

FTS-HRSA OA

**Moderator: Patricia Kota
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10:45 am CT**

Coordinator: Thank you all for standing by.

At this time, I'd like to remind all participants that the conference call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect.

You may go ahead, ma'am.

(Dora Ward): All right. Greetings everybody - to the Technical Assistance Call for our (unintelligible) grantees about evaluation.

I'm (Dora Ward). I'll be - from the Georgia Health Policy Center. I'll be sort of moderating this call. I would like to apologize for the technical difficulties everybody has experienced and really thank everybody especially our speakers for hanging with us and - so welcome and greetings.

We have today a great panel of speakers. We have Ruth Mohr who is an evaluation consultant and she's Chair - the Co-chair of the Health Topical Interest Group with the American Evaluation Association.

We have (Diane Manuel), who is with the California Endowment. She's the Co-chair of the non-profit and foundations (TIG) at the AEA.

And we have (Sarah Martin) who is an independent evaluation consultant but recently is with the CDC.

I really want to thank everybody for - thank our speakers for being able to talk with us and I guess I'll go ahead and turn it over to you. Do you want to start Ruth?

Ruth Mohr: I can do that.

Good afternoon everybody.

Woman: Hi.

Ruth Mohr: Greetings from beautiful Michigan today.

So I just want to say I've actually typed up my comments so I could send them on to you if that would be of any use.

I understand that those of you who have joined us this afternoon hope to leave today's conference call with some insight into developing and maintaining a relevant and technically solid evaluation within the resource constraints of your program or some thoughts on how to use evaluation to help generate new funding. In other words, to build sustainability for your programs.

I'm going to start by addressing elements relevant to both sustainability and developing a high quality evaluation. And then follow this by some thoughts

on addressing challenges related to resource other (considerations) relating to your program.

I'm going to be referencing the PowerPoint slide that you were able to download for this call. But if you didn't and you don't have them, don't worry. I mean it's not going to be critical to understanding anything that I'll be talking about.

Program sustainability and high quality (goes back) on how well you're meeting your goals and how you can improve your processes are two really important issues. They're distinct but they're ultimately related.

The ability to address both of them (versus) from the same foundation blocks of your program. If you have the slide, you could go to Slide 2 now.

Woman: Excuse me.

Ruth Mohr: Yes?

Woman: Question. Is there a way that we can have that slide shows sent to us since we were not - it was not available.

Ruth Mohr: That slide show is available now on the HRSA Web site for the TAP call.

Woman: At what site? Which site and can you give me the address, please?

Ruth Mohr: Not right this minute but before the end of the call. I'll announce it. And (unintelligible) why don't we save questions until the question-and-answer period because we're a little short on time?

And I can send another copy to (Dora) when I send the - my comment.

So anyway, the foundation blocks that I was referring to are your programs mission, vision and goal. That these are the guide posts for what you do and how you do it. And these underlie both sustainability issues and evaluations planning.

Being to able to identify and convey the extent of mission and vision that led to your specific program and its goals is important both for communicating the programs importance to new sources of funding and for developing an evaluation that will give you useful information.

While evaluation finally can play an important part in providing information that you can use to talk with program funders both (unintelligible), it's important to remember that interactions with funders are likely to have a significant political component.

For example, to new funders, your program as an important one in meeting important needs of your community. Well investing in it reflects well on them.

This sort of information is directly related to how they understand your mission, your vision and your program's goals.

If you can't convince a funder of the underlying importance of your program for solving an important problem in your community, all the evaluation data in the world is unlikely to convince them to invest in it.

Having this clear sense of what you want to accomplish through your program, the mission, vision and goals and how you intend to do this also forms the foundation...evaluation plan.

There's a tool that you may already be familiar with that helps programs and their stakeholders document the, what do we intend to accomplish and how do we intend to do this. It's the logic model.

This tool can vary in format but it conveys the logic of your approach to the problem. Developing this can promote useful discussion between program staff and other stakeholders.

And ultimately, the document generated provides both a reference for assessing progress for your desired outcomes and a schematic for explaining your program and approach to others including potential funders.

Many evaluators are skilled in working with program staff and stakeholders to develop such logic of program models. And this is because having such a model is a valuable assistance in identifying the questions that an evaluation needs to address and when data should be collected to answer these questions.

Starting evaluation planning from a model developed and agreed upon by staff and other important stakeholders (unintelligible) should leave them to owning the evaluation and its findings. In that way you hopefully don't have a report that ends up sitting on a shelf.

Slide 3 if you have them, having laid the foundation for where evaluation needs to come from, where the evaluation questions need to come from, by discussing the foundation blocks of the program, its mission, vision and goals,

that's moving in the process of developing a high quality evaluation within resource and contextual parameters.

As well as being owned by staff and important stakeholders, evaluation needs to be well integrated with the rest of the program so that the questions asked in the findings are useful to program staff and other important stakeholders.

And this would move us to Slide 4 again if you have it.

Well, I want to raise a note of caution. And that (unintelligible) needs to be important to the program's goals. And be a bit cautious about building an evaluation center and what potential funders might be interested in if this is likely to divert you from your program's focus.

It really is true. What gets measured is what gets done. That's also what is deemed to be important. You could end up changing the focus and the direction of your efforts by focusing on what a potential funder might want to know if it's not quite the same thing as what you thought you were headed towards in the beginning.

However, having cautioned you, I want to briefly mention an approach called return on community investment which might help you speak to potential investors in your program.

I don't know if you are already familiar with this or not. In trying to engage public and private partners, ask the right questions at the right time to judge whether a (unintelligible) effort is worth it and to attract new revenue. And it's also intended sort of along the way during the process to generate trust between the (unintelligible) to generate trust between the public and the private sector over time by creating mutual expectations for outcomes.

And a source to start from if you aren't familiar with this approach can be found at the (unintelligible) he's joined an action Web site. And I think rather than giving you that reference, I'll just (send) it along with that (unintelligible) I'm sending.

Another caution is that you can't evaluate everything. There needs to be a way to prioritize which (unintelligible) addressed. And decisions about what gets addressed should not be made by an evaluator in isolation. It really needs to be made by program staff, program leadership, a (function) with the evaluation folks.

How much you can evaluate also will be affected by the type of evidence that needs to be brought together to answer the question posed.

Who is the audience for this report? How strong an evidence base is needed that the findings are trustworthy and that they can be used for making decisions?

Other important consideration is when is the information needed? Can the question be answered at the level required and the time that's available?

Now, let's address a bit how to look at constraints on developing a high quality evaluation. And this would be Slide 5 if you have them.

Prioritizing the questions to be addressed is certainly one way and I had just (unintelligible) in that one. And others are, develop a partnering approach to evaluation. This would involve identifying an evaluation expert either an individual or a group to work with you in your program and develop a plan for

involving both the evaluator and the program staff that uses the skills and the time of both of these groups to the best advantage and fits your budget.

An example of this, you can have both - a representative from your staff and evaluators involved in developing the overall plan. Evaluators might develop the instruments that could collect the data, evaluate and analyze the data. You have to report that then both evaluator and staff worked on to interpret the data.

Or you might decide to use data analysis techniques that both fit your need in terms of evidence strength and that staff can come to carry out. So you wouldn't need an evaluator to necessarily do that part.

Another thing that you could do is to convene a evaluation advisory committee of experts and stakeholders to provide expertise and insight particularly (unintelligible) aspects of the program and particularly challenging questions that you're trying to answer.

We use this when I work with Michigan's comprehensive (unintelligible) control program and we had a person from the Michigan Department of Community Health Unit that was administering the CDC grant as well as the person who had carried out studies of collaboration between organizations because this approach was heavily dependent on developing collaboration between (unintelligible) Control Program throughout the state.

We also had enough epidemiologist with experience in cancer studies so that - because we wanted to look at health outcomes. There are people we could go to for health and planning and when we had difficult questions that arose.

Another thing you could do is to use existing data sources or known to be of high quality when you know they're relevant to your question and your situation then you don't have to sort of expend the resources to go after data and to develop, you know, a reliable and valid method of doing this.

Again, with the comprehensive cancer program, since we were looking for health behavior changes on the state level, we could use the behavior (unintelligible) status data. And we also (worry) with the piggy bank from additional questions onto the (BRFS) survey.

Another time we were able to get some cancer diagnosis-related cost data by establishing a relationship with the University Research and then work with a Medicare intermediary that handled the claims from Michigan.

I won't say this last one was easy or fast by any means because it takes a long time to get Medicare to be willing to work with you on anything.

As leaders of your programs, it's really important that you be clear to those evaluating your program how could data will be used and when it's needed. The bane of evaluator's existence is to work really hard on a report and then have it shelved. We really want evaluation findings to be useful.

And Slide 6, this is just summarizing. The three most important points that I'd like you to take away today, the first one, be really clear what your program is about. This is important for both the evaluation and for talking to potential investors and a logic model can be very helpful here.

Second, be clear about what questions you want the evaluation to address. Prioritize, determine how strong an evidence base is needed and be realistic about what you can learn in the time you have available.

And the third one, structure your evaluation approach with any constraints or challenges in mind. Prioritize the questions to address, partner your evaluation expert and your staff, convene an advisory committee, use existing data sources when possible.

So that's really the extent of the comments that I have today. In the slide set, I've also included some sources of information that might be of interest to you if you're hiring an evaluator to work with your program or if you just want to understand evaluation a little bit better.

The AEA Web site reference has information on principles that should guide the evaluation practice and some information on practitioner's evaluation. The Michigan affiliate of AEA also has a Web site that can be reached through AEA. There are a number of affiliates across the country. At least Michigan does also list possible evaluators, others may do so also.

The evaluation center at Western Michigan University has a lot of information including checklist and various aspects of evaluation including those from managing evaluation. And I listed those specifically with relevance to the beginning of the process like developing a budget and contracting with an evaluator.

It's been great talking with you. And if you have any other questions, my contact information is listed in the slide set. As was noted earlier, I am co-chair for the Health Evaluation Topical Interest Group of AEA so I do field questions on the area from time to time.

Thank you. I wish you all much success in your program and I'll be delighted to hear any questions that you have later.

(Dora Ward): Excellent. Thank you so much.

Those of you who have been listening to our TA conference calls on an ongoing basis might recognize a lot of themes in these presentations around connection between sustainability and evaluation and demonstrating your value to potential investors in your program so this is a really great evaluation perspective on that question.

As I've said, what's - do save questions for the end so let's move onto (Diane), if you want to go ahead with your...

(Diane Manuel): Okay. Hi everyone.

I have PowerPoint too. I guess (Dora) was able to send it out.

I'm just going to walk through that a little bit. This is a revised PowerPoint that we had a consultant who work with us, the Academy of Education and Development in D.C. They've work with us for some training on - training with our program staff here at California Endowment.

Just so you to know, the California Endowment is a - it's a health foundation and we only make grants in California. It's the biggest health foundation in California and we primarily do our work through community, so through the community work and currently we're really focusing on policy and systems changes.

This - let's just walk through the presentation and I think I'm going to highlight some of the things you've just heard so things wont be new to you. And I think one of the first things program staff needs to think about is the

stories you want to tell. And talk about figuring out how to prioritize those stories; list them out and then think about what opportunities or issues do you want to learn more about.

And that's an opportunity I think to work both inside the organization and during an evaluation and trying to tie it into what's going on in the outside world. Often I tell our grantees that having an evaluator is like having their own personal coach and that person is able to sometimes provide insights and pinpoint opportunities that they wouldn't normally see.

And then I think one of the biggest issues I think people need to think about is who's your audience? Who do you want to tell the story to? Do you want to tell the story to a funder? Do you want to tell a story to your Board? Do you want to tell a story to the media?

I think what I want to accomplish today is talk about some objectives and hope you'll be open to what you hear and to think about translating findings into sharing it with your stakeholders and your - and media and whoever are important in your communities.

And I think that key thing about evaluation was, I think it helps at least our grantees is that it helps put together a systematic process. So it helps people I think come out of the floors a little bit and think about their priorities and their issues and what they want their organization to look like down the line.

It helps them use work on it - work in an informed way. It helps people I really think identify successes and challenges, things they hadn't talked about before just because sometimes they are too often in the day to day work. It helps people to think about their program effectiveness and it also helps identifying new approaches.

And that's something that is very important to the Endowment. We usually don't fund the same thing over and over again.

There's just this slide, it's just a framework - you see this framework that our consultant had included in this training. I think the two big steps that I think are really important and I think it was reflected earlier is the importance of really focusing the evaluation design and to make sure whatever you get out of that that they're usable and they're able to be shared.

One of the things we have asked our program staff to do when they work with applicants and our grantees is to think about their - really understanding the program, think about their inputs, their activities or output and their outcomes so that there can be a creation of a logical link, some logical steps that doesn't, you know, how do we say this? We recognize that a lot of the work is very complex. Our work is complex but (unintelligible) that grantees do, more complex than applicants do and complex...

And somehow I think what an evaluator's added value to that team can be is to help - people just kind of take a step back and think about their lives (unintelligible) they want to do.

One of the things that's very important to the endowment and I would think to everyone is that the objective needs to be developed in the context of the community and the population we're working with.

And for us, for example, in California the variety of populations and community work on us are pretty vast (unintelligible) vast. And so I think we ask our grantees to think about that and think about how they're going to be doing their work in a realistic and a very flexible manner.

Also being open to unexpected outcome, just for example, we're working on obesity prevention project with schools to get sodas and competitive foods out of schools. And one of the unexpected outcomes is the - are the collaborative and the coalitions working on this started their work around the same time but California required all foods to have a wellness policy.

So some of our grantees were able to insert some language that directly apply to their grant and to their school wellness policies and that was something they brought back to us and were able to talk about and we're able to take advantage of it from much broader perspective.

And that again that reinforces the ability to remain flexible and that understanding that different methods might be needed to understand these things.

Also for example, contact specific factors and I think that goes into somehow, I think focusing your work and understanding populations, geography, culture. And I think for all of us here and working in health policy and systems that's in California, there's such a variety of just not cultural issues but geographical, populations, for example. And citing our obesity project, most of our sites are five or six sites in an urban area. And we have one site that's in a very rural area.

And I think for us understanding what's going on there is very important because you'll understand that working in a rural community and for example doing community designed is probably very different, you know. They don't really lack open spaces. They lack open spaces that are useful to their community whereas in urban areas, you just may lack space that may be useful for their communities to use.

Understanding organizational priorities, I think that is so important. I think, you know, you've already heard about talking to your program staff, talking to your Board, other people funders who are key to your organization who may not just be right in front of you; understanding and looking for opportunities and understanding resources to constraints. Good evaluations can take a lot of money and they don't have to take a lot of money.

So I think, the more people set their priorities, I think the easier it is to do. I think understanding the activities in your projects what will help or hinder the ability of the project to accomplish goals, again what do you don't want to tell others and the audience for your story, a discussion of what the project will accomplish.

And I think thinking about this in very, very, very concrete terms. Previously, I used to work at a museum. We listen to evaluations of educational programs and sometimes some of my biggest frustrations was getting people to be very specific about what the outcome it is they expect of their program.

And I use to tell my boss at the time the more unclear they are, the more expensive the evaluation because it just takes a lot more effort to collect a lot more data that may not even be relevant to what you - the story you want to tell.

Elements and evaluation of objective, I think being clear about the objective what the inputs are, what activities you are planning and again means that they think about the outcome.

As Ruth was saying, it's, you know, it can be elements of a logic model. We use logic models here. We also call them work plans, strategic plans. I'm not

really tied to the nomenclature. I think I'm more tied to people being clear about what they want to do.

Smart objective, this is something actually that our program thought that was very helpful to them that if their evaluation objectives were very specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and then also time specific.

(Unintelligible) of evaluation questions, I think the things I want to comment about here is not all of this because I think everyone knows this. But I think really understanding your stakeholders are and what is the political and cultural environment right now and how - is there an opportunity to capitalize on that environment to further your work.

Again to getting toward the end it's important to prioritize the information, again sighting a logic model as an example, understanding the philosophy of your team and understanding also that people might have differing agendas and questions that they may not be - not everyone maybe supportive of the evaluation.

This, you know, at the end of the day some people - it maybe frightening to them. They're not sure of what it will turn out et cetera, et cetera. By trying to figure out how to frame it so it's taken in a positive light in terms of learning and program improvement.

Again staying focused on the purpose of the evaluation activities. If, you know, there's a zillion things, I think programs do, projects do, initiatives do. How do we make sure - I think it's really important to make sure that it's focused and you collect the data, you're using your time in a wise way to answer those questions.

It's also an opportunity to improve organizational effectiveness, and again, sharing findings, and examining the values, I think those values are embedded in there.

A little bit about cost, I just listed some things that contribute to the cost of an evaluation and stuff (unintelligible) evaluation and project staff data collection, and analysis and report writing type of data, qualitative, quantitative, complexity of the issues, and if it's not focused. And then understanding what people need in terms of buy-in, again, who's bought into the evaluation? Who's not? Who's concerned about it? What are the benefits? I think that's a great way to spell it.

And then, you know, the communication with stakeholders. Do you research? What is important to them? What do they want to hear about? How do you frame what you're doing in a way that they could understand it and appreciate it? How do you share your findings?

My position is to always identify one big issue. Don't expect people to care about multiple things. What's the big thing that they want to hear about? Who's interested? Of course, your allies. But also, who are your enemies? And what your sound byte? What's the big takeaway? Things you want to know. It's like, what do you want people to take away from the work that you're doing?

That's it. I can - I guess we're going to take questions later.

(Dora Ward): Thank you very much.

I think that's the sound byte piece, the what story do you want to tell piece is a nice thread that comes through there -- a lot of good material there. Thank you very much.

(Sarah), do you want to go ahead with this?

(Sarah Martin): Sure. After hearing, it's sort of interesting being third and trying to decide what's left to tell because both presenters have presented useful material and covered some real important and basic facts about evaluation that I could also cover from just a third voice. But I won't try to be redundant of things that they said.

I will say that as an independent evaluator for what I call peanut because I do things at a little cost, so I think evaluation can be done, add a little cost and I'll try to share some of that perspective over my 10 to 15 minutes. But I would like to tell you what I have on the Web site, where that comes from.

As (Dora) mentioned in the introduction, really everything I put on the Web site represents my work as a member of the CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. And in the Physical Activity and Health branch, I help to develop the physical activity evaluation handbook. But again, the principles of evaluation are crosscutting, and both presenters have covered them well.

I can of course tell you about the CDC 6-step framework for evaluation. I was interested to hear what (Diane) just suggested was some of the most important parts of that. I was very curious what she'd say.

I would say the most important part of the CDC framework is Step 2 because that's where you describe your program. And when describe your program, everybody can come on board and understand and what you're doing is

describing your program, and planning for your program, and the evaluation at the same time. So I'm jumping right to a take-home point rather than making any sense.

My take-home point is that as you plan program with your stakeholders, you're also planning for your evaluation, and that's where those logic models come in so handy. If you plan your program, people come to that program with ideas about what they'd like to achieve or the outcomes they'd like to see. And you can work backwards from those outcomes and decide, "Okay, if I want to see improve physical activity levels, what am I going to do, and how am I going to do that and work backwards and create a logic model?"

In so doing, people like I say get on board, the evaluation is framed because you cannot process questions all along those inputs and activities that are at the beginning of your logic model, and then outcome questions which are the end of your logic model, and lead to your goal.

So, with that said, let me again tell you what's on the Web site for your perusal. There are three things that we put up there.

One is a PowerPoint called Evaluating Community Intervention. And I would call that my Evaluation 101 talk, and it does cover the principles that Ruth and (Diane) have already covered.

And then there's another document called Planning and Evaluation ICPACH which is the International Congress of Physical Activity and Public Health, a presentation that a couple of us did there that talks about how you can't do evaluation in a community setting without first doing some community engagement and really working with people there, getting to know people there, fitting your theme into their existing priorities and issues. And so really

doing community engagement work first and then think about planning and evaluating a specific program that fits with your mission. But you need to have that meld with the community's larger mission. So that's the second PowerPoint presentation on the Web site for you.

And third, there's an article in preventing chronic disease that I wrote that covers the CDC 6-step framework for evaluation, running through an example from a local health department person evaluating a physical activity program. And so, what I'll do now, I'm sorry I'm not making sense but my point is to try not to be redundant and not to talk off of my PowerPoint because those are there for you. But just to see if I have - you can hear again my perspective on what I think are some key things to mention. One thing I don't remember hearing is the purpose of evaluation and how it's different from research. I think a lot of people are afraid of evaluation or afraid they might not know how to do evaluation.

In everything I've ever done for the CDC, I tried to tell people and explain to people that they know a lot about evaluation more than they're probably aware of. Like for example, if they ever bought a car, they do the evaluation. They help, you know, help decide what car to get. And you can even take that example further and think, you know, "How did I decide what car to get?"

Well, you'd probably start it with your evaluation questions. Do I want good gas mileage? Do I want a nice color? Do I want the right size and features that will be useful?

So you can start with those questions and then you'll have to find some indicators to the answers to that and some data sources. So if you want to know if it gets good gas mileage, you might use an existing document. I heard people talk about, you don't know if need new data, you can use

existing data. Perhaps you could go online and find out the mileage that the car gets. So you use existing data, like consumer reports could probably give you that information.

And then if you want to know they have it in the right color, you do what you call observation. You actually go to the car lot and see if they have the car and the right color.

So, and then, if you want to know you can get - ask if, you know, ask others, knowledgeable others. You can call that key informal interviews, talk to people, learn about the car.

So really, you know, if you've bought a car or if you've bought a house, or if you've bought anything big or small, you've done evaluation. It's not necessarily anything difficult but again, there are key principles and things to keep in mind.

So what I wanted to say is evaluation's not research because the purpose is so different. Evaluation is used to improve your program. You can think of quality - continuous quality improvement. You get to evaluate as you go, that is process evaluation prior to your outcome evaluation, see how the process is going, see how the early outcomes are going, and you can adjust the program along the way, even as early as the process. So you can tweak your program and make it better and improve your chances of success.

When you do research, you can't touch your intervention once it started. If people were doing a drug study for example, you wouldn't want them to alter the drug partway through and then say it worked. I mean, you want to know about the drug as is, does it work or doesn't it work? So research is to

generate generalizable knowledge but program evaluation is to make judgments about your own program and to improve your program.

And so really the purpose is quite different between evaluation and research. And it doesn't mean that one is better than the other, but they're different, they are for different purposes.

So, program evaluation is very important. The results that you get aren't necessarily generalizable to other community, but as you've already heard from (Diane) that 6-step is to ensure use and share lessons learned, certainly one community can learn from another, but they have to do formative work in their own community to make a program work somewhere else.

So I guess that's another important point I could make is the importance of what I call formative assessment, some will call it formative research or formative evaluations. But again, it's all these jargon, if you think of the word formative, you're forming your ideas for your program to teller it to your community. So that early work is very important.

Now, if I try to think of anything else we haven't covered. Oh, the evaluation standards have been touched upon but I'll review those forth for you. When you're doing evaluation, you want to first ask yourself, will this evaluation be useful. So, the word utility or usefulness are useful. Utility is the first evaluation standard and you don't want a correct information that's not going to be used.

The second is, well, they're not in any particular order, but feasibility. If you were collecting obesity rates, you know, if you used underwater weighing, that would give you your most accurate way of getting body fat. But if not

very feasible, people won't get dumped underwater for you in a community setting, and you don't have a (don't think).

So feasibility and accuracy are two other standards that is, as you can see, kind of counterplay one another. The more accurate sometimes are less feasible. The more feasible like asking people how you can weigh, that's pretty easy to do but not necessarily the best accuracy. So you have to come to a balance between feasibility and accuracy.

And one of the ways to satisfy that balance is to collect data in more than one way. We call that - I call that triangulation. So if you ask people height and weight, that's one way of doing it. And then if you actually measure that the height and weight sort of redundant but that be a second way of doing it. That's not a good example. Actually, you can have them pick diagrams on the silhouette of their weight status, that would be a second method. And somewhere between what they said and what they circled would probably be closer to the truth. By - so by collecting two sources, you get closer to the truth which means more accurate.

So we have feasibility, accuracy, utility, and the fourth is propriety or ethics. So no matter what you do, of course, you have to be fair and ethical to everyone involved.

So those four standards, utility, feasibility, accuracy, and propriety are important to keep in mind. Every time you ask your stakeholder, you know, "What do you want to know?" And they'd say, "Well, I want to know if people's weights change or whatever." You have to ask yourself, you know, "Is that going to be fair to ask in ethical? Is that going to be useful if we find that answer? And is there a feasible to do it that's also going to be accurate?"

So you can see where those standards come in handy for everything.

The other thing important to think about as you're engaging your stakeholders in doing that community work upfront, there can be a lot of different questions that people want to ask, a lot of different outcomes that they're hoping to find. You know, they want your programs to solve all the problems of the world. So it's us and your role to sort to narrow down and prioritize questions.

And you can do that by thinking about the program itself and where it is. Is it in its planning stage, is it still new, then you can only ask very early questions and do that formative assessment work. If it's in the implementation stage or it's just started off and running, you probably can only measure some short-term objectives. And then if it's been running a long, long time, sometimes we have existing programs that go on and on and we wonder why. Now it's time to do not just the longer-term outcomes to see what effects we've got, but also some process measures to see what's really happening behind the scenes to lead to those results and can it be tweaked and improved to have better results.

So let's see, as I go through the Preventing Chronic Disease article that's online there, see if there's anything else that they wanted to cover that hasn't been covered.

Oh, with the CDC 6-step framework, there's the steps I want you to know are not necessarily have to run in that order. The first three steps, engage stakeholders, describe your program, then focus on the evaluation. You could start by focusing your evaluation, then bringing the stakeholders you need, then describe your program. Or you can start with the description of your program to engage in stakeholders and then focus on the evaluation. So those

first three steps are very iterative and fluid and can be in any order that makes the most sense for your program.

The fourth step is gathering credible evidence. And I think that in the PowerPoint and in the article, I have a grid that shows how you can put together your evaluation questions with some indicators, data sources, and performance measures or objectives to find out if you, you know, find the answer to your question. And again, I use more than one data source, more than one indicator to triangulate and try to get closer to the truth in my answer.

Trying to leave time for questions, so let's see if I left anything out.

I guess somebody touched on evaluation designs. With program evaluation, we have the choice of a myriad of evaluation designs. Pre-post - one sample or pre-post two sample, or time series, or lots of things. But I think what's most common and sort of a hopefully of pre-imposed, sometimes not even a pre, but pre-post one sample testing the community having the interventions. It's hard sometimes to find the comparison community when you don't run an intervention.

Of course, if you do find a comparison community willing to have measures taken, you do strengthen your design and feel more sure about the results. But I think it's very common just to do a one-sample evaluation. And that is fine because, remember, you're doing this evaluation to improve your own one-sample program. So it's okay if you just measure your own program as long as you use what you find to make decisions about your program and to improve it along the way.

So this is only one other point I can find that hasn't probably already been covered which is the ensure - with regard to ensuring use. I think it's very

important that you think about how you're going to ensure use. If you make recommendations about what to do next that are action-oriented, that will certainly help.

So as you, you know, as you find - as you get your data together and analyze it and find out what results you've got, you should reconvene your stakeholders, share those results, and come to a consensus on what you're going to share, and what kind of recommendations you can make.

These recommendations can be to the decision-makers, you know, continue funding the program or to change the program, or even abandon the program sometimes is the best - ouch - approach. Sorry about that. So it's important to ensure use not just things that is going to be used, but by making recommendations, you help to ensure its use.

And also, I remember Ruth saying, you know, that we don't want evaluation reports just sitting on a shelf. Well, we need to design evaluation "reports" if you will in a way that they won't sit on a shelf. Maybe that the reports are something as simple as a one-page summary or maybe five bullet points, it all depends who they're going to. So if you produce a report, think about its format and its style and its length, depending who you're going to give it to. You may need more than one report for various people that are interested in learning what you learn. Some only want five bullet points or less.

So I think I'll stop there because time is running short. And again, I hope that resources that are on the Web site are helpful, and sorry I was sort of convoluted, but I didn't want to be redundant. Thank you.

(Dora Ward): That's great. Thanks a lot. I think that expanded on a lot of the most important themes.

As you said, let's go straight to questions. You'll just state your name and where your program is and go ahead and ask any questions you have.

(Harold): My name is (Harold) (unintelligible) at (Winsboro).

There's been several Web sites referred to. Could we get the addresses for the Web sites?

(Dora Ward): Yeah, let me go ahead and give that. That - the Web site is <http://networkassist.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov>. And on that Web site, you will then go to your program and go to the TAP Web site, the Technical Assistance Program website. And...

(Harold): Okay. Repeat the dots in that address again, please.

(Dora Ward): [Networkassist.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov](http://networkassist.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov). And let me correct myself, that is the technical assistance Web site. So on that Web site, you have a link to all the call materials, and in a few days, we'll put up the transcript for this call as well.

I understand with at least one of the PowerPoint, there were some trouble pulling it out, but we'll make sure that all the materials that the speakers have referenced are in working order.

(Harold): Okay. Now, the lady prior to this lady reported to an organization known as AEA and a Web site for that. What...

Ruth Mohr: That information will be on the - on my PowerPoint slide. This is Ruth the Michigan.

(Harold): Okay.

Ruth Mohr: Web site is there.

(Harold): But it will be on the networkassist.

Ruth Mohr: It will - it should be on the networkassist, right. It (unintelligible) and I can give you - it's www.eval.org -- V-A-L-O-R-G.

(Harold): That will work. Is that .com, .gov?

Ruth Mohr: It's .org.

(Harold): Oh, okay. Oh, okay.

Ruth Mohr: But it will be on the PowerPoint slide.

(Harold): Okay, thank you.

Ruth Mohr: You're welcome.

(Dora Ward): Okay, thanks. Next question?

(Jennifer): Hi. I'm (Jennifer) from Twin City Hospital in Dennison, Ohio.

And our program has to do with improving people's fitness and their behaviors about fitness. And one of the evaluative measures we are planning, you know, to do was - has to do their weight, pre-imposed program, their

cholesterol, pre-imposed program, their blood pressure, and things that such as that.

You know, it seems like it's effectively easy way to evaluate. You know, is there are other things that we can do, you know, other than just those sort of, you know, concrete measures that can help to evaluate the success of our program?

(Sarah Martin): This is (Sarah).

When you say a fitness program, you're jumping of course right to the end, right to the outcomes that are most obvious. The, you know, the components of fitness, their body (comps), their aerobic endurance, if you want to add maybe a field test that has them walk a mile or do a step-test to get their aerobics fitness -- things like blood pressure, cholesterol are all associated with increased physical activity. So what you probably want to do to improve your chances of success and learn more about why or why you didn't get those results is think about precursors to those.

So think about, you know, did their attitude toward exercise change. Or did they find a buddy to exercise with that help sustain their activity. So I would look for earlier things that are associated with being active. So, you know, just, you know, norms or attitudes or beliefs or knowledge or support like having a buddy or like doing self-monitoring or having cues to action like leaving your sneakers out on.

So, a lot - I can - I could, you know, I would set up a logic model and say, "Okay, if fitness is my outcome, how am I going to get there?" Okay, they're going to exercise more. Well, how am I going to get them to exercise more? All right. And why are they going to want to? Things like that.

So I would try to work backwards. That way when you are done, you won't end up saying, "Well, we improved some people's fitness but not others," and no more than that. You want to know a lot more than that. So there's a lot of earlier questions you can ask.

(Jennifer): Okay. Thank you. I wasn't speaking that broadly.

(Sarah Martin): Okay. Okay.

(Jennifer): I appreciate that.

(Sarah Martin): Sure.

(Dora Ward): Okay. Thank you. Have we got another question?

(Harold): Evidently I have - I wrote down the Web site on the networkassist. Would you repeat that?

(Dora Ward): That's networkassisst.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov.

(Harold): I can't get in.

(Dora Ward): No www.

Woman: Can you guys maybe just send an email with that?

(Dora Ward): Yeah, sure.

(Harold): Okay, thanks.

(Dora Ward): Okay. Any other questions?

All right, it looks like we're about the end of the scheduled time. If there are no other questions, well, I'll go ahead and say thank you very much for - to everyone for sticking with us through our technical difficulties, and especially, thank you to our speakers for preparing some presentation and sharing their expertise with us.

That's it. And yes, as I said the transcription of the call will be up on that Web site within the next few days. So, thank you very much.

Woman: We're done.

END