



High Quality Performance Measures

What is Performance Measurement?

What makes a high quality performance measure?

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe key performance measurement concepts
- Identify high quality performance measures

Performance measurement helps you:

- Manage your program
- Tell your story

Module Overview

Performance Measurement

- Review of concepts and definitions
- Comparison to Impact Evaluation

Ensuring High Quality Performance Measures

- Understand alignment within theory of change
- Review characteristics of a high quality outcome
- Check alignment of outputs and outcomes

Review

Performance measurement is a systematic process of tracking outputs and outcomes:

Outputs

- Amount of service provided (e.g. people served, products created, or programs developed) through your planned intervention

Outcomes

- Reflect the changes or benefits that occur as the result of the intervention
- Can reflect changes in individuals, organizations, communities, or the environment
- Address changes in attitudes/beliefs, knowledge/skills, behavior, or conditions

Performance Measurement and Impact Evaluation

Differences: Key Areas	Performance Measurement	Impact Evaluation
Causality	Assumes causality; does <i>not</i> “prove” theory of change	Seeks to show causality and “prove” theory of change
Implementation	Tracks outputs and outcomes on a regular, ongoing basis	May occur from time to time, but not on a regular, ongoing basis
Time Focus	Shorter term focus; what can be measured within one year	Longer term focus

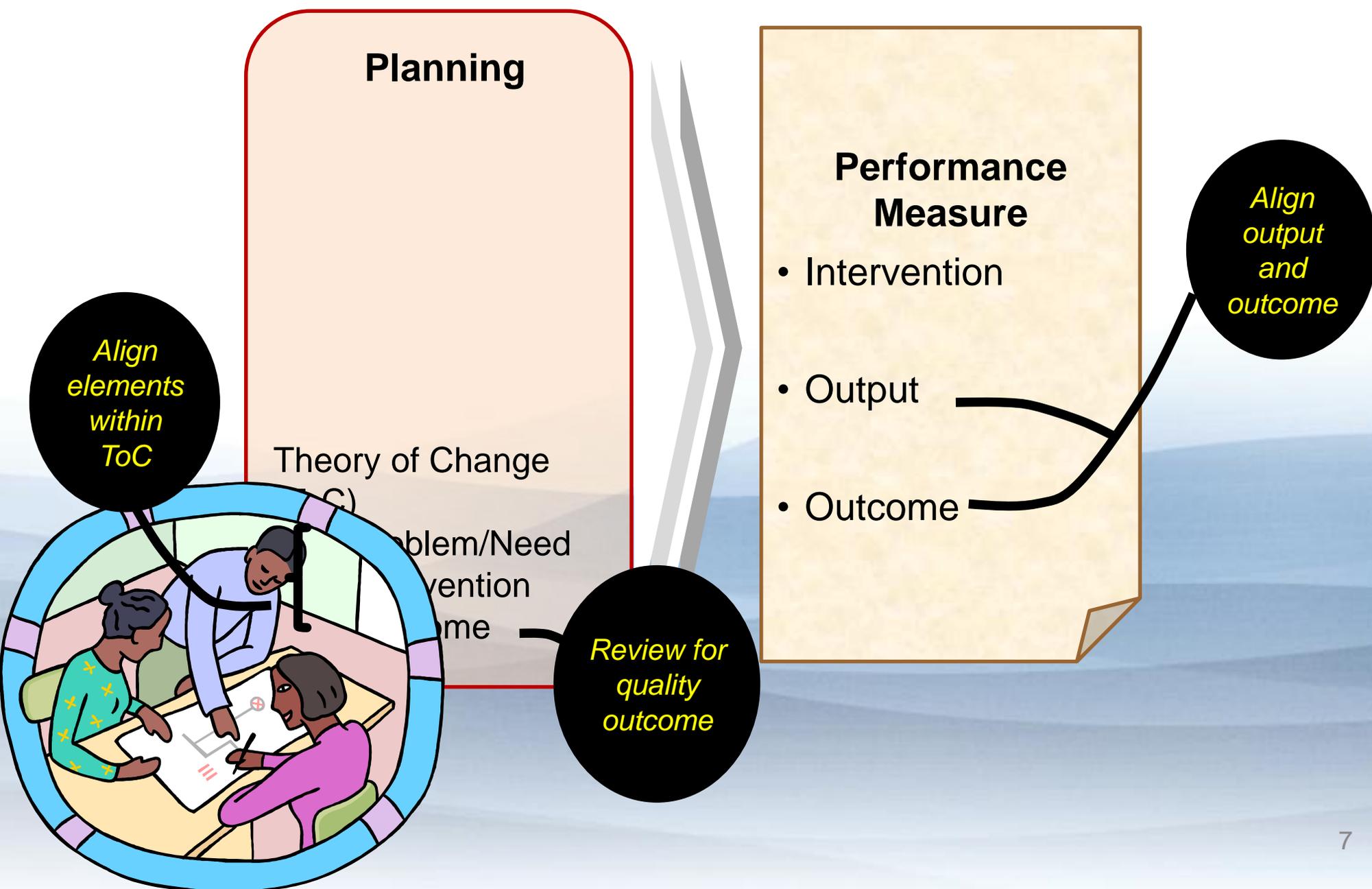
Performance Measurement and Impact Evaluation (continued)



Differences: Key Areas	Performance Measurement	Impact Evaluation
Design	Balances rigor* with practicality; measurement implemented by program staff with limited resources and expertise	Uses most rigorous evaluation design and methods that are right for program (e.g. quasi-experimental design)

*Capable of producing valid (accurate) results.

Aligning Theory of Change Elements



Alignment

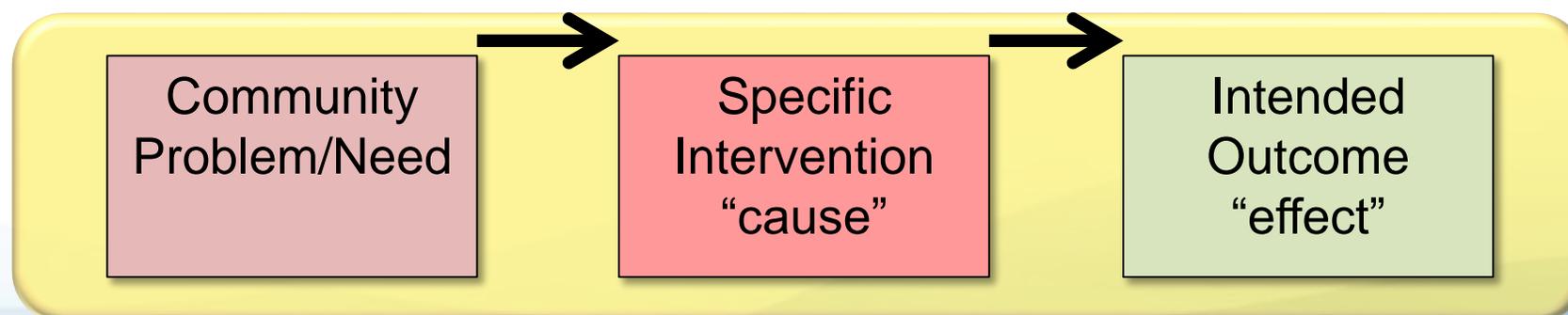
Alignment: Logical flow and connection between the different elements helps you:

- Strengthen your theory of change
- Articulate your performance measures
- Measure more accurately
- Clearly report changes

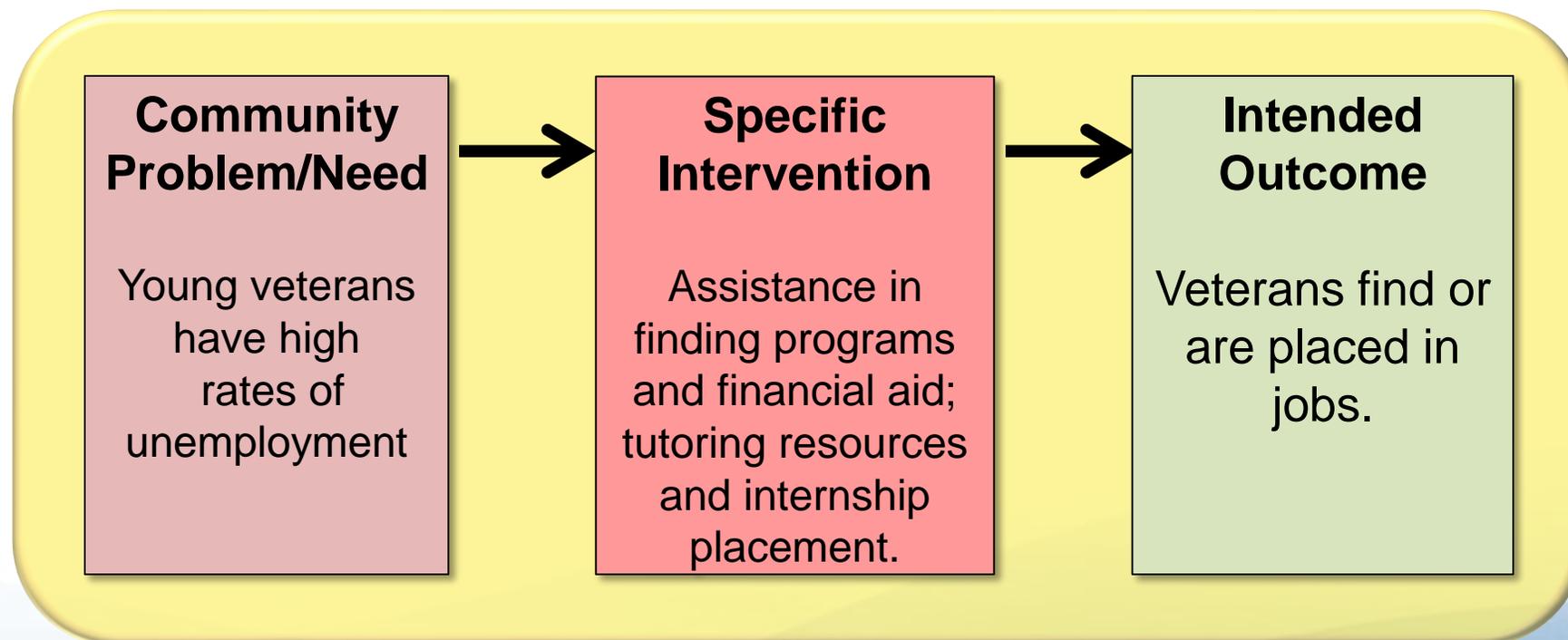


Alignment within Theory of Change

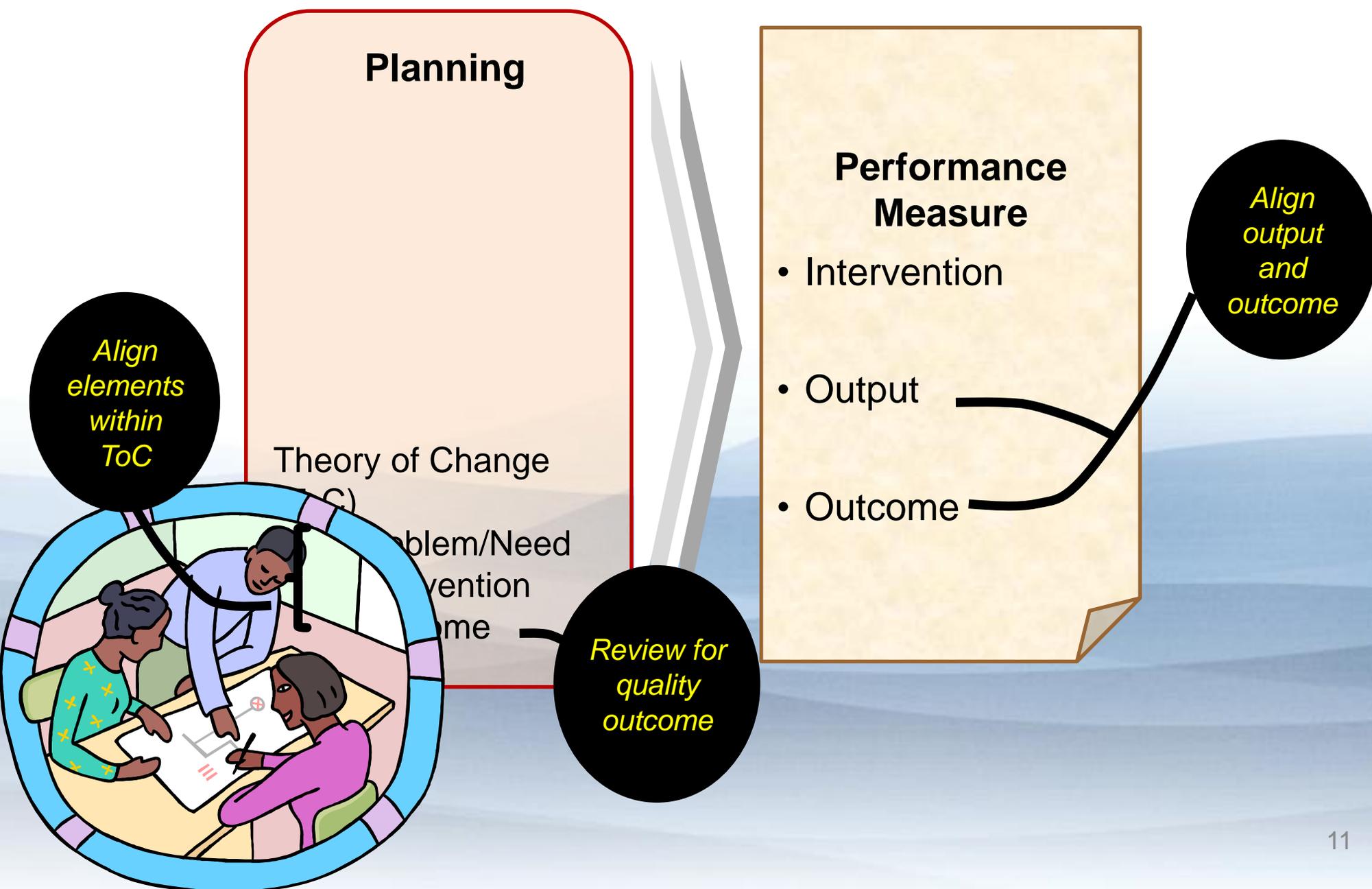
- Strong alignment among the theory of change elements sets the stage for identifying quality performance measures



Theory of Change: Veterans Example



Review for Quality Outcomes



Identifying a High Quality Outcome

The Outcome should:

- Be meaningful
- Be ambitious yet realistic
- Reflect the type of change (attitude, knowledge, behavior, or condition) you want to measure



Meaningful Outcome

Criteria for a meaningful outcome. Consider:

- **Community Need/problem:** Is the outcome addressing it?
- **Compelling/powerful.** Is the outcome central or peripheral?



Meaningful Outcome

Criteria for a meaningful outcome. Consider (continued):

- **Beneficiaries.** Is the target audience identified in the outcome?
- **Scope of the outcome.** How many will benefit?
- **Magnitude of the outcome.** How much change will occur for beneficiaries?
- **Evidence.** Is the outcome supported by evidence for the intervention?

Ambitious yet Realistic

Is the outcome too modest?

Consider:

- Outcome should reflect an ambitious change expected from the intervention
- Outcome resulting from full “dosage” of intervention



Ambitious yet Realistic

Is the outcome too ambitious?

Consider:

- Program timeframe



Ambitious yet Realistic

Is the outcome too ambitious?

Consider:

- Program timeframe
- Scope of the intervention

Ambitious yet Realistic

Is the outcome too ambitious?

Consider:

- Program timeframe
- Scope of the intervention
- Severity of the problems being addressed



Ambitious yet Realistic

Is the outcome too ambitious?

Consider:

- Program timeframe
- Scope of the intervention
- Severity of the problems being addressed
- Program resources



Mentoring Example

NEED: Documented high rates of chronic absence from school lead to other problems, e.g. low school engagement, poor academic performance (Social Work Practices, 2010).

INTERVENTION: Weekly individual and group mentoring to 6th grade students with attendance problems over 10 months. Focus on promoting re-engagement with school through social development and leadership skills.



Reflect the Type of Outcome

Has the outcome type been identified: attitude, knowledge/skills, behavior or condition?

- Outcome type should be same as theory of change
- Outcome type will inform instrument



Veteran Example: Type of Outcome

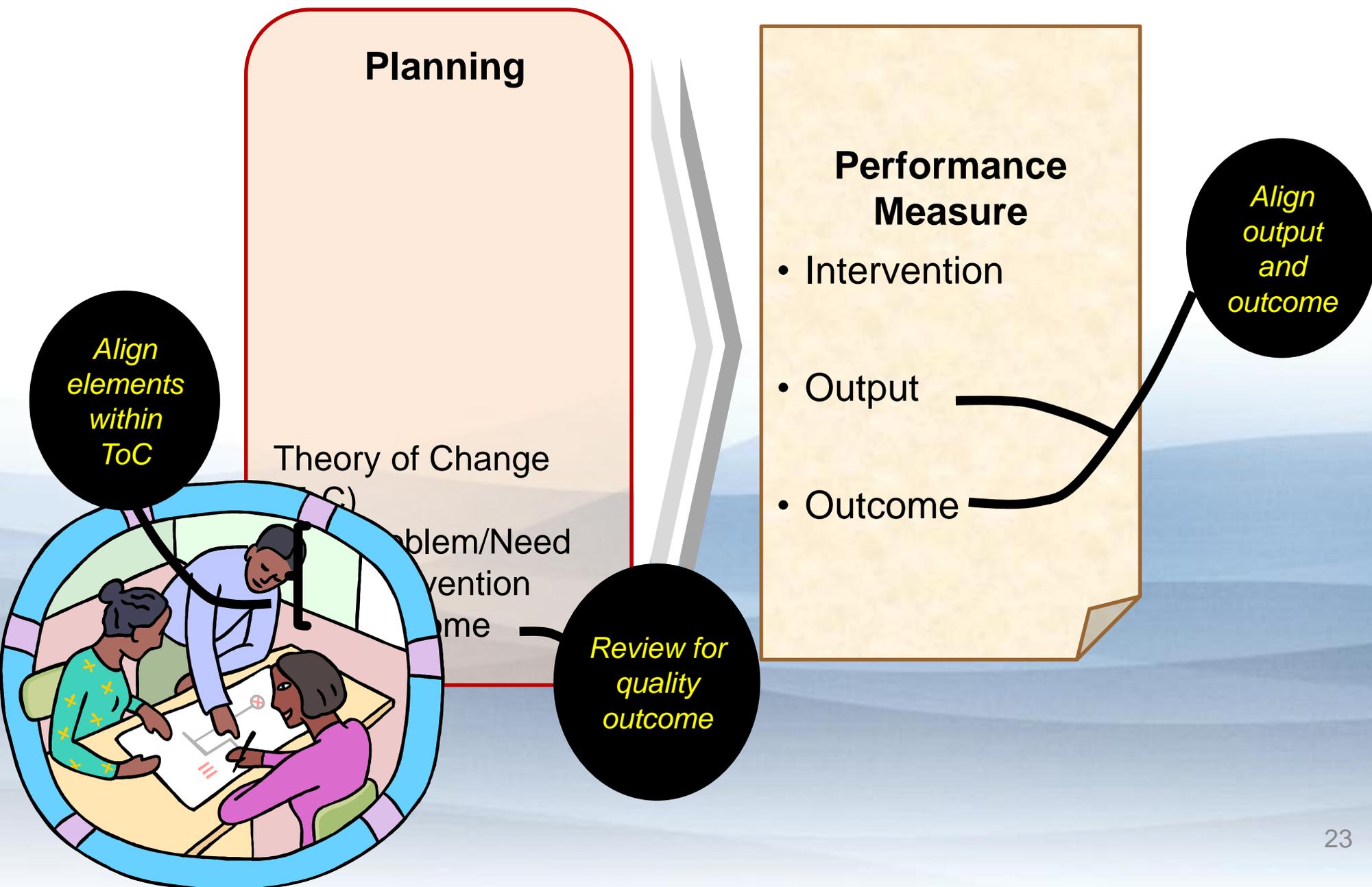
NEED: 35% of young veterans (18-24 year olds) are unemployed (Department of Veteran Affairs, 2011). Economists cite a lack of marketable civilian skills and the need for education degrees, vocational certifications...

INTERVENTION: National service participants support veterans in completing training programs by assisting in locating appropriate programs, securing financial aid, and by providing tutoring resources and internship placements.

Which type of outcome?

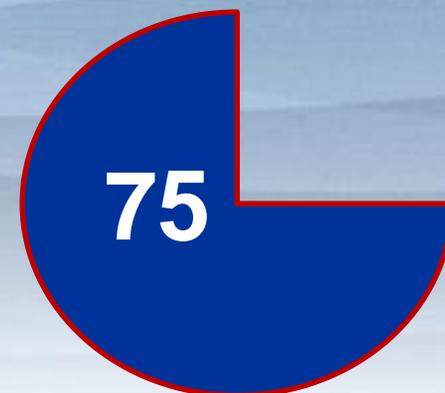
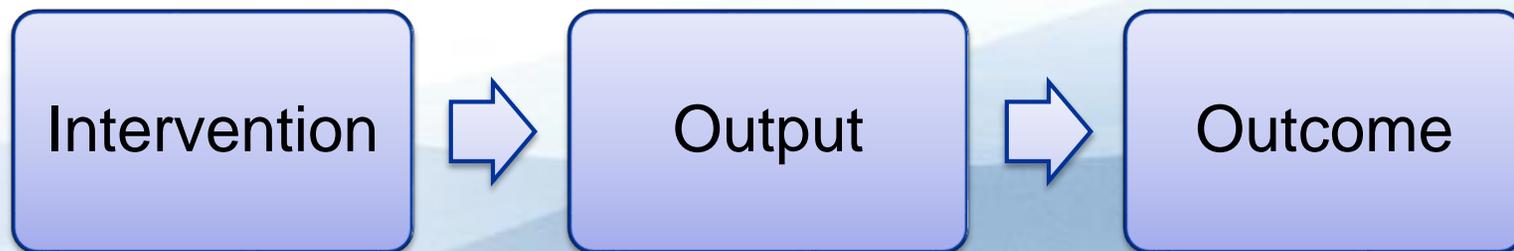
1. Veterans report increased confidence about finding employment. (attitude)
2. Veterans demonstrate new technical skills. (knowledge/skills)
3. Veterans are placed in jobs. (condition)

Align Output and Outcome



Alignment of Outputs and Outcomes

- Intervention produces output
- Output leads to the outcome
- Output and outcome measure the same intervention and beneficiaries



Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: Individuals with disabilities receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: Construction team members improve construction skills.

Do the intervention and output align?

Why or why not?

Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: Individuals with disabilities receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: Construction team members improve construction skills.

Do the intervention and output align?

Yes

No

Why or why not?

Logical to assume if well-designed and implemented

Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs, and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: Individuals with disabilities receive housing services (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: Construction team members improve construction skills.

Do the output and outcome align?

Why or why not?

Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: *Individuals with disabilities* receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: *Construction team members* improve construction skills.

Do the output and outcome align?

Yes

No

Why or why not?

2 different groups of beneficiaries

Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

Focus Area	Output	Outcome
Education	Number of children that completed participation in CNCS-supported early childhood education programs. (ED21)	Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.(ED23)



Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

Focus Area	Output	Outcome
Healthy Futures	Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger (H11)	Number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services (H12)



National performance measures at the Knowledge Network:
www.nationalservice.gov/resources/npm/home

Summary of Key Points

- Performance measurement is a systematic process of measuring progress (outputs and outcomes)
- Performance measurement does not seek to “prove” a theory of change, but can provide snapshots.
- Impact evaluation can determine if results occurred because of the intervention.

Summary of Key Points

- Strong performance measures align with the theory of change (need, intervention and outcome)
 - The intervention is based on evidence that supports a cause-and-effect relationship between the intervention and an intended outcome.
 - The theory of change helps identify an appropriate outcome to measure.

Summary of Key Points

- Quality outcomes should:
 - Be meaningful
 - Be ambitious yet realistic
 - Match the type of change you want to see (attitude, knowledge/skills, behavior, condition)
- Strong performance measures are aligned
 - Output comes from the intervention
 - Outcome is likely to result from output
 - Output and outcome measure the same intervention and beneficiaries

Resources



- CNCS Priorities and Performance Measures:
<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/npm/home>
- Program Specific Notices of Funding Opportunities and Application Instructions:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp