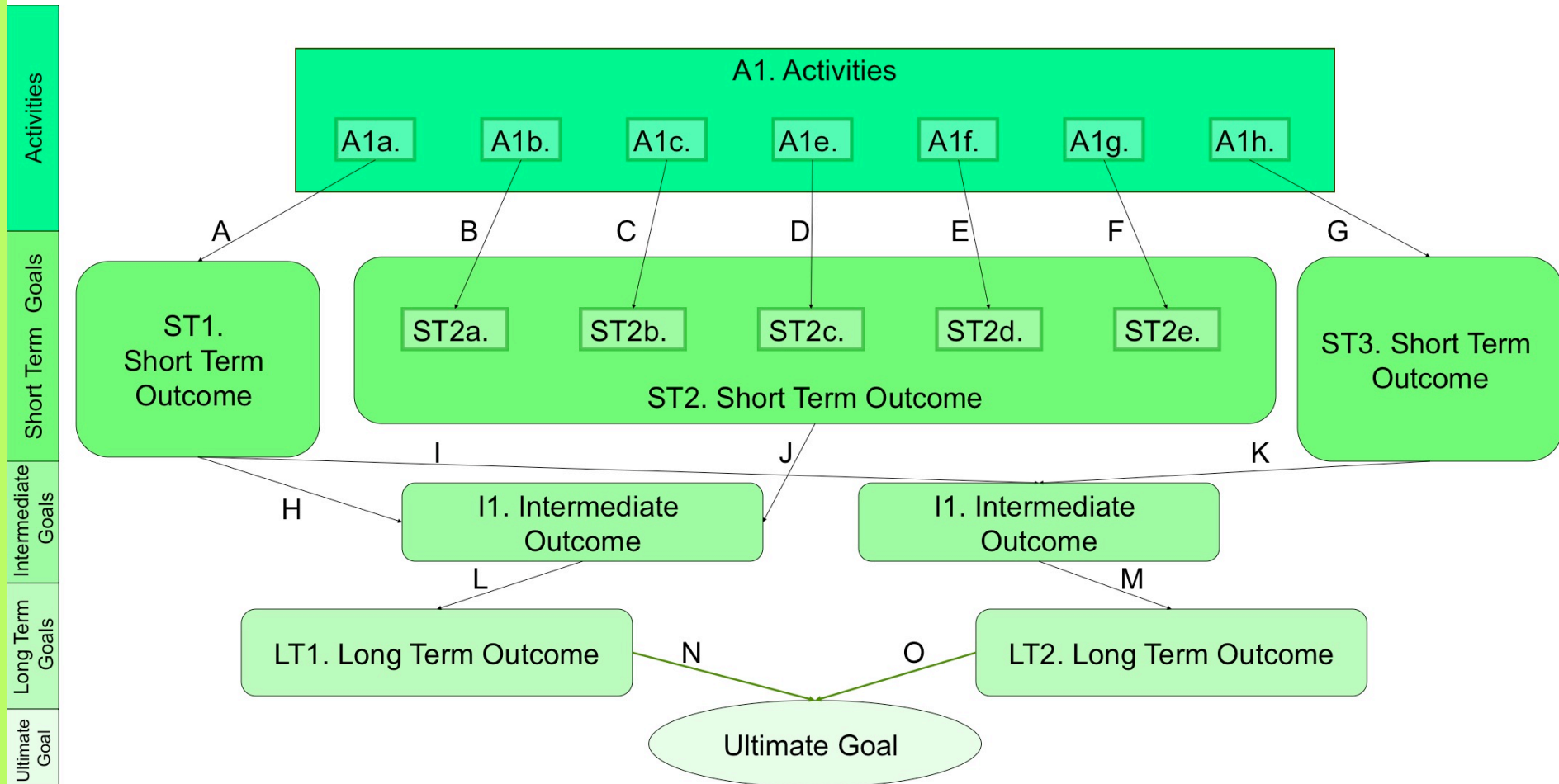


Program Logic Models



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Why Create a Program Logic Model?

- To provide a visual representation of a program's theory of change
- To clarify the links between the program's outcomes and activities
- To consider and critically examine the assumptions underlying a program
- To assist in explaining programs to collaborative partners, funding agencies and staff

Logic Models Assist in Understanding Program Activities

- How do staff deliver the program (i.e., what do they do on a day-to-day basis)?
- How do clients interact with the program?
- Are the activities delivered as expected?
- What is required to deliver the activities?
- Why will the activities lead to positive outcomes for program participants?

Logic Models Assist in Understanding Program Outcomes

- What are the expected short-term and long-term outcomes of the program?
- What is the overall vision or ultimate goal of the program?

Program staff usually have an implicit understanding of expected program outcomes, but logic models clarify these assumptions and help communicate them to others.

Logic Models Assist in Designing Program Evaluations

- By clearly specifying links between the program's activities and the expected outcomes, we can begin to figure out:
 - Which outcomes to measure (what do we expect to happen?)
 - Who or what to measure (program participants or program delivery)
 - When and how to measure (research design considerations)

Program Evaluation

“Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming.

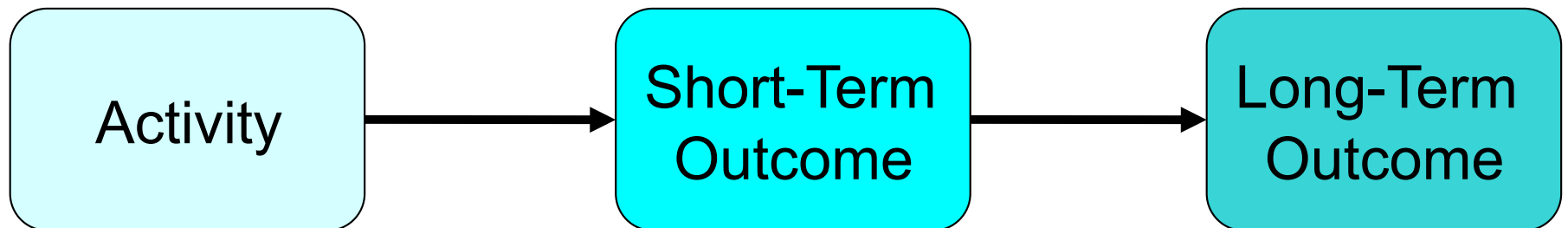
(Patton, Utilization Focused Evaluation, 1997)

Logic Models Help Improve Programs

- Using program logic models and evaluation, you can determine which parts of programs are most/least effective and whether programs are delivered as planned, which will assist in:
 - Planning new programs
 - Improving existing programs
 - Communicating program outcomes to stakeholders

Basic Form of Logic Models

- May flow from top-to-bottom or left-to-right
- Lead from program activities to shorter-term outcomes to longer-term outcomes



Activities

- Program activities are a collection of smaller tasks that can be summarized into one statement
- Each activity should lead to one or two unique short-term outcomes

If an activity leads to many short-term outcomes, it likely needs to be broken down into smaller pieces

If many activities lead to the same outcome, they may have enough overlap to be subsumed under a more general category label

Similar activities can be grouped together under an inclusive label to simplify the logic model

Short-Term Outcomes

- The earliest benefits or changes gained by program participants as a result of the program activities.
- Short-term outcomes may continue over time, but they are the first change in participants following an activity
- You should be able to identify a causal link from each least program activity to at least one short-term outcome
- Short-term outcomes should focus on psychological or cognitive changes (awareness, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs), rather than behaviour

Long-Term Outcomes

- The later or more distal benefits or changes gained by program participants as a result of the program activities
- Long-term outcomes should logically result from successful attainment of short-term outcomes
- Each long-term outcome should be linked to at least one short-term outcome

Intermediate Outcomes

- Sometimes it's useful to include outcomes that are assumed to fall temporally between short-term and long-term outcomes

Often this helps with measurement (if we can't measure long-term outcomes, we may be able to measure intermediate outcomes)

- For example, between knowledge of physical activity recommendations and a behavioural increase in physical activity comes:

Plans to change behaviour

Belief that behaviour change is possible

Improved attitudes towards behaviour change

Outcome Wording

- Outcomes should specify:
 1. Type of change (e.g., knowledge, behaviour)
 2. Direction of change (e.g., increase/decrease)
- More specific wording (improved/ increased/ reduced/decreased) is better than less specific wording (better/enhanced)
- Specific wording makes it easier to measure change during program evaluations

Validity Assumptions

- Each connection between boxes in the logic model involves an assumption about cause and effect, as well as assumptions about the necessary conditions for change
- Unexpected program results can be attributed to:
 - The program not being delivered as anticipated
 - Validity assumptions about necessary conditions not being met
 - Faulty causal validity assumptions

Creating a Program Logic Model

A Practice Exercise

Simple Logic Model

Pick a fairly simple program...

- Driver Training Program
- Swimming Lessons
- First Dates
- Others.....?

1) Describe Program Activities

List all the day-to-day activities of the program:

- What are the routine responsibilities of the people providing the program?
- Focus on activities that involve program participants (e.g., not filing paperwork)
- Use active verbs like:
Provide, Teach, Create
- Be inclusive in generating a list of activities
Group similar activities together (e.g., driving in the country and driving the city)
Activities that lead to different short-term outcomes should be separated (e.g., learning to drive and learning to park)

1) Describe Program Activities

Things to avoid:

- Using “outcome language” in your activities
E.g., improve/increase/reduce
Instead, identify the activities that *lead to* improvements, increases and reductions
- Grouping activities that lead to different outcomes together
E.g., providing information about resources and providing counselling
- Mixing up activities that lead to organizational outcomes with activities that lead to client outcomes
May need separate logic models for agency and client outcomes

2) Identify Program Outcome Goals

- Create a list of all the outcomes that you anticipate for program participants
 - At first, be as inclusive as possible (you can reduce the number of outcomes later)
 - Think about how the program helps participants or the community
- Place outcome goals under the activity that leads to those outcomes
- Separate outcomes for organizations and agencies (e.g., improved collaboration) from outcomes for participants (e.g., improved knowledge of community resources)

2) Identify Program Outcome Goals

- Group the short-term and long-term outcomes separately
 - Short-term goals result from program activities and tend to be cognitive in nature (e.g., knowledge of road signs)
 - Long-term outcomes result from short-term outcomes and tend to be more behavioural (e.g., follow road signs while driving)
- If there seems to be a disconnect between short-term and long-term goals, include a level of intermediate-level goals
 - E.g., More positive attitudes towards following road signs
 - Often, we can't measure behaviour directly, but we can measure knowledge and attitudes
- Word outcome goals in a way that can be easily measured
 - E.g., "More positive attitude towards following road signs" vs. "Enhanced attitude towards road safety"
- Ultimate goal(s) should be quite broad in scope (like a short vision or mission statement)
 - E.g., "Reduce road fatalities in Ontario"

3) Adding Connections

- Arrange your activities, short-term outcomes, long-term outcomes and ultimate goal on a large piece of paper or dry-erase board
- Create connections between the boxes:
 - All the boxes should be connected to one or more other boxes (no orphaned activities or outcomes)
- The links between the activities and outcomes should make sense to everyone in the room
 - This is a collaborative process, requiring negotiation

4) Consider Validity Assumptions

- Each line on the logic model represents a validity assumption
- Ensure there is a defensible causal link between activities and short-term outcomes, between short-term and long-term outcomes, etc...
 - Links may be based on common sense or on research literature
- Consider what conditions need to be in place for the link to hold
 - If you are assuming that the program will help participants, program recruitment is a necessary assumption for achieving outcomes

5) Revising the Model

- Take the draft model and put it into Powerpoint
 - The nicer the model looks, the more people will want to use the model
- Share your draft logic model with stakeholders for input
 - The first draft of your model should be a work in progress and will likely need revision
 - Can people not involved in developing the logic model understand it?
- Take some time for reflection
 - Are all activities and outcome goals included?
 - Are your validity assumptions tenable?
 - Can the outcomes in your logic model be tested or measured?