



PROGRAM PLANNING:
OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES
HELP RESOURCES

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Written Article from Measurement Resources' Web Page

Entitled: Outputs vs. Outcomes and Why it Matters

Recommended reading: Read down to the end of the numbered list.

Duration: About 5 minutes

Usefulness: Uses examples that are easily understood. Nice list of numbered steps.

Notes: They compare outputs and outcomes using food examples and differentiate between the importance of them both.

Link: <http://measurementresourcesco.com/outputs-vs-outcomes-matters/>

Outputs vs. Outcomes Table Example

Entitled: Excerpt from, "Welcome to Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models"

Recommended reading: Table below

Duration: <3 minutes

Full PDF:

<http://intranet/StrategicPlanning/Plans/Documents/Outputs%20and%20Outcomes%20Help%20Resources/Enhancing%20Program%20Performance%20with%20Logic%20Models.pdf>

Usefulness: While not public health examples, great side by side comparison

Outputs vs. Outcomes

Try not to confuse outcomes with outputs. **Outputs** are the activities we do or accomplish that help achieve outcomes. **Outcomes** are the results of those activities for individuals, families, groups, or communities. Look at the following examples.

Outputs - Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The program trains and empowers community volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community volunteers have knowledge and skill to work effectively with at-risk youth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program staff teach financial management skills to low-income families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-income families are better able to manage their resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The camp experience provides leadership development opportunities for 4-H youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campers, aged 12-15 years of age, learn new leadership and communication skills while at camp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An annual conference disseminates the latest forage research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forage producers in Pasture County know current research information and use it to make informed decisions.

Here's another way to look at the difference between outputs and outcomes:

Outputs: Is the client served?

Outcomes: Has the client's situation improved? (Hatry, 1999)

Simple Evaluation Concepts Overview Video

Entitled: Basic Monitoring and Evaluation Concepts

Duration: 3 minutes of watching

Usefulness: Quick video explanation using an illustrated easy examples.

Notes: They use some terminology that is a little bit different. We don't use inputs in our plan explicitly, and they differentiate between short, medium and long-term goals/objectives that we are not specifically using at this time.

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR8FalapJf0>

Simple Program Planning Evaluation Overview

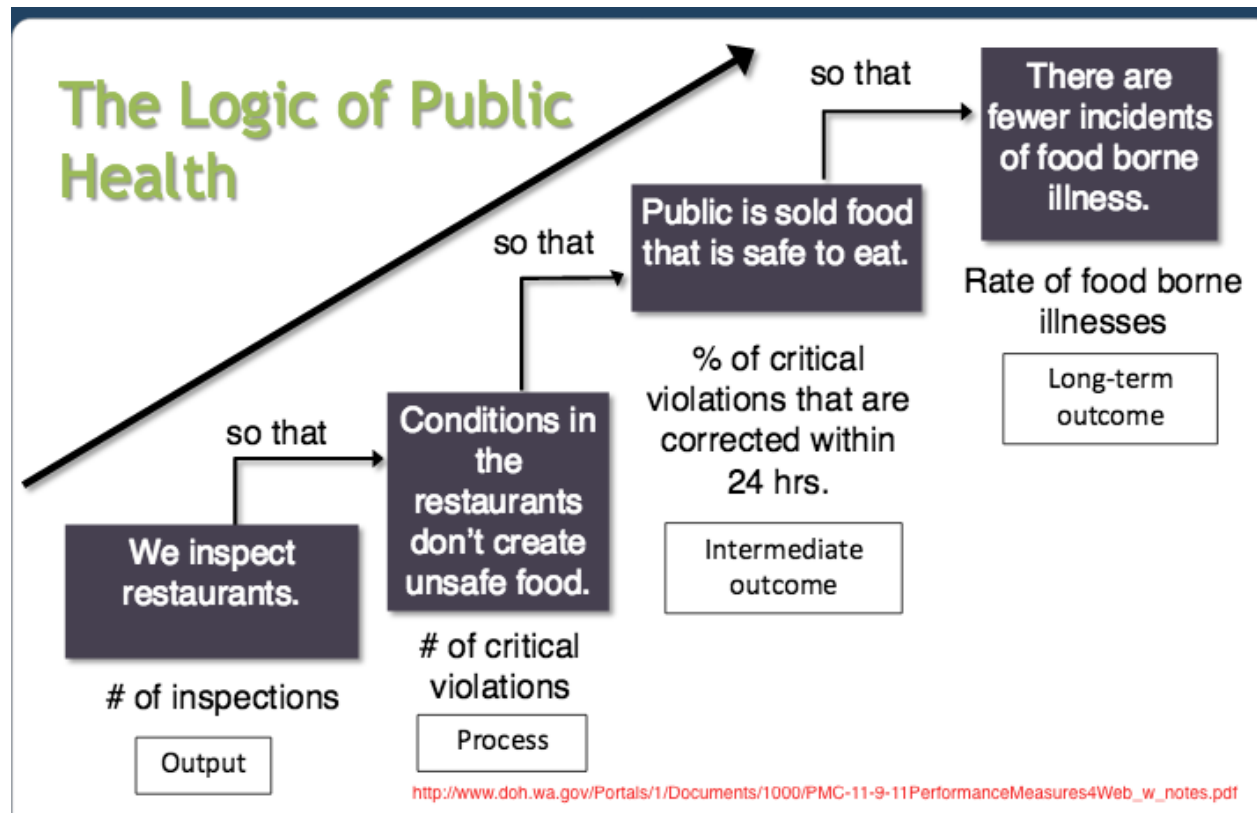
Entitled: The Logic of Public Health

Recommended reading: The screenshot below contains an overview of how the evaluation components are related to each other and gives a public health example.

Link: http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/Documents/1000/PMC-11-9-11PerformanceMeasures4Web_w_notes.pdf

Duration: <3 minutes

Usefulness: Helps put into context all the various measures and how they relate to each other.



Audio Presentation from Public Health Ontario

Entitled: Develop Indicators and review the plan

Recommended slides (use menu button to navigate): 1.6 Step 5: Develop Indicators to 1.9 Step 6: Review the plan

Duration: <5 minutes of listening

Usefulness: Uses public health examples, quick audio explanation.

Notes: They use the terminology outcome objective and process objective which is essentially the same as the outcome field (for outcome objectives) and output field (process objectives) on our template.

Link:

https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Articulate/Planning_at_a_Glance_Presentation_6/story.html

Evaluating Health Promotion Programs from Public Health Ontario Slides

Entitled: Evaluating health promotion programs

Recommended slides: 22-32 and 36 for a list of example indicators

Duration: <10 minutes

Usefulness: Public Health examples, simple breakdown of main considerations for selecting indicators, and quick comparison of what process and outcome evaluations are (representative of our process and outcome objectives).

PDF link:

http://intranet/StrategicPlanning/Plans/Documents/Outputs%20and%20Outcomes%20Help%20Resources/Evaluating_health_promotion_programs_2012%20-%20PHO.pdf

Getting to the Outcomes

Entitled: Getting to the Outcomes 2004: Promoting Accountability Through Methods and Tools for Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

Recommended reading: The following screenshots for detailed description and explanations for a little bit on outputs and more on outcomes.

Full PDF Link:

<http://intranet/StrategicPlanning/Plans/Documents/Outputs%20and%20Outcomes%20Help%20Resources/Getting%20to%20the%20Outcomes%202004%20Book.pdf>

Duration: 10 minutes

Usefulness: More detailed background on outcomes and some basic directions

Identifying Anticipated Outputs. What **outputs** will show that the components were implemented as intended?

Outputs are the direct products of program components and usually are measured in terms of work accomplished. In GTO-04, there are two types of **outputs** to track: One is the *service delivered* (number of hours, sessions, PSA ads aired, etc.) and the other is the *number of people served*. Like distance and destination signs on a highway, **outputs** indicate that your program is going in the direction that you intended. Below are examples of **outputs** for different types of program components.

Anticipated Outputs

If your component is ...	A possible program output might be...
Parenting classes	Number of parents attending the classes (people served) Percentage of parents completing classes (people served)
A school-based prevention program	Number of children attending the program (people served) Attendance at each session (people served)
An anti-drug media campaign	Number of PSAs aired (services delivered)

Anticipated **outputs** should be stated in precise terms. For example, a road sign that reads "Los Angeles this way" is not as helpful as a sign that reads "Los Angeles 100 miles."



Having a well defined target population and clear and specific program objectives helps to define your anticipated outputs.

What Should Be Measured?

Outcomes are *changes* that occur as a result of your program.

As stated in question ②, common outcomes for interventions aimed at individuals (e.g., youth) include changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. Risk and protective factors are examples of specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Also stated in question ② was that outcomes can be measured at higher levels such as the community (e.g., changes in policies and laws to control drinking and drug use like DUI laws).

When positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills take place, they do not always lead to changes in behavior. For instance, even if students know the risks related to smoking, believe that smoking is dangerous to health, and know how to refuse offers to smoke, they **STILL** may become smokers. Measuring only knowledge, attitudes, or skills may lead you to a different conclusion than you would have if you also measured behaviors. Although risk and protective factors are often associated with actual substance use behaviors, and therefore can be useful to assess progress toward behavior changes among youth, measuring actual behavior is still important.

What Are the Best Types of Outcomes to Measure?

Change in outcomes can be measured from the start of a program to months and sometimes even years beyond a program's official conclusion. Changes can occur, and can be measured, at multiple levels: individual, family, subgroup (e.g., third grade students with documented conduct problems), school, and whole communities. It is preferable to aim for reaching outcomes that

- affect actual behaviors (as opposed to only knowledge),
- affect larger groups of people (whole schools versus one classroom), and



Ⓢ Outcomes ◀117

- are longer lasting (as opposed to changes that disappear after the program ends).

Often, those who conduct programs assess process or outputs (e.g., number of youth in attendance, number of classes taught) and not **outcomes**. They may conduct satisfaction surveys that measure how pleased participants are with *how* the program is implemented. Unfortunately, a positive process evaluation (like a satisfaction survey that indicates if participants were happy with the program) will not prove that your program is successful. Assessment of satisfaction is necessary but not sufficient to document changes in the target population as a result of your program.

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When Deciding on Outcomes, You Should ...

- *Create realistic outcomes.* Focus on what the program can realistically accomplish. You should not assess youth tobacco use in the whole state if you are implementing a new anti-smoking campaign in just one school district.
- *Make your outcomes specific.* You will need to translate the general topic of what your program targets (e.g., perception of risk of harm of smoking) into something that is specific and calculable, called measures (e.g., scores on questions designed to measure perception of risk in the Monitoring the Future Survey). Called indicators by some, measures are related to the specific characteristics of your desired outcome (see Appendix 1E for a list of indicators).
- *Have at least one measure for each outcome.* Although you must have at least one measure for each outcome, it is actually better to have more than one measure since not all outcomes can be adequately expressed just one way. For example, one important way to test marijuana use is by a self-report survey, but self-report data can be biased; so measuring the number of new cases receiving marijuana treatment in the target area can provide additional information about the program's effect. Each type of measurement or data source can result in a somewhat different conclusion. When different data sources (e.g., statistics collected by the public health department, program surveys, and literature reviews) all agree, then you can have more confidence in the conclusions. Once you choose how you will measure your desired outcomes, deciding on a program design and creating your data collection methods will be much easier. It is also helpful to look at the evidence-based literature and see how others have assessed programs like yours.
- *Use the shortest measure possible.* Find an established measure with the least number of items. Shorter measures will reduce the time needed to complete the measure and to enter the data into a computer.
- *Pilot test.* Find a handful of members from your target population and administer the measure to them as a trial run. Get their reactions. Did they understand the questions the way you had intended? Then make changes based on their critiques.

Things to Consider When Writing Outcome Measures

Entitled: Program Evaluation Toolkit from the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health

Recommended reading: The screenshot below contains a useful series of questions to consider when writing outcome measures

Full PDF Link:

<http://intranet/StrategicPlanning/Plans/Documents/Outputs%20and%20Outcomes%20Help%20Resources/Program%20Evaluation%20Toolkit%20OCECYMH%20Pages%2011-13.pdf>

Duration: <5 minutes

Usefulness: Thoughts to help guide you when writing or thinking about outcome measures

To narrow the list of outcomes that you plan to measure, it is helpful to ask the following questions:

- 1.** Is this outcome important to our stakeholders? Different outcomes may have different levels of importance to different stakeholders. It will be important to arrive at some consensus.
- 2.** Is this outcome within our sphere of influence? For example, a transitional housing program to improve health-related outcomes for homeless youth cannot be held accountable for outcomes related to a drug cessation program to which some of the youth are referred.
- 3.** Will the program be at the right stage of delivery to produce the particular outcome? Ensure that the intended outcomes are achievable within the timelines of the evaluation.
- 4.** Will we be able to measure this outcome? There are many standardized measures with strong validity and reliability that are designed to measure specific outcomes. The challenge will be to ensure that the selected measure is appropriate for and easy to administer to the target population (e.g., not a heavy time burden, not too complex).

Objective Writing and Program Planning Evaluation PowerPoint

Entitled: Algoma Public Health Objective Writing and Program Planning Evaluation PowerPoint

Recommended reading: The whole presentation would hopefully be useful throughout the entire program planning evaluation process; however, for outputs and outcomes slides 33-43 are most recommended.

Link:

<http://intranet/StrategicPlanning/Plans/Documents/APH%202015%20Objective%20Writing%20and%20Program%20Planning%20Evaluation%20Training%20Presentation.pdf>

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Usefulness: Summary of what outputs and outcomes are intended to be and several public health examples.