

What Are Data?

Charity Insights Canada Project (CICP)

Community Education Centre

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Guest Speaker: Robin Sokoloski, Director of Programming and Research, Mass Culture

What we will cover:

- What are data?
- Review of some key data terms
- Why data matters to nonprofits and charities
- Why it is essential to consider ethics and DEI in your approach
- Overview of Learning Framework for Impact Measurement
- Focus on how to formulate research questions

What comes to mind when you hear the word Data?



What are Data?



Facts or values that can be measured or described

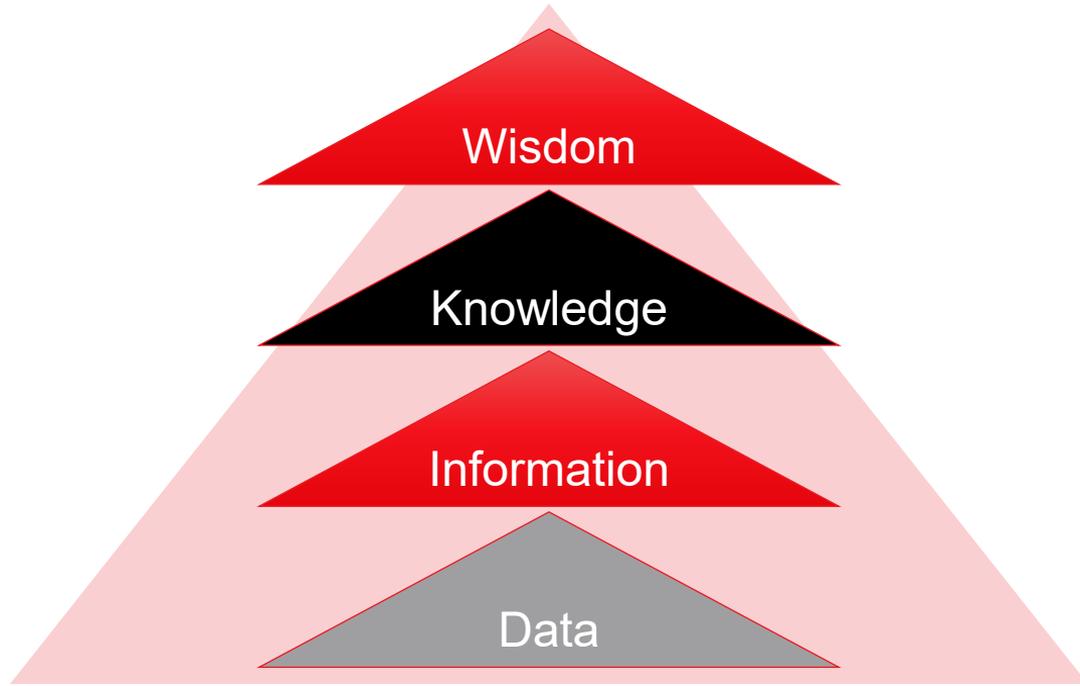


Includes numbers, text, images, and stories



Without data we cannot make informed decisions

From Data to Wisdom (DIKW Pyramid)



Quantitative Data

- Can be counted, measured, and expressed as numbers:
- Examples include:
 - Program participation rates
 - Donation amounts
 - Age or income level of participants
 - Program costs



Qualitative Data

- Non-numerical: describes qualities, characteristics, and experiences
- Examples include:
 - Focus group discussions about program experiences
 - Case notes
 - Observations of staff
 - Photos, videos, or audio recordings capturing program moments



Combined Insights:

➤ A youth-serving nonprofit evaluates its counselling program:

- 124 youth participated
- 82% showed improvement on a standardized wellness scale
- 315 counselling sessions delivered

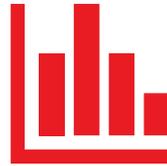
➤ Focus groups with youth reveal:

- “I finally trust an adult who listens without judgment.”
- “It helped that a counsellor shared lived experience like mine.”
- “I wish sessions were longer, 45 minutes doesn’t feel like enough.”

Some Types of Data Collected by Nonprofits



Administrative data



Program data



Impact data

Why Data Matters to Nonprofits

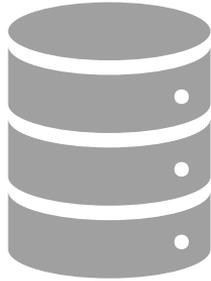
Improves decision-making

Supports monitoring and evaluation

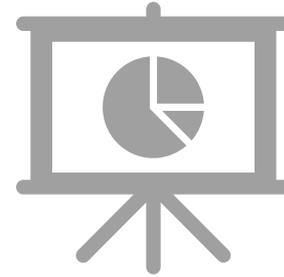
Enhances accountability

Supports fundraising efforts

Discussion



What is one example of data your organization already collects?



How is your organization using this data?

Consider Data Ethics

- “Data is an extension of a person or groups of people, and therefore should be treated as you would treat people—respectfully. For instance, data are the words, thoughts, feelings, expressions, interactions, and contributions from individual people, it is not abstract, objective nor distant/removed from people.”
- BILLIE JOE ROGERS, RECIPROCAL CONSULTING



Data Ethics Guidebook Cultivating an ethical mindset in research & evaluation.
(2022). Informing Change. <https://informingchange.com/data-ethics-project/>

Consider Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Data is never neutral.
- The way we collect, analyze, and communicate data reflects the assumptions, values, and biases of the people doing the work.
- Without an intentional DEI lens, data can unintentionally (but significantly) exclude communities, misrepresent findings, or even lead to inequitable decisions and outcomes.



Correlation and Causation

- **Correlation:** when two things happen at the same time or move together, but one does not necessarily cause the other.
- **Causation:** One thing directly produces a change in another.

*Correlation shows a relationship;
causation proves impact.*



Poll: How do you feel about data?



Data feels
scary



Data feels
manageable



Data feels
exciting



Data feels
confusing

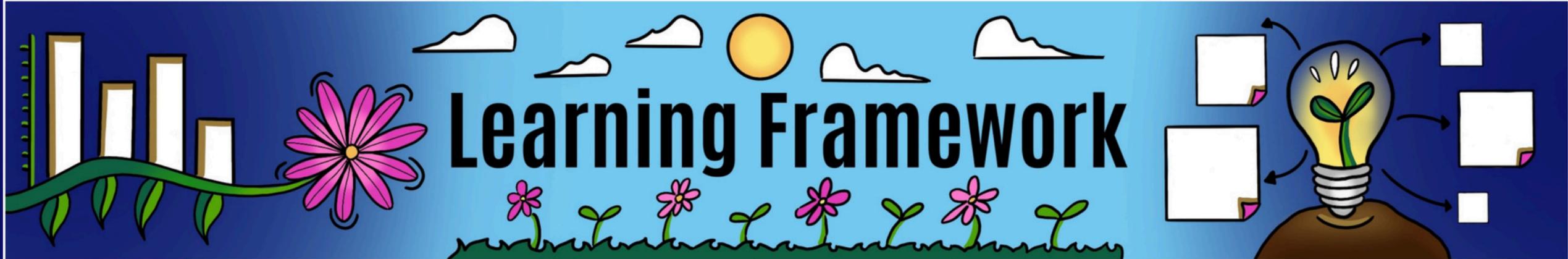
More Data Literacy Webinars Coming Soon!

- Join us for our next two webinars:
 - **April 28th** Spreadsheet Basics for Nonprofits
 - **May 5th** Excel & Google Sheets: Level-Up Skills for Nonprofits
- Other topics we will cover this year:
 - CICIP Survey Reports and Data Dashboards
 - Data visualization
 - Data storytelling
 - And more to come...



MASS culture
MOBILISATION culturelle

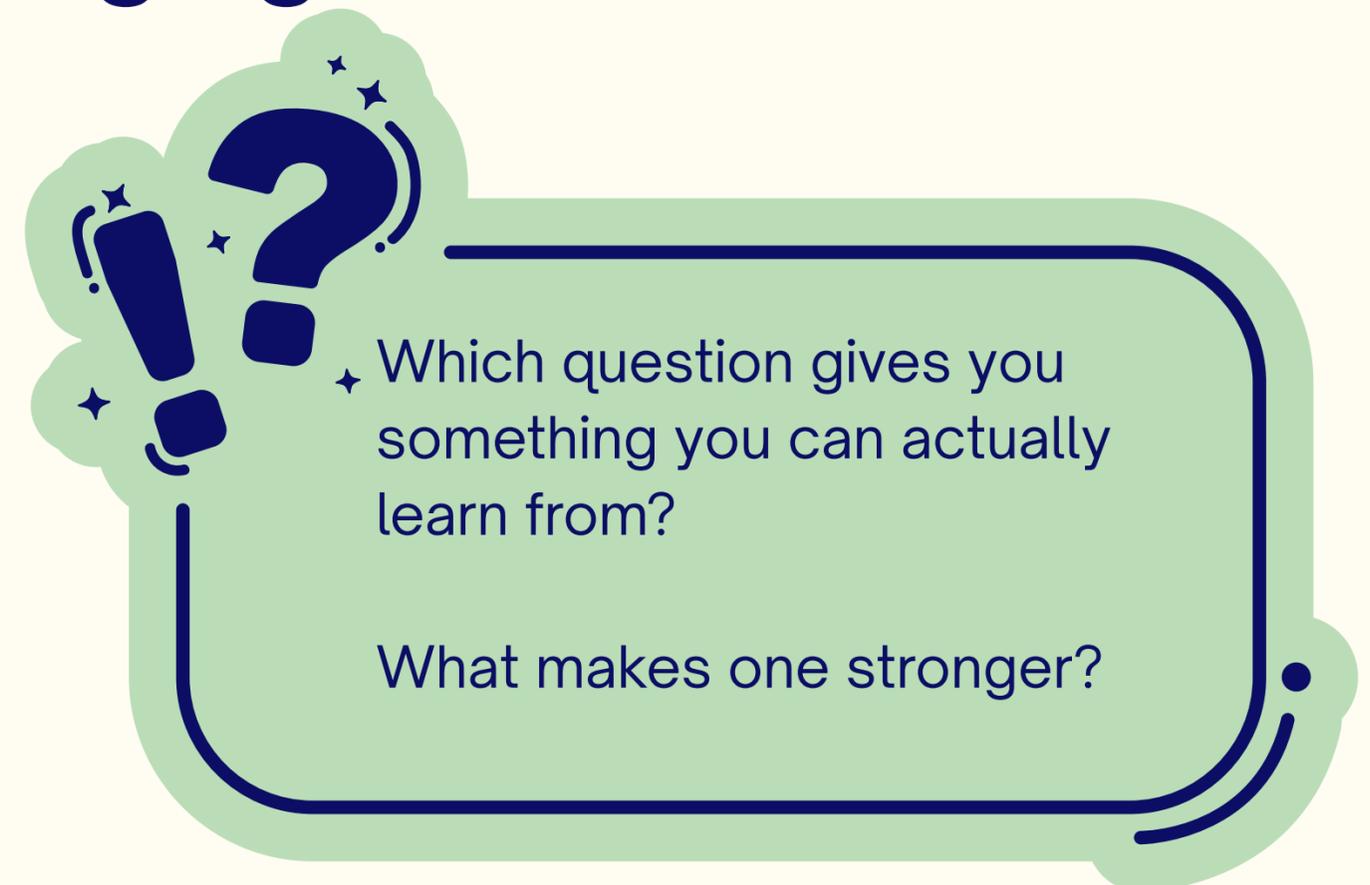
What Are Data



Impact Area A line of inquiry or concept or value to study and assess through out the life of the work ↓	How the impact area emerged? Source where the Impact Area came from by exploring activities, outputs and outcomes	Description This may evolve overtime. If so, a new description should build upon the original.	Questions What do we want to ask to explore this impact area?	Indicators By asking these questions what do we want to track?	Collection Mechanisms What's the best way to collect responses?	Engagement and Analysis What is your engagement and insight strategies?	Sharing Impact In what format(s) will our findings be shared?
			1.a) 1.b) 1.c)				
			2.a) 2.b) 2.c)				
			3.a) 3.b) 3.c)				

A. Are we increasing belonging?

B. In what ways, and under what conditions, does engagement with our work contribute to participants' sense of belonging over time?



For too long, practitioners of nonprofits have been asked to provide data that doesn't match up with what they need to learn in order to improve outcomes.

Field-led data building:
Emphasizing that those
closest to the work
should drive data efforts

**Capacity-building for
learning and adaptation:**
Not just reporting

**Equity-centered
learning:**
Integrating lived
experience and
community voice into
data and evaluation



“Through our work, we hope to contribute to ____.”



What are you genuinely curious about when you think about that impact?



The 5 Sharpening Filters

1. For whom?
2. In what context?
3. What kind of change?
4. What might influence it?
5. Over what time frame?

Indicators are clear and measurable signs of progress toward the intended changes you are / or your organization is striving to make.

In what ways, and under what conditions, does engagement with our work contribute to participants' sense of belonging over time?

(1)
% of participants
engaging with people
outside their usual social
or cultural circles.

(2)
People express
feeling "more at
ease" or "less
alone" in shared
cultural spaces.

(3)
Elders and youth
participate together in
arts experiences.

(4)
Participants describe
feeling seen,
respected, and safe.

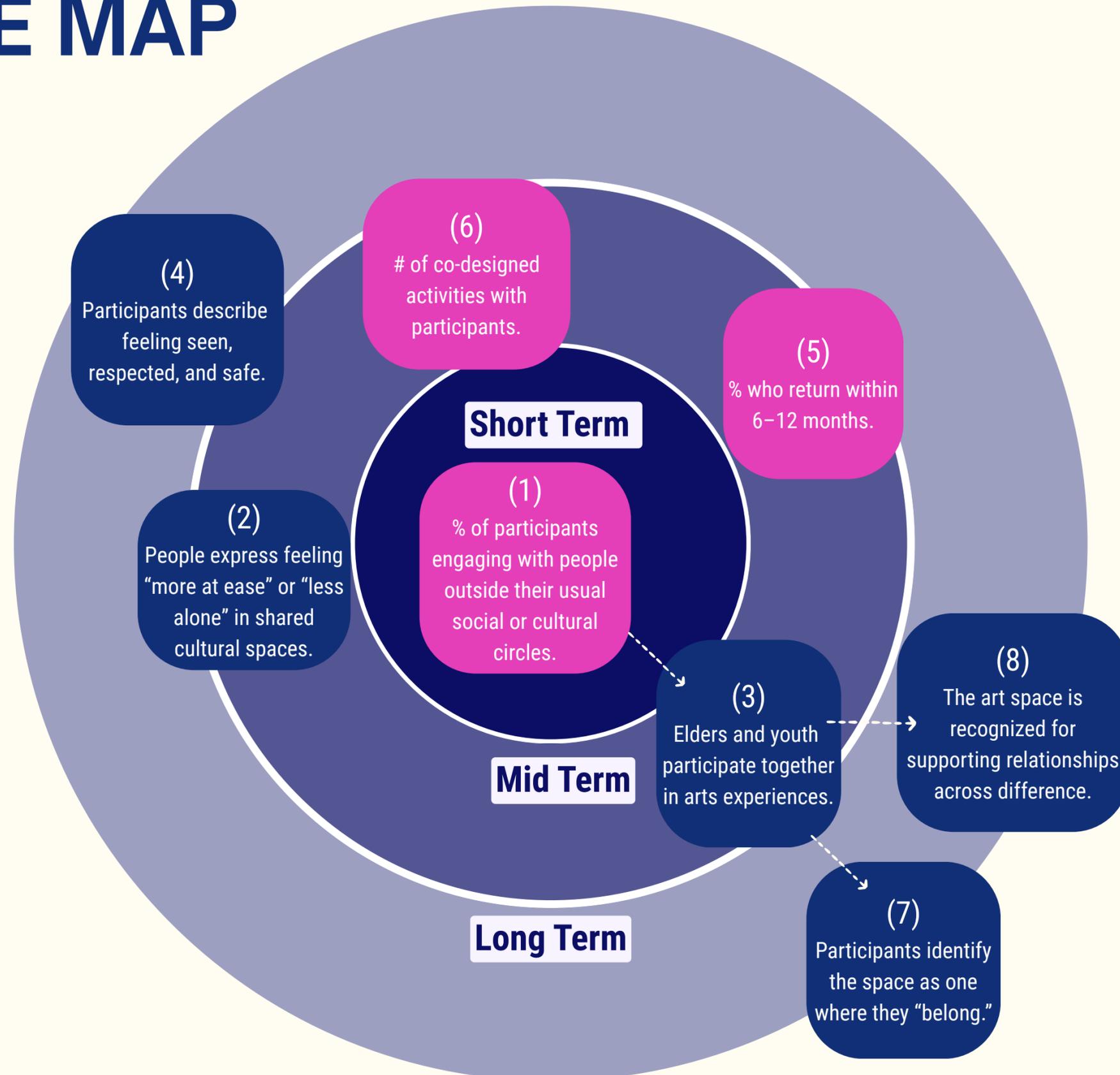
(5)
% who return within 6-
12 months.

(6)
of co-designed
activities with
participants.

(7)
Participants identify
the space as one
where they "belong."

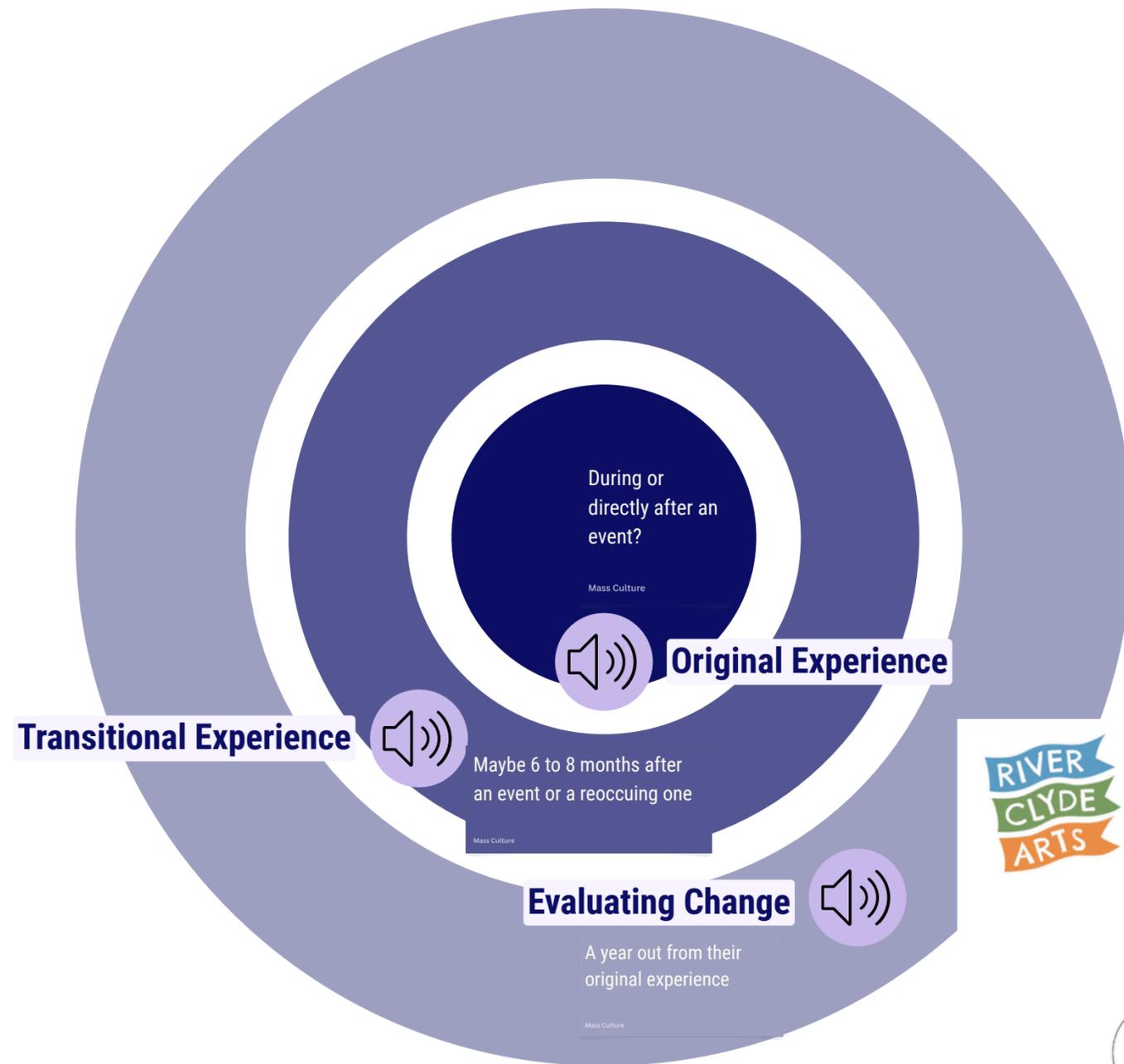
(8)
Our programming is
recognized for
supporting
relationships across
difference.

RIPPLE MAP



Ripple Map

<https://massculture.ca/dna/evaluation/>



River Clyde Arts (previously River Clyde Pageant)



Original Experience

Transitional Experience

Evaluating Change

Evaluating Change



More links and information:

Mass Culture Website: <https://massculture.ca/>

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www.massculture.ca

