

# Design Thinking

What is it and  
why should  
evaluators care?

Think Tank

Evaluation 2014

Denver, CO

Rosanna Tran

Srik Gopal

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# Your Facilitators



CALIFORNIA  
HEALTHCARE  
FOUNDATION



Rosanna Tran

[rtran@chcf.org](mailto:rtran@chcf.org)

@rtranCHCF

Learning & Evaluation Officer  
California HealthCare Foundation  
Oakland, CA

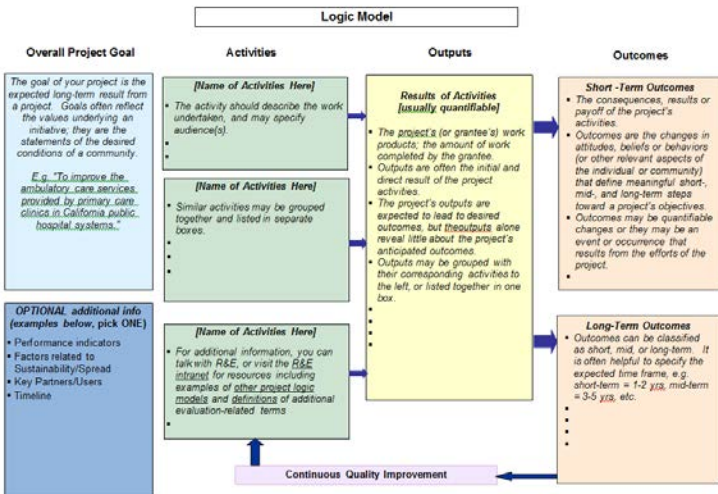
Srik Gopal

[Srik.Gopal@fsg.org](mailto:Srik.Gopal@fsg.org)

@Srik

Director, Strategic Learning and  
Evaluation  
FSG Social Impact Consultants  
San Francisco, CA

# Why design thinking?



# Who's in the audience?

- Evaluator
- Non-profit staff member
- Foundation staff member
- Other
- How familiar are you with design thinking?



# Think Tank Overview

1:45p-2:00p **Understand**  
design thinking process

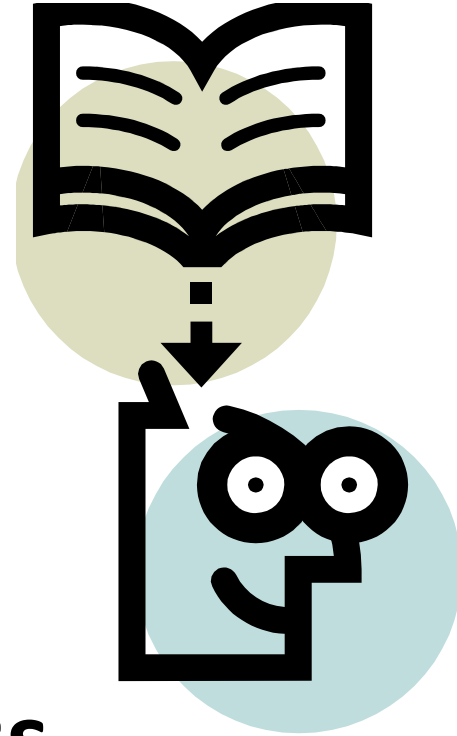
2:00p-2:50p **Apply**  
design thinking process

2:50p-3:15p **Discuss implications**  
for evaluation and learning



Agenda by Mark  
Shorter from  
The Noun  
Project

# Understand design thinking process





# What is design thinking?

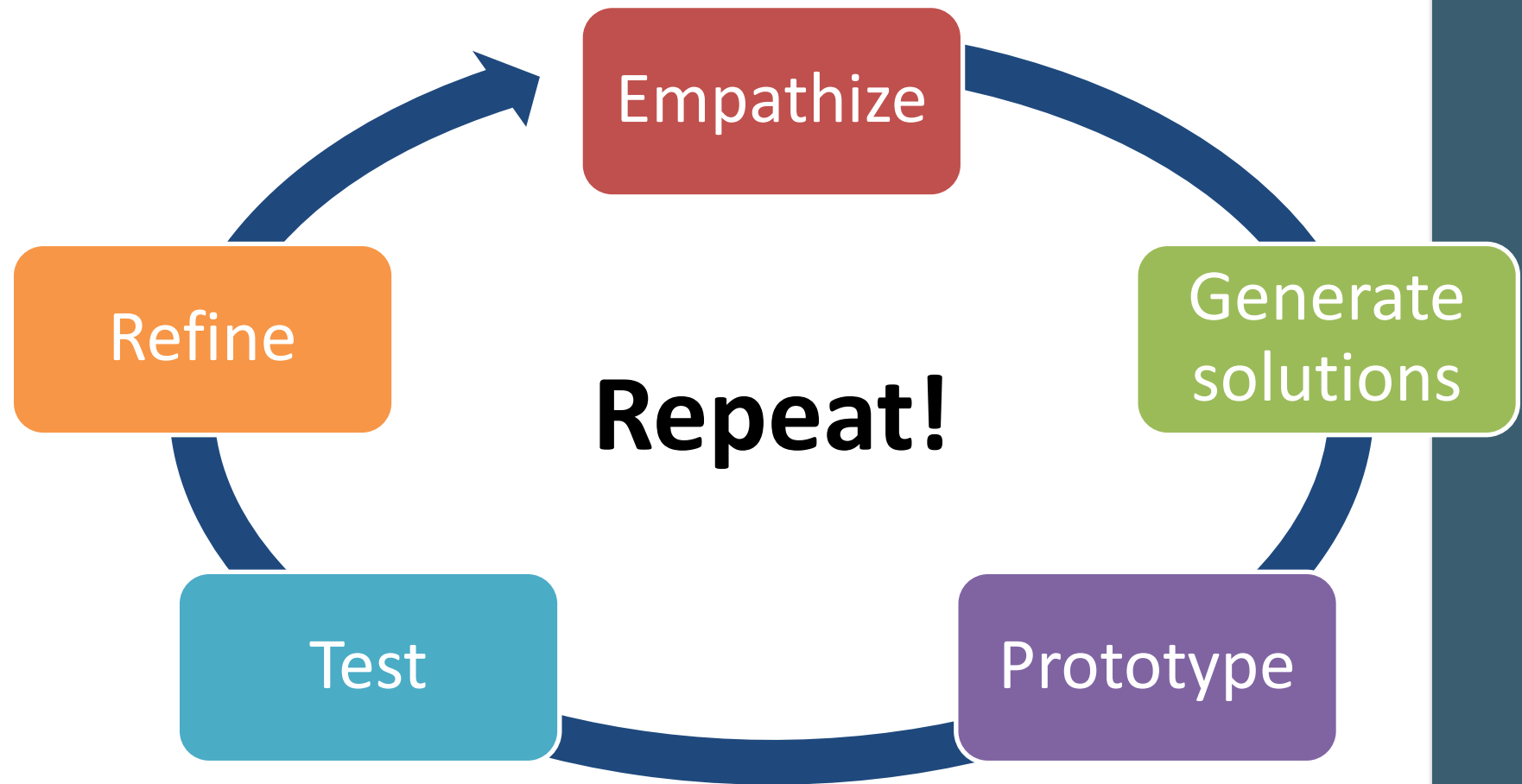


*Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.*

— Tim Brown, president and CEO of IDEO

<http://www.ideo.com/about/>

# How do you do design thinking?





# Step 1: Empathize



“To create meaningful innovations, you need to know your users and care about their lives.”

Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford.*An Introduction to Design Thinking Process Guide.*

# Step 2: Generate solutions



Come up with as many  
potential solutions as possible

# Step 3: Prototype



- Build quick, inexpensive models and simulations of an end product

# Step 4: Test

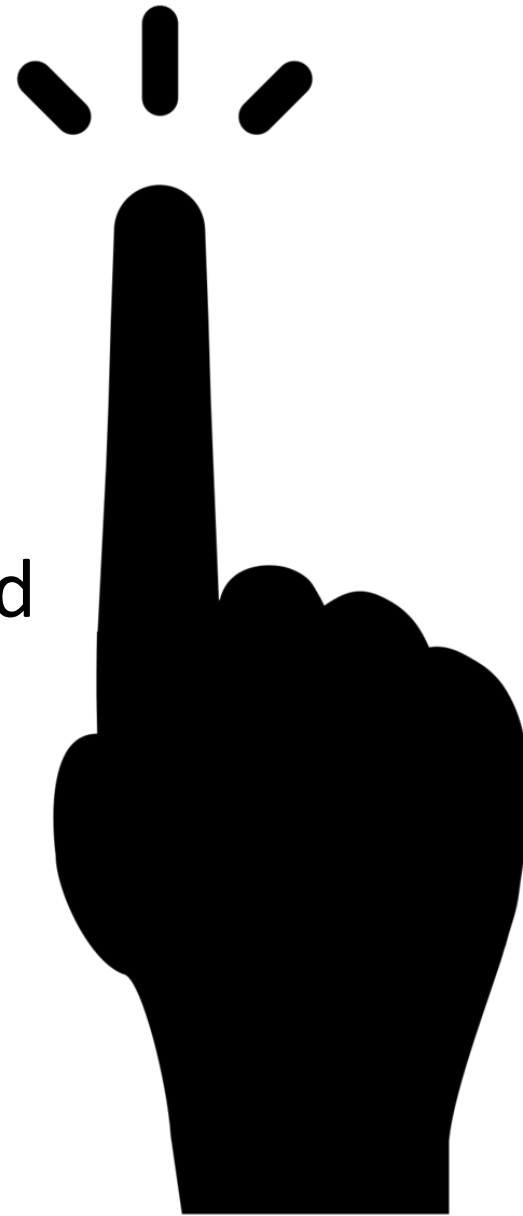


“The design process is a cascade of small tests and iterations rather than a large bet that could fail big.”

– Tran & Gopal (2013)

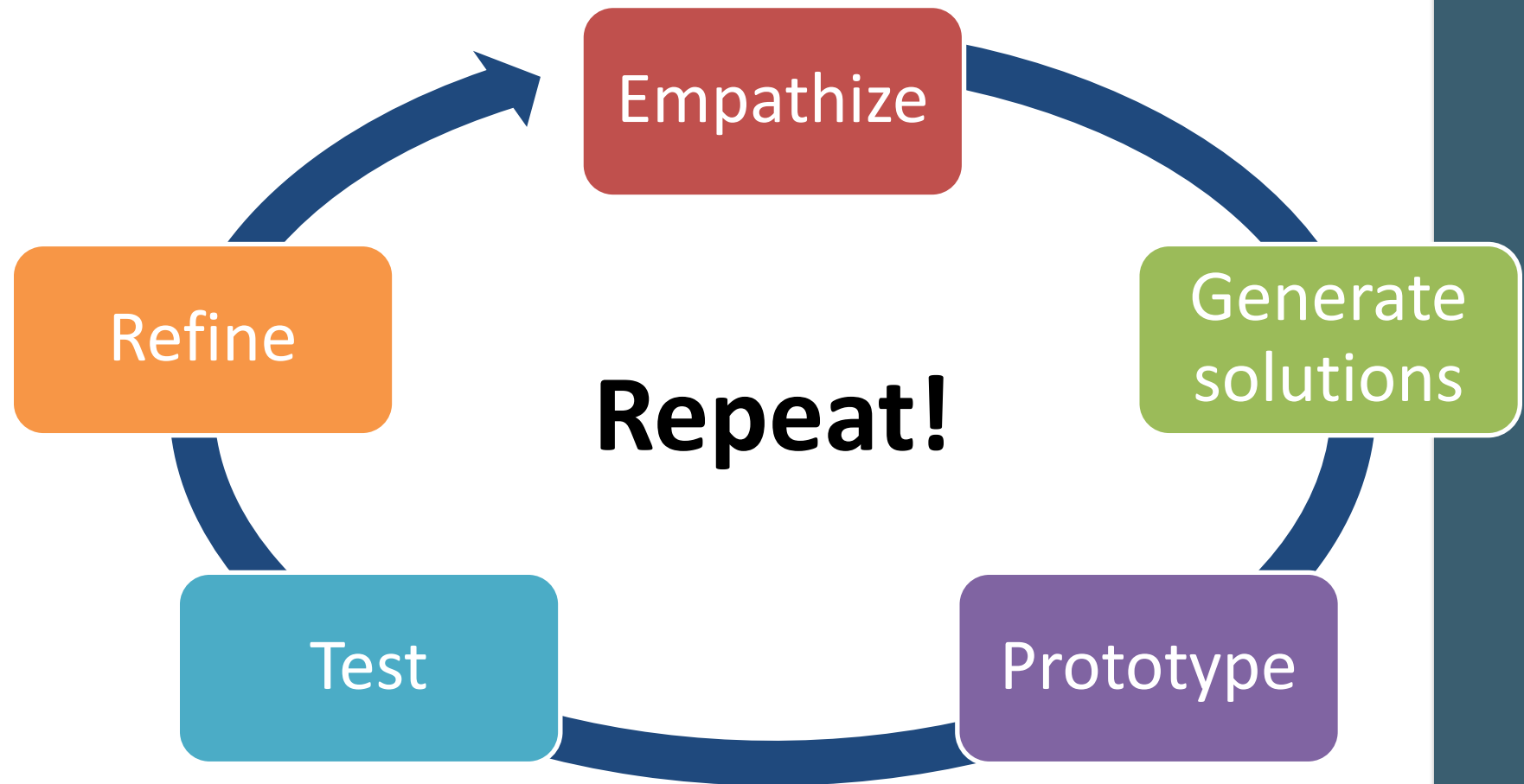
# Step 5: Refine

- Improve your design based on emerging insights.



Insight by Ola Möller from  
The Noun Project

# How do you do design thinking?





**Questions?**





# **Apply design thinking process**

The American Evaluation Association  
Conference experience

# Step 1: Empathize

- Groups of 4
  - 2 designers + 2 users
- Designers will interview users
  - Can do this together as pairs
  - Refer to Cheat Sheets for question ideas and to take notes
- Craft a design challenge based on what you learned in the interviews.
- After ~7 minutes, designers and users will switch roles



# Step 2: Generate solutions

- Everyone gets to be a designer for this part.
- Working with your partner, come up with as many possible solutions as possible for your design challenge.
- Write them down on sticky notes!



# Step 2: Generate solutions

- Defer judgment
- Encourage wild ideas
- Build on each others ideas
- Stay focused on the topic
- Go for quantity



Adapted from: Open Ideo (2012, Feb 23). 7 tips on better brainstorming. [Web log post]. *Open Ideo*.  
<http://bit.ly/1jioGv2>

# Step 3: Prototype

- Everyone gets to be a designer for this part.
- Select 1-2 of your favorite solutions
  - Can be about physical space, content, schedule/flow, etc.
- Create “prototypes” using the materials on your table
  - Drawings, flow chart, 3D object, etc.



Light Bulb by  
Roy Verhaag  
from The Noun  
Project

# Step 4: Test

- Take turns asking each other about your prototypes.
- Refer to the cheat sheet for ideas on what to ask.
- After ~7 minutes, designers and users will switch roles

# Step 5: Refine

- Everyone gets to be a designer for this part.
- Work with your partner to select one solution (or a combination of solutions)
- Refine it based on reactions from users



Insight by Ola  
Möller from  
The Noun  
Project



# Debrief

- Share solutions
- What was the experience like?
  - What was unique or different?
  - What surprised you?
  - What did you like?
  - What was difficult or challenging?



# Implications for evaluation and learning



# Discussion Questions

1. How could you envision applying design thinking to evaluation and/or learning?
2. What do you see as some of the benefits of design thinking?
3. What do you see as some of the challenges & barriers? How could you address these?



# Closing thoughts

# Relevance to evaluation

- Empathy and human-centeredness
- Identification of latent needs
- Rapid prototyping
- Overlap with existing evaluation theories



# Contact Us!



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@rtranCHCF

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