My Favorite Story - Pilot Planning Guide

Preparation

- Select up to 5 participants (caregivers, family members, institutional managers, and others). Participants should represent a mix of different backgrounds/perspectives. They should be open, communicative, and ready to share their views.
- Collect 5-6 stories of 'special moments' that describe the positive effects of clowning on the elderly (with dementia if possible) or children (with autism or disabilities if possible). These could be stories from project reporting and communications, from previous evaluations, or from your team's memory.
- The stories should show different positive effects and reactions to clowning. The stories should describe what happened and all be impressive. The goal is to make it possible that each story could be considered 'the best' or someone's favorite. You do not want everyone to choose the same story.
- Remove any identifying information. Edit the stories to be of similar length (~1
- paragraph) and detail.

Before the session

- Send the invitation to the session. (Zoom link)
- Share the stories and instructions with participants.
    - Thank you for participating in this activity! The goal of this session is to...
    - BEFORE you come to the session, we have one request. Please read the stories in the attachment about how clowning affects [elderly/children.] These are real snapshots from our work. Choose 1 story that is your favorite, and be ready to share with the group why you chose this story.
- Prepare the session flipcharts. Miro board

Session outline (1.5 hours)

- Introduction – 15 minutes
    - Welcome and introduction to the activity: Thank you for joining us today. We are here as part of the ClowNexus project, which is a new activity from Red Noses and its partners in 6 countries. As we begin the project, we are gathering information about how different people experience clowning and what they think about it.
    - Informed consent: During this session, we will be asking for you to openly share

your ideas and perspectives. There are no right or wrong responses, and your feedback will remain confidential among this group. That means that we won't use your name when we share the results. Together with other information we are gathering, what you share with us today will be used to plan activities during the project, as well as to track future progress. Ultimately this information will help us as we expand clowning to reach more vulnerable groups. We will develop a summary of our research, which we will share with you later this year, around April. Do you have any questions about why we are here? Do you agree to participate?

- Consent to record: We would also like to ask your permission to record the session so we can remember it and take better notes. The recording is for our reference only. If you would like us to pause the recording at any point, please ask us and it is no problem. Is that ok with everyone?
- Turn on recorder! (Zoom)
- Housekeeping: We would also like to share a few tips on how this session can be most useful. We will be here for 2 hours and will have a short break in the middle. We'd like to ask for our full attention during this time so that you can hear from the other participants. Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking. As long as your internet is strong, please also keep the video on so we can see each other. When you would like to share something, speak up directly. You can also raise your hand physically or on Zoom so we can call on you.
- Icebreaker/quick and fun introduction of participants: Do a short activity to allow each participant to introduce themselves and feel comfortable with the group. For example: Tell us your name and 2 things that you like that start with the same first letter as your first name (My name is Eddie and I like eggs and elephants).

- Individual Sharing – 20 minutes
  - Ask each individual to take a couple minutes to share which story they chose, and why they chose it.
  - After the individual shares, ask the group: What else do you think about this story? Why it is interesting?
  - Ask participants to share their own stories: Is this story similar to anything you have experienced/observed?
  - Take notes on the flipchart as they speak.
  - If they choose 2 stories, they can still continue with the discussion and the final vote.

- If they all choose the same 1 story, ask for their second favorite story. Then continue with the discussion, and have a final vote. For example: "In the first round, everyone chose the same story. Now that we've had a chance to think and discuss more, maybe someone will change their mind. Maybe not. Let's find out – please vote on your final selection for the favorite story." Either way, keep in mind that the story is just a 'tool' to get people talking. So use the chance to ask questions about their own stories and

perspectives and extend the individual sharing portion of the activity. For example:

- In this story, why do you think the child / elderly have this reaction to a clown? What did the clown do to make this reaction? What is special or different about a clown?
- This story talks about how clowns affect children / the elderly. How do clowns affect parents / relatives? How do they affect doctors and nurses?
- You all have experience with clowns. What do you know about clowns now, that you didn't know before you met them? What would you tell your peers (parents / doctors / nurses / managers) about clowns?

- Group Vote and Debate - 30 minutes
  - Tell the group:

    § So, these are all very interesting and powerful stories. Thank you for sharing your thoughts on them. We are now going to have a fun competition. Let's pretend that a journalist from a big newspaper has asked us to share an example of our work, and they will feature the story on the front page of the paper. So, among the stories we have, we need to pick one. [Alternate scenario, we are going to give a special visit/award to one audience member who has really been touched by our work, so we need to choose which one.]

    § First, we are going to vote on the stories. Then, we will have a mini-debate among the top 2 stories. Then, we will have a final vote on the "winning" story.

  - Ask each participant to vote on their selection (Raise hand or use Zoom chatbox)
  - Take the two top stories. Ask a participant to volunteer to start the debate. Why select this one over the other? After he/she speaks, ask if anyone would like to add their support? Then, turn to the other story, and repeat.
  - Keep the conversation light and fun. Allow participants to engage in a back-and-forth debate until time runs out, or they have nothing further to say.

- Final Vote – 5 minutes
  - Ask each participant to vote on their final selection (Raise hand or use Zoom chatbox)
  - Announce the 'winning' story and thank everyone for being

- Participant Reflection and Conclusion – 10 minutes
  - Ask participants: How was this experience for you? Did you learn anything new?
  - Summarize some of the themes generated during the session. Reflect that this process has allowed us to better understand how clowning affects the elderly/children, and what our group values.

- Closing and Thank you – 10 minutes

- Thanks participants for their time and emphasize that their contributions will help to strengthen the program and to expand clowning to elderly/children.
- Let participants know you will share a copy of the flipcharts after the session, and a summary of the evaluation when it is completed (~April).
- Provide a contact if they have any questions or further thoughts.

After the session

- Send a thank you note and a copy of the flipcharts
- Take notes from the session and hold a post-workshop meeting with the evaluation team
- When study is completed, send participants a copy of the evaluation summary