



Office of Children  
and Family Services

# DATA-DRIVEN STORYTELLING FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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# OBJECTIVES



**IDENTIFY DATA  
SOURCES**



**DESCRIBE STRATEGIES  
TO MAKE SENSE OF  
DATA**



**APPLY STRATEGIES TO  
DEVELOP A STORY**

# **THE POWER OF STORYTELLING WITH DATA**

**The most powerful stories pair a  
heartbeat with a chart.**

# WHY STORYTELLING WITH DATA?

**Data Make  
Stories  
Credible**



**Stories  
Make Data  
Relatable**

**Together, They Drive  
Action**

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

Beginning

Challenge

Turning  
Point

Outcome



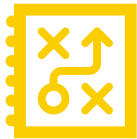
## Character

### Narrative Essentials

Who is the story about?

### Data

Data showing who is impacted.



## Conflict/Challenge

What problem did they face?

Data that highlight or reveal the need.



## Resolution/Change

What happened and what was the result?

Data showing the outcome or improvement.



## Emotion

What do we want the audience to feel?

Quotes or testimonials that personalize the numbers.

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND TAILOR THE STORY FOR IMPACT



**Funders**



Community  
Members



Policy Makers



Program Staff

**OUTCOMES**  
**COST-EFFECTIVENESS**  
**LONG-TERM IMPACTS**

*A powerful story connects when its relevant to the people hearing it.*

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND TAILOR THE STORY FOR IMPACT



Funders



**Community  
Members**



Policy Makers



Program Staff

**PERSONAL STORIES  
RELATABLE EMOTIONS  
SIMPLE VISUALS**

*A powerful story connects when its relevant to the people hearing it.*

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND TAILOR THE STORY FOR IMPACT



Funders



Community  
Members



Policy Makers



Program Staff

**PROBLEM > POLICY GAP >  
MEASURABLE RESULTS**

*A powerful story connects when its relevant to the people hearing it.*

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND TAILOR THE STORY FOR IMPACT



Funders



Community  
Members



Policy Makers



**Program Staff**

**PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS  
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK  
REAL-TIME DATA**

*A powerful story connects when its relevant to the people hearing it.*

# **IDENTIFYING AVAILABLE DATA SOURCES**

# COMMON DATA SOURCES

Program  
attendance  
records

Participant  
surveys and  
feedback

Outcome and  
performance  
measures

Community  
demographics

Case notes and  
assessments

# EXERCISE 1

1



## Data Sources

Identify different types of data you collect and where it's stored.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# **MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA**

# STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING DATA



**Identify Patterns  
and Trends**

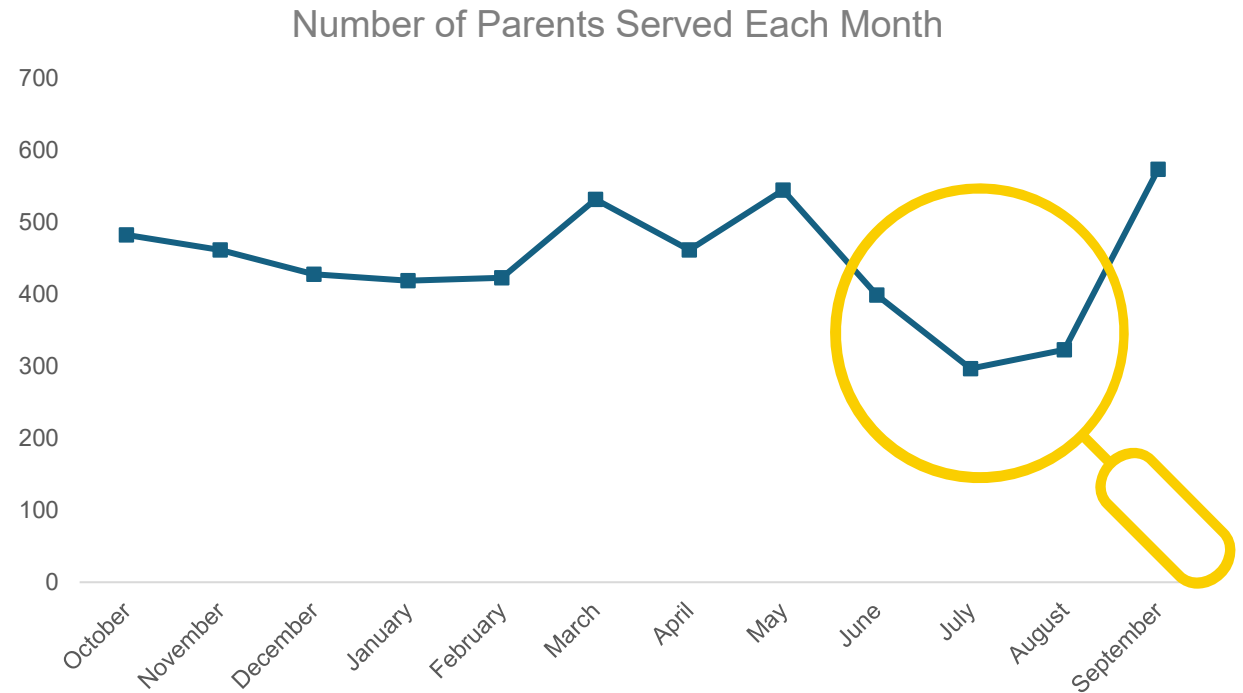


**Highlight Key  
Characteristics  
or Outcomes**



**Contextualize  
the Data**

*Look for recurring themes or trends in your data.*



**Attendance drops during summer months could  
reflect seasonal availability of parents.**

# STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING DATA



Identify Patterns  
and Trends



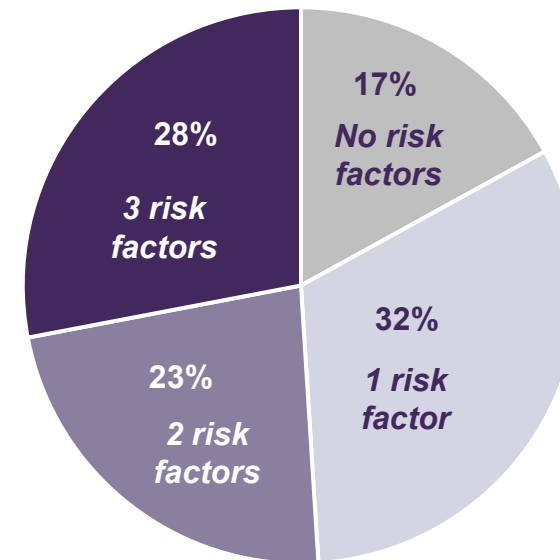
Highlight Key  
Characteristics  
or Outcomes



Contextualize  
the Data

*Describe the attributes of your participants, services, or outcomes.*

Family Risk Factors



**83% of families who attend have at least one risk factor associated with negative child outcomes.**

# STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING DATA



Identify Patterns  
and Trends

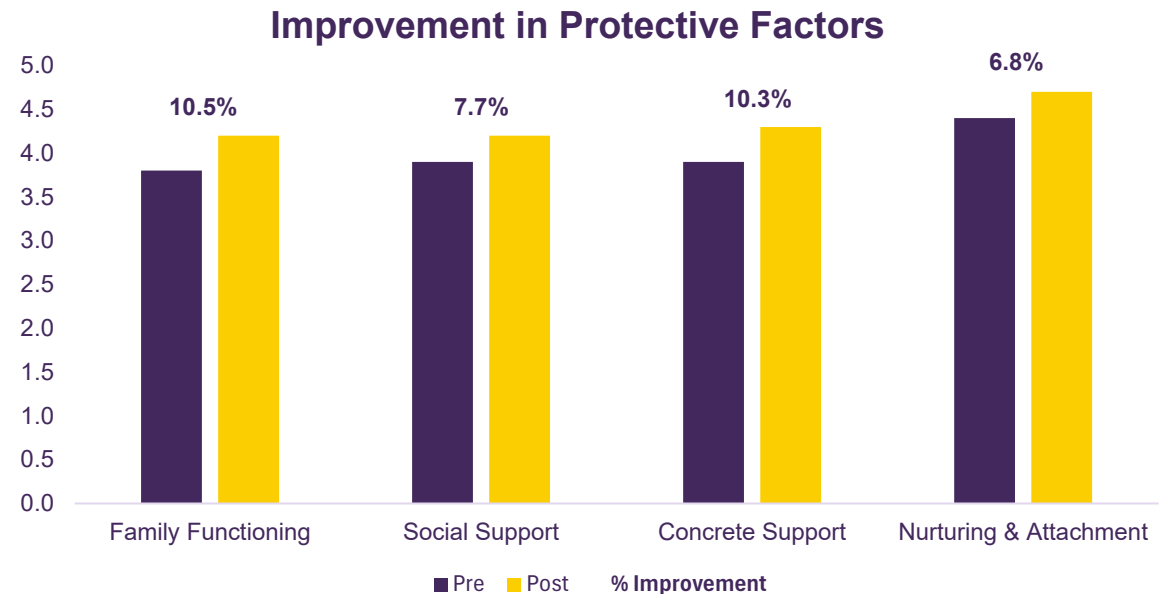


Highlight Key  
Characteristics  
or Outcomes



Contextualize  
the Data

*Compare your data to a benchmark, a goal, or historical data.*



**Caregivers who attended our program showed improvements in all four protective factors domains, exceeding our target of 5% in every domain.**

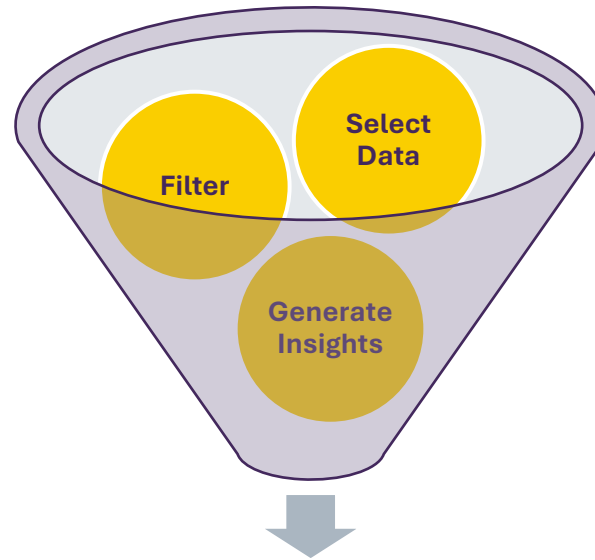
# AVOIDING DATA OVERLOAD

## Common Pitfalls

Too many numbers, not enough meaning

Unfiltered data dumps

No story structure



**Craft Your Story**

## Instead

Choose 2-3 key data points per story

Ask yourself “What is the story I want to tell?”

Provide interpretation, not just numbers

# FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL METRICS

## Not All Data Are Equal:



**Connect metrics to values and goals**

*If your goal is family stability, highlight retention, not just attendance.*



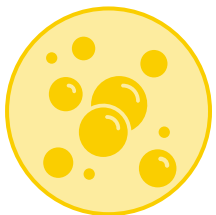
**Use metrics that show change or improvement**

*Highlight the percent of families reporting improved parenting practices, not just how many completed the class.*



**Tailor to your audience**

*Funders may want to know the return on investment; families may want relatability; your partners may want system-level impacts.*



**Use composite or summary indicators**

*Combine related items for a clearer story, like an index or a scale instead of individual measures.*

## EXERCISE 2

2



### Data Trends

Analyze your data to identify patterns and trends that highlight program impact.

Choose one source of data:

What pattern or trend might you observe?

What stands out or seems meaningful?

How might this relate to your program goals or families' outcomes?

# **CREATIVE WAYS TO PRESENT DATA-DRIVEN STORIES**

# FORMATS AND TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOU TELL YOUR STORY

**Infographics**

**Briefs and Reports**

**Social Media Posts**

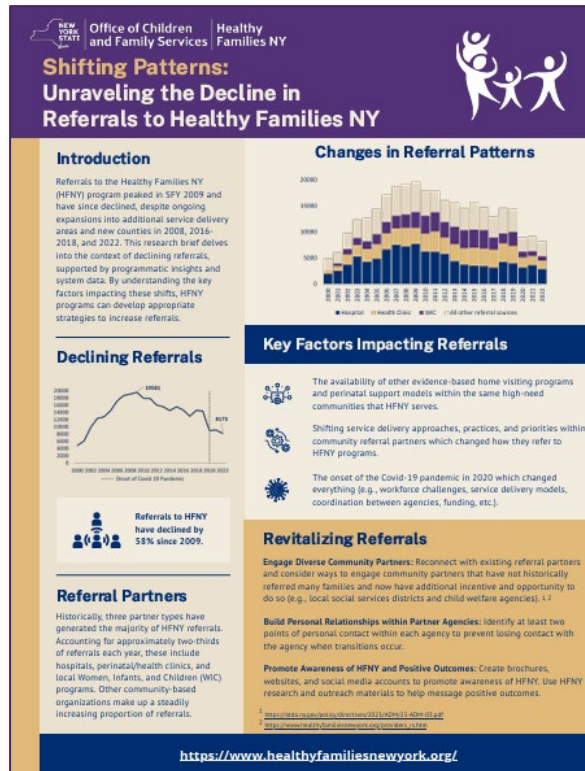
**Videos and Presentations**



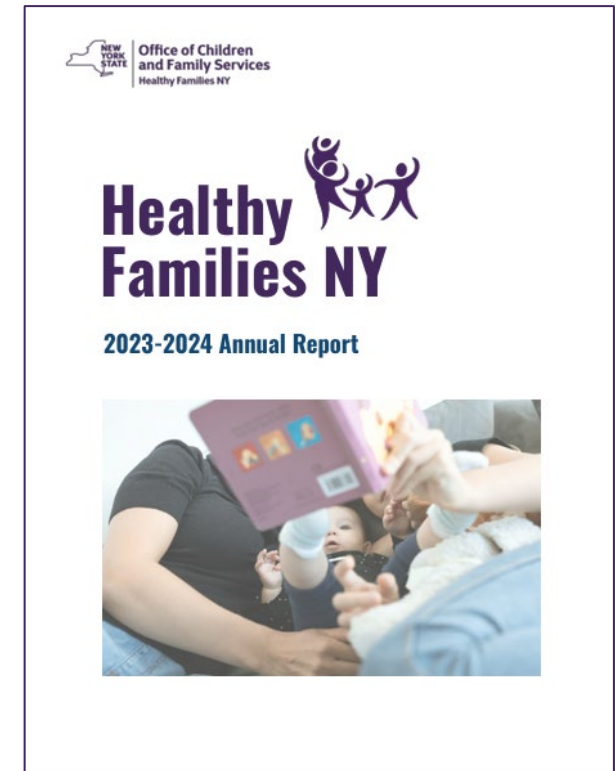
# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK



Infographics



Research Briefs



Reports

**BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER**

# SIMPLE BEFORE & AFTER DATA STORY

## Before

We had 220 parents attend our workshops in 2024.

# SIMPLE BEFORE & AFTER DATA STORY

## Before

We had 220 parents attend our workshops in 2024.



**Connect values and goals**

## After

In 2024, 220 parents attended our new Start With Heart program. More than 80% attended all 12 sessions and graduated from the program with their Start With Heart certification.

# SIMPLE BEFORE & AFTER DATA STORY

## Before

We had 220 parents attend our workshops in 2024.



**Show change or improvement**

## After

In 2024, 220 parents attended our workshops, with 88% reporting increased confidence in their parenting skills and 75% reporting that they were using those strategies at home at least once a week.

# SIMPLE BEFORE & AFTER DATA STORY

## Before

We had 220 parents attend our workshops in 2024.



## Tailor to your audience

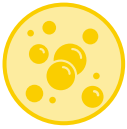
## After

Do you want to connect with other parents of teenagers? Last year, more than 200 parents attended our Parents of Teens workshop. Attendees built lasting relationships with other parents and felt like they were part of a supportive community.

# SIMPLE BEFORE & AFTER DATA STORY

## Before

We had 220 parents attend our workshops in 2024.



**Use composite or summary indicators**

## After

In 2024, 220 parents participated in our educational program. They each completed a 25-item survey assessing their knowledge of youth protective factors at the beginning of the program. Parents were least knowledgeable about the youth community/society protective factor domain, made up of 6 questions. After attending the full workshop series, their average score for this domain increased by 25%.

## Beginning (Character and Baseline Data)



**Narrative:** Meet Shreya. She's a single parent with two young children. She is new to the neighborhood and just recently lost her job.

**Data:** Shreya is not alone in this. Over 20% of families with children under 18 are headed by single mothers. Three-quarters of them work full-time.

**Emotion:** Shreya feels isolated and overwhelmed and unsure of how she will support her family while she looks for a new job.

## Challenge (Conflict and Supporting Data)



**Narrative:** Shreya struggles to find childcare, access job training, and secure food assistance. She's unaware of programs that could help.

**Data:** Childcare waitlists in the area average more than 3 months for new families and almost 20% of families who are eligible for SNAP are not participating in the program.

**Emotion:** Shreya's frustration and anxiety increase. She considers leaving the area to find support elsewhere.

## Turning Point (Change Catalyst and Program Data)



**Narrative:** While at the local library, Shreya hears about a community event hosted at her local Family Resource Center (FRC) and connects with the staff there. The next day, she meets with the program coordinator to learn more about what the program offers.

**Data:** After outreach events, 40% of attendees return to participate in at least one of our regular FRC activities. Shreya brings her children to play groups and gets connected to a job training program and emergency food assistance.

**Emotion:** Shreya is relieved. She begins to feel hopeful and like she's part of a supportive community.

## Outcome (Resolution and Impact Data)



**Narrative:** Six months later, Shreya is employed again. Her children are enrolled in a local early learning center, and she volunteers at the FRC once a month.

**Data:** Almost 90% of participants who attend FRCs show improvements in resilience and access to social and concrete supports. Like Shreya, more than a third of our participants engage in leadership activities; volunteering their time to support other families in return.

**Emotion:** Shreya feels confident and connected to the supports she needed. She's empowered to support others in return.

## EXERCISE 3

3



### Story Creation

Craft a compelling narrative using data to showcase program impact.

Who is the story about?

What data supports the story?

What change or impact is shown?

What visuals or formats would help tell this story?

# THANK YOU!


## CONTACT ME:



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**(518) 473-8833**




## Data-Driven Storytelling Worksheet

Turn your program data into compelling stories that showcase impact.



### Data Source Ideas

**01**


#### Quantitative Program Data

Attendance logs  
Service data  
Family outcomes  
Program processes

Can be used to show reach and results.

**02**


#### Survey Responses

Pretest and/or Post-test Surveys  
Satisfaction Surveys


Can be used to show participant growth.

**03**


#### Qualitative Quotes

Testimonials  
Focus Groups  
Interviews

Can be used to add emotional impact.

**04**


#### Community Data


Census Data  
Neighborhood Profiles  
State or County Data

Can be used to provide context or show need.



### Storytelling Tips


- Keep it simple and focused
- Use visuals where possible
- Highlight one key takeaway
- Include a human element
- Make it audience specific

**1**


### Data Sources

Identify different types of data you collect and where it's stored.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**2**


### Data Trends


Analyze your data to identify patterns and trends that highlight program impact.

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