

Understanding Evaluation and Program Evidence

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Call for Proposals

AEA Evaluation 2016
Conference
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American Evaluation Association

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The Dallas Evaluator Network meets informally on occasion. To be added to the announcement list, please e-mail Susan Wolfe at wolfe@cnmconnect.

Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their effectiveness.

The Texas Evaluation Network (TEN), a statewide interdisciplinary organization, provides advocacy, networking, and the exploration, development and exchange of theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge related to the field of evaluation.

TEN is a not-for-profit organization with three main purposes:

- Promoting and advocating evaluation and building evaluation capacity
- Providing professional development opportunities for Texas evaluators
- Establishing a venue for networking and the exchange of theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge related to the field of evaluation

Announcements

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Texas Evaluation Network

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- <http://www.texasevaluationnetwork.org/>
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Texas Evaluation Network

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What I will cover (to update)

- Key aspects of evaluation
 - Process evaluation
 - Outcome evaluation
 - Methodologies
- How the key aspects are related to level of evidence
- What to look for in an evaluator/what your evaluator need to know

GAA Rider 31:

TJJD program evaluation

- Providing in-depth consultative technical assistance on program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Assist in developing program logic models for new and existing programs
- Following current research on juvenile justice program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Disseminate best practice to juvenile probation departments
- Identify and measure program specific outcomes

The practice of evaluating one's own efforts is as natural as breathing. Cooks taste their own gravy and sauce, cabinetmakers run their hands over the wood to decide when a piece is smooth enough, and basketball players watch to see whether their shots go in. Indeed, it would be most unwise after turning on the hot water to neglect to check the water temperature before stepping into a shower stall.

— Posavac & Carey (1997)

Did the program work?

- Will this program work?
- Why do we think it will work?
- How will it work?
- For whom will it work?
- What is the goal of the program? What is a good result?
- What is a successful program? What does successful mean?

Key aspects of program evaluations

- Process evaluation – looking at the implementation of a program
- Outcome evaluation- looking at the results of a program and evaluate the results against something (e.g. control group's or comparison group's results)
- Research approaches/ methodologies for process evaluation and outcome evaluations

Process Evaluation

Focuses on questions like:

- Was the program implemented as intended?
- Were all planned program activities performed?
- How is the program/activities being perceived? What is the perceived outcome?

Process evaluation— how to measure the process

- Measure program **outputs**
- Outputs can most often be counted or expressed as a percentage
 - How many participants were served in the program?
 - How many attended each activity/session?
 - How many staff were involved?

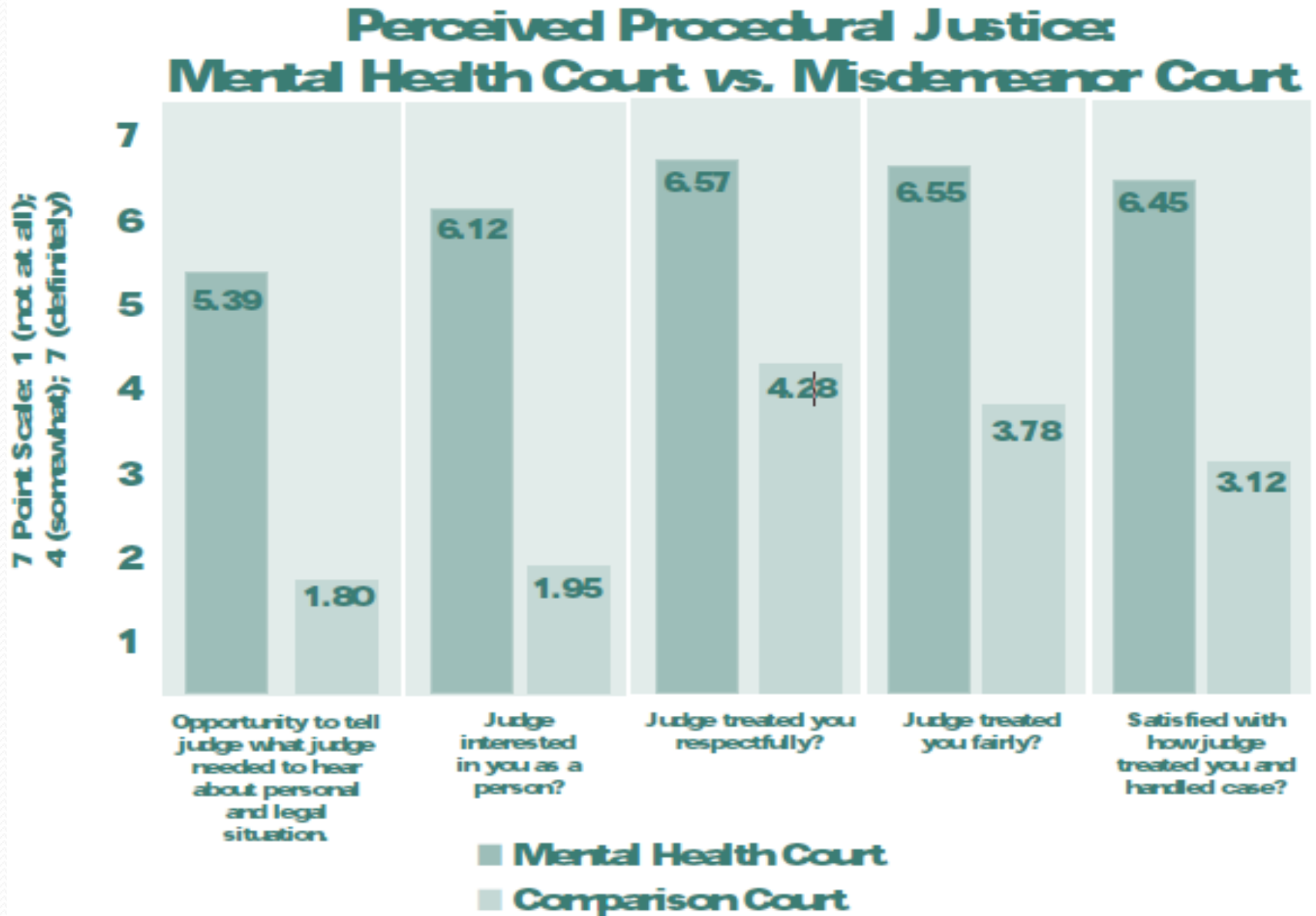
Process evaluation— how to measure the process

- Measure program **outputs**
 - Were the same staff members involved throughout the program(staff turnover)?
 - What was the cost of the program? Cost for different components, activities, and staff categories ?What was the cost per unit?
 - Did changes had to be made to the program during implementation? Why?

Process evaluation— how to measure the process

- Measure **perceived effects and outcomes**
- Ask the participants what they think the effect and outcomes are for them
- Methodologies:
 - Surveys—satisfaction surveys with Likert-scale responses (strongly agree - strongly disagree)
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups
 - On-going “reflection” meetings

Example: Perceived Procedural Justice



Benefits of Process Evaluation

- Develop understanding of what was done correctly when the program was first launched
- Evaluate fidelity to the model– implementing a program as the model program.
- Gain understanding of what elements were difficult to implement or had to be changed with the program
- Provide understanding of why the program was successful or not as part of **the outcome evaluation.**

Logic Model for GirlPOWER!*

What needs does the program address?

Needs

EARLY ADOLESCENT URBAN, MINORITY GIRLS

- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Victimization
- Health risk behaviors: Diet/nutrition, exercise, substance use, violence, risky sexual behavior, self-harm
- Academic underachievement

PREVENTION PROGRAMS FOR GIRLS

- Lack of effectiveness
- Lack of gender-specific strategies and content

What goes into the program?

Program Inputs

FINANCIAL

- NIMH Grant Funding
- BBBS Subcontract

PERSONNEL

- 2.20 FTE BBBS Staff
- Services of community agencies (workshop presentations)
- 10 BBBS female volunteer mentors
- Consultation: UIC Research Team

MATERIALS

- Program manual
- Supplies (participant handouts and notebooks, disposable cameras, picture puzzles, refreshments, workshop props)

FACILITIES

- Space for workshops and goal-setting and progress sessions

What goes on in the program?

Program Activities

SUPPORTS

- Staff training and supervision
- Mentor training
- Bi-monthly supervision of mentors and parent/youth check-ins

DIRECT SERVICES

- Bi-monthly workshop series for mentors/youth: focused on relationship and team building, promotion of healthy self-esteem, prevention of risk behaviors/ promotion of healthy behaviors (11 workshops total)
- Goal-setting and progress sessions for individual matches
- Between-session structured activities for matches during workshop series (Power Builders)
- Continued one-on-one interactions between mentors and youth following workshop series to 1-year mark (includes Power Builders)
- Group reunion session

EVALUATION

- Built-in program evaluation activities

What happens as a result of the program?

Program Outputs

FIDELITY

- Implementation of training sessions for staff and mentors
- Implementation of workshops & reunion
- Quality of implementation of training sessions, workshops, supervision/check-ins, goal-setting, and progress sessions
- Mentor/staff satisfaction with training
- Mentor/parent/youth satisfaction with workshops, supervision/ check-ins, goal-setting sessions, program materials
- Youth/mentor/parent satisfaction with mentoring relationship

DOSAGE

- Avg. # of workshop sessions attended by mentors and youth
- Parent attendance at orientation & talent show/graduation
- Avg. # of supervision contacts/check-ins for mentors/parents/youth
- Avg. # of goal-setting and progress sessions completed
- Avg. hours of weekly one-on-one mentor/youth interactions
- Avg. # of Power Builders completed
- % of evaluation materials completed by staff/mentors/youth/parents
- % of relationships sustained one year

What are the benefits of participating in the program?

Program Outcomes

INITIAL

- ↑ social support from non-parental adult (mentor): emotional, companionship, instrumental, informational
- ↑ health-related knowledge/attitudes
- ↑ gender and racial identity

INTERMEDIATE

- ↑ self-esteem/self-efficacy beliefs
- ↑ social competence
- ↑ skills for avoiding risky behaviors/engaging in positive health behaviors
- ↑ quality of relationships with parents, peers, and other adults

LONG TERM

- ↓ risky health behaviors: substance use, violence-related, unsafe sexual behavior, self-harm, etc.
- ↑ positive health behaviors: exercise, diet/nutrition, etc.
- ↓ mental health problems: internalizing (e.g., depression) and externalizing (e.g., conduct disorder)
- ↑ positive mental health: happiness, life satisfaction
- ↑ social, educational, occupational functioning at later stages of development

* This program was developed through collaboration between Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago (BBBS) and the Girls Mentoring Project at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), David DuBois, Ph.D., Director. FTE = full-time equivalent.

Outcome Evaluation

- Measures change or makes comparison
- Often expressed in terms of improvement, increase or reduction
- Helps answer what benefits did the program provide?
- Example of outcomes:
 - Improved self-esteem
 - Reduction in risky health behaviors
 - Improved reading level

Performance Measures

Outputs

- Number of individuals that received services in disaster preparedness
- Number of disadvantaged individuals receiving job placement services
- Number of economically disadvantaged students or students with special/exceptional needs who start in a CNCS-supported education program

Outcomes

- Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development
- Number of students that participated in the mentoring or tutoring who demonstrated improved academic engagement (behaviors)

Outcome Evaluation and Evidence

- How can we know the change(improvement, reduction) occurred because of the program?
- What would the change have been without the program?

Outcome evaluation lingo:

- Comparing apples to apples
 - Calculate a treatment effect
 - Rule out alternative explanations
 - Control for other factors
 - See statistically significant differences
 - Randomize treatment and control group
- ➔ CREATING COMPARABLE COMPARISON GROUP**

Outcome Evaluation and Evidence

- **What change** would have occurred in the program participants **if they had not been in the program.**
- We want to compare the result to **if we had done nothing.**
- Best option to use a **control group** for comparison that did not participate in the program.

Outcome Evaluation:

Experimental research design

- TREATMENT/PROGRAM GROUP
- **CONTROL GROUP**
- **Random assignment** to treatment and control group makes the two groups equal
- The sizes of the groups matter
- Compare average effect

Outcome Evaluation:

Experimental research design

- With **random assignment** (e.g. coin flipping) the **differences** between the groups are **removed**. The groups are “apples and apples”.
- The **only difference** between the groups is **participation in the program**.
- The difference in outcome between the two groups is because of the program.

Outcome evaluation:

Quasi-experimental design

- When random assignment to treatment and control group is not possible
- **COMPARISON GROUP**
- Find a comparison group as equal as possible to treatment/program group
- Use **statistical matching** to make the two groups more alike
- Use **statistical modeling** to control for differences between the groups

Outcome Evaluation:

Quasi-experimental design

- Statistical modeling/multivariate analysis: A method to control for other factors/differences between the treatment and control group.
- Adding the factors/variables known to matter for the outcome into the statistical model to “control” for them/ remove their effect.
- What other factors affect reading level?

Outcome Evaluation:

With a comparison group

- Example: matching for comparison group for Broward County Mental Health Court

archival data. A misdemeanor court in another Florida county with similar characteristics was chosen as a comparison to the MHC. We enrolled 120 individuals from the MHC and 100 individuals from the comparison court, matching them on a number of key variables to attempt to assure that individuals enrolled in the comparison misdemeanor court would have been eligible for the Broward County mental health court.

Outcome evaluation:

Pre- and post test

- **BEFORE AND AFTER** : PRE and POST Test
- **Measures change** in the same individuals over time
- Use a survey measuring self-esteem before and after a Girls Circle program
- Use an established assessment measuring reading ability before and after tutoring
- Valuable research approach, but can not tell us what the change would have been without the program

Problem Statement: Youth on probation supervision have a violent re-offense rate of 30% demonstrating a need for a cognitive behavioral intervention program that addresses youth who experience difficulties with interpersonal relationships and prosocial behavior

Goal: To reduce recidivism by modifying the anti-social behavior of chronically aggressive youth through skill streaming, anger control and moral reasoning training

Target Population:	Resources:	Activities:	Outputs:	Outcomes:
- Ages 12-17 - Youth on probation - Identified as chronically aggressive through relevant assessments - Identified as accepting of anti-social behavior through relevant assessments	- ART-trained group facilitators - Assessment personnel (e.g. trained probation officers or case managers) - Program materials - Space for groups of 8-12 youth to meet - Evaluation checklist - Budget	30 one-hour program sessions delivered 3 times per week over 10 weeks (1 hr. per component) 10 one-hour sessions, delivered 1 time per week over 10 weeks on Structured Learning Training: - Modeling - Role playing - Performance feedback - Transfer training 10 one-hour sessions, delivered 1 time per week over 10 weeks on Anger Control Training: - Identifying triggers/cues - Using reminders/reducers - Self-evaluation 10 one-hour sessions, delivered 1 time per week over 10 weeks on Moral Reasoning: - Moral dilemma exposure	Participants will attend at least # of the 30 program sessions # of Structured Learning Trainings given and attendance rate # of Anger Control Trainings given and attendance rate # of Moral Reasoning sessions given and attendance rate	- At least XX% of participants will abstain from recidivating within 18 months of the date of program completion - At least XX% of participants will have significant improvements in parent- and teacher-reported scores on the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) - At least XX% of participants will have significant improvements on parent-reported scores on the Child and Adolescent Disruptive Behavior Inventory 2.3 (CADBI) - At least XX% of participants will report significant improvement on the HIT instrument

Date Created/Modified:

Finding an evaluator resources:

- Texas Evaluation Network
- American Evaluation Association:
 - ▣ Find an evaluator
- RFP for evaluators resource:
 - ▣ http://publicprofit.net/site/uploads/Public_Profit_Eval_RFP_Guide_2015.pdf

References:

1. How to build a successful mentoring program using Elements OF Effective Practice: A step-by-step toolkit for program managers. National Mentoring Partnership.
2. The effectiveness of the Broward Mental Health Court: An evaluation. Policy Brief. November 2002. University of South Florida.
3. ART Manual