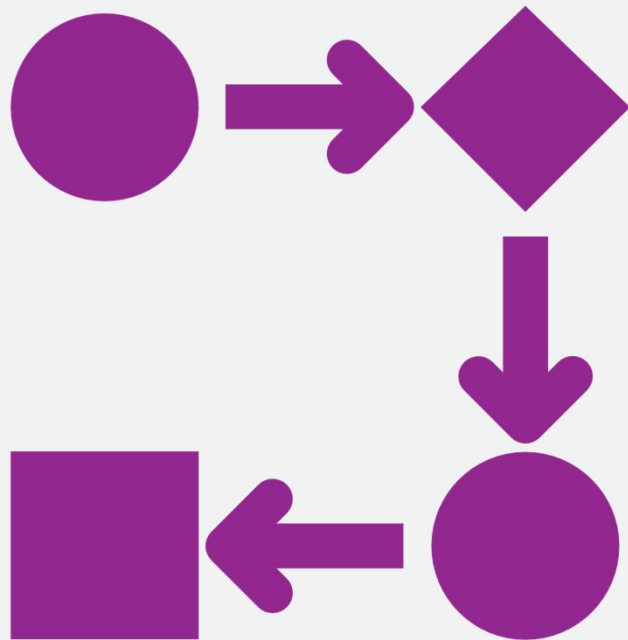Paired with Socialsuite for data collection and visualization

We set realistic goals and expectations

- Focused on contribution not attribution
- Set realistic timeframes
- Developed the framework upfront, but implemented it progressively over time
- Focused on continuous improvement not perfection

We developed an organisation-level theory of change

We started at the program level

We worked with service users and staff to gain first-hand insight into the change pathways that lead to positive outcomes

We reviewed research to identify the factors that are associated with positive outcomes for our communities

We identified what outcomes can be attributed to Meridian

We built up to the organisational level

We worked together to build an organisation-level theory of change

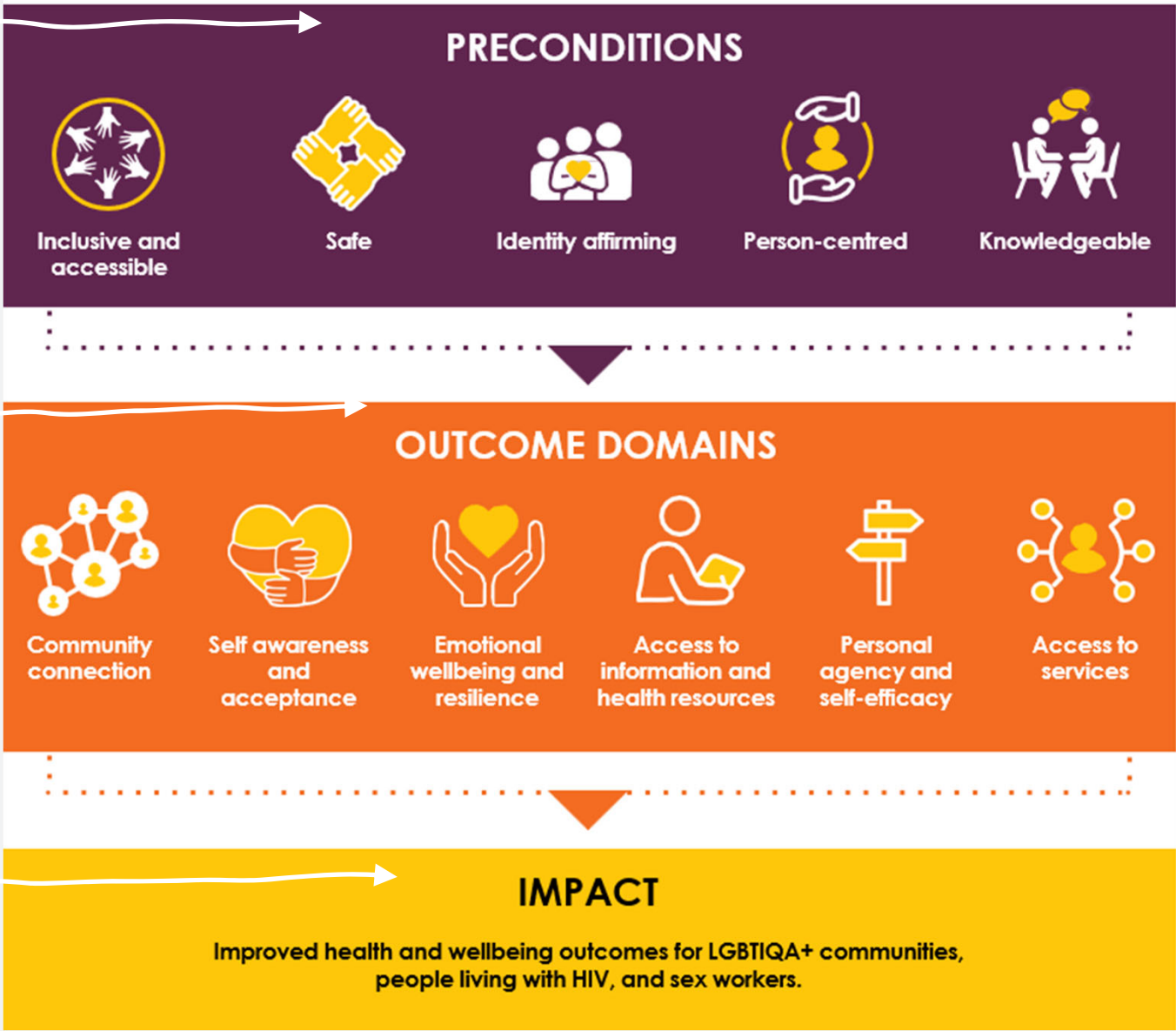We looked across the program theories to find common threads

We brought together different sources of expertise to establish evidence-based pathways between the outcome domains and long-term impact

We identified where to focus Meridian's evaluation resources

We identified service characteristics that remove barriers and create a foundation for positive outcomes.

PRECONDITIONS

Inclusive and accessible

Safe

Identity affirming

Person-centred

Knowledgeable

We created outcome domains to group the outcomes Meridian is working towards across their programs and services

OUTCOME DOMAINS

Community connection

Self awareness and acceptance

Emotional wellbeing and resilience

Access to information and health resources

Personal agency and self-efficacy

Access to services

We drew on social and public health research to establish a strong evidence base that demonstrates the relationship between our outcome domains and improved health and wellbeing among our communities

IMPACT

Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTIQA+ communities, people living with HIV, and sex workers.

We found the right data collection and visualization tool

Affordable

Easy to use

Enables the aggregation of data from across the organisation

Supports reporting at the activity, program and organisation levels

We collect data from service users to assess whether we're meeting the preconditions and outcomes

The organisation-level theory of change guides our data collection

We created a set of shared indicators and survey questions to standardise data collection

We use a monitoring approach to collect data as we go

We continuously work at balancing the needs of individual programs and the organisation

Staff and service users guide the implementation of the framework to ensure the process is safe and inclusive, and the findings are relevant and meaningful

We use the theory of change to integrate different forms of evidence to build a credible and compelling picture of the organisation's impact

We use surveys to assess whether we are meeting these preconditions

PRECONDITIONS

Inclusive and accessible

Safe

Identity affirming

Person-centred

Knowledgeable

We use surveys to assess whether we're achieving the outcomes under each domain, and we aggregate the findings under the domains.

OUTCOME DOMAINS

Community connection

Self awareness and acceptance

Emotional wellbeing and resilience

Access to information and health resources

Personal agency and self-efficacy

Access to services

We draw on social and public health research to demonstrate that the outcomes experienced by our service users are associated with improved health and wellbeing
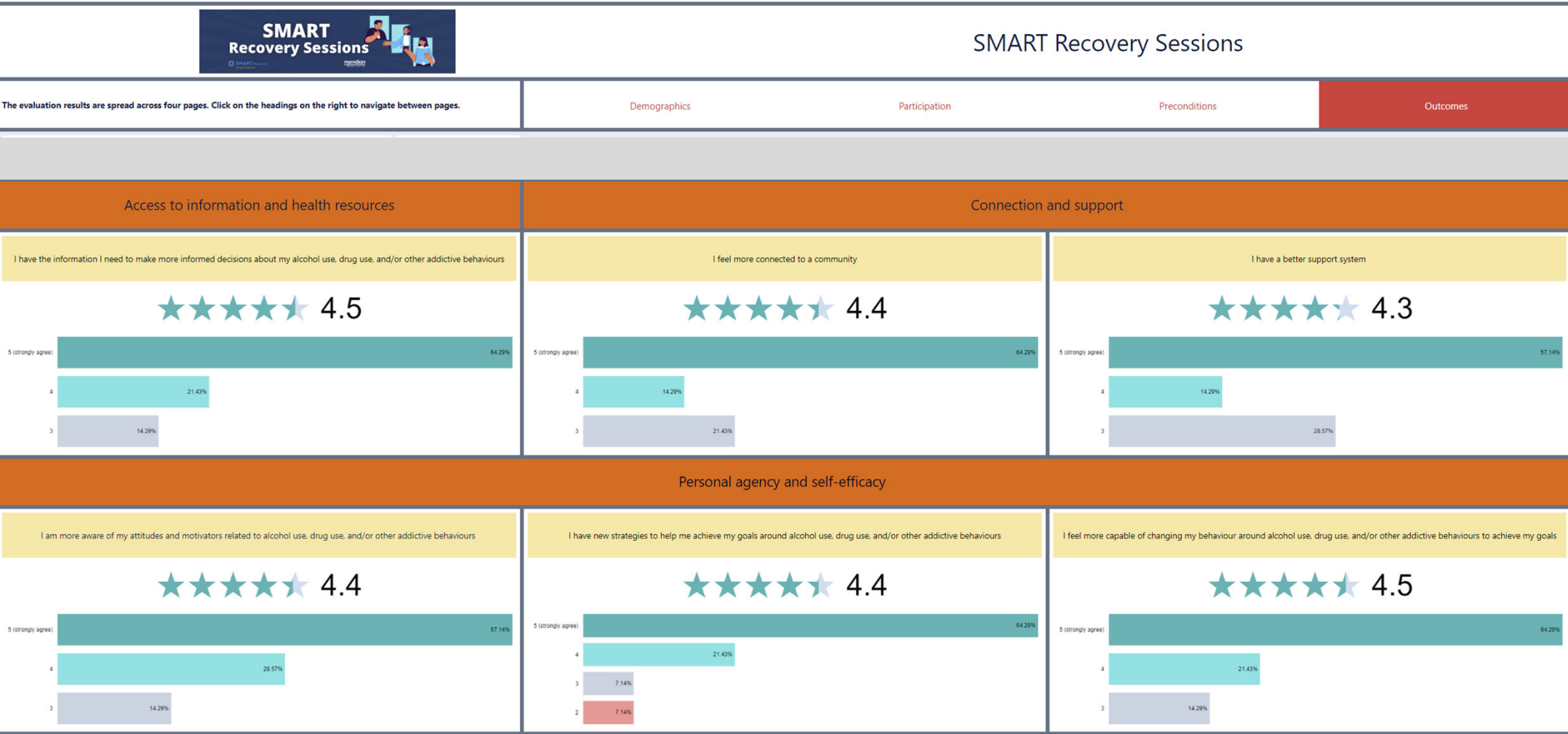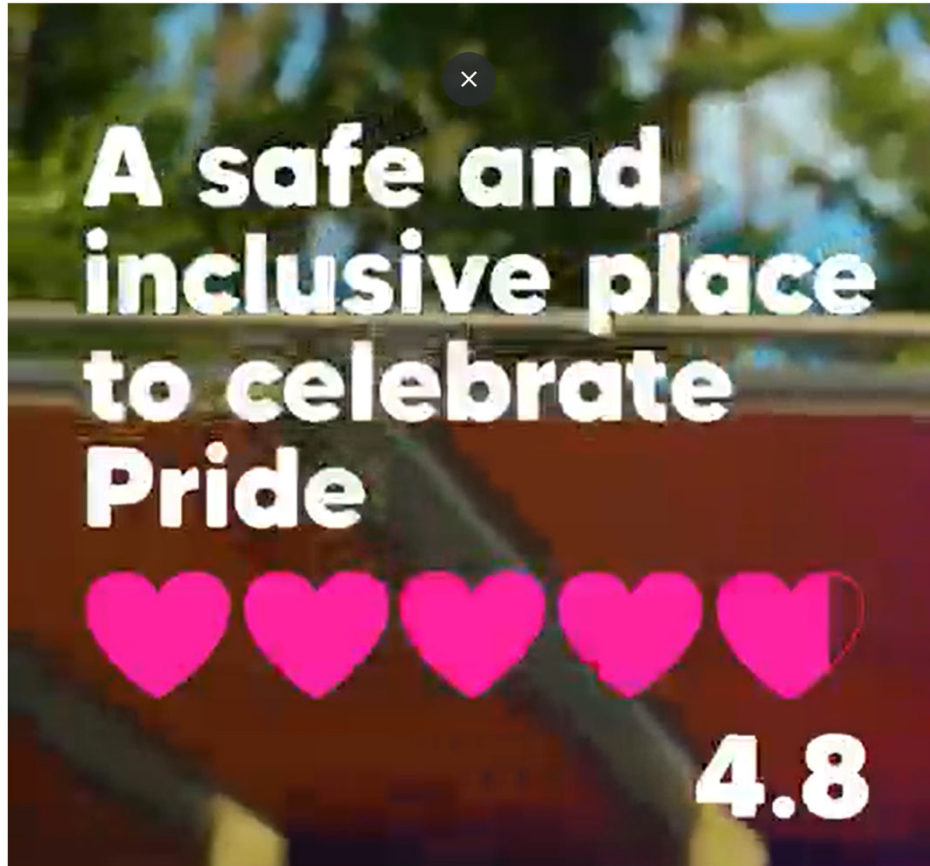
IMPACT

Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTIQA+ communities, people living with HIV, and sex workers.

We share the results, with staff, stakeholders, and communities

Evaluation results are available to staff in real time in custom-made dashboards

This is a screenshot of a dashboard that we created using Socialsuite. It presents the results of Meridian's SMART Recovery Sessions.

We share the data we collect with our communities

These images are from a video we created to share feedback about Fair Day 2023 – Canberra's annual Pride event. You can watch the video on Meridian's Facebook page (Meridian ACT)

What is it about the C2C framework, in combination with Socialsuite, that helped Meridian overcome many of the challenges that not for profits face when trying to establish monitoring and evaluation systems?

Meridian identified where their limited resources would have the greatest returns.

Theory-based monitoring approaches can support community organisations to focus on the immediate changes of their work and link them to the evidence base for their downstream impact.

collective action
the social impact specialists

Meridian is reaping the rewards of having an organisation-wide framework to guide data collection and analysis.

Project-by-project evaluation is a great place to start but move toward an overarching framework as soon as you can.

collective action
the social impact specialists

Meridian found a data collection and analysis tool that met their needs.

Invest in clarity first — then invest in tech.

Meridian engaged with staff and service users with lived experience to ensure that evaluation practice is culturally safe and that the findings are relevant, accurate, and meaningful.

INCLUSIVE HEALTH

Theory-based approaches can help bring together different forms of knowledge and weave them into a cohesive framework.

collective action
the social impact specialists

Meridian has embraced complexity, messiness and learning.

Accept that it will be a long road and commit to the journey.

collective action
the social impact specialists

Use theory-based approaches to focus on the immediate changes from your work and link them to the evidence base for downstream impact.

Project-by-project evaluation is a great place to start but move toward an overarching framework as soon as you can.

Invest in clarity first — then invest in tech.

Use theory-based approaches to bring together different forms of knowledge and weave them into a cohesive framework.

Accept that it will be a long road and commit to the journey.

collective action
the social impact specialists

Thank you! Please reach out if you have any questions or would like more information.

collective action
the social impact specialists

meridian
COMMUNITY ■ HEALTH ■ ACTION

Alison Barclay (she/her)
0403 745 792
alison@collectiveaction.com.au
www.collectiveaction.com.au

02 6257 2855

www.meridianact.org.au

training@meridianact.org.au