



## **Measuring the Effectiveness of Human Service Delivery: Bridging Research and Practice**

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### **Evidence Based Programs vs. Evidence Based Practices**

- **Evidence-based Programs:**
  - Usually a designation used for programs evaluated by external researchers where the design includes a control group
  - Few programs designated as evidence-based
- **Evidence-based Practices**
  - Any program can use data to determine evidence-based practices
  - Evidence(informed) based practices are practices developed/implemented using evaluation data that is linked with program success.

## Types of Program Data

- **External Program Evaluations**—Data collected from independent evaluators either on your particular program or published research from a similar program
- **Internal Project Specific Evaluations**—Data collected internally from programs designed to address a particular program questions (i.e. evidence-based levels of volunteer training)
- **Performance Management**—Data collected on an ongoing basis used to manage and assess program success

## External Program Evaluation

- **Evaluating your own program**
  - Collect data beyond outcomes/impacts
  - Use data to determine evidence base practices
- **Literature Reviews**
  - Inexpensive—can use undergraduate/graduate students
  - Possible research available on many aspects of service delivery (training, activities, recruitment)

## Internal Evaluations

- Data collected beyond standard data requirements
- Data collected by internal staff
- Design evaluation to get the most “bang for your buck”
- Sometimes outside consultants are needed in the design and analysis stages
- Can use an RCT design with groups or sites

## Performance Management

- Data collected on regular basis
- Part of general operating procedure
- Should include outcomes measurement
  - Focus on what you know you impact—not what you aspire to impact
  - Assess outcomes that are community and client relevant

## Conclusion

- Evidence-based practices can be determined by using data from external evaluations; internal evaluations and performance management data
- Requires evaluation expertise, but very “doable”
- Funders may want to consider the percent of evidence based practices implemented within a program when assessing program effectiveness
- Programs willing to assess themselves on a regular basis and make changes based on that data are likely serving their clients well and effectively.