

## Center TRT – Practical Policy Evaluation Webinar, 1.31.12

### Participant Questions and Answers

**Question:** Why would you not measure behavioral outcomes (intermediate outcomes) before and after the intervention?

**Answer:** I made the case that you should definitely measure short term outcomes (changes in environment) and invest in doing that well. You could also measure intermediate outcomes, and surveys are one way that you could do that. Doing a survey that captures before and after behaviors and does that well is difficult and resource-intensive – that doesn't mean it can't be done or shouldn't be done. But not all practice settings will have the resources to do that.

**Question:** How do we address the challenge of evaluating projects with short term funding when policy making takes a long time.

**Answer:** That's one of the values of capturing the work you do at the stages of formulation and enactment, because you are having an effect at that point in time. Even if you can't get to the stage of enactment you can demonstrate that you changed awareness and started to set the stage for future success.

**Question:** Why are knowledge and awareness outcomes excluded in the short-term outcome LM box?

**Answer:** This is a decision that we have made within the Center for our approach to this. With policy change we are trying to make population level changes, so looking at environments as the level of change, as opposed to individual knowledge and awareness.

**Question:** What is the purpose of the arrows on either side of the framework? It seems to go against the idea that inputs lead to activities that lead to outputs, etc. Is it to reinforce that it is a cyclical process?

**Answer:** These were just to highlight which section of the logic model we were talking about. The inputs do lead to activities.

**Question:** There are so many different policies we can choose from; how do you choose which will work best for you?

**Answer:** Ross Brownson suggests some approaches to evaluating different policy options. –(Brownson, Chriqui et al. 2009)

**Question:** What tools are good for helping you evaluate?

**Answer:** We do include tools within our intervention templates on the Center TRT website. When we post the evaluation plans we will provide links to tools that have been used to evaluate components of the policy that is posted. That is one place to access such tools.

**Question:** What were the biggest lessons learned from working with the 6 to 8 groups you've worked with?

**Answer:** Every intervention is so different – so it all depends. The structure of the intervention really determines the development of the logic model. The framework is flexible so it can be applied to any sort of intervention. It's useful to tap into the flexibility of the framework to highlight particular aspects of the initiative. One example of this is how you choose to represent the different levels of implementation that occur in an intervention – representing each level in both the activities and outputs columns or one in each column. The policy interventions we've received provide a lot of very helpful

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information. From reviewing practice-based policy interventions we have learned that practitioners do not always document their activities and outputs, particularly during the formulation stage of policy development. It's very important to be aware of documenting your activities. We would generally benefit from having more process evaluation data.

**Question:** Could you describe the role of indicators when developing evaluation questions?

**Answer:** Indicators are the data collected to help draw conclusions about the policy's impact on the targeted outcomes. In other words, indicators help paint a picture of the effects of the policy. Indicators are often shown in terms of numbers or percentages. In the Center TRT evaluation plans, the indicators appear in the "data to be collected" column. Indicators are essential to an evaluation plan as they are the benchmarks that help the evaluator understand what about the policy is working and not working.

### **References**

Brownson, R. C., J. F. Chiqui, et al. (2009). "Understanding evidence-based public health policy." Am J Public Health **99**(9): 1576-1583.