



Implementation, Research, and Evaluation

What is the role of Research in
Implementation

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Tension? What is that?

- Is there unavoidable tension and/or conflict?
 - YES
 - Implementers want to simply implement the treatment
 - Implementers want to work with the participants
 - Implementers do not wish to be “policed.”
They know what they are doing

Tension for the Evaluator/Researcher?

- YES
- The Evaluator wants to make sure the proposed treatment is being implemented
- The evaluator wants to work with the implementers (meetings, questions, etc).
- The evaluator wants to ensure that the correct/appropriate data are being gathered

Internal conflict for the evaluator/researcher

- The researcher/evaluator (if brought in later on) may disagree with the method of data gathering
- The researcher/evaluator (if brought in later on) could disagree with the implementation and this could indeed indirectly influence data collection.

What is the role of evaluation in research

- Remember the research designs? (workshop 1)
- Remember the questions asked? (Slide XXX of workshop 1)
- Don't you want to share your knowledge?
- The role of evaluation in research is to be able to generalize results to the appropriate populations.
 - This includes positive and negative results.

Who cares about the results?

- Funders \$\$\$\$\$
- P.Is. (future \$\$\$\$\$)
- Research Community
- Participants
- Policymakers
- Politicians
- You'd be surprised.....

What types of results do we wish to share

- Policymakers will ask “Did it work?”
- Practitioners will ask “Will it work for me?”
- Researchers will ask “What did you do?”
- The evaluator is the best responder (spin doctor if you will), who based upon observations will say.....
 - It worked in these conditions
 - It will work if you did this
 - And we did XXX, YYY, and ZZZ to control for threats to internal and external validity (remember presentation 1?) and so we can generalize our results to these populations

What is the role of evaluation in implementation

- Implementation is at the CORE of any research or intervention study.
- As a true research study, need to be able to replicate the study over and over again and receive the same results.
- If you do not evaluate implementation, you are not providing accurate results that could be generalized.
- Remember presentation 1 that discussed Direct manipulation and control as the strengths of Randomized field trials, and sometimes of quasi-experimental studies?
- All Changes to implementation MUST be documented.
- We must be able to tell people of the dosage, what we did, and how we did it, because replicability is key.

Can a researcher wear both hats?

- Yes a researcher can wear both hats
- It is very difficult to remain objective if a researcher wears both hats.
- It is very tempting to manipulate the “treatment” especially if the treatment was developed by the researcher, regardless of her/his research skills.
- It is best for a researcher to be an evaluator of a project in which she/he does NOT have a vested interest.