



Building Evidence of Effectiveness

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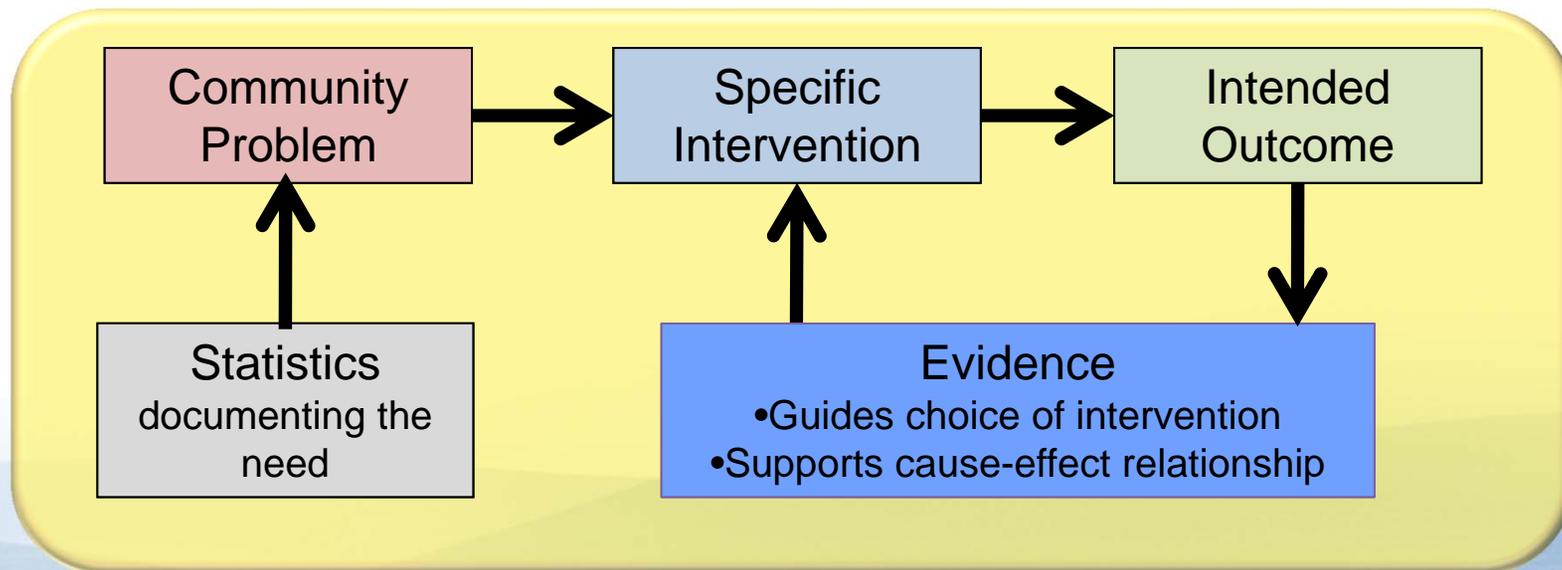
Overview/Learning Objectives

**Understand how evidence informs theory of change
and program design**

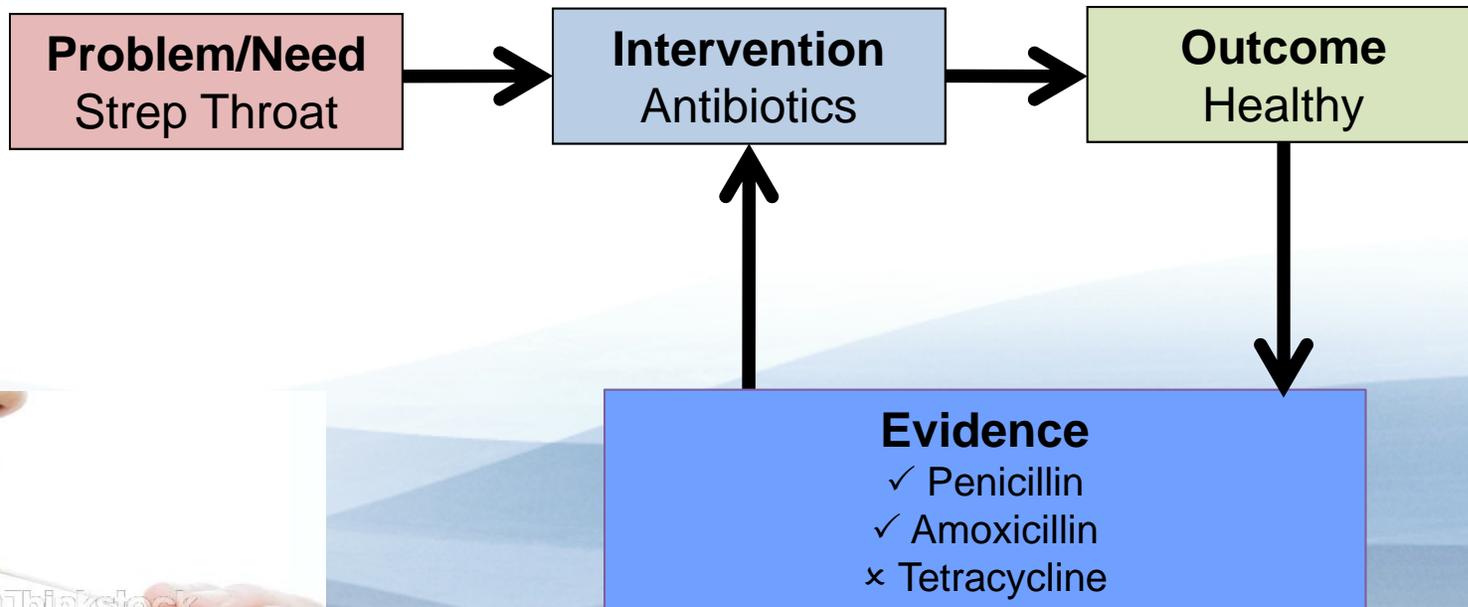
Be familiar with various types of evidence

Understand how to assess evidence

Theory of Change Elements

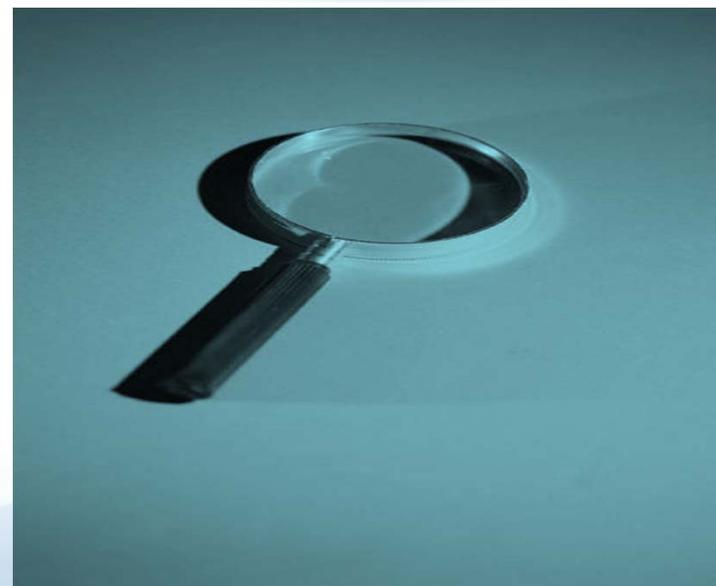


Everyday Life Example of a Theory of Change



Evidence

EVIDENCE: Information or facts that are systematically obtained in a manner that is replicable, observable, credible and verifiable for use in making judgments or decisions. Evidence enables us to determine whether or not a program is achieving its intended outcomes.



<http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/evidence/faqs.aspx>

How Evidence Informs Program Design

New Programs:

- What existing interventions have demonstrated success in solving the problem?
- Where have existing interventions fallen short?
- What is the recommended design (specific program activities) and dosage (frequency, intensity, and duration) to achieve an intended outcome?

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Program design is based on or adapted from a similar program that has evidence from an evaluation

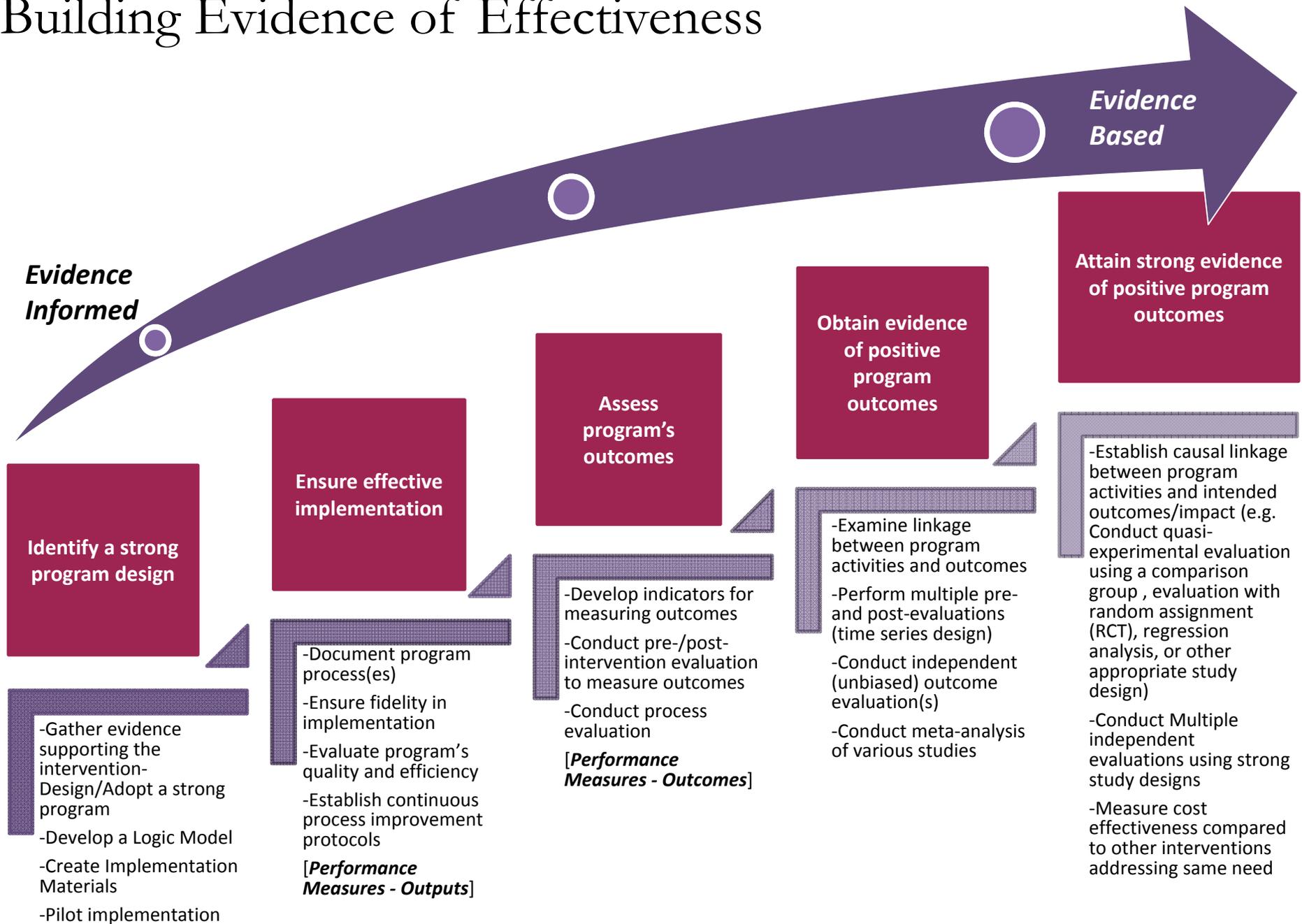
How Evidence Informs Program Implementation

Existing Programs:

- Is there sufficient evidence for the intervention to continue its use?
- Based on the evidence, are there modifications to the intervention that would make it more effective?
- Do you need to choose a new intervention?

Program designs where evaluation has established a causal linkage between program activities and intended outcomes

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Evidence Basis for Interventions

Possible sources of evidence include:

- Evaluations that document the outcomes of similar programs
- Performance measurement outcome data
- Results from an evaluation of your program outcomes



Evidence Source: Evaluations from Other Organizations

- Have similar programs been successful in achieving the outcomes you want your program to produce?

Evidence Source: Your Performance Measurement Data

Past performance measurement outcome data:

- What do your past performance measurement results tell you?
- Can you show positive outcomes over time?



Evidence Source: Your Program Evaluation

Results from an evaluation of your program outcomes:

- What type of evaluation is it?
- Does it document change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition of beneficiaries?
- Does it show that your intervention is what caused the change?



Assessing Evidence

Considerations:

- **Similar:** Cites comparable intervention with similar beneficiaries and results
- **Significant:** Findings show that the program had a positive and statistically significant effect on beneficiaries
- **Up-to-date:** Recently published or most recent available
- **High Quality:** Use well-implemented and appropriate research methodologies given the research questions of interest
- **Reputable:** Source with no stake in outcome and published in a peer reviewed journal or by credible organization

Evidence Continuum

Causation

Low

High

Preliminary	Moderate	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcome results from performance measurement or outcome evaluations• Doesn't show causality• No comparison group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact evaluations• Show causality, compares intervention recipients to non-recipients• Comparison groups: Quasi-experimental Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact evaluations• Show causality, compares intervention recipients to non-recipients• Randomly-assigned control groups: Experimental Design

Evidence Continuum

Shape Up: afterschool obesity prevention program

Preliminary	Moderate	Strong
<p>Performance measurement shows that 75% of girls age 14-16 participating in the Shape Up program increased knowledge of healthy food choices.</p> <p>Outcomes evaluation showed that 65% of girls in the program made more healthy food choices</p>	<p>A 2005 impact evaluation by internal evaluators (using a quasi-experimental design) found that after 12 weeks, the girls in the program made 50% more healthy food choices than the comparison group.</p>	<p>A 2010 impact evaluation of the program by University of MN using experimental design/ random assignment found after 12 weeks, the girls in the experimental group made 50% more healthy food choices than control group girls</p>

Key Points

- Evidence helps us understand whether or not a program is achieving its intended outcomes
- A program's theory of change should be informed by evidence about what interventions are, and are not, likely to be successful in achieving the intended outcomes
- The strength of a program's evidence exists on a continuum, and different types of evidence are appropriate at different stages of a program's life cycle
- Factors to consider when assessing evidence quality include: similarity, significance or strength of findings, recency, quality and whether the evidence is from a reputable source

Additional Resources

CNCS Performance Measurement Core Curriculum:

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/npm/training-resources>

AmeriCorps State and National Evaluation Resources:

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/evaluation-ameriCorps>