Adoption STAR/Family STAR Logic Model

Demonstrating Programmatic Impact

Standard Operating Procedures

The following description provides details on the process for evaluating and researching Adoption STAR/Family STAR's Programs.

- ***Conceptual Phase:*** The conceptual phase of any research effort conducted by Adoption STAR/Family STAR will tie directly to its Logic Model and begin with a detailed analysis of the program and desired objectives. The analysis should demonstrate a suggested link between specific program activities and desired outcomes. It will be these activities that will link to initial outcomes and consequently tie to the impact of the programs. Without this analysis, it will be difficult to link programmatic activities to outcomes. The analysis should clearly describe the program activities and the desired outcomes. Process evaluation will ensure that the program is running true to design and the evaluation and research efforts will ensure that the desired outcomes align with the program. Adjustments should be made when a "disconnect" between program and outcomes is revealed by the research and documentation of adjustments must be put in any final reporting of the research.
- ***Survey/Scale Selection:*** It is crucial to select research-based scales or surveys with citations in published peer-reviewed articles. This ensures that the scales and/or surveys have passed a rigorous review and that validity and reliability of the instruments have been established. Keep in mind that a review of the published articles is necessary to ensure appropriate methodology, statistical analyses, and effect size were utilized and achieved. In cases where scales are not validated, logic must be provided and tested for selected scales.
- ***Data Collection Process:*** The data collection process must be clearly defined prior to the initiation of any research effort. Careful adherence should be made with the Evaluation and Research Mapping portion of the logic model. This section will identify the Outcomes, Target Indicators, Data Sources, and Data Collection Method. If the new research requires the use of surveys or scales not identified on the Mapping, then they should follow the Survey/Scale Selection criteria identified in the previous section and once selected, should be added to the Evaluation and Research Mapping section of the logic model.
- ***Program Evaluation & Research:*** When conducting evaluation and research, careful attention should be paid to the administration of surveys. Consistent practices are essential to maintain the rigor expected of publishable research. The way to ensure a standardized administration occurs is to train all those involved in the evaluation and survey administration process. Topics to be covered in an evaluation or research training should include but are not limited to:
    - Overview of Surveys
    - Background on Expected Outcomes
    - Overview on Linkages Between Program and Intended Outcomes
    - Administration Guidelines
    - Handling Participant Questions
    - Handling and Storage of Surveys
    - How to Reach Researchers for Questions
- ***Initial Outcomes Measurement:*** Initial outcomes are often directly linked to program activities and most often link to intrinsic or knowledge-based changes within the participants. The expectation is that as a result of these initial outcomes, the participants will change behaviors. Programmatic activities should consistently reinforce the outcomes. The rationale behind this emphasis is that the desired outcomes are what the program is intended to effect. Reinforcing those outcomes ensures greater likelihood of effecting positive change in the Initial Outcomes.

- *Intermediate Outcomes Measurement:* Intermediate Outcomes are the behavior changes that one expects to occur as a result of successfully achieving the Initial Outcomes. The behavior changes are carefully mapped out in the logic model and should be directly linked to research discourse (Theoretical Framework or research-based evidence) which states that if a participant behaves in a particular manner, one may expect the desired impact. It is the behavior change linked to the initial outcome that ties the initial outcome and program activity to the impact outcome.
- *Impact Outcomes Measurement:* The impact outcome is the desired outcome a program claims it affects. Examples of Impact Outcomes include but are not limited to changes in Academic Achievement, Behavior Changes, Attendance Rates, Graduation Rates, and College Attendance Rates. When a program uses rigorous research methodologies, follows its logic model and evaluation and research mapping, and it achieves its impact outcomes; it can state that the program has the desired impact and that the program is evidence-based.
- *Reporting Data:* Reporting the evaluation and research findings in a public manner promotes the efforts of the agency to ensure that its programs have the desired impacts it states they have. Moreover, it demonstrates to foundations and donors that their monetary investments are appropriately invested in a sound program and agency and that they have a proven return on investment. Programmatic outcomes should be reported on the Adoption STAR/Family STAR web site with the ability to disseminate findings in hard copy to those who do not have internet access.
- *Publishing Results:* Publishing research in peer-reviewed journal articles is based on the submitted research's addition to current discourse. If a research study does not extend current understanding in a particular academic field, it does not suggest that the research is not credible. When research studies are not published, it does not necessarily imply poor design. On the contrary, a study not accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal may be scientifically sound and maintain the rigors expected of publishable research, however, it simply is not extending current understanding. When this occurs, white papers are one of two desired reporting strategies. The other strategy is evaluation and research reports as well as executive summaries. Finally, all reports should be made public and submitted to local, state, and federal funding agencies as well as foundations.