

# OUTCOMES WORKGROUP

## meeting notes

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

### THIS SESSION

Jewish Family & Children's Service

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

### JOB LISTINGS

Elizabeth Stone House is hiring a Development/Operations Clerk

### 2014 Session Schedule

December 11th

### 2015 Session Schedule

March 12th

June 11th

## a discussion about... Technology Use in Program Evaluation



Jewish Family & Children's Service cares for individuals and families by providing exceptional human service and health care programs, guided by Jewish traditions of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community.

LAURA BEALS, PHD

Director of Evaluation

NOAH SCHECTMAN

Manager of Data Strategy & Database Consulting

As technology advances so have the tools and methods for evaluation. What once was recorded with a quill on parchment paper can now be entered into a computer program with the ability to calculate and generate reports. While the end results of these tools can be helpful to program evaluation, it's a very daunting task to try and figure out which of the many options presents the best solution for your organization. Luckily, Laura Beals and Noah Schectman from Jewish Children & Family Services (JC&FS) were able to provide the Outcomes Workgroup with helpful information in choosing and implementing a technology system.

The software has so many great features. It does everything except what I need it to do.



freshspectrum.com

Laura's presentation introduced the Outcomes Workgroup to the various types of program technology, such as excel, custom databases,

and case management software. There are many different types of program which can make choosing the right one a challenge. Laura discussed the various options and presented two major takeaways. 1) Technology is a tool to support a thoughtful implementation of an evaluation plan, not a substitute and 2)

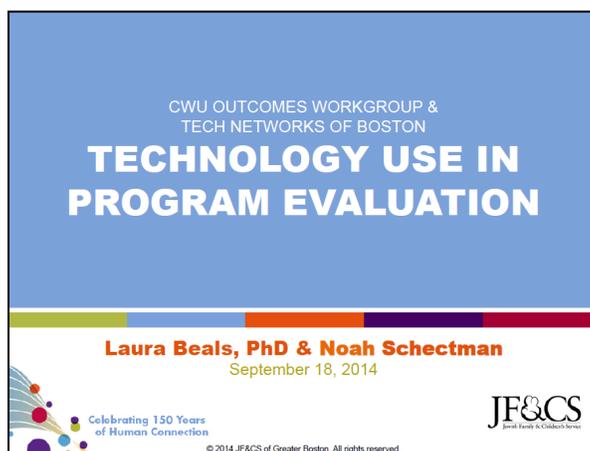
Determine evaluation scope and scale, as well as resources available, in order to choose the best technology. These takeaways are important when choosing which type of technology will support your

organizations evaluation plan. The evaluation plan is a logic model progression will help illustrate key goals and functional features your organization needs, which will help in determining a technology.

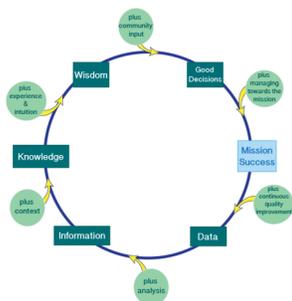
## Technology Use in Program Evaluation Cont.’

Noah’s presentation was focused on strategies for implementing a technology system once it has been decided. He stressed the importance of high quality data, staff buy in, and facilitating monitoring. High quality data is the foundation of each stage of program evaluation; it is uniformed, complete, and accurate. When data is missing, then analysis loses its statistical power. A helpful method in collecting high quality data is to use a custom interface that not only has the ability to use the staff’s language but also gives the staff everything they need in their data collection process. Staff buy in will help integrate the database into work process. When staff and managers depend on reports in the database for day to day operation, it provides the strongest motivation to keep data accurate in complete, it creates an intrinsic motivation for staff to keep high quality data. Finally it is important to facilitate monitoring of the data, we are all human and errors can be made. By creating tools that make it easy for staff and manager to monitor the quality of the data it fosters stronger data.

[If you missed this past Outcomes Workgroup meeting or would like to take another look at Laura & Noah’s slides, click here or the image below to access a pdf version of their slides and a list of resources.](#)



## Additional Resources



OUTCOMES	Methods	
	RIGOROUS E.G. LARGE, RANDOM SAMPLE	RELAXED E.G. SMALLER DATASET, IMPERFECT SAMPLING
AGNOSTIC ANY FINDING IS USEFUL/USABLE.	Scholarly & actionable research • Academic research • Major internal decision-making • Budgeting	Shareable content • Quick blog posts • Attention-getting infographics
INVESTED DATA IS ONLY USEFUL/USABLE IF IT SUPPORTS A SPECIFIC POSITION OR APPROACH.	Influencer projects • Government submissions • Grant applications and reports	Campaigns and outreach • Issue campaigns • Reports for a general audience

Let’s call it the Wisdom Cycle: Further adventures in clarifying the role of data in a mission-based organization

Does Rigorous Data Analysis Thwart Effective Storytelling by Non-Profits?

**Deborah Elizabeth Finn, Strategist and Consultant**

**Beth’s Blog**

### SAVE THE DATE

Next Workgroup Meeting is scheduled for:  
*December 11th, 9:30-11:30 AM*  
 CWU Boston Office  
 One Washington Mall

