Evaluation Capacity Building

Lessons from Neighborhood House
Mission

To help people, families and organizations develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to thrive in diverse communities.
Saint Paul’s West Side

Wellstone Center
What We Do....

**BASIC NEEDS**
- Food Shelf
- Housing Stabilization
- Crisis Intervention
- Refugee Resettlement

**LIFELONG LEARNING**
- Adult Basic Education
- College Access
- Early Childhood Education
- HIV/AIDS/STI outreach
- Youth Development
- Gang Intervention/Prevention
Introductions

Evaluation Manager

Evaluation Intern

Director of Programs
What is ECB?

- Increasing an organization’s capacity to:
  - Practice evaluation
  - Use the results of evaluation
  - Learn and improve
  - Be accountable
Why ECB?

The Accidental Evaluator
Why are you here?
Building a Culture of Evaluation

Know your end goal
The ECB Checklist

Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity

1. Cultivate a positive, ECB-friendly organizational culture.
   - Make sure that key leaders of the organization support and share responsibility for ECB.
   - Locate existing and add new evaluation components in the organization.
   - Develop and work to increase the organization's interest in and demand for evaluation information.
   - Determine if and to what extent the cultural environment supports or hinders evaluation.
   - Promote opportunities for informed decision making, ensuring that people in the organization are also able to use data to make decisions.
   - Organize opportunities for socializing around evaluation activities during the workday for informal learning, or as a family-like community or learning community.

2. Understand and take advantage of the external environment and its influence on the organization.
   - Identify external regulatory/credentialing requirements and expectations, and integrate them into the ECB efforts.
   - Determine to what extent the external environment is supportive of change (for example, accreditation agencies encourage innovation, professional organizations provide evaluation activities, external stakeholders provide support for evaluation).

3. Planning.
   - Develop a long-term, comprehensive plan for evaluation that includes evaluation activities.
   - Ensure that the plan is comprehensive and includes all aspects of evaluation.

4. Evaluation activities.
   - Ensure that evaluation activities are comprehensive and include all aspects of evaluation.
   - Ensure that evaluation activities are comprehensive and include all aspects of evaluation.

5. Professional development and coaching.
   - Provide professional development and coaching in evaluation.
   - Ensure that professional development and coaching is comprehensive and includes all aspects of evaluation.

Useful Resources/References


1. The ECB Checklist is a concise and useful resource for people working to build evaluation capacity. While similar in some ways, the capacity building checklist has developed with explicit attention to the ECB literature and context.
The Infrastructure

- Staff Position
- Advisory Group
- Database
Evaluation Manager

- .60 FTE + .25 FTE Database administrator
- Funded through 5% of program budgets
Evolution of the Position

Evaluation Platoon

Informal, naturally occurring knowledge

Evaluation + Database Positions

• Formalized, trained expertise
The PEP Squad;
Promoting Evaluation Progress

Purpose

- Oversee ECB checklist and growth
- Monitor ECB progress
- Take action and execute (work!)

Membership

- Cross-program/agency representation
- Board member and community member
- Direct staff and management
Evolution of Oversight

Informal, naturally occurring

Formalized, institutional

Formalized, strategic
The Database

- Facilitates evaluation activities;
  - Data collection
  - Monitoring progress
  - Reports
  - Agency view

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Our faces may change but our mission stays the same...

Helping people, families and organizations develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to thrive in diverse communities, since 1897.

SIMPSON HOUSING SERVICES

The Family Partnership
Counseling Education Advocacy

The Link

CEAP

East Side
Neighborhood Services

Phylis Wheatley.org
Evolution of the Database

Excel

Program Database

Client Database
Where are you at?
What have you encountered?
Staff Position

A few warm bodies have heard of “evaluation”

VS.

An Olympic-level team of Evaluators
Advisory Group

A couple interested somebodies bump into each other

VS.

We’re better organized than a ship’s crew
Database

I keep it in my head, sometimes a pencil is involved

VS.

I doubt NASA has a better system
The Processes

Day to day practice and systems in place to support
Streamlining Grants

Program Outcomes

Fdn

Gov

United Way
## Program Evaluation Plans

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<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
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**Quality:**
- How are we monitoring quality?
- Are there any measures that indicate high quality service we want to report on?
Who me?

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage

1986

It's not my department

2006

It's beyond the scope of my role
Annual Quality Check

Customer Satisfaction Survey

- Important to ask
- Builds ECB
- Everyone is involved
- Use of results in marketing
“We feel safe here.”

89% of participants always feel safe at Neighborhood House.
Regular Visibility and Communication

- Annual Impact report
- Survey Results
- Evaluation 101 training
- Database Updates
- Retreat Activities
- Random Prizes

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Data Use

Regular use of Results

- Marketing materials
- Grant reports
- Impact report to the board
- Annual report
- Bring new funding in

Reward the Effort

If I'd known they wanted me to use all this info - I would never have asked for it!
Evaluation Extravaganza!
Evaluation Champion Award
What’s one new idea you can implement?
The Strategy

The concepts and principles to inform your own ECB journey
Saturate

- Is it a bottom-up effort?
- Is it a top-down effort?

YES!
Create Demand
Evaluation = Fun

I said make it more interesting, not more fun.
Be Transparent
Sanction it

“I grant you time to enter your data, my dearie.”
Connected to Action

DON'T BE AFRAID OF CHANGE.

YOU'RE RIGHT! I'M GOING TO GET A GENDER CHANGE OPERATION AND MOVE TO CHINA!

I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMEONE LISTENED TO YOU.
CONCLUSION

Listened with your left brain, now let’s Synthesize with your right brain