How to complete Outcomes Stars™ collaboratively or in other ways

Guidance for organisations using any version of the Outcomes Star™ under any type of licence from Triangle

Triangle's guidance for best Star practice is that Stars should be 'collaboratively completed' when at all possible.

This document sets out the different ways a Star can be completed, how that can be recorded on the paper Star Charts, on the Star Online or other software, and sets out a few scenarios to illustrate the pros and cons of different approaches.   For more support, please contact us using the contact details at the end of this document.

1   What is a 'collaboratively completed' Star?

A Star has been completed collaboratively when all three facts below are true:

1	2	3
A practitioner and a service user (or a service user's circle of support) are both engaged in deciding the readings recorded on the Star in all outcome areas.	A service user (or a service user's circle of support) understands the Journey of Change (for example, by having access to the User Guide or Scales when using the Star, or by having it explained to them.	A service user (or a service user's circle of support) has seen their completed Star and had the opportunity to check their perspective is recorded correctly.

It does not matter if during your discussion you disagree on 1 or more Star readings – it is still collaborative because there has been a discussion and opinions have been shared. You can record both perspectives within the same Star – more guidance on how to do this is in the following section.

If the process around the completion of a Star was "collaborative" (for example, with an open discussion where the practitioner listens to the service user share their perspective), but the actual completion and decision around each scale/reading was not done together with a service user (or their circle of support) then the Star is not a 'collaboratively completed' Star. For more information on the other types of Star, see below.

2   What are the other ways of completing a Star?

If a Star is completed in a way that does not meet all 3 criteria above, then it has not been completed collaboratively.

Instead, a Star may be completed:

- By a practitioner only – where a practitioner decides on the readings themselves without discussing them directly with the service user.   This may be the case where a service user refuses to engage, where a service user leaves the service before a Star can be completed, or where a service user is not able to engage in Star completion.

- By a service user only – where a service user decides on the readings themselves without discussing them directly with a practitioner. This may be the case where the Star used is a lighter touch Star (such as the Well-being Star.) Generally, Outcomes Stars are not designed to be 'self-completed' by service users.

Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd © September 2021

3   A note on collaborating with someone's circle of support

Where at all possible, a service user should be supported to engage with the process of completing a Star.   There may be barriers to this, such as with literacy, English language skills, communication, or cognition. To overcome these barriers, the service may need to use different formats, tools, and approaches for sharing the concepts of the Journey of Change and the outcome areas. Triangle can provide further advice around this and share examples of best practice from other organisations.

Where a service user cannot be supported to engage meaningfully with the Star because of communication or cognitive barriers – perhaps because of intellectual disability, illness such as dementia, or injury such as acquired brain injury – one option would be to complete the Star together with someone's circle of support.
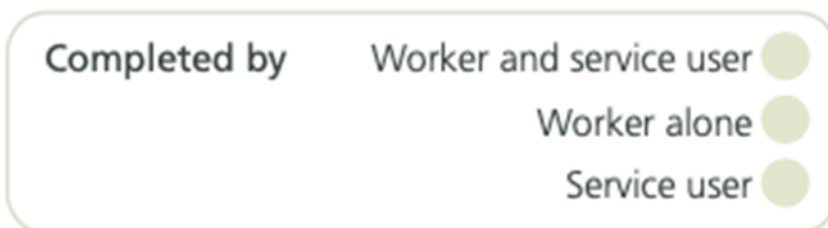
Someone's circle of support would consist of their family or other trusted representatives. The Star would be completed as per the standard approach set out in Star training but using the circle of support's perspective on the service user's life, rather than the service user themselves. The accessible and non-clinical nature of Stars means they help people in the circle of support to reflect, and help a practitioner build relationships with them.

When using this approach, consideration should be given as to whether there is an appropriate circle of support to work with, and whether this is in the best interest of the service user.

An alternative to this would be to work collaboratively with the service user, but ultimately the practitioner completes a 'practitioner only' Star based on their perspective of the service user's life and current Journey of Change stage. The benefit is that the framework is still helpful as a strength-based, holistic assessment tool for professionals.

4   How to record completion type on a paper Star Chart

If you complete the Star on paper, it will ask who it was completed by as seen below.

If "Practitioner and service user" is chosen, but then whilst completing the Star together there is disagreement, then you could record both perspectives on the Star Chart, marking which reading belongs to who.

Triangle are working on adding the option of 'With circle of support' to the Star versions most likely to need this option – contact us for more information.

5   How to record completion type on the Star Online

Using Enter Star From Paper

Enter Star from Paper means you are entering data already captured on a paper Star Chart – ie the Star has already been completed prior to you putting it onto the Star Online.

It will ask you if the Star was completed collaboratively. It is asking you the same information as it does when the Star is completed on paper: whether this Star was completed together with the service user or not.

Was this Star completed collaboratively with the service user? *

| Yes | ⌄ |

If you record that the Star was not completed collaboratively with the service users, you will be asked to record the reason for this:

Was this Star completed collaboratively with the service user? *

| No | ⌄ |

◯ Service user did not engage

◯ Service user has limited ability to engage

◯ Service user already left the service

◯ Service user completed on their own

If you select that the service user has limited ability to engage, you will be asked to enter some more information:

Was this Star completed collaboratively with the service user? *

| No | ⌄ |

◯ Service user did not engage

✓ Service user has limited ability to engage

◯ Service user already left the service

◯ Service user completed on their own

Was this Star completed collaboratively with the person's circle of support?

| | ⌄ |

Was the service user involved as much as possible?

| | ⌄ |

Using Live Completion

Live Completion means you are completing a Star on screen in real time – the Star Online shows you the detailed scale descriptions and scale information on screen alongside the ability to select the relevant reading.

You are asked to specify if that Star is being done collaboratively with a service user, or by a practitioner only. Triangle are working on adding in more options including the option to specify that the Star is being done collaboratively with someone's circle of support – contact us for more information.

Recording disagreement through either Live Completion or Enter Star from Paper

On the Star Online, you can now record multiple perspectives within the same Star, if there is disagreement on at least 1 scale/outcome area.

While entering the readings, you will see the option to select "Couldn't agree?" Selecting this option will then mean 2 readings per scale/outcome area can be entered – one for the practitioners perspective, and one for the service user's perspective (or someone's circle of support.)

Both perspectives can the be viewed for the completed Star, or it can be filtered to show only the agreed readings/service user perspective or only the agreed readings/practitioner perspective.

For Star Online reports, whichever perspective has the lowest reading will be included in the reports as default.

6   How to record completion types in other software

Triangle provide guidance to licensed software collaborators and those implementing Star functionality under licence on their 'in-house' software that says the system as a minimum should record whether a Star was completed collaboratively, by a practitioner only or by a service user only.

Exactly how it works will depend on the software you use. For any questions, please initially contact your software provider or the team who manage your software inside your organisation. You can also contact Triangle for further support.

7   Scenarios of completing Stars in different ways

Here we set out a few of the most common scenarios for completing Stars and what type of Star they would be.

Scenario: Managing different perspectives in a collaboratively completed Star

A practitioner and service user cannot agree because a service user feels they are higher or lower on the Journey of Change than a practitioner feels they are on at least one outcome area.

A practitioner has engaged all their skills to attempt to come to an agreement with the service user, and a detailed discussion has taken place. The practitioner wants to avoid a confrontation or damaging the practitioner/service user relationship but also avoid collusion.

The approach:

To strike a balance they can agree to disagree and record both perspectives on the Star.

Considerations:

This is still collaborative because the practitioner and service user have had an open honest conversation about their attitude, motivation and priorities, which is a good foundation for planning appropriate tailored support. If using Star Online, the system will use the lowest number to pull through to your Star data reports.

Scenario: A service user can't or isn't yet willing to engage with the Star (Practitioner only - not collaborative)

A service user is resistant to completing the Star. Stars may need to be completed for recording purposes.

The approach:

A practitioner uses the outcome areas of the Star (but without explicitly referencing the Star) as a framework for a conversation, for example using the Star Notes section of the Star Chart. Then on the basis of the discussion, they complete a Practitioner Only Star on their own. It is helpful if a practitioner shares their Star with the service user for transparency and to support an effective relationship.

Considerations:

The benefits are that you can still record a Star for the service, and the overall process is still fairly engaging for a service user. The downside is that the benefits of a truly collaborative Star are not achieved. One way to improve this is to return to the Star at a later date, and complete a retrospective Star collaboratively, perhaps based on a discussion about the Practitioner Only Star completed at the time.

Scenario: A service user has left the service (Practitioner only - not collaborative)

A service user has left the service / support from a service has ended, and a final Star was not completed with them. You still want to capture the change that had been achieved up to the end of the support.

The approach:

A practitioner completes a Practitioner Only Star based on their own judgement and information from their previous work with a service user before they left the service.

Considerations:

The benefits are that you have a way of recording the change that has taken place. The downside is that this method is more open to readings that present an overly favourable outcome, without the supporting evidence. Make sure this is covered within your organisational guidelines.

Scenario: Supporting a service user to complete the Star on their own (Service user only – not collaborative)

A service provides less intensive support, such as a short programme. They have already completed a service user's first Star collaboratively with them. They need a way of completing review Stars in a way that takes up less time but still supports service users to reflect on their progress.

The approach:

For the review Star, practitioners run small group sessions where service users complete the Stars individually and then discuss their readings in their small groups with their peers and with practitioners. The Stars are recorded as Service User Only Stars.

Considerations:

The benefits are that service users get an opportunity to record the progress they have made and the change in the shape of their Star. However, it must be used with caution as collaborative completion is the recommended method for all Stars. It is only likely to be appropriate in lighter touch services using lighter touch Stars, with some facilitation and support from practitioners, and for review Stars where initial Stars have been completed collaboratively and service users are familiar with the Star and Journey of Change.

8   Top tips for using Collaboratively Completed, Practitioner Only and Service User Only Stars

- Make sure practitioners understand what is meant by 'collaborative completion'; develop and document clear guidelines that are specific to the context of your organisation, the people you support and the way you use Star data.

- Test these out through discussion with the practitioners using the Star, getting their feedback to make sure the guidance is as clear and relevant as possible.

- Monitor how Practitioner Only and Service User Only Stars are used in your organisation. You can do this on the Star Online by using the Implementation Report to see what % of Stars are collaborative.

- Talk to Triangle if you have any queries or concerns with using the Star in your service. Get in touch with your Implementation Lead or contact us on info@triangleconsulting.co.uk or +44(0)207 272 8765.