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Using Your Logic Model to Guide Your Project

Practitioners often use logic models when planning an intervention, but there are many opportunities to use a logic model throughout your project. This tip sheet describes how your logic model can serve as a living document as you plan, implement, evaluate, and improve your teen pregnancy prevention project.

Project Planning and Implementation

The logic model should serve as a common reference point and communication tool for grantee and sub-awardee staff, community partners, stakeholders, parents (who may ask questions about the project as they make decisions about their child's participation), and your project officer (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Your logic model can help to define objectives for implementation that will enable you to plan efficiently, prioritize resources, and adequately monitor progress.

Throughout project planning and implementation, let your logic model guide your project in the following ways:

- Use your logic model to make decisions about which community partners to involve; who will be recruited to participate in programs; location(s) for implementation; time requirements for implementation; and staff hiring, training, and supervision needs.
- Use your logic model to communicate the basis for your project activities (including research evidence, theory, and information about your community). It is important for staff involved in planning and implementing project activities to understand which risk and protective factors these activities are intended to target and how changes in these risk and protective factors are expected to yield desired outcomes. Incorporate discussion of the logic model into staff training to foster understanding of what they are expected to do and why their work is vital to your project's success.
- Refer program delivery staff to the logic model to help them understand how activities outside of curricula (such as activities addressing adulthood preparation subjects) fit into the project and how they are expected to influence risk and protective factors that will facilitate desired outcomes.
- Use your logic model to inform fidelity monitoring tools to capture activities that are supposed to occur and to ensure that risk and protective factors identified in the logic model are addressed.

Evaluation Planning and Execution

A clear and comprehensive logic model can provide the roadmap for your evaluation and facilitate communication between project staff and your evaluator. Your logic model helps to define what is going to be evaluated, including the important elements of your program to measure as part of your process evaluation and the critical outcomes to measure as part of your outcome evaluation. When designing an evaluation, refer to your logic model and answer the following questions:

- What **resources** are required to implement the program?

- What **activities** are involved in implementing the program?
- What are the **immediate outputs** of those activities, or what does the program **produce**?
- What **short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes** are expected as a result of the program, or what **changes** are expected as a result of program participation?
- **When** should we expect to observe program outputs and outcomes?
- At what **levels** (e.g., individual, families, and communities) do we expect to see impact?
- What **contextual factors** (e.g., cultural values in your target community, passing of state legislation related to teen pregnancy prevention) are relevant to implementation and impact?

Your stakeholders will probably want information about whether and how your program worked. Use your logic model to inform evaluation questions based on linkages between activities, outputs, and outcomes demonstrated in your logic model:

- Why did we observe the outcomes that we did?
- What specific resources were associated with successful program activities?
- How did program activities achieve outputs and outcomes?
- If the program did not achieve its intended outputs and/or outcomes, why not? For example, was the program implemented as intended? Were the necessary resources applied?

Promoting Project Improvements

Logic models are great blueprints for guiding Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). CQI is a systematic approach that uses information obtained through program monitoring and evaluation to make improvements throughout the lifecycle of a project. You can use CQI processes to reflect on what you did, whether it worked, and how you can improve. These processes can happen as soon as problems are identified during project implementation (mid-course CQI) or as part of a systematic assessment of project functioning (strategic CQI). Regardless of the type of CQI you use, when the need for quality improvements is identified, it is critical to go back to your logic model and review each of the components and linkages. Check the following parts of your logic model:

- **Program inputs:** Are the right partners on board? Are staff receiving the necessary training and support? Do you have enough resources? Do you need additional technical assistance?
- **Programmatic components and activities:** Do your strategies fit your target population's needs and values? Is adaptation (or additional adaptation) needed? Do you have enough family involvement? Are your strategies reaching a large enough proportion of the community?
- **Program outcomes:** Is it reasonable to expect that your specified activities will influence your specified outcomes? Are outcomes being measured appropriately?

Remember, logic models are integral to all that you do, from planning and implementing to evaluating and improving your project.

References and Resources

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