



## Still Listening, Still Learning: Personal Outcomes in 2025 and Beyond

**Story title: *From metrics to meaning – a journey with Most Significant Change (MSC)***

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Overview: Can you tell us what is the piece of work, practice or initiative that you want to tell us about? (who was involved and what was the focus)



Metrics driven performance measures dominate health, social care and related organisations. Whilst they have their place, there is much about these services and their impact that cannot be demonstrated by metrics alone, particularly when it comes to understanding personal outcomes. As the saying goes. *‘Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts’.*

Across Wales, a diverse range of caring and passionate people with a commitment to supporting good outcomes, have been experimenting with a story and dialogue based approach to learning-focused evaluation called Most Significant Change (MSC). It was first developed in the context of public health programmes and international development by Rick Davies and Jess Dart (Davies and Dart 2005).

These ‘pioneers’ have used MSC across a range of subjects including the evaluation of training programmes, community-based prevention and rehabilitation, peer support, child and family safeguarding and supporting unpaid carers. They came together to share their learning and to network at a event in the National Botanic Garden of Wales on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025. A film was made about this event, which outlines the key messages. MSC is more than an evaluation tool – through its use of story and dialogue, it can also be therapeutic and relationship-building, which can have a positive impact on individual motivation and collective cultural and practice development.

### **What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?**

We have had to take time to listen and time to talk – things that can be in short supply in hard-pressed times. We have had to move beyond tick-box evaluation and immerse ourselves in stories and dialogue, using the Most Significant Change methodology. This has in part been supported by Welsh Government, who recognise the potential roles of stories and dialogue in capturing, exploring and learning about complex, often entwined personal and organisational outcomes.

**Has this helped to keep a focus on what matters to people in face of current challenges?**

Yes- very much so! Engaging in MSC has humanised evaluation, touched and changed hearts and supported individual and organisational learning, policy and practice development, as outlined in the film.

**What have you noticed in terms of outcomes or impact? (for people using the service/staff/the organisation)**

Participants – whether people supported by services, practitioners or managers all speak highly of their involvement in MSC, whether in sharing their stories or engaging in dialogue about the stories of others. The method engages the heart as well as the mind and makes people feel human, significant and connected

**How did this make you feel?**

I have been encouraged and changed by my involvement in this work. They call me the MSC expert in Wales, which I am not – I am a novice, but I have seen individuals and groups come alive and that creates a good feeling in me.

**What have you learned through this?**

The MSC method resonates with a quote by one of my all-time heroes – Greg Boyle, who works with marginalised and demonised gang members in LA. To quote him – *“If love is the answer, community is the context and tenderness the methodology”* I have learnt that this is very much the spirit of MSC and also that there are a lot of good people working to making the world a better place in one way or another.

**Anything else you want to tell us?**

Watch the film 😊

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey0pk1clewI>