

Focusing the Evaluation

Evaluation Lab 2022 Summer Institute

UNM Evaluation Lab Team

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Focusing the Evaluation: Objective

By the end of today, you will have a draft of your evaluation goals and evaluation questions.

Why do we want to focus our evaluation?

"If you don't know where you are headed, you will likely end up somewhere else"

If all that mattered was your mission, what evaluation question would you ask?

Focusing the Evaluation: What does it mean?

Obtaining useful and meaningful evaluation goals and questions means asking:

What do you want to evaluate?

Why is this necessary?

Who will use the results?

How will the results be used?

Getting started

We strongly recommend:

A collaborative approach.

Develop shared understanding of the program, its priorities, and how the evaluation fits.

Can yield most usable results.

Keep your mission in sight and in mind.

It will guide your process when things get confusing.

Team discussion: who should be at the table?

The most evident stakeholders:

Program managers, designers, staff implementing the program, admin staff.

Consider:

Former and potential clients if possible.

Team discussion

Step 1: Mission and Program Outcomes

Each person will express in their own words:

What are the program's mission and outcomes?

You might find your team has more to add to your program outcomes and mission than to what's written.

*You might already have this in your **logic model** but having each person talk about it lets them speak to their own experience.*

Team discussion

Step 1: Mission and Program Outcomes

Once you all have shared understanding of program outcomes and mission:

Decide on priorities

- Each team member can express which outcomes take priority for evaluation and why.
- Pick the outcome that most agree upon **as a starting point**

Team discussion

Step 2: What do you Want to Know?

Once you decide on what you will evaluate, each team member can express:

What do they wish to learn from the evaluation?

If the team is having a hard time answering this, think about a statement you wish you could make about your organization.

Example: Mandy's Farm statement of success in daily living for its clients:

“Adults with disabilities exert full control over where they live, where they work, and who they spend time with”

You may have these statements in your rubric! Feel free to use them but you don't have to.

Team discussion

Step 2: What do you Want to Know?

Once you have identified what you want to know, you can express them as evaluation goals (it is just a draft! You can revise it as you go!)

“The goal of this evaluation is to **learn** how much control do clients have over their financial decisions and personal relationships”

“The goal of this evaluation is to **assess** how effective is the training program in supporting teachers to plan, create, and implement an arts-based STEM online curriculum”

Team discussion

Step 3: The Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions reflect your evaluation goal.

They also define the scope or boundaries of your evaluation .

Make sure your evaluation questions are:

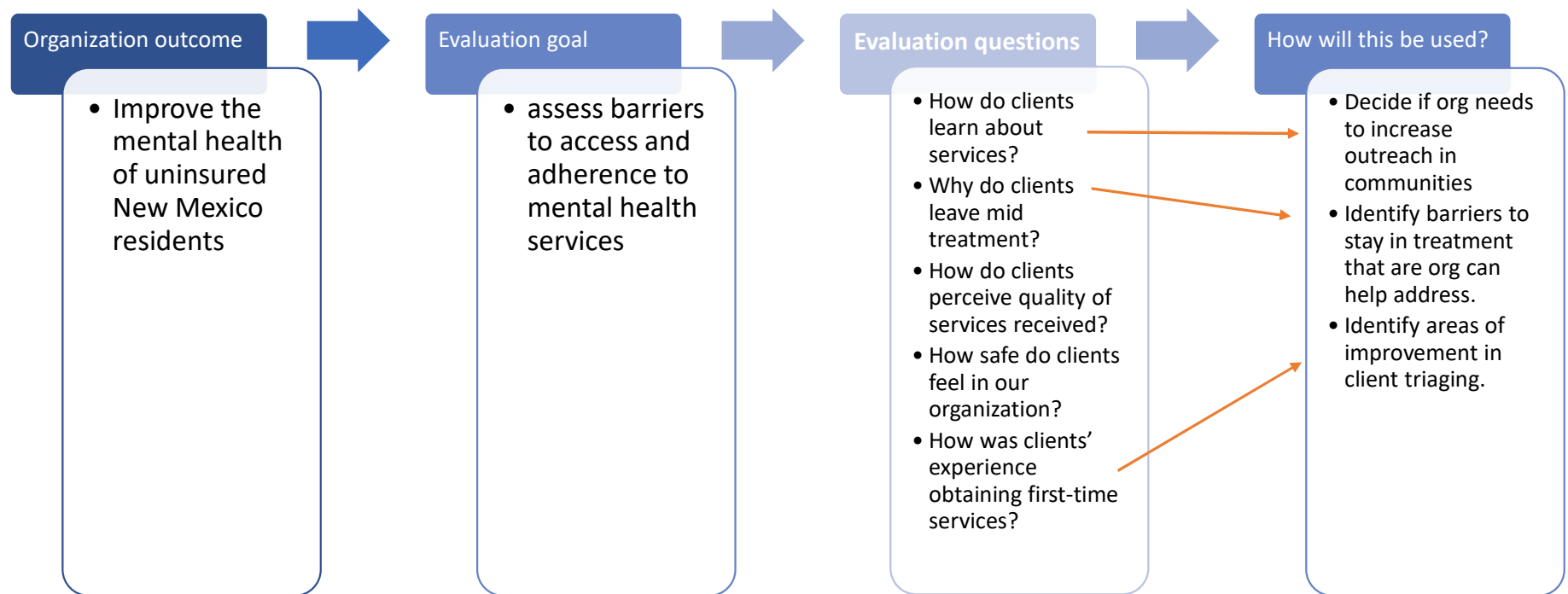
- Directly related to your evaluation goal
- Open ended*
- Helpful for decision making.

* This depends on the evaluation goal, but tends to be the most effective type of question if you want useful answers.

Example 1:



Example 2:



Team discussion: use of findings

Discuss with your team:

What decisions will the evaluation findings influence? (Staffing? Funding? Program design? Nothing?)

Who will make the decisions?

When should results be available to help decision making?

How much influence do you expect the evaluation to have? (be as realistic as you can!)

→ What kind of data do you need for the evaluation to have the influence you want it to have?

It is a learning process

About how you and your team see your program/organization

About what you want to know about your organization

About what you want to do next!

The process is not linear!

e.g., You might need to go back and tweak your evaluation goal once you start thinking about evaluation questions and the decisions you want to make.