

# Conducting an Evaluation

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# Evaluation

- Evaluation is the process of assessing what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. It means looking critically at the activity or programme, working out what was good about it, what was bad about it, and how it could be improved. Evaluation is the assessment of the achievement of the stated aims.
  - [Ewles and Simnett, 1992]

# Why Evaluate?

- To ensure intervention have desired effect
- To ensure effective and efficient use of resources
- To improve practice
- To assess overall impact
- To assess whether activities are ethically justified
  - [Downie, Fyfe and Tannahill 1992)

# Reasons for the Evaluation

- Effectiveness – is it working?
- Developmental – to refine and improve
- Efficiency – use of funds, costs and benefits
- Strategic Planning – for planning or management decisions (operation of particular aspects)
- Accountability – to account for and document funds received
  - [Murray, Faughnan and Redmond 1994]

# Forms of Evaluation

- Summative – tangible outcomes and quantifiable costs and benefits
  - Assess effectiveness
  - Measure efficiency
- Formative/Developmental – describe and analyse entire process
  - Examine and interpret outcomes
  - Contribute to on-going development

# Types of Evaluation

- Process – assessment of the process/progress of the activity while intervention still ongoing
- Impact – assessment at end of intervention looking at immediate effect e.g. satisfaction, intended behaviour change
- Outcome – assessment of long term effect e.g. actual behaviour change, trend in demand for services

# Link between type, form and method

- Process
  - Formative
  - Qualitative methods
- Impact
  - Summative
  - Mainly quantitative
- Outcome
  - Summative
  - Quantitative

# Evaluation Brief

- What is to be evaluated?
- Why is the evaluation being carried out?
- Who wants the evaluation?
- Who is the audience?
- What resources are available for the evaluation?
- What liaison procedures are available?
  - [Murray, Faughnan and Redmond 1994]



# Stages of the Evaluation

- Document the activity and its context
- Clarify activity's objectives
- Define achievements
- Collect information
- Analyse data
- Communicate findings
  - [Murray, Faughnan and Redmond 1994]

# Role of the Evaluator

- Evaluator and how s/he perceived is central to success of evaluation
- Perceptions and actual role will vary depending on:
  - Reason for evaluation
  - Methods
  - Whether evaluator is an insider or outsider

# Common Perceptions of Evaluator

- Expert – objectivity (of activity?)
- Facilitator – reflection; trust
- Problem solver – no; identify source of problems to inform decision-making yes
- Official scrutineer – if commissioned by funders, shaped by objectives of policy-makers
- Delaying tactic – continuation of activity in doubt
- Window dresser – paint a rosy picture
  - [Murray, Faughnan and Redmond 1994]

# Actual Role of Evaluator

- Formative
  - Facilitator assisting reflection
  - Provider of info on operation and impact
  - Advisor to decision-maker
  - Understand/Raise questions/Examine impact
- Summative
  - Inspector?
  - Standardised criteria e.g. cost-benefit
  - May articulate concerns of stakeholders

# Deciding on Data Collection

- Where is the information required?
- What is the quality of information available?
- Who has the information?
- Who controls access to the information?
- How get information already collected?
- How get new information required?
  - [Murray, Faughnan and Redmond 1994]

# Types of Variables/Data

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- Demographic
- Informational/Knowledge
- Value, Motivational, Attitudinal
- Capability, Behavioural
- Service Utilisation
- Environmental
- Clinical, Biological

# Methods of Data Collection

- Questionnaire/Agency form
  - Self-completion
  - Postal
  - Face-to-face
- Diaries/Logs
- Focus groups/In-depth interviews

# Validity

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- Internal Validity – degree observed effect can be attributed to the intervention
- External Validity – degree observed effect attributable to intervention can be generalised to similar populations and settings