

Older Individuals who are Blind – Technical Assistance Center

# **Policies and Trees: If No One Listens, Who Will Hear Them**

Kendra Farrow

# Philosophical Question

- If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?
- If you have a policy on who can receive assistive devices and no one reviews case files, is the policy being followed?



# **Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**

- Provide structure for how services are delivered.
- Help services to be consistent .
- Offer security for staff.
- Insure efficiency for the program.



# Why is Program Evaluation Important?

- Verifies that policies and procedures are being followed.
- Reveals places to find efficiencies.
- Helps identify what training is needed by staff.
- Provides opportunity for improvement.



# Program Evaluation

- Investigates processes and outcomes.
- Can assess compliance with RSA and agency guidelines.
- Provides additional information to assess your services.



# Steps in Program Evaluation

- What do you want to know?
- How will you get that information?
- When will you gather the information?
- How will you use the information?



# What do you want to know?

- Identify areas where there may be
  - Confusion or uncertainty
  - Suspected differences between providers
  - Complaints or questions
  - Inefficiencies
  - Measurements that provide outcomes



# Get the Big Picture

- Ask stakeholders
- Make a flow chart
- Review some recent 7-OB reports
- Interview staff





# Narrow the Focus

- Prioritize questions and focus on manageable number
- Review the list with stakeholders
- Consider ethical, political, and budgetary issues
- Anticipate impact of results, whether positive or negative



# How will you get the information?

- Survey
- Focus group
- Casefile review
- Observation



# Survey

- Determine the method for conducting the survey.
- How many program participants will be surveyed.
- Determine the survey questions.



# Focus Group

- The number of participants should be between 4-8.
- Determine number of groups to be held.
- Determine 6-8 questions to be asked.
- Determine the locations and dates.



# Casefile Review

- Review information staff are instructed to keep in the casefile.
- Develop a protocol to guide the casefile review.
- Are additional records kept outside of the casefile?
- Does the casefile tell the story?



# Observation

- Accompany staff and observe.
- Determine how information will be collected.
- Develop a checklist of things to watch for.
- Make notes to supplement checklist.
- Determine number of observations needed.
- Be objective.



# When will you get the information?

- Identify sources of all data.
- Determine how information will be obtained from each source.
- Who is responsible for each step in the process?
- Establish a timeline that is manageable for all parties.



# Pilot Test

- Administer the data collection instrument to a few people to test it.
- Review the entire process of data collection to determine a timeline.
  - Collecting information (from files, consumers, staff, etc.)
  - Submitting information for analysis
  - Analyzing information
- Identify problems in the process and revise plan, as needed.





# How will you use the information?

- Discuss draft of results with stakeholders.
- Get input regarding what the data means.
- Develop suggestions based on results.
- Generate a written summary of results.



# Using the Data

- What do you think needs to be changed?
- Is there a policy that supports the identified area to be changed?
- Is there a policy that is a barrier to the change?



**Employees do what supervisors check.**



# Conclusion

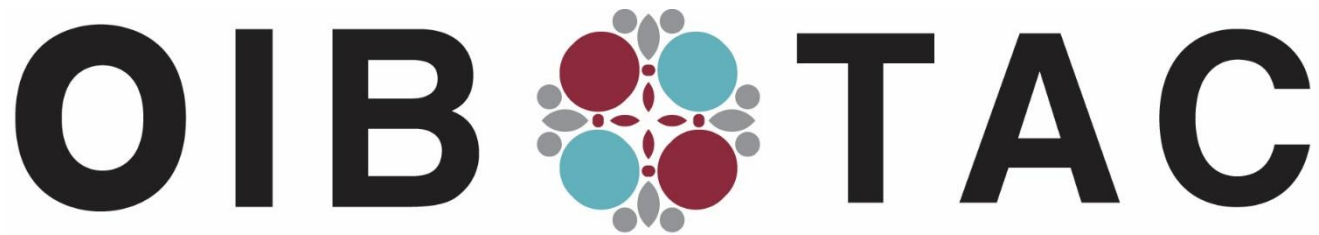
- Program evaluation is an ongoing process
- Build on results
- Involve staff and other stakeholders
- Help is available



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