

Affirmation

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous or talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the Glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us: it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others...

~ Nelson Mandela
1994 Inaugural Speech

National Conference Schedule

Community Planning Leadership Summit
Houston, Texas...**March 16-18, 2001**

U.S. Conference on AIDS
Miami, Florida.....**Sept. 13-16, 2001**

INSIDE

2...CBO Evaluation Guidance to be released in early spring

3...Six common concerns of program evaluation listed

4...Skills-Building Course Calendar

Adinkra

SOUTHERN PREVENTION INTERVENTION CENTER

Program effectiveness linked to evaluation

Evaluation is the best way to learn how to expand the effectiveness of HIV prevention programs. No matter how effective programs appear, there is always the possibility - indeed, the likelihood - that they are not as effective as they need to be. Programs may be fundamentally misconceived and fall far short of the mark, or may need only minor modifications to be more effective in preventing HIV infection.

While programs may look good when explained in funding requests and staff trainings, they may fall far short when actually implemented. So, in order to be fully committed to saving lives - as is everyone working on HIV/AIDS, awareness that our programs are in need of constant scrutiny and adjustment is crucial.



Aside from the need to make programs more effective, there are other important reasons to evaluate. Some of the primary reasons for evaluation are:

- ◆ To show accountability to funding sources and the general public
- ◆ To ensure that planning and development of HIV/AIDS prevention programs will be achieved with maximum effectiveness
- ◆ To institute safeguards that require program personnel to systematically examine what they are doing and why

- ◆ To produce data that will aid in decision-making relative to program improvements or continuation and that will aid future fund-raising efforts
- ◆ To disseminate knowledge and program models that will lead to replication of successful prevention efforts
- ◆ To enhance the organization's visibility and credibility within the community and
- ◆ To influence policy makers to make positive changes in HIV prevention based upon successes supported by data

The overall purpose of program evaluation is to gather relevant information in an unbiased manner so that advisory boards and program staff can obtain a degree of understanding about what is or what has taken place in their program. Hence, program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting.

This information can be used to:

- ◆ Increase knowledge of grant-making programs
- ◆ Increase the effectiveness of projects to which grants are made
- ◆ Monitor project activities
- ◆ Determine if funds are spent as intended
- ◆ Understand factors that promote or limit success
- ◆ Determine if intended audiences were reached
- ◆ Determine the future emphasis for grant awards and
- ◆ Provide input for future grant-making

Continued on Page 2

**ADMINISTRATIVE CORE**

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Jerrdean Franklin
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Adinkra

Executive Editor: **Dr. Mark Colomb**

Editor: **Pamela McCoy**

Managing Editor: **Marilyn A. Moering**

Asst. Managing Editor: **Nadine Jones**

Graphic Artist: **Valarie Smith**

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CBO Evaluation Guidance to be released in early spring

decisions.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) continues its devastating march through African-American communities, and until medical science produces a technological preventive breakthrough, the only weapon against its unrelenting advance is prevention interventions for behavior change.

The principles of behavioral science teach that much of this prevention must be delivered outside of clinics and instead in people's homes, neighborhoods, and other community

settings. For this reason, policy leaders, with the support of society, have invested heavily in an African-American community-based response to the epidemic with funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the Congressional Black Caucus. Because of this investment, it is urgent that the unique program evaluation issues that confront African-American community-based service providers are addressed. The very ability to prevent HIV depends on it.

It is fitting that the CDC develop a guidance document for the collection of data as part of a national evaluation system. The document will be titled *Evaluating HIV Prevention Programs in Community-Based Organizations*. The primary purpose of the upcoming guidance will be (1) to determine the extent to which local HIV prevention efforts have contributed to a reduction in HIV transmission and (2) to be accountable to stakeholders (at all levels) by informing them of the progress made in HIV prevention nationwide. The idea for this publication originated within a variety of program announcements released in 1999 and 2000.

The CDC convened a group of evaluation specialists to explore issues related to the evaluation of community-based HIV/AIDS prevention programs in order to develop the evaluation guidance. The document will be developed officially by the Program Evaluation Research Branch in CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention.

The guidance is intended to serve community-based service providers responsible for operating prevention programs. It will address intervention plan fundamentals, core data set

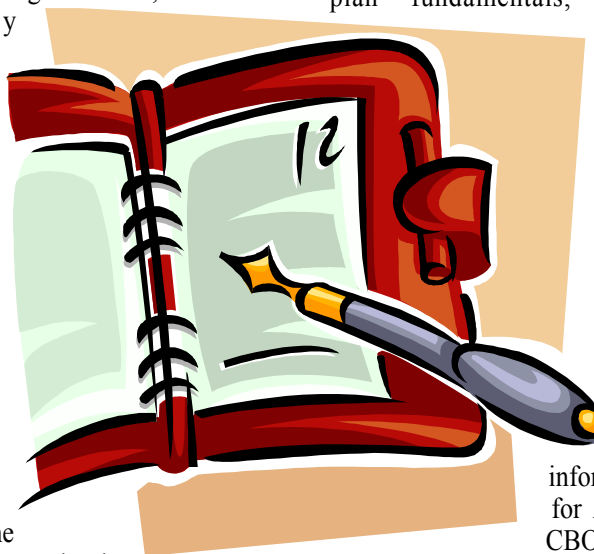
maintenance, process monitoring, outcome monitoring and action planning.

The African American Prevention Intervention Network (APIN) will be pleased to make this important information available for African-American CBOs. A series of

skills-building training sessions in order to support implementation of the evaluation guidance will be conducted by the APIN. Please contact the technical assistance analyst at 1-866-JSU-MURC (1-866-578-6872) for more information or for a regional schedule of activities.

Program effectiveness cont.

Evaluation can greatly enhance an organization's standing in the community. Those organizations that use evaluation initiatives to guide program development and implementation not only provide better programs; they also are most likely to have better justifications for their programs, stronger community support, and as a result, more stable funding and greater longevity. Conversely, organizations that ignore the need for evaluation tend to become marginalized more quickly and ineffective as champions of community



Change and development learn and improve Six common concerns of program evaluation listed

Concern #1: Evaluation diverts resources away from the program and therefore harms participants. This is a common concern in most programs. However, because evaluation helps to determine what does and does not work in a program, it is actually beneficial to program participants. Without an evaluation, services are provided with little or no evidence that they actually work!

Concern #2: Evaluation increases the burden for program staff. Often program staff are responsible for collecting evaluation information because they are most familiar with, and have the most contact with program participants. Despite this potential for increased burden, staff can benefit greatly from evaluation because it provides information that can help them improve their work with participants, learn more about program and participant needs, and validate their successes. Also, the burden can be decreased somewhat by incorporating evaluation activities into ongoing program activities.

Concern #3: Evaluation is too complicated. Program managers often reject the idea of conducting an evaluation because they don't know how to do it or whom to ask for help. Although the technical aspects of evaluation can be complex, the evaluation process itself simply systematizes what most program managers already do on an informal basis - figure out whether the program's objectives are being met, which aspects of the program work, and which ones are not effective. Understanding this general process will help you to be a full partner in the evaluation, even if you seek outside help with the technical aspects.

Concern #4: Evaluation may produce negative results and lead to information that will make the program look bad. An evaluation may reveal problems in accomplishing the work of the program as well as successes. It is important to understand that both types of information are significant. The discovery of problems should not be viewed as evidence of program failure, but rather as an opportunity to learn and improve the program. Information about both problems and successes not only helps your program, but also helps other programs

Concern #5: Evaluation is just another form of monitoring. Program managers and staff often view program evaluation as a way for funders to monitor programs to find out whether staff are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Program evaluation, however, is not the same as monitoring. Sometimes the information collected to monitor a program overlaps with information needed for an evaluation, but the two processes ask very different questions.

Concern #6: Evaluation requires setting performance standards, and this is too difficult. Many program managers believe that an evaluation requires setting performance standards, such as specifying the percentage of participants who will demonstrate changes or exhibit particular behaviors. Program staff worry that if these performance standards are not met, their project will be judged a failure.

This concern is somewhat justified because often funders will require setting such standards. However, performance standards can only be set if there is extensive evaluation information on a particular program in a variety of settings. Without this information, performance standards are completely arbitrary and meaningless.

Source:

The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Editor's Note: Additional information about *Concern #3: Evaluation is too complicated* is provided in Chapter 4 of the aforementioned source. Also, the type of evaluation discussed in the manual regarding *Concern #6: Evaluation requires setting performance standards, and this is too difficult* is not designed to assess whether particular performance standards are attained because most programs do not have sufficient information to establish these standards in any meaningful way. Instead, it will assess whether there has been significant change in the knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors of a program's participant population in general and whether particular characteristics of the program or the participants are more or less likely to

Southern Prevention Intervention Center Jackson State University (JSU)

850 East River Place, #403
Jackson, MS 39202
Phone: (601) 979-4081
Fax: (601) 979-4336

Focus

The Southern Prevention Intervention Center seeks to enhance the competencies of community-based organizations in the areas of intervention design, development, implementation and evaluation via capacity-building assistance services. The Southern Prevention Intervention Center is regionally structured to provide capacity-building assistance services with as much local expertise as possible.

PIC

The Southern Prevention Intervention Center is operated by Jackson State University's Mississippi Urban Research Center. The Southern Prevention Intervention Center's geographic area of coverage is as follows: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, AND WV.

Staff

RONALD JOHNSON
CBA Coordinator
e-mail: ronjohns@mail1.jsums.edu

NADINE JONES
Office Manager
e-mail: najones@mail1.jsums.edu



Skills-Building Course Calendar

Behavioral Science.....Feb. 15 & 16
Memphis, TN

Behavioral Science.....June 13 & 14
Atlanta, GA

Behavioral Science.....March 7 & 8
New Orleans, LA

Advanced Behavioral Science....July 25 & 26
Washington, D.C.

Program Evaluation.....March 28 & 29
Orlando, FL

Social Marketing.....Aug. 15 & 16
Birmingham, AL

Social Marketing.....April 25 & 26
Baltimore, MD

Behavioral Science.....Sept. 26 & 27
Houston, TX

Program Evaluation.....May 9 & 10
Nashville, TN

For information about these courses, please call the Southern Prevention Intervention Center at (601) 979-4081.



Jackson State University

MISSISSIPPI URBAN RESEARCH CENTER

Southern Prevention Intervention Center
850 East River Place, Suite 403 • Jackson, MS 39202
P. O. Box 17309 • Jackson, MS 39217



APIN



African American Prevention Intervention Network