Introduction to Program Evaluation

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Research and Evaluation
What You Will Learn From These Sessions

■ Session 1
  - Become familiar with the 6 steps of the *CDC Evaluation Framework*
  - Learn to identify and engage **important** stakeholders (Step 1)

■ Session 2
  - Develop a simple logic model (Step 2)
  - Learn to focus the evaluation (Step 3)

■ Session 3
  - Learn to select appropriate data collection methods for your evaluation questions (Step 4)
  - Learn to analyze and interpret data and findings (Step 5)

■ Session 4
  - Understand how evaluation findings can be used (Step 6)
Session 1

- Become familiar with the 6 steps of the **CDC Evaluation Framework**
- Learn to identify and engage stakeholders (Step 1)
Session 1

You will learn...

- What program evaluation is
- Why evaluation is important
- The steps in planning and conducting evaluations as outlined in the *CDC Framework for Program Evaluation*
- What standards exist for program evaluation
- How to identify and engage stakeholders (Step 1 of the *Framework*)
What is Evaluation?

“the systematic investigation of the merit, worth, or significance of an ‘object’”

Michael Scriven

“...the systematic assessment of the operation and/or outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy...”

Weiss Carol

“A systematic way to determine the “value” of a program, program components, or activity.”

Unknown XXX
Research vs. Evaluation

- Production of generalizable knowledge
- Researcher-derived questions
- Paradigm stance
- More controlled setting
- Clearer role
- Published
- Clearer allegiance

- Knowledge intended for use
- Program- or funder-derived questions
- Judgmental quality
- Action setting
- Role conflicts
- Often not published
- Multiple allegiances
“Research seeks to prove, evaluation seeks to improve…”

M.Q. Patton
If the Goal of Evaluation is...

... to improve a program

Then no evaluation is good unless findings are used to make a difference
Surveillance & Monitoring vs. Program Evaluation

- Surveillance - tracks disease or risk behaviors
- Monitoring - tracks changes in program outcomes over time
- Evaluation - seeks to understand specifically why these changes occur
What Can be Evaluated?

- Direct service interventions
- Community mobilization efforts
- Research initiatives
- Surveillance systems
- Policy development activities
- Outbreak investigations
- Laboratory diagnostics
- Communication campaigns
- Infrastructure-building projects
- Training and educational services
- Administrative systems

-- MMWR, 1999

Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health
When to Conduct Evaluation?

- Planning a NEW program
- Assessing a DEVELOPING program
- Assessing a STABLE, MATURE program
- Assessing a program after it has ENDED

The **stage of program development** influences the reason for program evaluation.
Why Evaluate Programs?

- To gain insight about a program and its operations – to see where we are going and where we are coming from, and to find out what works and what doesn’t.

- To improve practice – to modify or adapt practice to enhance the success of activities.

- To assess effects – to see how well we are meeting objectives and goals, how the program benefits the community, and to provide evidence of effectiveness.

- To build capacity - increase funding, enhance skills, strengthen accountability.
CDC Framework for Program Evaluation

Standards
- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy

Engage stakeholders

Describe the program

Focus the Evaluation design

Gather credible evidence

Justify conclusions

Ensure use and share lessons learned

Steps

Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health

MMWR, 1999
Steps in Program Evaluation

- Step 1: Engage Stakeholders
- Step 2: Describe the Program
- Step 3: Focus the Evaluation Design
- Step 4: Gather Credible Evidence
- Step 5: Justify Conclusion
- Step 6: Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned
Underlying Logic of 6 Steps

- **No evaluation is good unless**... findings are **used** to make a difference

- **No findings are used unless**... a **market** has been created prior to creating the product

- **No market is created unless**... the evaluation is **well-focused**, including most relevant and useful questions
Establishing the Best Focus Means

- **Framework Step 1:** Identifying who cares about our program besides us? Do they define the program and program “success” as we do?

- **Framework Step 2:** What are milestones and markers on the roadmap to the main public health outcomes?
Standards for Effective Evaluation

Standards
- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy

Steps
- Engage stakeholders
- Describe the program
- Focus the Evaluation design
- Gather credible evidence
- Justify conclusions
- Ensure use and share lessons learned

Ensure use and share lessons learned
Gather credible evidence
Justify conclusions
Focus the Evaluation design
Describe the program
Engage stakeholders

Standards
Utility
Feasibility
Propriety
Accuracy
The Four Standards

- **Utility**: Who needs the information and what information do they need?

- **Feasibility**: How much money, time, and effort can we put into this?

- **Propriety**: What steps need to be taken for the evaluation to be ethical?

- **Accuracy**: What design will lead to accurate information?
Standard: Utility

Ensures that the information needs of intended users are met.

- Who needs the evaluation findings?
- What do the users of the evaluation need?
- Will the evaluation provide relevant (useful) information in a timely manner?
Standard: Feasibility

Ensures that evaluation is realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

- Are the planned evaluation activities realistic given the time, resources, and expertise at hand?
Standard: Propriety

Ensures the evaluation is conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and those affected.

- Does the evaluation protect the rights of individuals and protect the welfare of those involved?
- Does it engage those most directly affected by the program and by changes in the program, such as participants or the surrounding community?
Standard: Accuracy

Ensures that the evaluation reveals and conveys technically accurate information.

- Will the evaluation produce findings that are valid and reliable, given the needs of those who will use the results?
Engaging Stakeholders (Step 1)

- Standards
- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy

Engage stakeholders

Steps
- Describe the program
- Focus the Evaluation design
- Gather credible evidence
- Justify conclusions
- Ensure use and share lessons learned

Ensure use and share lessons learned
“There are five key variables that are absolutely critical in evaluation use. They are in order of importance: people, people, people, people, and people.”

*Halcolm*
Identifying Stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders?
  - Persons involved in program operations
  - Persons served or affected by the program
  - Intended users of evaluation findings

- What is their interest in the program?
  - Do they support the program?
  - Are they skeptical about or antagonistic toward the program?
Identifying Stakeholders

- Persons Involved in Program Operations
  - Staff and Partners

- Persons affected or served by the program
  - Clients, their families and social networks, providers and community groups

- Intended users of the evaluation findings
  - Policy makers, managers, administrators, advocates, funders, and others

Be sure to include supporters and skeptics!
Which Stakeholders Matter Most?

Who is...

Affected by the program?
Involved in program operations?
Intended users of evaluation findings?

Who do we need to...
Enhance credibility?
Implement program changes?
Advocate for changes?
Fund, authorize, or expand the program?
Engaging Stakeholders

Stakeholders should be involved in...

- Describing program activities, context, and priorities
- Defining problems
- Selecting evaluation questions and methods
- Serving as data sources
- Defining what constitutes the “proof” of success
- Interpreting findings
- Disseminating information
- Implementing results
Any Questions?
Your turn...

Identifying Stakeholders

- Identify stakeholders for your program
  - Those involved in program operations
  - Persons served or affected by the program
  - Intended users of evaluation findings

- Think about which ones you need most for...
  - Credibility
  - Implementation
  - Advocacy
  - Funding

- List ways to keep them engaged