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Solving the Disconnect Between Planning and Evaluation, and the Prevention of Liability: How to Implement Successful Assessment Mechanisms in Law and Policy Initiatives

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Key Points

• What is “prevention?”
• Legal issues and assessment
• Relation of planning and assessment
• Planning process
Prevention of Liability

• Since liability is relatively rare, true prevention => instituting measures to **reduce or avoid problems** that could lead to liability

• Goes beyond effectively dealing with incidents

• Effective initiatives must combine policies, procedures (+training), programs, & services
Law & Assessment

• Recent court decisions ⇔ campuses must address foreseeable risk
  – So, must consider what is effective
  – This is a question for science as well as law
  – Assessment is an integral part of science

• Three primary roles for science:
  – Use assessment to identify *(forsee)* problems
  – Draw on past research to design appropriate actions
  – Evaluate to see whether actions reduced problems
Examples: Scientific Best Practice

U.S. Department of Education’s *Principles of Effectiveness*:

1. Base program selection on assessment of objective data;
2. Establish measurable goals and objectives;
3. Implement programs based on research providing evidence of effectiveness that the programs reduce the targeted problems;
4. Evaluate success & use evaluation results for program improvement.

*A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Campuses*

NIAAA Report, April 2002
- Literature review
- Strategies grouped by level of support for effectiveness
- Recommends use of a systematic planning and evaluation process
Dovetailing of Law and Science

“I predict that the courts will look to the NIAAA report as the standard for exercising all due care to prevent foreseeable risk.”

-- Peter Lake
MM’s Key Disconnects

Design and Implementation Problems

- Overly simplistic or narrow (#1)
- Doesn’t involve stakeholders (#2,4)
- Failure to clarify needs (#5)
- Failure to implement correct policy (#7)
- Failure to disseminate, train, update (#6)

Outcome Failures

- Failure to assess effectiveness
Relation between Design/Implementation and Assessment

- If policy is not well designed or implemented, then it is unlikely to bring about the desired results

† Outcome assessment is driven by †
good planning
The Most Successful Initiatives...

- Respond to particular well-identified problems
- Come about as a result of a planning/evaluation process
- Draw from existing research, supplemented with theory and logic about what might work
- Use multiple approaches, designed to achieve synergy
- Avoid what doesn’t work
- Build infrastructure in support of specific strategies
- Are evaluated and use results for improvement
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/Needs Assessment

- Set long-range goals
- Consult the literature
- Select program strategies, translate these into specific activities, and plan for evaluation

{ Strategic plan Logic model }

- Implement program activities
- Evaluate whether goals were achieved
Planning/Evaluation Process

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\begin{align*}
\text{Strategic plan} & \\
\text{Logic model} & \\
\end{align*}
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- Implement program activities
- Evaluate whether goals were achieved
Problem Analysis

• Systematic gathering of data to inform program development.

• Goals:
  – define the problems on your campus and community setting
  – identify priority issues and concerns
  – identify existing programs, policies, resources

• Best results when engage multiple campus and community partners during this process

• Must examine both individual and environmental conditions.
Comprehensive Approach

- Individual factors
- Group (Peer/Family) factors
  
  AND
  
  - Institutional factors
  
  - Community factors
  
  - Public policy

Environmental Factors
Questions:

- What are the problems?
- Who is involved in the problems?
- Where and when are the problems?
- What attitudes and norms exist?
- What programs, policies and protocols are in place? Are they working as intended?
- What laws and statutes exist?
- What campus and community resources are available to address the problems?
Analyze the Data

• Review collected data
• Create a summary of key findings
  – Scope and nature of problems
  – Contributing factors
  – Where are the gaps
  – Available programs and resources
• What changes must occur?
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/Needs Assessment

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Set long-range goals

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Consult the literature

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Select program strategies, translate these into specific activities, and plan for evaluation

\{ Strategic plan Logic model

↓

Implement program activities

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Evaluate whether goals were achieved
Establish Long-Range Goals ("Outcomes")

- Cumulative effects from *all* prevention efforts
- Examples:
  - Decreased crime or violence
  - Decreased injury
  - Decreased alcohol-related consequences or costs
  - Improved academic outcomes
  - Increased retention
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/ Needs Assessment

Set long-range goals

Consult the literature

Select program strategies, translate these into specific activities, and plan for evaluation

Implement program activities

Evaluate whether goals were achieved

Strategic plan
Logic model
Consult The Literature

• Key Question: what can we learn from past efforts – research and practice -- about solving the problems we’ve identified

• Scientific Sources:
  – Evaluated programs
  – Scientific reviews of existing studies
  – Best practice guides
  – Case studies, reports from colleagues on what’s worked (ask how they know!)
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/ Needs Assessment

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Set long-range goals

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Consult the literature

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 Strategic plan
 Logic model

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Implement program activities

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Evaluate whether goals were achieved
Challenge is to stay problem-focused and carry the analysis through

**Given:**
- Specific problems  -> Changes needed -> Literature

**Identify:**
- Overall strategy for change (increase knowledge, increase enforcement, change norms, etc.)
- Specific goals/objectives to support that strategy
- Specific activities to reach goals & objectives
  - clarify how these activities will lead to outcomes .Logic Model
Logic Model

- Diagram of underlying program “logic,”
- That is, theory of how the planned activities will lead to desired outcomes.
- This is a useful check on your strategic plan.
One kind of logic model = “Theory of Change” Model
Specifying the Links

• Each link in the chain should specify a change that is expected to occur, rather than the program activity that is expected to cause the change

• So, rather than:
  “workshops in dorms” (activity),
say:
  “increase student knowledge about conduct policies” (change)
Example: Underage Drinking

- Years of struggle
- Bar owners agreeing to minimum drink pricing
- Price of drinks
- Access to alcohol among minors
- Underage student drinking
Bottom Line

• Our efforts will be more effective if we know:
  – where we want to end up
  – how we expect what we’re doing to lead to change that will result in student-level outcomes.
Plan for Evaluation
The Theory of Change Model Facilitates Evaluation

• The theory of change model specifies
  – program activities
  – intended outcomes
  – how activities are expected to lead to outcomes

• Your evaluation should address whether this series of changes occurred.
As you begin to plan the evaluation...

• Involve an experienced evaluator who fits in with the team
• Become familiar with basic evaluation ideas
• Be prepared to help them articulate program goals and assumptions
• Involve evaluation stakeholders: individuals/ organizations invested in the evaluation results

More resources available at:  http://www.edc.org/hec/eval/.
Steps In Planning Evaluation

• Verify that your logic model articulates outcomes
  • increases/decreases
• Decide how to measure outcomes (indicators)
• Identify data sources for each indicator
• Plan a research design, e.g.,
  – Comparison group(s)
  – Measure before and after program/policy
  – Track other policies and programs implemented
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/ Needs Assessment

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\{ Strategic plan
Logic model\}

Implement program activities

Evaluate whether goals were achieved
Realistic Expectations

In the absence of a formal study, you should still:

– Have clearly defined program goals
– Have a clear understanding of how you expect activities to lead to desired outcomes
– Monitor program activities and some outcomes
Case Example:
Revision of Sexual Harassment Policy
Planning/Evaluation Process

Problem Analysis/ Needs Assessment

Set long-range goals

Consult science / theory / assumptions

Select program strategies, translate these into specific activities, and plan for evaluation

Implement program activities

Evaluate whether goals were achieved

Strategic plan
Logic model
Problem Analysis
Local Issues and Problems

• Complaints from across constituent groups
• Separate policies for students, faculty, staff
• No centralization of complaints; inconsistent handling of complaints
• Lack of recent training
Long-Range Goals

• Reduce sexual harassment among faculty, staff, and students
• Improve employee job satisfaction and retention
• Improve student academic performance and retention
Literature: Causes and Contributors

- Individual factors that increase SH:
  - Perpetrator beliefs and attitudes supportive of SH
    - Sexual harassment myths
    - Lack of empathy
    - Lack of knowledge of negative consequences of SH
    - Traditional sex role beliefs
  - Victim not clear what behaviors constitute sexual harassment & lack clout or strategies to respond to them
  - Perceptions that sanctions against harassment are lacking

Sources: O’Donohue et al, 1998; Dekker & Barling, 1998
Literature: Causes and Contributors

- **Situational factors** (organizational, work environment)
  - Procedures
    - Lack of explicit grievance procedures; potential victims unaware of procedures
    - Management not responsive to complaints
  - Work environment
    - “Unprofessional” environment
    - Acceptability of sexist behavior in the workplace
    - Workgroups where opposite sex dominates
Literature: Interventions

• O’Donohue (undated)
  – video-based program tested w/ college faculty and staff
    • SH myths/facts, victim empathy, decision making, norms
  – changes found in empathy, acceptance of SH myths, and knowledge of sexual harassment compared to a control group.

• Beauvais (1986)
  – workshops for resident staff members:
    • SH defs, policies, more effective reactions/behaviors
  – improvement in males’ attitudes, ability to recognize appropriate reactions to SH behavior
Interventions

• Navy program (Dalton, 1997)
  – **Components**
    • strong policies & procedures
      – mandatory training and refreshers
      – consistency in handling complaints
      – strong enforcement regarding alcohol violations
    • services: victim assistance, toll-free advice and guidance line
    • coordination: of SH w/ sexual assault & family violence efforts
    • education: prevention programs; values and leadership programs
    • data: regular reviews of biennial surveys, semi-automated case collection systems, complaint line, focus groups
  – **Results**
    • decline in reports of sexual harassment
Interventions

• Grauerholz, et al. (1999)
  – creation of a “quasi-formal” SH reporting network, works collaboratively to resolve complaints outside formal systems
  – no formal evaluation; many perceived benefits among members

• U.S. Department of Education, guidance (‘01) & guidebook (‘99 - not aimed at Higher Ed, but useful)
  – develop a comprehensive written anti-harassment policy
  – identify and respond effectively to harassment
  – establish formal reporting and complaint procedures
  – create a safe and supportive school climate
Implications for Your Program

• Program elements must address both individual and organizational aspects of the problem
• Policies must be supported by training, procedures to increase responsiveness. education
Add’l Program Recommendations

• Organizational
  – Explore institutional barriers to reporting and use in program design
  – Supervisor training should include “work environment” factors
  – Articulate how institution will publicize strong response to complaints
  – Consider whether others’ innovations would help meet identified needs: e.g., toll-free number, quasi-formal network
  – Establish regular data collection systems & review

• Individual
  – Educate all campus constituents about SH: address definitions, consequences, beliefs that lead to SH, skills for addressing SH, new policies, how to report
Strategic Plan

• Create plan with deadlines & assigned staffing:
  – Policy revision
  – New procedures
  – Implementation plan
  – Circulate to stakeholders for review
  – Design education/training programs
    – Think through goals, content, and outcomes for each audience based on key factors identified in the literature
### Example – Employee Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of problem according to literature</th>
<th>Goal for change</th>
<th>Program content</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Myths about SH are common**  
  • women enjoy SH  
  • women ask for SH by the way they dress  
  • women want to be pursued after saying no | Decrease sexual harassment myths | Information dispelling sexual harassment myths | Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale |
| **Social Norms**  
  Social influences (what others think and do) have been found to be important across a range of behaviors | Change perceptions of norms related to harassment. | • Sexual harassment behavior is not typical behavior;  
• The majority disapprove of SH, i.e., view it as undesirable behavior | Normative Perception Questionnaire |

Source: Content based on O’Donohue et al, undated
Identify Evaluation Stakeholders

Who else should be included in the evaluation design?
Evaluation Plan

– Create evaluation plan:
  • Think about desired results for each program component
  • Clearly articulate expected results (changes) for each activity
  • Articulate program logic: Logic Model
    – Create a separate “strand” for each activity, then compile into one overall model

Example Logic Model: Policy Development & Faculty Training
Sexual Harassment Faculty Training -- Program Theory Model

Revise SH policies

Create reporting, response procedures

Design of Faculty Training Program

Faculty training

# of faculty completing training

Admin support for procedures

Knowledge of complaint procedures

Skills in handling complaints

Perceptions of personal risks & costs of SH; benefits

Accurate perceptions of norms related to harassment

Knowledge of SH myths

Time in responding to complaints

Consistency in response to complaints

Perception SH is acceptable

Repeat Incidents

Sexual Harassment

SH Proclivity
Decide on Key Evaluation Questions

Process evaluation -- what are we doing?

– Does the revised policy meet applicable laws and best practice guidelines?
  • Expert review of policy content

– Was the policy implemented as planned?
  • How many education/training sessions were held? For whom?
  • How many key personnel (e.g., supervisors) were trained in proper procedures related to the policy, work environment issues?
Key Evaluation Questions

Outcome evaluation – did program have expected results?

Short-term outcomes from each component, e.g.,
– Increase in knowledge among faculty of prohibited behaviors
– Increase in skills among supervisors for handling complaints

Intermediate outcomes, e.g.,
– Better handling of reported incidents
– Increased perception that SH is not tolerated

Longer-range outcomes, e.g.,
– Decreases in sexual harassment
– Better retention
Other Aspects of Evaluation Design

- Data sources
- Obtaining baseline data
- Compared to what?
- Differential effects on different groups
Summary of remaining steps

- Collect baseline data
- Establish and implement policy
- Conduct evaluation of process and outcomes according to plan
Summary: Points of Connection

We agree that:

• we share many of the same goals
• we need to involve multiple stakeholders
• don’t reinvent the wheel
• good planning is essential
Kumbaya Moment

• This is hard!
• Crossing disciplines can push us outside our comfort zones
• Helpful metaphor: cross-cultural communication
  – Give benefit of the doubt; assume good intentions
  – Agree up front about the nature of the project & build in frequent check-ins
  – Keep asking questions if you’re not clear what they’re doing
  – Learn as much as you can about the other “culture”