



YW Evaluation Framework



INTERVENE.
EMPOWER.
LEAD.

Preamble

This document is intended to guide, inspire and inform evaluation activities at the YW Calgary. In 2018, after more than a year of development, YW Calgary launched the *YW Calgary Evaluation Framework* with the intent that it be both transformative and enduring and most importantly, support us to better understand the impact of our program and services.

This new evaluation framework was built upon the success of earlier evaluation work done at YW Calgary. It was also informed by a review of important research and documents from the sector and in consultation with YW staff teams. In concert with the *YW Practice Framework (2016)* and *YW Supervision Framework (2017)*, the *YW Evaluation Framework* will be a consistent anchoring document across the breadth of YW programs and services.

Purpose of this Document

- > Provide a unifying focus for all evaluation activities in YW Calgary client services
- > Align the concepts the *YW Practice Framework* and the *YW Calgary Supervision Framework* with evaluation activities
- > Articulate our belief that program design and evaluation and quality assurance impacts service delivery and effects optimal client care
- > Affirm a common theoretical basis for evaluation that aligns model for supervision and provide guidelines for principle-based approaches
- > Promote evidence-based good practice among client services staff at YW Calgary
- > Contribute to and influence the social narratives about organizational practice issues.



**why we
evaluate**



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Philosophy and Approach

We know that women who are living in poverty are vulnerable due to a range of circumstances that go beyond financial need. Social isolation, limited access to appropriate housing and food, lack of affordable childcare, underemployment or unemployment, barriers to education, family responsibilities and a range of other circumstances can prevent women from achieving stability in many aspects of their lives. When we develop programs and services to support women, we look closely at these circumstances – the “why” – and develop strategies to help women grow the assets and build the resilience that will reduce their vulnerability. **The ultimate why behind our strategy is simple: women and their families thriving in a safe and equitable community.** Therefore, our programs are carefully designed to reduce women’s vulnerability.

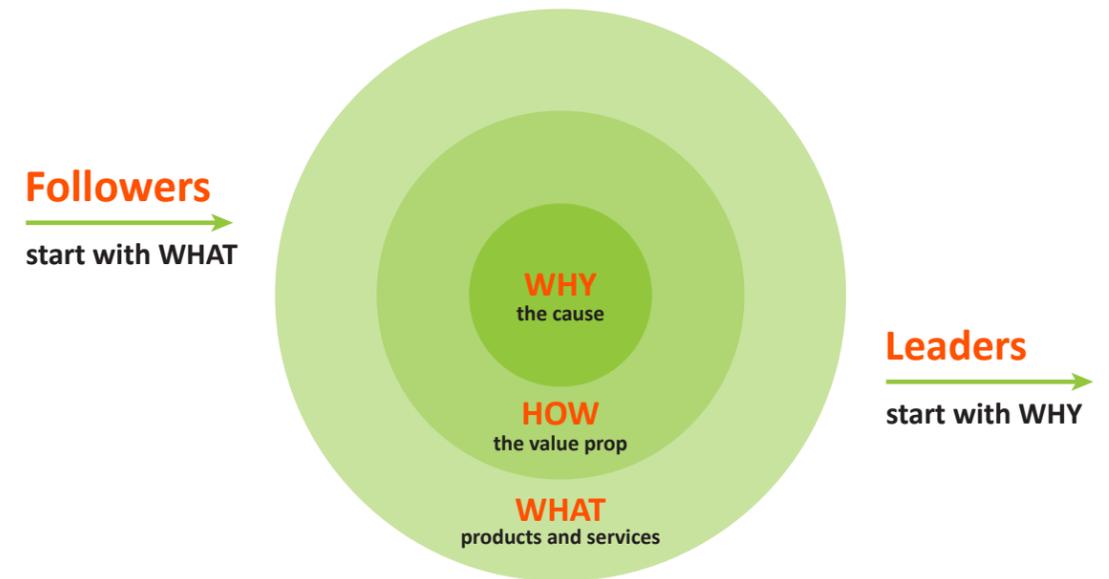


Figure 1: Golden Circle, Simon Sinek.

YW Evaluation Framework is a vital component of the programs and services we offer women in Calgary. It’s not a single tool or survey – rather, it’s intentionality embedded in the design of every program. Building evaluation into every initiative gives us a clear picture of what is working well and areas in need of improvement. We evaluate because we have a responsibility to understand how we can provide the tools that will reduce women’s vulnerability in the fastest and most effective way possible.





Guiding Principles

We apply these six principles to guide our evaluation process consistently across every program and service. This ensures we make the most of our resources and align our efforts in a way that most effectively and responsibly supports women.

#1 Proven

We always begin with an evidence-based theoretical construct. The indicators, measures and tools we use are all based in evidence, and are never guesses — not even educated ones. Sometimes, we rely on practice or research evidence, but we prefer validated and reliable research-based evidence.

#2 Client Centered

As opposed to focusing solely on program outputs, we will measure impact and highlight the indicators that truly demonstrate sustainable change is occurring in the lives of the women and families we serve.

#3 Consistent

To ensure accountability, we will maintain a consistent program evaluation structure across all programs and service deliveries.

#4 Adaptable

The *YW Evaluation Framework* can accommodate new programs when they arise. The intent of an evaluation framework is similar to that of a map. It provides guidance and clarity about possible routes, but is not intended to be proscriptive. As new intervention strategies arise from best practice or research highlights new approaches, the *YW Evaluation Framework* can and should accommodate them.

#5 Responsive

The *YW Evaluation Framework* allows for changing of measurement or tools. By identifying the indicators, yet allowing flexibility in how they are measured, the *YW Evaluation Framework* allows us to maintain measurement practices that are current and effective. Research continues every day on the best ways to measure the scope of social issues and the effectiveness of various interventions. The *YW Evaluation Framework* was specifically designed to maintain a focus on the mid-term outcomes that can be measured in various ways and allow for the adoption of new and more effective measures as they arise.

#6 Connected

The *YW Evaluation Framework* intentionally aligns itself to not only our internal strategic intentions, but also to strategic initiatives from external systems and key stakeholders, because those efforts impact us as an agency and our clients. Client's lives are lived in the community and immersed in real life and other experiences beyond YW Calgary. It is critical that we connect and leverage the policy and community initiatives that will support our clients in maximizing their benefit.



Foundational Elements

The *YW Calgary Evaluation Framework* is grounded in two important theoretical concepts: one is the Sustainable Livelihood Models and the second is the concept of hopefulness and its link to well-being.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The concept of Sustainable Livelihoods developed in the United Kingdom in the early 1990's in the context of international economic development work. It went beyond the conventional explanation of poverty as merely low income and instead recognized intersecting factors such as overall health, access to services, and personal experiences of vulnerability and powerlessness and has since been adapted to women's economic development work.

Due to its practical and philosophical alignment to YW Calgary's organizational mission and vision, the Sustainable Livelihoods Model has been utilized at the practice and program evaluation level, as well as informing our strategic direction. Finally, Sustainable Livelihoods aligns with the YW Practice Framework's emphasis on intersectionality.

There are four elements to the Sustainable Livelihoods Model that are applicable to YW's work and inform this evaluation framework:

1. Context of vulnerability and marginalization

There are multiple contexts which can create and perpetuate women's experiences with poverty. These include her own personal experiences and circumstances, social constructs such as traditional gender roles, family and child rearing responsibilities, as well as policy and system structures and realities that influence and inform women's economic and social vulnerabilities. For example the gender pay gap, workplace and government regulations and programs that can marginalize women.

2. Asset development

The Sustainable Livelihood approach contends an individual's life as being comprised of five asset areas and strength in all asset areas translates into decreased vulnerability:

- > Physical – housing, food, safety, transportation, recreation, child care
- > Financial – income, savings, debt, money management
- > Social – personal support network, community connection and resources,
- > Personal – internal support such as feelings of self esteem, motivation, self-worth, resilience
- > Human – mental and physical health, education, skills.

3. Strategic and practical interventions

The intention behind every program designed and delivered at YW Calgary assess women's current assets in the areas of physical, human, personal, social and financial and provides interventions that support women to develop and strengthen these asset areas.

4. Process for change

This element is about the process through which a woman moves from a place of vulnerability to a place of strength.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

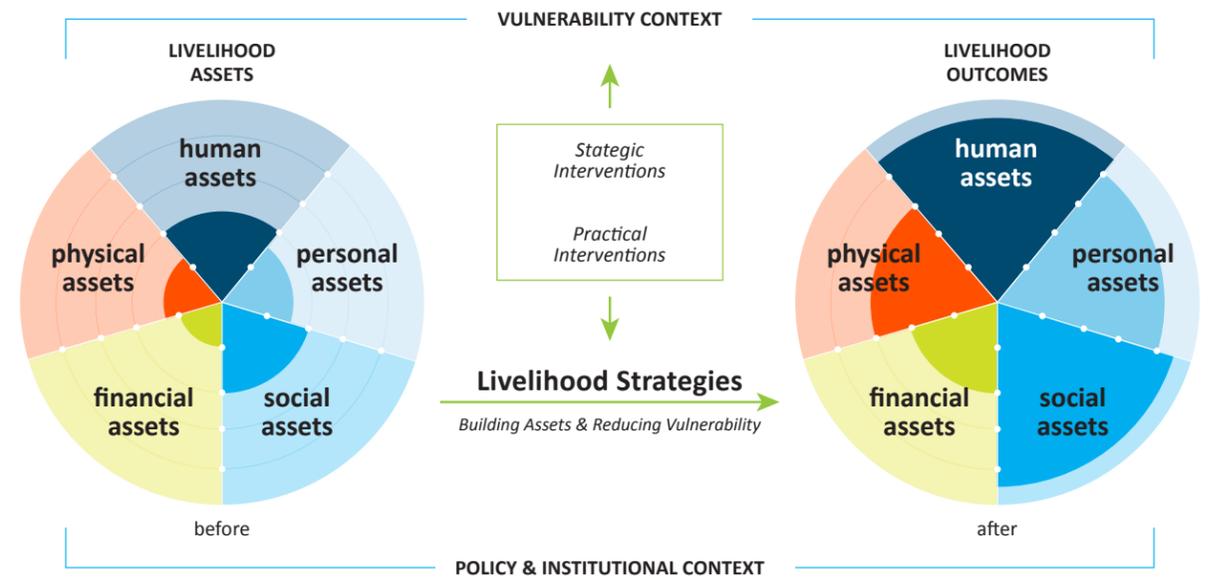


Figure 2: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, eko nomos.

LINKING HOPEFULNESS WITH WELL-BEING

For women to thrive they require sustainable internal and external assets. YW Calgary's work aims to support women to strengthen their assets through the provision of a continuum of programs and services.

An individual's internal assets are something not always evident and visible to others, but those intrapersonal indicators of well-being can inform an individual's trajectory. We know that when people are feeling good about the state of their lives they report a higher sense of well-being. Well-being includes a sense of self, meaning and purpose, an ability to regulate emotions and feelings of self-acceptance, motivation and hopefulness. People with higher feelings of well-being are better able to move through the world while accessing and accumulating both internal and external assets.

Tools

THE PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

A strong evaluation practice is built on the use of effective and comprehensive evaluation tools that measure and articulate change. Two of the tools that help us operationalize the *YW Evaluation Framework* are *Theories of Change* and *Program Logic Models*. Both are well known tools used to plan, implement and evaluate programs as well as are critical to good program design.

A *Theory of Change* shows a “snapshot” of a program at one moment in time and articulates what happens between a program intervention and the hoped for outcome. When we ask “if/then” questions, we can anticipate situations in which the program may need to change or adapt.

Program logic models are a way to visually outline the elements of a program — they’re like a roadmap for planning. We use program logic models to help us evaluate how effective a program or service might be. Seeing the desired outcomes laid out allows us to work backwards through the logic model to determine a strategy that allows us to best achieve the desired results. Logic models are sometimes also referred to as an element of a *Theory of Change*.

The model often looks like this:

Short-term Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Measures/ Targets	Mid-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<p>Outcomes that occur during the program and can be assessed during or at the end of delivery.</p> <p>Can be logically connected to mid-term and long-term outcomes.</p>	<p>Specific tactics undertaken to achieve the program outcomes, aligning with the overall program strategy.</p>	<p>Completed tasks that may be connected to outcomes but are not considered indicators of enduring change in clients.</p> <p>These can be actions that either program staff or clients perform. For example, staff making referrals to other programs, or clients attending a meeting or event.</p> <p>Satisfaction is actually an output rather than an outcome, since it is not enduring.</p>	<p>Measures are evidence-based ways of assessing how much progress has occurred toward short-term outcomes.</p> <p>Targets are our goals for program delivery.</p>	<p>Enduring outcomes achieved in the longer term that result from a combination of the short-term intervention and ongoing work and change undertaken by the client.</p> <p>Align with SLM.</p> <p>We do not directly measure these.</p>	<p>These outcomes are a visionary statement—what we desire for the client in the future.</p> <p>We do not directly measure these.</p>

Each program at YW Calgary has a specific Program Logic Model guiding its delivery. Most are heavily influenced by the unique requirements of the funder for that program. While providing clear direction and structure for that specific program, Program Logic Models generally do not provide a connection from one program to the next.

This lack of connection between evaluation tools and activities has historically been a gap at YW Calgary. When we view the programs and services of the YW Calgary as a continuum that can support women at various stages of their journey it is essential that we have a clear picture of our success and areas of improvement. The *YW Evaluation Framework* now serves the function of linking together the various evaluation elements and processes to create a comprehensive and cohesive model of overall evaluation.

CLIENT SURVEY

YW’s evaluation framework will measure standardized outcomes, in the form of a pre and post survey for all YW programs and clients. The survey, also known as the Chrysalis Survey, will enable us to measure the asset base of clients in aggregate at the beginning of their interaction with us and again at discharge, or every six months for longer programs.

The survey is delivered online and includes basic demographic questions as well as carefully constructed non-judgmental questions that allow clients to express where they feel they are in terms of the five asset areas. It was designed to be anonymous, brief, non-intrusive and avoids the use of jargon and clinical terms.

To gain maximum response rates it may be necessary to refine the delivery method. This will be an iterative process over this first year. We will review response rates and the effort necessary to collect responses. We are incorporating a system to incentivize participation. Other possible options include making the survey more mobile friendly, ensuring technology is available in-house for completion and simple wording or format changes. It may include addressing the need for in-person (possibly volunteer) support for specific clients and potential translation into other first languages.

The table on the next page lays out how each of the five Sustainable Livelihoods Model asset areas align to the newly established mid-term outcomes and then how the client survey questions draw out responses to inform the measurement of outcomes.



Sustainable Livelihoods Model:

ASSET AREA		Financial	Social	Human	Personal	Physical
No.	SURVEY QUESTION					
1.	My current housing situation is:					X
2.	I feel safe in my relationships.					X
3.	I am physically able to do the things I want to or need to daily.					X
4.	The following describes my current financial situation:	X				
5.	I've been feeling hopeful about the future.				X	
6.	Choose the statement below that is most true: (relationships)		X			
7.	When I have problems, there are people I can rely on.		X			
8.	I have the education and/or training that I need to live the way I prefer.			X		
MID-TERM OUTCOMES BASED ON ASSET AREAS		Financial stability and sustainability	Positive personal relationships and community participation	Adequate skills for daily living	Increased well-being	Personal safety, secure housing and appropriate health management

An illustrative example of using the survey tool:

As illustrated above, the SLM financial asset area and mid-term outcome “Financial stability and sustainability” correspond to question 4 on the survey:

4. The following describes my current financial situation:

- a. I live comfortably, money is not a concern
- b. I can meet expenses with some money left over each month
- c. I have just enough money to meet my expenses
- d. I do not have enough money to meet my expenses

Pre and post engagement with a YW program, clients will anonymously select one of the answers that corresponds to where they consider themselves in terms of their “Financial stability and sustainability”. YW will benchmark the answers to understand whether the organization is having an impact on clients’ development of the Sustainable Liv assets.

While the survey will be administered pre/post, the two measures will not be linked to specific individuals since the survey will be both anonymous and the results aggregated. The intent of the *YW Evaluation Framework* is to measure organizational and program area impact in the areas of asset development. An individual’s progress within a program is assessed against short-term outcomes that are measured by the robust tools already in place and dictated by the programs *Program Logic Model*.

In the above example, we chose to use a self-rating financial qualifier that enables clients to respond without being subjected to a middle class standard of income. In keeping with our *Practice Framework*, the intent is that the client rate whether they can meet their financial needs. Arbitrary standards such as living wage or \$50,000/year may be wholly unachievable for someone with chronic mental and physical health issues or has a number of children and cannot actually work outside the home.

An example of using the survey to establish a benchmark:

“I’ve been feeling hopeful about the future.”		
	# of answers at start (all anonymous)	# of answers at completion (all anonymous)
All of the time	10	20
Sometimes	30	50
Hardly ever	50	25
Never	10	5

In the above example, it might be established that the benchmark for usual to high levels of hopefulness correspond to “sometimes” and “all the time”. Therefore, we will be able to say “70 out of 100 people indicated normal to high levels of hopefulness at program end”. We could also say “as a result of client’s interactions with YW, we saw an increase in feelings of hopefulness from 40 per cent to 70 per cent”.

Benchmark results may change over time as our client base evolves. For example, if we saw an increase in immigration to Calgary, we might see a significant change in responses to Q8 “I have the education and/or training that I need to live the way I prefer”.

The YW Evaluation Framework is also flexible in that it can accommodate new programs and services when they arise and as program delivery shifts. The YW has been evolving and adapting to the changing needs of the community for more than 100 years. Since the framework is developmental and intended to focus on longer term asset development, it will not constrain program agility.

At YW Calgary, we are particularly interested in understanding our client's sense of hopefulness as we know it is an indicator of a person's sense of well-being and is the starting point for action and recovery. Therefore, it has been included as an element of our *YW Evaluation Framework*.



Putting It All Together

YW Calgary Evaluation Matrix



Cross-Organizational Impact

Chrysalis Survey – Assessing the client’s 5 asset areas at Intake and Discharge:

ASSET AREA	Financial	Social	Human	Personal	Physical
PROGRAM AREAS					
Employment and Education	X	X	X	X	
Housing	X	X	X	X	X
Shelter	X			X	X
Child Development		X	X	X	X
Counselling		X	X	X	X
MID-TERM OUTCOMES BASED ON ASSET AREAS	Financial stability and sustainability	Positive personal relationships and community participation	Adequate skills for daily living	Increased well-being	Personal safety, secure housing and appropriate health management
CURRENT SHORT-TERM OUTCOME CATEGORIES	> Adequate Income for Immediate Needs > Knowledge of Healthy Relationships > Safety and Shelter Provided				

Indicators/ Measures/ Targets/ Tools

Currently unique to each program area and funding source. The framework is intended to be flexible to ensure that up-to-date research is able to be integrated into each area. New tools or indicators may be adopted over time to more accurately measure appropriate short-term outcomes and to align with mid-term outcomes.

Reporting

The *YW Evaluation Framework* is a developmental evaluation, meaning it has been designed to be implemented in a dynamic environment and focused on complex issues and change. Our intention is to learn and adapt throughout the process – plan, do, check and adjust. The opportunities for formalized feedback loops within client services that will result from the *YW Evaluation Framework* activities will include:

- > Program evaluation results feed into program dashboards
- > Chrysalis Survey results provided to each program area each quarter
- > Structured summary reports created and circulated
- > Feedback, reflection and correction opportunities built into client services team and leadership meetings and processes.

measuring what matters



Conclusion

Developing and implementing a resonant evaluation framework that is both informative and flexible enables YW Calgary to more effectively guide our measurement and strategic program practices for the foreseeable future. As programs and funders change over time, YW's evaluation framework will focus us to continue measuring what really matters and ensure we stay on course toward our vision of a safe and equitable community for women and their families.

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Appendix

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Understanding how YW's Evaluation Framework operates requires understanding several key concepts. Later on we'll outline how we develop strategies and measure success based on evidence. For now, here are a few key terms you should know to understand how we develop a roadmap for success, known as a program logic model:

Outcomes...

are enduring changes for the clients that continue regardless of specific locations or times. Outcomes can be measured in the short, medium and long-term. For example, the development of a new skill that leads to increased employability. The client carries that skill with her regardless of whether she's enrolled in a program or where she works.

- > Short-term outcomes are often tied directly to the program outputs, and can include the development of new knowledge, access, or a skill
- > Medium-term outputs build on short-term outcomes, and can involve new behaviours that develop as a result of new skills or knowledge
- > Long-term outcomes usually have a social impact of some kind and are the highest level outcomes that can be attributed to a program or service.

Assets...

are the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood for individuals and a sustainable community. Assets can be social, physical, human, financial and personal. Limited assets is what makes women vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. Women pursue asset-building strategies to help them move toward sustainability and stability. Assets "endure" for the client and therefore are the basis for outcomes.

Outputs...

are typically not enduring; they're linked closely to the time and place of the program – and are things both we and our clients do: such as giving referrals, delivering programs, attending events or meetings, and experiencing program satisfaction. These may lead to outcomes but we cannot assume they will.

Skill acquisition...

is a key element of the programs we offer, especially in the area of emotion regulation, and aligns with being trauma-informed and case-management oriented.

Measures...

are the tools that assess change toward short-term outcomes. We choose measure based on research identifying that they "measure" a key indicator of the outcome. Targets are our goals for program delivery. We choose these based on evidence. Measures and targets are often referred to as being pre or post-change, but they can also be tied to the end of the program or service delivery (what we call the "intervention state").

Being evidence-based...

is also key. We use research evidence to inform program decisions and avoid investing efforts into approaches that have no evidence of being successful.

Program Logic Model

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT (HOUSING)

Program Goal: To assist chronically homeless women in transitioning from being unsheltered or emergency to provisionally or permanently housed.

Theory of Change: If women receive information about relevant supports, and develop and use self-regulatory and distress tolerance skills then they will attain and maintain provisional or permanent housing allowing them to thrive in community.

Strategy: Intensive short duration structured intervention intended to deliver skill acquisition with clear measurement and decision points.

Short-term Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Measures/ Targets	Mid-term Outcomes (Chrysalis Survey)	Long-term Outcomes
Client is provisionally or permanently housed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Structured housing needs assesment > Facilitated housing search, negotiation, and attainment > Increasing client capacity to meet basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improved access to community resources — meet immediate instrumental needs > Results from structured housing needs assessment documented 	60% of clients will be provisionally or permanently housed Housing status using criteria based on Canadian Definition of Homelessness Typology (CDFHT)	Physical Asset Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improved housing > Improved physical safety 	Women and their families thrive in a safe and equitable community
Increased use of skills during client identified episodes of crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Reframing crisis situations as opportunities for skill use, coaching, and learning > Developing safety plans > Providing referrals to services that address long term psychosocial concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Skills and strategies acquisition — tracked and assessed > Reduction in presentations with emergency services (self-report) 	60% of clients will demonstrate effective emotional regulation using the Difficulties with Emotional Regulation Scale (DERS -18)	Personal Asset Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improved emotional regulation 	





YW Calgary Head Office: Crisis (24HR) 403.266.0707 | Main 403.263.1550
320 – 5th Avenue SE | Calgary, AB T2G 0E5
ywcalgary.ca Charitable Reg# 108227927RR00