



Turning Point

TREATMENT • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

How do I know if it's going to work?

Some simple ideas for evaluating your program or activity,
that don't require a lot of time or money.

Dr Naomi Crafti
naomic@turningpoint.org.au

easternhealth



MONASH
University

MYTH 1: Evaluation is an extraneous activity that generates lots of boring data with useless conclusions



MYTH 2: Evaluation is about proving the success or failure of a program



MYTH 3: Evaluation is a unique and complex process that occurs at a certain time in a certain way and almost always includes the use of outside experts.



A 'Culture of Evaluation'

- Daily informal personal reflection
- Weekly reviews
- Special-effort evaluations of particular activities
- Monthly collective issue-pooling sessions
- Annual 'what have we achieved' and 'where are we heading' workshops
- Comprehensive program 'stocktakes' every 3-5 years

Why Evaluate AOD Programs?

- To improve the design or implementation of a program (e.g. Can our Art Therapy groups be improved?)
- To make informed decisions regarding the allocation of scarce resources.(e.g. Would it be better to deliver 10 sessions to 5 people or 5 sessions to 10 people?)
- To identify factors that influence client outcomes. (e.g. which elements of our day program are most effective in reducing harms associated with drug use?)
- To generate knowledge, to know what works and what does not. (e.g. Does NRT reduce irritability of smokers in an inpatient facility?)

Steps in Program Evaluation

- **Step 1: Engage Stakeholders**
- **Step 2: Describe the Program**
- **Step 3: Focus the Evaluation Design**
- **Step 4: Gather Credible Evidence**
- **Step 5: Justify Conclusion**
- **Step 6: Ensure Use and Share lessons Learned**



Data

- **Qualitative vs Quantitative?**
- **Surveys**
 - Hard copy? Electronic? Telephone?
- **Observations**
- **Existing Documentation**
- **Interviews**
 - Key informants
- **Focus Groups** – uses group interaction to generate data and insights that would be unlikely to emerge in individual interviewees

Simple Evaluation Techniques

- Focus Groups
- Lessons Learnt Workshops
- Writing and Keeping Journals
- The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique



Focus groups (1)

- **ORID METHOD**

- Observation
 - Insights
 - Reflection
 - Decision
- Provides participant and stakeholder experiences
 - Requires facilitation skills/facilitator independence
 - Requires skills in analysis
 - Requires getting a small group of people together in the same room at the same time!

Focus Groups (2)

- Start with Welcome and rationale
- Icebreaker
- Outline of ORID process including group guidelines
 - STEP 1 : Listing Observations (What do you remember?)
 - STEP 2: Reflections (What did you like/dislike about this?)
 - STEP 3: Insights (Why did this work/not work?)
 - STEP 4: Decisions (What Changes are needed?)
- Having completed the R-I-D for the first O, go to the second observation and repeat the process until you have completed all of them.

Lessons Learnt Workshop

- Project stakeholders share their insights and experiences of a project.
 - What worked well in the project?
 - What could have been improved in the project?
 - What should be done differently next time?
- Best facilitated by someone external to the project.
- Can include project target group representatives.
- Someone should take notes/record the event.
- Write a report to document the findings.
- Summary (or report) should be shared with participants and/or publicly.

Writing and keeping journals

- What is a journal?
 - Memory
 - Promotes thought
 - Reflection
 - Focus
 - Self-understanding
 - Time management
- Framework
 - Description/Additional information
 - Reflection
 - Action



Harvesting our journals

- *Are there experiences, situations or understandings that stand out for us?*
- *Does what we have written in our journals still ‘ring true’?*
- *What is missing?*
- *Are themes emerging?*
- *What can we learn from our journals?*



The 'most significant change' technique

- The 'story' approach.
- A good way of identifying unexpected outcomes
- Requires no special professional skills
- Delivers a rich picture of what is happening in a program

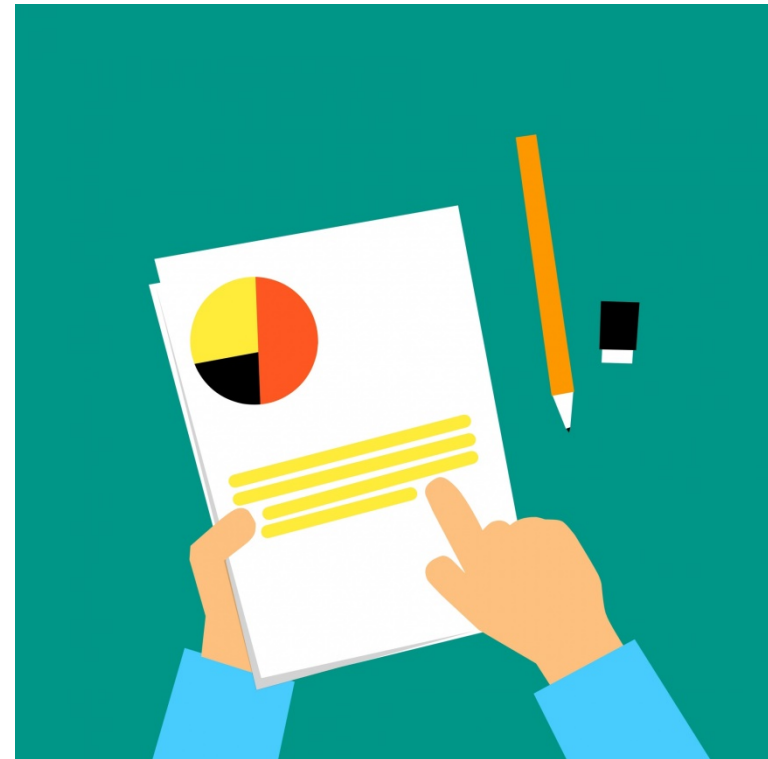


Ten Steps to Implementing MSC

- Establishing champions and getting familiar with MSC
- Defining domains of change including ‘open window’
- Defining the reporting period ‘*Looking back over the past 3 months...*’
- Collecting Significant Change stories (*e.g. Since the beginning of this Recovery Group, what do you think was the most significant change you made in your life/drug use/relationship with your family?*)
- Selecting the most significant of the stories
- Feedback the results of the selection process
- Verification of stories
- Quantification
- Secondary Analysis (themes/attributes)
- Revising the System

Reporting

1. Executive Summary
2. Clear description of the initiative/program
3. Statement of purpose
4. Explanation of the methodology
5. Findings
6. Conclusions
7. Appendices



Dissemination

- Meetings of stakeholders
- Conference presentations and/or events
- Newsletters or other publications
- Publishing in scientific journals
- Posting links on relevant websites
- Using Social Networking sites



“There are five key variables that are absolutely critical in evaluation use. They are in order of importance

People, people, people, people and people.”

