

# A Program Evaluation Strategy

The Causal Pathway

## Evaluation Strategy

- Our Evaluation Model starts in the initiation phase of a program, not upon its conclusion.
- We start by developing a “Causal Pathway” or roadmap, which identifies the steps necessary to achieve the desired goal.

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## Causal Pathway Framework

A roadmap of a project that shows:

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## Causal Pathway Framework

**Impact**

**Impact**  
Change in the health, social, economic status of the population

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## Causal Pathway Framework

**Effect** → **Impact**

**Effect:**  
Change in the knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior of the population of interest

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## Causal Pathway Framework

**Outputs** → **Effect** → **Impact**

**Outputs**  
Products and services that must be in place for the effects and impact to occur.

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact

### Activities

Technical and support tasks required to produce the outputs

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact

### Inputs

Resources needed to support the activities

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## Evaluation Strategy

- This Evaluation model starts by helping to **design** a program which has the highest probability of achieving success
- We use this model to plan the program starting with the desired Goal or Impact, and planning all intermediate steps.

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact



Design Direction

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## Evaluation Strategy

- Given that we now have a program with built-in logical steps toward success, we can then use this Causal Pathway tool to evaluate the progress and success of the program.

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## Evaluation Strategy

- Whereas in the planning phase, we worked from the desired Impact back to necessary Inputs, in the Evaluation Phase we monitor the completion of each step from Inputs to Activities to Outputs to Effects to Impact.

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact



Monitoring and Evaluation Direction

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## Evaluation Strategy

- One of the benefits of using this same tool in Evaluation is that even if there has not been enough time to realize a change in Impact, we can still determine how far along the logical pathway our program has advanced.

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Say for instance that we observe no change in Impact:

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact

↓  
No Impact



Monitoring and Evaluation Direction

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## Evaluation Strategy

- We can still determine how far along the logical pathway our program has advanced as an indication of success.
- We can also use this process to Diagnose where things are not working

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## Causal Pathway Framework

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Effect → Impact

↓  
No Impact

↖  
Were inputs  
available?

↖  
Were activities  
performed?

↖  
Were outputs  
produced?

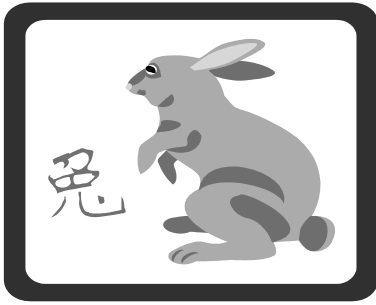
↖  
Were effects  
observed?

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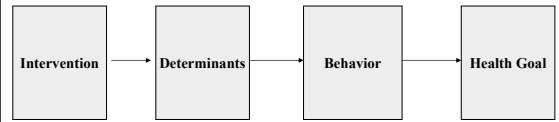
## **BDI LOGIC MODEL**

"If you don't know where you want to go,  
how do you know if you've gotten there?"

THE RABBIT, Alice in Wonderland



### BDI Logic Model



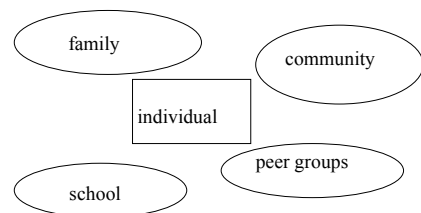
### What is resiliency?



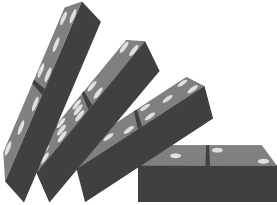
### Risk & Protective Factors

**Risk Factors**: conditions that  
increase the likelihood of  
outcomes that comprise health,  
quality of life, or life itself

### Risk Factors Occur in 5 major life domains:



**The more risk factors, the greater the risk**



**Common risk factors predict diverse behavioral problems:**

- substance abuse
- delinquency
- violent behavior
- risky sex —————→ teen pregnancy
- school behavior problems —→ dropping out

**If the impact of any given risk factor can be reduced, it is likely to reduce several risk behaviors**



**Risk Behavior: behavior that can compromise adolescent psychosocial development**  
**Examples?**

**Risk Taking Behavior: behaviors that entail a conscious awareness of the risk/danger in a deliberate thrill-seeking attempt**  
**Examples?**

**Protective Factors:**  
factors that buffer youth against the adverse effects of risk factors to which they are exposed  
and diminish the likelihood of negative health and social outcomes

### **Protective Factors occur in many domains:**

- individual (e.g. resilient temperament, social & cognitive skills)
- connections to family, friends, school, other adults
- opportunities for involvement (e.g. church, youth clubs in communities)

### **Many adolescent risk behaviors serve a purpose and are goal-directed**

### **Drinking, smoking grass, smoking cigarettes**

- feel relaxed
- feel socially accepted
- feel independent
- feel grown up
- feel excitement bucking the system

### **Magnitude of Risk?**

- intensity of involvement
- # of risk behaviors
- age of onset
- presence of protective factors

### **Implications for Prevention**

- comprehensive, multiple domains & multiple behaviors
- target risk and protective factors
- address larger social context in which behavior embedded