



PROGRAM EVALUATION COUC 515

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Learning Objectives

1. Understand the components of program evaluation
2. Review examples of actual program evaluations in Central Virginia (i.e. “real world” examples)
3. Apply these steps in a community behavioral health project

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is most interested in the effectiveness of a particular program for a particular group of people

Examples of program evaluation:

- Youth substance use*
- Parental substance use (Family Treatment Drug Court)*
- Young adult homelessness*

Steps of Program Evaluation

- 1. Setting evaluation boundaries
- 2. Selecting appropriate evaluation methods
- 3. Solicit input from stakeholders; identify program goals
- 4. Design a plan to examine program implementation
- 5. Design a plan for evaluating progress
- 6. Create the data collection plan
- 7. Plan the analysis
- 8. Estimate financial costs/come to agreement on costs
- 9. Collect/analyze information
- 10. Disseminate results

Strategies for Program Evaluation

- Pick a topic that you are passionate about
- Consult with subject matter experts
- Use a collaborative approach
- Establish regular communication among team members
- When analyzing results, do not discount results that do not match your hypothesis; explain all results
- In most community health settings, experimental designs are not able to be conducted thus be careful in disseminating results in how you frame the results (e.g., “X treatment is **associated** with improved outcome with Y.”)

What's Wrong With This Evaluation Strategy?

- My team wants to study adolescents with anxiety disorders so we apply for funding to study this population. As we are putting together an evaluation plan, we decide that we want to go to the schools so that we can do observations on the adolescents' behaviors in their natural environment. We decide that we should go into the classroom and sit in the back taking notes on the adolescents' behaviors.

What's Wrong With This Evaluation Strategy?

- We want to study homeless young adults that are referred to our program from homeless shelters. We have gift card incentives that the clients will receive for completion of our evaluation at intake and six months post intake. We tell our clients at intake that they have to complete the evaluation for us to measure our outcomes otherwise they cannot get treatment at the agency.

What's Wrong With This Strategy?

- In the same homeless young adult study, we want to find out if a particular therapy model helps reduce substance use. We research and find several assessments that have good validity and reliability measures. We decide on three assessments. These assessments take between 3-4 hours to administer on each client. The assessments are required at intake and at six months post intake.

What's Wrong With This Strategy?

- In this same homeless young adult study, we proposed to enroll 25 young adults into the evaluation. At the end of the project, we enrolled 20. We decided that we could add another 5 clients from other programs at the agency that did not involve homeless youth in order to reach our target number of 25.

Large group activity

- In our large group
- Review the Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) project on the next slide
- Then answer the following six questions on the following slide
- Record your answers

Evaluation Design for Illness Management and Recovery (IMR)

- Background: IMR is an evidence-based psychosocial treatment for adults with serious mental illness (e.g. MDD, BPD, Schizophrenia, etc)
- Proposed approach: Trained therapists deliver weekly individual or group sessions with clients for six months covering the following topics: knowledge about mental illness, relapse prevention, cognitive coping skills, etc.
- The goals are to increase knowledge about mental illness, decrease hospitalizations, reduce distress from symptoms
- Clients are given the Recovery Markers Questionnaire (RMQ) at baseline/entry into treatment and at 6 months post treatment

Some Key Questions For Us to Consider:

- 1. What are the goals of our project? Goals will drive the evaluation.
- 2. Is participation in the program evaluation mandatory?
- 3. What type of design will we use?
- 4. We are in a public community mental health setting: can we do an experimental design? Why or why not
- 5. What can we do to get qualitative data for our evaluation?
- 6. What are some ways to share our evaluation results? Who would you share them with?
- <https://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/I-felt-so--506234301.html>