Outcome measures for assessing progress of meeting PHP or SPH Goals.

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Outline for this presentation:

- What are outcomes?
- How do they fit into the larger picture of assessment and evaluation?
- Why do they matter?
- Why are they such a challenge to develop?
- Can a more effective process for developing outcomes be implemented?
Outcome measures or performance measures:

- the quantifiable indicators that gauge **productivity** or **effectiveness**

- the measurable variables by which attainment of objectives may be judged
Purpose of using outcome measures:

- Monitoring of multiple indicators enables a PHP or SPH to document:
  - the successes,
  - areas in need of improvement
  - and, ultimately, the effectiveness of efforts to meet goals.

To support and sustain deliberative evaluation that is also meaningful to the multiple stakeholders of a PHP or SPH.
Who are these stakeholders?

- Students, graduates
- Community members, public health professionals
- Faculty, Administrators, larger institution
- Groups described in mission or vision of SPH or PHP
- The public
- Funders, etc.
Caveat:

The use of outcome measures is not a substitute for thoughtful evaluation.

SPH and PHP will continue to assess the less tangible parts of the academic mission, the things that are not easily measured.

Remember . . . “You are what you measure”
“Fuzzy Goals” and Outcome Measure Development (Patton '97, Weiss '72)

- Problem: Lack of clear, specific, prioritized (and measurable with objectives) goals.
- Human cognitions are more intuitive than analytical – hard to think in “goal” format
- Lack of clarity can mask:
  - lack of understanding of WHAT to accomplish
  - divergent intents
  - underlying conflict
- Lack of contextual analysis to assess various stakeholders’ beliefs about what goals should be
- Many disciplines define these terms differently
Determine **Purpose and Direction**
*(goals for I, R, S and Org)*

**THEN** objectives and outcome measures of these

- **Examples of questions to use:**
  - What are you trying to achieve?
  - If successful what will be different?
  - How will stakeholder groups be different if successful?
  - Who will behave differently, why and how?
  - What will people be able to report is different because of changes?
  - What would you (as stakeholder) be able to see in one specific/or all stakeholders that would be different?
Developing link between goal(s) and outcomes

- Goals can be system level, organizational level, or at level of stakeholder groups
  - BUT should lend themselves to objectives/activities AND outcomes that measure purpose and direction

- Definition of outcomes should precede any discussion of HOW to measure them
Example of how people attempt to develop outcomes: You can lead a horse to water . . .

(Patton ’97)

You can lead a horse to water, measure proximity to the water and even count her “sips” of water - but, . . . . . . . . would you really prefer to demonstrate reduced horse dehydration?
Relevance . . .

You can control (and we tend to measure):
- Leading horse to water
- Making sure the water quality is good
- Measuring the “sipping ability” of the horse
- Keeping the horse happy and satisfied

You can NOT control (and tend NOT to measure):
- If the horse actually drinks the water
- How much water the horse drinks
- Horse urine
- The ultimate health status (dehydration?) of the horse
Main point here: Our tendency is to focus on what we can control

- It is difficult to move from counting “services or activities” to measuring meaningful outcomes.

- Tendency is to focus on what you can control (what YOU do and what YOU can count) – not on what you are trying to facilitate (healthy horses).
Developing valuable outcome measures:

- Involves linking type of change to specific indicators and measures of those indicators

- Consider:
  - Time frames
  - Resources for measuring
  - Validity and reliability of measures
  - How information/outcome findings will be used
  - Willingness of primary stakeholders to engage in this type of assessment
  - Clarity, specificity and measurability (Patton '97)
2 Examples from various levels of development: ESU and JPHCOPH

Outcome measures link the evaluation and planning process feedback loop for PHP and SPH
ESU Goal V: To Prepare graduates who are self-motivated, work collaboratively, apply ethical principles to their work, exercise initiative, have critical thinking skills and develop into leaders in public health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Program level Objectives</th>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Assessment 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students as leaders</td>
<td>1. Maintain a diverse student body that reflects the diversity of the community we serve.</td>
<td>1. Program student and graduate diversity will enhance the diversity of the region as compared to the regional statistics. demographics</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Maintain a student body with diverse educational and professional backgrounds</td>
<td>2. Assessments of records kept of the educational and professional backgrounds of the students to ensure our students body is diverse in these areas.</td>
<td>Met</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Graduates will be employed at the level appropriate to their education and experience in a position that contributes to population-based public health</td>
<td>3. Graduates employment history will be documented on regular surveys. Rates of employment in areas that contribute to population-based public health will be recorded. AT THIS POINT A TARGET LEVEL IS NOT SET.</td>
<td>&gt;60% in PH</td>
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<td>4. Graduates will report attainment of these outcomes on our regular surveys. 4. All students will be assessed favorably by their internship preceptor on these aspects during their internship experience</td>
<td>4. Graduates will respond with a 3.0 or better on their rankings of the outcomes related to Goal E on the evaluation survey.</td>
<td>Met</td>
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<td>5. During their tenure in our MPH program all students will successfully participate in multiple (no less than 3) group level experiential or service learning activities.</td>
<td>5. Documentation from faculty of the number of and types of collaborative, team building activities in which students participate in the required MPH courses.</td>
<td>Met – Vita and student database</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome statements are clearly separated from operational criteria for measurement of the outcome:

- Specification of desired outcome (connected to objectives/goals)
- Determine what is a reasonable measurement of the desired outcome
- Determine performance target (s)
- Determine time frames
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Goal:</th>
<th>Sample objective with activity</th>
<th>1 Outcome expected from the activity</th>
<th>Proposed measure of the this outcome</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Criteria for success or benchmark - baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide three exceptional competency-based DrPH programs ( ) that graduate leaders for the public health workforce who contribute to the mission of JPHCOPH during their academic training and throughout their careers.</td>
<td>All graduates will demonstrate the core competencies for all 3 DrPH concentrations through effectively designed and delivered coursework, practicum and dissertation. Additional: 1.Demonstrate Comp for Concentrations 2.Exceptional programs 3.Graduate leaders for 4.Contribute to mission in training 5.Contribute to mission during career</td>
<td>Demonstration of core competencies</td>
<td>Successful completion of and evaluation of coursework, practicum and dissertation</td>
<td>Preceptor Evaluation, Course grades and assessments, dissertation defense and presentation</td>
<td>Practicum = 90% students will receive a 4 or better (5 point scale) on competency evaluation completed by Preceptor</td>
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<td>Alumni self reports</td>
<td>Alumni Survey</td>
<td>Alumni report – 80% 4 or better for each competency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes could reflect change in:

- Policy/rules/regulations
- Circumstances for organizations, groups or individuals
- Status – health status?
- Behavior, skills or competencies
- Ability to function
- Knowledge or attitude
- Prevention
- Activities – process measures
Setting **meaningful** performance measures:

- Amount or level of outcome attainment that is expected or required.
- Use past performance/baseline
- Set progress measures at reasonable levels – normative
- Watch for the relationship between resources and performance
Data collection

- What data would give insights to this outcome: existing or new?
- Who “keeps” the data?
- Who is responsible? Who has oversight?
- How frequently will indicator data be collected? More often early on . . .
- Will sampling processes be used?
- How will findings be determined? Used? Shared?
Summary of developing outcome measures:

Process should:
- resonate with stakeholders
- contribute to valuable feedback loop for planning = give insights based on purpose and direction
- enable resource and performance based planning and change

Specifically planned outcomes should be the driver of planning rather than “available” data driving what the PHP or SPH will measure.
Concept: Ongoing Process

Values, Vision and Mission

Goals for Instruction, Research and Service (Organization/ System?) Purpose and Direction

Statement of Objectives and Activities for each goal - What do you need to accomplish to meet goals?

Developing Outcome Measures for ALL Objectives - Assessment

Development and Implementation of Evaluation and Planning Overview