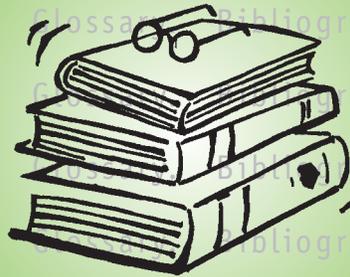


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*The Community Health
Worker Evaluation Tool Kit*

A Project of the University of Arizona
Rural Health Office
and
College of Public Health



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Glossary

*Adapted from the Virginia Effective Practices
Project: Atkinson, A., Deaton, M., Travis, R., & Wessel, T. (1998).
James Madison University and
the Virginia Department of Education.*

Accountability

The ability to demonstrate to key stakeholders that a program works and that it uses its resources effectively to achieve and sustain its goals and outcomes.

Activities

The actions programs develop and implement to meet their objectives.

Archival data

Information about trends in national, regional, state and local conditions (e.g., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, county health departments, local law enforcement agencies), which may be useful as baselines against which program effectiveness can be measured.

Attribution

A claim that your program alone is responsible for the successes you observe.

Baseline

Observations or data about the target area and target population prior to the program or intervention, which can be used as a basis for comparison following program implementation.

Best Practice

New ideas or lessons learned about effective program activities that have been used in the field, and have been shown to have positive results.

Comparison group

A group of people whose characteristics and demographics similar to those of the intervention group, but members of the comparison group do not receive the intervention.

Contribution

A claim that your program has at the least contributed to the changes you observe.

Control group

A group of people randomly chosen from the target population who do not receive an intervention, but are assessed before and after intervention to help determine whether program interventions were responsible for changes in outcomes in the group that received the intervention.

Cultural Competency

A set of skills that allow individuals to understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups.

Data

Information collected and used for reasoning, discussion and decision making. In program evaluation, both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (non-numerical) data may be used.

Data analysis

The process of systematically examining, studying, and evaluating collected information.



Descriptive statistics

Information that describes a population or sample. For example, gender, ethnicity.

Effectiveness

The ability of a program to achieve its stated goals and produce measurable outcomes in a “real world” environment.

Empowerment evaluation

An approach to gathering, analyzing, and using data about a program and its outcomes that actively involves key stakeholders in the community in all aspects of the evaluation process. Empowerment evaluation promotes evaluation as a strategy for empowering communities to engage in change.

Experimental design

The set of specific procedures which tests a hypothesis about the relationship of certain program activities to actual outcomes.

External evaluation

Collection, analysis, and interpretation of data conducted by an individual or organization outside the organization being evaluated.

Focus group

A small group of people with shared characteristics who participate in a focused discussion designed to identify perceptions and opinions about a specific topic. Focus groups may be used to collect background information, create new ideas, assess how a program is working, or help to interpret results from other data sources.

Formative evaluation

Systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data used to help develop a project or intervention.

Goal

A broad, often visionary, measurable that describes the desired result (outcome or impact) of a program.

Impact

A statement of long-term, effects of a program or intervention. Improvement in the health status of a community would be an impact.

Incidence

The percentage of people within a given population who have acquired a disease or health-related condition within a specific time period.

Indicated Prevention

Prevention efforts that have proven to be successful in addressing the specific risk and protective factors of a target population.

Internal evaluator

An individual (or group of individuals) from within the organization being evaluated who is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

Internal validity

Evidence that the outcomes achieved by a program are linked to program interventions and not to other possible causes. Internal validity is relevant only in studies that try to establish a cause-effect relationship.

Intervention

An activity conducted with a group in order to affect behavior. In substance abuse prevention programs, interventions at the individual or environmental level may be used to prevent or lower the rate of substance abuse.

Key informant

A person with the particular background, knowledge, or special skills required to contribute information about topics important to an evaluation.

Mean (Average)

A middle point between two extremes; or, the arithmetic average of a set of numbers.

Methodology

A particular procedure or set of procedures used to achieve a desired outcome.

Needs assessment

A systematic process for gathering information about current conditions within a community.

Outcome

A short term or direct effect of a program; changes in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs or intentions are usually considered to be outcomes.

Outcome evaluation

Systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to evaluate what outcomes a program has achieved.

Output

Summaries and documented activities; e.g. 250 home visits were conducted, and 875 women received education on breast self-exam.

Pre-post tests

Evaluation instruments designed to assess change by comparing the measurement before and after a program.

Prevalence

The total percentage or rate of people within a population who have the disease or health-related condition.

Process evaluation

Assessing what activities were carried out, the quality of the activities and the strengths and weaknesses of the activities. Process evaluation is used to produce useful feedback for program improvement, to determine which activities were more successful than others, to document successful processes for future replication.

Program

A set of activities that has clearly stated goals and objectives.

Protective factor

An attribute, situation, condition, or environmental context that works to shelter an individual from health problem being targeted by the intervention.

Qualitative data

Information gathered in narrative form by talking to or observing people. Often presented as text, qualitative data helps to further describe evaluation findings derived from quantitative methods and to indicate what should be measured quantitatively.

Quantitative data

Information gathered in numeric form. Quantitative methods deal most often with numbers that are analyzed using statistics to test hypotheses and track the strength and direction of program effects.

Questionnaire

Written research instrument that consists of statistically useful questions.

Random assignment

In an experimental design, arbitrary process through which participants are assigned to either a control group or intervention group.

Replicate

To carry out a program in a setting other than the one for which it originally was designed, with attention to the transfer of the core elements of the program.

Resource assessment

A systematic examination of existing structures, programs, people, materials and other activities potentially available to assist in addressing identified needs.



Risk factor

Situation, condition, or environmental context that increases the likelihood of the targeted health problem.

Sample

A group of people carefully selected to be representative of a particular population.

Science-based

A classification for programs that have been shown through scientific study to produce consistently positive results.

Selected Prevention

Prevention efforts targeted to those whose risk of developing problems is significantly higher than average.

Self-administered instrument

A questionnaire, survey, or report completed by a program participant without the assistance of an interviewer.

Stakeholder

An individual or organization with a direct or indirect interest or investment in a project or program (e.g., a funder, program champion, or community leader).

Standardized tests

Instruments of examination, observation, or evaluation that share a standard set of instructions for their administration, use, scoring, and interpretation.

Statistical significance

A relationship between variables which occurs so frequently that it cannot be attributed to chance, coincidence, or randomness.

Target population

The individuals or group of individuals for whom a program has been designed.

Threats to internal validity

Factors other than the intervention that may have contributed to outcomes, and that must be considered when a program evaluation is conducted.

Universal Prevention

Prevention efforts targeted to the general population, or a population that has not been identified on the basis of individual risk.

Validity

An instrument or tool is valid if it is an appropriate one for describing (in numbers or words) what you want to know about a program, a person, an activity or a result. To be appropriate, the tool must provide accurate, relevant, representative and complete information.