TRANSCRIPT: SOCIAL RESPONSE CYCLE RESOURCE

SECTION TWO THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL RESPONSE CYCLE

The Social Response Cycle consists of: 1. Observation 2. Response 3. Evaluation 4. Response 1. Observation etc. by checking out if what we observe informally, as a need and a gap in services, is backed up by evidence and information we are able to gather.

The Social Response Cycle has much in common with Kolb’s Learning Cycle (1984) and also with Lewin’s Cycle of Action Research (1946). In Kolb’s Learning Cycle, the individual’s conceptual processes for learning are depicted as a cycle. The starting point is the individual’s new experience and the following stages show how the new experience is processed, integrated by the individual and learned from.

The Social Response Cycle is located within the social rather than the individual experience. It includes the stage of Response (rather than Active Experimentation), occurring twice within the cycle. This is crucial for the social justice context. The Response Phase is relational and reciprocal. It involves a response to others, whereas the Active Experimentation Phase in Kolb’s Cycle, may not involve anyone else. The Response Phase ensures that some kind of solution to the problem, of those in need, is provided. Simultaneously, evidence is gathered (Evaluate and Assess Phase), which tests out whether the pilot response is, in fact, effective.

The other significant difference is that in the Social Response Cycle a lengthy, discrete reflective planning stage is deliberately left out.  That is not because we did not plan but because it is often the stage where projects can get stuck and stymied. Thinking and planning infuse the project during the action stage and not just at the beginning. A core principle underpinning the Social Response Cycle is that an active, creative response to what is observed should be rapid, small and often untried. The Social Response Cycle generates evidence of need and efficacy at the same time as offering some relief to those experiencing the problem, and learning. It involves observing, listening, responding, learning and offering small pilot services quickly and reflectively, while evaluating and collecting evidence to prove the need for fully funded interventions.