

Evaluation for learning

Mixed approach to
evidencing outcomes

www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

What I'll cover



- What is evidence?
- Limits of traditional thinking
- A new approach
- Making evaluation useful and friendly



The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid OED

What is evidence?

Good evidence is useful evidence! ... information that can help make better decisions ... provide better services .. raise standards
Dr Jonathan Sharples, York University

FOT-SHOTS NO. 1045.

**MY SOURCES
ARE UNRELIABLE,**

*Adapted
Bulletin*

BUT THEIR
INFORMATION
IS
FASCINATING.



Evidence hierarchies

1. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
2. Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) with definitive results
3. RCTs with non-definitive results
4. Cohort studies
5. Case control studies
6. Cross sectional surveys
7. Case reports

Petticrew & Roberts 2003 quoted Nutley et al 2013

'If decisions were only to be based on available strong evidence of effective actions, the result would often be a very small number and range of actions'
Andrew Tannahill (2008)



Problems with RCTs

- Can be expensive, complicated
- How do you get a 'control group'?
- It worked in US doesn't mean it will work here.
- Replication is tough
- People's motivation is big a factor
- Maybe less strong on 'how & why'
- Still need to evaluate ...



'Nudge Unit' for good use



Beyond hierarchies

- **Why** do we need evidence?
- What will we **use** it for?
- What do we **already know**?
- What evidence is **good enough**?

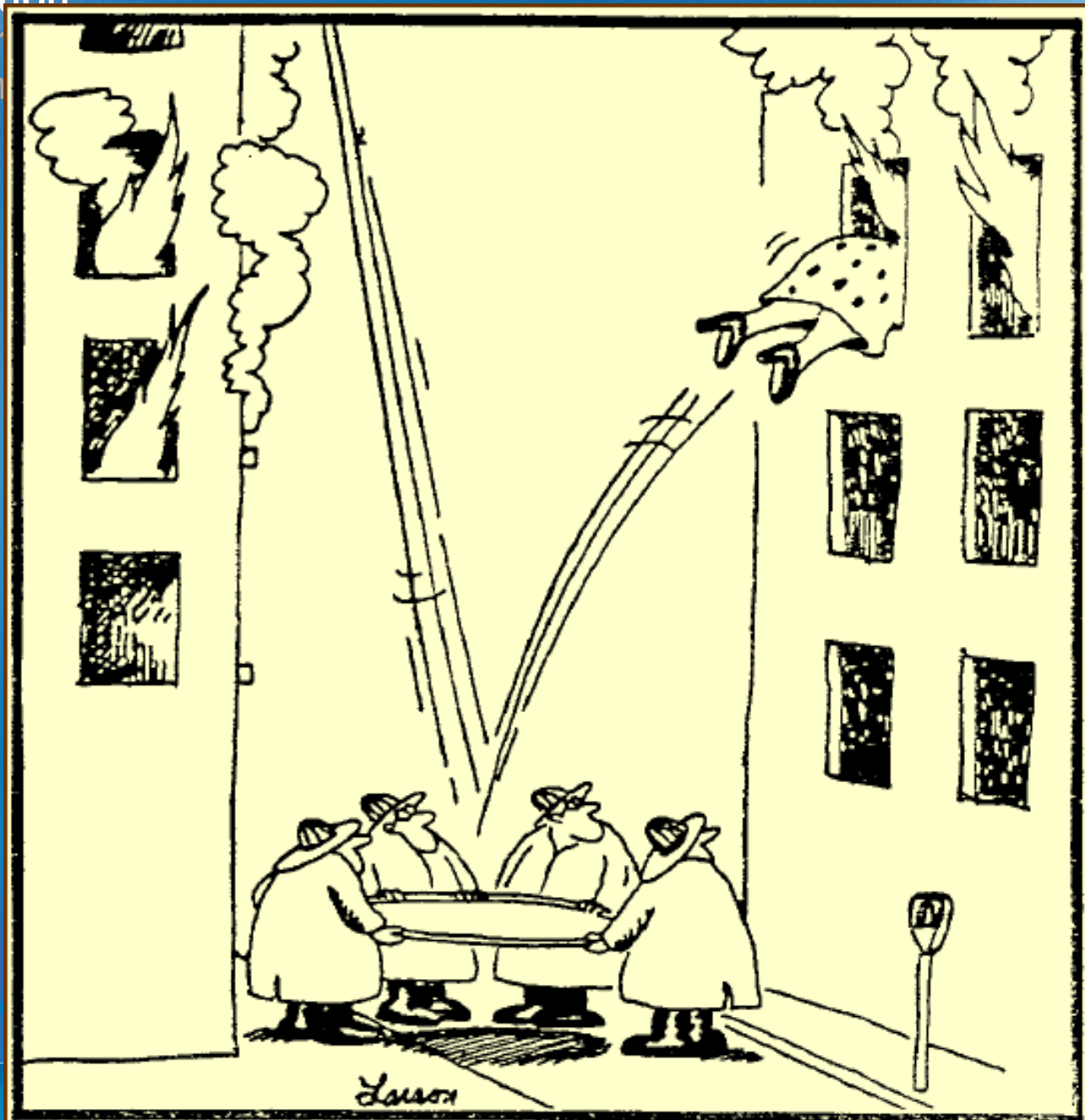


Different aspects of 'does this work'

- Does doing **this** work better than doing that?
- Does it matter?
- Will it do more good than harm?
- Will service users be willing to or want to take up the service offered?
- Is it worth buying this service?
- Is it the right service for these people?
- Are users, providers, and other stakeholders satisfied with the service?

Preventing Evaluation





Mixed approach

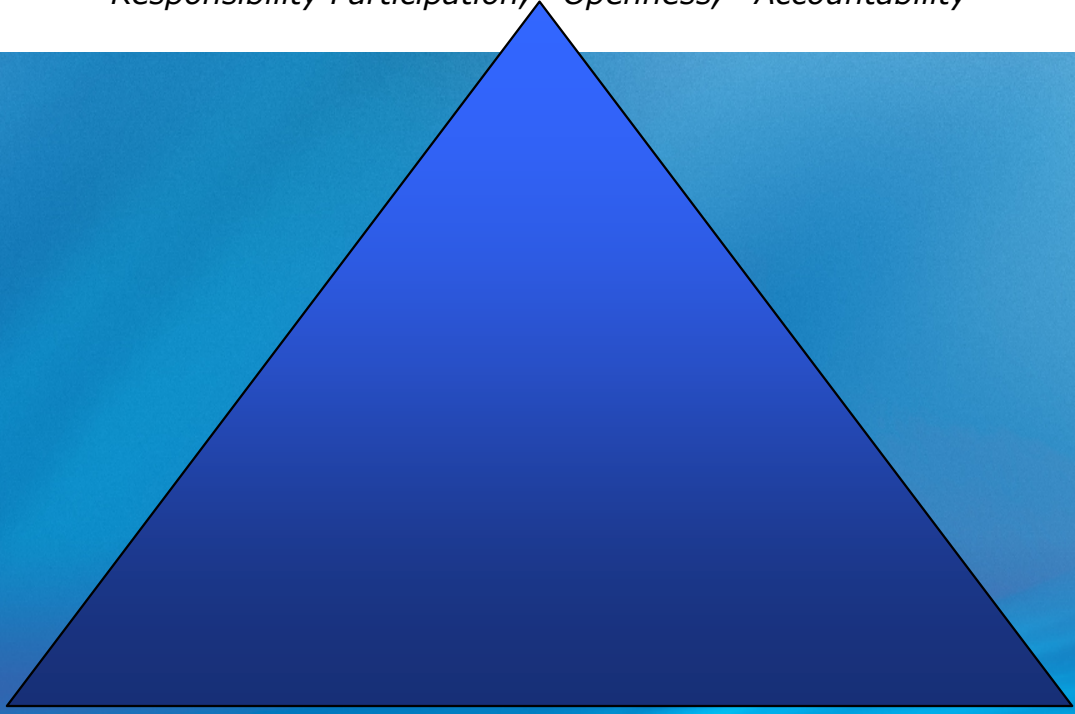


Beyond evidence - to ethics: a decision-making framework for health promotion, public health and health improvement

Andrew Tannahill (2008) Health Promotion International Vol 23 No. 4

Ethical principles

E.g. Do good do not harm Equity Respect Empowerment Sustainability Social Responsibility Participation, Openness, Accountability



Evidence

Theory

Self-evaluation isn't robust?

- Cost effective and flexible
- Rich source of evidence about 'how' and 'why' change happens (or doesn't).
- Complements formal research
- Supports people doing the work to learn and improve

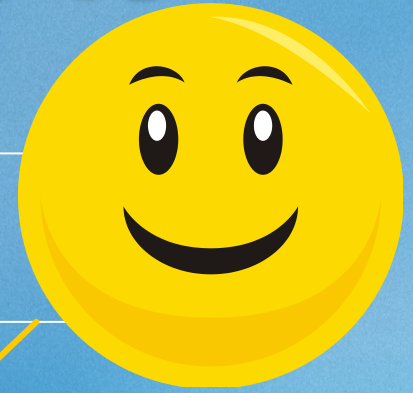
How it works

Outcome Statement Explanations



“Has learned to sit and listen”.

How long does it take?



Partnership Drugs Initiative

- Practice evidence drawn from projects providing intensive support to young problem drug/alcohol users
- Backs up literature - and adds to it. We now know more about successful interventions than the literature alone can tell us

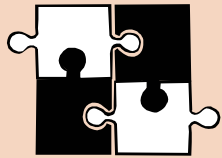
THE 4 STEP APPROACH TO EVALUATION



**Review
the
evidence**



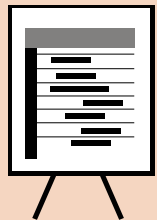
Interventions should be clearly structured and designed using 'what works' evidence



**Draw a
logic
model**



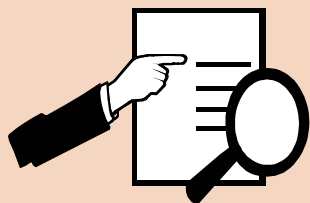
Draw a logic model for your intervention.



**Identify
indicators
& collect data**



Use this logic model to identify indicators and collect data using relevant methods



**Evaluate
logic
model**



Analyse data to find out if your intervention worked as the logic model predicted it would and **how**

Ways to think about 'evidence-based'

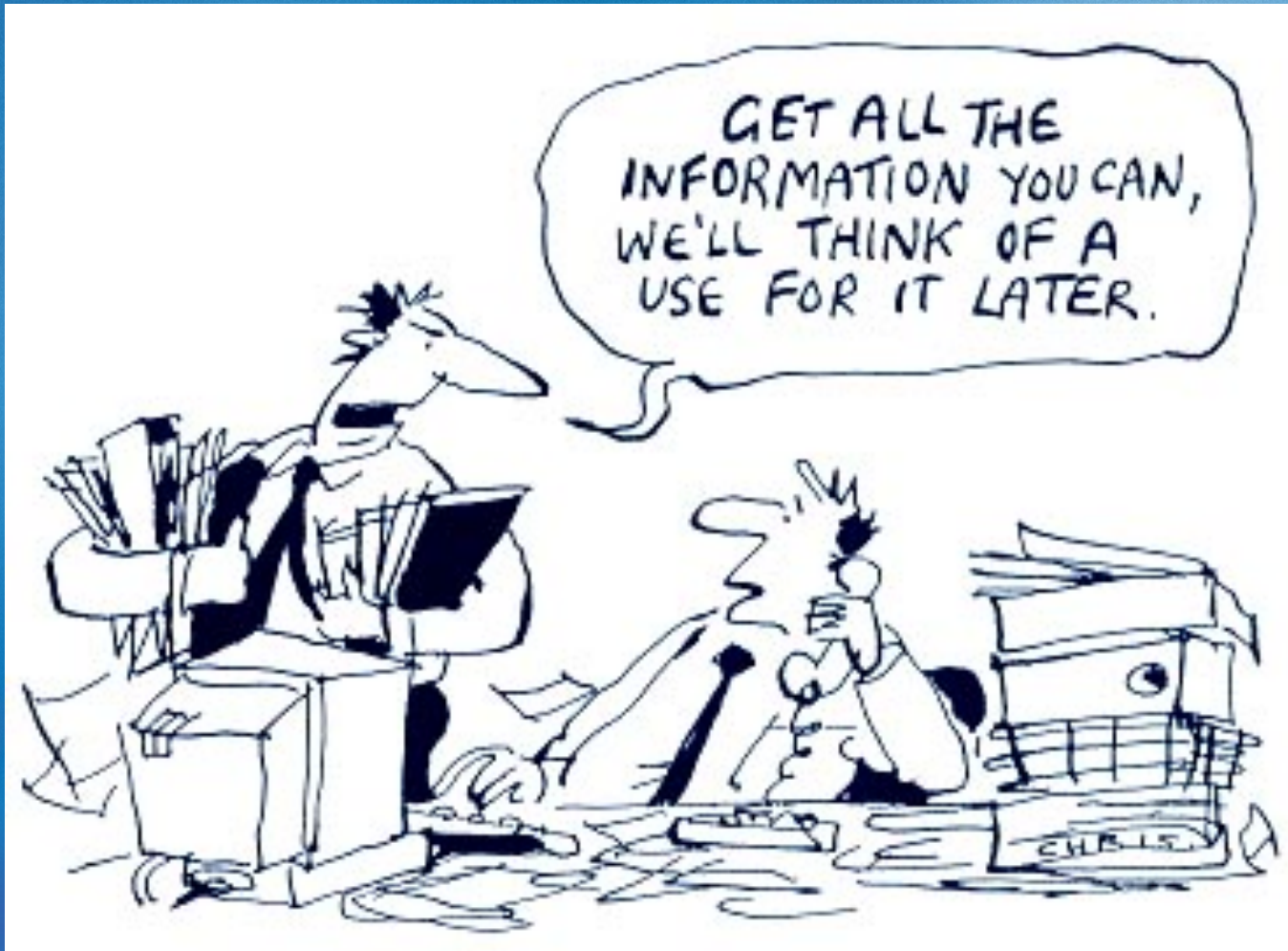
- ✓ We've run this before and have evidence to show it works
- ✓ Another organisation like us has done this before
- ✓ Broad research evidence
- ✓ 'What works' evidence
- ✓ Innovation in the evidence gap

How good is your evidence?

Quality criteria

- **Believable:** accurate, representative, reliable
- **Legitimate:** coming from the right sources
- **Enough:** strength of evidence v proportionality
- **Relevant:** up to date, appropriate
- **Transparency:** methods clear and limitations acknowledged





Evaluation Tips

- Do not overclaim: honesty = credibility
- Say what did not work
- Use case study to tell the story – but don't cherry pick
- Make links to other evidence – similar projects or research
- Focus on outcomes (but **also how** the outcome achieved)

Day to day

Evaluation
into day
to day
work



Day to day
work into
evaluation



Involve the people you work with



Scotland Funders' Forum

Best reports come from organisations that:

- Evidence their work
- Tell their story
- Use reporting to reflect on what they have achieved and learned



(Scotland Funders' Forum: Harmonising Reporting Working Group 2010)