

EVALUATING SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTOR APPROACHES

EVALUATION PLAN TEMPLATE

EVALUATION BEST PRACTICES



Engage partners early and in every step of planning and implementing your evaluation.



Confirm that your SRPF approach is logical and well-designed to set you up for success.



Clarify the purpose of your evaluation.



Be strategic about the outcomes you include in your evaluation.

TEMPLATE PURPOSE

This template is intended to provide states with a guide for developing an evaluation plan for shared risk and protective (SRPF) approaches aimed at improving the reach and impact of injury and violence prevention. While SRPF approaches to injury and violence have been around for a while, widespread adoption across public health is still relatively recent, and the research base available to support and guide health departments and their partners in implementing such efforts is still emerging. Evaluating these approaches is essential to sharing knowledge and advancing the field. This template is designed to help Injury and violence prevention programs with existing evaluation plans, as well as those programs starting from scratch.

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

Adapting or broadening existing evaluation plans to include shared risk and protective factors should be done with the same intention and inclusion of stakeholders as developing a new program, or developing a new evaluation plan. While many of the sections included in this template parallel traditional evaluation plans, ensuring the correct mix of perspectives will support conversations broad enough to build an effective evaluation plan focused on shared risk and protective factors.

This template contains a list of sections that can be included in your evaluation plan. Depending on where you are in your program development, how you construct the answer within each section may change. Feel free to delete or add sections as appropriate for your program.

A blank template can be found at the end of this document for you to populate as you develop your evaluation plan.

EVALUATION ELEMENTS

1

Background

Include a summary of the project, the priority shared risk and protective factors to be addressed, outcomes, population, location, etc.

2

Project Description

Provide a more detailed description with a theory of change model that illustrates how SRPF factors are expected to impact public health issues.

3

Stakeholder Identification

Define priority stakeholders who are essential to guide your program development and evaluation. What value will they bring, and what is their reach? Stakeholders should be across sectors and disciplines.

4

Scope

Define what you are trying to accomplish with this program, project, etc. This can often be done by thinking backward.

5

Data Collection Plan

Identify specific evaluation questions, indicators, and data collection methods for your program.

6

Communication

Lay out how you will share evaluation results. This is essential for ensuring ongoing support for the program and contributing to the knowledge base that continues to drive the field forward.



ELEMENTS OF AN EVALUATION PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Background section should operate as the jumping-off place for your evaluation plan. Include a short summary of the program, its history, and its significance. Briefly describe the major program elements, including the priority shared risk and protective factors to be addressed, the priority public health issues, the program location, the focus population, and any important stakeholders. Information on past evaluations and evaluation results can be included here or in a separate section if they are extensive.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project Description sets the context for the evaluation and includes a more detailed description of the program mission, vision, list of program goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

This section also includes the program theory of change and/or logic model. It is essential to describe the public health issues for which outcomes will be defined, as well as the priority risk and protective factors being addressed by the intervention. The theory of change included in this section should illustrate how a shift in those factors are expected to impact public health issues.

THEORY OF CHANGE

COMPONENTS FOR EVALUATION

- 
- 1 Background
 - 2 Project Description
 - 3 Stakeholder Identification
 - 4 Scope
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 - 6 Communication

A theory of change is a model of the changes you expect to happen because of your work. In other words, a theory of change outlines the causal pathway for your identified outcomes. The best way to build a theory of change is to start with those outcomes and build backward toward the resources column. This work will require a knowledge of how specific risk and protective factors can impact a specific context, community, or individual. Much of this information can be found in academic literature as well as within communities themselves. The content you include in the “SRPF Outcomes” column will become the source of your indicators as you get further into your data collection plan.

As an introduction to the theory of change for your SRPF efforts, include a problem statement based on the best available data. This statement should make clear why these efforts are necessary. Additionally, include a clear statement of the impact/s you expect to see from your interventions over time.

Resources	Partners	Strategies	SRPF Outcomes (indicators)	Outcomes
<p>Resources needed to conduct your activities efficiently.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources • Space/Facilities • Technology • Materials • Curriculum • Etc. 	<p>Who do you need to engage with to accomplish this work?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organizations • Other PH partners • Researchers • Community leaders • Tribal leadership • Schools • Etc. 	<p>Strategies needed to reach your outcomes.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Trainings • Learning activities • Services • Policy advocacy • Delivery of products • Etc. 	<p>Outcomes expected of your intervention(s) in your intervention time frame.</p> <p>Changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions • Behaviors • Practices • Decisions • Policies • Social actions • Conditions • Social contexts • Environmental characteristics 	<p>Outcomes you hope to observe beyond your intervention time frame.</p> <p>Changes In:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of suicide • Levels of violence • Levels of poor mental health

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

This section should include a list of stakeholders essential to guide your program development and evaluation. When developing SRPF approaches across public health issues, it is important to define priority stakeholders and communicate in a way that resonates with the advocates and supporters of the different topic areas. Building a shared understanding of SRPF approaches and the value they can bring to public health efforts is essential to develop and sustain ownership and buy-in of both programming and evaluation. This section should be designed to fully reflect the scope of the program and the scope of the evaluation.

EXAMPLE

Health department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to community connectedness among youth to prevent a range of injury topics including sexual assault, suicide, and substance misuse. Based on the theory of change developed for the SRPF work, these strategies are focused on increasing connectedness among youth by:

- Improving the quality of youth-adult interactions
- Increasing knowledge of community events among young people
- Increasing perceptions of being welcome in public spaces among young people
- Increasing outlets for creative engagement specifically for youth
- Increasing opportunities for meaningful input by young people into community issues

Given these priorities, the health department might brainstorm a stakeholder list that includes internal and external stakeholders focused on these public health issues, representatives from youth-serving organizations, representatives from mentoring organizations or programs, representatives from media and community outlets focused on advertising events and happenings in the communities, members of municipal departments responsible for public spaces and amenities, business owners and leaders from craft-focused business or theaters, community garden leadership, city council staff, and members of local advocacy groups.

Stakeholder Type	Details/Name	Reach	Role
Health Department	IVPP Branch within State Health Department	12,000,000 Youths (Age 5-17)	-Collects outcome data -Project funder -Project oversight
Youth Service Organization	YMCAs of Central Region	15,000 Members	-Oversees logistics of program within the community
Educator/Adult Mentors	50 Adult Mentors from local schools	500 Youths (10 per adult)	-Overall coordination -Collects Process data (IE: surveys)

COMPONENTS FOR EVALUATION

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EVALUATION SCOPE

It often isn't feasible to evaluate everything in our theory of change or logic model, so defining the scope of the evaluation becomes essential before data collection starts. Defining the scope of your evaluation is necessary to understand the time, human, and financial resources you will need to complete the project, as well as ensure you stay within any budget or time limits that have been set already. This is work that should be done in partnership with stakeholders and, ideally, with the focus population. Ensuring that the priorities you have identified for the program and the evaluation map onto the priorities of communities can make all the difference in the success of SRPF efforts and the success of the evaluation. Like many things with evaluation, defining the scope can often be done best by working backward. Start by thinking through the ultimate purpose and use of the evaluation and then use that information to help you determine the scope.

Do the strategies we have outlined in our theory of change correspond?

What data sources do we collectively have available?

Who can help collect this information?

What do we need to know to show impact?

What is the overall impact you are trying to achieve?

Whom are you looking to impact?

EVALUATION PURPOSE

This section describes the purpose and intended outcome of the evaluation. Ideally, the results can be used to drive future program decisions and improve the quality and effectiveness of the program, but additional purposes may exist for your group, such as supporting funding applications, changing local policy, and sharing results with the field to enhance our knowledge base about effective SRPF interventions and evaluation strategies for understanding the impact of our work. When defining the evaluation purpose, be specific about your needs, as well as other stakeholder needs across each of the public health areas being addressed by the SRPF efforts.

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Starting with the basic question of what you want to know will set the initial direction and ultimately be the foundation of your evaluation. The answer to this question will also help you develop evaluation questions and make decisions about where to direct resources and data collection. It can also help guide program implementation and strategy development. Things you might want to know can include:

- Were the outcomes and impact equitable
- Who benefitted most from our efforts? Who did we miss? Why?
- How well did we stick to our plan?
- What did we learn about our community context? Our focus population? What changed during our implementation?
- What resources did we use? What else do we need?

Do the strategies we have outlined in our theory of change correspond?

What data sources do we collectively have available?

Who can help collect this information?

What do we need to know to show impact?

What is the overall impact you are trying to achieve?

Whom are you looking to impact?

After you have established what it is your group wants to know, it is important to think about who else may be interested in the evaluation. This might include funders, policymakers, community members, or program participants themselves. Again, it may be important here to engage with stakeholders directly to ensure your answers reflect the true needs and interests of these outside stakeholders. Establishing who else is interested in the evaluation and what they want to know from it will contribute additional information to guide to the development of evaluation questions.

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SPECIFIC USES OF THE EVALUATION RESULTS

In this section, you want to get clear about how you will use the information that comes from your evaluation efforts. When the evaluation process is completed and the results compiled, there is still a good deal of work ahead of your evaluation committee and stakeholders as you focus on the application of what you will learn through the evaluation process. As mentioned earlier in this document, while SRPF approaches to injury and violence have been around for a while, widespread adoption across public health is still relatively recent, and the research base available to support and guide health departments and their partners in implementing such efforts is still relatively nascent. Making sure we plan for appropriate and impactful use of what we learn is essential to advancing our work in this area.

Developing a utilization plan now will allow you to ensure you have what you need to create the changes and accomplish the goals you identified in the development of the purpose of your evaluation. Some examples of how you might use evaluation results include:

- Making decisions or solving problems related to the program or its context
- Changing or improving the way we think about a public health problem
- Changing or improving the implementation of a program in some way
- Seeking additional funding and developing funding proposals
- Changing or impacting public policy
- Building support for best practices and advancing learning in the field

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ASSUMPTIONS

Being clear about the assumptions underlying a program can often help develop evaluation questions. Assumptions build on facts and help us shape our evaluation plan in the face of imperfect information. Some common assumptions include:

Assumptions about resources and funding

- Stable funding is available and will be available for X years
- Qualified, dedicated program staff are available

Assumptions about program appropriateness:

- The program strategies are an appropriate and effective method for addressing the identified issue
- The program strategies are culturally appropriate for the identified audience

Assumptions about program demand:

- There is a need in the community for this resource/program
- Outreach efforts will drive sustainable demand over the life of the program

Assumptions about infrastructure:

- The program has a champion and/or sustainable support from the community and/or leaders
- The program can be delivered effectively within current norms and constraints

DATA COLLECTION PLAN

The data collection plan lays out key process and outcome data needed for the evaluation. This section is also where the program will use the evaluation purpose and scope as guidance to define indicators and measurements and engage in defining the specifics of the measurement phase of evaluation work such as identifying data sources, data collection tools, and the frequency of data collection.

Identifying evaluation questions is where health departments working to implement and evaluate SRPF approaches to public health prevention are often challenged about where to begin. Because the evaluation of SRPF efforts is early in its development, there are few models and little guidance on how to think about defining indicators and evaluation questions. Thinking through this part of the evaluation plan with your stakeholder group and referring to your evaluation purpose and theory of change “SRPF Outcomes” column will both be key in building your data collection plan.

For the purposes of program evaluation, defining evaluation questions for SRPF work is like that of evaluating a single-issue public health program with the biggest difference being you are considering the impact of changes in a shared factor against multiple public health issues. You will want to work with your evaluation work group to identify process evaluation questions focused on the resources and processes used to implement the program, as well as outcome evaluation questions intended to give you information about the impact of the program on the focus population. For each set of questions, you will identify indicators that will allow you to measure any occurrence or change and draw conclusions about your program.

Examples of indicators (input, process, and outcome) as well as how to select appropriate data follows on the next four pages.

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INPUT & PROCESS INDICATORS

For your process evaluation questions, you will identify:

- **Input indicators** – these are measures of program resources that help you ensure the program had enough funding, staffing, partner support, and other inputs to allow it to be successful.
- **Process indicators** – these are measures of implementation activities and deliverables, or products, attached to the program that helps you measure the quality of program implementation. The closer your implementation is to the best practice or recommended implementation, the higher likelihood your program will achieve its goals.



EXAMPLE

Health Department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to community connectedness among youth

Theory of change strategies:

- Improving the quality of youth-adult interactions
- Increasing knowledge of community events among young people
- Increasing perceptions of being welcome in public spaces among young people
- Increasing outlets for creative engagement specifically for youth
- Increasing opportunities for meaningful input by young people into community issues

To create these changes, the health department and its partners have developed a mentoring program. Evaluation questions and input indicators for this program might include the following:

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency	Responsibility	Timeline
Did the program have enough mentors for all youth participants?	Number of mentors relative to number of mentees	Track mentor and mentee numbers	Monthly	Program Administrator	Ongoing
Were the mentoring sessions offered at locations accessible by youth?	Location of mentoring sessions relative to public transportation	Review program locations and city bus/train routes	Annually	Program Administrator	Ongoing
Who participated in the mentoring program?	Demographics of youth participants	Collect mentee applications	Monthly	Program Administrator	Ongoing
How many youth completed the full program?	Number of youth completing the full program	Collect attendance data	Monthly	Program Mentors	Ongoing

OUTCOME INDICATORS

For your outcome evaluation questions, you will identify:

- **Outcome indicators** – these are measures of expected outcomes or changes over time resulting from the program. For SRPF programming, these indicators would include changes in the priority factor/s your program is working to address. For an SRPF program, these questions would include a focus on the indicators we know, or believe, create change in the factor itself, as well as outcomes related to our specific public health questions. For instance, if a specific school is implementing a suicide prevention program focused on increasing peer connections, improving coping skills, increasing help-seeking, and increasing resiliency among school-age children, this same program could be tested for its impact on sexual violence or substance misuse.



EXAMPLE

Health Department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to **community connectedness among youth**

Theory of change strategies:

- Improving the quality of youth-adult interactions
- Increasing knowledge of community events among young people
- Increasing perceptions of being welcome in public spaces among young people
- Increasing outlets for creative engagement specifically for youth
- Increasing opportunities for meaningful input by young people into community issues

To create these changes, the health department and its partners have developed a mentoring program. Evaluation questions and outcome indicators for this program might include the following.

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency
Did we improve the quality of youth-adult interactions for program participants?	The number of youth who feel positive about their interactions with their mentors	Survey	Baseline and after every six months during the program.
	The number of youth who feel positive about their interactions with at least one other adult in their life	Survey	Baseline and after every six months during the program. Six month and one year follow-up.
Did we see decreases in substance use among program participants?	Number of youth who report using fewer substances during and after program participation	Survey	Baseline and every six months during the program. Six month and one year follow-up
Did we see decreases in violence behaviour?	Number of disciplinary actions, or suspensions, experienced by program participants in school	School records	Baseline and upon program exit.

SELECTING DATA SOURCES

Specific data sources should be identified for each evaluation question.

EXAMPLE

Health Department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to community connectedness among youth. To create these changes, the health department and its partners have developed a mentoring program that connects to multiple strategies within their theory of change model. To monitor how these strategies are being met, the following data sources will be used:

Evaluation Question	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3	Data Source 4
Did the program have enough mentors for all youth participants?	Mentor intake form	Mentee Intake Form	YMCA Administrator Survey	
Were the mentoring sessions offered at locations accessible by youth?	Mentor Survey	Mentee Survey	Transportation Records	County Data
Did we improve the quality of youth-adult interactions for program participants?	Mentee Survey	Parent Survey		
Did we see decreases in substance use among program participants?	BRFS Data	Mentee Survey	Parent Survey	
Did we see decreases in violence behaviour?	BRFS Data	School Records	Parent Survey	

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Identifying specific evaluation questions, indicators, and data collection methods for your program is essential to ensure proper reporting.

EXAMPLE

Health Department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to community connectedness among youth. To create these changes, the health department and its partners have developed a mentoring program that connects to multiple strategies within their theory of change model. To monitor how these strategies are being met, the following evaluation questions, indicators, collection method, frequency, responsible parties, and timelines have been selected.

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency	Responsibility	Timeline
Did the program have enough mentors for all youth participants?	Number of mentors relative to number of mentees	Track mentor and mentee numbers	Monthly	Program Administrator	Ongoing
Were the mentoring sessions offered at locations accessible by youth?	Location of mentoring sessions relative to public transportation	Review program locations and city bus/train routes	Annually	Program Administrator	Ongoing
Did we improve the quality of youth-adult interactions for program participants?	The number of youth who feel positive about their interactions with their mentors	Survey	Baseline and after every six months during the program.	Program Manager	Yearly
	The number of youth who feel positive about their interactions with at least one other adult in their life	Survey	Baseline and after every six months during the program. Six month and one year follow-up.	Program Manager	Yearly
Did we see decreases in substance use among program participants?	Number of youth who report using fewer substances during and after program participation	Survey	Baseline and every six months during the program. Six month and one year follow-up	Program Manager	Yearly

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING PLAN

Beyond reporting on program progress and impact, a plan for sharing evaluation results with communities, funders, program stakeholders, and other health departments engaged in SRPF work is essential for ensuring ongoing support for the program and contributing to the knowledge base that continues to drive the field forward. The communication plan should correlate with the purpose and utilization plan defined by the evaluation work group.

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EXAMPLE

Health Department A is focused on implementing and evaluating strategies related to community connectedness among youth. To create these changes, the health department and its partners developed a mentoring program. This program has now ended and they have a full evaluation report to share on outcomes.

The communication plan for the results is as follows:

Product Type	Description	Audience	Distribution Method	Responsibility	Distribution Date
Report of Evaluation Results	Actual .pdf of evaluation findings written up and designed with graphics	Partners Participants YMCA Network Youth Organizations State Health Dept. Partners	Online .pdf of report - originally posted on State Health Dept. website. distributed through partner newsletters	Program Manager	Early Spring
Media Kit	Packet including: information about the report, shareable social media posts, press release example, link to evaluation, contacts for project	Partners YMCA Network Youth Organizations State Health Dept. Partners Other State Health Depts. State Media	Partner newsletter's (IE: YMCA, State Health Dept., mentor's contacts, education centers)	Program Manager (development and sharing lead)	Mid Spring
Webinar	Online discussion outlining the report findings	Partners Youth Organizations State Health Dept. Partners Other State Health Depts.	Online Zoom webinar including partners (IE: YMCA administrator, State Health Dept. Mentor, Mentee)	Program Manager (logistics lead)	Late Spring

(The following is a guide that can be used to develop your evaluation plan.)

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

EVALUATION WORKING GROUP:

PREPARED BY:

LAST UPDATE:

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

BACKGROUND:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

PRIORITY STAKEHOLDERS:

Stakeholder Type	Name	Reach	Role

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

EVALUATION SCOPE:

ASSUMPTIONS:

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Input Indicators:

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency	Responsibility	Timeline

Output Indicators:

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency

[PROGRAM NAME] EVALUATION PLAN

DATA SOURCES

Evaluation Question	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3	Data Source 4	Data Source 5

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING PLAN

Product Type	Description	Audience	Distribution Method	Responsibility	Distribution Date

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The following Safe States team contributed to the design and development of this resource: Eva Bland, MA, and Sharon Gilmartin, MPH.



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