Evaluation for Grantmakers:

Examples from Oral Health

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Evaluating foundation grants & initiatives

Frequently Asked Questions:

+ **How is evaluation different from monitoring?**

+ **Why evaluate?**

+ **What should you evaluate?**

+ **When should you hire an outside consultant?**

+ **How do you go about conducting evaluation?**

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About Harder+Company

+ **We work with foundations, nonprofits, and government agencies across a diverse range of sectors to conduct planning and evaluation**

+ **Our staff bring expertise in:**

  - **Philanthropy & philanthropic strategy**

  - **Health care delivery**

  - **Systems & policy change**

  - **Oral health**

+ **More info: www.harderco.com**

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Grant monitoring vs. evaluation

	Grant monitoring	Evaluation
How it works	▪ Grantees report on progress against goals they identify	▪ Third party assesses implementation and results
What it measures	▪ Outputs → how many?	▪ Outcomes → what changed? ▪ Process → why?
Information sources	▪ Quarterly & financial reports as well as site visits	▪ Many, including data other than that reported by grantees
Purpose	▪ Support grantee accountability to project goals and budget	▪ Help foundations & grantees learn if and how funding made a difference

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Why evaluate?

Evaluation can also strengthen relationships

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What to evaluate?

Process: "The work"

+ **What services are being offered?**

+ **Who & how many are served?**

+ **Is the desired target group being reached?**

+ **Are funded services well implemented?**

+ **What are the challenges, successes, and lessons learned?**

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What to evaluate?

Outcomes: "The results"

+ **Did the grant or initiative produce the desired changes?**

+ **This requires:**

    - **An intention to produce a defined change**

    - **A credible way to measure that change**

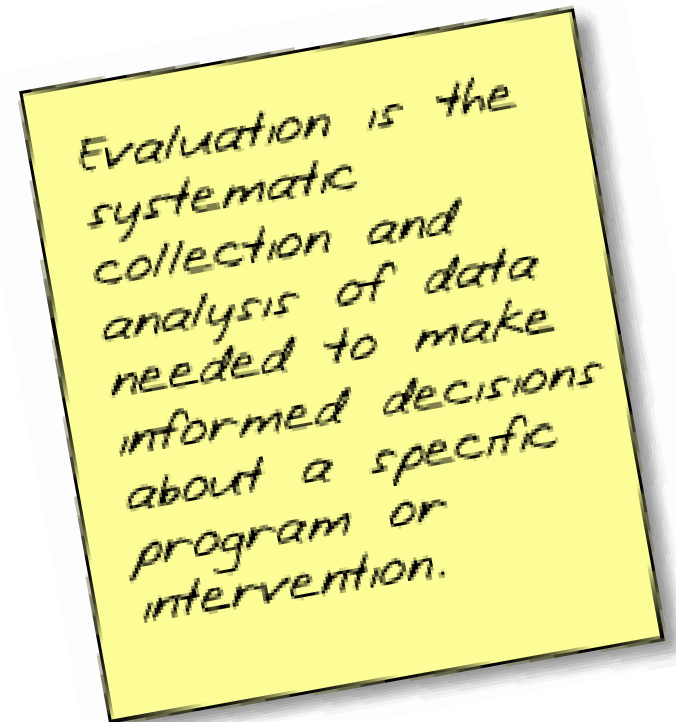   - **Time to allow change to occur and evaluators to collect data**

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When to do a third-party evaluation?

When you are…

+ **Trying something new**

+ **Making a multi-year strategic investment**

+ **Interested in taking stock of past investments**

+ **Required to by someone else**

+ **Not sure where to start**

Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of data needed to make informed decisions about a specific program or intervention.

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Evaluation types and when to use them

Types	Situation
Formative	▪ When fine-tuning a model ▪ When a future summative evaluation is expected and baseline data will be needed
Summative	▪ At the end of a program or initiative when key decisions about its future are going to be made ▪ When judging the model's merit or worth for continuation, expansion, or going to scale
Developmental	▪ When working on early stage innovations or in highly complex situations

From *A Developmental Evaluation Primer* by Jamie A.A. Gamble. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, 2008.

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Choosing an evaluation approach

Evaluation designs and methods depend on:

- **Initiative design and strategy**

- **What funders hope to gain through evaluation**

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Examples from oral health

Common oral health initiative goals:

✚ **Increase oral health literacy**

✚ **Improve oral health outcomes**

✚ **Increase access to oral health care**

✚ **Build system capacity**

✚ **Advance policy change**

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Case 1: Oral health literacy

Community Health Foundation of Western and Central NY:
CHOMPERS! Bringing Dental Care to Kids

+ **Goal:** Improve oral health knowledge and hygiene practices in children's home and early care and education (ECE) settings across 6 communities

+ **Strategy:** Establish hubs in each community to train providers using Cavity Free Kids, a curriculum for teaching preventive oral health lessons to preschoolers and their families

CHOMPERS!
Bringing Dental Care To Kids

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Case 1: Oral health literacy (cont.)

Evaluation purpose	■ Support implementation of a well-known model ■ Measure impact on participating children
Approach	■ Formative and summative ■ Mixed methods design to assess effectiveness of implementation and measures results
Methods & activities	■ Observation of provider trainings ■ Interviews with hub sites at two points in time ■ Pre/post surveys with teachers and parents ■ Active participation in quality improvement efforts

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Case 2: Oral health outcomes

HRSA Special Project of National Significance:
Innovations in Oral Health Initiative, Native American Health Center

+ **Goal:** **Improve dental health outcomes among HIV+ clinic patients**

+ **Strategy:** **Combine dental case management, medical-dental integration, and partnerships with private specialist providers to support participation in prevention and treatment activities**

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Case 2: Oral health outcomes (cont.)

Evaluation purpose	Gather data to inform the field about a well-running model for improving clinical outcomes
Approach	- Summative - Comparison group design
Methods & activities	- Documentation of the model - Chart review for participating patients and a matched comparison group

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Case 3: Oral health access

John Muir Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund:
Closing Gaps in Dental Care Initiative

+ **Goal: Increase access to oral health care among Head Start children, pregnant/parenting teens, and older adults**

+ **Strategy: Use community outreach and portable dental care to reach target populations**

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Case 3: Oral health access (cont.)

Evaluation purpose	▪ Support the foundation and grantee in developing a sustainable model for increasing access to care
Approach	▪ Developmental ▪ Mixed methods design to support development of an effective service delivery and financing model
Methods & activities	▪ Interviews with clinic staff and community partners ▪ Surveys and focus groups with patients ▪ Analysis of clinic service and financial data ▪ Bimonthly partnership meetings

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Technical considerations

+ **Design and methods**

  - **Emphasis on process vs. results**

  - **Quantitative vs. qualitative methods**

  - **Cultural considerations**

+ **Detecting change**

  - **Sample size**

  - **Controlling for outside influences**

+ **Deciding what is meaningful (i.e., compared to what?)**

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Practical considerations

+ **Where are the learning opportunities?**

+ **How much will it cost?**

  - **What is grantee capacity for evaluation?**

  - **What kind of evidence is good enough?**

+ **What does success mean for this initiative?**

  - **Grantee met performance measures?**

  - **Service participants are measurably better off?**

  - **The community is a better place?**

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Key ingredients for success

+ **Build consensus about purpose and questions up front**

+ **Are in tune with board expectations**

+ **Include grantee participation**

+ **Incorporate methods to understand/explain, not just describe**

+ **Value learning and improvement**

+ **Balance rigor with responsiveness to grantmaker's needs and concerns**

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Thank you!

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