The Basics of Program Evaluation: What Everyone Needs to Know to Get Started

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Presenter

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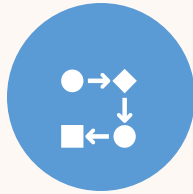
Presentation Roadmap

Evaluating problem gambling initiatives: contextual and Agility Grant considerations

Why evaluate: return on investment considerations

Where and how to get started

How to evaluate: a step-by-step guide to get started

Measurement considerations

Resources to support evaluation

Questions and answers

From the January 18th NCPG Webinar: Strategic Priorities of Prevention Innovation and Prevention Amplification

Prevention Innovation

Foster and accelerate the development, deployment, research, and evaluation of problem gambling prevention programs and curricula to communities disproportionately affected by problem gambling.

Prevention Amplification

Increase community awareness, response and support through the identification and elevation of new leaders, partnerships and voices within the problem gambling prevention community, especially prioritizing youth and leaders of color.

Evaluating problem gambling initiatives: contextual considerations

- Problem gambling interventions and strategies can be considered difficult to evaluate!

  - Newer area of work and focus
  - Fewer evidence-based practices
  - Emerging programs and strategies that often are smaller in scope and less well-funded than in other substantive areas
  - Less federal focus on gambling as a public health concern, on problem gambling prevention, and on supporting problem gambling treatment

Why evaluating problem gambling prevention initiatives is so important

- Disproportionate impact on specialized populations such as first responders and veterans
- Gambling prevalence is increasing in many areas
- Co-occurring disorders
- New and emerging forms of gambling
- Emerging technologies
- Sophisticated marketing and media
- Less of a federal focus on gambling and problem gambling prevention
- Focus on youth engagement
- We need to know what works to support the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Social norms around gambling
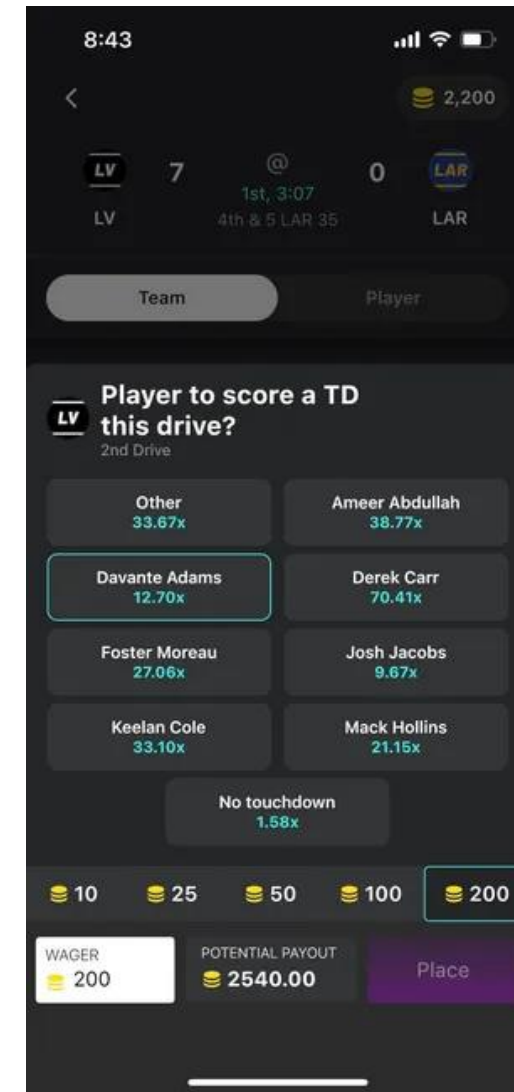
SPORTS BETTING FAIRY TALE

Why evaluate?

- <u>Answer #1</u>: Because you have to as a condition of funding or program support
  - Agility Grants—evaluation at application and outputs/outcomes for reporting
- <u>Answer #2</u>: To support new grant applications
- <u>Answer #3</u>: Program improvement/continuous quality improvement
- <u>Answer #4</u>: Because you have a commitment to improving the health and well-being of your communities and evaluation can help you see where you are meeting needs and what needs are still unmet (impact)
- <u>Answer #5</u>: To learn what your initiative did/contributed to.

Understanding your "why" is critically important as you think about evaluation and begin to plan and implement an evaluation!

MARGARET WHEATLEY | DEBORAH FRIEZE

WALK OUT WALK ON

A LEARNING JOURNEY INTO COMMUNITIES DARING TO LIVE THE FUTURE NOW

By the best-selling author of *Leadership and the New Science*

Getting started with evaluation--philosophically

"Start anywhere, follow it everywhere" is a mentality that frees us from having to choose the "right" starting point, the "right" first step. It means we begin wherever we are, with whatever makes sense to us. This approach shifts the focus from product to process, from knowing to discovering. It allows us to just start, to begin, without having it all mapped out.

--Miriam Rowley, reflecting on <u>Walk Out, Walk On</u>

Getting started with evaluation: Who

Step 1: Form your evaluation team

- May be the same as your program team
- May include other staff from your organization who have measurement, evaluation, or performance management experience.
- May include staff from outside your organization
  - Specialized evaluation firms
  - Consultants
  - Nonprofit organization staff (i.e., United Way)
  - College/university professors and classes
- Leadership support for the evaluation

Getting started with evaluation—What

Step 2: Decide what to evaluate

- Scope: entire program/initiative or parts?
  - Springboard approach of starting with part and building capacity to evaluate the whole program/initiative.
- Purpose: What do you need to know?
- Write evaluation questions
- Consider evaluation readiness
  - Is the initiative ready to evaluate (formal project model or program, capacity to support an evaluation)

Getting started with evaluation—What

Step 3: Decide on the type of evaluation

- Process
- Formative
- Outcome
- Impact
- Developmental

Process Evaluation

- Focus on program/strategy implementation
- Focuses on outputs—what was implemented, by whom, where, and with what population?
- What are the program outputs?
- Can include a fidelity assessment—did implementation follow the plan for the program, intervention, or strategy?
- Usually conducted internally and contributes to program improvement.

Formative Evaluation

- Usually undertaken early in the lifecycle of the program/strategy

- Used to understand whether the goals of the program are likely to be fulfilled, and to identify the barriers and facilitators of implementation.

- Results of the formative evaluation are then incorporated into the program with the necessary adjustments made to improve program implementation (CQI).

- Usually are usually less formal, and more likely to be internal, than the summative evaluations,

- Can be used in descriptions of new programs but the evidence is rarely published.

Outcome Evaluation

- Outcome evaluation focuses on whether the desired changes from the program, strategy, or intervention occur?

- Did the program reach its outcomes?

- Often use simpler designs and show how much change occurred
  - Pre-test/post-test

- However, outcome evaluation usually cannot determine how much of the observed changes came from the program or strategy or how much came from alternative drivers of change.

Impact Evaluation

- Similar focus as outcome evaluation – did the desired changes from the program, strategy, or intervention occur?

- Uses rigorous/intensive designs such as experimental designs and comparison designs with a matching comparison group.

- Allows drawing cause-and-effect conclusions.

- Often done with external teams

- Requires most financial and human capital and program capacity.

Developmental Evaluation

- Newer form, articulated by Patton, 2010

- Great choice if the program or strategy is not fully developed or ready for a traditional evaluation.

- Evaluators serve as part of the program team, working in partnership to develop the program or strategy and simultaneously designing an

- Good choice for complex or uncertain contexts

Getting started with evaluation—How
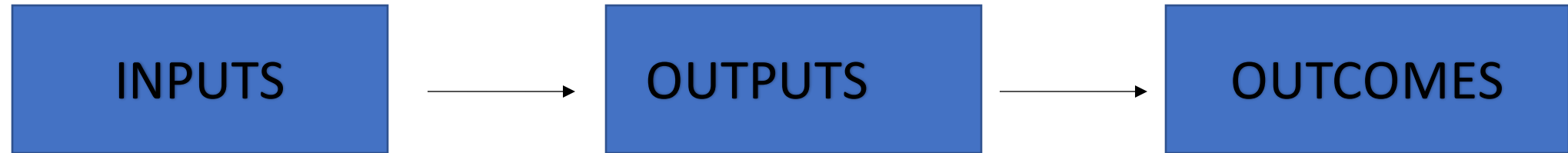
Step 4:
Decide on outcomes and link program activities to the outcomes

- Logic models
- Theory of change

A Simple Logic Model

INPUTS → **OUTPUTS** → **OUTCOMES**

- Funding
- Staff
- Program
- Intervention
- Strategy

- Activities (what we do)
- Engagement (who we reach)

- Short-term (knowledge)
- Medium-term (attitudes & behaviors)
- Long-term (environmental change)

Annotated Logic Model Template

[Logic Model Template Word Document | PDF Template (enterstarcrypticcity.blogspot.com)](enterstarcrypticcity.blogspot.com)

TIP (STRATEGIES):
1. Organization: Put 1 strategy in each box.
2. Activities: Adding Activities under Strategies helps make the logic model mo specific and can aid implementation.

TIP (OUTPUTS):
Outputs are different than Outcomes, and distinguishing between the two is important. Outputs are products or services that result from what you do; whereas, Outcomes are changes that happen as a result of what you do.

TIP (S-T OUTCOMES):
These are typically changes in awareness and knowledge.

TIP (I OUTCOMES):
These are typically behavioral and environmental changes.

TIP (L-T OUTCOMES): These can also be considered as "impact" and can be synonymous with project "goals."

TIP (ASSUMPTIONS): Continue to check and clarify assumptions as you develop your logic models.

ASSUMPTIONS — What are the principles, beliefs, or ideas about the project or the people involved in the project? What research or experience is driving the way you think about how the project will work?

INPUTS	STRATEGIES / ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (1-2 Years)	INTERMEDIARY OUTCOMES (3-4 years)	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (5+ years)
What are <u>tangible</u> resources that exist to support the project? • Funding • Personnel • Materials • Technology What are <u>intangible</u> resources that exist to support the project? • Partnerships • Time • Research • Regulations • Leadership • Expertise	What are the broad approaches or sets of actions you are employing in this project?	What are the observable products or services of your strategies and activities? Who will have participated? What will be produced?	What are the changes expected directly resulting from your strategies and activities?	What are the changes expected directly resulting from your strategies and activities?	What are the ultimate desired results your project is trying to achieve? What are the overall changes you want to make in a population or system level?

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the companion Quick Reference Guide to Logic Models to create your logic model.

TIPS (GENERAL):
1. Clustering: For Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes, consider grouping similar elements together. This provides a higher-level view of a project and can make the logic model significantly easier to read.
2. Showing Logical Linkages: Making and showing clear logical connections between project components is the crux of what a logic model is designed to do. Examine the logical relationships by asking "If we do this, then is it more likely that that will happen?"

EXTERNAL FACTORS — What are the current or anticipated dynamics in the external environment that can affect the success of your project? What is happening politically? Socially? Economically? What are real or potential risks?
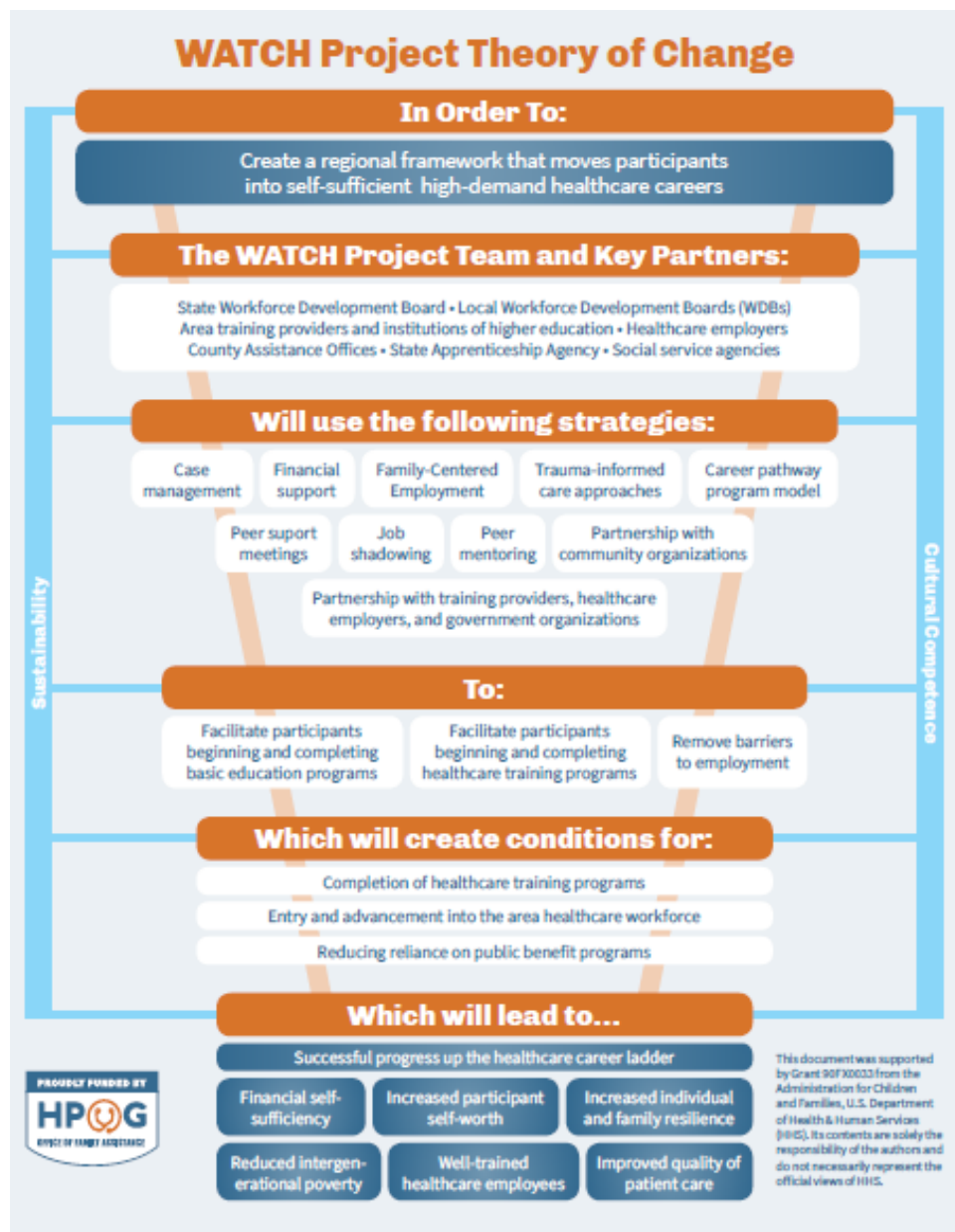
Articulating Program Logic Through a Theory of Change

WATCH Project Theory of Change

In Order To:
Create a regional framework that moves participants into self-sufficient high-demand healthcare careers

The WATCH Project Team and Key Partners:
State Workforce Development Board • Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) • Area training providers and institutions of higher education • Healthcare employers • County Assistance Offices • State Apprenticeship Agency • Social service agencies

Will use the following strategies:
Case management • Financial support • Family-Centered Employment • Trauma-informed care approaches • Career pathway program model • Peer suport meetings • Job shadowing • Peer mentoring • Partnership with community organizations • Partnership with training providers, healthcare employers, and government organizations

To:
Facilitate participants beginning and completing basic education programs • Facilitate participants beginning and completing healthcare training programs • Remove barriers to employment

Which will create conditions for:
Completion of healthcare training programs • Entry and advancement into the area healthcare workforce • Reducing reliance on public benefit programs

Which will lead to…
Successful progress up the healthcare career ladder • Financial self-sufficiency • Increased participant self-worth • Increased individual and family resilience • Reduced intergenerational poverty • Well-trained healthcare employees • Improved quality of patient care

Sustainability

Cultural Competence

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Getting started with evaluation—How

Step 5: Measuring outputs and outcomes

- **Measure characteristics of those you reach (outputs)**
  - Numbers reached
  - Demographics
- **Determine your key outcomes and key measures**
  - Direct linkage to evaluation questions
  - From Logic Model
  - From program or strategy materials (if using an EBP)
- **Determine other measures**
  - For example, if you are measuring gambling prevalence, you likely will want to measure ATOD use and risk factors
  - Attitudes, knowledge, and protective factors

More on Measurement

What you measure can depend on:

Your information needs

Your logic model

The characteristics of your program, intervention, or strategy

Your funder's requirements

How to measure key outcomes and constructs:

Measures and questions that have been used previously

Previous evaluations of interventions, media campaigns, and strategies

Measurement resources from universities and university extension services

Keep in mind:

Often it is better to measure a few things well than to measure everything possible.

Getting started with evaluation—How

Step 6:
Determine how to collect data

- **Instruments**
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
- **Data Sources**
  - Program records
  - Existing data sources
- **Identify your tools, identify a design, and create a plan**
  - How to collect
  - When to collect
  - Collecting from whom?
  - Records from the program or from other systems

Getting started with evaluation—How

Step 7:
Think about a research design

- Pre-post
- Pre-post with comparison group
- Experimental
- Many others!

Bringing it together in an evaluation plan

- You have:
  - Determined what aspects of the program/initiative the evaluation will focus on
  - Written evaluation questions.
  - Thought about the evaluation purpose and design
  - Created a logic model and/or theory of change
- Your next step is to create an evaluation plan that starts to tie it all together.

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Source(s)	Data Collection Methods
How did youth attitudes about gambling change with the delivery of the program?	Peer norms and perception of harm indicators/ scaled in pre/post survey	1 3-month cohort of youth participants	-Youth Listening Session -Pre/Post Survey

Getting started with evaluation—Data and Sharing Out

Step 8: Analysis and Reporting

- How will you analyze the data collected?
- Who will analyze and create the report?
- What do you need to report successfully to your funders?
- What will you report?
- Do you need a report or an infographic?
- How will you use your findings?
  - Program improvement
  - Grant reporting
  - New applications
- How will you share your findings?
  - What story will you tell?

Questions and Discussion

What about today's Webinar can you take back to your organization and use?

What questions, concerns, ideas, or information do you have that you would like to share?

What technical assistance might your program need?

Contact Information

- **Matthew Courser, Ph.D:** mcourser@pire.org

Evaluation Resources

Capacity Support

- American Evaluation Association:
  - A professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of evaluation as a profession.
 - Over 5,000 members representing all states in the US
  - [Find an Evaluator](#)

Community Tool Box

- https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents
- Comprehensive resource to support program design, quality improvement, and community change.
- Organized into chapters and toolkits
- Evaluation is covered in chapters 36-39 and toolkit in chapter 12.

Logic Model Templates and Resources

- Learning about logic models
- OPM.gov logic model template
- Completed logic model resources
  - Evidence Centre (Page 9)
  - Scribd
  - Alliance Scotland
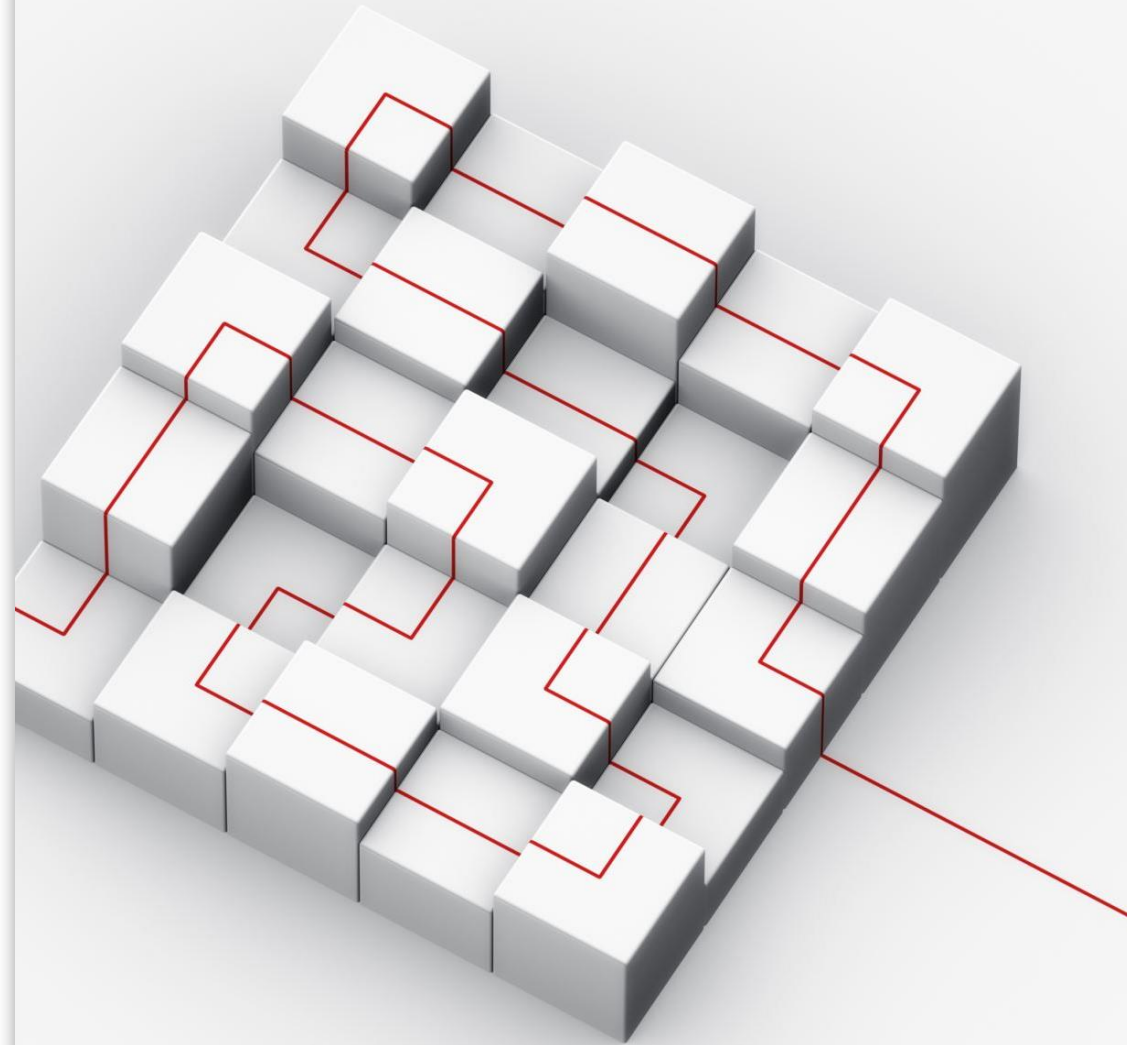
Evaluation Measurement Resources

- Process evaluation resources:
    - CDC
    - ND Health
- Formative evaluation resource:
    - CDC
- Outcome evaluation resource:
    - CDC
- Impact evaluation resource:
    - Better Evaluation
- Developmental evaluation resource:
    - Better Evaluation

Evaluation Design Resources

- [HHS Adolescent Pregnancy Example](#)
- [Better Evaluation Frameworks](#)
- [CDC Support](#)