Getting from outcomes to evidence:

EVALUATION DESIGN, QUESTIONS AND TOOLS

The Key Ingredients ..
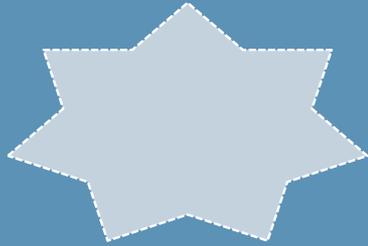
What Kinds of Questions Are You Asking?

How Can You Make Your Design as Strong as Possible?

How Can You Make the Best Use of the "Methods Toolbox?"

Key ingredients of a good measurement plan expanded…

1. Clear questions that fit with your program's stage of development, lead to new learning and enable new kinds of action.

2. An overall design for evaluation that will generate credible, persuasive evidence.

3. Clear methods and procedures for gathering data that are practical and ethical.

What kinds of questions are you asking?

- **Economic Analysis** (Are the outcomes worth it?)

- **Outcomes** (Is anybody better off? Have we made a measureable difference?)

- **Implementation Questions** (Was program implemented as planned? What's working? What has been learned? Are stakeholders pleased, engaged?)

- **Needs Assessment** (What are local strengths, local needs? What are some good ideas for trying to help?)

Clarifying the Levels of Questions

Evaluation Purpose

To determine how effective our program is at helping people find meaningful jobs

Evaluation Questions

How many of our participants find jobs?

How satisfied are participants with their jobs?

What parts of our program seem to help the most?

Actual Interview or Survey Items

For Participants: "How much do you enjoy your job?"

For Staff: "How satisfied does the participant seem?"

Some tips for crafting good evaluation questions

- Focus on the action-oriented and solution focused (what can you do the answer?)

- Review what knowledge your group already has!

- Whose knowledge is valued by decision-makers? Whose language is being used?

- What are the gaps in knowledge?

Evaluation planning worksheet

What's the evaluation question?	• Are people more confident undertaking evaluation as a result of this workshop?
What indicators can you pull from information you already have?	• Self-ratings from a workshop feedback form • Comments from participants at the end of the day
What additional numbers do you need?	• % of participants who were not confident before the workshop
What additional stories do you need?	• Examples of how content has been used from a follow-up survey

Choosing or designing new data collection tools

What kinds of outcomes questions are you asking?	What are the most likely approaches?
Changes in **psychological state** (e.g., confidence, stress level)	Self reports. Structured self-assessments.
Changes in **social interaction** (social support, family functioning)	Self reports. Observations. Network maps.
Changes in **conditions, social situation or access to resources** (e.g., housing, employment)	Basic counts. Tools for tracking progress through stages.

What kinds of outcomes questions are you asking?	What are the most likely approaches?
Limiting the negative effects of crisis (immediate access to shelter or food)	Basic counts of service provided, numbers and types of people served
Changes in **knowledge** as a result of participation	Knowledge tests. Self-ratings of knowledge. Key informant opinions.
Changes in **behaviour**	Self reports. Observations. Objective, secondary sources (e.g., # of suspensions from school)

Some "Special Cases"	What are the most likely approaches?
Prevention	Try to express what didn't happen (e.g., vandalism, unhealthy eating) in terms of something that did (new social contacts, weight loss).
Systems-level work like research, coalition work, or advocacy	Be clear about your target group. Who, exactly, is supposed to be "better off" and how? Most likely, your target is other service providers and policy makers, and your outcome is awareness.
Transient or anonymous populations	Focus on "in the moment" changes, follow up with those who are willing.
Children, youth, or other groups that don't work well with the written word	Interviews, alternative methods like photovoice

Program Outcomes & Indicators	Measurement Strategies
Increased or maintained self-esteem, self confidence or sense of personal agency: self-reports	On a self-report survey, some or all of the following questions from the CCHS may be used: Self-esteem: On a scale of 1 to five, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree: • You feel that you have a number of good qualities. • You feel that you're a person of worth at least equal to others. • You are able to do things as well as most other people • You take a positive attitude toward yourself. • On the whole, you are satisfied with yourself • All in all, you're inclined to feel you're a failure.

Measurement Needs Change as Programs Mature

Stage of Program Development	Measurement Need
Design and Development	**Needs & Capacities Assessment; Community Consultation**
Early rollout and implementation	**Process:** *do we have the right people involved? Does the plan make sense on the ground? How do we need to adapt the plan? What were the roadblocks?*
Stabilization	**Outputs and immediate outcomes**: *Did people come? Who were they? Were they engaged?*
Formalizing, expanding and replicating	**Short term and intermediate outcomes:** *Did the program lead to positive change for people? If so, how and under what conditions?*

Program Outcomes & Indicators	Measurement Strategies
Increased or maintained self-esteem, self confidence or sense of personal agency: self-reports	On a self-report survey, some or all of the following questions from the CCHS may be used: Mastery: On a scale of 1 to five, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree: • You have little control over the things that happen to you. • There is really no way you can solve some of the problems you have. • There is little you can do to change many of the important things in your life. • You often feel helpless in dealing with problems of life. • What happens to you in the future mostly depends on you. • You can do just about anything you really set your mind to.

Good data collection tools...

- Only gather information you know you are going to use

- Feel meaningful and worthwhile to participants AND to staff while they are completing them