



Missouri Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant

Participatory Evaluation

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Participatory Research/Evaluation Good Grief, Something Else?

- A type of evaluation that can *inform* and *improve*
 - Planning
 - Implementation
- A type of evaluation that can become
 - A natural part of what you do
 - Necessary for quality programming



Which?

- Participatory Research/Evaluation
- Participatory Action Research
- Action Research
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Participant-Oriented Evaluation
- Participatory Action Learning
- Participatory Learning-Action
- Participatory Action



Participatory Action Research/Evaluation

- Participatory
 - Collaborators, stakeholders and evaluators take active role
- Action
 - Conducted while programming is ongoing
- Research/Evaluation
 - Information (data) is systematically gathered
 - Reflection (judgment) and revision

Participatory Action Research

- Action research is a flexible spiral process, which allows action (treatment) and research (knowledge) to be achieved at the same time.





Origins

- Social science research into cultures and communities (Lewis, Parry, Ong)
- Critical pedagogy and community empowerment (Freire, Fals-Borda)
- Recent focus – political nature of PAR (Berger, Chambers)

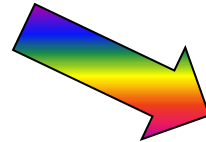
Four Phases

- Question arises out of practice
- Examine systematically
- Reflect on outcomes
- Change based on reflection

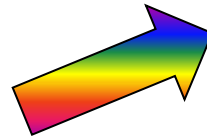


Collaborative Design and Implementation

Collaborators



Evaluators





Closer Look at the Four Phases

1. Question Arises from Practice, Experience or Research

- What was our goal?
- What worked (or is working)?
- What didn't (or isn't)?
- With what group?
- Under what conditions?
- With what treatment?
- At what time?
- What do we have a question about?

2. Systematically Examine the Question

- Write the question
- Design a way to collect data
- Design your tools
- Implement
- Collect Data
- Analyze
- Reflect



3. Reflect on Outcomes

- What did we want to know?
- What did the data tell us?
- What does this say about what we need to do next?
- How do we change our implementation/program based on what we found?


4. Change Implementation Based on Reflection

- Adjust one part
- Offer the program again
- Repeat the process – question, systematic examination with data collection, reflection, adjust program



Example

- Your teen intervention program is targeted to at-risk teens
- You offer several activities – information, social activities, community efforts
- Teens come to these events
- Are you reaching your targeted teens?



Example – Systematic Examination of Teen Population

- Sign-in sheets
- Teen surveys
- Demographic info
- Informal discussions/interviews
- Look for repeat participation/new participants
- (Database of information)
- Human Subjects Issues!



Example - Reflection

- Large group of teens come because friends do
- Transportation is a factor
- Best attended events are parties
- Some teens are repeaters, several one-timers
- One ethnic group is represented in repeaters group
- Did we reach our target group?



Example – Changes to Programming

- How would you adjust this programming to address what you found?

Example – Offer Programming Again

- Offer programming with adjustments
- Collect data
- Reflect
- Does it work this time?
- What other questions arise?



Your Turn

Determine one part of your project with which you could conduct participatory research/evaluation.

What question would you ask?

Who would you involve?

What data would you collect?



Challenges

- Diverse questions may be asked across groups within a project
- Time is needed to educate participants on developing measurable questions and data collection strategies and processes
- Quality of data may be compromised



Challenges – Continued

- Program staff's focus is on implementation of program, not evaluation
- Potential misalignment with funder goals and/or state and national indicators
- Evaluator maybe perceived as the outsider trying to influence programming

Cautions – Working With External Funder

- Funder must buy in to this design
- No quick outcomes – primarily formative information
- Evaluation design changes over term of the project – Evaluator must buy in to the design!



Advantages of Participatory Action Research

- Buy-in from participants for program evaluation
- Data collection is distributed over many people
- Data are focused on your unique situation and context
- Builds internal capacity for ongoing internal evaluation (sustainability and institutionalization)



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