




Critical Data Collection Tools: Weaving Evaluation Throughout the SPF Process


Presented by
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in partnership with
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The Five Steps of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)

- Step 1: Profile population needs, resources, and readiness to address needs and gaps
- Step 2: Mobilize and/or build capacity to address needs
- Step 3: Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan
- Step 4: Implement evidence-based prevention programs, policies, and practices
- Step 5: Monitor, evaluate, sustain, and improve or replace those that fail



The diagram shows five overlapping circles arranged in a circle. From top to bottom, they are: red (top), green (right), purple (bottom), blue (left), and yellow (center). Each circle contains text related to the steps: 'Assessment' (red), 'Mobilization' (green), 'Implementation' (purple), 'Monitoring & Evaluation' (blue), and 'Sustainability' (yellow).

From beginning to end



Evaluation is an ongoing process that *begins* as soon as the idea for a program is conceived, . . . interweaves with program activities *throughout the life* of the program, . . . and *ends* after the results have been utilized for continuous improvement.

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Continuum



- **Assessment** – refers to a continuous and ongoing task of critical self-reflection (i.e., a formative process)
- **Evaluation** --intended to explore whether goals or expectations have been met as intended (i.e., as a summative process)
- sometimes used *interchangeably* to refer to the same process

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What is Wrong with this Picture?



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Infusing Data Throughout SPF-SIG Decision Making



- SIG strives to *use data across all steps* of the SPF
- Deliberate process to collect, analyze, interpret and apply lessons from substance use and consequence data to drive community efforts across the entire SPF

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Requisite skills



Members of the group responsible for carrying out the needs assessment must have

- the **skills** required to conduct data collection/acquisition, management and analysis activities
- the knowledge of epi data and cultural sensitivity to interpret results
- an expanded membership to address gaps in expertise

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Community Requirements



- Accurately assess substance-abuse related problems using epidemiological data
- Identify the magnitude of the problem and where it is greatest
- Identify risk and protective factors
- Evaluate coalition's capacity to address needs
- Assess community assets and resources, gaps in services and capacity, and readiness to act

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First step – Data, data, data



We're asking coalitions to collect evidence on:

Consequences – ultimate outcome of the problem (e.g., lack of school success, sexually transmitted disease, alcohol-related accidents, teen pregnancy, violence)

- **Consumption** – behavior that is the precursor to the problem --must be studied by age, gender, and ethnic groups; multiple sub-populations in the community must be assessed in whatever ways are available

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First step – Data, data, data



Causes (aka Intervening Variables, or R & P Factors) – contributors to the problem (e.g., community, family, school, individual risk factors)

- **Capacity** – resources (human, technical, expertise, etc) available or lacking to address the problem

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Quanti and Quali Data



Quantitative methods are ways of gathering objective data that can be expressed in numbers

Qualitative methods are generally open-ended and determines attitudes, knowledge level and beliefs

Quantitative data can show what is happening while qualitative data can show why it is happening.

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Quantitative	Qualitative
Frequency counts	Anecdotal evidence
Checklists	Case studies
Surveys	Focus groups
Pre-post tests	Key informant interviews
Analysis of existing statistics (secondary data)	Field observations
	Document review

Benefits of Quantitative Methods

- Standardized
- Succinct
- Easily aggregated for analysis
- Systematic
- Easily presented in short space
- Generalizability is widely accepted

Benefits of Qualitative Methods

- Detailed and variable
- Unanticipated benefits and/or concerns are possible
- Offer explanations for short-term outcomes
- Help generate new ideas and/or theories

Using survey as a tool



- To describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context (How many single fathers are cigarette smokers in Yigo?)
- To describe the distribution of characteristics in a population (Who are the abusers of alcohol in Dededo?)

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Using survey as a tool



- To establish baselines (What do teens in Mangilao who engage in binge drinking have in common?)
- To analyze trends across time (What patterns of abuse are evident among our youth from the time they enter middle school up to the time that they leave high school?)

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Some survey types



- Individual Self-Administered
- Group Self-Administered
- Mail Self-Administered
- Telephone
- Online

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Is the survey good to use?



Potential Strengths

- Generates a lot of self-reported data in a short time
- Costs less per unit of information taken
- Makes possible comparisons and statistical analysis of data
- Relatively straightforward analysis

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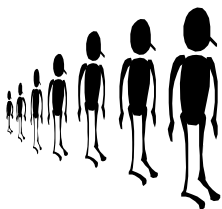
Potential Weaknesses



- Does not provide direct evidence of abuse
- Requires a lot of administrative effort
- Dependent on respondent's willingness and ability to report information
- Tends to produce subjective data
- Results can be difficult to interpret

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A Focus Group Is . . .



Who

- **Approximately seven to twelve people**
- **With common characteristics relating to discussion topic**

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A Focus Group Is . . .



How

- Conducted by a trained interviewer (moderator, facilitator).
- Three focus groups are the minimum for a study

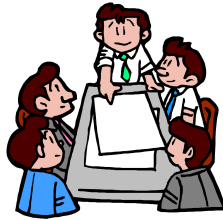
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A Focus Group Is . . .



What

- A carefully planned discussion
- To obtain perceptions of a defined interest area



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A Focus Group Is . . .



Where

- In a permissive, non-threatening environment



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A key characteristic which distinguishes focus groups is the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants.

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Logistics

- 1- to 1 1/2 hours
- round table, chairs in circle
- comfortable room, good sightlines, acoustics
- Food and drink with care – they have to be able to talk!

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Guiding the discussion

- know your objectives
- don't try to do too much – 2-4 major topics is probably all
- have an outline of how you want to proceed
- be ready to be flexible if need be – or to rein in the discussion
- Stick to the time limit

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When to Conduct Focus Groups



- Before a program begins, during a program or after a program ends
- Focus groups are effective when
 - People have something to share (motivations)
 - The goal is to understand human behavior
- Focus groups are not effective when
 - People are divided or angry
 - The goal is to gather factual information
 - Organization is trying to improve its image

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What Focus Groups Can Tell You:



1. Give information on **how groups of people think or feel** about a particular topic
2. Give greater insight into **why certain opinions are held**
3. Help improve the **planning and design of new programs**
4. Provide a means of **evaluating existing programs**
5. Produce insights for **developing strategies for outreach**

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Clarifying, resolving, probing



- To help clarify problems and add to existing information
- To help resolve ambiguous findings in a survey
- To probe into issues that impact on substance abuse with a view to compare various perspectives

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Moderator's role



- encourage discussion
- encourage them to talk with one another not you
- bring in people who aren't speaking
- Reduce influence of people who dominate
- Bring out a variety of viewpoints
- keep on discussion track w/o stifling
- allow silence
- avoid premature closure

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What Focus Groups Cannot Tell You:



1. Valid information about **individuals**.
2. Valid "before-and-after" information (**how things have changed over time**).
3. Information that you can **apply generally** to other groups of people.

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Systematic Analysis Process



- **Start while still in the group**
- **Immediately after the focus group**
- **Soon after the focus group--within hours analyze individual focus group**
- **Later--within days analyze the series of focus groups**
- **Finally, prepare the report**

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Focus Group Analysis Tips



When analyzing focus group data, consider...

- Words
- Context
- Internal consistency
- Frequency or extensiveness of comments
- Intensity of the comments
- Specificity of responses
- Find the big ideas

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Lessons Learned about Doing Focus Groups



- Do multiple sessions
- During the discussion, don't correct, teach, explain...
- Don't over-generalize results
- Don't filter out participants' own words in written summary

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Which method is best?



- All data gathering tools have pros and cons
- It is crucial to adopt a multi-method/multi-source approach
- "Ideal" method means those that are best fit between the needs of a program, satisfactory validity, and affordability (time, effort and money)

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