

Service Recipe

Foundation for Change

Creating a Podcast

OVERVIEW

Creating a podcast for people rejoining society after recovering from substance abuse

Summary

The London-based charity [Foundation for Change](#) works with people who have experienced addiction in the latter stages of their recovery journey and operates in a space between education and



therapy. It has an evidence-based approach crafted over a ten year period. It emphasises the need for people with histories of drug or alcohol addiction to be able to make sense of their experiences, understand the reasons they were using substances problematically in the first place and develop the resilience needed to live in an increasingly challenging world.

Foundation for Change's approach uses applied psychology, philosophy and feminist theory to help people understand the root causes of their addiction not just from the perspective of personal experience, but – importantly – within the wider context of social inequality. Both of these have a powerful, de-stigmatising effect and help people let go of much of the shame they carry about their pasts.



When the Covid pandemic hit and face to face group sessions were no longer possible, Foundation for Change decided to make its discussion topics available in a podcast format. Weekly online seminars were included, to discuss the podcast topics with the people the charity helps, to continue the educational and supportive work.

Like the in-person sessions, Foundation for Change wanted to ensure that the podcasts were super accessible and felt organic, like the users were just listening to a conversation.

The charity continued the podcasts after lockdown restrictions lifted, and plan on a second series in the future to have as an additional resource to offer alongside in-person work.

Service URL

<https://www.foundationforchange.org.uk/pages/category/making-sense-of-podcast>

Organisation

Foundation for Change

Organisation URL

<https://www.foundationforchange.org.uk>

This recipe has been in use since April 2020.

We are not sharing this recipe as the perfect solution to a problem. But we believe Foundation for Change's learnings could be very useful to other organisations.

User needs

- As a user, I want to be able to continue to access educational topics
 - As a user, I want to continue to feel connected to my support network
 - As a service provider, I want to stay connected with my users
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SOFTWARE AND TOOLS USED

Recording platform

Zoom

As the Foundation for Change team was working remotely during the pandemic and already used video conferencing software Zoom, the most straightforward option was to use the Zoom record function for the podcast.

Cost - £120/year

URL - <https://zoom.us/pricing>

Main benefits & limitations - This software offers mostly benefits, in that most people are already familiar with how it works, and recording audio and video is very easy and user friendly.

Editing software

Garage Band - music editing software.

The editing was taken on by a member of staff who already had access to Garage Band on their computer and some knowledge of how to use it. This programme comes preloaded on Macs for free.

Cost - Free

URL - <https://www.apple.com/uk/mac/garageband/>

Main benefits & limitations - The charity's needs for this podcast are very basic - there is no intro or splicing with different snippets. If this were to be incorporated into future iterations of the podcast, looking at wider functionality or other software might become relevant. One

limitation is that Garage Band is only available on Mac. For Windows, good, free alternatives are Cakewalk, Magix MusicMaker, Akai MPC Beats and Ohm Studio.

iMovie - video editing software.

This was used to convert the audio file of the recording into a video file to upload onto the charity's YouTube channel.

Cost - free with a Mac.

URL - <https://www.apple.com/uk/imovie/>

Main benefits & limitations - free and pre-loaded onto Mac but not available for Windows or other operating systems. Good alternatives include VSDC Video Editor, Olive, Davinci Resolve, Kdenlive and Openshot.

Releasing platforms

Anchor - A free podcast publishing platform that distributes your podcast to all mainstream listening apps (Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Play Music, Pocket Casts). Foundation for Change uses it to upload and share their podcast with the world, and to link to from their other platforms.

Cost - free

URL - <https://anchor.fm>

Main benefits & limitations - This platform is free to use and allows free, supported distribution to all mainstream listening apps. It also offers free analytics (like how many people are listening, when people stop listening, what countries listeners are from) which are useful and easy to understand. A minor limitation is that there is some question as to who owns the IP - it isn't entirely clear but not enough of a deterrent not to use it.

YouTube

Foundation for Change already operates a YouTube channel for its programme of work, so it was natural to choose this to release the podcast on as well.

Cost - Free

URL - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW8xd6WCMJiBqFRaYpwK5Sw/featured>

Main benefits & limitations - The main benefit of YouTube is that it makes the content widely accessible.

Foundation for Change website

Cost - free (no additional cost to this beyond normal website hosting costs)

URL <https://www.foundationforchange.org.uk>

RECIPE STEPS

Step 1 - Decide on the topic you want to cover.

Initially this was very spontaneous because Foundation for Change was responding to real-time circumstances. At the beginning of the pandemic there was so much change that it felt natural to produce a first episode centred around grief and loss. This trend continued and topics arose from the team responding to what was happening in the world. For instance, a discussion about mask wearing within the team led to a podcast discussing individualism. A

lot of the people that Foundation for Change works with are often socially excluded, and the charity wanted to help them deal with any anger or fear they were feeling, and to help them understand what those feelings were about.

As time went on, the charity wanted to start building up a bank of podcasts for people to refer to and the recordings became a useful promotional tool to educate people about what Foundation for Change do, as well.

Step 2 - Set up a broad structure and handout for your podcast

It is useful for listeners to have a handout or similar document to follow along with the podcast. This can include summaries, definitions of terms and links to other resources. The handout will usually also help you structure your podcast, figuring out where to start, what to cover, how much to critique the topic or theory under discussion and where to end.

Foundation for Change generally started the day by considering the definition of the topic under discussion. Then the team would go through a process of defining, deconstructing, applying and critiquing the topic. The accompanying handouts generally follow this structure and determine the flow of the podcast. Do the research and write the handout at the same time to save doing the work twice!

Step 3 - Train your staff

As Foundation for Change had never done anything like this before, the team googled and found a local podcast trainer (for a fee). She delivered training which was good at covering essentials like the length of the podcast, how to structure it and how to break it up. There were some gaps when it came to inclusivity and accessibility issues as the training course was aimed at commercial users and did not consider our users, so this is something to consider.

The best piece of advice was the importance of 'layering' your content design to draw people in, i.e. have a title to serve as the hook, then a slightly more detailed but concise description, then the full handout and podcast link. Without the hook/lure, the information would be too much to take in all at once and you would lose people before they even knew what you were offering.

Step 4 - Record the podcast

Once your team members are all on board with what the topic is, you are ready to record. Start a Zoom meeting as normal, and the person leading the discussion (in Foundation for Change this was the person who either was the specialist in that particular field, or for whom the topic held particular personal interest) will host. Make sure everyone is aware and happy that the session will be recorded before pressing record!

The host will introduce the topic, and open the discussion.

Practical tips for recording are to ensure that you are in a place with as little background noise as possible, and to maintain a constant distance from your laptop-mic input to ensure audio levels are consistent throughout the recording session.

Normally, Zoom recordings are saved as mp4 files (video & audio).

You can use this functionality and convert the mp4 file to mp3 after the fact by following these steps:

1. Sign in to the **Zoom desktop client**.
2. Click the **Meetings** tab.
3. Click the **Recorded** tab.
4. Select the meeting topic with the local recording.
5. Click **Convert**.

To record audio only, you need to go into your Zoom settings.

When recording locally, the host can record all participants' audio streams as separate audio files, one file for each participant. To enable this option:

1. Open the Zoom client and click **Settings**.
2. Click the **Recording** tab.
3. Enable **Record a separate audio file for each participant**.
4. Record and save the meeting to your computer.
5. Once the meeting is over and the recording has processed, open the recording folder.
6. Within the folder, open **Audio Record**.
7. Once in the Audio Record folder, each participant's audio track will be listed as its own file, with the file name beginning with the participant's name.

Step 5 - Edit the podcast

If you want to edit any of the audio, you can do so by opening your mp3 file in GarageBand. This allows you to cut out any preamble you may not want on the podcast, edit out interruptions and background noise, or edit the length down to the number of minutes you'd like it to run for.

1. Step 1: Open GarageBand
2. Step 2: Open the media browser
3. Step 3: Drag the track onto the screen
4. Step 4: Now you can split portions of the track, cut part of a track, etc.

Step 6 - Publish the podcast

Anchor use is very straightforward - from their website, take the following steps:

1. Log in to your Anchor account
2. Click new episode
3. Click upload a pre-recorded audio file (or record a new one right there in the app/ web browser)
4. Save episode.
5. Next, you'll want to give your episode a title and description
6. Click publish.

Once the podcast is published here it is distributed to Spotify (among others - see above). From Spotify, you can copy the 'embed' code which will allow you to embed the podcast on a website.

To upload the podcast to YouTube, Foundation for Change used iMovie to merge the audio track and the organisational logo into mp4 (basically this means it shows the logo for the duration of the podcast) - this is necessary because YouTube is a video platform and therefore needs a video format to publish.

Step 7 - Gather feedback from staff & listeners

Foundation for Change looked at the analytics available from Anchor to get an idea of the number of listeners and how long people would listen for.

Additional feedback gathering didn't start until after the team started running interactive seminars to go with the podcasts - a recipe has been created for these as well [INSERT LINK](#)

Step 8 - Publicise your podcast

Once the podcast was available, Foundation for Change linked to it from their social media channels, added the link into email signatures, created promotional pdfs and distributed these to the services that the charity partners with.

GUIDANCE

For the people recording the podcast - some users may take issue with Anchor's terms of service as there is some [nebulous wording](#) around intellectual property of the recordings released on this platform.

Consider the audio quality of your recording - when speaking into a microphone, make sure you stay roughly the same distance away from it as you are speaking to make sure the volume levels on the recording stay constant.

The process of recording and publishing this podcast has highlighted the inequalities around digital access, so this is something to consider. Not everyone will have a Spotify account, or access to a music streaming service.

Make sure that the thing you want to do a podcast about has longevity. You want an idea that continues to bring up an excitement and a sense that captures your imagination, something with substance to it. This will allow you to create consistent output with a clear underlying purpose. As ever, focus on user needs & the 'why' of the thing, rather than just making a single podcast for the sake of it.

RISKS

The podcasts are not interactive, so the risk to users is very low to zero.

The main risk is starting something before you've thought it through fully. Is a podcast what you need? Is there an audience? Have a clear discovery process before you invest time, energy and money.

POINTS OF CONTACT

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