Program Evaluation in Social Work and Human Services – An Overview

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Objectives

• Learn the five steps of developing and maintaining a successful evidence-based program

• Practice applying tools of program development, implementation, and evaluation, including program statements, logic models, and surveys.

• Have a beginning understanding of how to apply evaluation results to the program budget
About Me

• CEO of Human Systems, providing leadership and organizational development workshops and consulting services
• Extensive experience in all aspects of non-profits
• Some policy work
Human Systems Mission and Vision

• **Mission**: Prevent and repair the effects of moral injury (burnout) in individuals and organizations

• **Vision**: Thriving organizations.
How do you create an effective program?

• Before you even think about starting:
  • Based on scientific research and proven models
  • Clear, measurable outcomes
  • Clear, detailed plan and logic model
  • Evaluation plan
Developing and maintaining an effective program based on evidence-based practice

1) Problem statement
2) Research
3) Program development and timeline
4) Program implementation
5) Program evaluation
Problem statement

• Population
• Description of the challenge or issue
• Causes of the challenge or issue
• Miracle question/vision of the program
• Mission of the program

• Be prepared to add to and/or edit the program statement as you do your research.
Problem statement - example

• A significant number of children in our community (population) are overweight (challenge) because their families lack the resources and access to a variety of healthy foods within walking distance (causes). We would like to see every child in our community maintain a healthy weight over the course of their lifetime (vision) through healthy choices, such as engaging in physical activity and eating well (mission).
Research

• **Local/community research** (individual interviews and focus groups)
• Scientific research

• Use research to revise problem statement as necessary
Research - Sources of scientific research and evidence-based program models

• Moving Toward Evidence-Based Programming – Social Solutions
• Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)
• Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Model Programs Guide
• Office of Disease Prevention – Healthy People
Example: Physical activity for children and families

- Office of Disease Prevention ➔ Healthy People ➔ Topics and Objectives ➔ Physical Activity ➔ Interventions and Resources ➔ Physical Activity, Family-Based Interventions
Research - Searching for scientific journal articles

• Google Scholar
• Access at your local community college or university
Research – talking to experts

- Local colleges and university departments
- Article authors
- Long-running, effective programs that are similar to yours
Program development and timeline

1) Inputs/resources needed
2) Program components
3) Outputs/products
4) Measurable short-term outcomes
5) Measurable long-term outcomes
## Logic Model – Physical exercise/healthy eating example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs/resources</th>
<th>Program components</th>
<th>Outputs/Products (fidelity)</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes (immediately following program)</th>
<th>Long-term outcomes (within 3 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Healthy cooking and eating 1x week for 2 hours for 7 weeks</td>
<td>Participants engage in at least 5 of 7 cooking classes over the course of 7 weeks</td>
<td>Participants know how to make at least 5 of 7 different snacks or meals.</td>
<td>Children teach their friends and family members how to choose and make healthy meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct service staff</td>
<td>Fun physical exercise 1x week for 2 hours for 7 weeks</td>
<td>Participants engage in at least 5 of 7 exercise classes over the course of 7 weeks</td>
<td>Participants can demonstrate 5 different types of exercises from the program.</td>
<td>Children teach their friends and family members how to engage in physical activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants maintain weekly physical activity chart</td>
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<td>Office supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Relationships with schools</td>
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Participants engage in at least 5 of 7 cooking classes over the course of 7 weeks

Participants maintain weekly physical activity chart

Participants know how to make at least 5 of 7 different snacks or meals.

Participants can demonstrate 5 different types of exercises from the program.

Children teach their friends and family members how to choose and make healthy meals

Children teach their friends and family members how to engage in physical activity
Turn your logic model into a budget

- How much for staff salaries, benefits, fringe (continuing education, food, etc.)?
- Contractors?
- How much for supplies, including office supplies, program supplies/materials, etc.?
- Transportation?
- Space rental?
- Keep budget vs. actuals records and adjust periodically
Program implementation

• Detailed logic model and **program plan** helps ensure **fidelity** to program
• **Fidelity** helps ensure that intended outcomes will be reached
Program evaluation

• To assess how effective program was in producing intended outcomes
• Surveys (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative) based on logic model and program plan
• Develop evaluation plan and tools BEFORE program implementation and adjust as necessary
Creating a good survey

- Shorter is better – no more than 5 minutes
- Use clear, simple language
- Ask one question per item
- Make sure your scale matches all of the questions
- Include space for write-ins (qualitative)
- Pilot your survey with a few participants and get feedback prior to distributing to everybody
Creating a good survey – creating effective items

• **Ineffective item:** The cooking classes my son participated in were really useful and exciting.
  
• **Better:** My son enjoyed the cooking classes.
  • **Or:** My son would take more cooking classes with this organization.

• **Based on logic model:** My son has talked to me about healthy eating.
Using the evaluation results to revise the logic model and budget for next time

- Work backwards from outcomes – what worked/didn’t work and why?
- Enough staff? The right staff? Enough time?
- Enough supplies? The right supplies?
- Who needs to be involved that was not before? What other activities are required that we need to add to the plan?
Thank You!

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