



Evaluative Thinking

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Introductions and Icebreaker Question

Think about one of your organization's programs. What impact do you expect it to have? What change for what people?



Outcomes

1. Participants will understand the roles evaluation and evaluative thinking have within a nonprofit organization.
2. Participants will receive and begin completing a template to help focus their strategies and measure desired change.
3. Participants will receive both one-on-one support from the facilitators and peer feedback on their emerging outcomes and strategies.



Evaluative Thinking (Thomas and Campbell, 2021)

Critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an **attitude of inquisitiveness** and a **belief in the value of evidence, that involves identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding** through **reflection and perspective taking**, and **informing decisions in preparation for action**.



Traditional Performance Measures versus Evaluative Thinking

Performance Measurement

- Tied to individuals and teams and their effectiveness
- Focused
- Performance measures are created as expectations - SMART Goals/Objectives
- Measures are used as benchmarks to determine success

Evaluative Thinking

- Tied to organizational and community impact
- Broader approach to collecting evidence; uses diverse methods
- Ongoing reflective practice is involved
- Considers broader context



Outcome Evaluation versus Evaluative Thinking

Outcome Evaluation

- Implemented after program is completed
- Seeks to determine if a program was successful or not
- Often designed as a program nears completion
- May not have data from beginning or implementation of program

Evaluative Thinking

- Evaluation informs program strategy and design
- Data collection starts early and continues throughout program
- Program is evaluated in context and in real time
- Learning loops drive continuous improvement



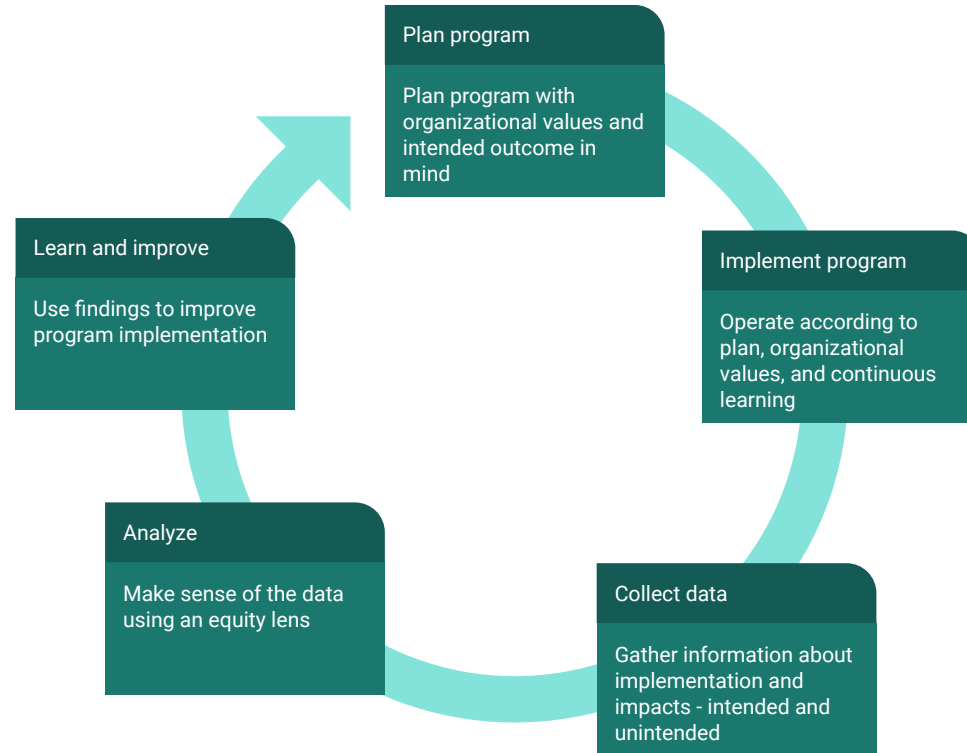
Small Group Discussion Question

Icebreaker: What impact do you expect it to have? What change for what people?

Thinking about your organization's program that you described, what activities does your organization do to achieve the expected impact?



Evaluative Thinking Cycle



Evaluative Thinking in Nonprofits

Improved Decision-Making: Evaluation provides data-driven insights that can inform strategic decisions, resource allocation, and program adjustments.

Enhanced Program Effectiveness: By measuring outcomes and identifying areas for improvement, evaluation helps nonprofits maximize their impact.

Increased Accountability: Evaluation demonstrates an organization's commitment to transparency and accountability to funders, stakeholders, and the public.

Strengthened Fundraising: Stories of success and measurable outcomes can be powerful tools for fundraising and securing support.



Evaluative Thinking in Nonprofits (cont.)

Organizational Learning and Development: Evaluation fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement, enabling organizations to adapt to changing needs and challenges.

Improved Collaboration: Evaluation can facilitate collaboration among different departments and stakeholders by providing a common framework for understanding and measuring progress.

Demonstrated Impact: Evaluation helps organizations document their contributions to society and advocate for their cause.



What is a Theory of Change?

- Process of change based on the causal linkages between short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes
- Grounded in relevant social science theory, empirical research, previous evaluations, good practice and stakeholder perspectives
- Can be completed anytime
- Makes explicit what is implicit (including assumptions)



Theory of Change for Weight Loss



Theory of Change for Weight Loss

Short-Term Outcome	Intermediate Outcome	Long - Term Outcome
Increase knowledge of food and nutrition to support weight loss	Shop for, cook, and eat nutritious food	Lose 10 pounds
Increase knowledge about benefits of exercising	Increase weekly exercise	
Understand potential causes for weight gain	Identify and engage support for maintaining success and momentum	



What is a Logic Model?

- A graphic representation or picture of how a particular project or initiative is supposed to work.
- Combines the theory of change with the activities and inputs to be completed by the program



Creating a logic model

[Blank Logic Model Template](#)



Elements of a Logic Model

- **Impact** - Long-term benefits or societal changes (e.g., reduced homelessness, increased economic opportunity)
- **Outcomes** - Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors (e.g., increased awareness, improved health)
- **Outputs** - Immediate results of program activities (e.g., number of participants, deliverables)
- **Activities** - Actions taken to achieve program goals (e.g., workshops, trainings, outreach)
- **Inputs** - Resources needed to implement the program (e.g., funding, staff, materials)



Sample Logic Models

[Get Real and Heel](#)

[Fulbright Student Association](#)

[Haven House's Juvenile Diversion Team](#)



Create a Logic Model Together

[Complete a blank template together](#)



Now it is your turn....

Think about the program you've already shared in the icebreaker. Let's start to complete a logic model for it.

- What is one expected change as a result of the program (Outcomes)?
- What does the program do to achieve that change (Activities)?
- How much of each activity does the program expect to deliver? (Outputs)
- What is needed to undertake the activities (Inputs)?

Work on your own for 15 minutes and then share at your table with each other for another 15 minutes. Stan and Charlene will roam the room to provide assistance and feedback.



Formulating the Evaluation Questions

Thinking about your organization's program that you described, how will your organization know if the program is achieving its expected impact?



Equity in Evaluation



What is evaluation with a racial equity lens?

Addressing systemic inequities by identifying biases and inequities that disproportionately impact people of color.

Asking “How is race operating here?”



Importance of Racial Equity in Evaluation

1. Ensures equitable outcomes by taking into consideration such as cultural relevance, accessibility, and representation in program design and delivery.
2. Builds trust and credibility with marginalized communities
3. Improves program effectiveness by tailoring interventions to unique subpopulations within a broad target population.
4. Fosters a culture of inclusivity within organizations which can promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the organization.



Strategies for Ensuring Equity

1. Involve diverse stakeholders in processes, including members of the target population
2. Train evaluators to be culturally competent
3. Disaggregate data, even if it means you can't find statistically significant results for your intervention
4. Identify equity-focused indicators that help show how the outcomes are distributed among diverse members of the target population



Strategies for Ensuring Equity (cont.)

1. Use community-based participatory evaluation methods
2. Interrogate data collection methods to assess for any biases that may emerge
3. Report results with an equity focus
4. Build in feedback loops for continuous learning



Examples of Equity in Evaluation

HOPE NC - Building a logic model from a job description

Juvenile Diversion Team - Disaggregating and recategorizing data for equity

The Kaleidoscope Project - implementing evaluation learnings





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