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Interviewer's Guide: Capturing High-Impact Case Studies

Why This Guide is Essential

We understand that your primary focus is delivering an exceptional experience for every participant. Collecting data and running interviews should never interfere with that core mission. This guide is designed not to add more work, but to ensure the valuable, transformative conversations you are already having are captured in the most efficient and effective way possible.

In the world of impact reporting, raw numbers only tell half the story. Funders and stakeholders need the human voice to validate the data. The case studies you gather using this guide are the most crucial evidence we have. They provide the emotional weight that converts a good statistical outcome into a powerful funding success story.

This structured approach is built on proven evaluation methods. By simply implementing the conversational tips below, you are ensuring that every piece of narrative you collect is high-quality, auditable, and ready to be placed directly into a professional report.

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1. The Core Rule: Focus on "Before" and "Action"

Funders want to see change, not just positive feelings. Use the Problem-Action-Result framework to guide the conversation.

Problem: Get a full picture of what life was like before the programme, focusing on how that experience felt.

Action: Fully understand their experience within the programme, what factors did they particularly enjoy? How did they feel, specifically relating to your project outcome.

Result: Get a full picture of what life is like now, how do things feel differently compared to the start of the programme?

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2. The questions and order to ask them

1. To get us started, could you describe in your own words what being part of this group or project means to you, and what the most significant change has been so far?
2. That change is fantastic. To truly appreciate it, can you take us back to a time before you started? What was the main challenge you were facing and what did it feel like trying to address that struggle on your own?
3. Thinking about how we operate in this group - what did you find was different or unique about our method or process compared to other things you might have tried or considered in the past?
4. Can you recall a specific moment or a day when you experienced that different approach, and it clicked that, 'This group/project is actually going to help me with that challenge'?
5. Thinking about your experience now, can you share a specific example of how you've started to think or act differently because of your time with this group?
6. Beyond the main results you hoped for, has anything unexpected happened as a result of coming to this group which you would like to share?



3. Tips for Specific Questions

Use these prompts if the participant gives a short, one-word, or generic answer.

Question Focus, If the Participant Says..., Try Asking...

Question	Goal	If the Participant Says...	Try Asking...
Q1	Capture the Headline Result & Emotion.	"It's been good/fun."	"That's fantastic. If you had to describe that 'good' feeling in one word, what would it be? Now, what's the one thing that has truly changed your day-to-day life?"
Q2	Establish the "Before" State (The Pain Point).	"Things were tough."	"Can you give me an example? What did a typical Tuesday look like when you were struggling with that challenge?"
Q3	Identify the Specific Intervention.	"The staff were nice."	"Beyond being nice, what did the staff do that felt different? Was it the way we talked about goals, or the activities we used?"
Q4	Pinpoint the Emotional Climax (The Turning Point).	"It just clicked one day."	"If you could freeze that moment, what exactly were you doing, who were you talking to, and what was the specific thought that went through your mind?"
Q5	Get the Behavioural Evidence (The Action).	"I feel more confident."	"That's great! When was the last time you felt that confidence, and what was the new action you took that you wouldn't have done before the group?"
Q6	Capture Wider, Unanticipated Benefits.	"No, not really."	"Did your family notice anything different? Did you stop or start any small habit that wasn't directly related to the group's main goal?"

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4. Collecting and Transferring Data

Keep the Pen Moving: Write down the participant's direct quotes as closely as possible. It's their voice that makes the quote powerful.

Listen actively: Make sure to validate this person's experience, maintain eye contact and welcoming body language.

Quote vs. Case Study: Remember:

Quotes: Are short, focused on a single outcome (Isolation or Resilience). Collect 1-3 per outcome.

Case Studies: Are long, full narratives covering all 6 questions. Complete one submission per participant.

Data Entry: When transferring the quotes and case study answers from your paper copy to the online form, do not edit or summarise the quotes. Simply copy the full text into the designated long text boxes.



5. Turning responses into a case study

Report Section Order	Data Source (Question or Section)	Narrative Purpose
1. <i>Introduction</i>	Introduction of participant	Sets the stage and the client's name/programme.
2. <i>The Challenge</i>	Question 2 (What was the main challenge you were facing before you started?)	Establishes the necessary emotional tension and the "Before" state.
3. <i>The Intervention</i>	Project description (Internal Text)	Provides a brief, objective explanation of the project or group's method.
4. <i>The Unique Method</i>	Question 3 (What did you find was different or unique about our method?)	Focuses on why your project succeeded where others might have failed.
5. <i>The Turning Point</i>	Question 4 (Can you recall a specific moment when it clicked?)	The "Aha" moment—the emotional point where change began.
6. <i>Behavioural Change</i>	Question 5 (Share a specific example of how you've started to think or act differently?)	Provides the concrete, actionable evidence of change.
7. <i>Bonus Impact</i>	Question 6 (Beyond the main results, has anything unexpected happened?)	Highlights broader, unplanned benefits (e.g., social connections).
8. <i>The Conclusion</i>	Question 1 (What being part of this group means to you, and what the most significant change has been so far?)	Delivers a powerful summary quote to end the narrative on a high note.

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6. Worked example

Question 1: To get us started, could you describe in your own words what being part of this group or project means to you, and what the most significant change has been so far?

"Well, I love it. Before, the biggest thing was being stuck in the house. Now, the biggest change is the ladies. I have friends now. We actually meet up on Tuesdays, too, not just Friday mornings."

Question 2: That change is fantastic. To truly appreciate it, can you take us back to a time before you started? What was the main challenge you were facing and what did it feel like trying to address that struggle on your own?

"I'd stand at the door, put my coat on, and just freeze. It felt like stepping outside was too much effort, or maybe I was just too nervous to talk to anyone."

Question 3: Thinking about how we operate in this group - what did you find was different or unique about our method or process compared to other things you might have tried or considered in the past?

"It wasn't formal. We didn't have to talk about our problems. The facilitator, Ben, just encouraged us to talk about the old days or what we were watching on telly. It was the simple, no-pressure chat that made it easy to come back."

Question 4: Can you recall a specific moment or a day when you experienced that different approach, and it clicked that, 'This group/project is actually going to help me with that challenge'?

"It was one morning while chatting with another participant about gardening. When I realised I had spent a whole 45 minutes laughing and sharing tips, I thought, 'Oh, this is nice. I can do this. I'm not a bother to people.'"

Question 5: Thinking about your experience now, can you share a specific example of how you've started to think or act differently because of your time with this group?

"I'm not anxious about the phone anymore. My doctor's surgery called last week, and before, I would have let it go to voicemail. Now, I pick up straight away, and I even went into the high street shop to ask about a discount. I wouldn't have done that three months ago."

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Question 6: Beyond the main results you hoped for, has anything unexpected happened as a result of coming to this group which you would like to share?

"I think my daughter is the most surprised! She told me I'm sounding much brighter on the phone, and she doesn't worry about me as much. That's a lovely side-effect."

Structured into a case study:

Dottie, 78, joined the Friday Morning Coffee Group after experiencing profound isolation following the loss of her husband.

The main challenge for Dottie was loneliness. She explains that after her husband passed away, she just stopped going out. "I'd stand at the door, put my coat on, and just freeze. It felt like stepping outside was too much effort, or maybe I was just too nervous to talk to anyone."

The Morning Coffee Group is a weekly, informal social group designed to provide a low-barrier, no-pressure environment for older adults in the community to re-establish social connections and build confidence.

Dottie credits success to the relaxed nature of the group: "It wasn't formal. We didn't have to talk about our problems. The facilitator, Ben, just helped us to talk about the old days or what we were watching on telly. It was the simple, no-pressure chat that made it easy to come back."

Dottie's breakthrough came one morning while chatting with another participant about gardening. "I hadn't talked about my old rose bushes in years. When I realised I had spent a whole 45 minutes laughing and sharing tips, I thought, 'Oh, this is nice. I *can* do this. I'm not a bother to people.'"

This renewed confidence has translated into small but significant actions outside the group. "I'm not anxious about the phone anymore. My doctor's surgery called last week, and before, I would have let it go to voicemail. Now, I pick up straight away, and I even went into the high street shop to ask about a discount. I wouldn't have done that three months ago."

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Beyond the main goals, Dottie notes a positive ripple effect: "I think my daughter is the most surprised! She told me I'm sounding much brighter on the phone, and she doesn't worry about me as much. That's a lovely side-effect."

Reflecting on the group's overall impact, Dottie concludes: "Oh, it's just wonderful. Before, the biggest thing was being stuck in the house. Now, the biggest change is the ladies. I have friends now. We actually meet up on Tuesdays, too, not just Friday mornings."

What next?

*To truly show the impact of your work, you need a bespoke monitoring system that speaks the language of both **data and narrative**.*

We specialise in creating affordable, streamlined impact systems that eliminate guesswork, effortlessly combine powerful numbers with human stories and simplify your reporting process.

Stop wasting time translating data—start securing funding.

Book a free discovery call with Chris today:

www.impact-partner.org/book-your-meeting

