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E V A L U A T I O N   P L A N N I N G

Chapter

4

Using Your Logic Model to Plan for Evaluation

Thinking through program evaluation questions in terms of the logic model components you have developed can provide the framework for your evaluation plan. Having a framework increases your evaluation's effectiveness by focusing in on questions that have real value for your stakeholders.

- Prioritization of where investment in evaluation activities will contribute the most useful information for program stakeholders.
- Description of your approach to evaluation.

There are two exercises in this chapter; exercise 4 deals with posing evaluation questions and exercise 5 examines the selection of indicators of progress that link back to the basic logic model or the theory-of-change model depending on the focus of the evaluation and its intended primary audiences.

Exercise 4 — Posing Evaluation Questions

The Importance of "Prove" and "Improve" Questions

There are two different types of evaluation questions--**formative** help you to *improve* your program and **summative** help you *prove* whether your program worked the way you planned. Both kinds of evaluation questions generate information that determines the extent to which your program has had the success you expected and provide a groundwork for sharing with others the successes and lessons learned from your program.

EVALUATION PLANNING

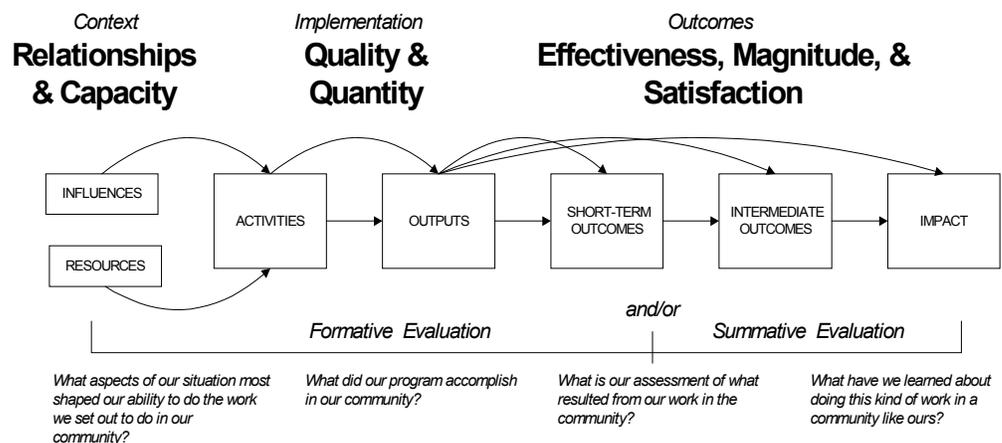## Benefits of Formative and Summative Evaluation Questions [3]

Formative Evaluation--Improve	Summative Evaluation--Prove
Provides information that helps you improve your program. Generates periodic reports. Information can be shared quickly.	Generates information that can be used to demonstrate the results of your program to funders and your community.
Focuses most on program activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes for the purpose of monitoring progress and making mid-course corrections when needed.	Focuses most on program's intermediate-term outcomes and impact. Although data may be collected throughout the program, the purpose is to determine the value and worth of a program based on results.
Helpful in bringing suggestions for improvement to the attention of staff.	Helpful in describing the quality and effectiveness of your program by documenting its impact on participants and the community.

📂

See Resources Appendix

for more information on evaluation planning.

Looking at Evaluation from Various Vantage Points--

How will you measure your success? What will those "investing" in your program or your target audience want to know?

A clear logic model illustrates the purpose and content of your program and makes it easier to develop meaningful evaluation questions from a variety of program vantage points: context, implementation and results (which includes outputs, outcomes, and impact).

What Parts of Your Program Will Be Evaluated?   Using a logic model to frame your evaluation questions.

Context	Implementation	Outcomes
Relationships & Capacity	**Quality & Quantity**	**Effectiveness, Magnitude, & Satisfaction**

INFLUENCES
RESOURCES → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES → INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES → IMPACT

Formative Evaluation   *and/or*   Summative Evaluation

What aspects of our situation most shaped our ability to do the work we set out to do in our community?

What did our program accomplish in our community?

What is our assessment of what resulted from our work in the community?

What have we learned about doing this kind of work in a community like ours?

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[3] Adapted from Bond, S.L., Boyd, S. E., & Montgomery, D.L.(1997 *Taking Stock: A Practical Guide to Evaluating Your Own Programs, Chapel Hill, NC:* Horizon Research, Inc. Available online at http://www.horizon-research.com.

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Remember you can draw upon the basic logic model in exercises 1 & 2 and the theory-of-change model in exercise 3. Feasibility studies and needs assessments serve as valuable resources for baseline information on influences and resources collected during program planning.

Context **is how the program functions within the economic, social, and political environment of its community** and addresses questions that explore issues of program relationships and capacity. What factors might influence your ability to do the work you have planned? These kinds of evaluation questions can help you explain some of the strengths and weakness of your program as well as the effect of unanticipated and external influences on it.

> **Sample CONTEXT QUESTIONS:** Can we secure a donated facility? With the low morale created by high unemployment, can we secure the financial and volunteer support we need? How many medical volunteers can we recruit? How many will be needed each evening? How will potential patients find out about the clinic? What kind of medical care will patients need? How can we let possible referral sources know about the clinic and its services? What supplies will we need and how will we solicit suppliers for them? What is it about the free clinic that supports its ability to reduce the numbers of patients seeking care in Memorial Hospital's ER?

Implementation **assesses the extent to which activities were executed as planned,** since a program's ability to deliver its desired results depends on whether activities result in the quality and quantity of outputs specified. They tell the story of your program in terms of what happened and why.

> **SAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS:** What facility was secured? How many patients were seen each night/month/year? What organizations most frequently referred patients to the clinic? How did patients find out about the clinic? How many medical volunteers serve each night/month year? What was the value of their services? What was the most common diagnosis? What supplies were donated? How many patients per year did the Clinic see in its first/second/third year?

Outcomes **determine the extent to which progress is being made toward the desired changes in individuals, organizations, communities, or systems**. Outcome questions seek to document the changes that occur in your community as a result of your program. Usually these questions generate answers about effectiveness of activities in producing changes in magnitude or satisfaction with changes related to the issues central to your program.

> **SAMPLE OUTCOME QUESTIONS:** How many inappropriate, uninsured patients sought medical care in Memorial's ER in the Clinic's first/second/third year? Was there a reduction in un-funded ER visits? How did the number of uninsured patients compare to previous years when the clinic was not operating? What was the cost/visit in the Free Clinic? What is the cost/visit in Memorial's ER? How do they compare? What were the cost savings to Memorial Hospital? How satisfied were Clinic patients with the care they received? How satisfied were volunteers with their service to the Clinic?

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Creating Focus

Though it is rare, you may find that examining certain components of your program is sufficient to satisfy your information needs. Most often, however, you will systematically develop a series of evaluation questions, as shown in the Flowchart for Evaluation Question Development.

Flowchart for Evaluation Question Development

The use of program theory as a map for evaluation doesn't necessarily imply that every step of every possible theory has to be studied. ...Choices have to be made in designing an evaluation about which lines of inquiry to pursue. ...The theory provides a picture of the whole intellectual landscape so that people can make choices with a full awareness of what they are ignoring as well as what they are choosing to study...

Weiss (1998)
Evaluation

Focus Area

What is going to be evaluated? List those components from your theory and/or logic model that you think are the most important aspects of your program. These areas will become the focus of your evaluation.

Audience

What key audience will have questions about your focus areas? For each focus area you have identified, list the audiences that are likely to be the most interested in that area.

Question

What questions will your key audience have about your program? For each focus area and audience that you have identified, list the questions they might have about your program.

Information Use

If you answer a given question, what will that information be used for? For each audience and question you have identified, list the ways and extent to which you plan to make use of the evaluation information.

EVALUATION PLANNING

What is going to be evaluated? For each area on which your program focuses, list the most important aspects of your program theory and logic model. Focus your evaluation on them.

Focus Area Examples:

Context Examples — Evaluating relationships and capacity. How will the Free Clinic recruit and train effective board and staff members? What is the best way to recruit, manage, retain and recognize medical and administrative volunteers and other Clinic partners? What is the most effective way to recruit and retain uninsured patients? How will the operation of a Free Clinic impact Memorial Hospital's expenses for providing uninsured medical care in its ER? How many patients can Clinic volunteers effectively serve on a regular basis? What is the ideal patient/volunteer ratio?

✎**Insert focus areas into Focus Area Column of Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4.**

Implementation Examples — Assessing quality and quantity. How many major funding partners does the clinic have? How are volunteers and patients scheduled? How many medical volunteers serve Clinic patients on a regular basis? What is the value of their services? What is the most common diagnosis at the Clinic? What is the most common diagnosis of uninsured patients seen in Memorial's ER? How long do patients wait to be seen at the Clinic? Is there a patient or volunteer waiting list?

✎**Insert focus areas into Focus Area Column of Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4.**

Outcomes — Measuring effectiveness, magnitude and satisfaction. Has the clinic increased access to care for a significant number of Mytown's uninsured citizens? How many residents of Mytown, USA do not have health insurance? How many patients does the Clinic serve on a regular basis? What is that ratio? What is the cost per visit in the Clinic and Memorial's ER? How do the costs compare? What is the satisfaction level of Clinic patients and volunteers with Clinic services and facilities? How many donors does the Clinic have? What is their satisfaction with Clinic services and facilities? How effectively is the Clinic educating, engaging and involving its partners? What organizations have officially endorsed the Clinic? What is the board and staff's satisfaction with clinic operations, facilities and services?

✎**Insert focus areas into Focus Area Column of Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4.**

The benefits of asking and answering evaluation questions depend on how clear you are about the purpose of your evaluation, who needs to know what when, and the resources you have available to support the evaluation process.

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What Information Will Your Program's Audiences Want?

As shown below, program audiences will be interested in a variety of different kinds of information.   Donors may want to know if their money did what you promised it would. Patients might want to know how many patients the clinic serves and how many volunteers it has. Physicians donating their time and talent could be interested in the financial value of their contributions. If you ask your audiences what they want to know, you'll be sure to build in ways to gather the evaluation data required.

Audience	Typical Questions	Evaluation Use
Program Management and Staff	Are we reaching our target population? Are our participants satisfied with our program? Is the program being run efficiently? How can we improve our program?	Programming decisions, day-today operations
Participants	Did the program help me and people like me? What would improve the program next time?	Decisions about continuing participation.
Community Members	Is the program suited to our community needs? What is the program really accomplishing?	Decisions about participation and support.
Public Officials	Who is the program serving? What difference has the program made? Is the program reaching its target population? What do participants think about the program? Is the program worth the cost?	Decisions about commitment and support. Knowledge about the utility and feasibility of the program approach.
Funders	Is what was promised being achieved? Is the program working? Is the program worth the cost?	Accountability and improvement of future grantmaking efforts.

How often do you have to gather data? Whether a question is more formative or summative in nature offers a clue on when information should be collected.
- Formative information should be periodic and reported/shared quickly to improve your efforts.
- Summative tends to be a "before and after" snap-shots reported after the conclusion of the program to document the effectiveness and lessons learned from your experience.

Involve Your Audience in Setting Priorities
Program developers often interview program funders, participants, staff, board and partners to brainstorm a list of all possible questions for a key area identified from their program theory or from their logic models. That list helps determine the focus the evaluation. Involving your audience from the beginning makes sure you gather meaningful information in which your supporters have a real interest.

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Prioritization is a critical step. No evaluation can answer all of the questions your program's audiences may ask. The following questions can help you narrow your number of indicators: How many audiences are interested in this information? Could knowing the answer to this question improve your program? Will this information assess your program's effectiveness?

The final focus for your evaluation is often negotiated among stakeholders. It is important to keep your evaluation manageable. **It is preferable to answer a few important questions thoroughly than to answer several questions poorly**. How well you can answer your questions will depend on the time, money, and expertise you have at your disposal to perform the functions required by the evaluation.

What key audiences will have questions about your evaluation focus areas?
For each focus area that you identified in the previous step, list the audiences that are likely to be most interested in that area. Summarize your audiences and transfer to the Audience Column of the Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4.

Context--Relationships and Capacity

Example audiences: Medical professionals, Memorial Hospital Board and Staff (especially ER staff), Medical associations, Foundations, The Chamber of Commerce, United Way, The Technical College, uninsured residents, medical supply companies, local media, public officials.

Implementation--Quality and Quantity

Example audiences: Funders, In-kind donors, Medical and administrative volunteers, Board, Staff, Patients, Public Officials, The media, Medical associations, Local businesses, Healthcare organizations.

Outcomes--Effectiveness, Magnitude, and Satisfaction

Example audiences: Funders, In-kind donors, Volunteers, Board, Staff, Patients, Public Officials, The media, Medical associations, Local businesses, Healthcare organizations.

What questions will key audiences ask about your program?
For each focus area and key audience you identified in the previous step, list the questions your stakeholders ask about your program. Insert summaries in the Question Column of the Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4.

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Sample of Key Audience Questions:

☐ Who are the collaborative partners for this program? What do they provide?
☐ What is the budget for this program?
☐ How many staff members does the program have?
☐ How many patients does the clinic serve?
☐ How many visits per year does the average patient have?
☐ What is the most common diagnosis?
☐ Does the clinic save the hospital money?
☐ How does the organization undertake and support program evaluation?
☐ How are medical volunteers protected from law suits?
☐ How satisfied are patients, volunteers, board and staff with the clinic's services?
☐ What do experts say about the clinic?
☐ How many uninsured patients still seek inappropriate care in the ER? Why?

How will the evaluation's information be used? For each question and audience you identified in the previous step, list the ways and extent to which you plan to make use of the evaluation information. Summarize audience use of information. ✎Insert in the Use Column of the Evaluation Questions Development Template for Evaluation Planning, Exercise 4 on *page 44*.

Context--Relationships and Capacity Examples

- Measure the level of community support
- Assess effectiveness of community outreach
- Assess sustainability of Clinic funding sources
- Improve volunteer and patient recruitment methods
- Secure additional Clinic partners

Implementation--Quality and Quantity Examples

- Assess optimal number of volunteers and patients to schedule per session to improve operating effectiveness while maintaining patient and volunteer satisfaction.
- Measure patient, volunteer, staff, board, donors and community satisfaction with clinic.
- Determine cost savings per visit. Share information with local medical and business groups to encourage their support.

Outcomes & Impact—Examples of Effectiveness, Magnitude, and Satisfaction

- Cost savings of Clinic-- use to obtain additional volunteer and financial support from Memorial Hospital
- Patient satisfaction survey results -- use to improve patient services and satisfaction.
- Analysis of most frequent referral sources-- use to present information seminars to ER staff, social service workers and unemployment insurance clerks to increase patient referrals and intakes.
- Analysis of most prevalent patient diagnoses --use to create relevant patient health education newsletter. Patient tracking system will measure impact of education program.

EVALUATION PLANNING

Exercise 4 Checklist: After completing Exercise 4 you can use the following checklist to assess the quality of your draft.

EXERCISE 4

Check-list

Posing Questions Quality Criteria		Yes	Not Yet	Comments Revisions
1.	A variety of audiences are taken into consideration when specifying questions.	☐	☐	
2.	Questions selected are those with the highest priority.	☐	☐	
3.	Each question chosen gathers useful information.	☐	☐	
4.	Each question asks only one question (i.e. "extent of X, Y, and Z is not appropriate).	☐	☐	
5.	It is clear how the question relates to the program's logic model.	☐	☐	
6.	The questions are specific about what information is needed.	☐	☐	
7.	Questions capture "lessons learned" about your work along the way.	☐	☐	
8.	Questions capture "lessons learned" about your program theory along the way.	☐	☐	

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EVALUATION PLANNING

Logic Model Development. Evaluation Planning Template – Exercise 4

Evaluation Focus Area	Audience	Question	Use
Relationships	Funders	Is the program cost effective?	Cost benefits/fundraising
		Are volunteers & patients satisfied with Clinic services?	Program promotion/fundraising
	Medical Volunteers	What is the most common diagnosis?	Quality assurance/Planning
		How will medical volunteers be protected from law suits?	Volunteer recruitment
	Patients	Am I receiving quality care?	Program improvement & planning
		How long can I receive care here?	" "
	Staff	Are we reaching our target population?	Evaluation/program promotion
		How do patients find us? What's our best promotional approach?	Evaluation and/or improvement
Outcomes	Funders/Donors	Program Budget?	Cost benefit analysis
		Cost/visit?	"
	Volunteers	Visits/month/year?	Annual Report/Program promotion/Public relations
		Cost savings for Memorial Hospital?	Annual Report/Program promotion/ Fundraising
	Patients	Volunteers/year?	Annual Report/Volunteer recruitment
		Patient satisfaction	Program improvements/staff training
	Staff	Patient & volunteer satisfaction	"
		Common DRG(?)	

EVALUATION PLANNING

Exercise 5—Establishing Indicators

One of the biggest challenges in developing an evaluation plan is choosing what kind of information best answers the questions you have posed. **It is important to have general agreement across your audiences on what success will look like.** Indicators are the measures you select as markers of your success.

In this last exercise you create a set of indicators. They are often used as the starting point for designing the data collection and reporting strategies (e.g., the number of uninsured adults nationally, statewide, in Mytown, USA or the number of licensed physicians in Mytown). Often organizations hire consultants or seek guidance from local experts to conduct their evaluations. Whether or not you want help will depend on your organization's level of comfort with evaluation and the evaluation expertise among your staff.

> The biggest problem is usually that people are trying to accomplish too many results. Once they engage in a discussion of indicators, they start to realize how much more clarity they need in their activities.
>
> I also find that it is important that the program, not the evaluator, is identifying the indicators. Otherwise, the program can easily discredit the evaluation by saying they don't think the indicators are important, valid, etc.
>
> Beverly Anderson Parsons, WKKF Cluster Evaluator

Focus Area	Indicators	How to Evaluate[1]
Influential Factors	Measures of influential factors--may require general population surveys and/or comparison with national data sets[2].	Compare the nature and extent of influences before (baseline) and after the program.
Resources	Logs or reports of financial/staffing status.	Compare actual resources acquired against anticipated.
Activities	Descriptions of planned activities. Logs or reports of actual activities. Descriptions of participants.	Compare actual activities provided, types of participants reached against what was proposed.
Outputs	Logs or reports of actual activities. Actual products delivered.	Compare the quality and quantity of actual delivery against expected.
Outcomes & Impacts	Participant attitudes, knowledge, skills, intentions, and/or behaviors thought to result from your activities[3].	Compare the measures before and after the program[4].

Examples and Use of Indicators.

Our advice is to keep your evaluation simple and straight forward. The logic model techniques you have been practicing will take you a long way toward developing an evaluation plan that is meaningful *and* manageable.

---

[1] This table was adapted from *A Hands-on Guide to Planning and Evaluation* (1993) available from the National AIDS Clearinghouse, Canada.

[2] You may want to allocate resources to allow for the assistance of an external evaluation consultant to access national databases or perform statistical analyses.

3 Many types of outcomes and impact instruments (i.e. reliable and valid surveys and questionnaires) are readily available. The Mental Measurement Yearbook published by the Buros Institute (http://www.unl.edu/buros/) and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (http://ericae.net/) are great places to start.

4 You may need to allocate resources to allow for the assistance of an external evaluation consultant.

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Determine the kinds of data you will need and design methods to gather the data (i.e., patient registration forms, volunteer registration forms, daily sign in sheets, national, state and local statistics). Sometimes, once an indicator (type of data) is selected, program planners set a specific target to be reached as a agreed upon measure of success if reached (for example 25% decrease in the numbers of inappropriate ER visits).

As in the previous exercises use the space below to loosely organize your thoughts. Then, once the exercise is completed and assessed, use the **Indicator Development Template** on page 60 to record your indicators and technical assistance needs.

Filling in the Flowchart for Indicator Development

What information will be gathered to "indicate" the status of your program and/or its participants?

Focus Area	Question	Indicators	Technical Assistance Needed
①	②	③	④

Column 1: *Focus Areas*—From the information gathered in Exercise 4, transfer the areas on which your evaluation will focus into column one (for example, patient health, volunteer participation, sustaining supporting partnerships).

Column 2: *Questions*—transfer from Exercise 4 the major questions related to each focus area--big questions your key audiences want answered. Remember to keep your evaluation as simple as possible.

Column 3: *Indicators*--Specify the indicators (types of data) against which you will measure the success/progress of your program. It's often helpful to record the sources of data you plan to use as indicators (where you are likely to find or get access to these data).

Column 4: *Technical Assistance*--To what extent does your organization have the evaluation and data management expertise needed to collect and analyze the data that related to each indicator? List any assistance that would be helpful— universities, consultants, national and state data experts, foundation evaluation departments, etc.

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Exercise 5 Checklist: Review what you have created using the checklist below to assess the quality of your evaluation plan.

EXERCISE 5

Check-list

Establishing Indicators Quality Criteria		Yes	Not Yet	Comments Revisions
1.	The focus areas reflect the questions asked by a variety of audiences. Indicators respond to the identified focus areas and questions.	☐	☐	
2.	Indicators are SMART--Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Timed.	☐	☐	
3.	The cost of collecting data on the indicators is within the evaluation budget.	☐	☐	
4.	Source of data is known.	☐	☐	
5.	It is clear what data collection, management, and analysis strategies will be most appropriate for each indicator.	☐	☐	
6.	Strategies and required technical assistance have been identified and are within the evaluation budget for the program.	☐	☐	
7.	The technical assistance needed is available.	☐	☐	

EVALUATION PLANNING

Logic Model Development Indicators Development Template – Exercise 5

Focus Area	Question	Indicators	Technical Assistance Needed
Relationships	Are volunteers & patients satisfied w/ clinic care?	• Patient satisfaction surveys • Volunteer satisfaction tests	Anywhere's pt. satisfaction surveys Anywhere's volunteer survey
	Are we reaching our target population?	• % of clinic patients vs. % of uninsured citizens in Mytown, USA • # of qualified clinic patients/year	Reports from Chamber of Commerce Patient database creation
	How do patients find The clinic?	• Annual analysis of telephone referral log • Referral question on patient intake form	Telephone log data base Anywhere's patient intake form
Outcomes	Does the clinic save The community $?	• Cost/visit • # of uninsured pts. seen in hospital ER—beginning the year before Clinic opened.	Budget figures; patient service records Tracking database software Strategic direction for analysis
	What does the clinic provide?	• most common diagnosis • Hospital cost/visit for common diagnosis	DRG workbook/tables (hospital staff) Input from hospital billing staff
	How has volunteering impacted doctors, nurses, administrators and patients?	• Annual volunteer survey • Patient satisfaction survey • # of volunteers/year • # of volunteers donating to clinic operations	Anywhere surveys and analysis instruments Volunteer management data base Donor data base (Raiser's Edge?)