Utilizing Data to Tell Your Story
Objectives

To Understand:

1. The purposes and limitations of evaluation at the community level
2. The types of data that are available to use in your evaluation and communications
3. How to share data in a compelling way to help tell your story
Why is evaluation important?

Helps you:

- Document what you have done
- Make improvements or adjustments to a program or intervention
- See whether a program or strategy appears to be working (i.e. achieving its goals)
- Justify efforts to funders and other stakeholders
- Support sustainability
Process Evaluation: What is it?

Answers the question “Did we do what we said we would do?”

- Who?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- Why not?
- How many?
- How well?
Why Do Process Evaluation?

01 Document what was done so:
  - You can determine how well it was done
  - You and/or others can repeat what was done

02 The information can be used to adjust and improve implementation going forward (also called formative evaluation)

03 The information can be used to help understand outcome findings
Outcome Evaluation: What is it?

Documenting the effects of the strategies implemented on both short and long term goals and objectives.
Why Do Outcome Evaluation?

- Determine if strategies implemented appear* to be achieving their anticipated effects
- Accountability to stakeholders, funding agencies, and your own organization

*Only the most rigorous (and expensive) study designs can “prove” that a specific intervention caused the observed effects. Evaluations at the local level more typically can provide “support” for the effectiveness of an intervention.
Beware of the “Black Box”!

Evaluations that focus solely on program/strategy outcomes are dangerous!

Understanding how you got to (or why you didn’t get to) those outcomes is just as important.
Special Challenges and Limitations of Evaluating Community-Level Strategies Focused on Population-Level Change

- There are many external factors that influence outcomes.
- Design constraints limit causal attribution (e.g., your community is an N of 1).
- Effects likely to be small and sometimes take a long time.
What data sources do you have?

| Process Data |  |
| Community Perceptions |  |
| Regional capacity |  |
| Outcomes |  |
### Examples of community-level data sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Data</td>
<td>Your work plans, quarterly reports, information submitted to CLI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Perceptions</td>
<td>Locally conducted pre and post community surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional capacity</td>
<td>Sectors represented by and level of involvement of community partners, strength of collaborations, training and skills development of staff and/or volunteers, levels and types of funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>YRBS, YAS, locally collected pre/post outcome data, possible archival data sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Communicating Findings

- **Define the audience**: Who are you sharing the findings with? For what purpose?
- **Determine which data are important**: Which data are relevant to your audience/stakeholders?
- **Interpret the data clearly**: Reported data should tell a story clearly and concisely.
- **Think about design**: Format, graphics, layout, and other design elements can generate interest and improve retention.

Adapted from Communicating Evaluation Findings, Kevin Lee, AEA365 Tip-a-day 3/4/16
Think about design
Format, graphics, layout, and other design elements can generate interest and improve retention.

Interpret the data clearly
Reported data should tell a story clearly and concisely.

Determine what data are important
Which data are relevant to your audience/stakeholders?

Define the audience
Who are you sharing the findings with? For what purpose?
Let’s play with some data!
What is the best way to visualize your data?

Questions to think about:

Who is the audience?  
What type of communication or format are you using?  
What skills and technical capacity are needed?

adapted from Susan Kistler's Data Visualization Planning Tool
Let’s look at some examples...
Final thoughts...

- Test your data visuals with others to make sure it conveys the message you intended.
- Help stakeholders understand the data (and its limitations).
- Don’t take all the credit for good outcomes, nor all the blame for bad outcomes.
- Use simple, user-friendly graphics to help show patterns in the data.
- Use data, but also use stories to highlight results.
Resources

Magnolia Consulting Infographics Tools
https://magnoliaconsulting.org/tools/#infographics

http://stephanieevergreen.com/dataviz-checklist/

Juice analytics online chart chooser
http://labs.juiceanalytics.com/chartchooser/index.html

Storytelling with Data, Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic
http://www.storytellingwithdata.com/gallery/

Marijuana Use Among Youth in Colorado infographics: