



welcome

Program Evaluation *Tool Kit*

A Blueprint for Public Health Management

Background

In October 1994, the Ontario Ministry of Health assigned the task of studying program evaluation in Health Units to the Program Evaluation Work Group. The Work Group published its recommendations in the Public Health & Epidemiology Report Ontario (PHERO) on May 31, 1996 in the article entitled *An Agenda to Enhance Program Evaluation in Public Health*. One recommendation was to develop guiding principles to evaluate public health programs; another stressed the need for a common educational resource for program evaluation.

In response to the first recommendation, the Guiding Principles for Program Evaluation in Ontario Public Health Units were developed. The Guiding Principles provide a framework for strengthening the evaluation of public health by outlining when, how and why evaluations should be conducted and who should be involved. The Guiding Principles are presented in Appendix A.

The Program Evaluation *Tool Kit* was developed in response to the second recommendation. It is based on the ideals represented in the Guiding Principles.

Intended Users

The Program Evaluation *Tool Kit* is tailored specifically to the decision-making needs of managers of public health programs. It will also be useful for front-line field staff, medical officers of health and other senior managers, plus anyone assisting with evaluation, such as health unit program evaluation specialists, epidemiologists, community nurse specialists, health planners, information analysts or outside consultants.

Format

The *Tool Kit* is a practical, five-step guide to planning, conducting, and using program evaluation. It is presented in a series of short modules with simple explanations and specific tools.

Purpose

The *Tool Kit* presents a decision-oriented model of program evaluation. With tools from the *Tool Kit*, it is hoped that managers will find it easier to integrate evaluation into the management of their programs. The *Tool Kit* should also help set a standard for evaluation and enhance communication across health units.

Focus

The *Tool Kit* is a guide to small-scale, in-house, process and outcome evaluation.



Unique Features

Although most managers already recognise the importance of evaluation, many have legitimate concerns about the resources required and the relevance of existing educational materials. The *Tool Kit* responds to those concerns.

Concern

Tool Kit Solution

RESOURCES

MONEY—Evaluation is expensive!

Our budgets are stretched to the limits now. Hiring a consultant to do the program evaluation is expensive.

The *Tool Kit* suggests a relatively inexpensive, do-it-yourself approach to evaluating programs. You can use the *Tool Kit* to reduce contracting out evaluation activities. If you do happen to contract out your evaluation, the *Tool Kit* will make you a more knowledgeable consumer of evaluation, and put you in a better position to manage an evaluation consultant.

TIME—Evaluation takes forever!

I'm concerned about time — there's never enough and I have a lot of other priorities. Time spent on evaluation is time taken away from service delivery.

The *Tool Kit* is intended to be a time-saver. It boils the evaluation process down to five basic steps. By providing the tools you need, it should reduce the time it takes to plan, conduct and use evaluations. It will help you focus on specific areas for evaluation — areas you need to make decisions about.

EXPERTISE—Will I be able to understand the *Tool Kit*?

Program evaluation only makes sense to people specially trained in evaluation... plus I never was very good at stats.

The *Tool Kit* is designed to be easy-to-use and free of technical jargon. It is intended as an introduction for managers thinking about evaluation for the first time. It is not a thorough textbook, but will point you toward other resources if you need them, or want to learn more.

RELEVANCE

Will I find the *Tool Kit* useful? What kind of program is it designed for?

Books and articles on program evaluation are so general that I find it difficult to see their relevance to public health.

The *Tool Kit* has been developed specifically to evaluate public health programs. It uses practical examples of health protection and promotion strategies. The methods and tools described are all available to managers of public health programs.

Organisation of the *Tool Kit*

The first module highlights the key aspects of program evaluation and the following five modules are a “how-to” guide to the basic steps in the evaluation process.

At the end of the *Tool Kit*, you will be able to:

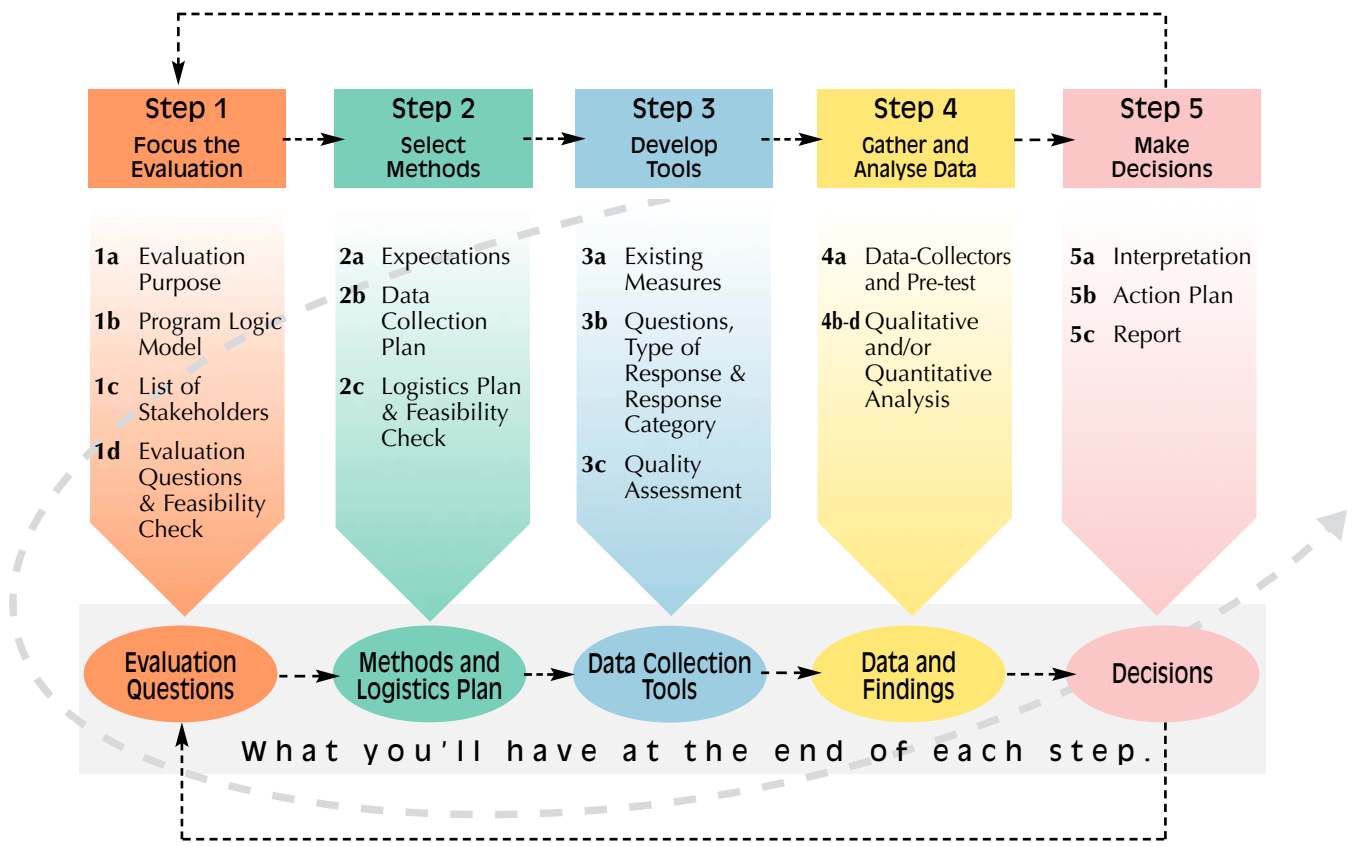
- 1 Focus your evaluation.
- 2 Choose appropriate methods for answering evaluation questions.
- 3 Develop or modify data collection tools.
- 4 Gather and analyse data.
- 5 Use the answers to your evaluation questions to help make decisions about your program.

Worksheets will guide you through the *Tool Kit* evaluation process. Hard copies of blank *Worksheets* appear in Appendix B. The diskette attached to the inside cover of the *Tool Kit* binder contains a modifiable electronic version of the blank *Worksheets*. Examples of *completed Worksheets* are included within each step. A complete set of example *Worksheets* appears in Appendix C.

Each module begins with a statement of intended learning outcomes and finishes with a synopsis of key points, a short quiz and a list of references. Some suggestions for further reading are included throughout the *Tool Kit*.



The diagram below illustrates the *Tool Kit's* approach to program evaluation.



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