Developing EVALUATION CAPACITY in Community-Based Organizations

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Section I:

Introduction

A little about myself...

Minnesota-born (Bi-coastal, rural, urban, suburbs)

He/She Him/Her

BA in Liberal Arts, Portland State University

MPA: Health Administration, Portland State University

PhD candidate: University of Minnesota

And a little bit more.

Social Justice Activism (1983-2000…)

Catholic Worker, Central America, HIV/AIDS, Gay Civil Rights

Public Health/HIV Prevention Work (1995-2012)

CBO, Health Dept., Research, State Health Division

University Faculty (2008-2015)

Portland State & UM Morris: Instructor & Principal Evaluator

Consultant (2012-2035)

Assessment, Evaluation, Planning, Alignment, & Community

Queer, Potter, Farmer, Builder, Quilter (T.I.D.)

In this workshop…

- Your work will be validated.
- You will understand that resistance to evaluation is normal.
- You will learn about your organizations' capacity to conduct evaluation.
- I want to provide opportunities for you to discuss real issues about real programs.

You will not…

- Learn how to do a survey
- Learn how to analyze focus group data
- Create a logic model
- Become an expert
- Be a hater
- Throw things at me

Section II:

Evaluation Issues:

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

Importance of CBOs

Many Purposes

Health, Education, Social Services, Arts, Organizing

Strategic Position

Community-based, Socially-oriented, Collaborators

"Third Sector" of Civil Society

Non-profit; Minority, Alternative, Controversial, Poor

Economic Impact

1.5 million non-profits; $500 billion; 1 in 10 employees

CBOs' Need for Information Evolves

Organizational Management

- *Program planning, management, improvement*
- *Administrative & budget decisions*
- *Concerns re: staff, board, stakeholders, etc.*

Improved Accountability

GPRA (1993) Government, Foundations, Grants

Demonstrating Effectiveness

Compete for funding (other CBOs, wars, hurricanes)

Evaluation: What's in it for you?

Do high-quality assessments/evaluations

Sustained ability for routine evaluation use

Use (actually use) evaluation results

Decisions and actions are made by using data

Manage your organization

Goals set; processes examined; staff effectiveness

Accountability

Systematically answer to funders; define value

Why is Evaluation Difficult?

Lack of empirical knowledge re: CBOs

“How do we measure what?”

Vaguely defined goals, lack of infrastructure

Resource Issues

- *Funding, Staff (skills, roles, support)*
- *Organization (resources, technology, support, leadership)*
- *Individual (skills, expertise, attitudes, practices)*
- *Structures & Evaluation Culture (values, policies, planning)*

Why Do We *Resist (Hate?)* Evaluation?

- ✓ Fear of being criticized (Scriven)
- ✓ Left outside of decision-making (Baumeister et al.)
- ✓ Position, worth, livelihood is threatened (many)
- ✓ Previous negative experiences (Fischer & Wiswede)
- ✓ Disagreement: w/i or w/ evaluator (Taut & Braun)
- ✓ Evaluation anxiety (Donaldson)

Thoughts?

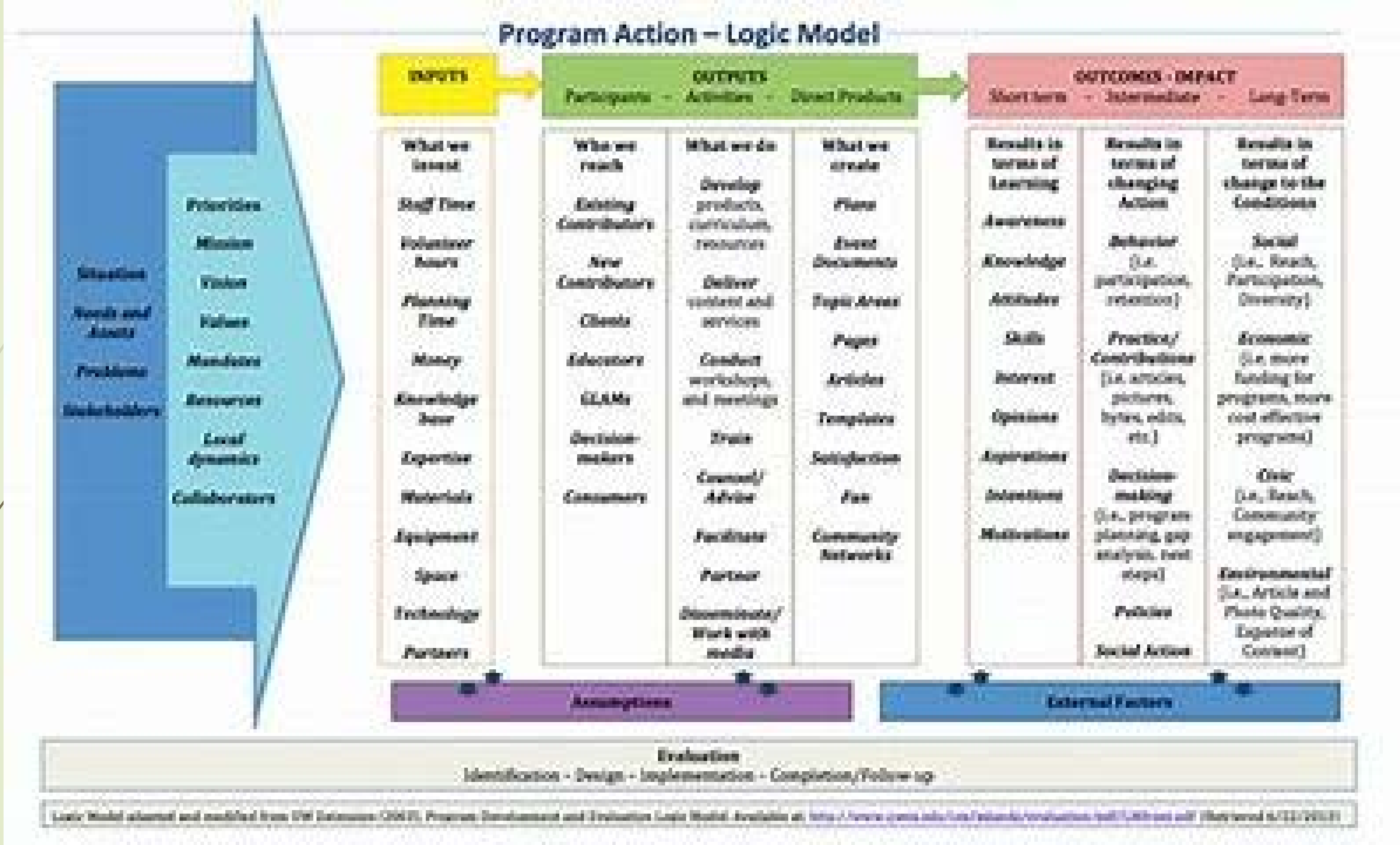
What brings you here?

Section III:

Building Capacity for Evaluation:

Know your program.
Tell your story.

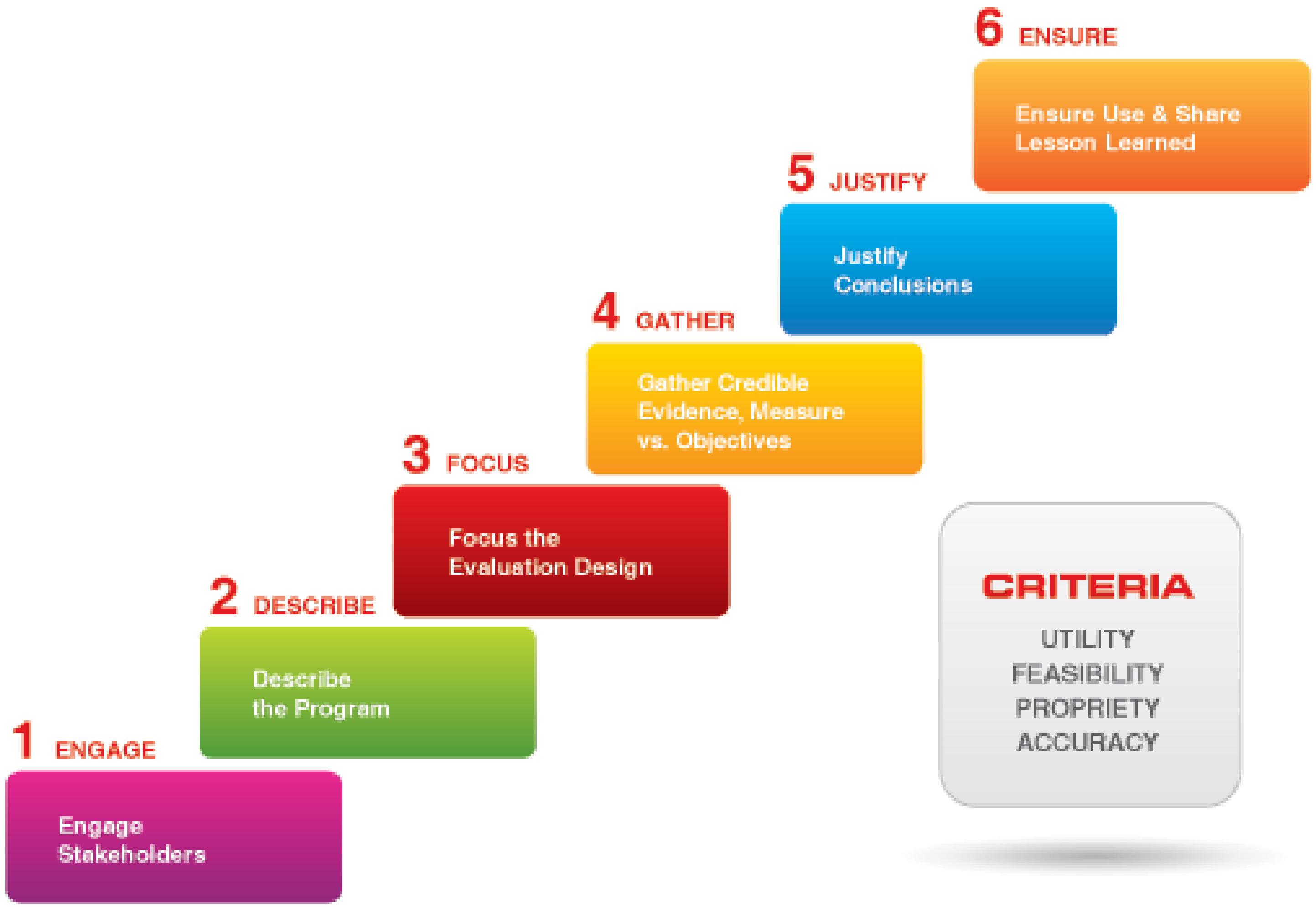
<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Purposes or motivations for doing something called “evaluation”</th><th colspan="4">Approaches</th></tr>
<tr><th>Performance Measurement</th><th>Program Evaluation</th><th>Systems Evaluation</th><th>Applied Research</th></tr>
<tr><td>Measurement will be used by an external agent, such as a government department, to determine whether local programs, sites or agencies have delivered a service as planned.</td><td rowspan="2">Good fit!
➢ ... If data is used!</td><td rowspan="2">Not a good fit.
➢ Evaluation methods are more complex than needed and the turnaround time for analysis may be too slow.</td><td>Can work well.
➢ When time and energy are invested in shared performance measurement systems.</td><td rowspan="2">Not a good fit.
➢ Applied research is not designed for day-to-day monitoring.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Measurement will be used internally by a nonprofit to determine whether individual programs or sites have delivered a service as planned.</td><td>Not a good fit.
➢ Shared measurement tools aren’t typically flexible or sensitive enough to track nuances of local programming.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Measurement will be used by an external agent to determine whether local programs, sites, or agencies have achieved impact as planned.</td><td>Can work well.
➢ If performance measurement systems are sophisticated, specialized, and carefully monitored.</td><td>Can work well.
➢ But evaluations undertaken for this purpose may not be as good at generating local insights or actions (see below).</td><td>Can work well.
➢ When time and energy are invested in shared measurement systems, ongoing communication, backbone infrastructure, and a shared sense of purpose.</td><td rowspan="2">Not a good fit.
➢ Applied research is not designed to inform action in a direct way.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Measurement will be used by nonprofits or networks of nonprofits to develop insights about their work and its impact leading them to improve practice.</td><td>Rarely works well.
➢ Measures are focused on outputs, buy-in is minimal, and analysis is basic.</td><td>Good fit!
➢ Especially when time and energy is invested in buy-in, communication, clarity of purpose, and plans for use.</td><td>Can work well.
➢ If local sites are engaged as partners in the process.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Measurement will be used by networks representing a sector or the community as a whole to develop new knowledge about best practices and long-term impacts.</td><td rowspan="2">Rarely works on its own (although performance measurement methods are often useful when incorporated into more complex systems evaluation projects).</td><td>Rarely works.
➢ Local evaluations do not typically measure long term change and are not designed to generate generalizable knowledge.</td><td rowspan="2">Good fit!
➢ Especially when time and energy are invested in shared measurement systems, ongoing communication, backbone infrastructure, and a shared sense of purpose.</td><td>Good fit!
➢ Especially when the research questions are highly focused and specialized.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large systems will use measurement to develop insights about their work and its impact leading them to improve practice.</td><td>Rarely works.
➢ It is challenging to aggregate findings from different local evaluations.</td><td>Can work well.
➢ If research findings are presented in an accessible way and provided in a timely manner.</td></tr>
</table>

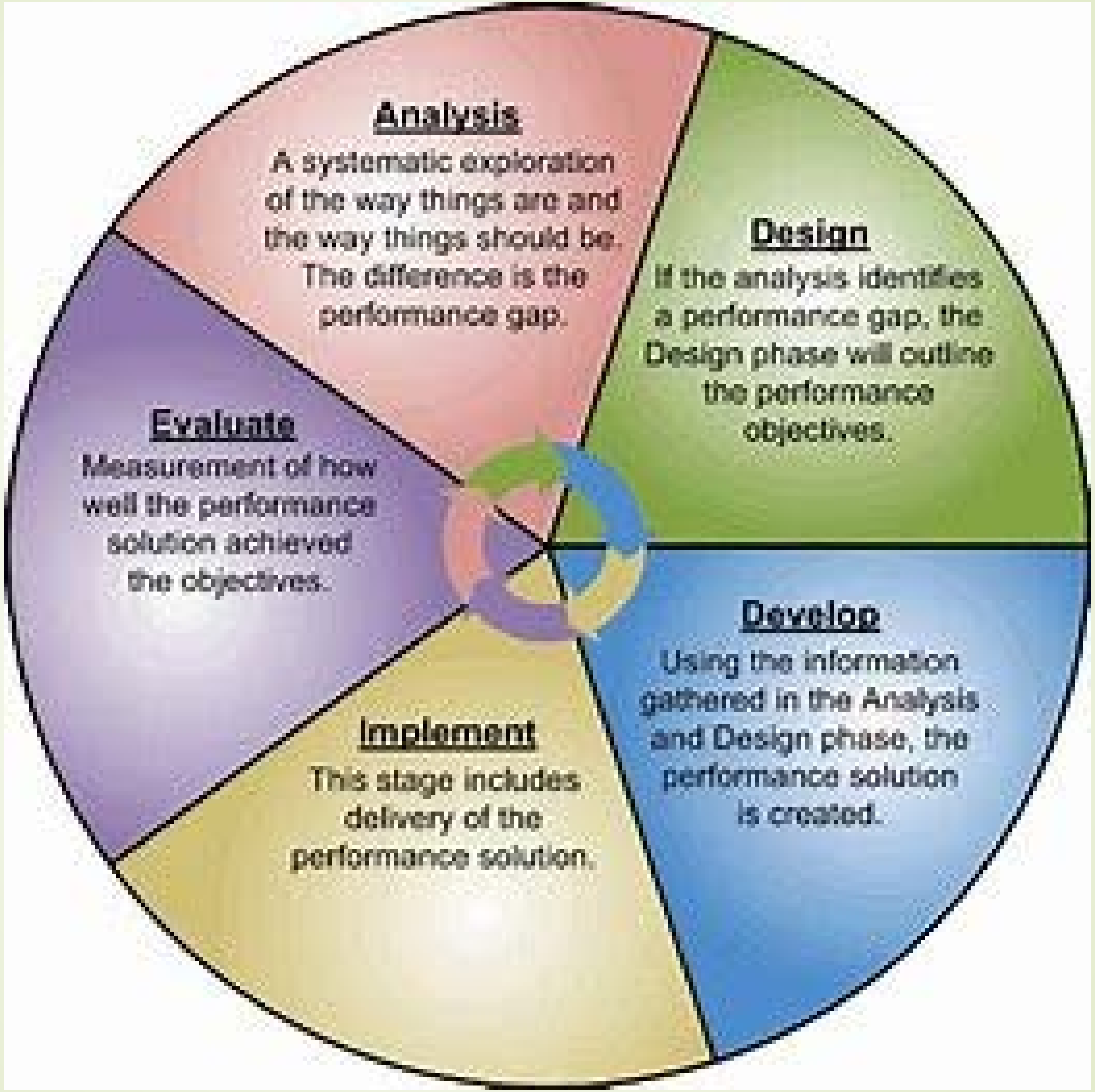


Program Action – Logic Model
INPUTS
OUTPUTS
Participants - Activities - Direct Products
OUTCOMES - IMPACT
Short term - Intermediate - Long Term
Situation
Needs and Assets
Problems
Stakeholders
Priorities
Mission
Vision
Values
Mandates
Resources
Local dynamics
Collaborators
What we invest
Staff Time
Volunteer hours
Planning Time
Money
Knowledge base
Expertise
Materials
Equipment
Space
Technology
Partners
What we reach
Existing Contributors
New Contributors
Clients
Educators
GLAMs
Decision-makers
Consumers
What we do
Develop products, curriculum, resources
Deliver content and services
Conduct workshops, and meetings
Train
Counsel/ Advise
Facilitate
Partner
Disseminate/ Work with media
What we create
Plans
Event Documents
Topic Areas
Pages
Articles
Templates
Satisfaction
Fun
Community Networks
Results in terms of Learning
Awareness
Knowledge
Attitudes
Skills
Interest
Opinions
Aspirations
Intentions
Motivations
Results in terms of changing Action
Behavior (i.e. participation, retention)
Practice/ Contributions (i.e. articles, pictures, bytes, edits, etc.)
Decision-making (i.e., program planning, gap analysis, next steps)
Policies
Social Action
Results in terms of change to the Conditions
Social (i.e., Reach, Participation, Diversity)
Economic (i.e. more funding for programs, more cost effective programs)
Civic (i.e., Reach, Community engagement)
Environmental (i.e., Article and Photo Quality, Expertise of Content)
Assumptions
External Factors
Evaluation
Identification - Design - Implementation - Completion/Follow up

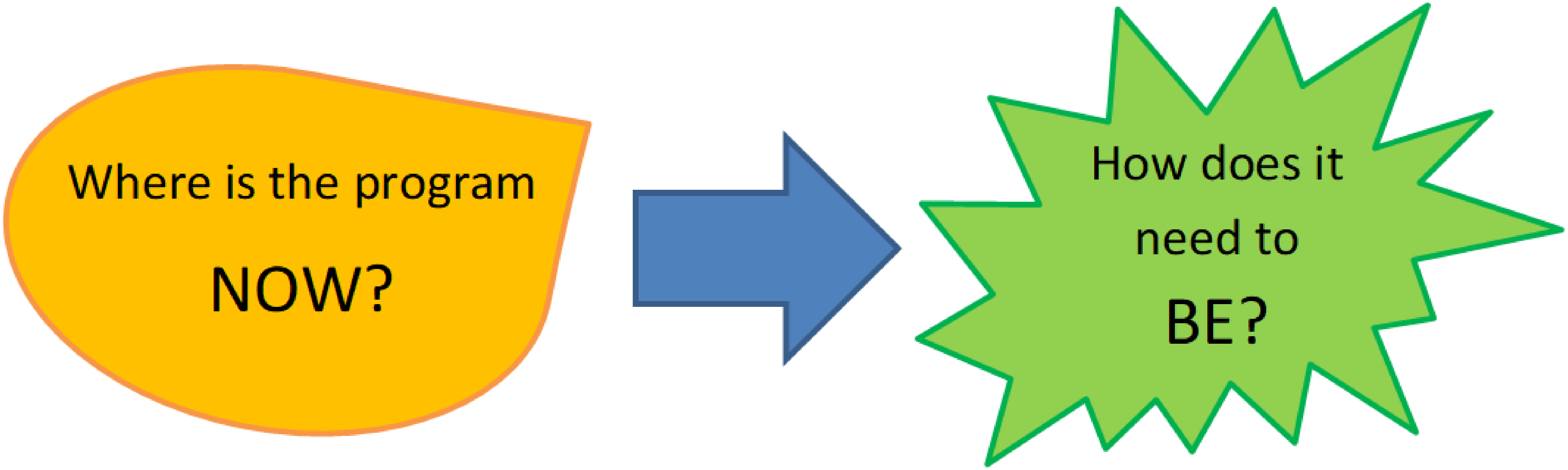

Steps in the Evaluation Process
Designing Evaluation Plan
Designing Data Collection Tools
Collecting Data
Analyzing Results
Reporting Findings
Planning Program Changes
Input From:
You, Your Staff, Program Participants, Key Stakeholders, Wider Community

PROGRAM EVALUATION




Analysis
A systematic exploration of the way things are and the way things should be. The difference is the performance gap.
Design
If the analysis identifies a performance gap, the Design phase will outline the performance objectives.
Develop
Using the information gathered in the Analysis and Design phase, the performance solution is created.
Implement
This stage includes delivery of the performance solution.
Evaluate
Measurement of how well the performance solution achieved the objectives.

EXPANDED PDSA PROCESS:


Where is the program
NOW?
How does it
need to
BE?

Small Groups

1. What does your program do?

Small Groups

1. What does your program do?

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2. **Where is that written down?**

Small Groups

1. What does your program do?

2. Where is that written down?

3. How will you know if and when it is successful?

"Doing" Evaluation

"Good" evaluations are used.

- *Focus on "intended use for intended user"*

What key question(s) need answers?

- ***Evaluation Question****: Who asks and why?*

"Improvements" usually involve decisions.

- *Engage stakeholders (esp. intended users)*
- *Build shared agreement around purpose of evaluation*
- *Identify how decisions will be made*

Building Agreement & Focusing the Evaluation on Intended Use

1. What are you asking?
2. Who are you asking?
3. How will you ask?
4. Why are you asking this?
5. How will this information be used?
6. When is this information needed?

Evaluation Design Matrix

Evaluation Question	Information Needed	Information Source	Methods Used	Timing

Check in with group.

- Continue with example?
- Group work on real programs?

Case Study

The "*Life-Ready-Instruction (LRI)" is a* program for queer homeless and home-insecure young adults (16-25) at the large agency, MustWE. The program is designed to provide clients with knowledge, training, and professional skills that prepare them for future employment in settings as diverse as retail, service, entrepreneurial, and educational settings.

For the last year, however, the first-floor admin staff has commented on the time it takes to respond to a wide range of questions from these clients who tend to drop in throughout the day. The staff want to be helpful, but don't always have the latest information, AND MustWE has a dozen other programs.

Perhaps not so surprisingly, these questions are addressed in great detail in the 115-page handbook that each client gets upon an in-person intake (it can also be mailed out after an informal phone intake if they have an address).

After clients have been in the program for three months, they are given a survey. For the past several months, the surveys suggest a growing dissatisfaction with the way professional development is taught. Phrases like "outdated information" and "more opportunities to practice" are common.

Evaluation Question	**Information Needed**	**Information Source**	**Methods Used**	**Timing**
Q1. How does LRI improve career preparation for clients?	• Perceptions and suggestions from past LRI participants re: program relevance across various career options • Perceptions and suggestions of current LRI students regarding program information (quality and relevance) • Expectations of incoming clients to LRI program • Current LRI curriculum and program requirements; LRI promotional info	• LRI students • LRI trainers • LRI grads • LRI website • LRI exit interviews	• Document analysis: Explore exit surveys for questions and comments re: career preparation, skill development, etc.	Sept-Nov 2019
			• Website analysis: Review program website for messages re: career prep, expectations, etc.	
			• Online survey: of LRI students and alumni (retrospective-post)	Nov ’19-Jan ’20
			• Paper survey: Incoming Master students at orientation event	August 2019

Evaluation Question	Information Needed	Information Source	Methods Used	Timing
Q2. How does LRI improve programmatic communication to its students?	• Perceptions, norms, suggestions re: communication modes: clients • Current material that displays information re: program requirements, policies, etc. • Trainers/staff input re: critical and helpful information that students "need"	• LRI students • LRI staff/faculty • LRI website	• Document analysis: Review program website content & patterns of use; review written program material for accuracy	Sept-Nov 2019 Oct-Nov 2019
			• Key interviews: w/ admin staff	Nov 2019
			• Online survey: BRI faculty	Jan-Feb 2020
			• Focus group: of BRI students	Sept-Nov 2019

Check in with group.

- Group work on real programs?
- Problem Solving?
- Suggestions?

Data Collection

Deciding on a survey is not the first step.

- *The EVALUATION QUESTION determines the DC methods.*
- *Focus on "intended use for intended user"*

Use information that is already gathered.

- *Past evaluations, archived reports, website queries, census info*

Gather only useful information.

- *Engage stakeholders (esp. intended users)*
- *How will this information be used? Will it be useful?*
- *Be clear. Be creative. Collaborate.*

Data Collection Methods (Gelmon, NW Health Foundation)

Comparison of Advantages & Disadvantages

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
DOCUMENT REVIEW	Program documents or literature are available and can provide insight into the program or the evaluation	• Data already exist • Does not interrupt the program • Little or no burden on others • Can provide historical or comparison data • Introduces little bias	• Time consuming • Data limited to what exists and is available • Data may be incomplete • Requires clearly defining the data you're seeking

Data Collection Methods

Comparison of Advantages & Disadvantages

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
OBSERVATION	You want to learn how the program actually operates—its processes and activities	• Allows you to learn about the program as it is occurring • Can reveal unanticipated information of value • Flexible in the course of collecting data	• Time consuming • Having an observer can alter events • Difficult to observe multiple processes simultaneously • Can be difficult to interpret observed behaviors

Data Collection Methods

Comparison of Advantages & Disadvantages

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
SURVEY	You want information directly from a defined group of people to get a general idea of a situation, to generalize about a population, or to get a total count of a particular characteristic.	• Many standardized instruments available • Can be anonymous • Allows a large sample • Standardized responses easy to analyze • Able to obtain a large amount of data quickly • Relatively low cost • Convenient for respondents	• Sample may not be representative • May have low return rate • Wording can bias responses • Closed-ended or brief responses may not provide “whole story” • Not suited for all people—e.g., those with low reading level

Data Collection Methods

Comparison of Advantages & Disadvantages

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
INTERVIEW	You want to understand impressions and experiences in more detail and be able to expand or clarify responses	• Often better response rate than surveys • Allows flexibility in questions/probes • Allows more in-depth information to be gathered	• Time consuming • Requires skilled interviewer • Less anonymity for respondent • Qualitative data more difficult to analyze

Data Collection Methods

Comparison of Advantages & Disadvantages

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
FOCUS GROUP	You want to collect in-depth information from a group of people about their experiences and perceptions related to a specific issue.	• Collect multiple peoples' input in one session • Allows in-depth discussion • Group interaction can produce greater insight • Can be conducted in short time frame • Can be relatively inexpensive compared to interviews	• Requires skilled facilitator • Limited number of questions can be asked • Group setting may inhibit or influence opinions • Data can be difficult to analyze • Not appropriate for all topics or populations

Program Improvement

Before solving a problem:

Define it.

Before changing a process:

Understand it.

Before making any changes:

Prioritize.

More to think about…

We focused on building a solid foundation for doing and using evaluation in your organization.

There are many more approaches.

- *Consider perspectives of queer, feminist, anti-racist, and other critical, radical, and participatory evaluation frameworks.*

"Do nothing—about me—without me." (Interaction Institute for Social Change)

"When you don't know where to start, here is a good place." (Doug Moon, with thanks to Yogi Berra & Lewis Carroll)

Arigato.

Thank you very much.

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