Program Evaluation Webinar Series

December 17, 2008
2-3:30 pm

Dial: (800) 374-0278
Access code: 76239491

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Describing Your Program and Choosing an Evaluation Focus

Tom Chapel, MA, MBA,
(Acting) Chief Performance Officer
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Session 2

You will learn

- Why a strong program description is important to evaluation
- How to use logic models in program description
- How logic models make it easier to identify the most important questions to include in an evaluation
- How these teaching points play out using some case examples
Recap of session 1

We learned

- That program evaluation is the systematic investigation of the merit or worth of a program.
- The goal of good evaluation is production of results that will be used.
- Key to use is good focus.
- Key to a good focus is to identify and engage stakeholders and be attentive to what they need from the evaluation.
Describe the Program (Step 2)

- Equally important to a good evaluation focus is a clear and consensus understanding of the program
Note!

You May Not Always Need a Logic Model, But, You’ll Always Need a Program Description
Elements of Program Description

Don’t jump into planning or eval without clarity on:

- The big "need" your program is to address
- The key target group(s) who need to take action
- The kinds of actions they need to take (your intended outcomes or objectives)
- **Activities** needed to meet those outcomes
- “Causal” relationships between activities and outcomes
- What "bounds" the program: inputs, context, assumptions
Why describe the program?

- Clarity/consensus about program activities and intended “effects”
- Early identification of “holes” or problems in the program
- Clarity on how smaller components of the program fit into the larger picture
Logic models

- ARE graphic representations of the *intended* relationships of a program’s activities and their *intended* effects.

- SERVE AS a “road map” denoting the substance of a program, what it expects to achieve, AND HOW.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up somewhere else.”

-Yogi Berra
Similar Concepts—Other Names

- Program theory
- Program roadmap
- Means-end hierarchy
- Theory of change
- Logical framework (logframe)
- Conceptual map
- Blueprint
- Rationale
- Program theory
- Program hypothesis
A Simple Logic Model

- Inputs
  - Actions
  - Outputs
  - Outcomes
  - Impacts

Context
Assumptions
Results of activities: Who/what will change?

Inputs
Activities
Outputs
Short-term Effects/Outcomes
Intermediate Effects/Outcomes
Long-term Effects/Outcomes

Context
Assumptions
Linking Planning, Evaluation and Performance Measurement

**Plan**
- Actions/Tactics
- Objectives
- ST or MT Outcomes
- LT Outcomes or Impacts

**Eval**
- Activities
- ST or MT Outcomes

**PM**
- Process Measures
- Progress Measures
- Impl. Measures
- Outcome Measures
- Impact Measures
- Key Performance Indicators
- Success Factors
Goals And Objectives Are Source Of Outcomes/Impacts In The Logic Model

- **Goals**
  - What the program is ultimately trying to achieve
  - General, “big picture”
  - Source for our long-term or distal outcomes/impacts

- **Objectives**
  - Levers pushed to achieve the goal
  - Source for short-term and intermediate outcomes
  - S-M-A-R-T objectives
SMART Objectives

- S: Specific
- M: Measurable
- A: Achievable
- R: Relevant
- T: Time-bound

Don’t need these to do a logic model, but if you have them, much work is done already.
Basic Steps in Construct Logic Models

- Identify and list:
  - Activities
  - Intended Effects

- Arrange in a time sequence

- Elaborate, as helpful by:
  - Adding inputs and outputs
  - Considering assumptions, context, and stage
  - Draw arrows

- Review and refine
List Activities and Outcomes by....

1. Examining program descriptions, missions, visions, plans, and extracting these from the narrative, OR

2. Starting with outcomes, ask “how to” in order to generate the activities which produce them, OR

3. Starting with activities, ask “so what” in order to generate the outcomes that are expected to result
Then...Do Some Sequencing...

- Divide the **activities** into 2 or more columns based on their **logical** sequence. *Which activities have to occur before other activities can occur?*

- Do same with the **outcomes**. *Which outcomes have to occur before other outcomes can occur?*
An Example from Asthma
Intervention: Reducing Adverse Effects by Improving Indoor Air Quality at Home

- State XX’s health department desires to reduce the number of adverse asthma events—hospitalizations, ER visits, missed school days due to uncontrolled asthma symptoms—in urban children who live in low-income apartment complexes...

- By reducing the children’s exposure to asthma triggers in their homes.

- They’ve designed a multi-component intervention to
  - enforce relevant housing codes
  - change behaviors of tenants and caretakers of the complex.
Intervention: Activities

- Customized educational sessions targeted to apartment complex owners, maintenance services, code enforcement officers, and tenants to increase awareness of asthma triggers, relationship between indoor air quality and asthma, and steps to reduce triggers.

- Smoking cessation programs for tenants to decrease exposure to environmental tobacco smoke both inside the building and immediately outside where smokers may gather.

- Advocacy with city officials on potential impact of improved housing codes on asthma prevalence and severity.
Intervention Description

- Intervention to improve indoor air quality in the home environment to decrease adverse asthma events:
  - Provide education and training for apartment owners, code enforcement, maintenance vendors, and tenants regarding asthma triggers and housing codes
  - Conduct smoking cessation programs for tenants
  - Work with city officials to enhance existing housing code
Intervention Description (cont’d)

Intended outcomes of this intervention include:

- A decrease in adverse asthma events as a result of...
- Decreasing exposure to asthma triggers in the home...
- By changing behaviors as a result of...
- Improved awareness & knowledge of the harms of triggers & availability of appropriate policies
Activities and Outcomes

### Activities

- **Education & training on IAQ for:**
  - Apt owners
  - Code Enforcement
  - Maintenance providers
  - Tenants

- **Smoking cessation program for tenants**

- **Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code**

### Outcomes

- Improved knowledge of harms of smoking & ETS exposure
- Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers
- Improved understanding of methods to reduce exposure to triggers
- Housing codes emphasizing improved IAQ available
- Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ
- Improved enforcement of housing codes
- Better maintenance of apartment complex
- Reduced exposure to asthma triggers

**Fewer adverse asthma events**
Sequencing

**Activities**

- Education & training on IAQ for:
  - Apt owners
  - Code Enforcement
  - Maintenance providers
  - Tenants
- Smoking cessation program for tenants
- Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code

**Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Long-term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers</td>
<td>Better maintenance of apartment complex</td>
<td>Fewer adverse asthma events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved understanding of methods to reduce exposure to triggers</td>
<td>Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ</td>
<td>Reduced exposure to asthma triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved knowledge of harms of smoking &amp; ETS exposure</td>
<td>Improved enforcement of housing codes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing codes emphasizing improved IAQ available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Planning and Evaluation “Causal” Arrows Can Help

- **Not** a different logic model, but same elements in different format

- Arrows can go from:
  - **Activities to other activities**: *Which* activities feed *which* other activities?
  - **Activities to outcomes**: *Which* activities produce *which* intended outcomes?
  - **Early effects/outcomes to later ones**: *Which* early outcomes produce *which* later outcomes?
Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code

Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers

Improved understanding of methods to reduce exposure to triggers

Better maintenance of apartment complex

Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ

Reduced exposure to asthma triggers

Fewer adverse asthma events

Education & training on IAQ for:
- Apt owners
- Code Enforcement
- Maintenance providers
- Tenants

Smoking cessation program for tenants

Housing codes emphasizing improved IAQ available

Improved enforcement of housing codes

Improved knowledge of harms of smoking & ETS exposure

Short-term

Intermediate

Long-term

Activities

Outcomes

“Causal” Roadmap—Activities and Outcomes

Activities

Outcomes
Note!

Logic Models make the program theory **clear**, not **true**!
Key Benefits of Even Simple Logic Models

- Clarity for you
- Clarity and consensus among stakeholders
- Areas for clarity and consensus:
  - Distinguishing “activities” from “effects”
  - Identifying the order/sequence in which effects will unfold
  - Identifying the underlying “program theory”
Any Questions?
Elaborating the Logic Model—Mediators

- Specifying “mediators”
  - (Back)fill in the blanks.
    Elaborate any intermediate links between the activities and the distal effects/outcomes.
"I think you should be more explicit here in Step Two!"

THEN A MIRACLE OCCURS...
“Prevention Program”—Simple Logic Mode

- **Surveillance**
- **Research and Development**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Communication**
- **Partnership**
- **Leadership**

- **Change Physical Environments**
- **Change Social Environments**
- **Prevent and Control Problem**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SURVEILLANCE</td>
<td>Evidence-based models. Strategies to implement models. Best implementation practices.</td>
<td>Propose policy changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH &amp; DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adopt changes in policies, laws and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPACITY BUILDING</td>
<td>Network of strong frontline implementers. Good training tools and resources.</td>
<td>Diffuse supply of tools, practices and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adopt practices and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTNERSHIP</td>
<td>Effective prevention messages and information. Effective delivery channels.</td>
<td>Change knowledge, attitudes and behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>Activated constituency for prevention. Shared vision.</td>
<td>Generate demand for tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong partnerships at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change established/takes root.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prevent and control problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Identify factors and populations.
- Support/develop frontline infrastructure. Identify skills and needs.
- Identify channels, audiences, and key beliefs.
- Identify strategic partners.
- Forum for convening. Develop research and other agendas.

- Change social environment
- Change physical environment
- Prevent and control problem

- Increased resources
- Access to leaders. Access to key groups.
- Strong partnerships at all levels.
- Change established/takes root.
- Generate demand for tools.
Elaborating the Logic Model: Outputs


Context
Assumptions

Tangible products of activities
Intervention to decrease adverse asthma events through improved Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) home environment--**Outputs**

### Activities
- Education & training on IAQ for:
  - Apt owners
  - Code Enforcement
  - Maintenance providers
  - Tenants
- Smoking cessation program for tenants
- Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code

### Outputs
- Educational materials developed & disseminated
- Trainings conducted & attended
- Meetings
- Model housing codes
- Improved knowledge of harms of smoking & ETS exposure
- Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers
- Improved understanding of methods to reduce exposure to triggers
- Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ
- Improved enforcement of housing codes

### Outcomes
- Better maintenance of apartment complex
- Reduced exposure to asthma triggers
- Fewer adverse asthma events

**Short-term**

**Intermediate**

**Long-term**
Elaborating the Logic Model: Inputs

Resource "platform" for the program

Context
Assumptions
**Intervention to decrease adverse asthma events through improved Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) home environment—Full Logic Model**

### Inputs
- **Funding**
  - NGO grant
  - State funds
  - Federal grant
- **Staff**
  - Program manager
  - Health educators
  - Evaluator
- **Partners**
  - State & Regional EPA
  - Related state public health programs
  - Community & professional groups

### Activities
- **Education & training on IAQ**
  - For: Apt owners, Code Enforcement, Maintenance providers, Tenants
- **Smoking cessation program for tenants**
- **Model housing codes**
- **Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code**

### Outputs
- **Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers**
- **Educational materials developed & disseminated**
- **Trainings conducted & attended**
- **Housing codes emphasizing improved IAQ available**

### Outcomes
- **Better maintenance of apartment complex**
- **Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ**
- **Improved enforcement of housing codes**
- **Reduced exposure to asthma triggers**
- **Fewer adverse asthma events**

**Short-term**
- **Intermediate**
- **Long-term**
**Elaborating the Logic Model: Moderators**

**Moderators:** Contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder getting our outcomes

**Context**

**Assumptions**
Contextual Factors

- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Technological
Programs as Networks—“Potluck” vs “Stir Fry”

Multi-Org Partnership

Community Effort

OUTPUTS
SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
MID-TERM OUTCOMES
LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Org A
Program A-1
Program A-n

Org B
Program B-1

Org C
Program C-1
Program C-n

Org D
Program D-1
Program D-n
How Detailed?

- Function of purpose of the logic model
  - Stakeholders—global view alone
  - Managers—detailed action plans

- BUT, view collection of models as a related family—“nested” models

- Not different models, but each an elaboration of level above
Any Questions?
Focus the Evaluation (step 3)

Steps
- Engage stakeholders
- Ensure use and share lessons learned
- Justify conclusions
- Gather credible evidence

Standards
- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy

Describe the program
Focus the Evaluation design
Why Focus the Evaluation?

- Ensure the evaluation reflects
  - Purpose
  - Users
  - Uses

- Use resources efficiently and effectively
The Focusing Process

- Establishing priorities for the evaluation
- Identifying limited number of targeted questions to meet priorities
- Testing feasibility of questions against logistical issues and scope and stage of development or program
Did we get the inputs we needed/were promised?

Were activities and outputs implemented as intended? How much? Who received?
Which outcomes occurred? How much outcome occurred
(How) was implementation quality related to inputs?

Context of Development
Did outcomes occur because of our activities and outputs?
Setting Focus: Some Rules

Based on “utility” standard:

- **Purpose:** Toward what end is the evaluation being conducted?

- **User:** Who wants the info and what are they interested in?

- **Use:** How will they use the info?
(Some) Potential Purposes/Uses

- Show accountability
- Test program implementation
- “Continuous” program improvement
- Increase the knowledge base
- Other…
- Other…
“Reality Checking” the Focus

Based on “feasibility” standard:

- **Stage of Development:** How long has the program been in existence?

- **Program Intensity:** How intense is the program? How much impact is reasonable to expect?

- **Resources:** How much time, money, expertise are available?
Some Evaluation Scenarios

- **Scenario I**: At Year 1, other communities/orgs want to adopt your model but want to know "what are they in for"
Scenario 1:

- **Purpose:** Examine program implementation
- **User:** The “other community”
- **Use:** To make a determination, based on your experience, whether they want to adopt this project or not
Intervention to decrease adverse asthma events through improved Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) home environment—**Full Logic Model**

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#### Short-term
- Increased awareness of indoor asthma triggers
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- Improved knowledge of harms of smoking & ETS exposure

#### Intermediate
- Better maintenance of apartment complex
- Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ

#### Long-term
- Reduced exposure to asthma triggers
- Fewer adverse asthma events
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- Improved housing codes emphasizing improved IAQ available

- Model housing codes
- Meetings

- Collaborative meetings with city officials to enhance housing code

- Smoking cessation program for tenants
- Education & training on IAQ for:
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- Staff
  - Program manager
  - Health educators
  - Evaluator

- Partners
  - State & Regional EPA
  - Related state public health programs
  - Community & professional groups
Some Evaluation Scenarios

- **Scenario II:** At Year 5, declining state revenues mean you need to justify to legislators the importance of your efforts so as to continue funds.
Scenario 2:

**Purpose:** Determine program impact

**User:** Your org and/or the legislators

**Use:**
- *You* want to muster evidence to prove to legislators you are effective enough to warrant funding, or
- *Legislators* want you to show evidence that proves sufficient effectiveness to warrant funding
Intervention to decrease adverse asthma events through improved Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) home environment—**Full Logic Model**

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- **Intermediate**
  - Better maintenance of apartment complex
  - Tenants conduct activities to improve IAQ
- **Long-term**
  - Reduced exposure to asthma triggers
  - Fewer adverse asthma events
Session Summary

- Program description identifies all the components of the program being evaluated and the larger environment in which it’s embedded.

- Logic model is a graphic depiction of the “program theory”—why should this program work.

- Program description/logic modeling foster clarity and consensus on the program and the evaluation of the program.

- By thinking through “utility” and “feasibility” issues, the best evaluation focus can be derived.

- Logic models help guide the focus discussion.
Any Questions?
References


Thank you for Joining Us!

• Please provide your feedback using the Question and Answer pane.

• Archive of this Webinar will be posted to: www.AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org
  Click the “Webinar” link on the left navigation bar.

• Date change: Our next Webinar will be Thursday, February 5th, 2 - 3:30 pm ET