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.

Causal Pathway Framework

A roadmap of a project that shows:

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

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

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

**Activities** → **Outputs** → **Effect** → **Impact**

**Inputs** → **Activities** → **Outputs** → **Effect** → **Impact**

**Activities**
Technical and support tasks required to produce the outputs

**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.

**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.

**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.
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.

Say for instance that we observe no change in Impact:

- 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.

BDI LOGIC MODEL

Were inputs available?  Were activities performed?
Were outputs produced?  Were effects observed?

No Impact
“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

Intervention → Determinants → Behavior → Health Goal

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:

- family
- community
- individual
- school
- peer groups
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