Building the Foundation of a Program Evaluation

Research Questions and Program Definitions

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at Heritage University

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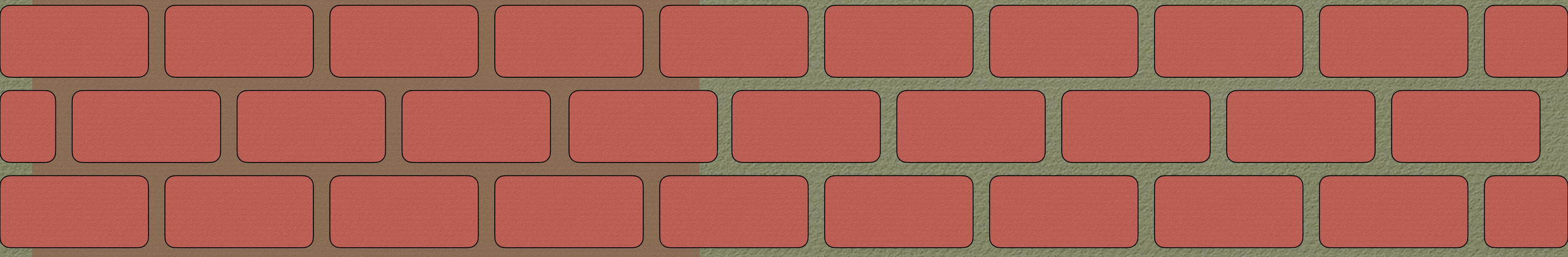
SOWK 460w Week 07



Week Seven Plan

Agenda

- Developing a research question
- Presentation planning
- Developing a program description
- Midterm feedback

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe the seven foci of process evaluations.
- Develop a clear and focused research question for a program evaluation.
- Use a program logic model to identify key information about an agency.

Context (political, economic & other influences on the program)

Recruitment (methods used, successes and failures)

Reach (% of target population participating, sufficient resources?)

Dose Delivered (how much intervention typically delivered?)

Dose Received (clients' engagement & compliance with treatment)

Fidelity (was the intervention applied as designed?)

Implementation (a composite program implementation score can be created by averaging reach, dose delivered, dose received, and fidelity)

Foci for Process Evaluations

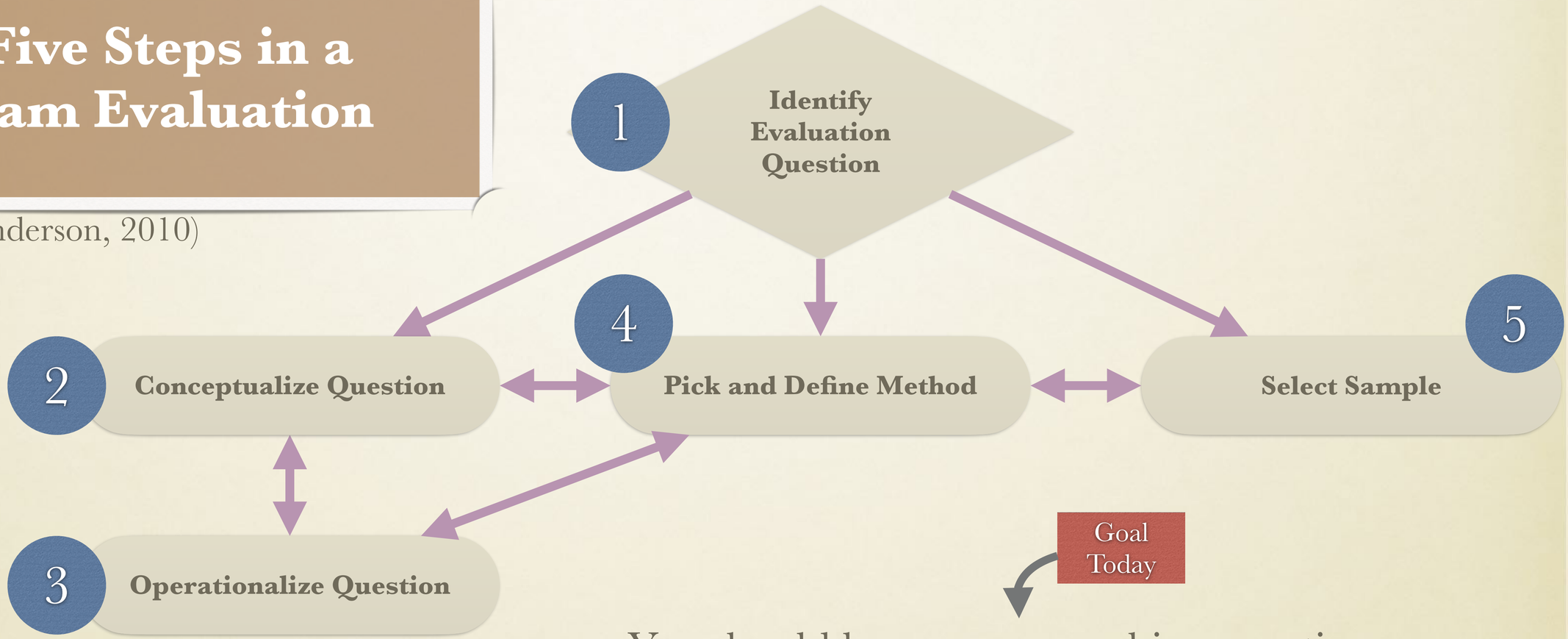
(Steckler & Linnan, 2002)

Research Question

What do you want to know?

First Five Steps in a Program Evaluation

(Kapp & Anderson, 2010)



You should have an overarching question you are trying to reach with your evaluation. You should also have 3 to 5 specific questions your evaluation is trying to answer

Developing a Research Question

Developing Your Question

Step 1

What is your topic? i.e., burnout, how transitions happen, gaps in services, etc.

What is the context or location of your research? i.e. DSHS, Domestic Violence, etc.

What do you want to achieve? i.e. to discover, to describe, to change, to explore to explain, etc.

What is the nature of your question? i.e., a what, where, how, when, or why question?

Are there potential relationships you want to explore? i.e., impacts, increases, decreases, relationships, correlations, causes, etc.

Starting with the nature of the question – *who, what, why, where, how, when* – begin to piece together the answers generated in Step 1 until you feel comfortable with the eventual question or questions.

2

Suppose the problem you are interested in is increased viewing of pornography among high school students. The answers from Step 1 might lead to several questions:

example:

1

Topic: pornography
Context: high school
Goal: to explore prevalence of watching porn
Nature of your question: how much/ often
Relationship: N/A

Question: How prevalent is watching pornography among high school students?

2

Topic: pornography
Context: high school
Goal: to understand how porn changes sexual expectations
Nature of your question: how
Relationship: watching porn and expectations

Question: How does watching pornography change sexual expectations among high school students?

3

Topic: pornography
Context: high school
Goal: to understand education programmes in high school that address porn viewing
Nature of your question: what
Relationship: N/A.

Question: What education programmes have been shown to have a positive impact on the pornography viewing habits of high school students?

Developing a Research Question

Step 2

Developing Your Question

Potential Question 1

Topic:

Context:

Goal:

Nature of Question:

Relationships:

Question:

Potential Question 2

Topic:

Context:

Goal:

Nature of Question:

Relationships:

Question:

Developing a Research Question

Developing Your Question

Step 3

Draft a question...

Developing a Research Question

Developing Your Question

Step 4

1. Rewrite your question and circle terms that could be ambiguous.
2. Go through and clarify those terms.
3. Then, redraft your question, bringing more clarity and description

MONDAY MAY 4TH 2026

Presentation Planning

Who do we invite
What do we call it
Do we have food

Click link

Evaluation for Leaders

Complete one as a group

Parenting and infant health

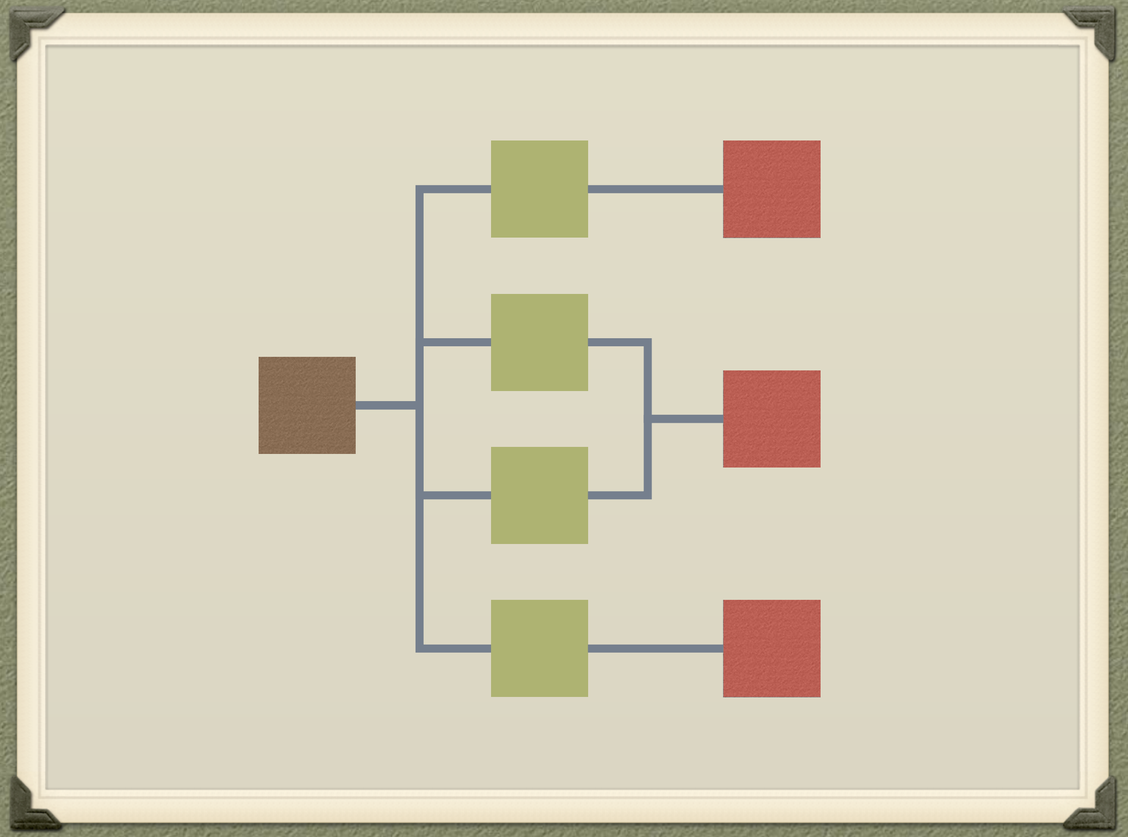
Youth smoking cessation

Senior fall prevention

Neighborhood crime prevention

Evaluation Resources

https://www.communitysolutions.ca/logic-model-puzzles



Using Logic Models

to Identify Key Information Needs

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Using Logic Models to Identify Key Information Needs

Reviewing your logic model or , ask yourself, “What information do we need to evaluate the processes and outcomes of the program effectively?”

Process

A process is the implementation of a key program component. In the Kellogg logic model, processes are described as activities and quantified as outputs.

Outcomes

Outcomes are results that occur that are directly linked to program processes.

Residential Treatment Program

Resources/Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Funding	Group therapy	4 weekly group therapy sessions	Youth maintain participation in employment or education program	Families functioning productively
Staff	Family therapy	Weekly family therapy sessions for 30 families	Youth maintain legal lifestyle	Families satisfied with functioning
Clients	Residential care	30 youth in residential care		
Facilities				

Residential Treatment Program

Program Component	Indicator
Weekly group therapy sessions	# of sessions
Weekly family therapy sessions	# of sessions

Residential Treatment Program

Program Component	Indicator
Weekly group therapy sessions	# of sessions
Weekly family therapy sessions	# of sessions
Youth maintain participation in employment or education program	% of youth employed or in education program 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months out
Youth maintain legal lifestyle	% of youth with no encounters with the legal system with first 12 months

Using Logic Models to Identify Key Information Needs

Reviewing your logic model, ask yourself...

*"What information do you need to evaluate the **processes** and **outcomes** of the program effectively?"*

Writing About Your Description of the Program

- **Need**: What need or needs is this program designed to meet?
- **Context**: What is the program's context? Be sure to discuss the contextual or cultural factors that may affect the program's effectiveness?
- **Population Addressed**: Who is included in the population for whom activities are intended?
- **Stage of Development**: How long has the program been in place?
- **Resources**: What resources (e.g., staff, money, space, faculty time, partnerships, technology, etc.) are available to support the program?
- **Activities**: What specific activities are conducted to achieve the program's outcomes? (Note: Here is where you can provide additional information that you may have been asked to eliminate from the logic model, such as information on hours and availability of services, length of tutoring sessions, etc.)
- **Outputs**: What do the activities produce? (Remember, these are goal numbers, in this case measuring services delivered.)
- **Outcomes**: What are the program's intended outcomes? (Remember that outcomes are changes in attitudes, skills, or behaviors of participants. You may want to divide outcomes into short-term, intermediate, and long-term categories--it's up to you.)
- **Impact**: What is the program's intended impact on the larger community?

Complete Your midterm Feedback

Please Share Your Thoughts

Time to Work on Your Logic Models