UCONN
CAHNR EXTENSION

Interpreting and Utilizing Program Evaluation Findings

Allison Nichols, Ed.D.

2020 Northeast 4-H Evaluation Conference

February 7, 2020

Using real-time data, we will:

1. Identify and select important findings
2. Determine implications
3. Write recommendations for program sustainability
4. Write impact statements that can be used in outreach publications

The types of data we will use are:

- Demographic and other descriptive
- End of session, one-time
- Pre- and post-intervention
- Qualitative data

Demographic/descriptive data

This data can give us insights into:

- Marketing approaches
- Appropriateness of:
  - Program locations, rooms, refreshment
  - Teaching techniques, topics, speakers visual aides and technology
- Need for additional personnel
- New programming
- Future evaluation approaches

Post-program content-related data

- **Data about attitudes, motivations, opinions, knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors can be used for:**
  - **Descriptive analyses**
  - **Comparative analyses among types of participants**
  - **Comparative analyses among types of presentations**
  - **Comparative analyses based on benchmarks or national norms**

Pre-post data

Short-term: Learning - Improvement in attitudes, opinions, motivations, knowledge/skills

Medium-term: Behavior - Perceived or actual improvement of skill level, behaviors

Long-term: Conditions – social, economic, civic

Qualitative data

- **Observation data**
  - **Views of the program in real-time**
  - **Views of the results of the program in the effected environment**

- **Focus group or interview data**
  - **Views of program participants about their experience and how they have used what they learned**
  - **Views of significant others or participants about their own or their child's experience in the program**
  - **Views of funders, university administrators, and community members about program function and/or results**

UCONN
CAHNR EXTENSION

Description of Activity/Program

Example: 4-H STEM Activity

A Key Finding (What?)

Example: 50% of youth say they are not getting the opportunity to practice STEM skills

The Implication of the Finding (So What?)

Youth may not gain knowledge and skills

Youth may get discouraged and drop out of 4-H

Youth who have potential for STEM may lose interested in STEM

Recommendations

1. Assign a mentor to each youth
2. Allow for more practice sessions
3. Increase # of adults in the room who give assistance as needed

Exercise 1

- Divide into small groups. Each group will be given a different type of data.
- Chose a recorder/reporter.
- Use the data provided to:
  - Identify one major finding
  - Draw at least one implication from the finding
  - Make recommendations for program change and/or new programs based on the implication.
- Report to the larger group.

Putting results into impact statements

- What issue/s has your program addressed?
- What activities were done to address the issue?
- What are the results?
  - Did you reach the targeted audience?
  - Which attitudes, knowledge, skills, were improved?
  - Which attitudes, knowledge, skills, were changed over time and how do you know?
  - How has community conditions changed over time?

UCONN
CAHNR EXTENSION

Sample Impact Statement

UCONN
CAHNR EXTENSION

Issue

In order to address the extreme problem of substance abuse in our state, most specifically opioid abuse, this project implemented an evidenced-based program which has been proven to be effective in reducing the likelihood that youth will become involved overtime in risky behaviors.

What we did

Youth in this program are enrolled in one or both of two activities: family-based learning with parents or guardians (6th grade) and school-based life skill training (7th grade). This semester, 311 youth between the ages of 10 and 14 were enrolled. The students and families came from two counties. Two family programs and four life skill programs were held.

Results

Youth showed slight increases on decision-making, self-efficacy, problem-solving, and post-critical thinking measures. For critical thinking, the pre-assessment mean was 2.70 and the post-assessment mean was 2.76. On a the making-decisions scale, the pre-mean was 2.95 the post-mean was 2.96).

On a family relationship questionnaire we saw some improvement on indicators related to social conscience, personal values, and caring. For example, youth showed improvement in their response to one statement: “I show my parent that I appreciate the things they do for me” (pre mean = 2.667 and post-mean = 3.000).

Exercise 2

- Groups meet again.
- Using your important findings, write a short, concise impact statement.
- Group reporters will read the statement to the larger group.

Putting implications and recommendations into narratives

- **In-house audiences may want to know your recommendations for programming?**
  - **Should we continue to offer this program?**
  - **Should we make changes to program functioning and/or curricula?**
  - **Should we select/create a different program to address the issue?**
  - **Should we consider a more in depth evaluation plan to capture mid and long-term results?**
  - **Should this program become a priority program for our institution?**

Exercise 3

- Each group will get back together and write a paragraph on plans for the program.
- Each group reporter will read their statement to the larger group.

Next Workshop

As you participate in the next workshop, think about how you would illustrate the findings you identified and discussed in ways to best speak to your evaluation audience.