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The Evaluation of Gatekeeper Training Programs: Challenges and Resources
Breakout (C)4E

**Campus Suicide Prevention Grantee
Technical Assistance Meeting**
Phoenix, AZ
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Presenters

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Session Outline

- Overview of issues in DKT evaluation
- Two Grantee experiences
- Q&A and Discussion

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General Evaluation Questions


- What did we do? (process eval)
- Did the program achieve expected outcomes?
 - For whom?
 - What “dose” is needed?
 - Do results persist over time?
- Are outcomes attributable to the program, rather than other factors?
- What program components/elements created change?

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(Selected) Evaluation Decisions & Tasks

- (1) Decide what to measure (**Intended outcomes**)
- (2) Determine how to measure outcomes (**Measurement**)
- (3) Plan a **research design**
- (4) **Collect and analyze** the data
- (5) **Use results** to improve programs (& evaluation plan)

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(1) Decide what to measure (**Intended Outcomes**)

- Ask: what outcomes (or *changes*) do we expect as a result of the program?
 - Use “change language,” e.g., increase/decrease
- Driven by various factors. e.g.,
 - (a) The program, including
 - Intended audience
 - *Specific* program content, delivery, duration
→ Different forms of “GKT” may have different outcomes
 - (b) Particular research questions

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One approach

**“Theory of Change” Logic Model:
 Mapping How Activities Lead to Goals**

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Thinking “Inside the Box”

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Specifying the Links

- Each link in the chain should specify an expected *change* rather than a program activity
Example: Instead of “implement suicide prevention training” (activity), say:
 “increase staff members’ knowledge of suicide warning signs” (change)
- Use *change* language
 - often, “Increase” or “Decrease”
 - (sometimes, “create” or “revise”)

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**Generic Model
 (but never just 4 boxes)**

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Relationship to Goals & Objectives

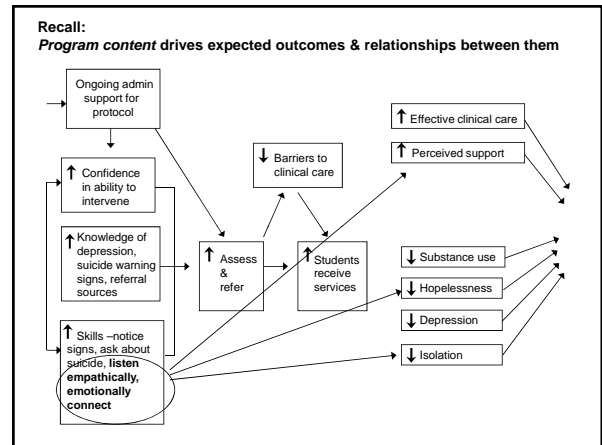
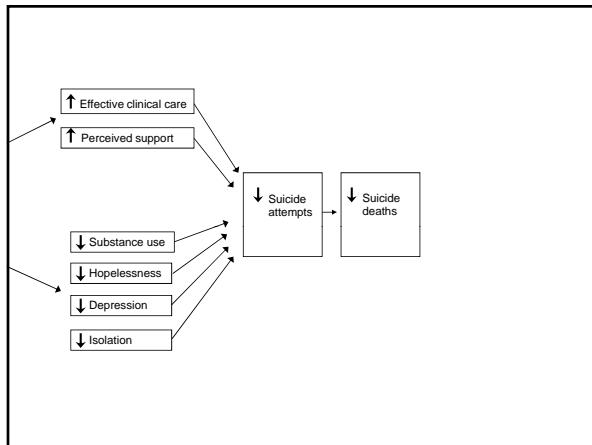
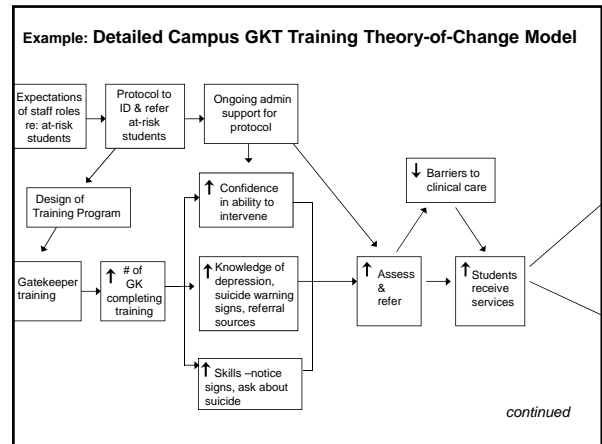
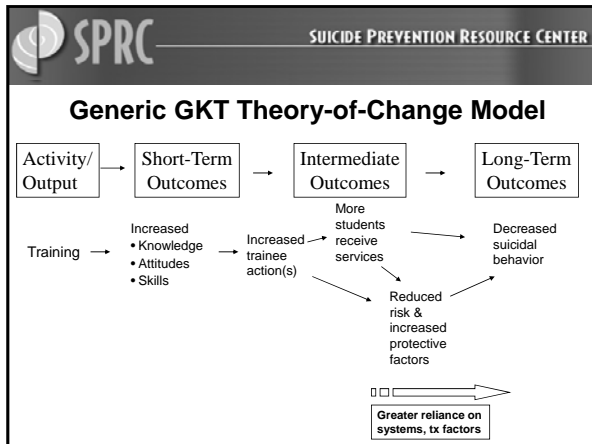
- Theory-Of-Change model is really an elaborated version of Goals/Objectives
 - Both approaches establish intended changes -> needed to be able to conduct evaluation
- Benefits of TOC model:
 - Articulates assumptions about *mechanisms* of change, including R & P factors affected
 - Gives an *order*, i.e., specifies early changes required before later changes can occur
 - Allows measurement of interim outcomes

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Example: Goals & Rationale for GKT

- **Goals:**
 - Improve early identification of students at high risk for suicide
 - Facilitate timely mental health referrals
- **Rationale:**
 - Suicidal youths are underidentified and few use services
 - Few seek help on their own

Wyman et al. (2008.) Randomized Trial of a Gatekeeper Program for Suicide Prevention: 1-Year Impact on Secondary School Staff. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 76(1): 104-115.




Design Stage: Elaborate/Adjust Your GKT Model

- What **exact** behaviors do we want the GK to perform (for whom, under what circumstances)?
- For each audience/setting, take into account:
 - Current roles (formal and informal)
 - What do they do now (current behaviors)?
 - What structural factors affect their behaviors?
 - Formal policies and protocols
 - Availability and follow-through of services
 - Confidentiality/privacy laws or regulations
 - What are the barriers to the desired behavior?
- Make sure evaluation design reflects your model

(2) Determine how to measure outcomes (Measurement)


- **Quantitative / Qualitative**
- **Possible Sources & Methods:**
 - Surveys
 - Open-/Closed-Ended Qs
 - Various administration options
 - Records
 - Observation
 - Document review
 - One-on-one interviews
 - Group assessment (including focus groups)
 - Case studies
 - Diary/Journal
 - Simulations and others....

Resource: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-4.pdf>

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Measurement: Key Considerations

- Appropriateness
 - Match with:
 - Intended outcomes
 - Audience
 - Research questions
 - Sensitivity to change
- Feasibility
- Surveys:
 - Reliability: yields the same results across repeated trials
 - Validity: measures the concept we want it to measure
- Records: data quality, definitions

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(3) Plan a Research Design

- Closely connected with measurement choices
- Decisions about:
 - Timing of data collection
 - Who/where should data come from
 - What data do you need to disprove *other* possible chains of events?
- Goals:
 - Rule out competing explanations for findings
 - Make other comparisons, e.g., between groups, components

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Design Choices - Examples

- Timing
 - Pre- as well as post-test? Follow-up? (when?)
- Who/where
 - Sampling
 - All trainees, or a subset?
 - Students?
 - Comparison group(s)
- Increasing response rates
 - Timing/location of data collection
 - Incentives

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(4) Collect & analyze the data

- Execution of the data collection plan
 - Unexpected developments
 - Adjustments needed?
- Data analysis
 - Appropriate for measurement and design

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(5) Use Results for Program Improvement

Cohort I grantee:
"We conducted pre and post tests of participants in gatekeeper training. We learned that the participants' knowledge and attitudes didn't change in particular areas. Our steering committee went back to the drawing board, conducted a literature review, examined our program rationale, developed learning objectives based on our desired outcomes. We have a much stronger program foundation, which we believe will result in much better outcomes."

- Reminder: modify evaluation plan too