

A Practitioner Checklist for Measuring *Program Process Outcomes*

Program Process Outcomes Definition:

Program process outcomes are *characteristic of the program, not the participant.*

Step 1: Define your program's goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes.¹

Step 2: Develop **Program Indicators** by asking the question "How would you know that the program goal/objective/activity is being met or happening as planned?"

Indicator = How would you know something had happened or not? For example: How would you know youth are completing a program? Answer: You see them at the program's 6-month graduation ceremony. The indicator in this case is: The # of youth who graduate from the program

Step 3: Develop **Program Measures** by asking the question "How do we know how much/how often something happened?"

Measure = How would you count/quantify how much had happened/changed or not? For example: The # of youth graduating from the program as measured by...? Answer: There could be a variety of answers: such as official graduation records or number of graduation certificates awarded. The measures in this case would be Graduation Records and Graduation Certificates.²

Step 4: Find **Information Sources** that match the indicators and measures you have identified. Chances are that you are already collecting this "data" in your everyday practices, but have never considered this information as a "measure or indicator" or program processes or outcomes. If you are not collecting this information already, you will need to determine how you will start doing this.

Information Sources for Graduation Measures: If you don't already keep track of the number of participants who graduate, this information could be found in a graduation program that lists participant names, in a computer program used to generate graduation certificates, in letters inviting family members to the graduation, etc.

Important Note: Measures of program process outcomes, such as graduation numbers, do not depend on using a "validated instrument", like the instruments used to identify youth risk/needs/assets when creating a treatment or placement plan when first entering a program. Any programmatic information source that is *reliable* (can be generated over and over in a consistent manner and still be accurate) and *relevant* can be used. Relevant means that the information really matches the reality of your program-so, if you don't consistently award graduation certificates, then using the certificates as a measure of graduations would be an unreliable measure and should not be used as a data collection strategy.

¹ This is a process that needs to be revisited, revised, and refined as data collection strategies are developed and implemented over time. Why?

² It is always advised to use more than one measure whenever possible to determine what change (indicator) has occurred. Why?



A Practitioner Checklist for Measuring Program *Participant* Outcomes

Program Participant Outcomes Definition:

Program participant outcomes are *characteristic of the participant, not the program.*

Step 1: Define your program's goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes.³

Step 2: Develop **Program Indicators** by asking the question "How would you know that the participant outcome was achieved?"

Indicator = How would you know a participant characteristic had changed or not? For example: How would you know youth who completed your "Dangers of Drugs Awareness Program" have more knowledge now about the harms of drugs than they did when they first came to your program? Answer: There are a variety of indicators for this, including the number of harmful consequences of drugs that participants can list, explain, or identify after they graduate from your program versus the number they produced before they started your program. The indicator in this case would be # of harmful consequences identified by youth before and after program participation.

Step 3: Develop **Program Measures** by asking the question "How do we know *how much/how often* something changed for the participant?"

*Measure = How would you count/quantify how much had happened/changed or not? For example: The harmful consequences identified by youth before and after the program could be measured by...? Answer: There could be a variety of answers: such as a simple paper survey that quizzes students on drugs and their harmful consequences or a visual identification of drugs and consequences using photographs, models, or samples. The measures in this case would be Pre/Post Knowledge Survey on Drug Harms and Visual Identification/Matching of Drugs with Harms Produced.*⁴

Step 4: Find **Information Sources** that match the indicators and measures you have identified.

Information Sources for Drug Harm Awareness Measures: If you don't have a tool that has been used in other similar programs to measure the same type of drug awareness you are measuring here (which is just measuring knowledge changes-not attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, or behaviors), you will need to do some library/internet research to see if a tool already exists and if you can get permission to use it. If no such tool exists that meets your needs, you will need to create a tool of your own.

Important Note: Even standardized tools that have been "validated" outside your program need to be reliable and relevant to *your* program and your participants or the tools will not work properly. Creating a new participant outcome tool requires a precise understanding of measurement and human development and should be done under professional guidance to achieve optimal results.

³ This is a process that needs to be revisited, revised, and refined as the data collection system is developed and implemented over time. Why?

⁴ It is always advised to use more than one measure whenever possible to determine what change (indicator) has occurred. Why?

