



Formative Assessment

Facilitated by:
Sonya Dublin, MPH/MSW
CBA Specialist, Capacity for Health

This web seminar is co-hosted by:



Capacity for Health at APIAHF, a Capacity Building Assistance Program, with offices in *San Francisco* and *Washington D.C.*



Shared Action, a Capacity Building Assistance Program of AIDS Project Los Angeles.

Who we are:

Both Programs are funded by *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* to provide **FREE** trainings and one-on-one technical assistance for community-based organizations (**CBOs**) on:

- (1) Organizational Infrastructure and Program Sustainability,
- (2) Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs) and Public Health Strategies, and
- (3) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Presenter:

Sonya Dublin is a Capacity Building Assistance Specialist with Capacity for Health at the Health Forum. Her training has been as a social worker and public health professional (MSW/MPH). She has been involved in HIV prevention programming for over 15 years. Her area of expertise is in program planning and evaluation.

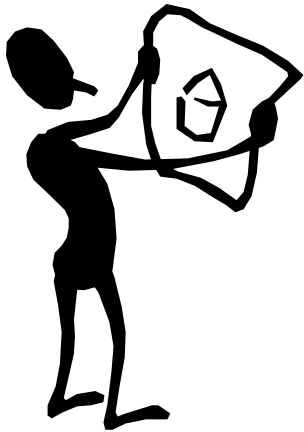
Housekeeping

All participants are automatically muted by webinar administrators.

For questions that arise during the presentation, you may type them in using the Questions feature.

For discussion, please “raise” your hand. You will be called on and un-muted so that you can ask your question live.





Today's Agenda

Presentation (55 minutes)

Defining Formative Assessment (FA)

3 Step Approach to FA:

Step 1: What we want to learn

Step 2: How to learn it

Step 3: What to do differently

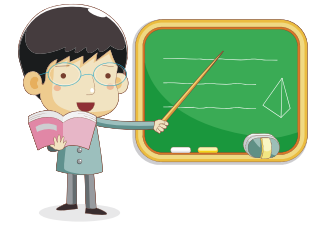


Quick Poll:

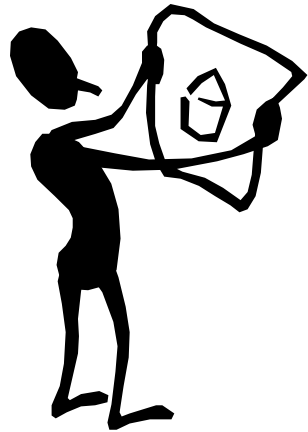
1. What type of organization do you currently work with?
2. What is your organizations' experience with HIV prevention?

Learning Objectives:

by the end of today's presentation
participants will...

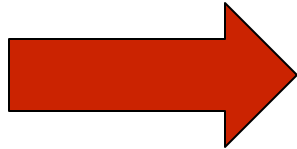


- ✓ Have a clear understanding of what formative assessment is
- ✓ Understand how formative assessment can be used to improve HIV prevention interventions
- ✓ Have identified questions for formative assessment
- ✓ Be able to name methods for formative assessment and understand how to select appropriate methods
- ✓ Have identified clear next steps for their agency



Today's Agenda

Presentation (55 minutes)



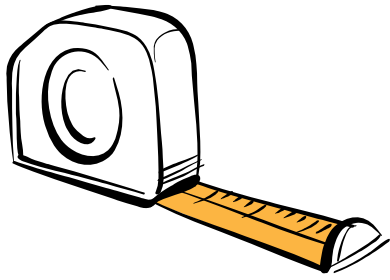
Defining Formative Assessment (FA)

3 Step Approach to FA:

Step 1: What we want to learn

Step 2: How to learn it

Step 3: What to do differently



Definitions:

- Formative assessments are any type of measurement or evaluation that happens before or during the implementation of a program with the primary goal of learning about and adapting the program.

What it is NOT

- Formative assessment is similar to, but NOT the same as needs assessment
- Formative assessment is NOT about finding out whether or not a program produces results (i.e. *outcome evaluation*)

Benefits of Formative Assessment

- Helps us understand how participants are experiencing a program
- Given us information early on to make necessary program changes
- Helps ensure programs are acceptable, feasible, and sustainable



Case Study

Project START

A community organization has just started offering a new weekly support group for the women partners of men about to be released from incarceration. The group is funded through HIV prevention dollars with the stated goal of reducing women's high risk sexual and injection drug use behaviors.

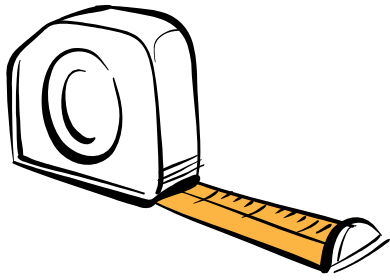
Formative Assessment asks the questions:



- Where am I going?
- Where am I now?
- How can I close the gap between the two?

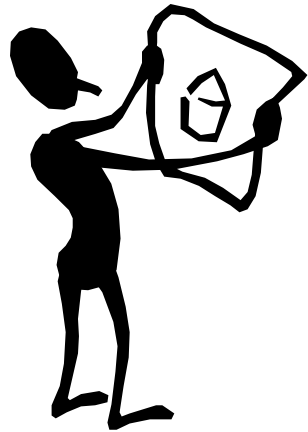
McManus, S. (2006). "Attributes of Effective Formative Assessment." Accessed March 20, 2009 from The Council of Chief State School Officers website.

Website: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/educators/fastattributes04081.pdf>



Definitions:

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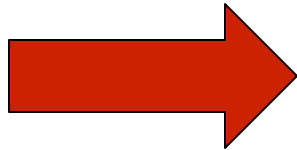


Today's Agenda

Presentation (55 minutes)

Defining Formative Assessment (FA)

3 Step Approach to FA:



Step 1: What we want to learn

Step 2: How to learn it

Step 3: What to do differently

Formative Assessment Questions

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Who** are we trying to reach?
- What are the **risk behaviors**?
- What are the **specific needs** of the community or population?
- What other **resources** or assets exist in the community or for the specific population?

Formative Assessment Questions



NEEDS ASSESSMENT	BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	DURING IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are we trying to reach?• What are the risk behaviors?• What are the specific needs of the community or population?• What other resources or assets exist in the community or for the specific population?		

Formative Assessment Questions



NEEDS ASSESSMENT	BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	DURING IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are we trying to reach?• What are the risk behaviors?• What are the specific needs of the community or population?• What other resources or assets exist in the community or for the specific population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we reach our target population?• What specific needs do they have?• How can we successfully engage and retain them in services?	

Formative Assessment Questions



NEEDS ASSESSMENT	BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	DURING IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are we trying to reach?• What are the risk behaviors?• What are the specific needs of the community or population?• What other resources or assets exist in the community or for the specific population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we reach our target population?• What specific needs do they have?• How can we successfully engage and retain them in services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are we reaching our intended target population?• How do they feel about the services?• What is working or not working?• Are we seeing initial results that are what we hope for?

Case Study--Project START

POPULATION:

Women partners of men about to be released from incarceration

BEHAVIORS:

Reducing women's high risk sexual and injection drug use behaviors

ACTIVITY:

New weekly peer support group

Formative Assessment Questions Before Implementation:

1. How do we best reach, recruit, and retain the women?
2. What type of environment and what type of schedule will work best for these women?

Case Study--Project START

POPULATION:

Women partners of men about to be released from incarceration

BEHAVIORS:

Reducing women's high risk sexual and injection drug use behaviors

ACTIVITY:

New weekly peer support group

Formative Assessment Questions Early on during implementation

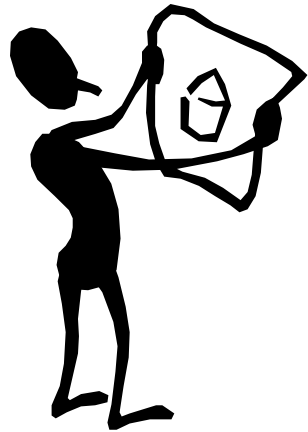
1. What do women like/not like about this program?
2. Do women feel a sense of community and social support (one of the identified objectives of the program)?

Questions???

**Please raise your hand to ask a
live question**

OR

**Use the Questions feature to
write in your question**



Today's Agenda

Presentation (55 minutes)

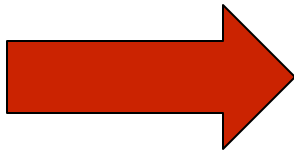
Defining Formative Assessment (FA)

3 Step Approach to FA:

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Quick Poll:

Which methods do you have personal experience with?

Ways to do Formative Assessment:

(tools/activities/methods)

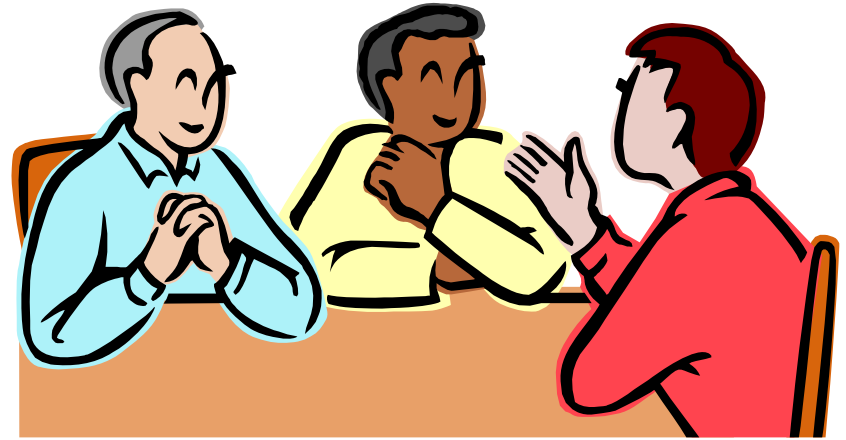
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Observations
- Key Informant Interviews
- Community Mapping
- Community Discovery
- Participatory Activities



Selecting Methods:

- Method selection is integrally connected to what you are trying to learn.
- There is no “right” combination of methods
- Each method has distinct advantages and disadvantages.

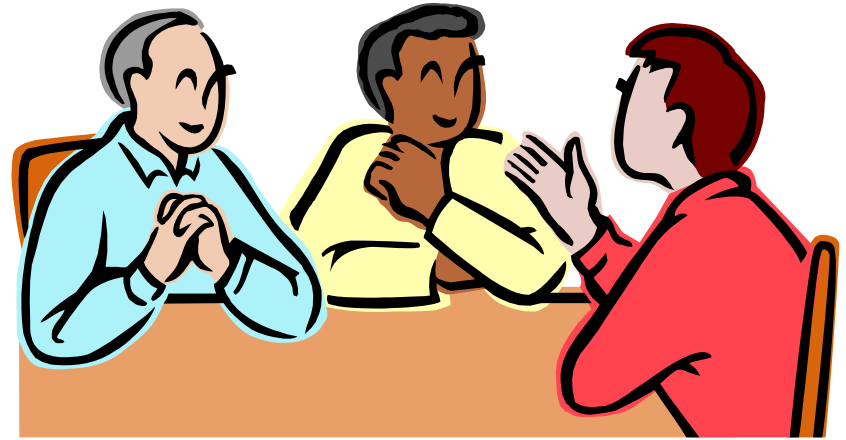
Focus Groups



For Formative Assessment:

- How do we reach, engage, and retain our target population?
- What do they want or need in the program?
- What do they like/not like in the program?

Focus Groups



Strengths

- Quick way to get feedback from multiple participants in a short amount of time

Weaknesses

- Require a skilled facilitator
- Can be timely to analyze data
- Social response bias

Surveys

For Formative Assessment:

- How do we reach target population?
- What do they want/need?
- Are we reaching our intended target population?
- How do they feel about the services?
- Are we seeing initial results that are what we hope for?
- What is working or not working?



Surveys

Strengths

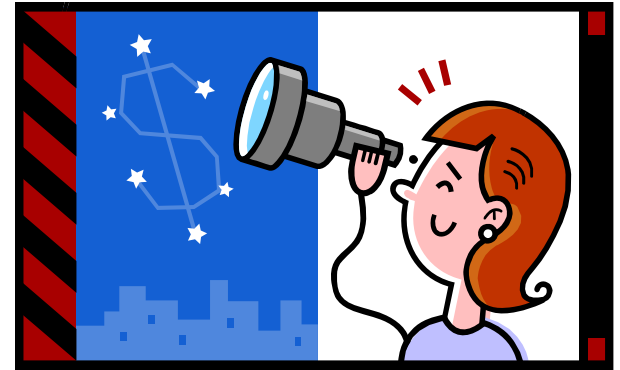
- Quick, easy and versatile method
- Easy to administer

Weaknesses

- Can be burdensome to participants
 - Only learn what we know to ask.
 - Issues of “representative-ness”



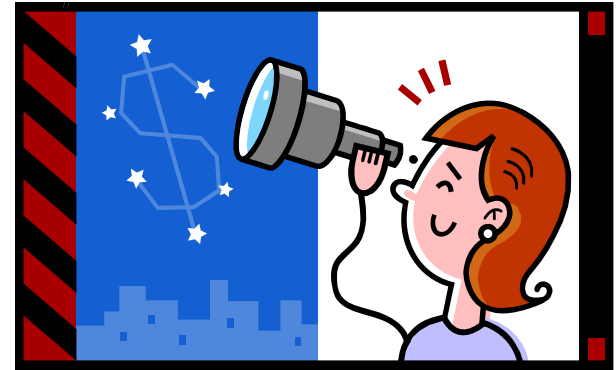
Observations



For Formative Assessment:

- Where is the target population?
- How can we best reach them?
- What are their interactions/activities like?

Observations



Strengths

- No burden on participants
- Can be done flexibly, over time, with a variety of staff

Weaknesses

- Need TRAINED observers
- Only learn what we know to observe



Key Informant Interviews

For Formative Assessment:

- How do we reach target population?
- What do they want/need?
- How do they feel about the services?
- Are we seeing initial results that are what we hope for?
- What is working or not working?



Key Informant Interviews

Strengths

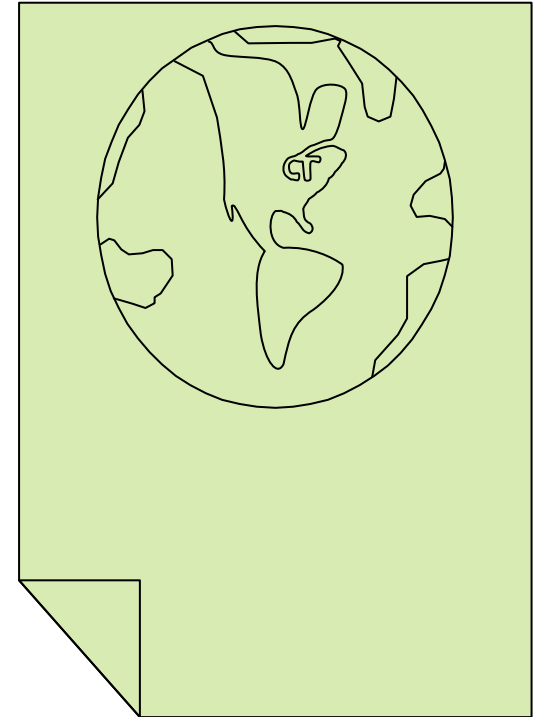
- Depth of responses
 - Can learn the unexpected

Weaknesses

- Need TRAINED interviewers
- More intensive to administer, thus can lead to small number of responses

Community Mapping

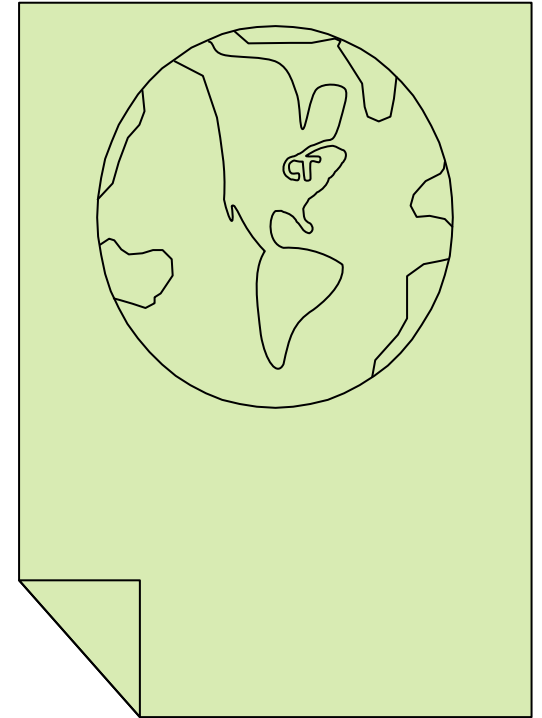
- Can be formal or creative
- Single or multiple stakeholders
- Identify assets (and/or issues)



Community Mapping

For Formative Assessment:

- Where is the target population?
- How can we best reach them?
- What are their interactions/activities like?
- What other assets/issues in the community should we be connecting to?



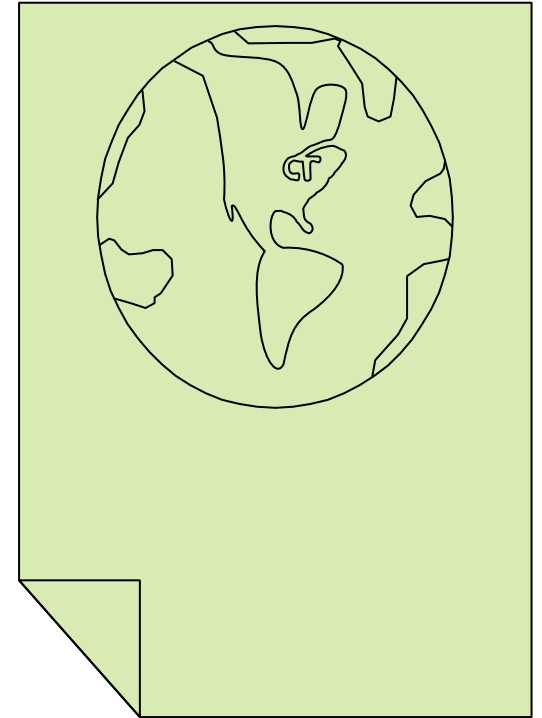
Community Mapping

Strengths

- Versatile, creative
- Responsive to multiple learning styles

Weaknesses

- More complicated to analyze data across multiple community maps



Community Discovery

- Specific term used in many community level EBIs
- Variety of methods
- Used to define target population and risk behaviors
- Different than most other forms of formative assessment!



Community Discovery



For Formative Assessment:

- Who is the target population?
- How to reach target population?
- What are the behavioral norms of the target population?

Community Discovery

Strengths

- Comprehensive
- Uses mix of methods

Weaknesses

- Can be complicated to implement



Participatory Activities

- All methods can have varying degrees of participation
- Participatory activities can come from a Participatory Evaluation framework
- Explicit goal of empowerment for participants
- Integrate into existing program activities



Participatory Activities

For Formative Assessment:

- How do people feel about the services?
- Are we seeing initial results that are what we hope for?
- What is working or not working?



Participatory Activities

Strengths

- Engaging for participants
- Can be integrated into the existing format of a program

Weaknesses

- Can be complicated to analyze
 - Can take more time and training to implement



Questions???

**Please raise your hand to ask a
live question**

OR

**Use the Questions feature to
write in your question**

Case Study--Project START

FA Questions: Before Implementation

1. How to reach, recruit, and retain the women?
2. What type of environment and schedule will work best?

Formative Assessment Methods Before Implementation:

1. Observation, interviews, focus groups, community mapping, surveys
2. Interviews, focus groups, surveys

Case Study--Project START

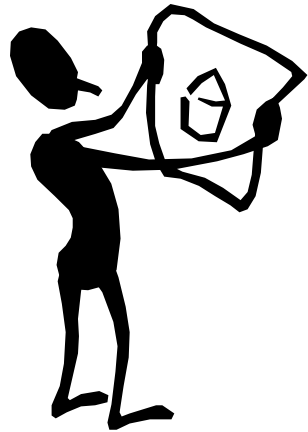
FA Questions: During Implementation

1. What do women like/not like?
2. Do women feel a sense of community and social support? (outcome objective)

Formative Assessment Methods During Implementation:

1. Participatory activities, surveys, interviews, focus groups
2. Participatory activities, surveys, interviews, focus groups

FA Question	Method	Findings
Before implementation		
1. How to reach, recruit, and retain the women?	Focus Groups	Reach and recruit: Outreach on visiting days, social networks (word of mouth) Retain: Transportation vouchers and food
2. What type of environment and schedule will work best?	Focus Groups	Location: Next to public transit Environment: Casual with couches Schedule: Tues, Wed, or Thurs early evenings
During implementation		
1. What do women like/not like?	Interviews	Like: Having food and check-in time Don't Like: Specific presenters
2. Do women feel a sense of community and social support?	Participatory Activities	They are starting to feel comfortable with each other, but they don't like having new people join and leave the group. They would like to know more about each other's lives outside of the specific topics the facilitator introduces.



Today's Agenda

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Findings	Actions
<p>Reach and recruit: Outreach on visiting days, social networks (word of mouth)</p> <p>Retain: Transportation vouchers and food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a month outreach on Saturdays at the local prisons • Transportation, food and childcare
<p>Location: Next to public transit</p> <p>Environment: Casual with couches</p> <p>Schedule: Tues, Wed, or Thurs early evenings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location in a community center recreation room • Tuesday evenings from 5-6:30
<p>Like: Having food and check-in time</p> <p>Don't Like: Specific presenters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have presenters once a month
<p>They are starting to feel comfortable with each other, but they don't like having new people join and leave the group. They would like to know more about each other's lives outside of the specific topics the facilitator introduces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the group for a 3 month session, then invite new women to join.

Using the Findings from Formative Assessment

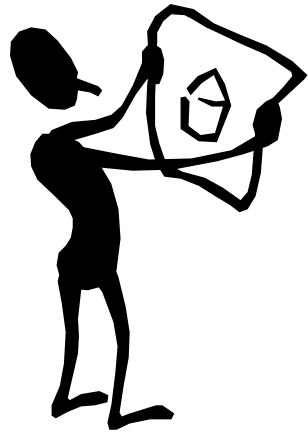
- Identify important stakeholders to share findings with.
- Be clear about what CAN and CANNOT be changed as a result of findings. (Ex. The group time or place can change, but it can't be opened to participant's partners.)
- If participant feedback was sought as part of formative assessment, make sure to share findings and planned actions with participants.

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Your Next steps:

- Think about where your organization is in terms of using formative assessment:
 - Are you planning a new program?
 - Have you already started a new program?
- What are your top 2 formative assessment questions?
- What methods might you use?

Sharing Your Next Steps

Use the Question feature to write in your responses:

1. What are your top 2 formative assessment questions?
2. What methods might you use?

We will share them with other webinar participants

Further Resources

**Continue with the discussion at
Shared Action's Forums**

<http://sharedaction.org/phpBB3>

1. Click on the **Formative Assessment** link under **Webinars** on the list of available Forums
2. Click **register** to gain access to the Forum
3. After registering you will be approved and sent login information.

Slides and a recorded version of this webinar will be available on the Forum.

Further Resources

Contact us for individualized capacity building assistance



Sonya Dublin, *Capacity for Health*
415-568-3335, sdublin@apiahf.org



Oscar Marquez, *Shared Action*
213-201-1641, omarquez@apla.org