Developing a Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

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InSites
2014 President of the American Evaluation Association
A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something.

Key Message

Systems-Oriented Evaluation:

From Afterthought to Forethought
Our Changing World

Social Systems

Then:
Stable, limited connections

Now:
Complex, connected, dynamic
Our Changing World System Interventions

Then:
Individual programs, policies

Now:
Multi-faceted, overlapping, dynamic

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Our Changing World
Evaluation Approach

Then:
Formative and Summative

Now:
Developmental with Nested Formative and Summative
Formative Evaluation
Summative Evaluation
Developmental Evaluation

Adapts to changing conditions

Recognizes complexity

'Uncertainty"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Strategy Approach</th>
<th>Establish goals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop action plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implement plan</td>
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<td>Evaluate results</td>
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Evaluation and Strategy Repositioned and Redesigned

Adaptive STRATEGY

System Benefit

Developmental EVALUATION
Developing an Evaluation Framework

Step 1. Articulate Fundamental System Change Using Existing Evidence

Step 2. Identify Points of Systemic Influence

Step 3. Weave Strategy and Evaluation with System Change

Step 4. Identify Indicators of System Benefit
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(Initiative)</th>
<th>Points of Systemic Influence</th>
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<th>Trying Out Interventions</th>
<th>Tipping Point</th>
<th>Sustainable Adaptive Balancing</th>
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Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation
Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture
Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture

Map actions among partners
Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation
See the big picture
Map actions among partners
Be transparent
Value of the Evaluation Framework

- Link strategy and evaluation
- See the big picture
- Map actions among partners
- Be transparent
- Map progress over time
Articulate Desired System Change
Children's Social/Emotional Competence
Concrete Support in Times of Need

Protective Factors Approach

Social Connections
Parental Resilience
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
Children's Social/Emotional Competence

Center for the Study of Social Policy (www.cssp.org)
There is no safe time to drink during pregnancy and no safe kind of alcohol to drink while pregnant.
Fostering Hope
Salem
Identify Points of Systemic Influence

First: Identify Relevant Domains of the Social Ecology
Social Ecology for Strengthening Families

Societal

Community

Relationships

Individual

Step Two
Identify Points of Systemic Influence

First: Identify Relevant Domains of the Social Ecology

Second: Identify Potential Levers for Change
Levers for System Change

Activities & Results

Patterns

Norms, Infrastructures & Policies

Principles

Paradigms
Levers for System Change

Activities & Results

Patterns

Norms, Infrastructures & Policies

Principles

Paradigms

Step Two
<table>
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<th>Strengthening Families Initiative</th>
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<td><strong>Step 1</strong> Points of Systemic Influence</td>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong> Baseline Understanding</td>
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<td><strong>Step 3</strong> Trying Out Interventions</td>
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<td><strong>Step 5</strong> Sustainable Adaptive Balancing</td>
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### Caregiver-Child-Family

- Are families aware of and practicing protective factors? Do parents use both organized and adaptive dynamics?
- Families test use of protective factors and determine changes in relationships and boundaries in daily life. Families learn to self-assess use of protective factors.
- Enough families are habitually using and building protective factors that family norms are shifting in support of protective factors framework for living. Benefits being realized.
- Caregivers are connected with other caregivers and family members who are skilled at using and building protective factors. Family norms support protective factors. (Evidence of well-being of families and levels of child maltreatment regularly monitored.)

### Neighborhood/Community

- Are neighborhoods and their leaders building social cohesion around protective factors? Do they encourage adaptive and organized dynamics?
- Neighborhoods/communities pilot new ways of functioning that are grounded in protective factors and social cohesion.
- Neighborhoods & leaders commit to use and support protective factors. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired social cohesion being achieved/supported.
- Neighborhoods & leaders adjust to social conditions in community and emphasis on supporting protective factors. They consider and reflect on their ways of functioning. (Evidence monitored.)

### Organizations, Providers (Norms, infrastructures, policy)

- Are organizations/services designed to support protective factors framework? Do providers encourage adaptive & organized dynamics to support building protective factors?
- Organizations/providers pilot new ways of operating that emphasize protective factors framework. They determine cost implications.
- Organizations/providers commit to redesigned norms/structures/policies that support protective factors framework & principles. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired benefits being realized/supported.
- Organizations/providers use caregiver, child, family outcome and other data to adjust to social conditions in community with emphasis on presence of protective factors. Organizations/providers leverage both adaptive and organized dynamics.

### Societal Actors (State & national) (Norms, policies, infrastructures)

- Are norms, infrastructures, policies based on protective factors/framework principles? Are policies attentive to both organized and adaptive dynamics?
- Norms, infrastructures, policies targeted for change with engagement of multiple voices, perspectives, and valuing of protective factors.
- Norms, infrastructures, policies overall encourage presence of protective factors. Leverage both organized and adaptive dynamics. Caregiver, child, family outcomes supported.
- Societal leaders balance attention to risk and protective factors tailored to micro-contexts. They address norms, infrastructures, policies and dynamics over time based on monitoring data and related new knowledge.

### Stakeholder Learning & Capacity Building

- Do learning activities address protective factors and model both adaptive and organized dynamics?
- Learning activities redesigned and tested with attention to protective factors and use of interactive, peer-to-peer learning and learning from families.
- Communities of practice grounded in peer-to-peer learning and application are common; include reflection on use of protective and risk factor attention in different contexts.
- New knowledge development, dissemination, and integration woven into practice with learning activities and communities of practice used to shore up challenging areas. (Stakeholder knowledge and practice regularly assessed.)

### Networks/Partnerships

- Are networks/partnerships designed to encourage protective factors? Do networks/partnerships leverage adaptive and organized dynamics?
- Networks, partnerships test change in norms, infrastructure, and policies among their members.
- Key partners, networkers have multiple interconnections that encourage attention to protective factors in a micro & macro level. Attention to protective factors framework is fundamental to connections.
- Partners, networkers use data feedback to strategically shift connections to respond to contextual changes to ensure primary attention to protective factors. Shifts are based on systems thinking.
Identify Actors within the Domains of Social Ecology
Identify Actors within the Domains of Social Ecology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<td>Caregiver-Child-Family</td>
<td>Are families aware practicing protective behaviors? Do they use both adaptive and organic dynamics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood/Community</td>
<td>Are neighborhoods leaders building social capital around protective factors and encouraging adaptive dynamics?</td>
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<td>Organizations, Providers (Norms, infrastructures, policy)</td>
<td>Are organizations designed to support protective factors and encourage adaptive dynamics to support protective factors?</td>
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<td>Are norms, infrastructures and policies based on protective framework principles that are attentive to both adaptive and organic dynamics?</td>
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<td>Stakeholder Learning &amp; Capacity Building</td>
<td>Do learning activities focus on protective factors and adapt to both adaptive and organic paradigms?</td>
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<td>Are networks/partnerships designed to encourage protective factors and leverage adaptive dynamics?</td>
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Developing an Evaluation Framework

Step 1. Articulate Fundamental System Change Using Existing Evidence

Step 2. Identify Points of Systemic Influence

Step 3. Weave Strategy and Evaluation with System Change
Step Three

Weave strategy & evaluation with system change over time
Assessing Where We Are in relation to our vision
Trying Out Interventions within & across system domains, dimensions, and across time
Reaching a Tipping Point: Activities are clearer, scaled up, and crossing more parts of the system.
Sustainable Adaptive Balancing: We are here, new things happen, system changes, and we are able to adapt.
Eventually the cycle begins again with a new paradigm shift.
Weave strategy & evaluation with system change over time
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

Points of Systemic Influence

Baseline Understanding

To what extent:

Tipping Point

Sustainable Adaptive Balancing

(Initiative)

(Community: formal)

(Community: informal)

(Societal—City, state, national)

(Learning & Capacity Building)

(Networks/Partnerships)

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Trying Out Interventions

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## Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

### Strengthening Families Initiative

#### Points of Systemic Influence

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<td>Caregivers are connected with other caregivers and family members who are skilled at using and building protective factors. Family norms support protective factors. (Evidence of well-being of families and levels of child maltreatment regularly monitored.)</td>
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| Neighborhood/Community | Are neighborhoods and their leaders building social cohesion around protective factors? Do they encourage adaptive and organized dynamics? | Neighborhoods/communities pilot new ways of functioning that are grounded in protective factors and social cohesion. | Neighborhoods & leaders commit to use and support protective factors. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired social cohesion being achieved/supported. | Neighborhoods & leaders adjust to social conditions in community and emphasis on supporting protective factors. They consider and reflect on their ways of functioning. (Evidence monitored.) |

| Organizations, Providers (Norms, infrastructures, policy) | Are organizations/services designed to support protective factors? Do providers encourage adaptive & organized dynamics to support building protective factors? | Organizations/providers pilot new ways of operating that emphasize protective factors framework. They determine cost implications. | Organizations/providers commit to redesigned norms/structures/policies that support protective factors framework & principles. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired benefits being realized/supported. | Organizations/providers use caregiver, child, family outcome and other data to adjust to social conditions in community with emphasis on presence of protective factors. Organizations/providers leverage both adaptive and organized dynamics. |

| Societal Actors (State & national) (Norms, policies, infrastructures) | Are norms, infrastructures, policies based on protective factors/framework principles? Are policies attentive to both organized and adaptive dynamics? | Norms, infrastructures, policies targeted for change with engagement of multiple voices, perspectives, and valuing of protective factors. | Norms, infrastructures, policies overall encourage presence of protective factors. Leverage both organized and adaptive dynamics. Caregiver, child, family outcomes supported. | Societal leaders balance attention to risk and protective factors tailored to micro-contexts. They address norms, infrastructures, policies and dynamics over time based on monitoring data and related new knowledge. |

| Stakeholder Learning & Capacity Building | Do learning activities address protective factors and model both adaptive and organized dynamics? | Learning activities redesigned and tested with attention to protective factors and use of interactive, peer-to-peer learning and learning from families. | Communities of practice grounded in peer-to-peer learning and application are common; include reflection on use of protective and risk factor attention in different contexts. | New knowledge development, dissemination, and integration woven into practice with learning activities and communities of practice used to shore up challenging areas. (Stakeholder knowledge and practice regularly assessed.) |

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Process for Developing an Evaluation Framework

Who:
- Leadership Team
- Evaluator
- Stakeholders

When:
- Near beginning
- Review, revise, adapt
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

**Strengthening Families Initiative**

**Step 1:** Points of Systemic Influence

**Step 2:** Baseline Understanding

*To what extent:*

- Are families aware of and practicing protective factors? Do parents use both organized and adaptive dynamics?

**Step 3:**

**Step 4:**

**Trying Out Interventions**

Families test use of protective factors and determine changes in relationships and boundaries in daily life. Families learn to self-assess use of protective factors.

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Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit

- reframing benefit
- immediate benefit
- potential benefit
- realized benefit
- applied benefit
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Immediate:
the benefit of the activities and interactions in the community of practice
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Potential:
knowledge capital that is produced but not necessarily used in the immediate situation
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Applied:
adapting and applying knowledge in different contexts
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Realized: application that leads to improvement in performance

- immediate benefit
- potential benefit
- realized benefit
- applied benefit
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Reframing: reconsideration/redefining of perspectives, processes and/or structures

reframing benefit

potential benefit

applied benefit

immediate benefit

realized benefit
Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Reframing:
reconsideration/redefining of perspectives, processes and/or structures

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immediate benefit
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

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Link strategy and evaluation
See the big picture
Map actions among partners
Be transparent
Map progress over time
Questions & Answers
Let's Connect!

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Site Level
Patterns of knowledge development, dissemination, and integration
QIC-EC Level
Patterns of knowledge development, dissemination and integration

OR—Neighborhood
Focus Knowledge developed and disseminated to community development specialists

CO—Wraparound
Knowledge developed and disseminated to substance abuse and treatment

SC—Stepping Stones
Knowledge developed and disseminated to disability professionals

MA—Family Specialists
Knowledge developed and disseminated to pediatricians legal professionals

CSSP
Policy system

InSites
Evaluation methods

ZTT
Practice

CB
Practice

Alliance

Related Research and Evaluation