

Gathering an evidence base
for value-laden decisions
out of the frying pan and into the ...

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research
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The people I work with

- ◆ Research New Zealand – a private research and evaluation
- ◆ Public sector and NGO clients
- ◆ Communities

- ◆ Evaluation team
- ◆ Māori evaluators
- ◆ Literature review team
- ◆ Social research teams



Evaluation work – a little background

- ◆ Work across a range of topics
- ◆ Across health, addiction, rehabilitation, social services, education
 - ◆ Behavior change
 - ◆ Safety/rehabilitation
 - ◆ Special needs
 - ◆ ‘Priority populations’ (Māori, Pacific peoples)
- ◆ For our evaluations we do a lot of multi method work
 - ◆ Literature reviews
 - ◆ Outcomes hierarchies/logic models (outcome measures)
 - ◆ Data collation and analysis
 - ◆ Case studies, interviews
 - ◆ Surveys



High quality programmes

- ◆ Unusual innovative solutions
- ◆ Local needs
- ◆ Local skills and assets



The meaning of 'success'

- ◆ Depends on the values used to judge success
 - ◆ Effective and efficient use of resources - accountability
 - ◆ Innovative
 - ◆ Accessible priority groups
 - ◆ Culturally appropriate



Judgments of value or worth

- ◆ Contemporary evaluators
- ◆ Judgments based on evidence base
- ◆ Success indicators according to stakeholders
- ◆ Best practice or Good practice
- ◆ Expert evaluator
- ◆ 'Expert' on sector
- ◆ Judges programmes against own knowledge base or values



What is best or good practice?

- ◆ Best practice – based on evidence in the literature
- ◆ Accepted good practice – locally, across the sector
- ◆ Literature filtered through:
 - ◆ professional training
 - ◆ developments based on experience
 - ◆ culturally mandated/expected adaptations



We really need a literature review

I know what I am doing

Right, this is what we need to look for...

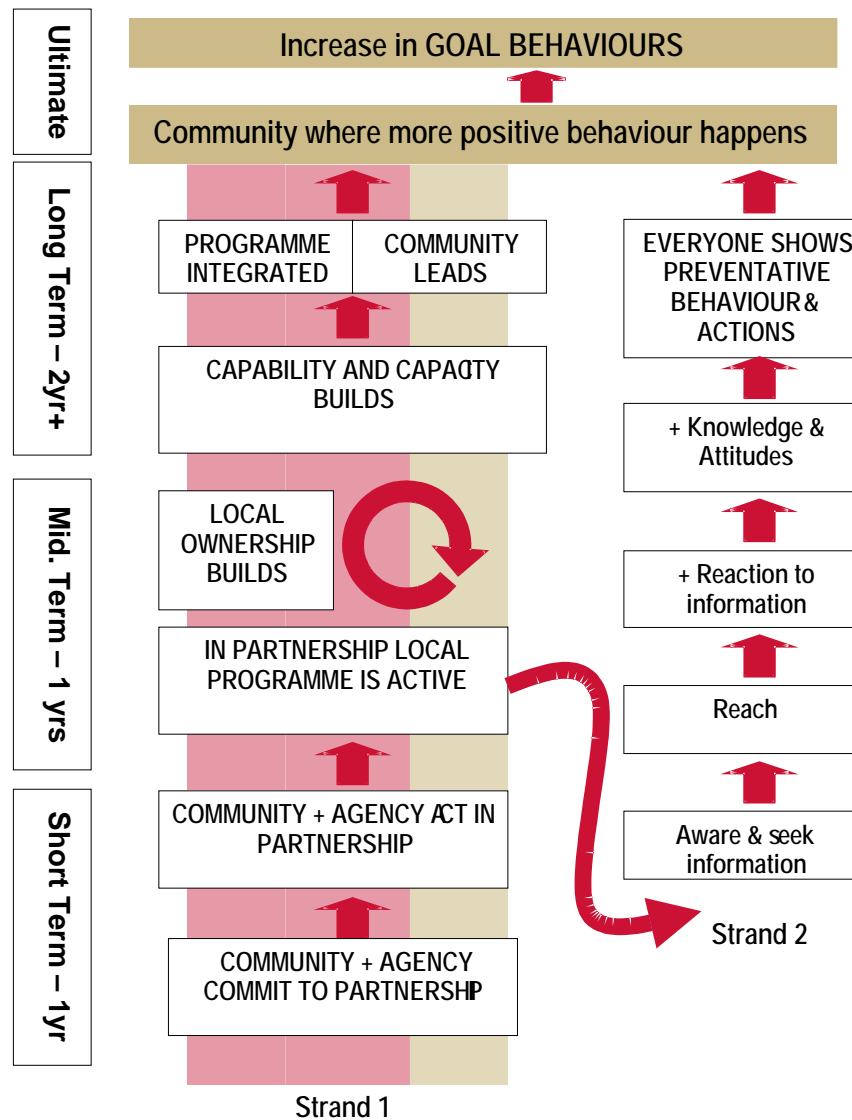
... best practice is...



Logic models

- ◆ Hierarchy of outcomes
- ◆ Logic diagrams
- ◆ Detailed logic models





Typically we use more than a diagram

- ◆ Strategic context
- ◆ Diagrams and details of outcomes
 - ◆ Intended outcomes of the programme (long term and intermediate)
 - ◆ Processes
 - ◆ The inputs and outputs
 - ◆ Success indicators
- ◆ Assumptions and mediating influences
- ◆ Stakeholders (users/planned uses)
- ◆ Methodology (bibliography)



Literature is invaluable

- ◆ Details of theory of change for the programme/intervention
- ◆ Formative evaluation (best practice)
- ◆ Process evaluation – checklist

- ◆ Focused nature and quality of evaluations
- ◆ And ... our credibility



Whose values does this promote?

- ◆ Is this good evidence to judge our programmes?
- ◆ So much literature is
 - ◆ Eurocentric
 - ◆ Mono-cultural in focus
- ◆ This literature does not transfer well
- ◆ We have unique local communities
- ◆ Different social, economic, cultural and political environments



***What is good
evidence for our
communities?***



***Whose values
count?***



Does it depend on what we want to know?

◆ Values depicted in the
international literature

OR

◆ Local values and
imperatives



Does it depend on what we want to know?

◆ Values depicted in the international literature

OR

◆ Local values and imperatives

◆ Local knowledge - what is locally accepted good practice

- ◆ Accessible
- ◆ Culturally appropriate



What is good evidence for us?

Not anecdotes and hunches

- ◆ Our communities cannot be guinea pigs
- ◆ Consider
 - ◆ Drug education programmes
 - ◆ Suicide prevention programmes
- ◆ Or consider behaviour change (addiction) programmes for disadvantaged groups



All knowledge has value

- ◆ All knowledge has value given a specific circumstance
- ◆ Approach of systematic reviews Campbell collaboration and Cochrane Review



Best practice ... in the real world comes about ... based on the values and skills of a high quality, adequately resourced, provider being in synergy with the needs and expectations of their ... local community



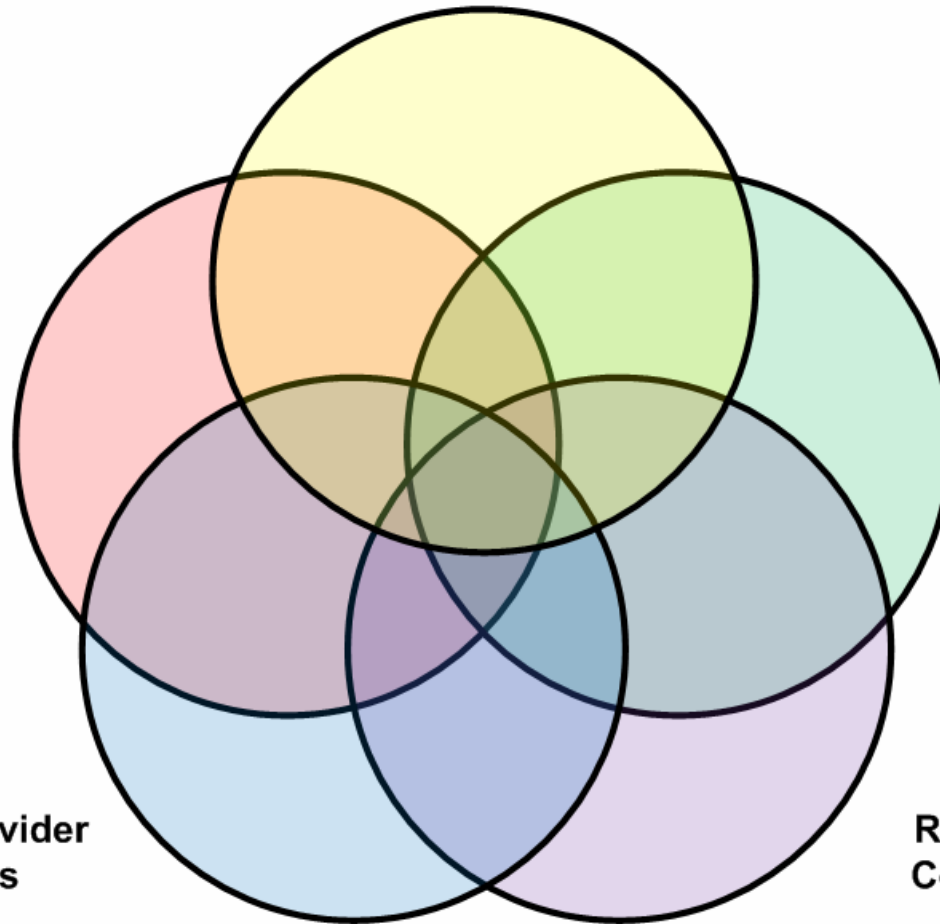
**Clients Needs,
Preferences**

**Efficacy,
Effectiveness**

**Practitioner
Knowledge, Skill**

**Programme/ Provider
Goals, Values**

**Resources,
Constraints**



Adapted from: Gibbs (2003), Davies (2004).
Cited by Littell, J (2008)



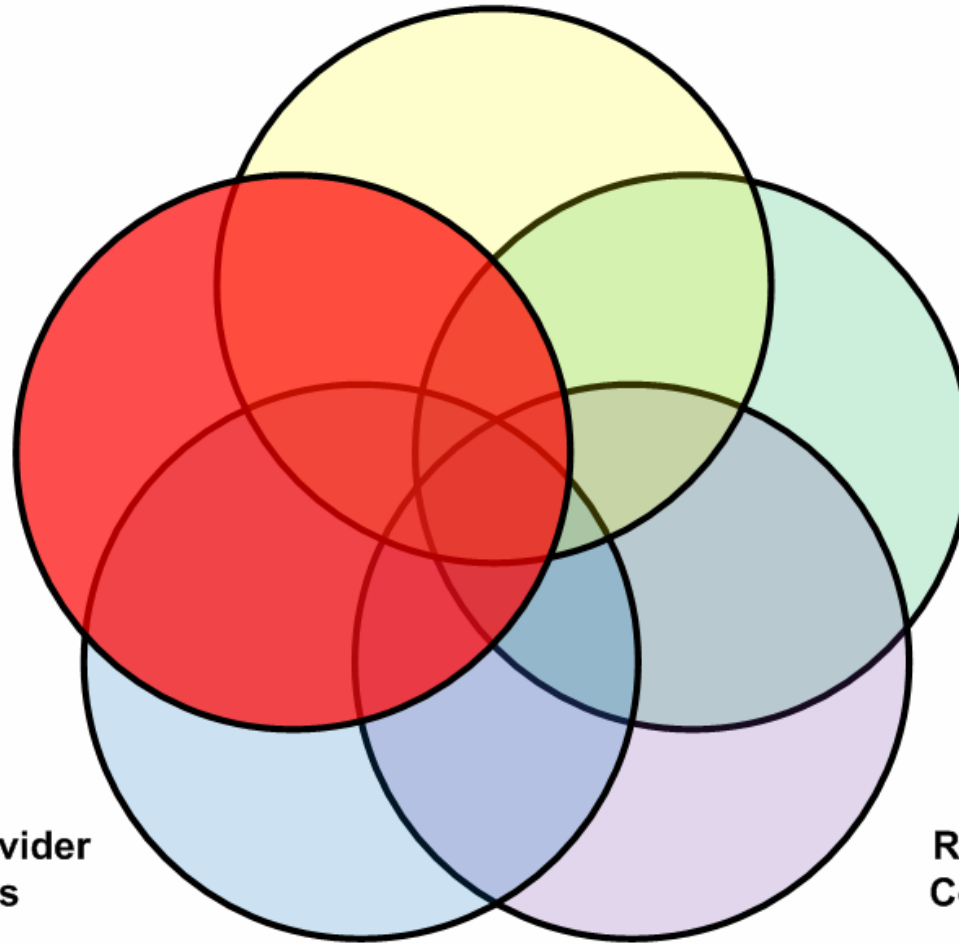
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Clearly, we must value many forms of knowledge

- ◆ Work our literature much harder
- ◆ Be innovative and more inclusive of the range of information
- ◆ Cannot do a 'quick scan'
- ◆ A thorough 'standard' search as well as for the 'grey' literature



Search techniques

- ◆ Information specialists/librarians
- ◆ Tailor the scope - answer specific questions
- ◆ Search local research clearing houses
- ◆ Search topic based clearing-houses
- ◆ Email requests, and use snow balling
 - ◆ sector experts
 - ◆ government agencies
 - ◆ local academics
- ◆ Search conference proceedings – identified via experts
- ◆ Advisory group of academics (local writers) to source local literature



Analysis of literature

- ◆ interviews with local topic experts
 - ◆ researchers
 - ◆ providers of services
 - ◆ seek documents
 - ◆ describe good practice
- ◆ local analysis/interpretation
 - ◆ quotes and commentary
 - ◆ integrity of different information (opinion vs. published literature)
- ◆ Advisory group review drafts or write/draft sections
 - ◆ sections on cultural adaptation



Dearth of literature

- ◆ Need to write more
- ◆ Share more about what is working in our communities
- ◆ Write about using 'proven' models
- ◆ What worked and what failed
- ◆ Strategies to make this happen
- ◆ Lots of clearing houses – information needs to be released and shared



Final thoughts

- ◆ Defensible, robust evidence base
- ◆ Local expectations and local innovative solutions
- ◆ Without careful balance, these can derail a quality evaluation
- ◆ The evaluation may have no real value to any of the stakeholders
OR at worst
- ◆ The evaluation has no rigor and cannot adequately assess the quality (or safety) of the programme



**Any questions
or comments?**



Discussion

- ◆ What other possible options are there for grounding our literature reviews/evidence base?
- ◆ What other types of information gathering could be better for listening/valuing local knowledge?



Discussion

- ◆ What other formats should be used that truly present the values and expert knowledge of local practitioners?
- ◆ How do we stop ourselves from moving too far towards anecdote and hunch, in local contexts?
- ◆ What types of information inquiry are best left to being based on the international 'evidence-base', and why?





NZ in October





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