

The Ten Steps to Evaluating a Health Promotion Program

1 Clarify Your Program

Ensure that your program has clearly defined goal(s) populations of interest, outcome objectives, activities and outputs, and indicators of success.

Review vision and mission to which the program is intended to contribute. Clarify goal(s) that summarize the positive outcomes you intend to achieve. They need not be measurable.

Understand the intended audience so that you can make decisions about the most appropriate evaluation methods. Be aware of their demographics: where they live; the best way to reach and communicate with them; and unique subgroups.

Define outcome objectives. They should include:

- An **indicator** – what you are trying to have an impact on
- A **target** – how much you are trying to impact the indicator
- A **population** – who are you trying to have an impact on
- A **date** – when you expect to achieve your objective

Define activities (i.e., things that you will do and produce) within a detailed workplan. Activities are associated with **implementation/process** objectives not **outcome** objectives.

Ensure that activities are clearly linked to outcome objectives. A logic model will demonstrate links and discover gaps in logic.

Develop indicator(s) for each **outcome** objective that will tell you if you achieved it. Indicators may be based on things such as standards set by professional organizations, data about a control group that did not participate, norms established through previous evaluations, morbidity or mortality rates, and participant opinions.

Make an estimate based on what would *not* be acceptable in situations where you need an indicator but do not know what kind of effect would be reasonable to expect.

Develop indicators of success for **implementation** objectives (e.g., numbers of things distributed, number of people contacted, resources expended).

2 Engage Stakeholders

Define your stakeholders, understand their interests and expectations, and engage them in a review of objectives so that you can define evaluation questions.

Make a list of people and/or organizations that would be interested in the evaluation, including program participants.

Identify stakeholder interests and expectations.

Specifically

- what they want to know about the program, and
- their expectations regarding the type and nature of the evaluation.

Prioritize stakeholder evaluation questions and expectations.

Define final evaluation questions.

3 Assess Resources for Evaluation

Clarify staff, time, money, and other resources available for evaluation in order to inform evaluation design.

Identify resources available for the evaluation.

Consider

- funds;
- staff and volunteer time, interest, and evaluation skills;
- timeline;
- equipment and tools; and
- support of partner organizations.

Ensure that timeline for evaluation is aligned with timeline for program implementation.

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Select the type of evaluation

Select the best type of evaluation for your program at this time. Choices include formative, process, summative (short-term), summative (long-term), and a combination.

In order to decide, clarify the time the program has been in operation, stage (e.g., development, winding down), and type of evaluation already done.

Determine the best type by applying the following guidelines:

When a program is starting up, formative and some process evaluations are realistic. Evaluations in the initial phases are most useful for quality improvement and efficiency.

When program leaders are learning how to effectively implement the program, formative and process evaluations are most helpful and realistic. Summative evaluations for measuring short-term and intermediate-term outcomes are possible. Even in this stage it is important to measure processes to determine why outcomes may not be reached.

Once the program has been established, it is possible to conduct summative evaluations to assess the short and long-term impact of the program.

5

Determine Appropriate Methods of Measurement and Procedures

Identify the most plausible kinds of evaluation methods as well as how the data will be collected.

Consider stakeholder expectations, success indicators, available resources, and the type of evaluation to determine the most plausible evaluation methods. Evaluation studies may be qualitative or quantitative. Some of the choices include

- a literature review,
- survey of experts,
- interviews,
- management audits,
- record keeping, and
- pre/post health status measures.

Determine how and how often data will be collected. This decision should include whether to include a comparison group, whether random assignment is needed, and how many times data should be collected. This decision should be based on:

- whether you must show comparative impact on people who have not been exposed to the program (analytical data),
- the best way and time to communicate with participants/recipients,
- ways to limit the burden on study participants,
- success indicators, and
- kinds of studies chosen.

Choose, adapt, or develop the evaluation data collection tool. Questions to be included in the tool should be dictated by

- success indicators,
- time and resources available, and
- type of evaluation study

Choose a sample size and a sample recruitment method. The size of the sample should be based on

- size of total target population,
- budget,
- desired level of confidence in results, and
- need to analyze information about subgroups.

6

Develop Workplan, Budget and Timeline for Evaluation

Identify specific tasks, roles, resource allocations, and deadlines for the evaluation.

When creating the project plan don't forget to allow enough time for design, tool development, pilot testing, report writing, and dissemination of results.

Minimize costs by combining material testing with summative pre-testing and using students and volunteers.

Outsource when objectivity is needed; staff lacks the skills, time or interest; and resources are available.



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7 Collect Data

Pilot test tools and procedures and then collect data.

Develop data collection standards and procedures for people involved in data collection.

Ensure that people collecting the information are trained in the appropriate data collection procedures.

Closely monitor data as it comes in to ensure that procedures and tools are correct.

Computerize data collection where appropriate to make later analysis easier.

8 Process the Data and Analyze the Results

Prepare and then analyze the data.

Put data in a format that can be summarized and interpreted.

Cluster qualitative data to determine how often an idea appears in the data set.

Double-check at least 10% of the data, especially odd comments or "out of range" numbers to minimize errors.

Enlist the support of a data analysis expert whenever possible.

9 Interpret and Disseminate Results

After interpretation, share results with all stakeholders in formats that are tailored to their specific interest in the evaluation.

Anchor all interpretation to the original evaluation questions.

Keep your audience(s) in mind when preparing the report. Consider their specific interest in the evaluation.

Include the limitations of the evaluation in the final report.

Compare and contrast evaluation results of similar programs and if applicable the results of different parts of the evaluation.

To illustrate results, use simple visuals whenever possible.

Create shorter and/or otherwise tailored versions of the final report for different stakeholders, depending on how they plan to use the information.

10 Take Action

Make changes to improve the program based on the evaluation results.

Involve stakeholders to determine what program adjustments are warranted.

Create a list of recommended actions that address the outcomes of your evaluation.

Prioritize those changes that are most important and feasible to implement.

Set up an action plan to implement the recommended changes.