

Finding a Good Fit Tool Workshop Materials

1. Defining measurement needs and priorities
2. Is this a good fit tool?
3. Right for purpose and audience?
4. Right for agency capacity?
5. Right for youth in programs?

1. Our Measurement Needs & Priorities

Reflection Questions

- Are there certain aspects of our outcome area that we are more interested in than others? Are there particular behaviors, skills, attitudes we want to be sure to include—*think we can affect*?
- How important will it be for us to demonstrate change in youth—and in what time-frame? How important will it be for us to compare our results to others?
- How many outcome areas are we planning on measuring overall? How many youth will we be collecting data on/from?
- Who might be the best source of info for what we need to measure? How important will it be for us to collect multiple perspectives?

Measurement Need	Possible Tool Implications
<p>What kinds of changes in youth are we really trying to capture?</p> <p><i>Are there certain aspects of our outcome area that we are more interested in than others? Are there particular behaviors, skills, attitudes we want to/believe we can capture?</i></p>	<p>Your definition of the outcome area should be reflected in the tool you choose. You will need to look closely at the scales and sample items for your potential tool to be sure they capture the specific behaviors, skills and attitudes you believe you are contributing to.</p> <p>Important Tool Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scales/Sub Scales ▪ Sample Items
<p>How important will it be for us to demonstrate change—and in what timeframe? How important will it be to be able to compare our results with others?</p>	<p>Longer term/broader outcome areas take time—so if you have a relatively short time period (e.g. less than 6 mos) you may want a tool that focuses on participation level outcomes. Most importantly you will want your tool to be sensitive enough and reliable enough to capture change within your timeframe. Having comparative data and multiple respondent sources will also help you make a stronger “case” that your program contributed to changes.</p> <p>Important Tool Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background & Testing- strong reliability, comparative data, research or other evidence that this tool can capture change in your timeframe. ▪ Respondent ▪ Response scale
<p>How many outcomes do we plan to measure overall? How many youth do we plan to collect information from/on?</p> <p><i>Do we plan to use it to design individualized interventions—or are we looking for broader program-wide effects?</i></p>	<p>If you are only focusing on one outcome area and have relatively few youth, you may want to consider a tool that offers you depth. However, if you plan to be collecting data in several areas or from many youth you will want to consider using shorter outcome measures.</p> <p>Important Tool Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length (# of items) ▪ Number of scales per outcome ▪ Number of outcomes per tool
<p>Who is going to be the best source of information for measuring this outcome? Will it be important to collect information from more than one respondent?</p>	<p>Some outcomes can best be measured through one respondent source. For instance, youth are the best source of info on self-concept. In contrast, staff, teachers and parents may be better sources of info on outcomes such as behavior or academic skills. Having info from more than one respondent is always helpful for gaining a better understanding—but takes a lot of time and effort.</p> <p>Important Tool Considerations: Respondent Options</p>

2. Is this a “good fit” tool?

<p><i>Does this tool fit our audience?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will the kind of information this tool generates be useful to us and/or our staff? Meaningful and compelling to our important audience(s)? ○ Can I--and will our audiences trust the information provided by this tool? (e.g. will the way this tool was developed and tested satisfy them?) ○ Will it make a difference to us/our audience who the information was collected from (youth? Staff? Teachers? Etc.) ? 	<p><i>Does this tool fit what we are trying to measure?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will this tool capture the kinds of changes we are hoping to affect? ○ Do the items in this tool match our own understanding and definition of this outcome area? ○ Do we think that this tool will be able to capture change in youth for our measurement period? Is there any evidence? ○ Will this tool give us enough detail? Enough depth? Too much detail, too much depth?
<p><i>Does this tool fit our capacity?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do we understand how to use this tool? ○ Does someone within our organization meet the qualifications? Do we have the time and money to participate in any required training? ○ Do we know how/have enough time to prepare this tool for data collection? (<i>Formatting, consents, procedures, staff preparation?</i>) ○ Will we have enough expertise to enter the data we get from this tool? Will we be able to easily connect it with other data we might have on youth? ○ Will we know how to analyze and make good use of the data this tool will produce? 	<p><i>Does this Tool Fit our Youth/Population?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will our youth/families/staff see this tool? ○ Does the length seem reasonable for our respondents? ○ Will respondents be able to easily understand and rate the questions? ○ Will they be comfortable answering these questions? ○ Will we get honest and accurate responses to this tool from our population?

3. Determining our Needs and Priorities: Purpose/Audience

Reflection Questions

- Why are we conducting this evaluation? What do we hope to learn or accomplish?
Better support individual youth? Find ways to improve the program? Demonstrate the value/benefits youth are deriving from participation? Satisfy our funder? (You can list in rank order if more than one important purpose)

- Who are we doing this evaluation for? *You? Your staff? Parents? School Personnel? Funder(s)? (List audiences in rank order. You can include yourself!)*

- What would we like to learn or be able to say from this evaluation? What about our key audiences—what would be meaningful and compelling to them? Do they have any specific expectations we will need to try and meet? Any questions they'd like answered?

- What characteristics should the tool have to enable our audience to “trust” the information provided (*e.g. how should this tool have been developed and tested in order to satisfy them?*)?

- From “whom” should we collect the information (*youth? Staff? Teachers? Etc.*) to best match our purpose and satisfy our audience(s)?

Key Purpose	Possible Tool Implications
<p>Better support individual youth? <i>Determine whether youth are benefiting in expected ways? How could you better support individual youth?</i></p>	<p>You may want a tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With multiple scales and a fair amount of depth for your selected outcome area. ▪ Linked with an approach
<p>Find ways to improve the program? <i>Understand better what may be working/not working in the program so you can modify program design or activities? Identify areas for staff development?</i></p>	<p>You may want a tool that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ is linked with an approach ▪ has been used by after school programs ▪ focuses on early/participation level outcomes so that it will be easier to translate your findings into improvement priorities.
<p><i>Demonstrate the value/benefits youth are deriving from participation? Be able to show that youth did improve or maintain a benefit.</i></p>	<p>You may want a tool that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ has comparative data available ▪ is reliable, ▪ has been shown through research to capture change. ▪ offers multiple respondent options to help illustrate changes.
<p>Satisfy funder?</p>	<p>You will want a tool that the funder recognizes, values and trusts. You may need to find out more from your funder about their preferences.</p>

Primary Audience	Possible Tool Implications
<p>Your Staff</p>	<p>Staff may be interested in how they compare with other after school programs and how they can improve what they do. You may want a tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that has been used in after school research, ▪ is linked to an approach, ▪ comes with training on how to use results
<p>Parents</p>	<p>You may want a tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that has been used in after school ▪ will allow you to describe the kinds of benefits youth may be deriving from your program. ▪ Offers parents a chance to be respondents
<p>Funder/School Personnel:</p>	<p>You may want a tool with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ comparative data ▪ solid testing (e.g. reliability and validity) ▪ A focus on intermediary or longer-term outcomes. ▪ Been widely used and is recognized

4. Determining our Capacity to Conduct an Outcomes Evaluation

Reflection Questions

- Do we have at least one staff person who can be responsible for overseeing the evaluation process? Will other staff also be available to assist with data collection? Entry? Is lack of staff time a key issue for us?

- Is there someone in our organization that has prior experience or expertise in:
 - Using and/or constructing measurement tools?
 - Coding/Entering data?
 - Analyzing data?
 - Interpreting and communicating results?

- Do we already have data on youth that will need to be combined with this new survey data? What system are we using? Do we have someone that will know how to integrate the new with the existing? Will we need the survey company to help with this?

- Do we have easy access to those who we want to complete surveys? (*time in schedule and appropriate space for youth to complete? Access/time/cooperation from parents? Relationship with school personnel? Available staff time?*)

Our Capacity	Possible Tool Implications
<p>Do we have at least one staff person who can be responsible for overseeing the evaluation process? Will other staff also be available to assist with data collection? Entry? Is lack of staff time a key issue for us?</p>	<p>If your <u>time is limited</u>, and you have few staff available to help--you may want a tool that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available on the web ▪ Is “ready to use” as is ▪ Comes with clear instructions ▪ Comes with scoring software ▪ Is relatively short
<p>Is there someone in our organization that has prior experience or expertise in measuring outcomes?</p>	<p>If you <u>don't</u> have someone with <u>ample experience</u> measuring outcomes, you may also want a tool that comes with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training opportunities ▪ Comparative data ▪ Access to T.A. ▪ No pre-requisite qualifications <p>If you <u>do have</u> ample time and experience, you may want a tool that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You can customize ▪ Is linked with an approach ▪ Offers you access to researchers doing work in this area ▪ Will offer you depth in your outcome area ▪ Will offer you advanced training
<p>Do we have easy access to those who we want to complete surveys? (<i>time in schedule and appropriate space for youth to complete? Access/time/cooperation from parents? Relationship with school personnel? Available staff time?</i>)</p>	<p>Respondent Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>If Youth</u>: Do we have appropriate space for them to do it in? Enough time for them to complete surveys? ● <u>If parents</u>: Do they regularly come to the program? Would they be willing to complete? Would they have the time to complete? ● <u>If School Personnel</u>: Do we have an established relationship with schools already? Will teachers/others have the time and inclination to complete? ● <u>If Program Staff</u>: Will staff be able to accurately complete the info needed? Will staff have the time to complete? Will staff be able to maintain confidentiality?

Our Youth/Population	Possible Tool Implications
<p>What are the ages of the youth we want to measure outcomes for?</p>	<p><i>Most tools have been tested to work best with a particular age group of youth. However, if the age of your youth falls on the cusp of a stated age cut-off, you may still be able to use the tool. Best to look at the sample items to see if they seem appropriate for your age group/youth. Younger children may have difficulty responding on written surveys so other response formats may be needed.</i></p> <p>Important Tool Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age group ▪ Response format
<p>What are some of the important demographic characteristics of our youth/families?</p>	<p>It's important that the tool you use reflects the youth you are serving, yet, many tools have not been tested on a diversity of populations and most are only available in English. Look for a tool that has been tested or at least used by populations similar to yours. If a tool matching your population is not available, examine the individual items in the tool to see if you think they will capture your outcome in a way that is culturally relevant to those you serve.</p> <p>Important Tool Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background & Testing ▪ Sample Items/Cultural Relevance
<p>What is the capacity of our respondents (youth, parents, staff, teachers) to accurately and honestly complete survey tools?</p>	<p><i>While most tools have been tested for use—you know your population best. The quality of your findings depends on the quality of responses. The tool should be in the respondents' primary language and at their reading level. They should be able to use the rating scales, and feel comfortable and willing to answer the questions. The length, tone and formatting of the tool can also be key factors in gaining good responses.</i></p> <p>Important Tool Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of tool in other languages ▪ Reading level of sample items ▪ Complexity of rating scale ▪ Tool length ▪ Tool format/Tone