Tool 3: How to write an impact summary

**Time:** ½ day

**Resources:** Human resources; internet access (optional).

**Purpose:** A short summary of your project’s impact that can be adapted for many communications products, such as a policy brief, an elevator pitch, a project website, or your project’s Mental Health Innovation Network innovation case study webpage.

What is an impact summary?
A few short sentences which demonstrate what a mental health innovation has achieved.

How and when is an impact summary used?
An impact summary is completed once an innovation has been implemented and its effectiveness evaluated.

Why produce an impact summary?
Your impact summary will help you to focus on the key messages of your project once it has results.

Structure
Use a maximum of three, one sentence-long bullets, to demonstrate your innovation’s impact in terms of:

- Coverage, e.g. number of people who were screened
- Outcome, e.g. number of people who received treatment
- Cost or cost-effectiveness, e.g. how much the innovation cost to implement

Use a number for each bullet, e.g. 2,000 people treated.

“Sticky” story
You may want to think about how to turn your impact summary bullet point key messages into a sticky idea story using the [guiding principles on packaging your key messages](#).

**Note:** If you want to tailor your impact summary to stakeholders, think about their needs. You may need to highlight cost-effectiveness data more for Ministers of Finance, whereas funders may be more interested in the outcome of your innovation and how many lives were saved or improved.

**Example:** Mental Health First Aid impact summary on the Mental Health Innovation Network

Many members of the Australian public do not know how best to assist someone experiencing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The goal of this innovation is to equip members of the public, by attending a 12-hour Mental Health First Aid, with the knowledge and skills needed to give initial effective assistance for these problems. The program is based on the familiar concept of first aid training, and extends this to cover developing mental health problems and mental health crises, such as having depression, anxiety problems, psychosis, substance use problems, being suicidal, self injuring or having a traumatic experience.

**Impact summary**

- 78% of community participants use their first aid skills to help someone following completion of the course
- In Australia, there are over 1,000 active instructors and over 200,000 members of the public have done the course. World-wide, over 600,000 people have attended a MHFA course
- In Australia, the fee per person to do a 12-hour MHFA course ranges from US $565-320

[Read more about this innovation](http://mhinnovation.net/innovations/mental-health-first-aid#VgVttjVhBc)