

Information Gathering on How the Surveillance and Evaluation Committee Can Assist in the Evaluation of Your Committee Goals?

Key Considerations:

Consider the following key questions when designing a program evaluation.

1. What's the purpose of the evaluation being done?
2. What do you want to be able to decide as a result of the evaluation?
3. Who are the target audiences for the information from the evaluation, e.g., customers, funders, board, management, staff, etc.
4. What kinds of information are needed to make the decision you need to make and/or educate your intended audiences?
5. What resources are available to collect the information?
6. How can that information be collected in a cost-effective, timely, and reasonable manner?
7. What types of data collection method are going to be used?
8. How are the evaluation results going to be implemented?
9. When is the information needed?
10. How are you going to get the information to interested parties?

Checklist for Committee Evaluation

Name of Committee _____

Purpose of Evaluation?

1. What do you want to be able to decide as a result of the evaluation? For example:
 - Understand, verify or increase impact of products or services on clients (eg, outcomes evaluation)
 - Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly (eg, process evaluation)
 - Verify that we're doing what we think we're doing (eg, process evaluation)
 - Clarify program goals, processes and outcomes for management planning
 - Examine attitudes & behavior change by participating in program
 - Public relations
 - Program comparisons, eg., to decide which should be retained
 - Fully examine and describe effective programs for duplication elsewhere
 - Other reason(s)
2. **Audience(s) for the Evaluation?**

Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation, for example:

 - Clients/customers
 - Funders/Investors
 - Board members
 - Management
 - Staff/employees
 - Stakeholders/Partners
 - Public health professionals
 - Community Members
 - Other(s) _____
3. **What Kinds of Information Are Needed?**

What kinds of information are needed to make the decision you need to make and/or enlighten your intended audiences, for example, information to understand:

 - The process of the product or service delivery (its inputs, activities and outputs)
 - The clients who experience the product or service
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the product or service
 - Benefits to customers/clients (outcomes)
 - How the product or service failed and why, etc.
 - Demographic information
 - Other type(s) of information?

4. **Type of Evaluation?**

Based on the purpose of the evaluation and the kinds of information needed, what types of evaluation is being planned?

Goal-based?

Process-based?

Outcomes-based?

Other(s)? _____

5. **Where Should Information Be Collected From?**

Staff/employees

Clients/customers

Program documentation

Funders/Investors

Existing data set

Other(s) _____

6. **How Can Information Be Collected in Reasonable and Realistic Fashion?**

questionnaires

surveys

interviews

documentation

archival records

self report/log

observing clients/customers

observing staff/employees

conducting focus groups

other(s)

7. **When is the Information Needed?**

8. **What Resources Are Available to Collect the Information?**

Background information that may be useful to committee members.

Three Kinds of Evaluation

Goals-Based Evaluation

Goal-based evaluations are evaluating the extent to which programs are meeting predetermined goals or objectives. See the Heart Disease and Stroke in Virginia: A Prevention and Control Plan 2008-2018, www.vhdsa.org. Each committee has developed goals, strategies, and objectives.

Below are some of the questions to ask yourself when designing an evaluation to see if you reached your goals, are:

1. What is the status of the program's progress toward achieving the goals?
2. Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the program implementation or operations plan? If not, then why?
3. Do committee members have adequate resources (money, equipment, facilities, training, etc.) to achieve the goals?
4. How should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?
5. How should timelines be changed (be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are behind schedule before timelines are changed)?
6. How should goals be changed (be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are not achieving the goals before changing the goals)? Should any goals be added or removed? Why?

Process-Based Evaluations

Process-based evaluations are geared to fully understanding how a program works -- how does it produce that results that it does. These evaluations are useful if programs are long-standing and have changed over the years and they are also useful for accurately portraying to outside parties how a program truly operates (e.g., for replication elsewhere).

There are numerous questions that might be addressed in a process evaluation. These questions can be selected by carefully considering what is important to know about the program. Examples of questions to ask yourself when designing an evaluation to understand and/or closely examine the processes in your programs, are:

1. On what basis do employees and/or the customers decide that products or services are needed?
2. What is required of employees in order to deliver the product or services?
3. How are employees trained about how to deliver the product or services?
4. How do customers or clients come into the program?
5. What is required of customers or client?
6. How do employees select which products or services will be provided to the customer or client?

7. What is the general process that customers or clients go through with the product or program?
8. What do customers or clients consider being strengths of the program?
9. What do staffs consider to be strengths of the product or program?
10. What typical complaints are heard from employees and/or customers?
11. What do employees and/or customers recommend improving the product or program?
12. On what basis do employees and/or the customer decide that the product or services are no longer needed?

Outcomes-Based Evaluation

An outcomes-based evaluation facilitates your asking if your organization is really doing the right program activities to bring about the outcomes you believe (or better yet, you've verified) to be needed by your clients (rather than just engaging in busy activities which seem reasonable to do at the time). Outcomes are benefits to clients from participation in the program. Outcomes are usually in terms of enhanced learning (knowledge, perceptions/attitudes or skills) or conditions, e.g., increased literacy, self-reliance, etc.

The [United Way of America](http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/) (<http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/>) provides an excellent overview of outcomes-based evaluation, including introduction to outcomes measurement, a program outcome model, why to measure outcomes, use of program outcome findings by agencies, eight steps to success for measuring outcomes, examples of outcomes and outcome indicators for various programs and the resources needed for measuring outcomes. The following information is a top-level summary of information from this site.

To accomplish an outcomes-based evaluation, you should first pilot, or test, this evaluation approach on one or two programs at most (before doing all programs).

1. The general steps to accomplish an outcomes-based evaluation include to:
Identify the major outcomes that you want to examine or verify for the program under evaluation. You might reflect on your mission (the overall purpose of your organization) and ask yourself what impacts you will have on your clients as you work towards your mission.
2. Choose the outcomes that you want to examine, prioritize the outcomes and, if your time and resources are limited, pick the top two to four most important outcomes to examine for now.
3. For each outcome, specify what observable measures, or indicators, will suggest that you're achieving that key outcome with your clients. This is often the most important and enlightening step in outcomes-based evaluation. However, it is often the most challenging and even confusing step, too, because you're suddenly going from a rather intangible concept, e.g., increased self-reliance, to specific activities, e.g., supporting clients to get themselves to and from work, staying off drugs and alcohol, etc. It helps to have a "devil's advocate" during this phase of identifying indicators, i.e., someone who can question why you can assume that an outcome was reached because certain associated indicators were present.
4. Specify a "target" goal of clients, i.e., what number or percent of clients you commit to achieving specific outcomes with, e.g., "increased self-reliance (an

- outcome) for 70% of adult, African American women living in the inner city of Minneapolis as evidenced by the following measures (indicators) ..."
5. Identify what information is needed to show these indicators, e.g., you'll need to know how many clients in the target group went through the program, how many of them reliably undertook their own transportation to work and stayed off drugs, etc. If your program is new, you may need to evaluate the process in the program to verify that the program is indeed carried out according to your original plans.
 6. Decide how can that information be efficiently and realistically gathered.
Consider program documentation, observation of program personnel and clients in the program, questionnaires and interviews about clients perceived benefits from the program, case studies of program failures and successes, etc.
 7. Analyze and report the findings.

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