
**EVALUATING NUTRITION EDUCATION:
STEPS FOR MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

Making Theory Work For You

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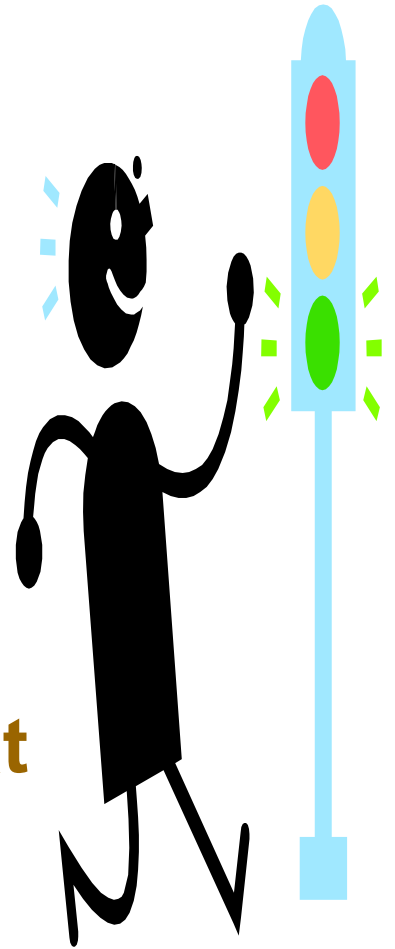
**FNS National Nutrition Education Conference 2
Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, Science, Community
Arlington, Virginia**

Theory – Definitions

- **General principle that explains or predicts facts or events (6th grade vocabulary)**
 - **Explanation for some phenomenon based on observation, experimentation, and reasoning (NASA)**
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Theory – What it IS

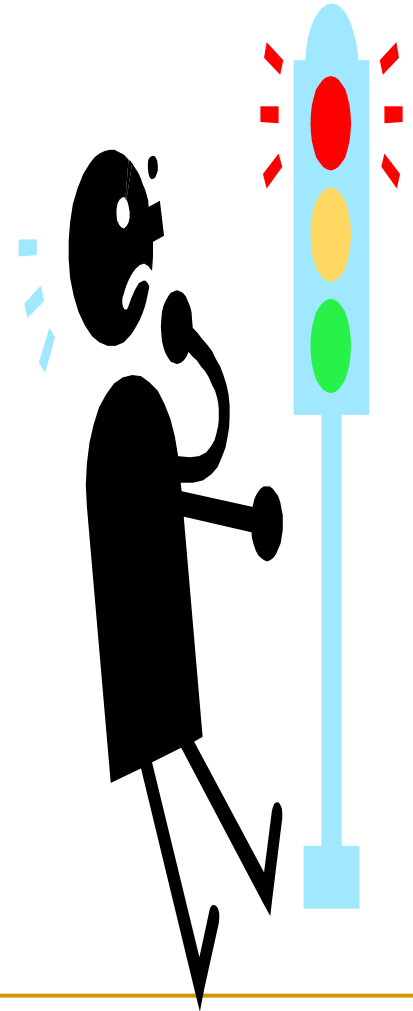
- Attempted **EXPLANATION** for observed facts or phenomena
- **PLAUSIBLE** or scientifically acceptable
- **DYNAMIC** – gains acceptance through testing in a variety of circumstances
- Model or idea that **PREDICTS** what will happen under different circumstances



Theory – What it is NOT

- **Fact**
- **Reality**
- **Applicable in all situations**

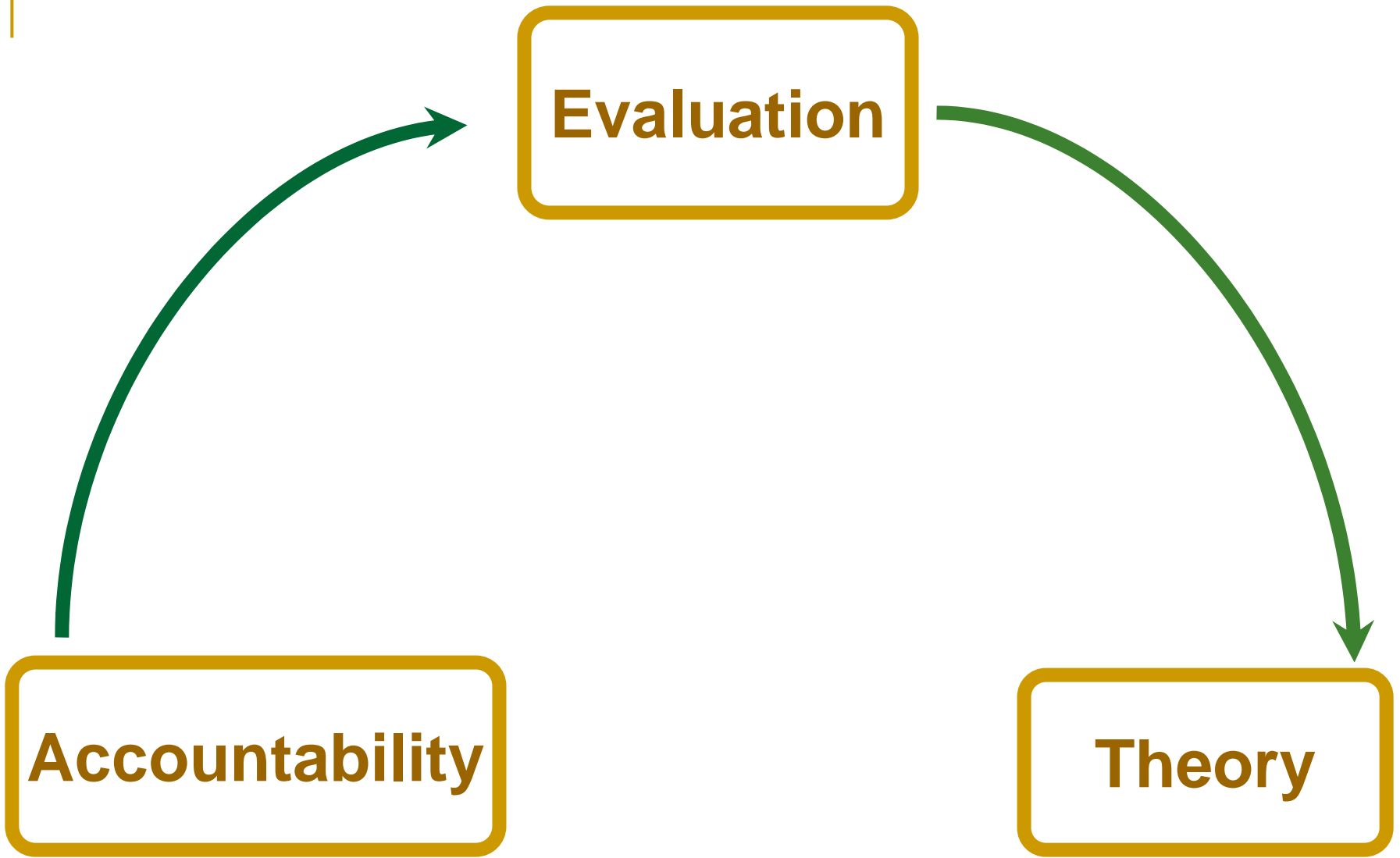
Every theory has limited application!



Evaluation

Accountability

Theory



Program Theory/Theory Driven Evaluation Can:

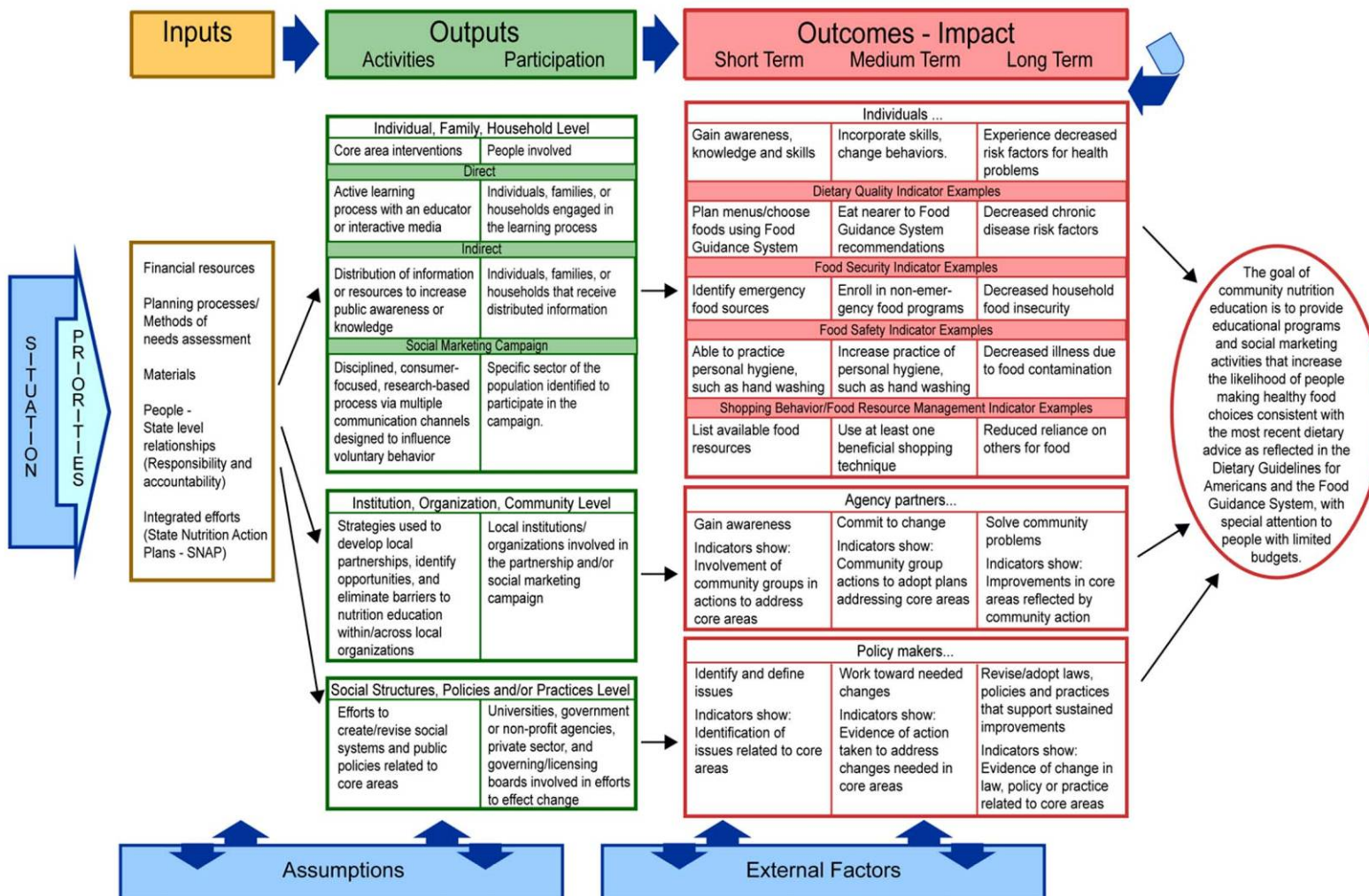
- **Provide a logic framework for planning data collection**
- **Claim a reasonable approximation of a causal explanation**
- **Help evaluators (and program administrators, supervisors, deliverers, others) understand and tell why and how a program works**

Program Theory =

Program Logic + Social Science
Theory

“Synthesis of both stakeholder program logic and social science theory to define what a program does, in what manner, and how much of an effect each goal and objective can have on the outcome.”

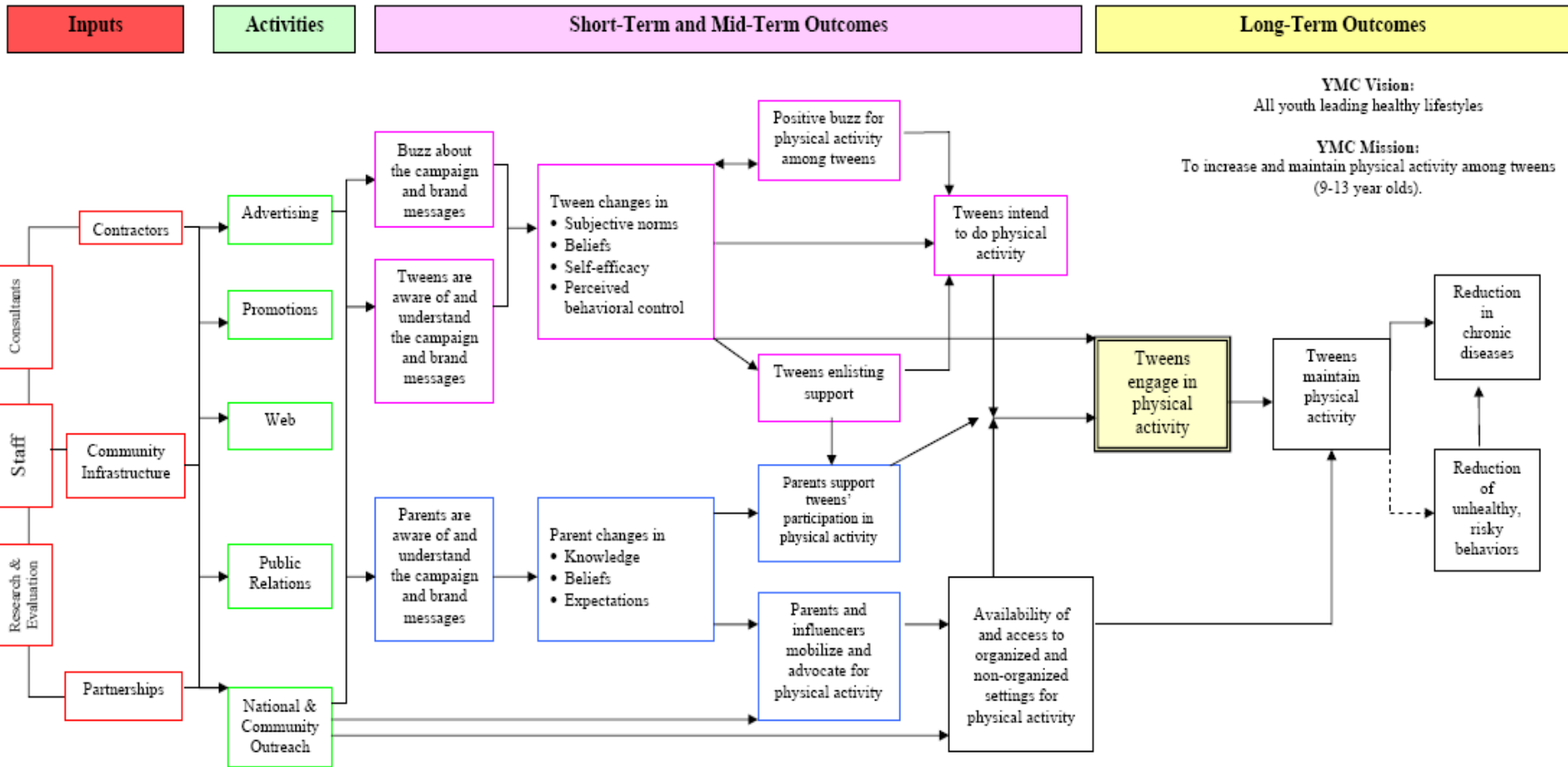
The Community Nutrition Education (CNE) Logic Model – Overview



The Community Nutrition Education (CNE) Logic Model – REVISED DRAFT, March 2005; Helen Chipman and CNE Logic Model Workgroup

For details on initial development see *J. Nutr. Educ. Behav.* 2005; 37:197-202

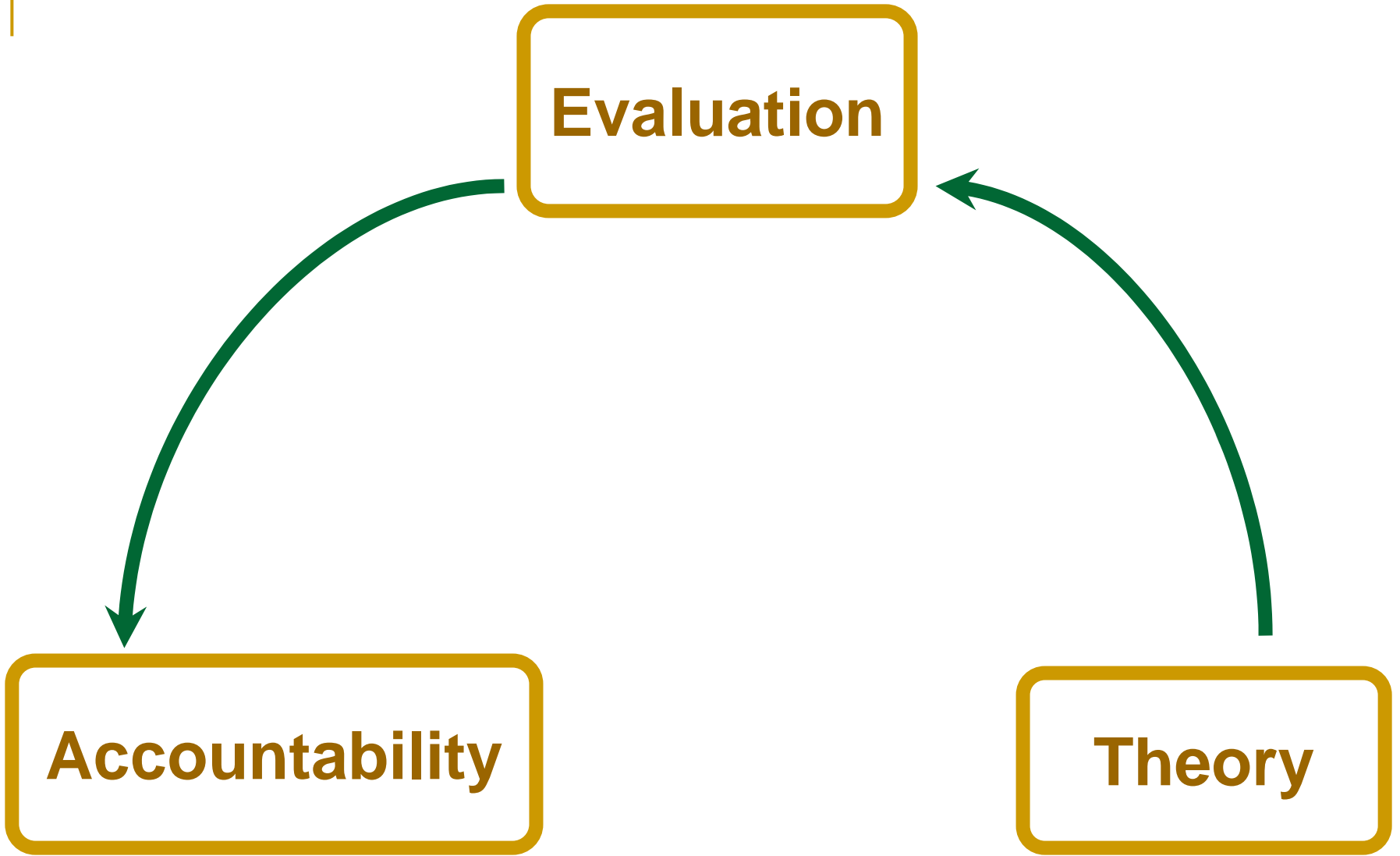
CDC'S YOUTH MEDIA CAMPAIGN, VERB™ LOGIC MODEL



Evaluation

Accountability

Theory



What about You?

- **Start where you are. Theory comes from:**
 - **Local knowledge and wisdom**
 - **Research and evidence base**
 - **“Best” or “Promising Practices”**
 - **Evaluation studies**
 - **Other lessons from the field**
 - **General social science theories of change**

What about You?

- **Contribute to the development, refinement, and/or testing of what is in place**
 - **Use insights gained at professional meetings to strengthen your program; build theory into your program**
 - **Assist with testing (Example - CNE Logic Model beta testing)**
 - **Raise questions with intent to build knowledge**
 - **Work collaboratively with others; share knowledge gains**
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Program Theory – Cautions

- Too much focus on outcomes
- Too little focus on testing theory
- Perfecting the key to the wrong lock
- Remaining static
(Attending to context only at the front end)



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 - **Administrators**
 - **Instructional Technology Specialists**
 - **You!**
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 - www.eval.org
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