Working With Local Evaluators: KSAs and SOWs

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- Statewide initiatives such as the Georgia Alcohol Prevention Program aim to have population-level impacts.

  – Community-level (or local) impacts are crucial to achieving statewide outcomes.

- Local evaluators can help providers show the impacts of their interventions on their local communities, understand implementation challenges, and provide feedback for improvements.

Goals

- Understand the purpose of evaluating programs such as the Georgia Alcohol Prevention Program

- Discuss the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) needed by local evaluators

- Provide guidance on developing a local evaluator Statement of Work (SOW) or Work Plan

Evaluation as Collaboration

Why Do We Evaluate What We Do?

- Accountability:
  - Accountability to any of a number of stakeholders (funder, program staff, clients, community, etc.).
- Program improvement:
  - Evaluation helps us improve existing programs.
- Knowledge development:
  - Evaluation helps us plan future programs.
- Social justice:
  - Evaluation can tell us whether the most vulnerable populations receive appropriate and effective services.

"My question is: Are we making an impact?"

Consider your Alcohol Prevention Program activities or another program or strategy you want to evaluate in your community

- What program or strategy do you want to evaluate? Describe the program.

- Who are the stakeholders of your evaluation?

- What questions do you want to answer with your evaluation? Think process and outcomes.

- A strong **logic** or conceptual model
- Appropriate **alignment** between intervening variables, root causes, and selected interventions
- Appropriate **measures** of key concepts and constructs
- Appropriate alignment of **unit of analysis** and program impact AND
- A good evaluator
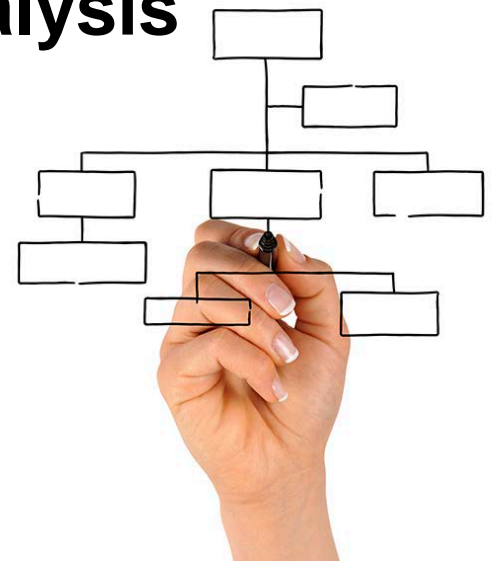
Evaluation Approaches

Traditional	Collaborative
Done to the program	Done with the program
Evaluator operates apart from the program	Evaluator operates in concert with the program
Evaluator decides	Evaluator advises
Evaluator retrieves information from program staff as needed to plan and carry out the study	Program staff are participants in planning and carrying out the study
Evaluator interacts relatively infrequently through the program director	Evaluator interacts regularly through the program staff and other stakeholders

- When evaluation uses a collaborative model, an evaluator's KSAs complement those found in the provider's staff and community partners.

  – **Program staff are participants** in planning and carrying out the evaluation.

  – **Evaluator interacts regularly** through the program staff and other stakeholders.

Local Evaluator Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Key Knowledge for Local Evaluators for the Alcohol Prevention Project

- **Strategic Prevention Framework model**
- **Relationship between intervening variables and contributing factors**
- **Alcohol prevention interventions**
  - Individual or environmental strategies
  - Evidence-based programs, policies, and practices
  - Link between selected strategies and targeted intervening variables and contributing factors
- **Data sources for strategy implementation, other process factors, intervening variables, contributing factors, alcohol use, and consequences**

Strategic Prevention Framework

The SPF requires states and communities to systematically

1. **Assess** prevention needs based on epidemiological data

2. Build prevention **capacity**

3. Develop a strategic **plan** based on identified needs

4. **Implement** effective community prevention strategies, policies, practices, and programs

5. **Evaluate** process and outcome efforts for effectiveness

# Intervening Variables and Contributing Factors

- **Intervening variables**
  - Strongly related to and influence alcohol use – **Why?**
  - Social and community norms, retail availability, social availability, low perceived risk, enforcement, etc.

- **Contributing factors**
  - Actual condition you see in the community – **Why here?**
  - Parents believe alcohol use is OK; alcohol retailers don't check IDs; youth don't think drinking has academic or legal consequences; law enforcement doesn't know about underage parties

Alcohol Prevention

Individual Strategies

- Help people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to change their behavior

- Include prevention education, alternative activities, and problem identification and referral

Environmental Strategies
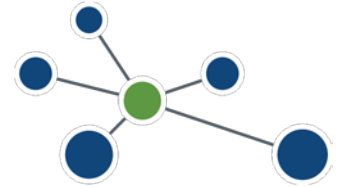
- Change the conditions within a community, including physical, social, or cultural factors that may lead to substance use

- Include information dissemination, media campaigns, educating environmental influencers, policy change, and enforcement

- Evidence-based programs, policies, and practices (EBPPPs)
  - Included in federal or other registries
  - Found effective in a published, scientific journal
  - Based on a theory of change documented in a clear logic or conceptual model
  - Similar in content and structure to interventions that appear in registries or literature
  - Supported by documentation of effective implementation multiple times in past (positive effects)
  - Reviewed and accepted by panel of informed experts
  - On list of recommended programs, policies, or practices

- Link between selected strategies and targeted intervening variables and contributing factors
- Your selected strategy should target the intervening variables and contributing factors that your assessment process identified as important for your community
  - Example: Social marketing campaign to address social and community norms – targeted to parents to address parent beliefs about underage drinking
  - Example: Compliance checks to address retail availability and specifically that alcohol retailers are not checking IDs

Linking Strategies, Intervening Variables, and Contributing Factors
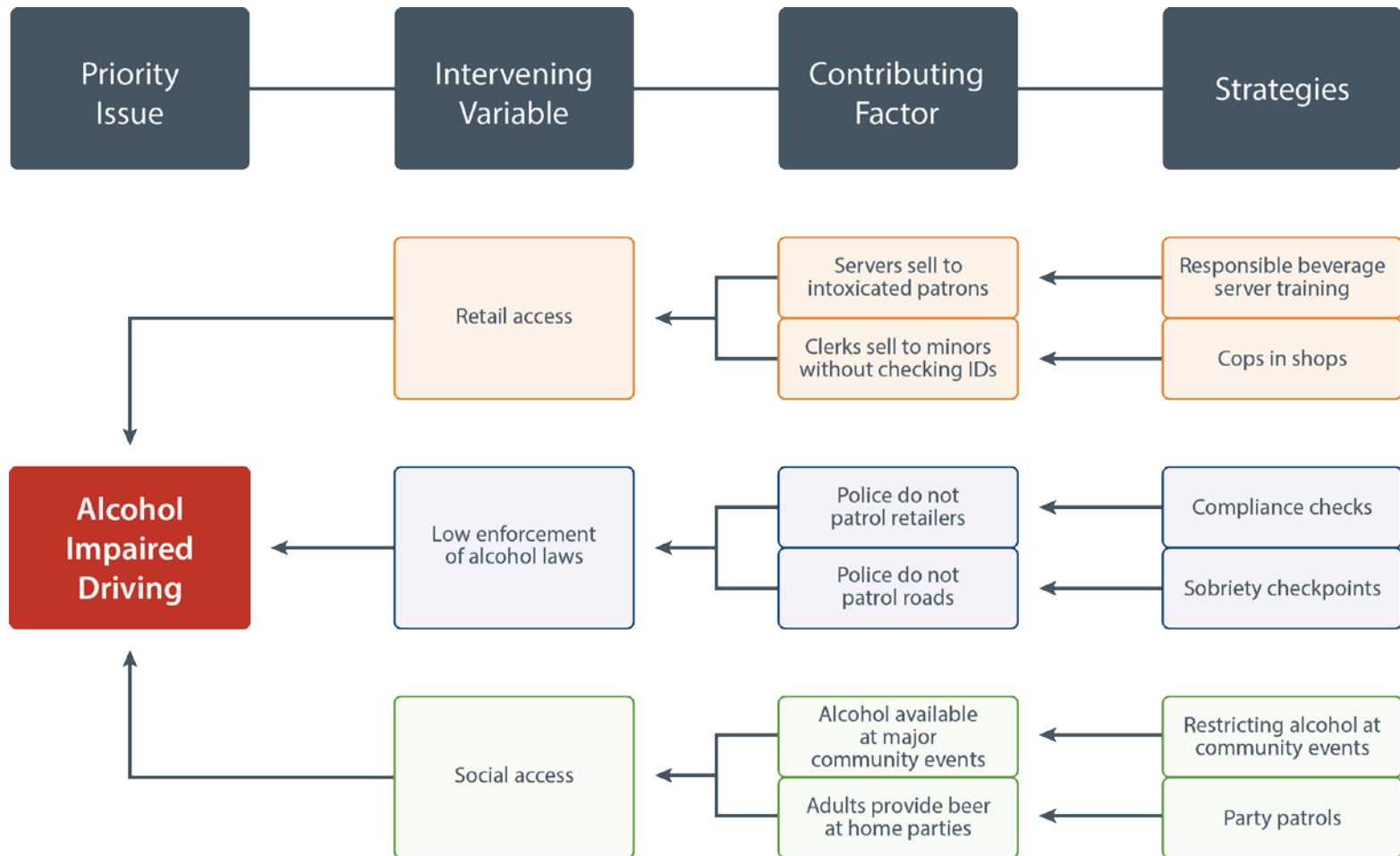
Data Source Requirements

- Reflect priority outcomes, intervening variables, contributing factors, or chosen strategies

- Available at the community level

- Reflect community as a whole or targeted subpopulations within the community

- Measured at multiple time points

- Collected both before the community implemented the strategies (pre) and at one or more points after (post)
  - Data lag as an issue

- Data types
  - Primary or archival
  - Administrative or survey
  - Qualitative or quantitative

- Data sources for
  - Strategy implementation
    - Numbers reached, fidelity assessment rubric, adaptation assessment, etc.
  - Other process factors
    - Community readiness, community demographics, etc.
  - Outcomes
    - Intervening variables, contributing factors, alcohol use, **and** consequences

What Skills, Abilities, and Experience Should a Local Evaluator Have?

- 3–5 years of substance use prevention evaluation experience

- Experience working with community-level coalitions, prevention providers, and other community stakeholders

- Ability to develop logic models and evaluation questions

Continued…

What Skills, Abilities, and Experience Should a Local Evaluator Have? (cont.)

- Ability to apply appropriate evaluation designs

- Experience with process and outcome data collection

- Experience with SPSS, SAS, or other statistical software, with basic to mid-level statistical analytic skills

- Ability to travel occasionally

- Excellent written and oral communication skills (provide writing samples such evaluation reports)

- Participation in larger cross-site evaluation

Evidence of Skills, Abilities, and Experience

- Master's degree preferred
- 3–5 years of evaluation experience (resume)
- Examples of evaluation plans - including logic models, evaluation questions, and measurement plans
- Writing/presentation samples, such as evaluation reports, fact sheets, etc.
- Letters of reference (from former clients)

Logic Model

- A good **logic** or conceptual model…
  - Aligns the selected strategies with intervening variables and selected intervention
  - Separates the "inputs" and specific activities implemented as part of the strategy
  - Ties activities to specific outputs – what immediate impact do you expect to result from the strategies (e.g., numbers of youth and adults exposed to messages; implementation of a new policy)
  - Links activities to specific short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes (tie to your intervening variables and contributing factors)
  - Incorporates SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound)

Evaluation Design

- Qualitative, quantitative, and **mixed methods**

- Comparisons and trend analyses
  - Pre-post – change over time (%, frequency, and process)
  - Pre-post with comparison group
    - No random assignment; matched communities on relative features (e.g., outcomes at pre-test) or compared to state
  - Pre-post with control group
    - Random assignment to strategy or control
  - Trend analyses
    - Look at trends from before and after the strategy was implemented

- **Qualitative (why & how: organized themes)**
  - Focus groups & interviews
  - Site visits
  - Document abstraction
  - Open-ended survey questions

- **Quantitative (who, what, when, & how much: numbers)**
  - Survey questions (numeric, categorical)
  - Archival, count data

- **Process data and outcomes data**

- ## Descriptive statistics
  - Changes over time: improved – stable – worsening
  - Display means, counts, or rates using bar or line graphs
    - Include comparison groups on the graphs to compare trends

- **NOTE:** Statistical analyses may be limited because community N = 1 (i.e., no pre-post data at individual level for comparison communities)

Dissemination

- Who is the target audience?
- What are the main findings?
  - Was the strategy implemented appropriately?
  - What are the outcomes of the strategy?
  - What process factors impacted the outcomes?
- What should people do based on the findings?
  - Recommendations for strategy change and future evaluations
- Types of communication
  - Evaluation report
  - Presentation
  - Fact sheet
  - Infographics

Dissemination - Feedback Loops

Feedback Loop – pathway that allows information about the results of a program to be sent back to the input of the system as meaningful data
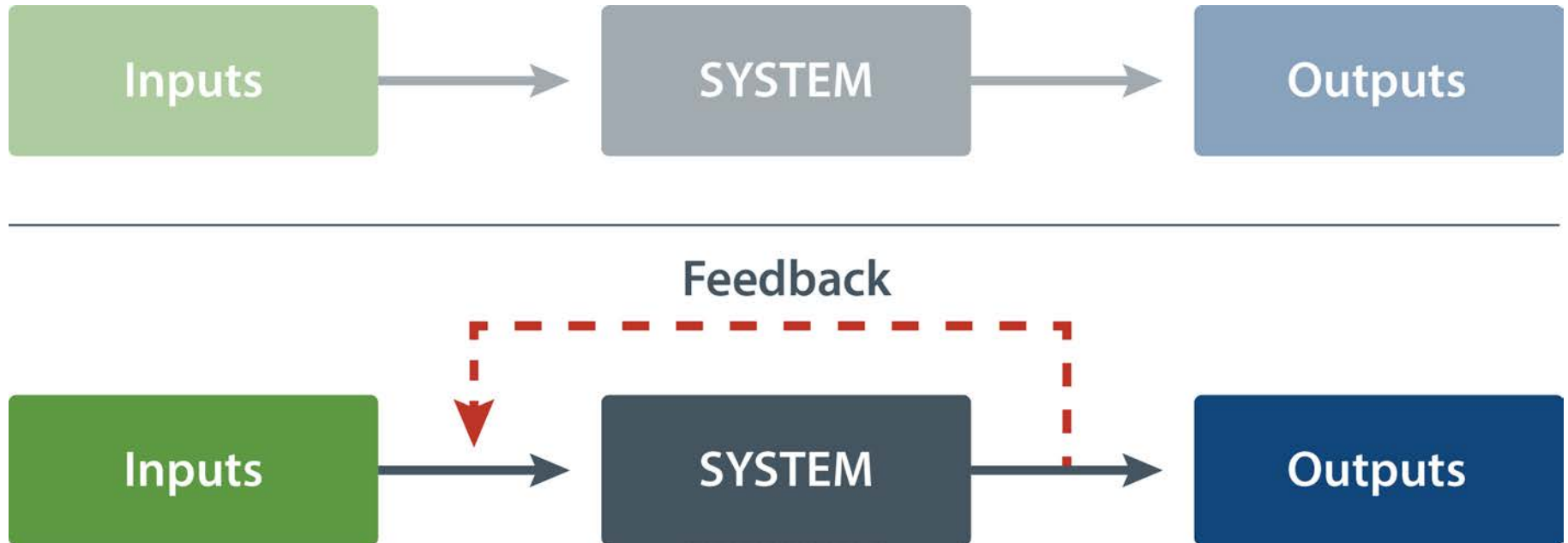
Public health professionals can no longer question whether to evaluate their programs; instead, the appropriate questions are: What is the best way to evaluate? What is being learned from the evaluation? And, how will lessons learned from evaluation be used to make public health efforts more effective and accountable?

—*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999*

- Think about your current program staff and community or coalition partners. Where can they provide some of the knowledge and skills needed for a local evaluation? Where do you see gaps in the knowledge and skills?

Local Evaluator SOWs and Work Plans

Local Evaluator Responsibilities

Local evaluators may be expected to do some or all of the following activities:

- Collaborate with providers and other community stakeholders to develop a local evaluation plan

- Develop or select relevant instruments for process and outcomes data collections

- Conduct annual evaluation-related site visits

- Coordinate data collection at the community, coalition, key stakeholder, and participant levels

- Collaborate with providers to enter data and submit it for aggregation at the state level

Continued…

Local Evaluator Responsibilities (cont.)

- Analyze local-level data

- Produce annual evaluation reports, fact sheets, presentations, or other products to disseminate findings and provide a feedback loop to providers

- Provide recommendations related to implemented strategies, process improvement, and future evaluation

- Deliver final datasets

- Participate in ongoing training

Additional local evaluator objectives and activities?

SOWs and Work Plans should clearly describe:

- Objectives – What is the purpose of that set of activities? What do you expect as the end product or outcome of the activities? (e.g., Develop Evaluation Plan)
- What are the **key** activities to accomplish those objectives?
- When will those activities take place (start/end dates)?
- Who will be working on those activities?
- Dissemination products – Which types? How many? How long do you expect them to be?
- Relevant aspects of the evaluation framework steps – What are expectations related to engaging stakeholders? How should they share lessons learned?

More Information
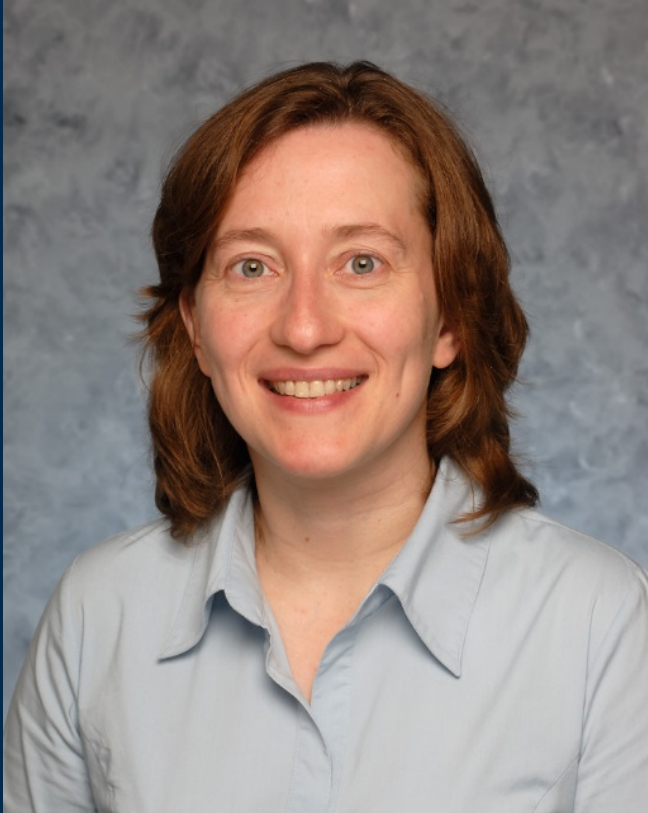
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