FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION

What is process evaluation?

Process evaluation is how you measure "What happened?" Process evaluation allows you to determine if the intervention was delivered as intended. Sometimes it is referred to as outputs (what was done or what was produced) as opposed to outcomes (what was changed).

What is outcome evaluation?

Outcome evaluation is how you measure "So what?" Outcome evaluation should determine whether what was done (process evaluation) actually changed anything and whether your objectives were reached.

What is typically measured in a process evaluation?

Process evaluation commonly includes measuring aspects of the implementation like number of participants (per session if multi-session program), demographics of participants, dates of delivery, amount of time spent in direct delivery, what content was delivered, and fidelity to implementation plan. Other methods like getting participant feedback after a cycle of a program through a questionnaire or focus group are also process evaluation. For environmental strategies, process evaluation may include number of meetings about a policy, number of compliance checks, records of media exposure, or number of sobriety checkpoints.

What is typically measured in an outcome evaluation?

The most common and appropriate way to measure the outcomes of a program are through pre- and post-testing. These pre- and post-tests typically contain questions for students that are grouped into measures that should be research-tested and valid. Changes in the responses to these answers indicate whether there were changes in knowledge, beliefs, or behavior. In some cases, demonstrating that a skill was learned may be the outcome measured.

How do process and outcome evaluation work together?

There are several important ways these two types of evaluation can be brought together. One example is if your outcome data was not as positive as hoped, you can refer to your process evaluation and see if part of the reason may be that the program was not implemented as planned. Even if the plan was implemented correctly, looking over both sets of data may inspire some potential improvements for the next time the program is implemented. Another conclusion may be that the program simply is not effective for your target group. Another example may be if you have some inconsistent data where one group had much better data than another. Analyzing fidelity records may show that differences in the way the program was implemented may account for these varying results.