

Using Metaevaluation to Understand and Improve a Healthy Marriages Program

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Healthy Marriage Programs Overview

Target Audience

- Low-income
- Couples
- Child under 3 months old

Intervention

- 8-12 hours of healthy marriage curriculum
- 12+ hours of life skills curriculum & community presentations

Intended Outcomes

- Marriage
- Healthy relationships between parents

Key Partners For The Project

Project staff (Encouraging Family Foundations)

- Provided key documentation for past programming and future plans
- Participated in interviews about program implementation

Internal evaluator (Quality Analyst)

- Provided information about past evaluation instruments and processes
- Explained context of local and federal evaluation

External evaluator (iEval)

- Provided evaluation expertise
- Researched other similar programs & evaluation components

What is Metaevaluation?

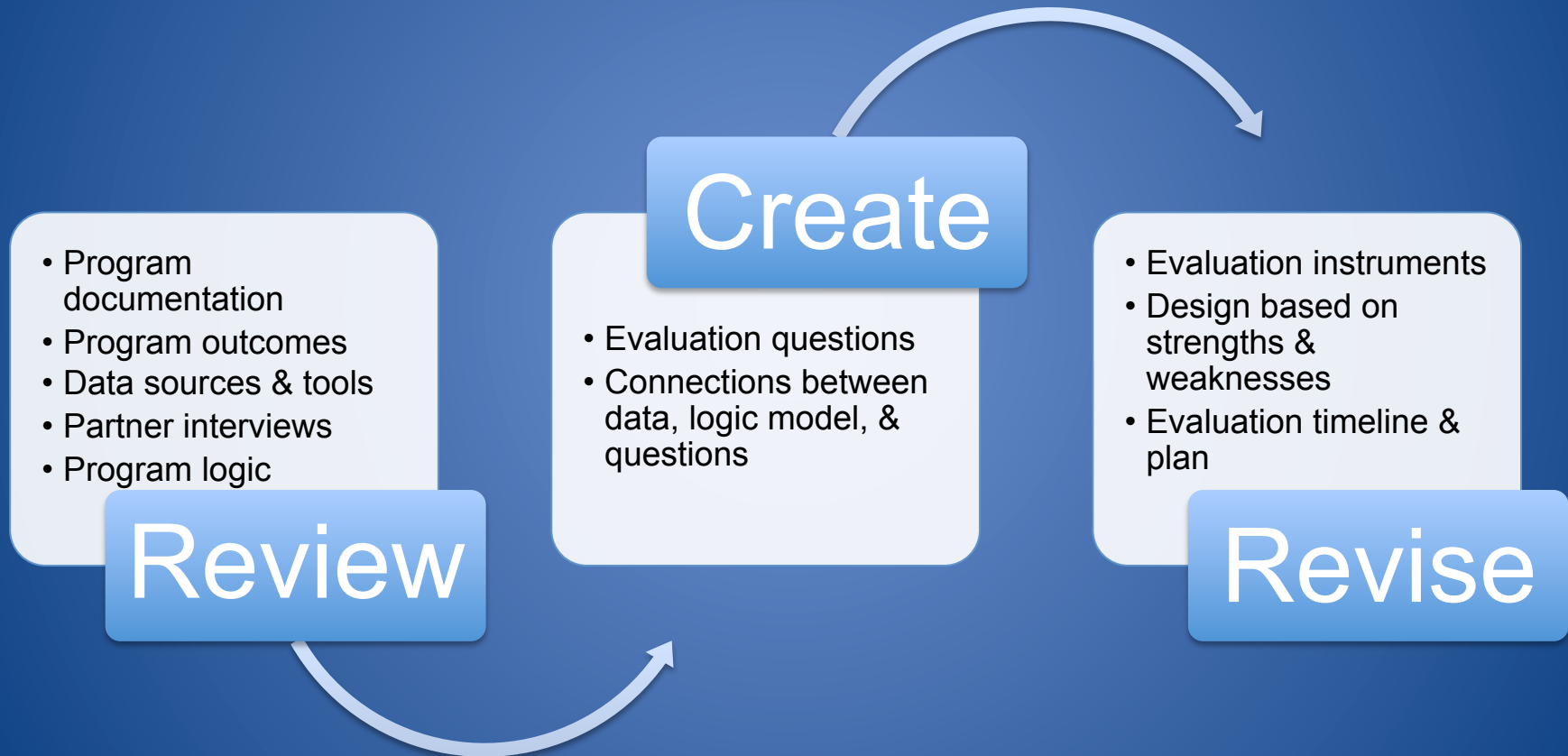
“Documentation of the effective/ineffective application of program evaluation procedures facilitates the proper interpretation of data. Regular employment of metaevaluations should enhance the credibility of particular program evaluations and the overall evaluation profession.”

The Program Evaluation Standards 2nd Edition, p.185

Evaluation Balance



Metaevaluation Process



Review: Data Sources

Identified intended outcomes from grant and subsequent federal reports



Identified current data sources that were used for each outcome

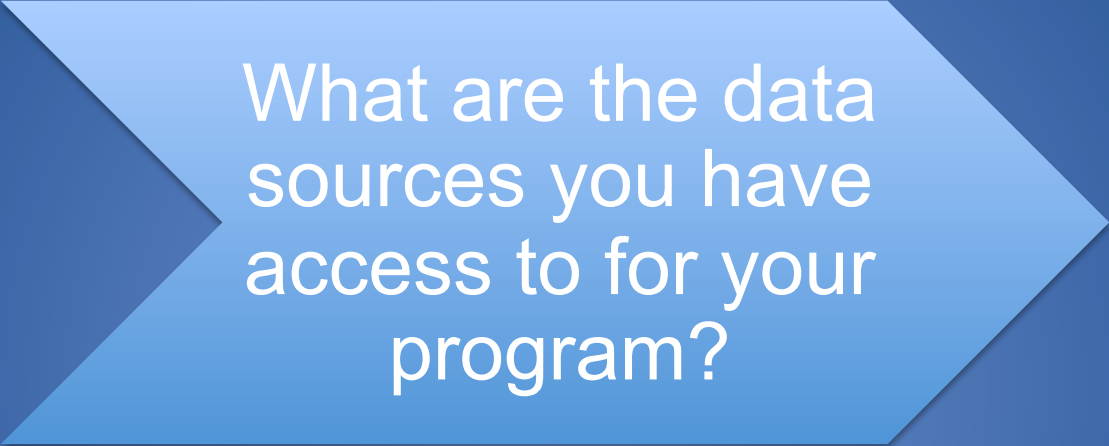


Highlighted where there were no related data sources and where current data sources could be applied to other outcomes

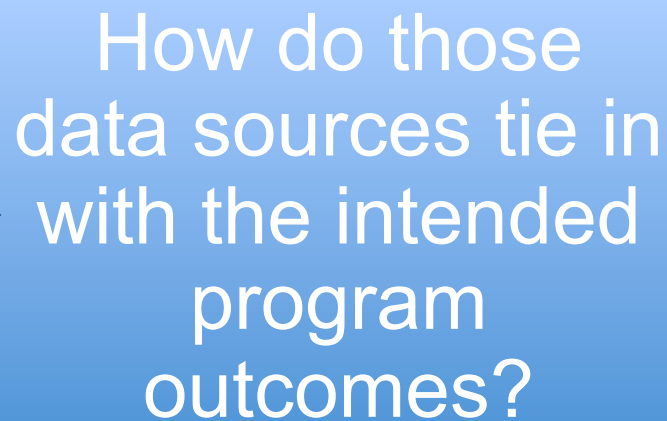
Review: Data Sources

Intended Outcome	Current Data Used	New Data Applications
Specific number of hours of programming	Session schedule is tabulated for numbers	Hours of sessions captured in new database (was in development at time of metaevaluation)
Participant use of video/ DVD library resources	No tracking is done	Add question to post-test about use during sessions and to follow-up survey about use after sessions ended
Remove barriers to formation of healthy marriages	No tracking is done	

Review: Your Task



What are the data sources you have access to for your program?

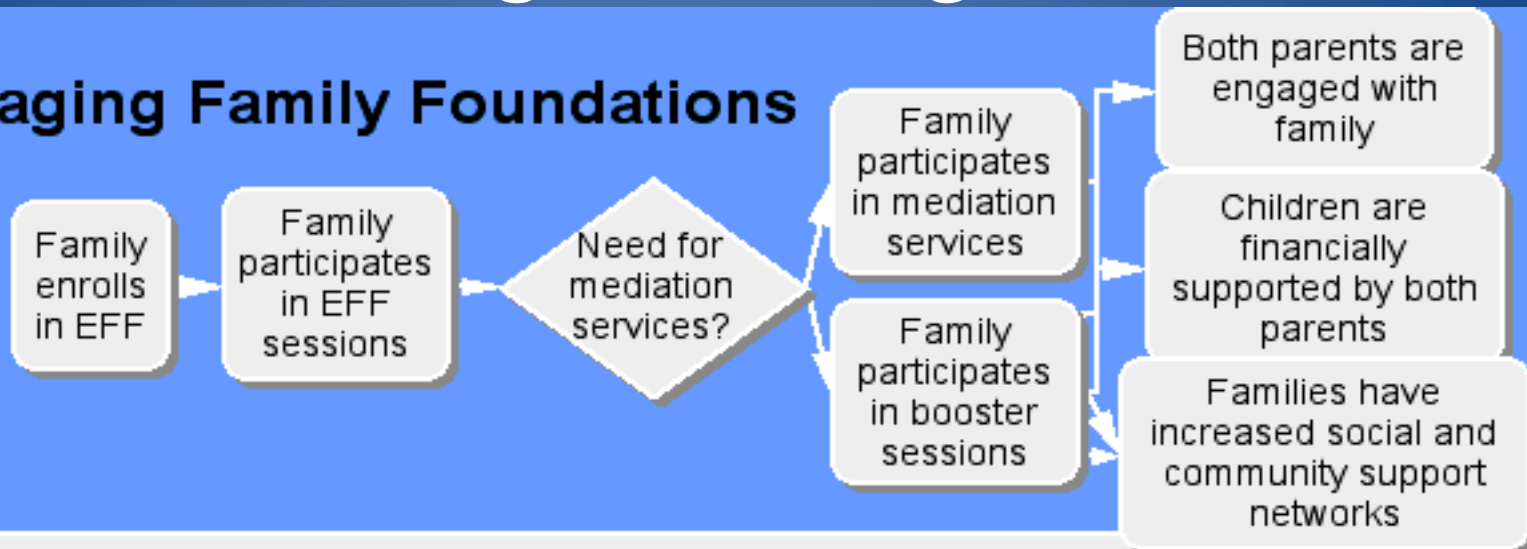


How do those data sources tie in with the intended program outcomes?

Program Logic

Encouraging Family Foundations

Program Logic



Process Data Points

How enrolled (referral, marketing, word of mouth, etc.)

Family demographics

Session content

Session attendance

Number of requests for mediation

Number of contact attempts

Mediation attendance

Booster session attendance

Number of biological parents together and/or married

Child support payments received

Visitation agreements made

Number/type of services families are connected with

Child support agreements made

Child support agreements upheld

Outcome Data Points

Pre-test on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

Post-test on knowledge & attitudes

Participant satisfaction

Pre-test on mediation need

Post-test on mediation impact

3-12 month follow-up survey on cognitive & behavioral changes

Trends in marriage statistics

Trends in child support data

Trends in number of families receiving services

Collecting Data: Partner Questions

- ✓ How are clients referred into the program and to specific sites?
- ✓ What is the impact of participation in the EFF program? Do clients move forward in their relationships or do they get “stuck?”
- ✓ What information that is presented through EFF do the participants actually use?
- ✓ Are participants satisfied with the program? Which topics are most meaningful to the participants?
- ✓ Is everyone clear on how the mediation process works?

Create...

Using Jacob's five-tiered approach to evaluation, developed evaluation questions under each tier



Connected current data sources to evaluation questions where possible



Recommended new data sources for evaluation questions that had none

Create: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question	Current Data	Proposed Data
To what extent is EFF meeting the needs & problems focused on healthy marriages and child support in Kent County?	Grant application	Child support data – local & state Marriage statistics – local & state
To what extent did the EFF program meet the needs of the target population as planned?	Grant application	Participant post-test Participant follow-up survey/interview
To what extent have community resources been responsive to participant needs?	None	EFF staff interviews Partner interviews Program observations Participant follow-up

Create: Your Task

Pre-implementation



Process evaluation



Understanding & refining



Short-term outcomes

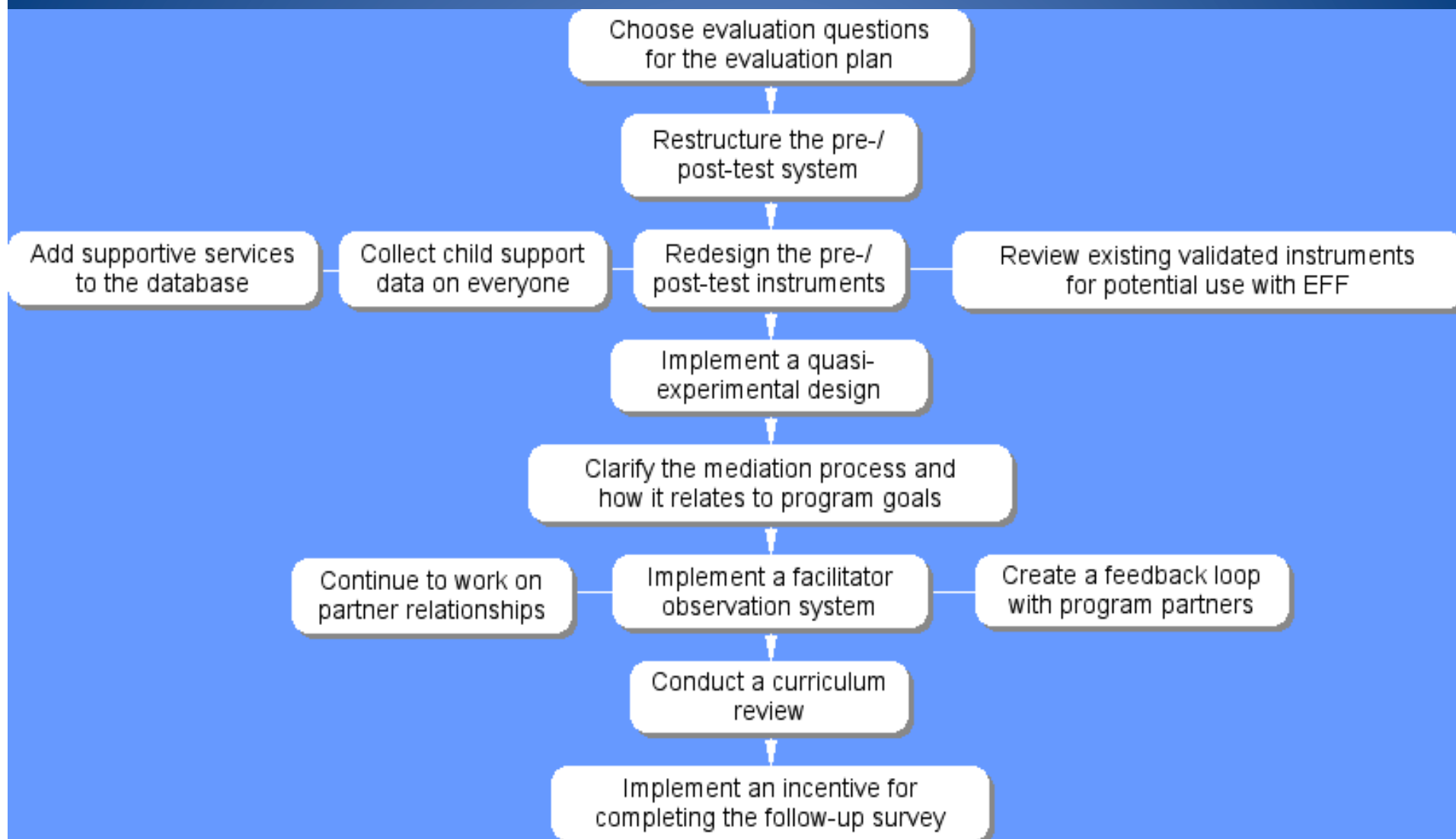


Impact

Revise: Recommendations

- ✓ Implement a quasi-experimental design
- ✓ Collect child support data on everyone
- ✓ Restructure the pre-/post-test system
- ✓ Redesign the pre-/post-test instruments
- ✓ Review existing validated instruments for potential use with EFF
- ✓ Implement an incentive for completing the follow-up survey
- ✓ Add supportive services to the database
- ✓ Implement a facilitator observation system
- ✓ Conduct a curriculum review
- ✓ Create a feedback loop with program partners
- ✓ Clarify the mediation process and how it relates to program goals
- ✓ Continue to work on partner relationships

Evaluation Timeline



Evaluator-Staff Relationship

Useful & Meaningful

Staff
involved in
the
evaluation
process

Informal
updates
given prior
to formal
report

Report
presented
in user-
friendly
format

Evaluation
team part
of change
process

Questions?

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