Risk assessment and risk management

Risk assessment and management are vital, non-negotiable elements in designing and delivering effective crime prevention and youth justice programs. Understanding the difference between the two is crucial for ensuring the success and sustainability of your project.

> **Integrating risk assessment into program design from the start is crucial. It helps us foresee and tackle potential challenges early on, ensuring our initiatives are solid and lasting. By treating risk assessment as a foundational step, we can address issues thoroughly, avoiding last-minute fixes and creating stronger outcomes for everyone involved.**

Risk assessment involves identifying potential challenges (Red Flags) and evaluating the seriousness of impact if it does occur (severity) and likelihood. This step helps you understand the scope of potential risks (Red Flags) that may impact your program.

- If your program involves high-risk young people, potential risks may include safety concerns for staff, other participants, and the young people themselves, as well as risks to property, the environment, reputation, and resources.
- *For example, how would you identify if a young person is a risk to themselves or someone else if they disclose information to you?*

Risk management focuses on developing strategies to mitigate identified risks (Red Flags) and minimise their impact on your program. This may include reviewing intake forms for each young person, creating a risk matrix and plan, ensuring correct staff-to-participant ratios, providing trauma-informed training for staff to handle potential challenges effectively, having case discussions about young people and providing supervision to staff.

- *For example, if a disclosure from a young person has put themselves or someone else at risk how would your program manage this?*

Key steps in risk assessment and management

1. **Identifying potential risks:** Recognise financial, logistical, staffing, and environmental factors that may affect program implementation.
2. **Assessing risk severity and likelihood:** Evaluate the consequences and probability of each identified risk scenario.
3. **Developing risk mitigation strategies:** Create plans to address risks and allocate resources accordingly.
4. **Monitoring and reviewing risks:** Regularly review and update risk assessments as new risks emerge or evolve over time.

By incorporating robust risk assessment and management practices into your program design, you can proactively address challenges and increase the likelihood of achieving your program's objectives.

When applying for grants, it is essential to provide evidence of your risk assessment and management process to demonstrate your organisation's preparedness and accountability.

Risk assessment examples

Developing a risk register	• Documenting all identified risks, their potential impact, and likelihood of occurrence.
Conducting site inspections	• Identifying potential hazards or safety concerns in physical locations where the program will take place.
Reviewing past incidents	• Learning from previous experiences to anticipate and mitigate similar risks in the future.
Consultation with stakeholders	• Gathering insights from participants, staff, and community members to identify potential risks and concerns.
Researching relevant regulations and standards	• Ensuring compliance with legal requirements and industry best practices.

Risk management examples

Creating a risk management plan	• Outlining strategies and procedures to address identified risks effectively.
Implementing staff training	• Providing comprehensive training to staff members on risk identification, mitigation, and response protocols.
Establishing policies and procedures	• Developing clear guidelines for handling emergencies, incidents, and other risk-related situations.
Allocating resources	• Ensuring sufficient resources are available to address identified risks, such as budgeting for safety equipment or additional staffing.
Regular monitoring and review	• Continuously assessing and updating the risk management plan to address new risks or changes in circumstances.

Integration with program design

Incorporating risk assessment into program planning	• Identifying potential risks during the initial program design phase and developing strategies to address them.
Embedding risk management procedures into program activities	• Integrating risk mitigation measures into program implementation to ensure ongoing safety and effectiveness.
Establishing communication channels	• Facilitating open communication among stakeholders to report and address emerging risks in a timely manner.
Reviewing and updating risk management practices	• Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of risk assessment and management processes and making adjustments as needed to improve outcomes and ensure program success.
Incorporating risk assessment into program planning	• Identifying potential risks during the initial program design phase and developing strategies to address them.

These are not comprehensive lists, and you must make sure that the actions you take are appropriate to your organisation, program, participants, and community.

By effectively demonstrating your organisation's risk assessment process and providing evidence of risk management strategies, you can instil confidence in grant funders and stakeholders, ultimately enhancing the success and impact of your program.