

Share a case study with Befriending Networks

Your befriending service is making a difference, but do people in your community, your county, or your country know about it?

One way to effectively communicate the impact your service has, is by sharing the real-life experiences of your befriendees, befrienders and staff. Case studies make outcomes in mission statements relatable, and the evidence presented in statistics inspiring.

'A case study gives a snapshot of how an individual has experienced your work and the difference it has made to them.'
ESS (2022)

The content and presentation of these stories should be carefully crafted to ensure it is authentic, that your message is clear and engaging, any visuals are appealing and on-brand, and the story-telling process is informed by those involved.

This guide has been written to help you confidently prepare case studies. You can use these in publicity, marketing and influencing about the impact of befriending.

For more information about sharing a case study with Befriending Networks, please email info@befriending.co.uk



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How to develop a case study

Step 1



Generate a list of positive experiences and outcomes that your service users and volunteers have with your service. Can you identify examples of both the typical and the expectational experience or outcome?

Step 2



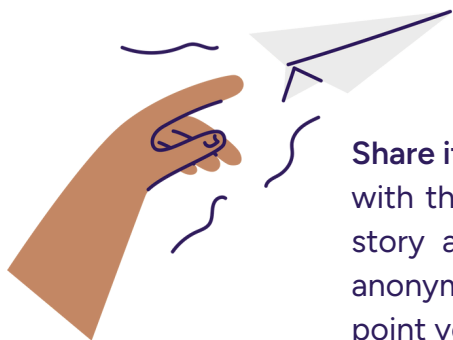
Involve your service users and volunteers in the creation of the case study. Early engagement will help you decide if the case study will be anonymous or identifiable. What is most important is that the story is informed by the individual(s) that feature within it. If your service is working in a sensitive context or with very vulnerable people where an individual case study (anonymised or identifiable) is not appropriate, you may choose to write a 'composite' case study which merges the experiences of a few people together.

Step 3

Get writing. What and how you write will depend on the format of the case study. Will it be on social media, a newsletter, a film? Where you intend to share your case study will inform its length, and your audience will inform how much detail you require. It is important to remember what you are trying to achieve from sharing this case study. This may be to raise awareness of your service, to secure funding, to recruit volunteers, to thank supporters, to encourage referrals etc. You should be authentic and where possible use the voice of the individuals that the case study is about.



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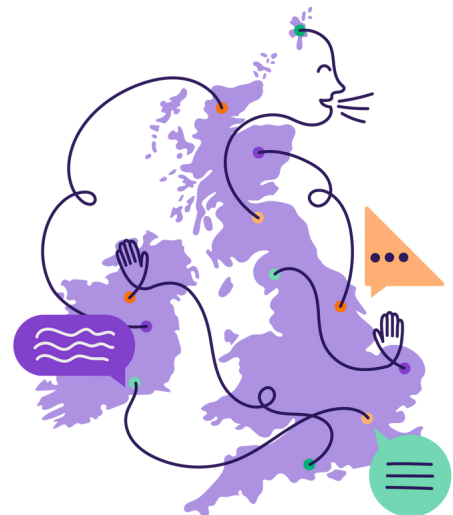


Step 4

Share it with your service users and volunteers. Share a copy of the case study with those it features. This gives them a meaningful opportunity to own their story and to make any changes. They may decide they wish to be more anonymous, or they may decide to own their story and be identified. At this point you should confirm where you are going to publish the case study.

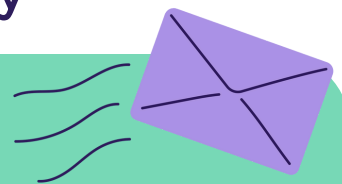
Step 5

Publish your case study. Getting the word out there is the opportunity to share your story. You may publish it in multiple places, and it is worth considering publishing your case study more than once at different times to reach different audiences. Remember to think about images which can accompany your case study. Photos of identifiable individuals are personal data and permissions must be in place to use these. If case studies are anonymous, look for high quality stock images or use unidentifiable photographs from your service activity.



Where to share your case study

- Send it to Befriending Networks
- Your organisation's website
- Your organisation's social media channels
- Newsletters - both your own and any partners who might be looking for content to share with their readers e.g. thematic campaigns, funders, alliances, CVS, third sector interfaces
- Local or nation media - newspapers - contact journalists
- On hub, campaign and coalition community spaces



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What else should I consider when developing a case study?

- While everyone's stories are important and valid, some stories will be better suited to be the flagship for your organisation's message. There may also be voices, currently under-represented, that you would like to use this opportunity to bring to the forefront.
- Sharing befriending experiences publicly can often involve people sharing personal challenges or difficult situations that led them to befriending. The process should, therefore, be dealt with sensitively, so the story-giver feels comfortable with the way their final story is presented.
- Some people are happy to communicate, share, write, be photographed or filmed, whilst others may be willing, but might need some encouragement. If anyone seems unwilling or resistant, give them an easy way to say 'thanks, but no thanks'.
- Case studies, when identifiable, are personal data. You will need to inform those featured in your case study about what, how and where their data is being used. This should reflect your data protection policy. You should use a consent form to obtain informed consent for identifiable case studies.
- Consider the impact and what is possible if consent is withdrawn. For example, if you include an identifiable case study on social media and consent is withdrawn you can then delete it; however, if it is in a printed publication such as an annual report this would be much harder and potentially expensive to your organisation.



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Some thoughts on length and accessibility

- A full story for a newsletter or website should be no longer than 500 words, which is about 4 minutes of reading. Animations or films should be between 1 and 3 minutes long.
- For social media posts that limit characters, you may want to pull out a quote from the story with a link to 'read more'. For social media platforms that allow longer format posts, you should either edit the story back or share the introduction and add a link to where they can read the full story.
- If you choose to put quotes or the case study into a graphic, such as on Canva, it is important to use Alt-Text and include the image text in the description so that users with screen readers can still access your content.
- Once written, read it back to check for any mistakes or typos. Reading it aloud can help you check the flow of the story. Always have someone else proofread your case study before you publish.

What should an impactful befriending story include?

- Take the audience on a journey. It should open with a hook - perhaps a direct quote from the subject of your story.
- The audience should be informed, the case study should be set into a context. Have you covered the who, what, where, when, why?
- Create a 'wow' moment by showing the difference and impact your service has made.
- The story should share what has changed or is different from than at the start. You should aim to communicate both the change and how the change happened.
- You may decide to include quotes from the individuals - keep these authentic in their voice.
- The story may be exceptional or emotive, but equally it may be typical or factual. All will serve a purpose and appeal to different stakeholders.
- It should be an honest representation of your work.
- A call to action - what does the audience do now? Donate, volunteer, refer, support, share?



Learn more about effective case studies

Check out these resources

- A short guide from Evaluation Support Scotland: [EES Support Guide 3c - Case Studies - Evaluation Support Scotland](#)
- For in-depth and longer case studies, we recommend: What Work Wellbeing - Guide to Effective Case Studies (2021): [Guide to Effective Case Studies - What Works Wellbeing](#)
- For engaging stories, these blogs will get you thinking and inspired:
 - [Tips for Creating Case Studies for Your Charity Website](#)
 - [Tips for Writing Impactful Case Studies](#)
- A word on data and privacy from Charity Comms:
 - [Case Studies, Photos and Films can be Personal Data under GDPR Too](#)
 - [Improving Your Case Studies with Informed Consent](#)



For a plain text version of this guide, contact
info@befriending.co.uk



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