



Making Evaluations Work for our Work

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Overview

- Why evaluate?
- How can nonprofits better use evaluation to show impact?
- How can nonprofits use evaluation to inform program improvement?
- Where do we go from here?

Focus on the goal, not the jargon



Where to start?

The greatest value from evaluation comes before the funding is awarded and the program is launched

Using an evaluation mindset helps to

1. Clarify the target population/audience
2. Decide how to focus the intervention/strategy
3. Decide on the scope and duration of the program
4. Select the things to measure about how the program operates and what it accomplishes
5. Determine how success will be judged (compared to what?)



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The Basic Questions

1. How many people does my program/organization serve? Serve well?
2. Of the people served, how many improve or show benefit?
3. How hard is it for the organization to answer questions 1 & 2 at a point in time and over time?
4. What aspects of program benefit are we currently not capturing?



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Recommendations for better evaluation

- Develop a picture (e.g., logic model) that conveys the program's theory of change
- Identify the data you have now and still need, to document change
- Lay out phases for evaluation, don't bite off too much at once
- Establish a group whose job it is to plan the evaluation work and discuss it over time



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Program Theory defined

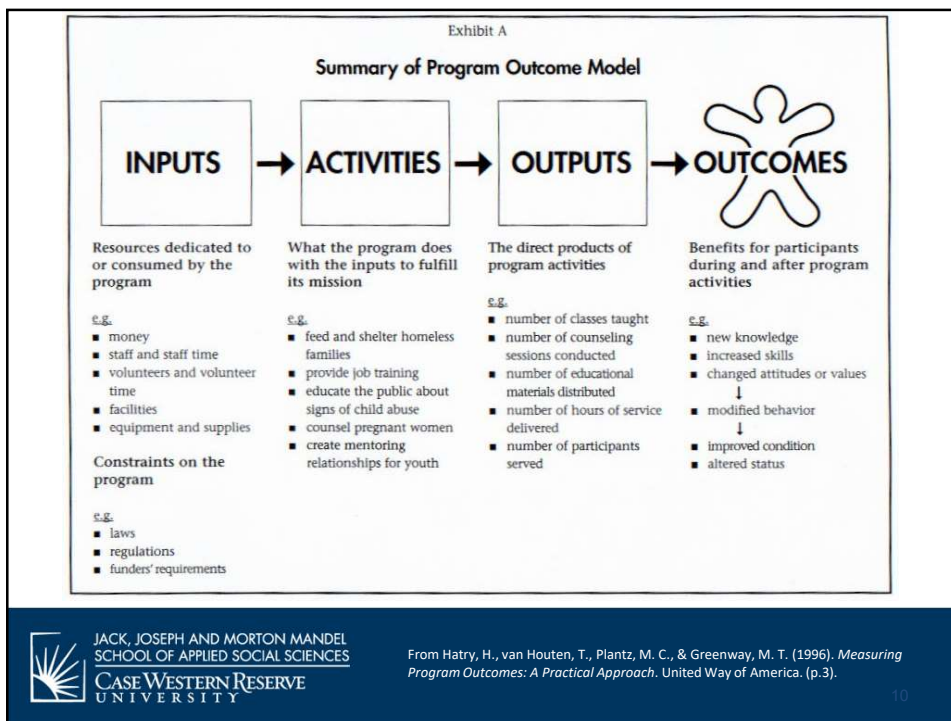
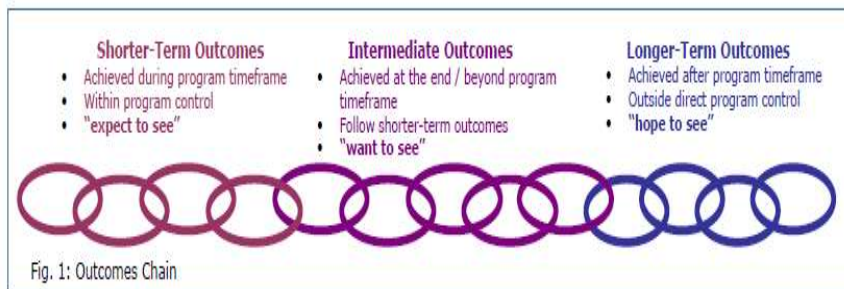
“Program theory refers to the chain of assumptions that explains how program activities are going to lead step by step to desired outcomes.”

Source: Carol H. Weiss. (1998). Evaluation.

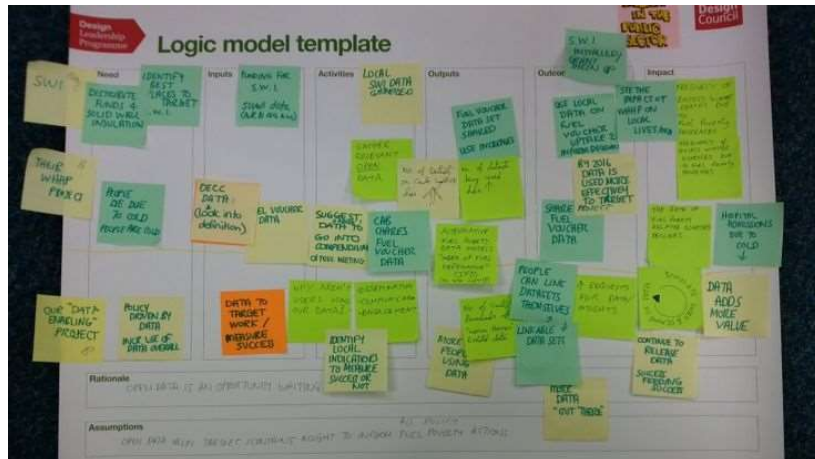


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Thinking about our outcomes

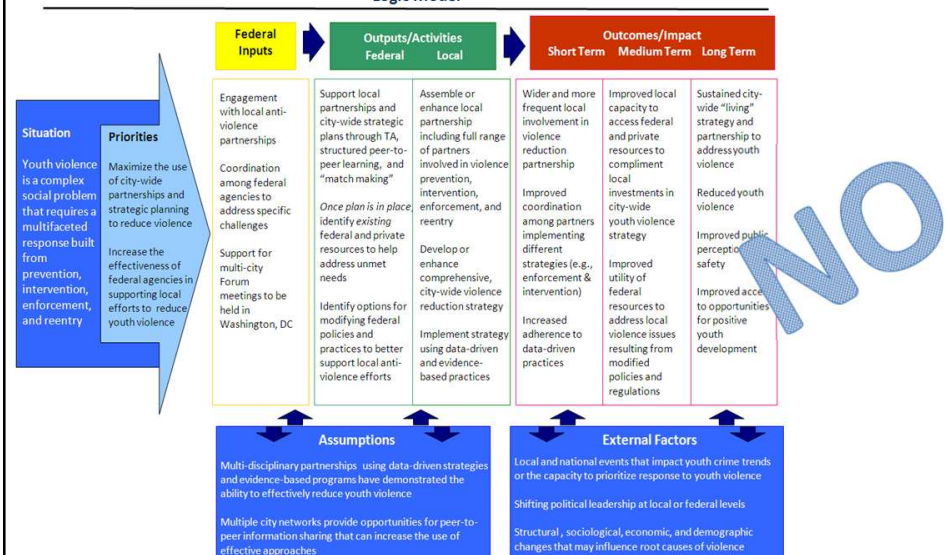


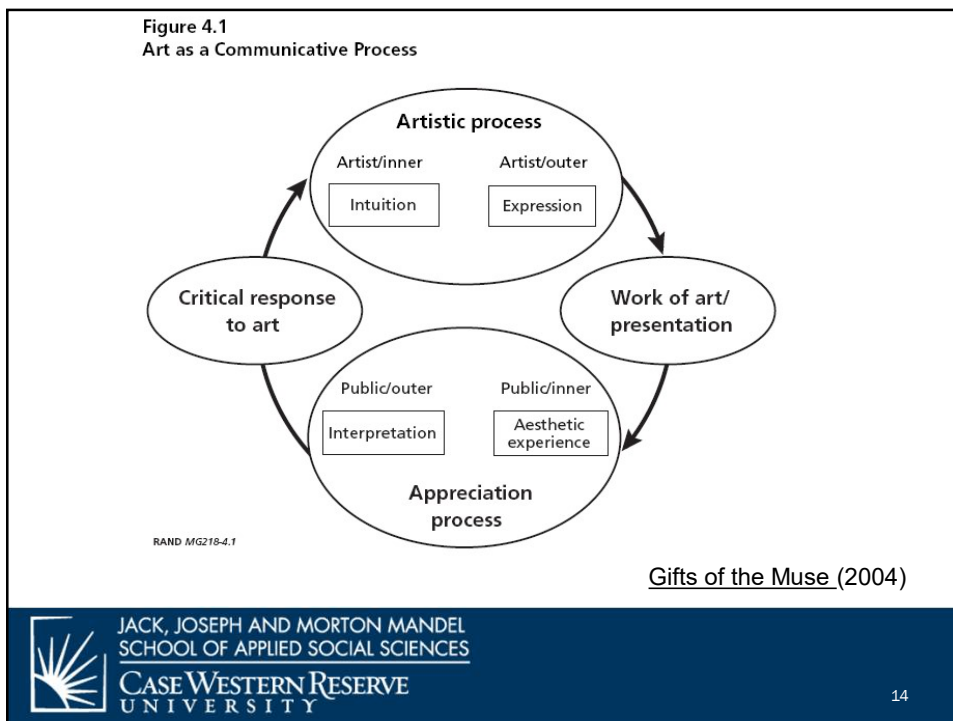
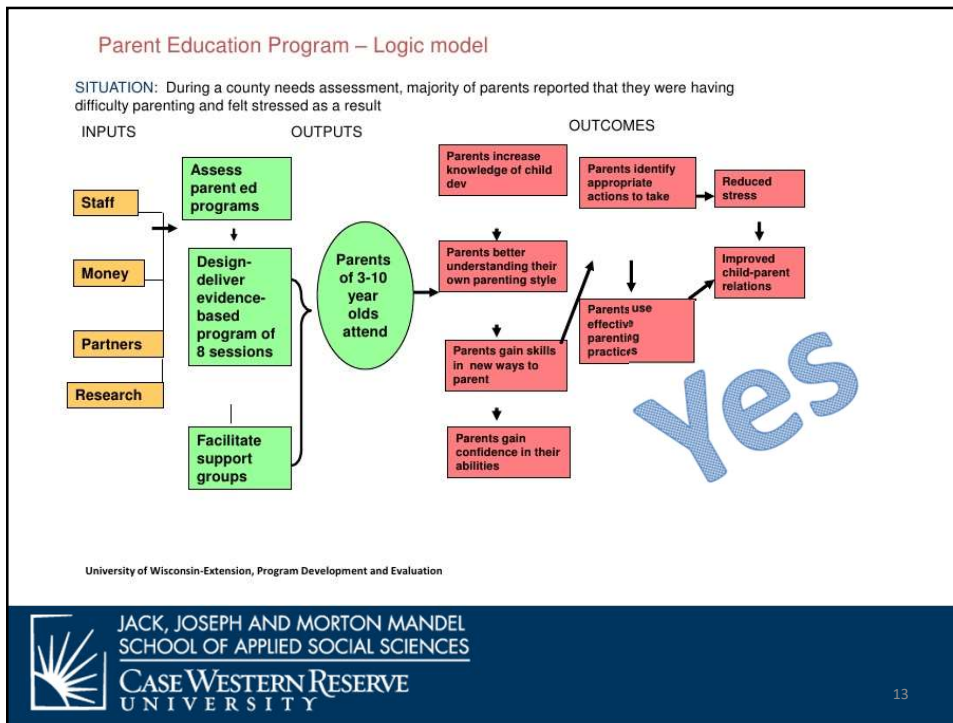
Brainstorm program theory



National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention

Logic Model





Arts Evaluation

- Program content
 - Knowledge of arts
 - Technical skills in music, theatre, writing
 - Skills in regard to ability to focus, attention, learning
 - Translational content – e.g., linked to education outcomes
- Program experience
 - Awakening, self-awareness
 - Self-esteem, empowerment
 - Love for the arts
 - Quality of life

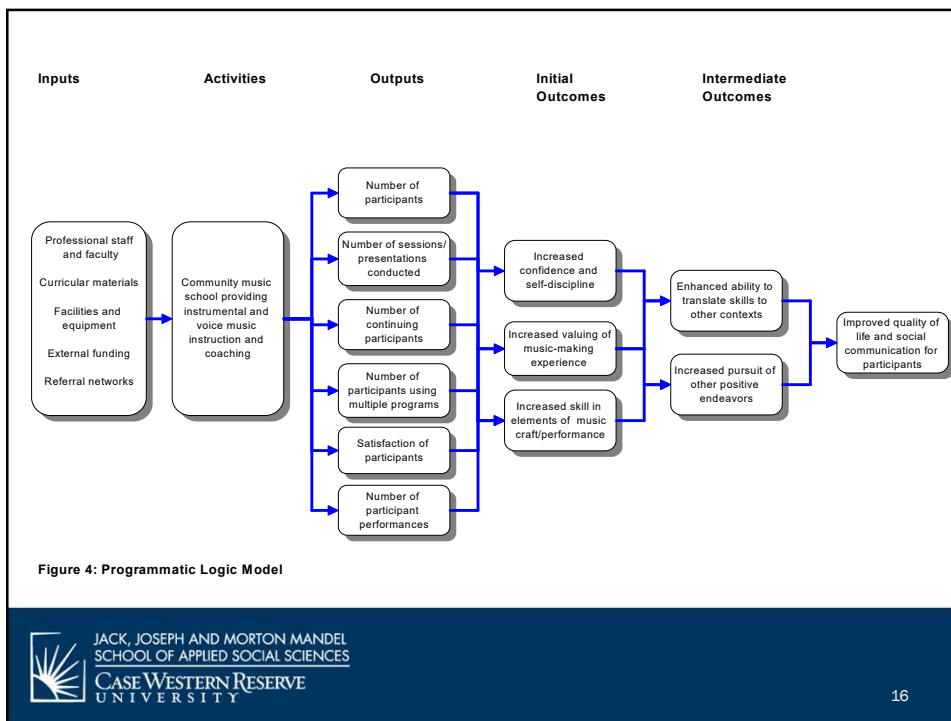


Figure 4: Programmatic Logic Model



Phasing the evaluation

- **What – data sources**
 - Participants, parents/caregivers, program records, partner data, trained observers
- **How – data methods**
 - Surveys (paper, on-line)
 - Interviews or focus groups
 - Data extraction
- **When – timing**
 - Post-only (workshop/event feedback)
 - Pre/Post (training/education program)
 - Tracking over time (longitudinal data)

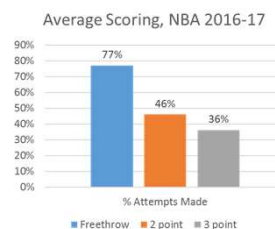
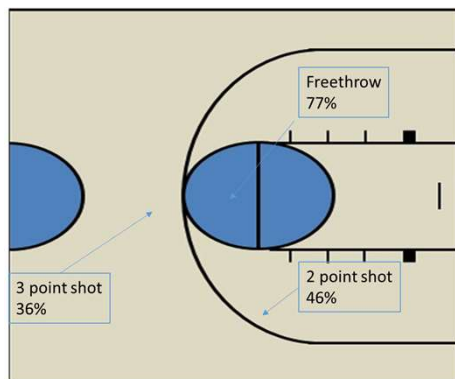


How should we measure the outcome?

- First ask –
 - Do we measure it now and, if so, how?
 - How do others who do this work measure it?
 - How do researchers measure it?
- Then ask –
 - What's the best way to measure it? (valid/reliable)
 - What's the best way to measure it given our capacity and context? (feasible)



Setting expectations – how much success should we expect?



→ Not all programs are shooting free-throws!

Program example

- Afterschool tutoring program targeted to children age 8-10 who are behind in reading or math. Tutor works with student for 2 hours each week.
- Program's claimed outcome is "academic progress"
- What specific outcomes could we measure?
- What data sources/methods could we use?

From outcomes to indicators

Type of Program	Outcome	Indicator(s)
Smoking cessation class	Participants stop smoking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of participants who report that they have quit smoking by the end of the course Number and percent of participants who have not relapsed six months after program completion
Tutorial program for 6th grade students	Students' academic performance improves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of participants who earn better grades in the grading period following completion of the program than in the grading period immediately preceding enrollment in the program
Counseling for parents identified as at risk for child abuse or neglect	Risk factors decrease. No confirmed incidents of child abuse or neglect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of participating families for whom Child Protective Service records report no confirmed child abuse or neglect during 12 months following program completion
Prenatal care program	Pregnant women follow the advice of the nutritionist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of women who take recommended vitamin supplements and consume recommended amounts of calcium
Shelter and counseling for runaway youth	Family is reunified when possible; otherwise, youths are in stable alternative housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of youth who return home Number and percent of youth placed in alternative living arrangements who are in that arrangement 6 months later unless they have been reunified or emancipated
Family planning for teen mothers	Teen mothers avoid second pregnancies until they complete high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of teen mothers using a recommended form of birth control Number and percent of teen mothers who do not have repeat pregnancies prior to graduation



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Types of evaluation designs

1. One group post-test only design



T₂ = Posttest

P = Program or intervention



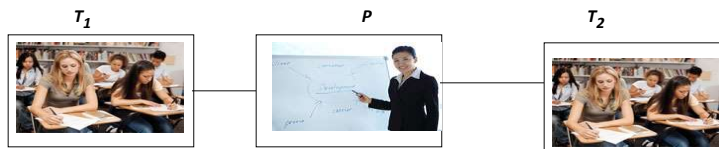
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Types of evaluation designs

2. Before and After Design

One group pretest-posttest design



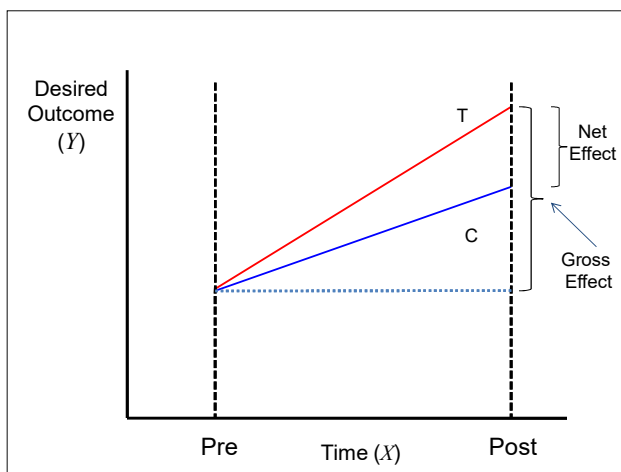
T_1 = Pretest (treatment group)
 T_2 = Posttest (treatment group)
 P = Program or intervention



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How much of the effect is due to the program?

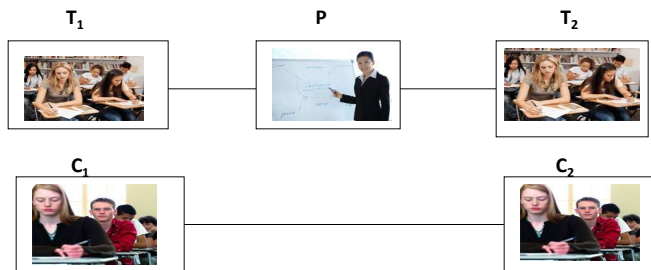


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Types of evaluation designs

2. Comparison Group Design

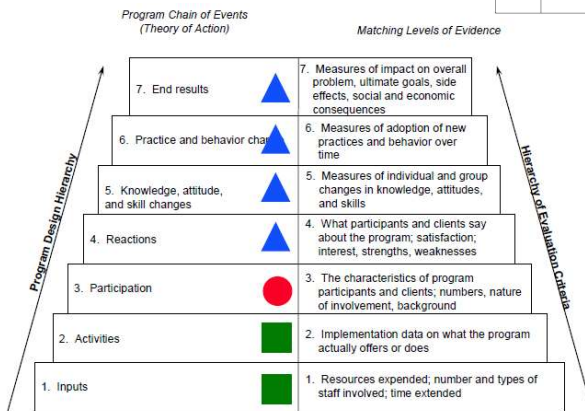


- T₁ = Pretest (treatment group)
- T₂ = Posttest (treatment group)
- P = Program or intervention
- C₁ = Pretest (comparison group)
- C₂ = Posttest (comparison group)



Collecting the data you need

	How?	Who? Where?	What do we want? Why?
	Resources	Reach	Results
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Users/clients/ co-deliverers/ beneficiaries
			Direct outcomes
			Ultimate impacts



Source: Adapted from Claude Bennett 1979. Taken from Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text*, Thousand Oaks, California, 1997, p.235.



Dominant Data Methods

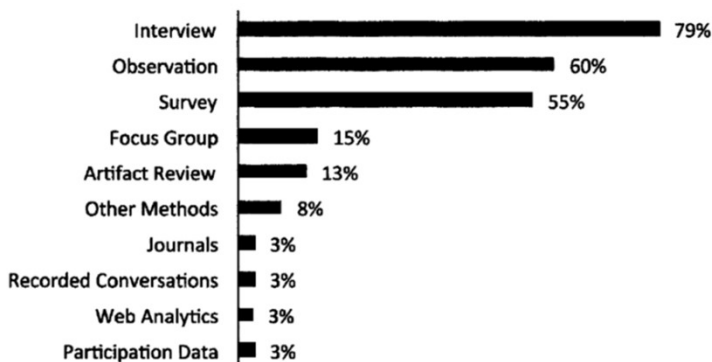


Figure 1 Data collection methods cited in museum-related evaluation reports posted on informalscience.org before May 2013 (n = 319).

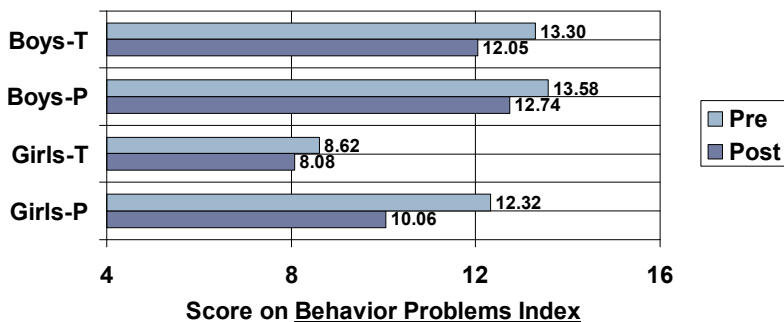
Grack Nelson & Cohn, 2015



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Perspectives matter

Level of Behavior Problems Rated by
Parents(P) & Teachers (T) (n=105)



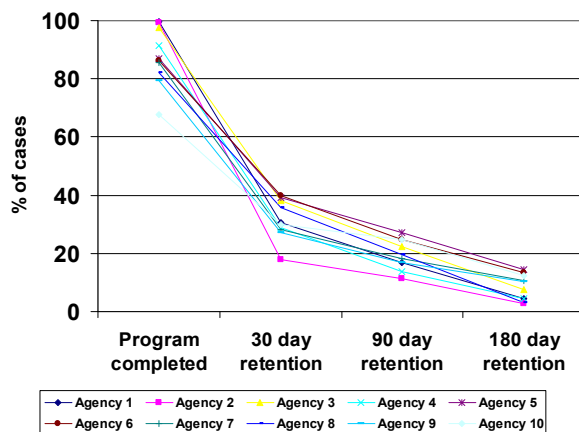
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Differences in perspective

TABLE 3 Change in Functioning and Coping by Counseling Case Closure Reason:
Change from First to Last Session

Case Closure Reason by Client Type			
<u>Individuals</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Change in Functioning</u>	<u>Change in Coping</u>
Service completed according to plan	525	+22.7%	+40.1%
Client withdrew request for service	135	+21.8%	+40.5%
Client did not follow through	638	+27.5%	+39.0%
<u>Couples/Families</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Change in Functioning</u>	<u>Change in Coping</u>
Service completed according to plan	210	+19.5%	+39.5%
Client withdrew request for service	74	+16.5%	+22.2%
Client did not follow through	389	+16.5%	+28.8%

When you measure matters



The “Iron Triangle” of program evaluation



Pick 2!

Fast + Cheap = Narrow scope
 Cheap + Wide scope = More time
 Fast + Wide scope = Expensive



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Cost/worth of evaluation

- Cost
 - Funds: est 10-15% of program delivery cost
 - Time
- Worth
 - Bringing form to program idea & delivery
 - Detecting program challenges earlier
 - Modifying approach based on data
 - Identifying new needs/opportunities



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Faced with evaluation demands a common response is...



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What about using the data?

- Outcome data should be able to inform –
 - Are the conditions of participants changing over time?
 - What subgroups appear to be well served versus not?
- Outcome data along with anecdotal and other information can address –
 - Program improvement approaches
 - Resource deployment decisions across programs



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Next steps

- Review the data you have
- Answer any questions you can from existing data
- Identify data gaps and next steps
- Try to extend evaluation efforts in depth and over time
- Use the data – to inform and advocate for the work



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