The FUNdamentals of Program Evaluation

COSA
We're stronger together

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What interests you about program evaluation?

What about program evaluation hits you in the head, heart, or the hands?

Many things can be evaluated...

Personnel

Products

Plans

Policies

Programs

Why Evaluate Programs?

What is Program Evaluation?

Program evaluation is a systematic process for collecting, analyzing and using information to answer important questions about the need for, thinking behind, quality of, and effects of programs.

Evaluation

What about programs could (should) be evaluated?

| NEED for the program | DESIGN of the program | IMPLEMENTATION of the program | OUTCOMES of the program |

?

Logic Models & Theories of Change

Logic models and theories of change unlock the front door of program evaluation.
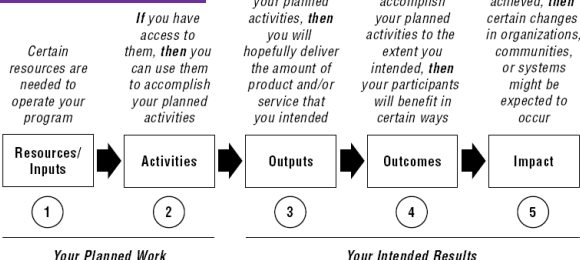
Logic Models & Theories of Change

- A logic model is a visual diagram that illustrates how your program is intended to work.
- A theory of change describes in writing how your program is intended to work.

They are used to communicate how your projects, programs, operations, resources, activities, and goals are related to one another.

They are used in all aspects of program planning, implementation, communication, and evaluation.

PROGRAM LOGIC/THEORY Basic Elements

Certain resources are needed to operate your program

If you have access to them, then you can use them to accomplish your planned activities

If you accomplish your planned activities, then you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended

If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, then your participants will benefit in certain ways

If these benefits to participants are achieved, then certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur

Resources/Inputs (1) → Activities (2) → Outputs (3) → Outcomes (4) → Impact (5)

Your Planned Work | *Your Intended Results*

Program Logic/Theory – Elevator Pitch

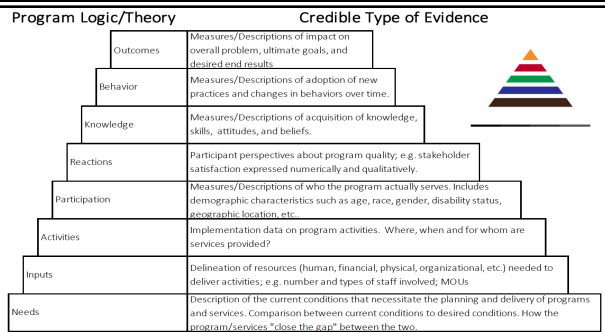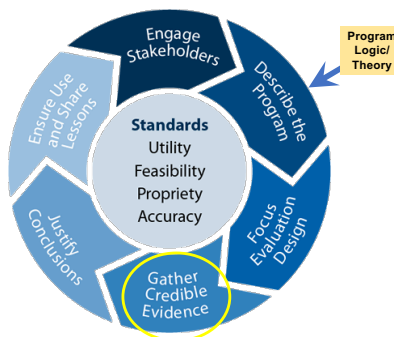Take 60 seconds to think about your program's logic/theory. If desired, jot down notes.

Consider...
1) Primary NEED for the program
2) Overall DESIGN features of the program,
3) Key program ACTIVITIES
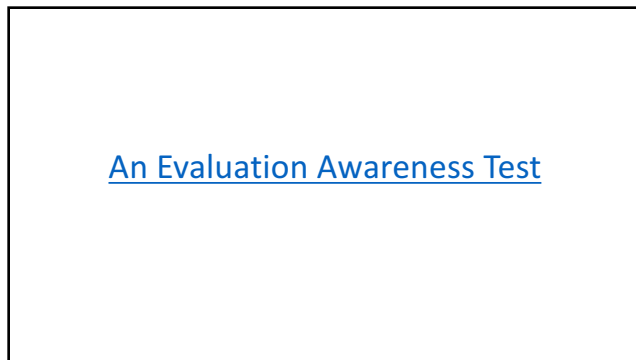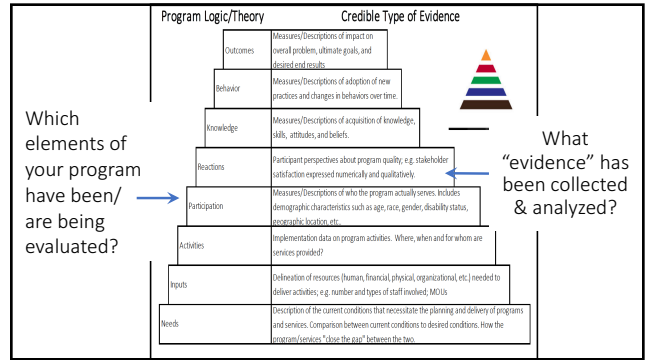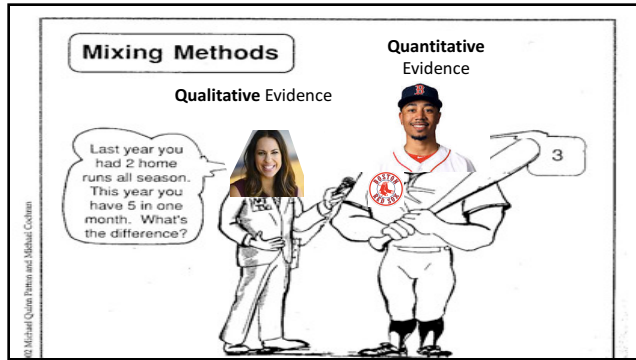4) Primary GOALS of the program
5) Envisioned long-term OUTCOMES

Pair up – Take up to 60 seconds to share your program's logic/theory with your partner.
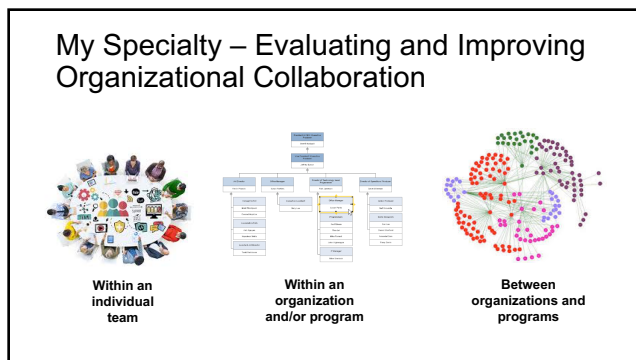

Framework for Program Evaluation

Engage Stakeholders · Describe the Program · Focus Evaluation Design · Gather Credible Evidence · Justify Conclusions · Ensure Use and Share Lessons

Standards Utility Feasibility Propriety Accuracy

Program Logic/Theory

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Program Logic/Theory | Credible Type of Evidence

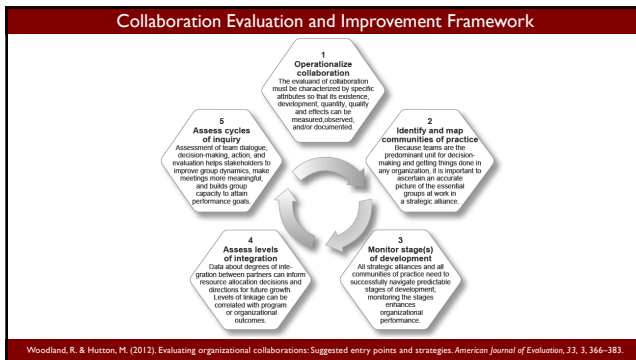| Program Logic/Theory	Credible Type of Evidence
Outcomes	Measures/Descriptions of impact on overall problem, ultimate goals, and desired end results
Behavior	Measures/Descriptions of adoption of new practices and changes in behaviors over time.
Knowledge	Measures/Descriptions of acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs.
Reactions	Participant perspectives about program quality; e.g. stakeholder satisfaction expressed numerically and qualitatively.
Participation	Measures/Descriptions of who the program actually serves. Includes demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender, disability status, geographic location, etc.
Activities	Implementation data on program activities. Where, when and for whom are services provided?
Inputs	Delineation of resources (human, financial, physical, organizational, etc.) needed to deliver activities; e.g. number and types of staff involved; MOUs
Needs	Description of the current conditions that necessitate the planning and delivery of programs and services. Comparison between current conditions to desired conditions. How the program/services "close the gap" between the two.

An Evaluation Awareness Test

Program Evaluation – Some Common Pitfalls

- Wrong program element assessed
- Overlooking issues of race, gender, class, etc.
- Wrong evaluation question
- Program "evaluand" not "operationalized" (e.g. what constitutes a successful "pass")
- Numbers are over-emphasized/valued
- Unplanned/unintended elements not assessed (e.g. the moonwalking bear)

My Specialty – Evaluating and Improving Organizational Collaboration

Within an individual team

Within an organization and/or program

Between organizations and programs

The direction, speed and quality of programs and services are mediated by collaboration - the patterns of interactions between people within and between organizations.

Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework

1 Operationalize collaboration — The evaluand of collaboration must be characterized by specific attributes so that its existence, development, quantity, quality and effects can be measured, observed, and/or documented.

2 Identify and map communities of practice — Because teams are the predominant unit for decision-making and getting things done in any organization, it is important to ascertain an accurate picture of the essential groups at work in a strategic alliance.

3 Monitor stage(s) of development — All strategic alliances and all communities of practice need to successfully navigate predictable stages of development; monitoring the stages enhances organizational performance.

4 Assess levels of integration — Data about degrees of integration between partners can inform resource allocation decisions and directions for future growth. Levels of linkage can be correlated with program or organizational outcomes.

5 Assess cycles of inquiry — Assessment of team dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation helps stakeholders to improve group dynamics, make meetings more meaningful, and builds group capacity to attain performance goals.

Woodland, R. & Hutton, M. (2012). Evaluating organizational collaborations: Suggested entry points and strategies. *American Journal of Evaluation, 33,* 3, 366–383.

For more information about program evaluation...

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION
https://www.eval.org

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION
https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2010/w-k-kellogg-foundation-evaluation-handbook

Evaluation in Organizations: A Systematic Approach to Enhancing Learning, Performance, and Change

CDC
A Framework for Program Evaluation
https://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm

Program evaluation journals...

American Journal of Evaluation

Evaluation and Program Planning

PARE – Online Journal

Take an online class...

UMASS AMHERST — Foundations of Program Evaluation — EDUC 690P

Continuing and Professional Education
https://www.umass.edu/cpe/class/spring-2019/21952/foundations-program-evaluation

WRAP UP – Key Takeaways

What is one idea, tool and/or understanding that you'll take away with you today?

or

What is one action step you plan to take (or might take) as a result of today?

THANK YOU