Welcome to the World of Evaluation
Learning Objectives

- At the end of the session, I hope you will understand:
  - Defining characteristics and uses of evaluation
  - Some differences between internal and external evaluation
  - The evaluation requirements of the MHSA
  - The role of logic models in evaluation
  - Some pros and cons of performance measures
What do you think of when you hear the word:
Defining Characteristics of Evaluation

- Systematic data collection and analysis
  - Interviews
  - Surveys
  - Observations
  - Program records
- Systematic selection of data sources (people or other sources)
- Focused on use
Why do evaluation?

- Learn how to improve our programs or initiatives
- Learn what works (and what is not working)
- Help program consumers or intended beneficiaries have their voices heard
- Be accountable to funders, the public, and other stakeholders
- Identify lessons that can be used in other sites or other programs
An Evaluation Context (fictional)

- Great Northern Region Foundation develops and funds an initiative of nurse home visits to new mothers.
- The initiative is intended to increase the mothers’ knowledge and support the infants’ development.
- The initiative is launched in a diverse set of communities in northern California, each with its own culture.
- The foundation decides that it wants an evaluation.
Scenario 1: Internal Evaluator

What is wrong with this picture?

- The foundation’s internal evaluator, Mr. Natomas, is responsible for evaluating the initiative’s effectiveness.
- He asks the nurses in the program to tell him which mothers have had the best outcomes.
- He calls some of the mothers that the nurses identified and has informal conversations about their experiences.
- In his final, 300-page written report, he concludes that the initiative was highly successful.
Scenario 2: External Evaluator

What is wrong with this picture?

- The foundation contracts with an external evaluator, Ms. Bannon, whose previous experience focused on rural communities in Montana.

- Ms. Bannon decides to gather information through a 10-page survey of the nurses. Out of 100 nurses participating in the initiative, only 15 finish the survey.

- She analyzes the data and concludes that the initiative needs more resources to support the nurses.
External and Internal Evaluators

...Either/OR?

...Or Both?
RPC Internal and External Evaluators

- **My role as internal evaluator**
  - Support RPC as part of Sierra Health’s role of administrative entity
  - Lead the selection of the external evaluator and facilitate the external evaluation
  - Help RPC with establishing performance measures for monitoring awardee performance

- **External evaluator role**
  - Gather in-depth information
  - Provide independent perspective
  - Work directly with awardees
MHSA Innovation Funding Evaluation Requirements

- Contribute to learning

- Sacramento Innovation Plan Learning Goals:
  - *Goal 1*: Learn whether a community-driven process promotes stronger interagency and community collaboration
  - *Goal 2*: Learn whether the community-driven process leads to (a) increased quality of services and (b) better outcomes
Next Steps for Evaluation

- October 18 RPC meeting:
  - Identify priority performance measures
  - Provide input on draft RFP for external evaluator

- November-December:
  - RFP for external evaluator released
  - Performance measures discussed with grantees

- January-February:
  - External evaluator on board
Changing gears...

... to logic models

An example – a person is hungry:

- **Resource**: Food
- **Activity**: Eating
- **Outcome 1**: Feel better
- **Outcome 2**: Increase concentration
- **Outcome 3**: Improve performance
What is a logic model?

- A picture to show how resources and activities are linked to program outcomes
- Can be used in planning a program
- Can be used to describe an existing program
- Characteristics:
  - Usually on a single page
  - Usually linear (first resources, then activities...)
  - Can include other information:
    - Participants
    - External factors
    - Statement of the problem being addressed
Simple Logic Model

HOME (Home Ownership Mobilization Effort) - Zoom-In Model

**Resources**
- Volunteer educators
- Schools and faith institutions
- Lenders and local businesses
- Champions for neighborhood revitalization
- Social capital of community residents

**Activities**
- **Education:**
  - Presentations on benefits of HO
  - Credit counseling
  - Loan application assistance

- **Neighborhood Organizing**
  - HO support groups
  - HO maintenance support services
  - Neighborhood organizing council

- **Partnerships:**
  - Business alliance
  - Collaboration with lenders

**Short Term Effects**
- Desire to own home
- Understanding of credit ratings
- Loan applications

**Mid Term Effects**
- Improved average credit rating
- Increased loan approvals
- Increase in first time buyers
- New buyer sense of competence
  - Pressure to change illegal lender practices
- Improved appearance of housing stock

**Long Term Effects**
- Percent of owner occupied housing increases
- Increase sense of stake in community by residents
- Increased interest in neighborhood investment by businesses
- Increased neighborhood organizing
- Expansion of business alliances

**Community residents active in community affairs**
- Residents work together on community and personal health and safety issues
- Economic revitalization of the community

Source: Community Toolbox (www.cbt.ku.edu).
Logic Model Benefits

- Starts a conversation about how our actions get us to what we want to achieve
- Is a simple way to describe a complex program
- Provides a basis for a work plan for implementation
- Provides a framework for evaluation
- Helps identify performance measures
Logic Model Pitfalls

• Programs/initiatives evolve
  → logic models need to be kept up-to-date

• The “logic” of programs is not always linear
  → logic models need to be culturally and contextually appropriate

• Different stakeholders have different perspectives about the way the program works
  → logic models can be used to develop a common understanding of the program

• Does not tell you whether you are doing the right thing
  → Logic models do not stand alone – monitoring and evaluation are also needed
Use of RPC Logic Model

• Guide the evaluation by:
  – Providing a framework for evaluation questions
  – Giving an overview of the RPC to external evaluator
  – Maintain focus on Innovation Plan Learning Goals and RPC intentions

• Help identify meaningful, high priority performance measures for monitoring

• Serve as a resource to others unfamiliar with the purpose of the RPC
## Innovation Plan Logic Model – Guiding Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Immediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What resources does the RPC have?</td>
<td>What does the RPC do?</td>
<td>What happens as a direct result of the RPC’s actions?</td>
<td>What happens as a result of the immediate outcomes?</td>
<td>If the RPC is successful in its immediate and intermediate outcomes, how is society changed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Logic Model Development

- Using questions on table stands, discuss RPC outcomes
- Write the key outcomes on cards, using
  - Green for immediate outcomes
  - Pink for intermediate outcomes
  - Yellow for longer-term outcomes
- Include who or what is affected by writing a code on the card
  - C = Mental health consumer or caregiver
  - P = Mental health provider
  - S = Mental health system
  - So = Society
- Put cards on wall
- Resource: List of outcomes generated in earlier meetings
Performance measures – from June 5 Meeting Discussion

- Self identified benchmarks/performance measures
  - Grantees put forward benchmarks
  - RFP won't have tight specifics
  - Allow room for negotiations
  - Grantee must I.D. they know where they are going

Support
What are performance measures?

- The evidence for the items in the logic model
- Usually very concrete, for example:
  - # of people in the target population who were served
  - % of consumers who gave high ratings to the care provided
  - % reduction in unnecessary psychiatric visits to the emergency department
Pros and Cons of Performance Measures

- Simple way to monitor performance
  - ...but does not capture all the qualities of a program
- Easy to communicate progress (or lack of progress)
  - ...but does not explain what supported or hindered progress
- Easy to compare across sites or projects
  - ...but does not consider differences across sites
- Provides accountability
  - ...but can focus programs on inappropriate goals
    - *What gets measured gets done.*
Identifying Key Measures of Performance

- Do the measures reflect the elements of the logic model?
- Are the proposed measures clear about what kinds of information would be provided?
- Will the information be useful to you (the RPC) in gauging the success of the funded services?
- How feasible are the measures in terms of the effort on the part of the service providers to gather and report the information?
Next Steps – October 18 Meeting

- Review organized logic model
- Discuss external evaluator RFP
  - Guiding questions
  - Qualifications of external evaluator
- Identify priority performance measures