eTA
Evaluation Technical Assistance

EVALUATION Compass

FALL 2007

Let Evaluation Technical Assistance Be Your Compass

The Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) Evaluation Research Team (ERT) is ready to point you in the right direction toward effective program evaluation. The ERT provides DASH-funded partners with evaluation technical assistance (ETA) including consultation, tools, and resources. Look for ETA news and tips in future issues of the *Evaluation Compass.*

CDC DASH ERT Staff: Karen Debrot, Catherine Rasberry, Evelyn Finch, Leah Robin

CONTACT

E-mail
ert@cdc.gov

Phone

Karen Debrot
ERT TA Coordinator
CDC DASH
770-488-1037
bol6@cdc.gov

Leah Robin
ERT Team Leader
CDC DASH
770-488-6187
ler7@cdc.gov

Evaluation Is Critical to Program Success

ERT is available to provide customized ETA to help funded partners with a variety of evaluation tasks, including DASH expectations. Funded partners are expected to:

- Describe, understand, and plan their programs;
- Document what has happened in their programs; and
- Improve their programs.

Evaluation helps funded partners:

- Plan program activities
- Monitor program progress
- Improve program implementation
- Document program achievements
- Make program decisions
- Justify the program to funders

The ERT is prepared to assist funded partners in successfully navigating these and other evaluation tasks.

Across the Nation, ERT Has You Covered

The DASH ERT is staffed with dedicated professionals trained in public health and educational program evaluation. ERT is based in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The staff located at CDC is the primary point of contact for ETA. A group of ERT professionals also is located at the Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education (RMC) in Lakewood, Colorado. ERT team members work together to provide DASH-funded partners seamless access to ETA.

RMC ERT Staff: Pat Lauer, Tracy Harnetiaux, Anne Milliken, Jill Elnicki, Carolyn Horcher, Tessa Crume

Compass Point #1: SMART Objectives

The road to evaluation success typically begins with writing objectives that describe desired results and how they will be achieved. Well-written objectives help set program priorities and targets for progress and accountability. Objectives are called "SMART" when they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-phased.

- **Specific** objectives provide the who (target population) and what (action/activity) of program activities.

- **Measurable** objectives focus on how much change is expected.

- **Achievable** objectives are attainable given the program's current resources and constraints.

- **Realistic** objectives address the scope of the health problem and propose reasonable programmatic steps.

- **Time-phased** objectives provide a time frame indicating when the objectives will be met.

For a handy Goals and Objectives Checklist, go to http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm#3 and click on Evaluation Brief 3.

Compass Point #2: Hands-on Training is Just a Click Away

Online tutorials are among the many tools available to help funded partners improve their ability to evaluate their programs. Tutorials provide training on topics related to DASH evaluation expectations. They are designed to build skills so that funded partners can better describe, plan, evaluate, and improve their programs. The tutorials contain interactive exercises, review pages, and downloadable resources and examples.

The tutorials currently available at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation include the following:

- **Writing Good Goals and SMART Objectives** Provides information on formulating goals and SMART objectives to plan and describe programs.

- **Logic Models 1: The Basics** Provides information for planning and developing a logic model to describe a program and guide program evaluation.

- **Logic Models 2: Constructing a Logic Model** Provides information on how to develop, revise, and maintain a logic model.

Resource Zone

CDC DASH Program Evaluation Expectations
http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/expectations.htm

A web site that describes the evaluation activities that CDC DASH expects of funded partners.

CDC Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health
ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Publications/mmwr/rr/rr4811.pdf

A practical, non-prescriptive tool designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation.

Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health Programs: A Self-Study Guide
http://www.cdc.gov/eval/whatsnew.htm

A guide based on the *CDC Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health* that contains step-by-step guidance and worksheets for evaluating programs.

Writing Good Goals and SMART Objectives

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Writing Good Goals and SMART Objectives tutorial available at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/resources.htm#4