

SECTION 5:

KEEPING WOMEN AND GIRLS COMING BACK

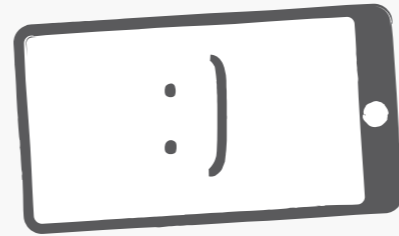
Once you've done the hard work of getting women to your session, you need to keep them engaged and coming back. The two main things to think about are how you monitor progress and how the actual sporting experience evolves – aka evaluation!



Top tip 🗨️ Monitoring and evaluation influences everything – what we deliver, how we deliver it, where we deliver, how we price it, and how we communicate. We've learned some really useful specific things, like our local women preferred Tuesday sessions to Thursday sessions. We just wouldn't have known that without evaluating. 🗨️ **Nicola, Partnership & Contracts Coordinator, I Will If You Will (IWIYW), Bury Council**

HOW CAN I MAINTAIN AND GROW ATTENDANCE?

The best way to encourage repeat attendance is to keep your women and girls interested and engaged. There are a number of things to get right here:

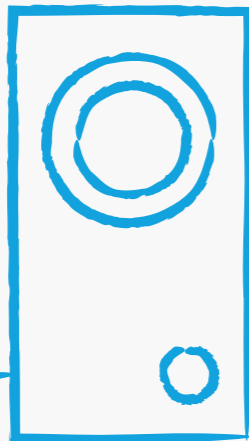


1 MAKE YOUR SESSION APPEALING

- Use music and lighting to make the sessions as sensory and compelling as possible, and mix it up each week so that the experience stays fresh.

- Use feedback from participants to keep improving the experience. Start by asking them what method of feedback they prefer (in person, email, text). Then use that method to ask them what they like and what could be done better, and act on this immediately so they can see that you take their feedback seriously.

- Set achievable challenges for attendees and reinforce personal successes, potentially with a reward of some kind. This is more important for those less familiar with the activity.



Top tip 🗨️ We meet as a team on a weekly basis to quickly review how things are going, what's gone well in the last week and what hasn't gone so well, and we think about whether we want to do anything differently as a result. If so, we change it that week rather than waiting any longer. 🗨️
Pritesh, Operations Programme Manager, IWIYW, Bury Council

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Go to page 31 in Section 5 – Keeping them coming back for more – and follow our tips for monitoring and evaluation. Remember that the number of participants will reflect the appeal of your sessions. People often vote with their feet!

2 COMMUNICATE BETWEEN SESSIONS

- Keep in touch with your women and girls between sessions to build relationships and encourage them to keep coming back.
- Collect email addresses and other contact details from participants and follow up the session with a thank you or well done message to the group, personalising it if possible.
- Send out a calendar email reminder of follow-up sessions or text people/tag them on Facebook the day before to remind them to attend.
- If you notice that someone hasn't been for a couple of weeks get in touch to say you're missing them. And if someone has been coming for a few weeks in a row, get in touch to say well done and keep going.

Top tip “ We found our social media accounts were really useful for getting people engaged in our sessions and more likely to keep coming back. The Facebook page particularly was a great way to keep everyone informed of upcoming activities, and prompted lots of discussion and camaraderie. ”
Hannah, Marketing Officer, IWYW, Bury Council

- Make the most of your social media presence:
 - Post Facebook updates on what a great session it was.
 - Include photos and videos taken at the session (though nothing that any of the participants might find personally embarrassing).
 - Encourage people to post their own images from the session on their social media feeds, and retweet or link to them as appropriate.
 - Prompt discussion amongst your group on what they enjoyed and what they would like to do next time.
 - Alert people ahead of the next session and remind them how much they enjoyed it last time.
 - Encourage them to bring a friend to the next session, and incentivise them to do so with discounts or other loyalty rewards.
 - Emphasise the social benefits of engaging in sport and physical activity.



3 PLAN WAYS FORWARD

- The perfect time to promote additional sessions is while participants are enjoying that post-exercise buzz. So have hand-outs about other sessions available, with spares for participants to give to friends.
- If you are running beginner sessions, there may well come a point where your group is ready to graduate to a follow-on session, or even alternative activities. **In this case:**
 - Identify the potential follow-on activities that would fit your group or individuals.
 - Provide participants with information about their options for next steps, appropriate to their ability level and the experience they are looking for.
 - Encourage them to talk about their experiences of your activity to persuade others to follow in their footsteps.
 - Aim to keep follow-on sessions on the same day and time to encourage ongoing attendance. Also try to keep groups together when they graduate, as friends moving to different days or times is a major reason why many women and girls drop out of sport and physical activity.

HOW CAN I EVALUATE SUCCESS?

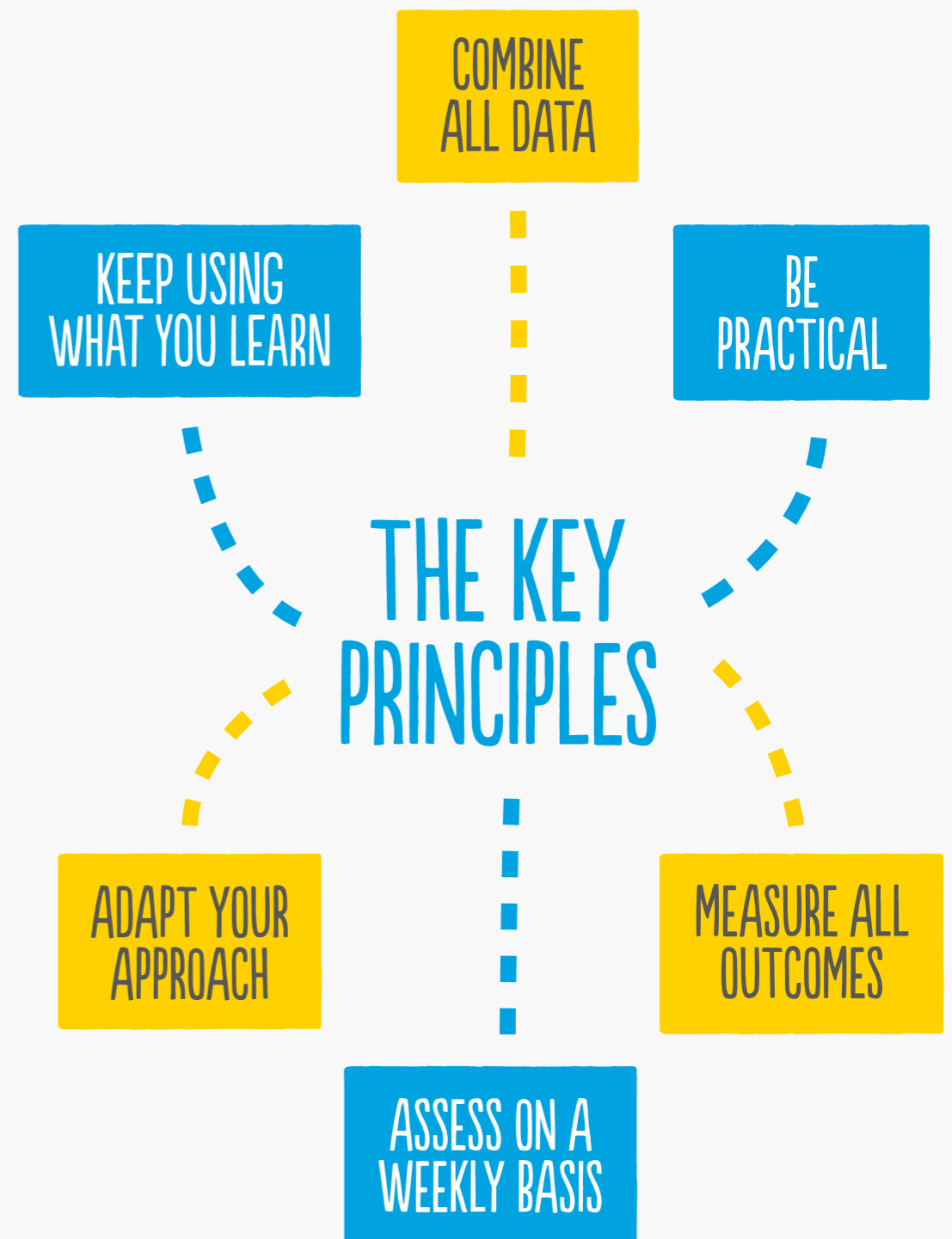
Monitoring and evaluation allows you to identify how well you're doing, whether you're meeting your objectives, what impact you're having, what's working well and what could be improved. It will also help you allocate resources more efficiently in the future.

Monitoring and evaluation can take many different forms, but there are key principles that always apply:

- Combine multiple sources of information (i.e. statistics from other sources/projects and participant/activity leader feedback) to get the best possible insight.
- Be practical about what you can achieve and focus on answering the most useful questions that will be feasible to implement.
- Measure and take on board the less positive outcomes as well as the good.
- Combine the lessons learned on a weekly basis with more formal measurement at key milestones.
- Change and adapt your approach to monitoring and evaluation as you go and learn from what's working for you.
- Take time to embed the findings properly so that evaluation becomes central to what you do, not just an add on.

The nature of your activities is likely to depend on whether you're involved in directly delivering sessions or whether you manage their delivery. There's no one-size-fits-all model for how to evaluate your activities, but the diagram on the following page is a great starting point.

Top tip 🗨️ Ask yourself how, why, what and so what? 'How' do I want to improve, 'why' am I evaluating this aspect, 'what' do I need to ask, and once you've got your data back 'so what' do I need to do as a result of what I've learned? Be clear about what questions you need to ask to inform your next move, and ask them. 🗨️ **Nicola, Partnership & Contracts Coordinator, IWYW, Bury Council**



HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR ACTIVITIES

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE?

YOU DELIVER ACTIVITY TO WOMEN

To find out what women do and don't like about your activity so it can continue to be improved and also show how successful your activity is.

You could seek informal feedback before or after the activity. You can ask their opinion on things like the venue, atmosphere/welcome, ease/difficulty/enjoyment of the activity and the best way of keeping in touch. You might also want to record and review what times/days/activities are most popular and explore why.

Consider asking for group feedback over a cup of tea or perhaps use easy-to-complete feedback forms. Look to introduce feedback early on so you don't miss any useful tips or risk losing some women because you don't know how they feel. Use registration forms to keep track of attendance and to capture useful details like whether they are already regularly active, whether they have a disability and how best to keep in touch with them.

WHY YOU MIGHT CARRY OUT EVALUATION

HOW YOU MIGHT DO THIS

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

YOU MANAGE THE DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES TO WOMEN IN YOUR AREA

To find out and share with others what women in your area do and don't like so improvements can be made and to demonstrate activities that are successful at attracting women who aren't currently active or who are typically hard to reach.

You could keep track of what times/days/activities are most popular across activities. You can explore why by seeking feedback from women coming to sessions and the deliverers too. You can ask their opinion on things like the venue and facilities, atmosphere/welcome, ease/difficulty/enjoyment of the activity, the quality of communication and the cost. Regularly reviewing this information can help you spot things that are working well and things that you might want to improve, and to share this insight with your deliverers. It also allows you to track your success over time in helping more women to become active.

Ask for the same information across activities so that you can make better comparisons. You may want to understand whether things like the difference in price, time or location are positively or negatively affecting feedback. Capturing whether someone is new to being active is important in showing that activities are attracting a wider network of women. It also highlights where someone may need a little extra reassurance at the beginning. To help evaluate success across a number of activities and places, you may wish to use online or app-based systems to collect, store and help you analyse the data. This could include data from registration forms, turnstiles or loyalty cards.