Step 7
Process Evaluation

Contents

Tip sheets

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Focus question

How will you assess the quality of your program planning and implementation?

Step 7 Process Evaluation begins with more planning for your process evaluation and monitoring, and it contains the start of your actual program. During

Step 6, you methodically selected an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program (EBP), and developed plans for rolling it out. Congratulations!

Now, in Step 7 before you implement your program, you'll decide how to monitor and document the quality of your program implementation. Between deciding what to measure and initiating the process and outcome evaluations—still prior to implementation—you'll also want to develop **measures** for the Step 8 Outcome Evaluation. When the program is completely finished, you'll return to Step 8 and finish the outcome evaluation itself. Steps 7 and 8, therefore, encompass two periods of time each—a creation phase and an evaluation phase—the first phase being the period for which you'll want to consider and plan prior to implementing. Once you actually start the program, you'll initiate the process and outcome evaluations activities.

Key point

Planning the process evaluation reveals what you need to measure and how to measure it during program implementation.

Materials

For the planning portion of this step, you'll need:

- Completed Step 2 **BDI Logic Model** tool

- Completed Step 6 work plan and associated tool

- Copies of the Step 7 **Process Evaluation Planner** tool

- Curriculum materials for the selected program, including descriptions of specific components

- Extra copies of the tip sheets **Process Evaluation Questions & Tasks** (p. 7-10) and **Sources of Process Evaluation Information** (p. 7-12)

- Copies as desired of the Sample Project Insight Form, Sample End of Session Satisfaction Survey, Sample Overall Satisfaction Survey, and Sample Fidelity Rating Instrument For the evaluation portion of this step, you'll need:

- Your assessment instruments

- Copies of the Step 7 **Process Evaluation** tool

Step 7 Checklist

Prior to launching your program

☐ Develop a clear process evaluation

When the process and (Step 8) outcome evaluations are set

☐ Implement your teen-pregnancy prevention program

Once your program has begun

☐ Examine whether the activities captured in your logic model were implemented as planned.

☐ Monitor the work plan you started in Step 6.

☐ Determine the quality of your activities.

☐ Identify and make midcourse corrections as needed

☐ Track the number of participants and their attendance

☐ Monitor your program fidelity

Fayetteville Youth Network tackles Step 7

As FYN prepared to launch *Making Proud Choices!* for the first time, the work group paused before completing its work plan to familiarize themselves with tasks and tools needed to conduct a high quality process evaluation. Using the **Process Evaluation Planner**, the work group made decisions about the methods and tools they would use, paying particular attention to any pre-test information they needed to capture before launching MPC.

The work group also noted that, as part of ongoing staff and peer facilitator training during implementation, they wanted to make sure that people could tell when it was appropriate to make **midcourse corrections** and identify the means to handle them.

Reasons for evaluating the process

Measuring the quality of your implementation efforts tells you how well your work plan and the program process are proceeding. Using a variety of methods to assess the ongoing implementation process, you can recognize immediate and critical opportunities for making midcourse corrections that will improve program operation.

Objective measures also provide data you need to maintain accountability with your stakeholders, organization, and funding sources. Many granting agencies require as a condition for approval that proposals promise standard evaluation measures accompanied by an unbroken paper trail.

As we discussed in Step 3 Best Practices, implementing an EBP with quality and fidelity increases your chances of replicating its success. Therefore, this step also shows you ways to track and measure quality and fidelity.

Collaboration

A formal process evaluation provides transparency for partners and stakeholders.

Information to get you started

A process evaluation helps you identify successful aspects of your plan that are worth repeating and unsuccessful aspects that need to be changed. With your work plan and the curriculum, you will identify measurable items such as dosage, attendance, session quantity, and content covered. The data will help you improve your program in the short and long terms.

Short-term benefit

Process evaluations produce in-the-moment data indicating, first, whether you implemented everything you had planned, and then second, how well things are going, thus providing opportunities to eliminate problems and adjust your activities as needed in real time. As your program proceeds, you want to monitor those factors you can control—like the time activities start and end—and those you can't—like a snowstorm that forces participants to stay home. If the appointed hour turns out to be inconvenient or you need to repeat a session, timely data suggest the need to reschedule.

If you can, you also want to use opportunities for improvement as they arise, rather than wait and miss your chance as problems grow or resources diminish. For example, if monitoring indicates that you're in danger of running out of money when the program is 75% complete, you may still be able to raise more or economize. Finally, monitoring can indicate corrections to make before the program is implemented again, such as updating a video.

Long-term benefit

When you developed your **BDI Logic Model**, you saw the close tie between the intervention activities and your desired outcomes. Evaluating your implementation process, therefore, can help explain why you did or did not reach your desired outcomes.

Combining good data from the Step 7 Process Evaluation and the Step 8 Outcome Evaluation will help you reach productive conclusions about the suitability of your program and the quality with which you implemented it. Both types of information are essential to any organization committed to a long-term community presence, dedicated to making a difference in the priority population, and accountable to outside funding sources, collaborators, and stakeholders.

If the process evaluation showed…	And the outcome evaluation showed…	Then it's likely the staff chose and developed an…
High-quality implementation	Positive outcomes	Appropriate program and logic model
High-quality implementation	Negative outcomes	Inappropriate program and logic model
Poor-quality implementation	Negative outcomes	Appropriate OR inappropriate program or logic model

Key point

It's just as important to identify any successes you want to repeat as it is to change what's not working well.

How to perform a process evaluation

The process evaluation tells you how well your plans are being put into action. It measures the quality and fidelity of your implementation, participant satisfaction, staff perceptions, and adherence to the work plan by compiling data in six areas:

- Participant demographics

- Individual participant attendance

- Fidelity to the selected program

- Participant satisfaction

- Staff perceptions

- Adherence to the work plan

- Clarity and appropriateness of communication

We've created tip sheets to help you select evaluation methods that will work for you in each of these six areas. We've also provided a tool on which you can compile your decisions about gathering the data. Upon implementing the program you will use your selected instruments to gather the actual data. Finally, you can compile the information on the **Process Evaluation** tool. This section, therefore, is divided into two parts, each with its own tasks: create the process evaluation and perform process evaluations.

Memory Flash: Get help/get ready!

It's all about getting your ducks in a row, so have you…
- Hired an evaluator if you need one?
- Committed to evaluation?
- Truly recognized your limits?
- Obtained broad leadership support?

You will create the evaluation instruments now and then proceed to Step 8 Outcome Evaluation to do the same for outcomes. With both evaluation instruments in hand, you will implement the program. Once it is up and running, you will then return to this step and evaluate the implementation as it progresses.

Create the process evaluation

In order to develop a process evaluation that is specific to your selected program and to your health goal and desired outcomes, you will need to proceed methodically. We suggest the following sequence:

1. Engage or assign personnel to perform the evaluations

2. Decide what to measure

3. Choose methods for obtaining data

4. Set the schedule and assign the responsible parties

1. Engage or assign personnel to perform the evaluations

Persons evaluating implementation should be independent of facilitators and other persons involved with presenting a program, and vice versa. Separating implementation and evaluation personnel helps avoid conflicts of interest, let alone burnout. Though everyone involved in the program is committed to its success, the goals, requirements, and personal stake in presentation and evaluation differ. For the cleanest data you need a separation of duties. Whether you hire outside evaluators or train someone associated with your organization is a matter of budget and opportunity. Whichever path you take, however, evaluators must remain independent of facilitators.

2. Decide what to measure

We strongly recommend that, throughout the program, you track information about participation, adherence to curriculum and planning, and personal perceptions. The **Process Evaluation Questions & Tasks** tip sheet (p. 7-14) frames the areas of interest as questions and then suggests methods for obtaining answers. Informed by the curriculum and your **BDI Logic Model**, use the tip sheet to brainstorm a list of specific program elements that you need to monitor.

Participation

Demographic data reveals the success of the program at reaching your priority population. Demographic data is essential to describing the teens that attend sessions in your program. It can include, but isn't limited to, age, sex, family size, race/ethnicity, grade/education level, job, household income, and religion. You've probably gathered this sort of information in the course of planning, establishing, or running other programs. You can use surveys and interviews to get it.

Attendance records reveal participant dosage. Keep records of participant attendance at each session, using a roster of names and sessions by date.

Fidelity to curriculum and adherence to the work plan

Fidelity monitoring shows how closely you adhered to the program. As we've stated, the closer you can come to implementing the program as intended, the better your chance of achieving your goals and desired outcomes.

Measuring adherence to your work plan assesses its quality and exposes problematic departures. Use the work plan you created in Step 6 to identify measurable benchmarks.

Personal perceptions

Participant satisfaction leads to commitment. Evidence-based programs depend on certain minimum dosages for validity, which makes returning participants a prerequisite to success. As each session ends or at the conclusion of the program, you can conduct satisfaction surveys or debrief with participants.

High program satisfaction doesn't inevitably produce desired outcomes, however. A program could have very satisfied participants who do not improve at all in the areas targeted by the program. Satisfaction surveys should be considered one part of an overall evaluation.

Staff perceptions provide a mature view of an event. Sometimes the presenter is the only staff member present, but most sessions call for other adults to lend a hand. Obtaining staff perceptions can be as simple as holding a quick debriefing after a session and as thorough as a scheduled focus group. Periodically having an observer witness sessions can also give outside perceptions of the program's implementation.

Tip sheet ahead

Process Evaluation Questions & Tasks offers questions and the means to gather the answers.

Process Evaluation Questions & Tasks

Process Evaluation Questions	When Asked	Evaluation Methods & Tools	Resource Requirements	
1. What are the program participants' characteristics?	Before and after program implementation	Data collection form, interview, or observation	Expertise: Time:	moderate moderate
2. What were the individual program participants' dosages?	During program; summarize after	Attendance roster	Expertise: Time:	low moderate
3. What level of fidelity did the program achieve?	During/after program	Fidelity monitoring/ staff	Expertise: Time:	moderate moderate
		Fidelity monitoring/ observers	Expertise: Time:	moderate high
4. What is the participants' level of satisfaction?	During/after program	Satisfaction surveys	Expertise: Time:	low high
		Focus groups	Expertise: Time:	moderate low
5. What is the staff's perception of the program?	During/after program	Debriefing	Expertise: Time:	low low
		Staff surveys	Expertise: Time:	low low
		Focus groups	Expertise: Time:	high moderate
		Interviews	Expertise: Time:	moderate moderate
6. How closely did the program follow the work plan?	During/after program	Comparison of actual to planned events	Expertise: Time:	low low
7. How clearly did the staff communicate program goals and content?	During/after program	Observers	Expertise: Time:	moderate moderate
		Surveys and focus groups	Expertise: Time:	moderate high

3. Choose methods for obtaining data

Select data-gathering methods and instruments that will supply the information you've identified for revealing the quality of your implementation processes. As you select methods, keep in mind your organization's current resources and capacities. Ideally, you will want to assign at least one method to each question shown in the tip sheet on **Process Evaluation Questions & Tasks**.

Data collection forms and surveys

Collect demographic data from individual participants with fill-in-the-blank questionnaires (perhaps included in your pre-test survey, which we cover in Step 8) or structured program enrollment forms/documents. You can choose to collect this information anonymously in order to obtain details the respondent may otherwise find too intimate for sharing. Consider this carefully, however, as it will limit your ability to link these data to other aspects of your program.

Rosters and attendance sheets

Attendance records track participant attendance at each session, which will allow you to quantify program dosage per participant (e.g., Bob received 50% of the program, Sally received 80% of the program).

Satisfaction surveys

Obtain immediate, detailed feedback (1) at the end of each session and/or (2) at the end of the entire program by handing out anonymous surveys. Once the program ends, surveys can help you sum up pros and cons regarding the group's efforts. Satisfaction surveys are best used in combination with other methods because participants often limit ratings to "somewhat satisfied." Strong negative results require serious attention, but, as we mentioned earlier, high satisfaction does not necessarily equate with positive outcomes. You can find examples of satisfaction surveys on the CDC Teen Pregnancy website that came with this guide: **Sample End of Session Satisfaction Survey** and **Sample Overall Satisfaction Survey**.

Tip sheets ahead

The **Sources of Process Evaluation Information**, p. 7-12, summarizes some common ways to get information.

Fidelity Tracking, p. 7-14, expands on the primary means of assessing adherence to the program.

Sources of Process Evaluation Information

Data Collection Form

What it is: A handout for gathering information from individuals OR a roster the facilitator uses to document participation

How to use it: To make sure that you get complete and valid data, be strategic about information you gather, keep the form as short and easy to finish as possible, and consider making it anonymous if you are gathering details that participants may be reluctant to share.

Advantage: You can obtain a variety of data for statistical analysis.

Satisfaction Survey

What it is: Information collected from participants after an event. It reveals the level of enjoyment, perceived value, perceived clarity of the information as delivered, and degree to which the event met needs or expectations. Best used in combination with other measures for the whole picture.

How to use it: For immediate, detailed feedback, administer brief surveys to participants at the end of each session or activity. In addition at the end of a program, you can hand out surveys with self-addressed, stamped envelopes for participant to complete and return later (see the CDC Teen Pregnancy website for a **Sample End of Session Satisfaction Survey** and a **Sample Overall Satisfaction Survey**). This latter approach will increase participants' sense of privacy, but will result in a lower response rate.

Advantage: Immediate understanding of issues that may impact participant enjoyment, likelihood of returning, and areas to fine tune.

Debriefing

What it is: Quick post-session meeting to gather observer insight into what worked and what didn't.

How to use it: Right after a session, gather staff members, volunteers, and others from whom you desire first-hand observations. Ask them to quickly complete a project insight form (see the CDC Teen Pregnancy website for a **Sample Project Insight Form**) or note their responses to two quick questions:
- What went well in the session?
- What didn't go so well, and how can we improve it next time?

Advantage: Staff members and other adults can offer observations on the implementation quality.

Focus Group

What it is: A trained facilitator-led discussion of a specific topic by a group of 8-10 persons.

How to use it: Typically focus groups are led by 1-2 facilitators who ask the group a limited number of open-ended questions. Facilitators introduce a broad question and then guide the group to respond with increasing specificity, striving to elicit opinions from all group members. Record the proceedings and designate note takers. Analyze the data by looking for emerging themes, new information, and general opinions.

Advantage: They give you an opportunity to gather a broader range of information about how people view your program and suggestions to make your program better.

Fidelity Tracking

What it is: The systematic tracking of program adherence to the curriculum.

How to use it: An evidence-based program should contain a fidelity-monitoring instrument. If it doesn't, contact the distributers to see if they have one. If a fidelity instrument isn't available or you developed your own program, use the **Fidelity Tracking** tip sheet to create and employ your own.

Advantage: The closer you come to implementing the program as it was intended, the better your chances of achieving your goals and desired outcomes.

Sources: *Getting to Outcomes: Promoting Accountability Through Methods and Tools for Planning, Implementation and Evaluation*, RAND Corporation (2004); *Getting to Outcomes With Developmental Assets: Ten Steps to Measuring Success in Youth Programs and Communities*, Search Institute (2006)

Fidelity Tracking

Simple tracking/rating forms are easy ways to track fidelity. If you're using an EBP kit or package, check to see if it includes a fidelity instrument. If it doesn't, contact the distributors to see if they have one. They are not always included with packaged program materials, but you can develop your own from the curriculum materials. Find the lists of session objectives and major activities in the material—the more detail the better—to get started.

1. List the sessions and the key activities associated with them

2. To each activity, add one or more statements of accomplishment, according to curriculum expectations. Check out the **Sample Fidelity Rating Instrument** on the CDC Teen Pregnancy website.

3. Add a rating column to the left of the list.

Did not cover	Covered partially	Covered fully
1	2	3

4. Calculate the average score: sum the checklist items and divide the total by the number of items. Repeat for each session; then average the sessions for an overall fidelity score.

5. Calculate the average percent of activities that are covered fully: Count the number that are covered fully and divide by the total number of activities. Repeat for each session, then average the percentage for all sessions. There is no golden rule but higher levels of fidelity (above 80%) are considered good.

Who does the rating? You decide. There are pros and cons for each type of rater. Below, we offer a summary of pros and cons to aid in your decision-making.

Program presenters

Pros	Cons
Inexpensive because they're already present	Could produce biased ratings
Should know the material enough to rate what is happening	May resent the extra work involved in making the ratings
Checklists help them plan sessions	

Program participants

Pros	Cons
Inexpensive because they're already present	Do not know the program well enough to rate what should be happening (regarding content)
Able to rate the "feel" of the program (e.g., Did the session allow for participant discussion?)	Could take time away from activities

Outside raters (by live observation or viewing videotapes)

Pros	Cons
Likely to provide the least biased ratings	Requires resources: training in rating, extra staff, and possibly videotape equipment

Tool

The **Process Evaluation Planner** displays the seven questions from the tip sheet and provides columns for entering your decisions about addressing them.

Session debriefings

Immediately following a session, midway through the program, or at the end of the program, you can hold a quick debriefing meeting to get instant, first-hand feedback from observers (not participants) such as staff members, facilitators, or volunteers. You can gather the information by asking them to complete an insight form (see **Sample Project Insight Form** on the CDC Teen Pregnancy website). More commonly, debriefing boils down to taking notes during a quick conversation about three questions:

What went well in the session(s)?

What didn't go so well?

How can we improve it next time?

Focus groups

Elicit valuable—even surprising—information from participants, staff, volunteers, partners, parents, and other members of the community by holding a formal focus group. The usual focus group employs one or two trained facilitators leading a group discussion on a single topic. Groups usually contain no more than 8-10 people brought together for a couple of hours to share their opinions. The format is designed to draw out ideas that members may not have articulated to themselves, yet, or that they are reluctant to share. Usually, the event is structured like a funnel—with each major topic starting with broad questions and narrowing for increasing specificity. It's up to the facilitator to moderate group dynamics as they emerge, make sure that everyone gets their say, and tease out thorny or controversial issues.

It can be useful to audiotape the focus group and to designate note takers. Analyzing audiotapes takes time, however. Analysis involves looking for patterns or themes, identifying attitudes, and noting word choices. The result is qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) insight into the way group members are thinking. Listening as people share and compare their different points of view provides a wealth of information about the way they think and

the reasons they think the way they do. For youth focus groups, see the ETR developed focus group guide on the CDC website.

Online

Focus Group Best practices developed by ETR Associates describes all aspects of conducting focus groups from development to analysis: **http://pub.etr.org/upfiles/etr_best_practices_focus_groups.pdf**

Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research by Richard Krueger and Mary Anne Casey is a straightforward how-to guide (2009) available from SAGE Publications: **www.sagepub.com**

Your process evaluation instruments will probably include a combination of surveys, assent or consent forms, attendance sheets, and meeting notes. Please think carefully about the means you will use to collect and store the data.

4. Set the schedule and assign the responsible parties

Once you have selected your methods you should set the schedule for administering them and assign the appropriate person to do so. You will have associated at least one method with each of the seven questions. You also need to make sure that your choices result, at the very least, in a method for each session.

Note

If you've set the program schedule, you might find it helpful to add the process evaluation schedule to it and list the associated methods.

Regarding the keeper of the data, this assignment is as important as any you make in the course of setting up and providing a program. You need to select an organized person on whom you can rely to be consistent and thorough. Poorly administered collection or lost data could invalidate your evaluation and keep you in the dark as to how well your efforts are being implemented. Enter the schedule and assignment on the **Process Evaluation Planner**.

Save it

Save the **Process Evaluation Planner** and any instruments you plan to use. You'll need them once the program gets started.

e.g. **FYN completes the Process Evaluation Planner**

e.g. **Process Evaluation Planner**

	Evaluation Methods & Tools	Anticipated Schedule for Completion	Person Responsible
1. What were the program participant characteristics?	Demographic data collection (surveys or observations)	First session	Session Facilitator
2. What were the individual dosages of the program participants?	Create attendance roster and take roll at every meeting	Each session	Peer facilitator
3. What level of fidelity did the program achieve?	Fidelity tracking tool completed by facilitator	Each session	Program director
4. How satisfied were the participants?	Brief surveys alternating with quick debriefs at each session	One or the other at each session on an alternating schedule on the class calendar	Peer facilitator or adult volunteer
5. What was the staff's perception of the process?	Debriefing after sessions and a focus group midway	Each session and an October 3rd focus group in the auditorium	Weekly debrief by facilitator and the focus group run by a trainer
6. How closely did the program follow the work plan?	Include a comparison in the weekly debrief	Weekly	Facilitator and classroom volunteers
7. How clearly did the staff communicate program goals and content?	Part of debrief and focus group sessions	weekly	Facilitator and volunteers

Pause – create the outcome evaluation for Step 8

This is a good time to read ahead through Step 8 Outcome Evaluation and create the instruments you'll need for evaluating the impact of your program. You might discover that you need a pre-test survey of participant determinants and knowledge. Or, for more sophisticated evaluation, you might want to recruit a **control group**. Working on the Step 8 instruments now certainly will give you a handle on timing for both process and outcome evaluations. When you have identified the tools you need for both steps and set the schedule for employing them, you'll be ready to implement your program and start evaluating it.

If you do decide to gather information from pre- and post-tests, you will need to schedule your pre-tests with participants before the program launches. This could be done in advance of your first session or it could be done right at the beginning of your first session, before facilitators start delivering program content. You will want to have a way of gathering and tracking the pre-tests so that you can later match them to individual post-tests.

Resume – implement your program

Now that you have the tools you need for performing the evaluations called for in both Steps 7 and 8, you're ready to implement your program. This means you will initiate two threads simultaneously:

- Program implementation activities have begun, and any pre-testing has been performed or control group instituted.

- Process evaluation data is being gathered.

Tool

After each session, compile data on a copy of the **Process Evaluation**. At the end of the program, aggregate the data on a single copy of the tool.

Perform process evaluations

Now that you've started implementing your program, it's time to start following your process evaluation schedule and accumulating the data. Here's where the importance of the keeper of the data intensifies: conclusions about the quality of the process are only as valid as the data you gather. Maintain careful records.

Save it

Save the **Process Evaluation** forms and data you collect. As they accumulate, save summary documents that capture what is happening or has happened across the program implementation.

FYN completes Step 7

FYN's program director worked with other agency staff members familiar with evaluation activities to find existing tools that could be used to monitor MPC implementation. The work group added to the work plan a list of process evaluation tasks and a schedule for completion. They assigned people to the job of capturing process evaluation data before, during, and after implementation. The program director, for example, took responsibility for overseeing **fidelity monitoring** to ensure the program was implemented as planned and according to the developer's original program model.

FYN assigned both adult and youth facilitators to the task of gathering participant satisfaction information throughout the program. They used a series of regularly scheduled debriefings with staff and facilitators to talk about how things were going and, as needed, used the information to conduct mid-course corrections.

Finally, the organization was able to benefit from the experience of three other communities in the state that were using MCP. Along with process evaluation tips, they obtained and tailored for their own use several tools and surveys the other communities had developed.

Later on, FYN analyzed the results of the process evaluation and found:

- Generally, FYN's staff maintained their support for MPC's implementation, though some still questioned why their agency was getting involved with teen pregnancy prevention.

- Some real-time corrections were needed to keep the program on track. For example, a participant became ill during a session, and the adult facilitator had difficulty getting someone to pick him up from school, which cut short the day's planned activity for everyone. Consequently, the facilitator took time the following week to make sure the activity was delivered before moving on. On another occasion, the facilitators had to run an activity twice, because the participants didn't understand it the first time.

- As they proceeded through the implementation, FYN examined the program materials with respect to health literacy. They considered whether the materials used unfamiliar terms or concepts that the youth would find confusing or made assumptions about participants' understanding of anatomy, bodily functions, and consequences

- FYN summarized relevant details were in the Start at the End report.

e.g. Process Evaluation

1. What were the program participant characteristics?	*8ᵗʰ graders in a school serving a generally middle income population.*
2. What were the individual dosages for each program participant?	*Dosage was adequate, with youth on average receiving 75% of the program sessions.*
3. What level of fidelity did the program achieve?	*Both adult and youth facilitators did a good job of sticking to the curriculum, resulting in high program delivery fidelity.*
4. How satisfied were the participants?	*Participant satisfaction among youth surveyed was high; however, next time, we want to increase the number of youth responding to the surveys.*
5. What was the staff's perception of the process?	*Though the organization's emphasis on pregnancy prevention has become controversial among some staff members, most support the program. Of those that maintain support, many are feeling overworked. They are proud of what FYN has accomplished but they want to get more help next time.*
6. How closely did the program follow the work plan?	*Very closely; the primary deviation came when the session was interrupted by a boy becoming ill in class.*

Applying this step when you already have a program

If you are already implementing a program, it's not too late to begin tracking your process and monitoring fidelity. You should monitor things that are going well and be ready to change things that aren't working out. The tools and tip sheets contain information and suggestions that will help you gather information that you can apply even when you're well into implementation. If your goal is to make the interventions resonate with the priority population, evaluating the progress and making midcourse corrections maximizes the benefit to those who attend your program.

Use this time also to consider ways to evaluate your program outcomes. As long as the program hasn't ended, you have time—theoretically at least—to develop an outcome evaluation that could be helpful. We recommend that you:

1. Create your process evaluation instruments and start monitoring as soon as possible.

2. Proceed to Step 8 Outcome Evaluation and devise a mechanism for assessing your results.

3. Once your program and process evaluation is complete, proceed to Step 8 and evaluate the outcomes.

CQI and sustainability at this stage

Your program's sustainability is largely based on documenting success in achieving your stated goals and outcomes; that is, having the positive impact you'd hoped for. Being able to document evidence that you implemented your program with quality and fidelity is an important part of telling the story of your success. Identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement increases overall effectiveness and builds confidence in the program among participants, staff, and stakeholders—all of which contributes to sustainability.

Lessons learned

It is important to learn as you proceed through the process evaluations. When you get to Step 9 CQI, we'll help you use process evaluation data to determine whether you implemented the entire program with fidelity. In Step 10 Sustainability, you'll look at ways to improve process evaluation and thus enhance sustainability. At this point, considering these questions regarding capacity may be revealing.

Does our organization have existing evaluation capacity to offer?

There may be other staff in your organization that are familiar with process evaluation or have experience recognizing and making midcourse corrections during an implementation. You may find additional help in the section starting on p. 7-8 on creating your process evaluation. Engage or assign personnel to perform the evaluation.

Are there new skills for our staff to learn?

Skill enhancement increases program performance and personal confidence. If more people are learning new skills associated with your program, you're actually taking steps toward building more organizational memory, too. If some staff get promoted later, they take those skills with them, which might also allow them to link different interests in the organization for continued support of a variety of successful programs.

Save it

Keep taking notes about your findings in the Lessons Learned tool.

Getting ready for Step 8

Step 8
**Outcome
Evaluation**
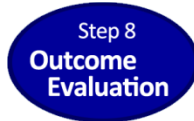
Halfway through Step 7, you moved into Step 8 in order to set up an outcome evaluation prior to implementing the program. Once you established evaluation methods and schedules for both process and outcomes, you returned to Step 7 and implemented your program.

Throughout the program, you have followed the process evaluation schedule and gathered data using the methods you selected. You have entered that data onto session-specific process evaluation tools, and you aggregated the session data onto a single copy of the **Process Evaluation Tool**. That gave you an important means for eventually recognizing any process factors that may have contributed to the program's success or failure at achieving the health goal and desired outcomes.

When you finish implementing the program and then compile the aggregate data, you are completely finished with Step 7. You are now ready to complete the second half of Step 8: perform the outcome evaluation and find out how successful the program actually was.