Using evaluation at events
Why?

Why is it important to evaluate? Evaluation is an important part of project management of an event. As it lets you know whether something is working. It provides you with the evidence.

When planning an event you should always consider evaluation at the beginning of the project and not at the end. It is important to know what you would like to achieve from the evaluation.

What?

- Is it to measure success of the event?
- To find out from participants what they like about the day?
- To help with planning of future events?
- How much time, staff and resources will you have on the day to spend on evaluations?
- Is there time in the programme for people to complete evaluations?
- To provide evidence for funders and other stakeholders
- What sort of information do you want people to share?

Once you have established what you want to evaluate then it is to find out who is coming to your event and to have an understanding of their communication support needs.

How?

Adjust your programme to allow for evaluation during the event. Know who will be doing the evaluation.

For example:

- Handing out evaluation forms at registration to participants
- Information stall where people can feedback on an evaluation board
- Interviews with staff
- Filming

Evaluation methods

Different evaluation methods will suit different people and it is important to choose evaluation methods that everyone can take part in. You may find you have to use a range of evaluation methods at your event.

Evaluation Board

This is a quick method of evaluation with smiley faces and for participants to write their comments on sticky notes on the board to say whether it was good, ok or didn't like. This form of evaluation provides a snapshot of the day.

Different sizes of boards from A3 to large boards A0 can be made.

Materials

An A3 board can be made simply by printing out the template and laminating the A3 paper.

Sticky notes

(depending on your size board you can choose different sizes of sticky notes. Use a reasonable size pad so that if someone can see if writing in large font.)

Pens (have a range of pens including felt tip ones like Sharpie pens)

Camera/Phone (to take picture of your evaluation board at the end)

Laminator

Evaluation Forms

Traditional method of evaluation but by incorporating the easy read symbols together with the smiley faces makes it a lot easier and quicker for participants to fill in. For most events we have used 3 smiley faces. You can also use other symbols such as PCS (Boardmaker). Depending on your audience you can choose the number of scales you want to use whether it is a choice of 2, 3 or 5.

If you are using an agenda with easy read symbols then it would be useful to use the same symbols in your evaluation form.

Materials

Symbols – You can use free Bonnington ones from Talk for Scotland Toolkit or Clipart

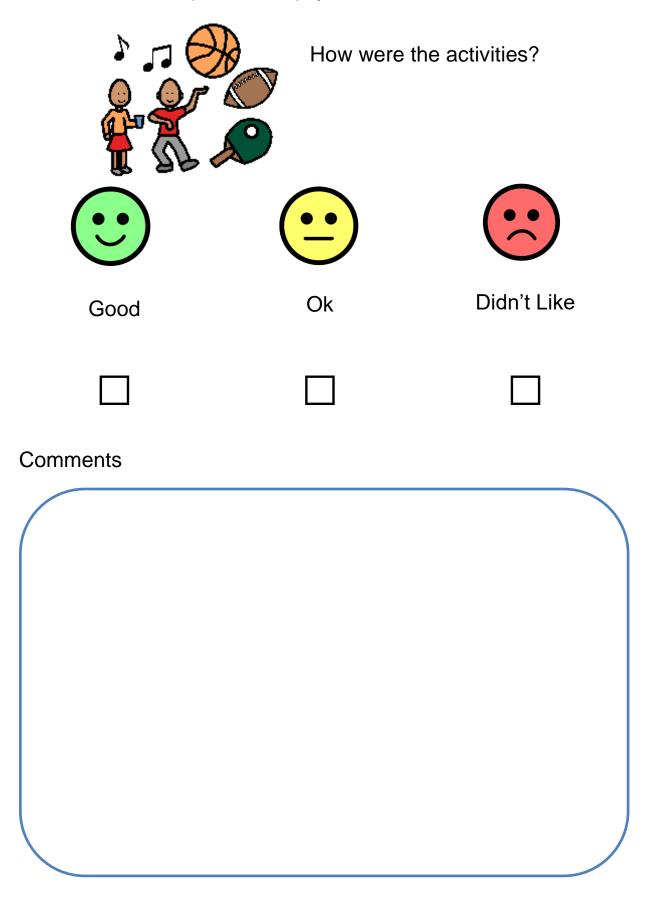Other symbol software – For example Boardmaker

Evaluation template

Microsoft Word

Access to a colour printer

Pens

Here is an example taken from a survey using Bonnington symbols for the scales and PCS (Boardmaker) symbols for the activities.

How were the activities?

Good	Ok	Didn't Like
☐	☐	☐

Comments

Voting using balls or other shapes

You can use a ball to place into a basket to say whether you like or did not like an activity. Place the ball into the green box for things you like and into the red box if you do did not like.

This method will suit someone who requires a more tactile method and if the other evaluation methods do not suit.

Materials

Small plastic balls (we used ones for children's play pit)

Other variations you can make pom poms or scrunch up a piece of paper to make it into a ball

2 boxes or baskets

We used Ikea boxes that were in red and green.

Observation Sheets

This feedback form is designed to be used by a member of support staff, a family member or another person who is supporting someone during the event. Using your own observations you should tick the box that best describes how the person responded to each activity or event. It is best to do this as the activity happens, rather than at the end of the day, in order to get the most accurate picture.

Materials

Template which is based fro the Listening to Children 2004 Call Scotland

Access to a printer

Pens

Choosing Yes or No

Low tech version simply print smiley faces, Yes/No symbols

You can also laminate these or print on card so they can be held up by the user and to make the resource reusable.

Materials

Low Tech

Paper

Colour Printer

Laminator (if required)

Computer

Access to symbols

Symbol	Yes	No
Bonnington		
PCS (Boardmaker)		

High tech version

Using Talking tiles, Big Macks or other audio devices to record yes or no. Software to print symbols. Software such as Matrix Maker comes with templates for communication aids such as Big Macks.