

Why Don't More Evaluations Include Costs ... and Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit?

- Costs (10): The value of what it takes to make the program happen. Time of skilled providers, space for meetings, communications services like phones and computers, liability insurance, administration (including accounting and human resources). The amount of money actually spent to assemble providers, space, and other resources is usually called the cost of the program. This may not include valuable resources such as volunteers' time, space rented at below-market values, and donated food, transportation, and equipment.
- Effectiveness (21): Outcomes that aren't money and that aren't converted into money or measured with monetary units. *Examples:* reduce bullying and assaults, reduce Emergency Room visits.
- Benefits (6): Outcomes that are money. *Examples:* improved income, savings in health care expenses due to reduced Emergency Room visits, savings in income support payments no longer needed due to employment, savings in criminal justice costs due to less crime, fewer arrests, and less jail time.
- Assessment (44): Measuring something that's of possible importance. *Examples:* People can be assessed for their health, their mental health, their intoxication, their mechanical skills, and what they know. Programs can be assessed for how well they accomplish their goals – for example, how many clients achieve the desired outcomes. For programs, assessment asks what the program does compared to no program, and compared to other programs already in place. It's possible that a well-intentioned program doesn't help people do better than they already are doing, either because of another program already in place or because the people are getting better on their own. Some programs even hurt people, even though the program was designed to help and seems like it should help. Without assessment of a program, you just don't know. *Example:* HeadStart evaluations.
- Cost-Effectiveness (2): A type of program assessment that asks, "What does this program accomplish relative to its cost?" *Examples:* cost per drug-free day, cost per child prevented from smoking, cost per year of life saved, cost per quality-adjusted life year.
- Cost-Benefit (2): A type of program assessment that asks, "Is the cost of this program justified in terms of the value of its outcomes?" *Examples:* ratio of dollars spent for therapy versus dollars saved in reduced unnecessary use of health services, net benefit (after subtracting costs) of diversion program for homeless adults (in terms of reduced use of Emergency Room and jail).
- Cost-Utility (2): Program assessment that asks, "What is the cost of producing an improvement in an outcome that is defined similarly for all programs being compared or to which the program may be compared – an outcome that is not monetary or monetized but a common accepted measure of program results. *Examples:* \$ per Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) gained.

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Whys and Why Nots of cost-inclusive evaluation

why it's not asked for: good reasons	why it's not asked for: bad reasons
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