



Outcomes planning and evaluation using Contribution Analysis

So What? Conference October 2013

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Background



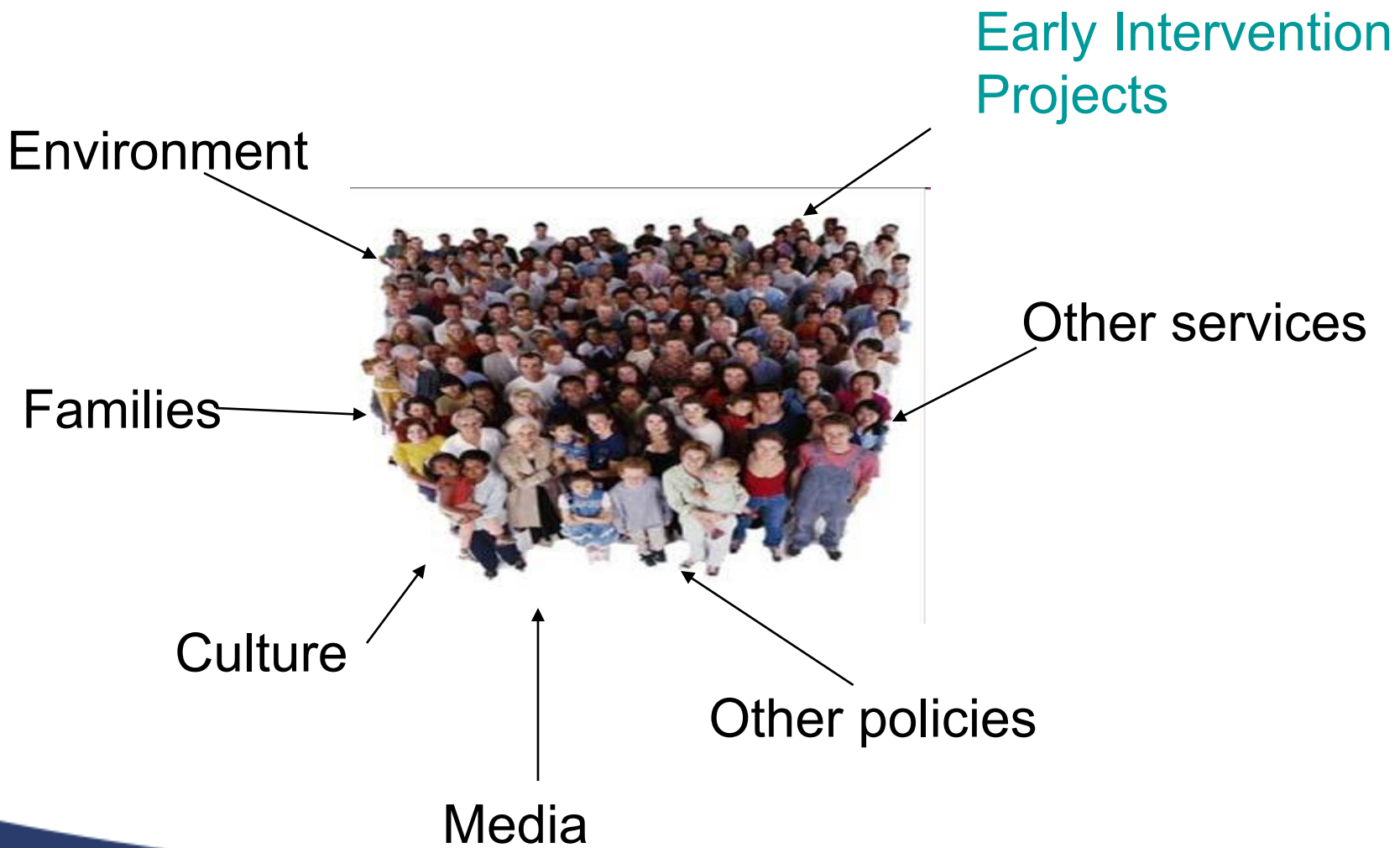
- Outcomes culture
- Universities' role in assessing research impact
- My own work on CRFR's impact
- Link with Erica Winbush Health Scotland



Review

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

Why Contribution Analysis?



Basic ideas of CA



- Takes a logic model/results chain approach
- Assembles evidence to validate the results chain
- Includes an examination of alternative explanations of change
- Contribution analysis builds a credible case about what difference is being made

Spheres of influence



ISSUE, CONTEXT and DRIVERS

Socio-economic, political,
Technological factors

Existing policies,
practices, beliefs

Actors, networks in research,
policy and practice, power

Capacity of target
groups to respond

Receptiveness of context

Organizations,
resources,
systems, skills

Outside influences
increase as we move
'outward' along the chain

WHY? (State)
Your environment of *indirect influence*
e.g., practice sectors, the public,
communities of interest where you do not
make direct contact

WHAT do we want by WHOM?
(Behavioral Change)
Your environment of *direct influence*
e.g. people and groups in direct
contact with your operations,
immediate research users,
collaborators and partners

HOW? (operational)
Your operational
environment
You have *direct control*
over the behaviours
within this sphere

Impact or
change

Action

Capacity

Engagement

Activities

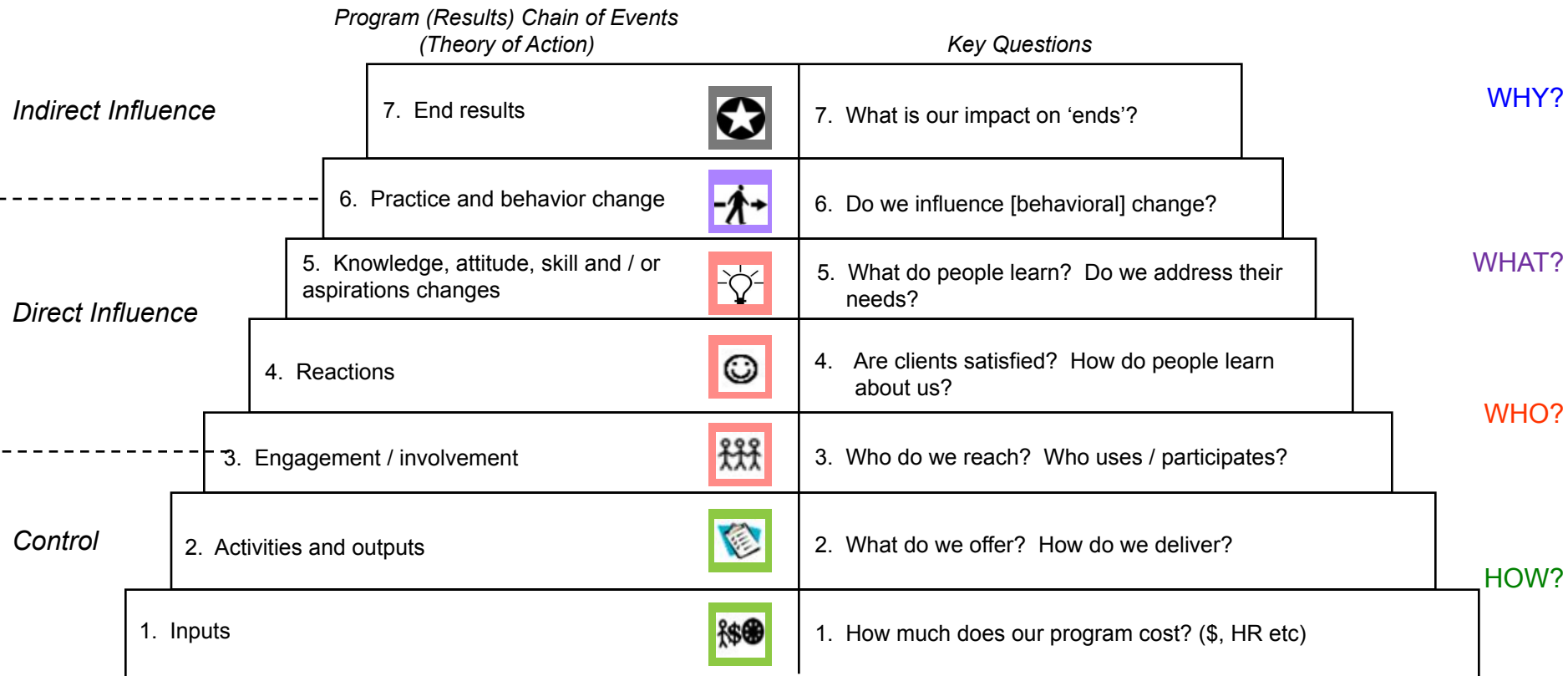
Adapted from S Montague 2009



Tools

- How do we get from activities to outcomes?
- Planning steps of results chains
- Thinking about risks and assumptions

A Basic Results Chain



Source: Adapted from Claude Bennett 1979. Taken from Michael Quinn Patton, Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text, Thousand Oaks, California, 1997, p 235.

FINAL IMPACT OR CONTRIBUTION: the result of these changes was ...impact on ...people or groups

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR PRACTICE: these things were done differently or these behaviours were affected

CAPACITY/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS: We intend to address these abilities, skills, gaps in services

AWARENESS/REACTION: we hope to address these issues...we expect the clients to react in these ways....

ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT ...we intend to reach... clients in these ways..

RESOURCES/OUTPUTS: We plan..... activities/projects... to be delivered in these ways

INPUTS: We have these resources (financial, human, technical) ...

Acknowledging complexity



- Many factors influencing change
- Not everything is planned
- More than one strand in a theory
- Need to reflect and learn along the way
- Seek to understand what is working and why



How to create evidence?

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Evidencing outcomes

Creating a convincing evidence chain

- Logical approaches - judged on the robustness of logic
- Need to evidence steps in the chain
- Risks and assumptions approach to generate evidence

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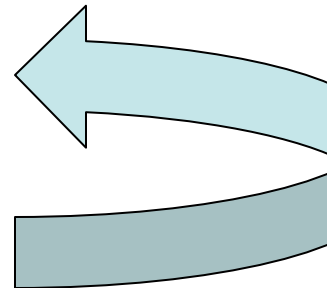
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What assumptions do you make, what risks are there?





- Assessing risks and assumptions
 - What are the other influencing factors?
 - Other policies and services
 - Other factors in children and parents lives (poverty, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse etc)
 - What assumptions do you make to get from one step to the next?
 - What are the risks that these won't happen as you imagine?
 - How might you mitigate against these risks?

Risks and assumptions 1

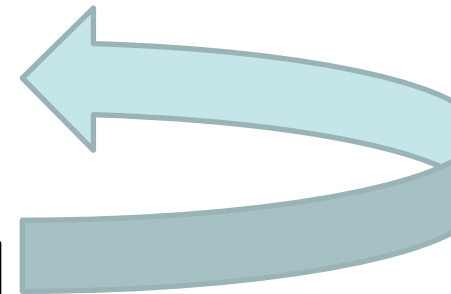
Assumptions: we know and can reach the right client groups

Risks: didn't reach right client group (e.g. easier to reach) , families attend initial session but don't return etc

Indicators: stakeholder and attendance analysis, levels of engagement in activities

ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT X number of parents and children attend for X sessions

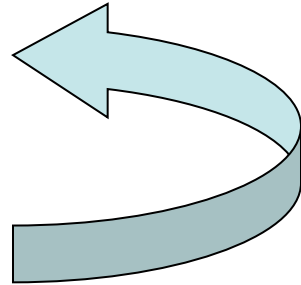
ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS: parents and children play sessions



Risks and assumptions 2

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR PRACTICE: children and parents have more interaction, more positive interactions

CAPACITY/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS: parents increase confidence, and have more knowledge about interacting with children, see benefits of interacting with children and understand how it affects their development



Indicators: feedback from parents and children, observation of families, assessment on exit from programme etc.



Assumptions: parents find sessions useful and relevant, integrate with existing knowledge and practice
Risks: play not prioritised, timing wrong, other family factors affect interaction (e.g. domestic abuse)



Making it real

WHAT IS *YOUR* EVIDENCE?



Results Chain analysis

- Which links have the weakest evidence?
- Some may be supported by prior research
- Some may be well accepted
- Some may be more tenuous or contested
- Focus efforts on the weakest links



Steps in CA

1. Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
2. Develop your results chain
3. Gather evidence to support this
4. Assemble and assess the contribution story at set intervals
5. Seek out additional evidence
6. Revise and strengthen the contribution story
7. Develop the complex contribution story

Gather evidence



- Results
- Assumptions and risks
- Other influencing factors
- Your own evidence and service monitoring
- Wider research evidence
- Population level data and statistics

Issues to consider



- How are we reviewing progress
- What are the early signs of success?
- What might indicate that our assumptions are wrong?
- What do we already measure?
- What additional things might we need to measure?
- Whose views are included?
- How do we make sure it is measurable?

A measurement plan



1. What can we measure from project data?
(e.g. referrals, assessment data, team meetings etc)
2. How are we collecting feedback from parents and children?
3. How are we reviewing and reflecting on overall project progress?

Thank-you!



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