BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DATA COMMUNICATION AND THE EVALUATION LIFE CYCLE

A PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH FROM A LARGE UNIVERSITY SETTING

PEGGY GLIDER, PHD AND LAUREN PRING, MPH

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA CAMPUS HEALTH SERVICE

ABOUT US

- University of Arizona Campus Health Service (CHS) Evaluation Team
  - Small evaluation team within CHS(integrated model of care)
  - Large university setting – more than 44,000 students

- Although internal to CHS, we communicate across campus, across the community, the state, and nationally
  - Grant work is a large part of what we do, but we serve as evaluators mostly for Health Promotion and Preventive Services (HPPS) and Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS)

- Since the 1990s, data-driven programming has been a central function of the UA CHS Evaluation team.

DATA COMMUNICATION – WHAT WE MEAN

- Data communication = more than just dissemination and reporting

  - Informs decisions and choices in each evaluation phase

  - Influences how the data is put to use

  - Active and engaged

- Particularly for those who subscribe to Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) methods, a closer look at data communication's role in enhancing evaluation utility in a variety of contexts is a valuable exercise (Patton, 2008)

Dissemination is a one-way street – data communication goes in both (or many) directions

Data Communication and the Evaluation Life Cycle

Adapted from Willets and Crawford (2007)

Identification – informs most valuable evaluation questions to stakeholder network
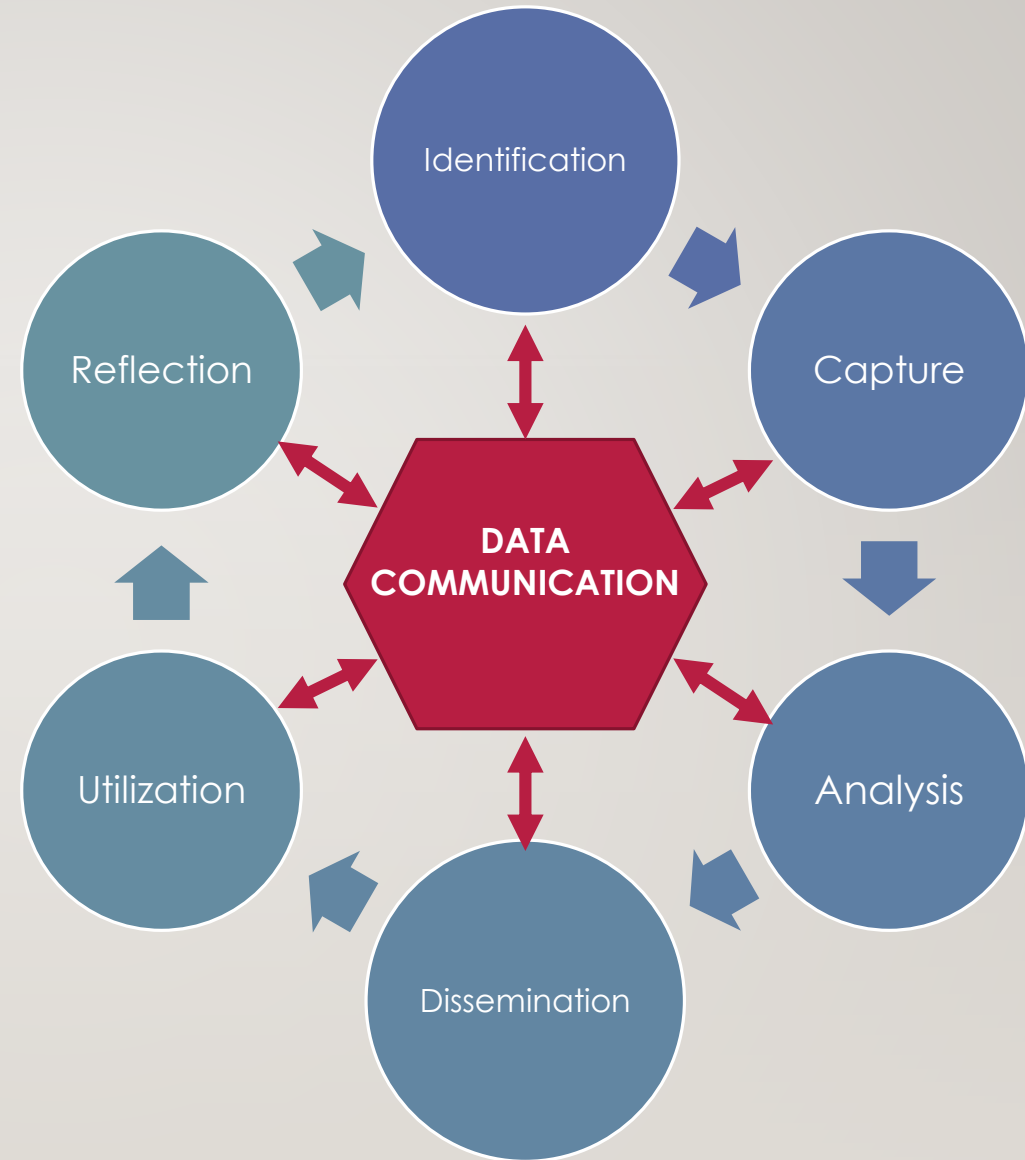
Capture – improves ways to ask the questions

Analysis – helps identify multiple angles of analysis

Dissemination – informs most strategic dissemination methods for what purpose

Utilization – influences use and utility of findings

Reflection – helps provide meaning to the data and informs future directions

Why do we need to talk about data communication in behavioral health?

THE NECESSITY OF EFFECTIVE DATA COMMUNICATION IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- High stakes – information needs to feed into practice to benefit the population, failure to do so in some circumstances could be damaging

- Improvement in behavioral health outcomes depends on knowing what works, what doesn't, with whom and how well processes and protocols are followed

- Fighting barriers in help seeking through outreach and health promotion is more effective when data is put to work

- Assessing need is critical for obtaining and maintaining resources

- Allows for networking and shared vision
  - If everyone is too busy, this can't happen effectively

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

- How does effective data communication allow us to speak truth to power?

- What are some barriers that prevent us from using the data to speak truth to power?

- How does reframing data communication through a social justice lens influence our work and it's effectiveness?

KEY STRATEGIES IN EFFECTIVE DATA COMMUNICATION

- Relationship building

- Considering complex stakeholder networks

- Targeted goals and defined objectives

- Diversified and creative dissemination

OUR EXPERIENCE: SOME CASE EXAMPLES FROM UA

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY: METHODS

- Purpose: to collect and share data on student health behaviors
- Annual survey on health behaviors conducted in the Spring semester (pre-Spring Break)
  - Anonymous in-person pencil and paper survey
  - Large randomized sample of all qualifying courses (>25 enrolled students, on UA main campus)
  - Total n typically 4,000 – 6,000, response rate typically ~15% - 20% of all classes sampled
  - Covers questions on alcohol and other drug use, mental health, sexual health, nutrition, service utilization, and more

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY: DATA COMMUNICATION

- Relationship building - Recognition of our department/evaluation team as important in wider university efforts

- Considering Complex Stakeholder Networks - Active engagement with stakeholders developed over many years has led to:
  - Ensuring data captured reflects needs and interests of UA community
  - Improved utilization of data for a wide variety of stakeholder purposes

- Targeted Goals and Defined Objectives – integrated into department strategic plan, allowing for institutionalized forms of data communication

- Diversified and creative dissemination – individualized reports for stakeholders, data bytes, stakeholder and classroom presentations, website, social norming

LGBTQ NEEDS ASSESSMENT: METHODS

- Purpose: to collect and share data on LGBTQA student wellness, campus climate, and health behaviors

- First of it's kind survey at the UA to investigate in-depth on a number of indicators specifically relevant to LGBTQA students, faculty and staff
  - Collaboratively developed by multiple stakeholders
  - Sent electronically through LGBTQA students, staff and faculty email networks in Spring 2014
  - N=539

LGBTQ NEEDS ASSESSMENT: DATA COMMUNICATION

- Relationship building – Strong connection between CHS and LGBTQ Affairs was both made possible and strengthened by this effort. Truly collaborative process

- Considering complex stakeholder networks – the question of 'responsibility' for the work of improving campus climate was a big question, and this effort was used to mobilize networks of stakeholders who should be involved in that process

- Targeted goals and defined objectives – understanding LGBTQA student and faculty/staff wellness and campus climate to inform needs and how to address them
    - Strategic dissemination plan was linked to goals and objectives

- Diversified and creative dissemination – presentations to many stakeholders, official report distributed far and wide, high degree of knowledge of effort and findings among LGBTQA student advocates, incorporation of key data into program materials, use of data in networking and conversations, infographic series

COUNSELING AND PSYCH SERVICES (CAPS) INTEGRATED EVALUATION: METHODS

- Purpose: broad-reaching evaluation of mental health services at the UA, including utilization, outcomes, and program evaluation
  - Outcome evaluation includes using a clinical questionnaire at each visit with measures that are relevant for both clinical and eval purposes
  - Process evaluation related to a wide range of utilization measures
  - Program evaluation of CAPS outreach programs

- Interesting note – the success and reputation of HPPS data communication strategies is in a large part what led to the development of a true CAPS evaluation plan

COUNSELING AND PSYCH SERVICES (CAPS) INTEGRATED EVALUATION: DATA COMMUNICATION

- Relationship building – essential for instituting clinical questionnaire and ensuring it's use
  - Collaborations between CAPS and HPPS valuable in data communication

- Considering complex stakeholder networks – deepening relationships have allowed for more functional collaboration with stakeholders across campus health and nationally (National College Depression Partnership)

- Targeted goals and defined objectives – outlined evaluation plan has been fundamental for gaining stakeholder buy-in and garnering compliance with data collection processes

- Diversified and creative dissemination – Many new reports created with diverse audiences in mind, some collaborative
  - Mental Health Trends report, CAPS data reports for differing levels of stakeholders, staff presentations and data bytes

DISCUSSION:

What are some of your own examples of data communication in your unique setting?

OUR BARRIERS AND PITFALLS

→ Knowing how and if stakeholders are utilizing data (and helping guide them when needed)

  → Even with strong relationships, busy schedules often prevent reflection and discussion of how data are used

→ High turnover and frequent change make **institutionalizing** processes and relationships even more important

→ Complex stakeholder networks and hidden politics can make stakeholder analysis and forming new relationships challenging at times

→ Overburden of stakeholders in their main jobs can affect their ability to engage with the data in a more robust way

DISCUSSION:

What are barriers and pitfalls you experience(d) in effective data communication?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be targeted and responsive about relationship building

- Be intentional about planning and documentation

- Be creative in using multiple strategies for data communication

- Conduct stakeholder survey and analysis

- Be open to feedback from stakeholders

- Building and leveraging data dashboards

What are your recommendations?

Questions?

CONTACT INFO

Peggy Glider, PhD

glider@email.Arizona.edu

520-621-5973

Lauren Pring, MPH

pring@email.Arizona.edu

502-500-2528