Phase 5: Evaluation

This module describes phase 5 of the social marketing planning process, evaluation. On average, it takes people 20-30 minutes to complete this module. The time you need will depend on your pace and how much you explore the resources and supplemental materials.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to

- List the six steps for evaluation.
- Discuss how to engage stakeholders and why it's important (step 1).
- Discuss the program plan and explain why it's important in evaluation (step 2).
- Discuss what is meant by focusing the evaluation and explain the importance of determining the evaluation's purpose and identifying evaluation questions (step 3).
- Explain how to gather credible evidence and what to gather it on (step 4).
- Discuss options for evaluating the 4 P's (step 4).
- Explain what it means to justify conclusions (step 5).
- Discuss use of the evaluation results and the importance of sharing results (step 6).

Introduction

Phase 5 of the social marketing planning process involves developing a plan for evaluating the intervention. Work done in phase 5 should be coordinated with phase 4. You will likely be designing both the intervention activities and the evaluation plan at the same time.

It is important to have an evaluator on board throughout your planning process so they are familiar with your plans and so they can advise you about how your decisions will impact your evaluation.

In-depth coverage of evaluation can be found in several CDC resources
- CDC's *Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health.*
- *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook.*

This module won't get into the level of detail found in these resources, but we will go through the six steps that are described in both of these resources with the perspective of how social marketing fits with evaluation planning.

Tip

If you are looking for an evaluator, look for someone with specific training in program evaluation and a variety of research methods. Be aware, not everyone who has been trained in research methods has been trained in program evaluation.

Resources

- Evaluation Relevance
  CDCynergy: Social Marketing Edition shows the list of steps from CDCynergy and how evaluation is related to each of them.
- Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health
- Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook

Evaluation Purpose

The *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook* lists three purposes for evaluation[1]:

1. Gain insight (i.e., assess level of interest, identify barriers and facilitators): If you've completed phase 2 of social marketing, you've already done this. This type of evaluation is also called formative evaluation or formative research.

2. Improve a program (i.e., process evaluation). This type of evaluation lets you monitor the implementation of a program, enhance programs based on feedback, and understand how and why something happened. You would plan a process evaluation during phase 5 of the social marketing planning process.

3. Assess program efforts (i.e., impact evaluation, outcome evaluation, or summative evaluation). This type of evaluation would determine how well you are meeting your objectives and provide lessons learned for future programming. Phase 5 is the time to plan for an outcome evaluation.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation can help you (a) monitor whether your intervention was implemented, (b) monitor if your intervention was implemented as intended, and (c) determine how and why certain things happened as they did.

Outcome and Impact Evaluation

Decide what outcomes you'd like to evaluate from your program. Generally, interventions directed at nutrition and physical activity-related behaviors are not able to track the long-term health benefits that may occur. You may need to assess proximal outcomes that you can use to make a case for impacting health, for example, amount of fruits and vegetables eaten or amount of physical activity performed by the target audience.

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[1] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p 20

Steps for Program Evaluation

The six steps for evaluation are:

Step 1: Engage Stakeholders

Step 2: Describe the Program

Step 3: Focus the Evaluation

Step 4: Gather Credible Evidence

Step 5: Justify Conclusions

Step 6: Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned

Step 1: Engage Stakeholders

Step 1 of program evaluation is to engage stakeholders. The *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook* defines stakeholders as "people with a vested interest in a program and the future use of its evaluation."[2] It suggests that stakeholders can be broken down into four categories:[3]

- Implementers: those involved in program operations
- Partners: those who actively support the program
- Participants: those served or affected by the program
- Decision makers: those in a position to do or decide something about the program

If you've followed the social marketing process thus far, you should have a good idea of who your stakeholders are. As you embark on developing your evaluation plan, you should probably choose a subset of them to help with the evaluation plan. Think about who will use the results of your evaluation to make decisions about the program.[4]

> **Tip**
> Only ask for feedback about pieces of the intervention or program that you are able and willing to change.

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[2] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 9
[3] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 9
[4] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 9

Step 2: Describe or Plan the Program

Step 2 of program evaluation is to describe or plan the program. This is the work that you complete in phases 1-4 of the social marketing process. For example, in phases 1 and 2, you learn about your audience and the environment. In phase 3, you determine what the behavioral and intervention outcomes should be.

You should have already started working on a logic model by now. Use this time to add details. According to the *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, a logic model

- "Describes the core components of the program
- Illustrates the connection between program components and expected outcomes, and
- Includes pertinent information regarding program context (i.e., influential factors)."

The components of a basic logic model include: influential factors, inputs, activities, outputs, initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes, long-term outcomes, and your program's goal.

Resources

- Evaluation Guide: Developing and Using a Logic Model
- Logic Model Development Guide from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (PDF-1.3Mb)
- Evaluation Logic Models Selected Bibliography (PDF-36k)
- Example of Physical Activity Logic Model (PDF-209k)
- Components of a Logic Model (PDf-240k)

Step 3: Focus the Evaluation

The third step for program evaluation is to focus the evaluation.

Start by looking at your logic model and all of the potential things that you could evaluate. For each of the boxes, "Did this thing happen?" For each of the arrows between boxes, "Did this relationship occur?" "Did the relationship occur the way we anticipated?" There's no way that you can answer all of the potential questions, so you must focus the evaluation. Because evaluation resources are usually limited, use them wisely. Only try to answer the necessary questions to which you don't already know the answers.

Determine the Evaluation's Purpose

Knowing the purpose of your evaluation can help you focus your scope. It is possible to have multiple purposes, but you should determine what you want to know at the end of the evaluation. For example, do you need to measure the impact your program had to get additional funding?

Tip

You don't have to evaluate every piece of your program or intervention. Instead, focus on the most important pieces, or the pieces that you are able to change.

Identify Evaluation Questions

Once you have determined the purpose of your evaluation, identify the evaluation questions you need to answer. You can think about evaluation questions similar to how you developed research questions in phase 2. Like research questions, evaluation questions are broad. They are not the specific questions or items that might appear on a survey or interview guide. However, research questions helped you identify information you need for program design, while evaluation questions are used for program implementation.

Example

Examples of evaluation questions include
1. Was the target audience exposed to the intervention?
2. Did members of the target audience who were exposed change their behavior?
3. Did behavior change occur the way we expected?

Stakeholders can help you prioritize these questions, but different stakeholders can have different priorities and they may conflict. Some criteria you can use to focus the evaluation are
- Amount of resources available.
- Amount of resources needed to get an answer.
- Willingness to change as a result of an answer (if you are unable or unwilling to make a change once you know the answer to a question, don't spend resources trying to answer).
- What you already know (e.g., don't spend resources asking questions you already know the answer to).

Evaluation questions will be determined by the type of evaluation you are conducting (process or outcome). Evaluation questions for the process evaluation relate to inputs and activities found in your logic model as well as program context issues that affect inputs and activities. Evaluation questions for an outcome evaluation relate to the effects of your program on initial, intermediate, and long-term outcomes in your logic model.[5]

Need to review? See [Phase 2: Write Research Questions](#).

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[5] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 21

Scenario 32

Rosa: "Bob and Tiffany are having a minor dispute over the evaluation questions. I gave the two of them the task of coming up with a draft list of the activities and outcomes that we want to measure in our evaluation. But, Bob thinks Tiffany is trying to measure too many things and some of those things just aren't going to be important to him. But, she's the expert, right?

Well, I took a look at the list she was proposing and, you know… I think I may agree with Bob on this one. There are too many items here – we'll never be able to measure all of these things.

But, what do I do now? How should I cut back?"

Select the advice you would give to Rosa.
1. Ask Tiffany to cut down the list based on what isn't as important.
2. Consider your needs for the evaluation. What stakeholders prefer is important, but you also need to make sure you get what you need from the evaluation. Determine a purpose for the evaluation and then see if any of the questions can be eliminated.
3. Don't try to cut back. You should measure everything that you can because you may need it later.

Feedback:
1. This would be **poor advice**. Cutting the list based on what Tiffany thinks is important won't be as useful as figuring out what is important based on program goals and your evaluation's purpose.
2. This would be **good advice**. Determining a purpose for the evaluation and basing your evaluation questions on that purpose can be a useful way to cut back on extraneous evaluation questions.
3. This would be **poor advice**. Focus your efforts and resources on evaluating the pieces of your program most important to you and your stakeholders.

Step 4: Gather Credible Evidence

The next step in your program evaluation is to gather credible evidence. Here is where you will develop a data collection plan to answer your evaluation questions. The process for this step is similar to the data collection that you do in phase 2, formative research. You will need to identify

- Who will answer questions.
- Method for answering.
- Data source.
- Evaluation design.
- Logistics.

You'll need to decide how you will collect information. Because you may be measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, you should plan to have a good set of baseline data to know what people are doing before any intervention activities take place.

Next, you should have a plan for how all of the evaluation data are going to be used. If you don't know how the answer to any particular question will be used, then don't ask it. The data you collect in the evaluation step can (and should) be used not only as a marker of how you did, but also as formative data for the next phase of your program.

Need to review? See [Phase 2: Collect Data](#).

One addition to the data collection in phase 5 is the use of indicators, which were not part of your formative research data collection. An indicator is a description of a characteristic or change you expect you see that shows progress you are making toward achieving a specific outcome. In other words, it is what you will measure. Some examples include

- Minutes of physical activity.
- Amount of fruits and vegetables consumed.
- Number of volunteers.

In addition to your indicator, you may want to develop a "performance indicator," which is a goal for each indicator. This sets the bar for what will count as success; for example, 15% increase in minutes of physical activity per day; 2 cups of fruits and vegetables per day; 25 total volunteers.

The following table is an example from the *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook* that includes information from a Kids Walk-to-School program. Constructing a table like this can help you organize your evaluation plan.

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Performance Indicators
To what extent does program implementation use community resources?	- Number of volunteers. - Longevity of volunteers. - Total volunteer time. - Description of volunteer activities. - School resources contributed to program.	- Administrative records. - Volunteer activity logs. - Key informant interviews.	25 volunteers total, including five core volunteers. - Total volunteer time meets need. - Volunteer activities meet need. - School contributed to program.
What effects has the program had on schoolchildren?	- Number of days walked or biked to school in past week. - Children's attitudes towards walking to school (three question scale for parents and children). - Children's scores on traffic safety test.	Surveys of parents and children (before and after the program).	15% increase in number of days/week children walked or biked to school. 20% increase in Likert scale average of three attitude questions. 30% increase in children's traffic safety test scores from baseline.
Has the program had any effect on other community members?	- Community members' knowledge of physical activity recommendations. - Community members' intentions to exercise. - Community members' exercise in past 7 days. - Community cohesion scale.	- Community household survey (before and after the program or after the program only). - Key informant interviews.	50% increase in community members' knowledge of physical activity recommendations. 20% increase in community members' intentions to exercise. 10% increase in community members' exercise in past 7 days. 15% increase in community cohesion scale.
How has the program affected the community's barriers to walking?	- Description of original barriers to walking. - Description of barriers to walking after the program. - Quantity and quality of advocacy efforts.	- Walkability survey (observations). - Key informant interviews. - Volunteer questionnaires.	- Qualitative improvement in walkability barriers. - Planned advocacy efforts were conducted.

What to Measure for Social Marketing Programs?

Before we move on to Step 5, we'll spend some time talking about the specific things you might measure in a social marketing program.

Monitoring the Program

First, monitoring is especially important in a social marketing program. Monitoring is a type of process evaluation that keeps track of how the intervention is being implemented and allows you to get audience/ participant feedback to make adjustments in the intervention as needed. If you plan to monitor your program, you must also be prepared to make changes mid-course depending on what you find. You may want to monitor

- Program implementation: Is the program being implemented the way you designed it?
- Effectiveness of strategy and activities: Are they having the effect you expected?
- Other possible changes: Are there any unintended consequences from your program? Any unrelated activities?
- Feedback from both participants and implementers: What are the responses to the program or intervention? Does anyone see any problems that need to be fixed?
- The program's reach: Are you reaching the people you intended to reach?

Once you identify something that needs to be fixed, take steps to fix it. Monitor the audience at key points and to make adjustments in the program as necessary to keep it as effective as possible. However, make sure that your adjustments are addressing real issues, not just a component of the program that someone may not like.

You may want to monitor feedback from both participants and non-participants. Participants can give you feedback about the actual program, what they liked, and what could be improved. Non-participants from your target audience have a different perspective and can provide valuable information on why they did not participate. They may not have heard about the program, or there could have been other barriers to participation that you didn't account for in your initial planning.

Example

Program planners in Lexington, Kentucky evaluated the 2004 VERB summer scorecard program by interviewing their target audience and secondary audience to get feedback about the program. They got input from both people who participated and those who did not. Then they took the feedback and made changes in the 2005 scorecard program. For example, they heard from parents that it was difficult to get their children to and from events. So, program planners partnered with the local bus system to use the program's materials as bus tokens so they would have reliable and free transportation to and from events. For more information about Kentucky's planning process, see this case study. (PDF-971k)

What to Measure for Social Marketing Programs?

It can also be helpful to think about evaluation for social marketing in terms of the 4 P's. The marketing mix is a unique component of a social marketing plan and the next few sections talk about evaluating each part of the marketing mix.

Evaluating Product and Price

As part of your marketing strategy you identified a product to offer to the audience and the price for "buying" that product. Your evaluation could be used to determine if the product and its related benefits were acceptable to the audience. Also, you may want to evaluate how well you minimized the costs to adopting the behavior; for example,

- Did the audience understand what you were asking them to do?
- Did they attempt the behavior?
- Did they adopt it?
- Were the benefits enough to persuade them to overcome the costs?

You'll also probably want to keep tabs on the competition. Did anything happen during the course of your program that would increase the audience's desire to participate in competing behaviors? For example, did the prices of unhealthy items in the vending machine drop? Did something happen to persuade legislators to adopt a policy opposing the one you were advocating?

Resources[6]

- *Measuring Program or Campaign Exposure*
  See the chapter found in *Evaluating Health Promotion Programs* by Thomas W. Valente.
- The Pink Book
  National Cancer Institute

Evaluating Place

Another aspect that you may want to add to your evaluation is the idea of place. Were you successful at putting materials and messages in the places you identified? Were those places the best ones to reach the target audience? Did the audience have easy and convenient access to any tangible products or services you offered them?

Evaluating Promotion

The final P is promotion. When evaluating promotional activities that include commercials, media placement, and communication campaigns, keep exposure in mind. How many people were exposed to your program? Did you reach the right people (i.e., the segment of the audience that you tried to reach)?

In evaluating promotion, remember to address all of the ways you promoted your program which may include methods other than advertisements or mass media approaches. For example, how well did word of mouth work? How did the participants hear about the program?

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[6] Resources that are not hyperlinked can be found at:
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/socialmarketing/training/resources.htm

What to Measure for Social Marketing Programs?

Along with the 4 P's, you should think about how to measure both behavior change and/or environmental and policy changes, depending on the focus of your program.

Measuring Behavior Change

Look back to the behavioral objectives you established in phase 3. You will want to place measures in your evaluation plan to see if your behavioral objectives were met. You may also want to measure any precursors to behavior change (i.e., intention, knowledge, skills, self-efficacy). If you completed a logic model to describe how you plan for behavior change to occur, you may want to evaluate the different steps in that logic model. Did your logic model accurately describe the process of behavior change for your audience?

Measuring Policy and Environmental Changes

If your program was designed to create policy or environmental changes, this is something you'd want to evaluate as well.

Once a policy or environmental change has been enacted or implemented, you probably want to evaluate how well the implementation and enforcement occurs and if the changes make a difference to the end user. For example, if your program's objective was to add sidewalks in a low-income neighborhood, the evaluation is initially straightforward. Did the city council vote to approve funds for installing sidewalks in the neighborhood? If so, were the sidewalks installed? You may want to go beyond that step if you have enough resources and find out if neighborhood residents are using the sidewalks and if they are walking more now than they were before.

Resources[7]

- A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy
  Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Issue Topic: Advocacy and Policy Change
  Evaluation Exchange
- Article: *Promoting evidence-based public health policy: Can we have better evidence and more action?*

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[7] Resources that are not hyperlinked can be found at:
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/socialmarketing/training/resources.htm

Step 5: Justify Conclusions

The fifth step of program evaluation is to justify your conclusions. *The Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook* suggests that you analyze data and interpret the results in this step. This is the time for you to compare your results to your performance indicators (the standards you set for success) and see how successful you were. You may also want to think about whether there were any alternative explanations for your results.

Step 6: Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned

The final step in program evaluation is to ensure the evaluation is used and to share lessons learned. Here you can prepare the tangible products of evaluation (recommendations and reports), share them with stakeholders and other appropriate audiences and follow up to promote their use.

If you performed a process evaluation, make sure you use the results to improve the program as it is implemented, and the next time it is offered. If you received positive outcome evaluation results, share your successes widely.

If you didn't receive such positive results, look at your data to see if you can figure out why. You may need to conduct further qualitative research to help understand the results. Don't shy away from sharing those results with your planning committee. They can provide important information you'll need to improve the program, or help you see that you may need to stop the program altogether. Either way, the information can contribute to the literature and evidence base.

Tip

It's very important to learn from your evaluation results, even if they aren't as positive as you hope. Use the results and future research to determine what went wrong, and what might need to be changed or adapted. Or, you may find that the program simply isn't working, even with adjustments. It may be necessary to revisit the entire strategy, or let go of a program that isn't successful.

Scenario 33

"Well, it looks like our evaluation plan is coming together nicely. After the one bump with Bob and Tiffany, things went pretty smoothly. We heard from our stakeholders and now we've got an idea of what activities and outcomes we'd like to measure.

Tiffany is busy working on developing some survey questions to track our outcomes. We're also planning to do some informal interviews with our participants to get feedback about the things they like about the program and what they would like to see changed. And, Tiffany had the wonderful idea that we should probably also check in with people who AREN'T participating to see if there's anything we can do to reach them.

I think I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel!"

Summary

You should now be able to
- List the six steps for evaluation.
- Discuss how to engage stakeholders and why it's important (step 1).
- Discuss the program plan and explain why it's important in evaluation (step 2).
- Discuss what is meant by focusing the evaluation and explain the importance of determining the evaluation's purpose and identifying evaluation questions (step 3).
- Explain how to gather credible evidence and what to gather it on (step 4).
- Discuss options for evaluating the 4 P's (step 4).
- Explain what it means to justify conclusions (step 5).
- Discuss use of the evaluation results and the importance of sharing results (step 6).