Knowing What Works: A Guide to Program Evaluation for Health Promotion Professionals
Department of Health Promotion and Behavior
College of Public Health
Understanding and engaging

Needs assessment

Set goals and objectives

Developing an intervention

Implementation

Evaluation

Adapted from Figure 2.1; McKenzie, Neiger & Smeltzer. Planning, Implementing & Evaluating Health Promotion Programs: A Primer. 2005. 4th edition. Pearson: Benjamin Cummings: San Francisco
What is a program?

- A program is
  - A set of planned activities over time designed to achieve specific objectives*

- Which of the following would be considered a program?
  - Direct service interventions
  - Community mobilization efforts

*Adapted from An Evaluation Framework for Community Health Programs
What is a program?

- Direct service interventions
- Community mobilization efforts
- Administrative systems
- Policy development activities
- Infrastructure building projects
- Training and educational services
- Surveillance systems

But **not** a single activity such as a

- Annual screening event
- One shot presentation, e.g., motivational speaker
- Single mailing or pamphlet
- Health fair
How about policies?

- Can also consider evaluating policies as part of program evaluation

- A policy is a complex series of moves, a course of action or strategy designed to affect program implementation, alter the problem, achieve particular values
### Why Evaluate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To generate information that can help you to improve your programs by:</th>
<th>To demonstrate the impact of your programs to funders and other potential supporters by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➤ Monitoring progress toward program objectives</td>
<td>➤ Assessing progress toward program goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>➤ Identifying issues of importance to program participants</td>
<td>➤ Documenting the quality of your programs and describing the effects on participants</td>
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<td>➤ Refining data collection activities</td>
<td>➤ Quantifying the amount of change experienced by program participants</td>
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Purpose of Evaluation

Program improvement (Formative evaluation)
- Is the program addressing the most important problem(s) in our community?
- Do the program components logically lead to certain program outcomes?
- What are the best ways to design a program?

Program accountability (Summative evaluation)
- What are the results of the program?
- Are the benefits of the program worth the cost?

Knowledge generation
- May answer formative or summative questions

Hidden agenda
- Avoid!
Types of Evaluation
Independent Evaluation

- An evaluation in which the evaluator has the primary responsibility for developing the evaluation plan, conducting the evaluation, and disseminating the results.
Participatory or Collaborative Evaluation

- Organized as a team project
- Evaluator and representatives of one or more stakeholder groups work collaboratively
A Participatory Approach to Evaluation...

- Reduces suspicion and fear
- Increases awareness and commitment
- Allows for differing perspectives
- Integrates the knowledge and experiences of diverse stakeholders
- Increases the likelihood that evaluation findings will be used
- Acknowledges the unique situations of communities

Empowerment Evaluation

- A participatory or collaborative evaluation
- The evaluator’s role includes consultation and facilitation
- Stakeholders conduct evaluation on their own
- Used effectively for advocacy and change

Tailoring Evaluations: Some Considerations

- **Stakeholder needs**
  - Questions of interest to the individuals, groups, or organizations with a stake in the program’s operations & outcomes

- **Stage of program development**
  - What is already known about the program and its operations and outcomes – here and elsewhere

- **Organizational context**
  - Who supports the evaluation?
  - What data are readily available? Other resources?

- **Political context**

- **Outside Resources available**
Levels of Program Evaluation
What is program evaluation?

Comparison of an object of interest against a standard of acceptability
Examples of Standards

- Needs or preferences of the target population
- Stated program goals and objectives
- Program protocols and procedures
- Professional standards
- Customary practice, norms for other programs
- Norms in the “best” groups
- Theoretical standard
- Cost
- Past performance, historical data
- Targets set by program managers
- Targets set by funders
- Regulation, ordinance, or legal requirements
- Expert opinion
- Baseline levels for target population
- Conditions expected in the absence of the program
- Ethical or moral values

Exhibit 3-B, Rossi (p. 75); CDC Framework for Program Evaluation
Comprehensive Evaluation

- Efficiency Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Concept and Design Evaluation

Rossi PH et al., 2004 (7th ed)
Steps to Achieving a Population Impact

**Program Concept, Design**
- Real problem; right group, plausible causal theory, methods, strategies & delivery system

**Implementation**
- Right group, right operations received, sufficient resources

**Measurement/Power/Design**
- Sensitive measures, sufficient power, strong design & analysis

**Study Outcome**
- Sufficient effect

**Application**
- Broadscale application in similar populations & settings

**Generalizability**
- Likely to succeed in similar populations & settings

**Population Impact**
Comprehensive Evaluation

Concept & Design Evaluation

Rossi PH, Lipsey M, Freeman HE, 2004 (7th ed)
Potential Sources of Failure …

Program Concept, Design

Wrong problem, wrong priority group(s), wrong theory, wrong methods & strategies & delivery system

Implementation

Measurement/Power

Study Outcome

No effect
Concept and Design

- Needs Assessment
  - Is there a need for the program?
  - How big is the problem?
  - Is the appropriate population being targeted?
  - What services are needed?
  - What are appropriate channels for delivering services?
Concept and Design

Assessment of Program Theory or Foundations

- **To what extent** does the program design reflect valid assumptions about the problem and its cause(s)?
- ... does the program represent a well-founded, feasible approach to solving the problem?
- ...is it likely that the program will be delivered?
- ... are the appropriate type and amount of material and human resources and political support planned for the program?
Comprehensive Evaluation

Process Evaluation

Concept & Design Evaluation

Process Evaluation

- **Coverage Assessment**: How well is the program actually reaching its intended users? What other groups is it reaching? What dose is being delivered?

- **Program Fidelity and Process Assessment**: How faithful to the planned program is the program actually being delivered? What is actually being received by participants?

- **Program Support Assessment**: What resources and other organizational functions are actually in place to support the program?
Potential Sources of Failure …

☑ Program Concept, Design

- Implementation
  - Poor reach; not operationalized or missing critical elements; not fully received; insufficient resources

- Measure-ment/Power/Design

- Study Outcome
  - No effect

Good idea, well directed
Comprehensive Evaluation

- Concept and Design Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation

Rossi PH et al., 2004 (7th ed)
Outcome Evaluation

- How effective is the program in achieving the intended outcomes, both short- and long-term?
- How sure can we be that the program is the real cause of observed outcomes?
- How sure can we be that the program does not cause plausible potential harms? Is there any evidence that the program produces any positive side effects?
- No design is superior in all instances
Comprehensive Evaluation

- Concept and Design Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation
- Efficiency Evaluation

Rossi PH et al., 2004 (7th ed)
Evaluation Approaches
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Step 1: Engage stakeholders

- those involved in program operations
- those served or affected by the program
- primary users of the evaluation
Step 2: Describe the program

- Statement of Need
- Expected Effects
- Activities
- Resources
- Stage of Development
- Context
- Logic Model
Step 3: Focus the evaluation design

- **Users** - target population
- **Uses** - how evaluation information will be used
- **Questions** – what do the stakeholders want to know
- **Methods** – type of study design, addressing threats to validity
- **Agreements** – protecting human subjects, financial contracts
Step 4: Gather credible evidence

- Depends on the evaluation questions
  - Indicators
  - Sources
  - Quality
  - Quantity
  - Logistics
Step 5: Justify conclusions

- Standards
- Analysis and Synthesis
- Interpretation
- Judgments
- Recommendations
Examples of Standards

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- Cost

Exhibit 3-B, Rossi (p. 75); CDC Framework for Program Evaluation
Step 6: Ensure use and share lessons learned

- Design – Refer back to how the evaluation was constructed
- Preparation – How will potential findings affect decision making
  - What if the findings are negative
- Feedback – include stakeholders at all steps
- Follow-up – ensure that lessons learned and evaluation findings will be used
- Dissemination – share findings with other audiences
Thank You!