OUTCOMES WORKGROUP

meeting notes

June 1st, 2017

THIS SESSION

Creating Data Cultures

Pieta Blakely—

Blakely Consulting LLC

SAVE THE DATE

Next Outcomes Workgroup Meeting:

September 14th, 2017

EMPath
One Washington Mall, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Creating Data Cultures

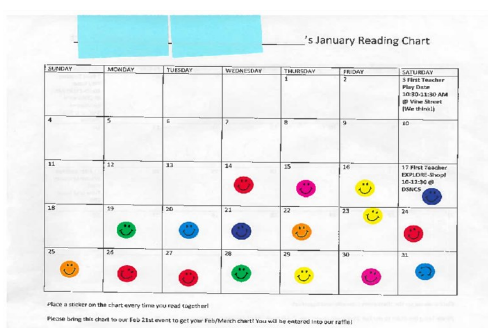
The June Outcomes Workgroup met at EMPath's downtown offices, and focused on creating data cultures in non-profit organizations. **Pieta Blakely** shared some insights about what she has learned in terms of successful data collection and increasing buy-in around data.

PIETA BLAKELY

Principal, Blakely Consulting LLC

Creating Data Cultures, an Overview

Pieta Blakely started the session by providing the group with an overview of the importance of data. At a basic level, she believes that we have an ethical responsibility to collect and use data in the non-profit sector in order to better serve marginalized populations. Furthermore, she spoke about the importance of providing usable tools for participants. Here is an example of a way to track reading to one's child:



Pieta also strongly advised researchers to conduct data analysis with the tools that they already have access to and that do not require additional work on behalf of participants and program staff. This 'additional work' is referred to as data tax. She advises us to be creative in what we are doing with what we already have as data analysts.

Pieta then provided some potential frameworks that researchers can use to conceptualize data collection.

Potential Frameworks

- Dashboard/Scoreboard
- Leading/Lagging
- Performance Measure/Indicator
- Output/Outcome

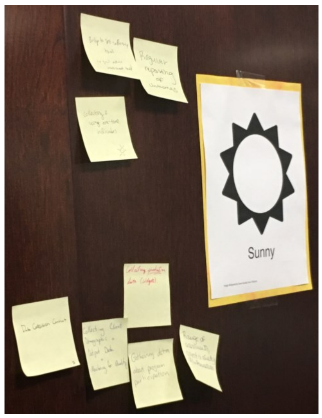
In addition, Pieta mentioned two of the questions that internal evaluation should seek to answer:

1. Am I doing what I said I would do — Is the program being implemented in fidelity to the model?
2. Is the program doing what I thought it

Small Groups: Data for Decision Making

would do? — Is anybody better off?

The session included a small group activity where people were asked to rate their organization in terms of its relationship to data– what is 'rainy,' 'sunny,' or 'cloudy' about their particular organization's data practices? Participants listed examples of what they thought were "rainy", "cloudy", and "sunny" areas and hung them in the



appropriate space on the wall.

Pieta was able to categorize the responses received as follows:

- Collecting data and getting the right data
- Using data for needs assessment; what's the problem and what's the right funding?
- Frameworks, logic models, data for decision making
- Analysis turnaround time (evaluation capacity)

Next, individuals were instructed to choose a table that piqued their interest and discuss the corresponding topic. The Data for Decision Making table came up with many interesting insights. At that table, one woman expressed being struck by the fact that she was the only program person in the room. She reminded us that data needs to help programs first so that they are on board with collecting and entering it into the organization's database. Additionally, we discussed how important it is to make sure that program staff take ownership of the data. This, in conjunction with program supervisor buy-in, helps immensely in promoting and strengthening data cultures.

In conclusion, the group left with the reminder that data collection must be kept simple, relevant, and usable in order to increase buy-in and promote a data-informed organizational culture. We thank you for your insights, Pieta!

Increasing Buy–In: Tips and Tricks

One of the principle strategies that Pieta spoke about in regards to increasing data-related buy-in is to ensure that program mentors and program supervisors design their own metrics. Here are some questions that can facilitate this process:

1. **What is the problem in the world that we're solving?**
2. **How will __ look when we're done?**
3. **Who does our program serve?**
4. **Can we write what our organization does on a bumper sticker?**
5. **What metrics can we use to help evaluate our**

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to attend this session of Outcomes Workgroup! We hope that the discussion and activity prompted some reflection that you can take with you back to your respective organizations. We look forward to our next meeting!

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September 14th, 2017