*UNIT 3:*

*PROGRAM EVALUATION*

*terminal objective*

*The students will be able to:*

*3.1 Demonstrate how to evaluate a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program.*

*enabling objectives*

*The students will be able to:*

*3.1 Explain why evaluation is an integral component of a YFPI program.*

*3.2 Define the three stages of program development.*

*3.3 Define the four stages of program evaluation.*

*3.4 Describe how to use the stages of program evaluation to measure the development, implementation and operation of their YFPI program.*

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I. purpose of evaluating a youth firesetting prevention AND intervention program

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A. Evaluation of a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program.

1. Determines whether the program or aspects of the program are:

a. Appropriate.

b. Adequate.

c. Effective.

d. Efficient.

2. Is our road map for:

a. Program planning.

b. Good management practice.

c. Informed decisions.

B. Evaluation can provide information to support decision-making pertinent to the management of a YFPI program.

C. Program evaluation can provide essential information for performance planning and assessment.

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D. A well thought-out and executed program evaluation can be used to:

1. Communicate program strategy and value.

2. Describe the impact of services on the community, especially target groups.

3. Promote services in the community.

4. Decide how to fund and allocate (or reallocate program resources) to best achieve program outcomes.

5. Eliminate activities that have proven ineffective and drop components that are not cost-effective.

6. Revise program goals, objectives and strategies.

7. Revise objectives to make them more realistic.

8. Target new or different audiences and allies.

9. Modify, refine or redesign an activity or program.

10. Identify whether to modify or make timely adjustments to the program design or implementation to improve the rate of program achievement relative to the resources committed.

11. Decide how best to improve program operations (e.g., add new technology, increase efficiency of operations via streamlining, refining or redesigning).

12. Decide whether to continue the program or specific program elements.

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II. suggestions for conducting program evaluation

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A. Define the evaluation based on the YFPI program’s goals and objectives.

B. Identify the types of information to be collected.

C. Choose suitable methods for collecting the information.

D. Design instruments to collect information.

E. Collect and analyze information.

F. Analyze and interpret findings of the evaluation.

G. Communicate results.

H. Implement changes.

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IiI. challenges to program evaluation

A. A long-standing challenge to our industry has been a tendency to develop and operate prevention programs without consideration of how they will be evaluated.

B. YFPI programs are not immune from this challenge.

C. Failure to properly evaluate a YFPI program can lead to misdirected resources and a lack of program effectiveness.

D. Practical problems in conducting evaluations of YFPI and community risk-reduction programs in general:

1. Limited amounts of data (small numbers).

2. Rare occurrences of specific events.

3. Inaccurate collection or processing of data.

4. Limited time frame to collect data.

5. Community mobility (people move a lot).

6. Limited resources (time/money).

7. Lack of confidence or trained people.

Iv. lifecycle of a prevention program

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A. Prevention programs (including YFPI programs) mature and change over time. A program’s stage of development reflects its maturity.

B. There are three stages of program development:

1. Planning.

a. Program activities are untested at this stage.

b. The goal of evaluation at this stage is to create and refine plans.

2. Implementation.

a. Program activities are being field-tested and modified.

b. The goal of evaluation at this stage is to:

- Characterize real-world, as opposed to ideal, program activities.

- To improve operations, perhaps by revising plans.

3. Effects.

a. Enough time has passed for the program’s effects to emerge.

b. The goal of evaluation is to identify and account for both intended and unintended effects of a program.

v. four stages of program evaluation

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There are four stages of program evaluation. Each has its own purpose and value in assessing a program.

A. Formative stage — conducted during the planning and implementation stages of a program **or** when an existing program is having difficulties.

B. Process stage — performed once the program has been implemented and showing signs of activity/outreach into the community.

C. Impact stage — conducted during the intermediate stages of a program to measure if the program is helping to increase knowledge levels, change behaviors or modify living environments/lifestyles.

D. Outcome stage — done over the long term to measure if a program has reduced incidents, saved lives/property, or improved the quality of life in a community.

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vi. stages of evaluation

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A. Stage 1: Formative evaluation.

1. Used:

a. During the development of a new program.

b. When an existing program is being modified or has problems with no obvious solutions.

c. When a program is used in a new setting with a new population.

d. When a program is targeting a new problem or behavior.

2. Main purpose is to strengthen or improve the development/delivery of a program.

Unfortunately, formative evaluation is a step often overlooked or underutilized by program developers.

3. With respect to a new program, formative evaluation allows programs to make revisions **before** the full effort begins, thereby maximizing the likelihood that the program will succeed.

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4. The following are questions to answer during the formative evaluation stage for a new program.

a. Address local needs: Does the program seek to impact a local risk issue that has been identified through objective analysis of accurate data?

b. Appropriate stakeholders: Are people/groups who have a vested interest in the risk issue involved in the program planning process?

c. Knowledge levels: What do stakeholders know about the risk being addressed by the program?

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d. Introduction: When is the best time to introduce the program or modification to the target population?

e. Plans and strategies: Are the proposed plans/strategies realistic and likely to succeed? Are time frames for development and implementation present and realistic?

f. Resources: Are adequate resources (time, people, money) available to develop, implement and sustain the program? Do resources support the goals and objectives of the program?

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g. Methods for implementing program: Are the proposed methods for implementing program plans, strategies and evaluations feasible, appropriate and likely to be effective?

h. Ability to reach target populations with market research: How do people in the target population get information? What are the best mediums for communication? (Is it television, newspaper, radio, Internet, word of mouth or a combination of sources?)

i. Program activities: Are the proposed activities suitable for the target population?

- That is, are they current, meaningful, barrier-free, culturally sensitive and related to the desired outcome? For example, is the literacy level appropriate?

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j. Logistics: Are program scheduling and locations appropriate?

- For example, would scheduling program hours during the normal workday make it difficult for some people in the target population to use the program?

k. Acceptance by program personnel: Is the program consistent with the staff’s values? Are all staff members comfortable with the roles they have been assigned?

- For example, are they willing to learn what to do if a parent shows up at a firehouse stating that their child is experimenting with fire in the home? Has the staff been adequately trained to perform their prospective duties?

l. Barriers to success: Are there beliefs among the target population that work against the program?

- For example, do some people believe that it is a natural phase of growth for children to experiment with fire?

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5. Who you ask to participate in formative evaluation depends on the evaluation’s purpose.

a. For example, if you are pilot testing materials for a new program, select people or households at random from the target population who share characteristics of the proposed target populations.

b. If you want to know the level of consumer satisfaction with your program, select evaluation participants from people or households who have already been served by your program.

c. If you want to know why fewer people than expected are taking advantage of your program, select evaluation participants from among people or households in the target population who did not respond to your messages.

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6. How to use results of formative evaluation.

a. Well-designed formative evaluation shows which aspects of your program are likely to succeed and which need improvement.

b. It should also show howproblem areas can be improved.

c. It can be used to modify the program’s plans, materials, strategies and activities to reflect the information gathered during formative evaluation.

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7. Formative evaluation is a dynamic ongoing process.

a. Even after the prevention program has begun, formative evaluation should continue.

b. The evaluator must create mechanisms (e.g., customer satisfaction forms to be completed by program participants) that continually provide feedback to program management from participants, staff, supervisors and anyone else involved in the program.

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B. Stage 2: Process evaluation.

1. Should answer the following question: Is the program being delivered as intended?

a. This is a very important question to answer because even the best-designed program may not produce intended results if it is not delivered properly.

b. The methods for tracking process evaluation (forms, surveys, databases, etc.) should be designed during the formative stage of a program’s development.

2. Often referred to as “program monitoring.” This begins as soon as the program is put into action and continues throughout the life of the program.

3. Process evaluation examines how well a program is being delivered.

a. Identifies when and where programs occur.

b. Identifies who delivered services and how well they did.

c. Examines how well the program is reaching its intended target populations.

4. Keeping track of the following information is considered process evaluation.

a. Program activity level, such as:

- Training sessions for staff.

- Meetings to organize program outreach.

- Materials purchased for program.

- Number of programs presented.

- Locations of presentations.

- Number of people who attended presentations.

- Number of materials distributed.

- Number of home surveys conducted.

b. Program/Staff performance levels, such as:

- Participant satisfaction with program.

- Performance of staff who deliver programs.

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5. Process evaluation is useful because it identifies early on any problems that are occurring in reaching the target population.

a. Allows programs to evaluate how well their plans, procedures, activities and materials are working and to make adjustments before logistical or administrative weaknesses become entrenched.

b. Allows one to understand why a program may or may not have influenced short- or long-term changes.

c. For example, poor attendance may explain why a well-designed educational activity did not influence a target group’s knowledge.

d. If process evaluation identifies unexpected problems with a program, especially if it shows you are not reaching as many people in the target population as you expected to, conduct additional formative evaluation to figure out why.

6. Done well, the process stage of evaluation sets up a pattern for ascending levels of program success.

Much of the information gathered during the process stage will be used as a foundation for impact and outcome evaluation when you will be calculating the effect your program has had on the target population.

7. Some components of process evaluation are similar to those performed in a program’s formative stage of development.

8. The main point to remember is to start evaluating the minute you begin thinking about a program and keep doing it throughout its lifespan.

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C. Stage 3: Impact evaluation.

1. Impact evaluation reveals the degree to which a program is meeting its intermediate goals. It measures two important levels of performance: learning and action.

a. Learning.

Did the program influence any of the following among the target population?

- Awareness.

- Knowledge levels.

- Attitudes and/or beliefs.

- Skill levels.

- Action.

b. Did the program change any of the following?

- Target population behavior or lifestyle change.

- Change within a targeted physical environment.

- Public policy, legislation, adoption or enforcement.

- Hazard reduction.

- Change in practice.

- Decision-making process.

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2. It is often the least used, but the most important stage of evaluation.

A major contributing factor to its lack of use is that impact evaluation requires time, skill, planning and effort.

3. Requires that baseline measurements are taken before the program is delivered and after it has been completed.

4. Compares conditions that existed before a program was delivered to those present after it was completed.

5. Impact evaluation mechanisms should be designed during the development phases of a program.

Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are almost always measured by some type of assessment instrument.

a. The instrument could be a test, survey or questionnaire.

b. Evaluators might also observe group discussions to watch and listen for signs of change among participants’ knowledge, attitudes or beliefs.

c. Physical, environmental and lifestyle changes are usually assessed by direct observation.

- For example, an observer might check to see that smoke alarms are installed appropriately or that adults are keeping ignition tools from being accessed by children.

6. Conducting impact evaluation is important because it allows management to modify materials or move resources from a nonproductive to a productive area of program.

7. If the results of impact evaluation are positive, they can be used to justify continuing a program.

8. If the results are negative, they can help justify revising or discontinuing a program.

9. In addition to providing tangible evidence to evaluators, impact data can be used to show stakeholders and potential funders that a program is working.

10. In the case of a program experiencing challenges, impact evaluation can be used to help justify support for adjustments.

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D. Stage 4: Outcome evaluation.

1. Demonstrates the degree to which the program has met its ultimate goals.

2. Measures change over an extended period of time within the community.

3. Outcome evaluation seeks to provide:

a. Statistical proof that the risk-reduction program is reducing risk in the specified areas. Program success is proven by a reduction of deaths, injuries, property and medical costs in the target area.

b. Valid anecdotal proof (such as personal testimonials) that verify outcomes. Anecdotal proof is used frequently to measure outcome of social-oriented risk-reduction initiatives.

c. In some circumstances, outcome can be demonstrated by improvement in the target population’s health and quality of life.

d. Cultural change can be a measurement of outcome because it often leads to sustained levels of behavioral change.

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4. Just like impact evaluation, measuring outcome requires baseline data about conditions that exist prior to the start of a program, initiative or strategy.

a. It is difficult at best and often impossible to prove outcome unless baseline data is in place.

b. This is especially true when attempting to measure changes in morbidity, mortality, and economic and social conditions.

5. When seeking to perform outcome evaluation on a specific program, the following strategy is recommended:

a. Outcome evaluation should be used for ongoing programs (e.g., YFPI program) at appropriate intervals throughout the program’s offerings.

b. For ongoing programs (e.g., a series of fire safety classes given each year in elementary schools), conduct outcome evaluation as soon as enough people or households have participated in the program to make outcome evaluation results meaningful.

c. Depending on the extent of your youth firesetting problem (and the number of programs you deliver), you could conduct outcome evaluation, for example, every year, every three years or every five years to find out how well the program’s effects are sustained over time.

6. Preparation for outcome evaluation begins when the program is being designed.

The type of data (and their sources) must be considered carefully. To be considered reliable, data must be collected from valid sources in a systematic, unbiased manner.

7. In general, measuring changes in morbidity (injuries) and mortality (deaths) is not so easy.

a. For example, you can measure the change in helmet-wearing behavior of children who participated in a safety training class soon after the class is over.

b. Measuring the reduction in morbidity and mortality as a result of those same children’s change in behavior is more difficult, and results take much longer to appear.

c. Documenting changes in morbidity and mortality that are a direct result of a program to reduce most unintentional injuries requires a vastly larger study population than does documenting changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

d. In addition to a large study population, documenting changes in morbidity and mortality requires a long-term study, which can be time-consuming.

8. You can use positive results of outcome evaluation as even stronger evidence than the results of impact evaluation to justify continued funding for your program.

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Evaluation Measures

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|  | **Feature Measure** | **Type of Evaluation** | **Examples of Evaluation Measures** | **Instruments and Methods to Measure Change** |
| 1. End result | Outcome | Number of deaths, injuries, dollar loss, number of calls | Injury/Loss statistics |
| Saves attributed to program | Anecdotes |
| 2. Public policy | Impact | Passage of legislation ordinances and codes | Legislation |
| 3. Behavior | Impact | Percent of parents who have isolated fire tools in their home | Observational survey |
| Percent of adolescents who can state the penalties of repeat firesetting | Questionnaire |
| Children who can do stop, drop and roll | Skill testing |
| 4. Environment | Impact | Percent of homes with updated smoke alarm protection | Home visit |
| 5. Knowledge | Impact | Percent of public that knows how to maintain smoke alarms | Pretest/Post-test  self-report survey |
| 6. Extent of program | Process | Percent of public receiving prevention materials | Calculating number of people attending presentations |
| 7. Appeal and usage | Formative | Percentage of teachers who think materials meet state objectives and use them | Pilot testing of forms, questionnaire, personal interviews, focus groups |
| 8. Institutional change | Formative | Introduction of safety curriculum | Letter of agreement, adoption of curriculum |
| Funding for programs | Budget |
| Forming/Joining task force | Minutes of meeting |

VII. WHAT IS AN EVALUATION PLAN?

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A. The evaluation **process** should begin when the idea for creating a program is conceived. Evaluation should continue throughout the lifespan of the program.

B. An evaluation **plan** describes in precise, **measurable** terms how a prevention program is to be developed, implemented, operated and monitored.

It also describes the intended levels of outreach, impact and outcome that the program seeks to achieve.

C. The foundation of an evaluation plan is its goals and objectives.

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1. Goals.

a. Without clear goals and well developed objectives, it is virtually impossible to assess and evaluate where we are making a difference in community risk reduction.

b. A goalis a statement that overall explains what the program seeks to accomplish. It sets the fundamental, long-range direction of the program.

c. Typically, goals are broad, general statements. A goal summarizes expected results and outcomes rather than program methods and activities.

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2. Objectives.

a. Without objectives, the fundamental components of the program cannot be developed (i.e., specific interventions).

b. An objective is a concise statement of the desired product of the risk-reduction initiative.

c. Provide realistic steps to attain goal.

d. Good objectives are challenging but achievable.

e. Must relate to the mission of the organization and the goals of the governing authority.

f. Focus on what’s to be done and how to do it.

g. Objectives are tied to what we want to measure and evaluate. What do we want to know about our program?

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D. SMART objectives refer to an acronym designed around the five leading indicators of a solid program.

1. Specific: What precisely is going to be done, and with or for whom?

a. The program states a specific outcome or a precise objective to be accomplished in concrete terms.

b. The outcome is clearly defined in numbers, percentages, frequency, etc. The objective is defined clearly.

c. An action is described. The verb is important, especially in process objectives.

d. Verbs such as “provide”, “train”, “publish”, “purchase” or “schedule” indicate clearly what will be done. Verbs like “partner”, “support”, “facilitate” and “enhance” are vague.

e. Action may be described by something completed such as a code adopted or by the amount of injuries or fires reduced (e.g., 50 percent reduction in occurrence).

2. Measurable: Is it quantifiable, and can it be measured?

a. The objective can be measured and the measurement source is identified.

b. Collection of the data is feasible for your program or partners.

c. Baseline data is basic information that must be identified before a program begins so that impact and outcome can be measured.

d. A baseline measurement is required to document change (e.g., to measure percentage increase or decrease).

e. If the baseline is unknown, indicate in the objective as “baseline to be determined” with the source and year.

f. All activities should be measurable at some level.

3. Achievable: Can we get it done in the proposed time frame/in this political climate/for this amount of money/with resources and support available?

a. The objective or expectation of what will be accomplished must be realistic given the time period, resources allocated, and political and economic conditions.

b. The objective should not only be achievable but challenging as well.

4. Relevant: Will the objective have an effect on the desired goal or strategy?

a. Does it address the scope of the problem and propose reasonable programmatic steps?

b. The outcome or results of the program directly support the mission of the agency’s long-range plan or goal.

5. Timeframed: When will the objective be achieved?

a. A specified and reasonable time frame should be incorporated into the objective.

b. Take into consideration the environment where the change is expected, the scope of the change, and how it fits into the work plan.

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| IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION PLAN |
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| Cleveland Park Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program |
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| **Vision:** Cleveland Park will be a community that prevents and intervenes in youth firesetting. |
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| **Problem Statement:** The problem is the Cleveland Park Fire/Rescue Service responds to a disproportionately higher rate of firesetting incidents involving youth between the ages of 12-17 as compared to communities of similar size and demographics. |
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| **Goal:** To decrease youth firesetting incidents involving youth (ages 12-17) in Cleveland Park. |
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| Outcome Objectives |
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| As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred: |
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| By December 2016, there will be a 50 percent reduction in the number of firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17. Evaluation methods: fire and police reports. |
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| By December 2016, there will be a 40 percent reduction in fire loss attributed to firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17. Evaluation methods: fire reports. |
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| Impact Objectives |
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| As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred: |
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| By October 2013, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be adopted among agencies handling youth involved in firesetting. Evaluation method: adoption of MOUs. |
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| By January 2015, the city council will have adopted an ordinance prohibiting the sale of novelty lighters in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: passage of ordinance. |
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| By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least three ways that an arson arrest can affect them and their families. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests. |
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| By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can identify the age juveniles can be arrested in their state. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests. |
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| By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least two of the state’s arson laws. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests. |
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| By December 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in the number of parents/caregivers who attended the YFPI who can name three ways they can prevent acts of youth firesetting. Evaluation methods: pretests and post-tests. |
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| By December 2015, there will be a 95 percent increase in the number of working smoke alarms located in the homes of families that have attended the YFPI program. Evaluation methods: observational surveys and self-report surveys. |
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| Process Objectives |
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| By October 2013, the program manager will have distributed three news releases and three articles to local media to raise awareness about youth involved in firesetting. Evaluation methods: counting number of outlets using news releases and articles and estimating percent of public receiving news releases and articles. |
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| By December 2013, the program manager will begin offering the educational component of the youth firesetting intervention program to youth and their families who have been referred to the program as often as needed to meet demand. Evaluation method: program presentation records. |
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| By October 2013, each member of the task force will have made at least three presentations to a community group about the problem (and solutions to) youth firesetting in the community. Evaluation method: program presentation records. |
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| By December 2014, the program manager will have evaluated the performance of the school-based educational program and all instructors who present it. Evaluation method: performance evaluation checklist. |
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| By June 2015, there will have been 200 school-based educational programs on state arson laws presented at secondary schools in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: program presentation records. |
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| Formative Objectives |
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| By March 2013, key staff from the Cleveland Park Fire Department will have identified and recruited primary stakeholders in the Cleveland Park District to join the YFPI task force. Evaluation method: commitment of stakeholders. |
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| By May 2013, the task force will start program planning based on the escalation of youth-set fires identified through the community risk assessment of Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: records from meetings. |
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| By July 2013, the task force will develop goals, interventions and objectives for the YFPI program. Evaluation method: development of program. |
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| By August 2013, the program manager, with assistance from the task force, will design the educational component for youth and their families referred to the YFPI program. Evaluation method: development of educational component. |
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| By September 2013, MOUs will be developed by the task force on how youth will be handled by various agencies. Evaluation method: development of MOUs. |
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| By September 2013, the task force will have drafted standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the fire department (and partner agencies) on how youth who set fires are handled. Evaluation method: SOPs. |
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| By December 2013, all partner agencies (including the fire department) will have trained key staff on how to make referrals to the YFPI program. Evaluation method: training records. |
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| By March 2014, the program manager, with the help of the task force, will have developed a lesson plan on state arson laws for use in the secondary schools in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: development of lesson plan. |
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| By May 2014, the program manager will have received permission from the school board of Cleveland Park to instruct teachers in secondary schools about the lesson plans pertaining to arson laws and how they pertain to youth ages 12-17 years. Evaluation method: letter of agreement and adoption of curriculum. |
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| By July 2014, the program manager will have trained teachers in the pilot school to use the lesson plans about arson laws in the state. Evaluation method: record of training. |
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| By August 2014, the task force will have drafted legislation restricting novelty lighters in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: drafting of legislation. |
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VIII. DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN

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A. Development of an evaluation plan is best handled as a group exercise among the YFPI program partners/leadership team.

B. This strategy allows the team to be involved in planning, implementation and management of the program.

1. Allows opportunity to weigh different perspectives.

2. Consensus on what signals success.

3. Better chance of support for program.

4. Nothing for us without us.

C. There are four types of objectives used in developing and evaluating a program plan: formative, process, impact and outcome. These objectives are tied to how the program will be evaluated.

IX. TYPES OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

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A. Formative objectives.

1. Formative objectives are SMART objectives written during the planning stage of a program. These objectives help define how the program is to be developed, pilot-tested and implemented.

2. Formative objectives call for explanation of why the program is needed. Calling for a community risk analysis can be stated in a formative objective.

3. Formative objectives also can call for exploration of general knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of your target audience before the program is developed, while it is being tested, and throughout implementation.

4. Good formative objectives can guide a planning team to discover strengths and weaknesses of a program as it is developing and before huge resource investments are made.

5. Formative objectives help establish baselines for your efforts to be measured. They examine the early stages of the program’s development concerning:

a. Community risks.

b. Target populations.

c. Stakeholders.

d. Existing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs.

e. Material development.

f. Developing goals and objectives.

g. Testing procedures.

h. Resources needed.

6. Formative objectives also call for the development of a program.

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7. Examples of formative objectives:

a. By August 2013, the program manager, with assistance from the task force, will design the educational component for youth and their families who are referred to the YFPI program.

- Evaluation method: development of educational component.

b. By September 2013, the task force will have drafted SOPs for the fire department (and partner agencies) on how youth who set fires are handled.

- Evaluation method: SOPs.

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B. Process objectives.

1. Process objectives describe anything having to do with program activities, procedures and materials.

2. The number of intended presentations, attendance and material distribution can be described in process objectives.

3. Process objectives can also describe the intended quality of the service being delivered.

4. They are written using action verbs to show accountability: “monitor”, “coordinate”, “plan”, “write” or “publish” (rather than “know”, “learn” and “feel”).

5. Process objectives are normally developed after the interventions have been selected and decisions are made based on who is going to do what when.

6. Process objectives assign responsibility for activities to be completed by specific dates.

7. These objectives are an important component of an evaluation plan because they can indicate who will be responsible for doing what and include a deadline of when tasks are to be accomplished.

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8. Examples of process objectives:

a. By December 2013, the program manager will begin offering the educational component of the youth firesetting intervention program to youth and their families referred to the program as often as needed to meet demand.

- Evaluation method: program presentation records.

b. By October 2013, each member of the task force will have made at least three presentations to a community group about the problem of (and solutions to) youth firesetting in the community.

- Evaluation method: program presentation records.

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C. Impact objectives.

1. Impact objectives are SMART objectives written to describe the following:

a. Who will be affected by the program.

b. What results are expected.

c. How large a change is necessary to demonstrate success.

d. How much time is required for the change to occur.

2. Impact objectives are written to show desired changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, physical environment or public policy that will be created by the program in a relatively short term (one to five years).

3. Baseline data is required so that current knowledge levels, attitudes, living conditions, use of safety equipment, etc. can be compared to those that exist after a program has been operating for a designated time period.

4. Impact objectives answer the question: What do you want to know in the short-term about your program?

Don’t forget — Baseline data must be obtained before impact and outcome can be measured.

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5. Examples of impact objectives:

a. By June 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least two of the state’s arson laws.

- Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests.

b. By December 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 25 percent increase in the number of parents/caregivers that attended the YFPI who can name three ways they can prevent acts of youth firesetting.

- Evaluation methods: pretests and post-tests.

c. By December 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 95 percent increase in the number of working smoke alarms located in the homes of families that have attended the YFPI program.

- Evaluation methods: observational surveys and self-report surveys.

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D. Outcome objectives.

1. An outcome objective is a SMART objective written to show the intended long-term implications of your program. It describes expected outcomes for the community.

2. Outcome objectives describe the intended effect of the program (usually to reduce the occurrence of a condition).

3. Outcome objectives may be related to personal, social, economic, environmental or health conditions.

4. Outcome objectives usually call for a long-term reduction in deaths, injuries, property loss and emergency responses. They should be tied to evaluation, support your goal, and state conditions you ultimately want to achieve.

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5. Examples of outcome objectives.

a. By December 2016 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 50 percent reduction in the number of firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17.

- Evaluation methods: fire and police reports.

b. By December 2016 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 40 percent reduction in fire loss attributed to firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17.

- Evaluation methods: fire reports.

ACTIVITY 3.1

Developing an Evaluation Plan

Purpose

To give you experience in developing an evaluation plan to address a youth firesetting problem that is occurring in a simulated community.

Directions

1. This is an instructor-led large group activity.

2. First, you will view a video vignette that is part of the PowerPoint presentation. It describes the youth firesetting problem that exists in the fictitious community of Redwood County.

3. Next, peruse the written summary of the problem in Redwood County. (It is the video script.) You will have five minutes for this task.

4. Next, based upon the information given, the instructor will lead the class to develop a (miniature) evaluation plan for addressing the youth firesetting problem. Students will have 45 minutes for development of the (miniature) evaluation plan. The plan should include the following:

a. Vision.

b. Problem statement and goal.

c. One outcome objective.

d. Two impact objectives that, if accomplished, would support the outcome objective.

e. Four process objectives. Two that support each impact objective.

f. Four formative objectives that support the development of the overall youth firesetting program.

**Note:** What is being developed is only a partial evaluation plan. In real-world application, the plan would be much more detailed and include many more impact, process and formative objectives. This activity is merely to give you practice with a skill that you should employ upon returning home.

Case Study

Redwood County is a small but densely populated county located 35 miles from a major United States city. The county enjoys a strong tax base that supports emergency services, mental health, social services, the justice system and schools.

While residents of Redwood County enjoy a relatively stable economic climate, the community is not without challenges. The adults in most families work outside the home. Many work long hours and commute to the nearby large city, which adds the stress of additional hours away from home. Adolescents often lack after-school supervision and end up “hanging out” with peer groups in a variety of settings.

Most families are technologically savvy and equipped with the latest communication mediums. While there are several recreational complexes in the county, there are no neighborhood associations. Transience is common, as families often relocate after about five years in Redwood County to move further away from the city and traffic.

The police department was the first agency to notice a rise in the number of youth firesetting incidents, specifically the manufacture and use of bottle bombs by adolescents. Fireworks were also noted as a problem. Examination of data revealed that 80 percent of arrests related to malicious burning involved youth between the ages of 11 and 14. This age group also accounted for 90 percent of arrests for manufacturing or detonating incendiary devices.

The juvenile justice office and the mental health authority were second to contact the fire department. Both cited a rise in the number of parents asking for help with juveniles (ages 11 to 14) who were “out of control and experimenting with all sorts of dangerous things.” Many parents said their children needed counseling because they had become disconnected with the family.

Social services was the next agency to inquire about the issue. At a service club meeting, the director of social services approached the fire chief to inquire if there was an intervention program in the county for bomb makers. When the chief replied no, the director advised, “You really should consider starting one because many families have children who are experimenting with fire and explosives.”

Last but not least, the vice principal from one of the middle/senior high schools called the fire department inquiring about the presence of an intervention program for juveniles who experiment with fire and bombs. When informed there was no such program, the vice principal said she was going to call the school superintendent to see if maybe a task force could be created to develop one.

The fire department called a meeting of agencies that they believed to be primary stakeholders on the topic. The first task they agreed to do was examine five years of local data that was available on youth firesetting, most specifically, firesetting and incendiary device usage among the age group 11-14. The data identified the following:

1. An average of 100 annual fire incidents can be attributed to adolescents experimenting with either fire or explosive devices.

2. The average property loss associated with the problem is $900,000.

3. There are 50 injuries a year as a result of the problem.

4. No deaths have been reported.

5. The police department responds to an average of 200 calls per year for youth setting fires, discharging fireworks or experimenting with incendiary devices.

6. The police department/juvenile justice office charges an average of 40 youths each year for fire or explosive-related offenses.

7. There are approximately 70 incidents related to youth firesetting or incendiary devices in schools each year.

X. SUMMARY

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