

Evidence Based Evaluation: Telling the Story of Your Camp

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Overview

Reasons for evaluation

Barriers and solutions

Small group discussion

Ideas and resources



A photograph of three young women laughing and splashing in the ocean. The woman in the foreground on the right is covering her mouth with her hand, while the other two are behind her, also laughing. The image is darkened to serve as a background for text.

Frontloading

- AH-HA moments?
- Most relevant tips?
- One thing you're going to do?
- Questions you still have?



Why Evaluate?

Building an evidence base

Why evaluate?

- Make programs better!!
- Ensure you are achieving your mission and goals
- Build your organization's credibility and become more competitive
- Document changes in youth that can be shared with stakeholders
- Develop systems that support ACA/organizational accreditation

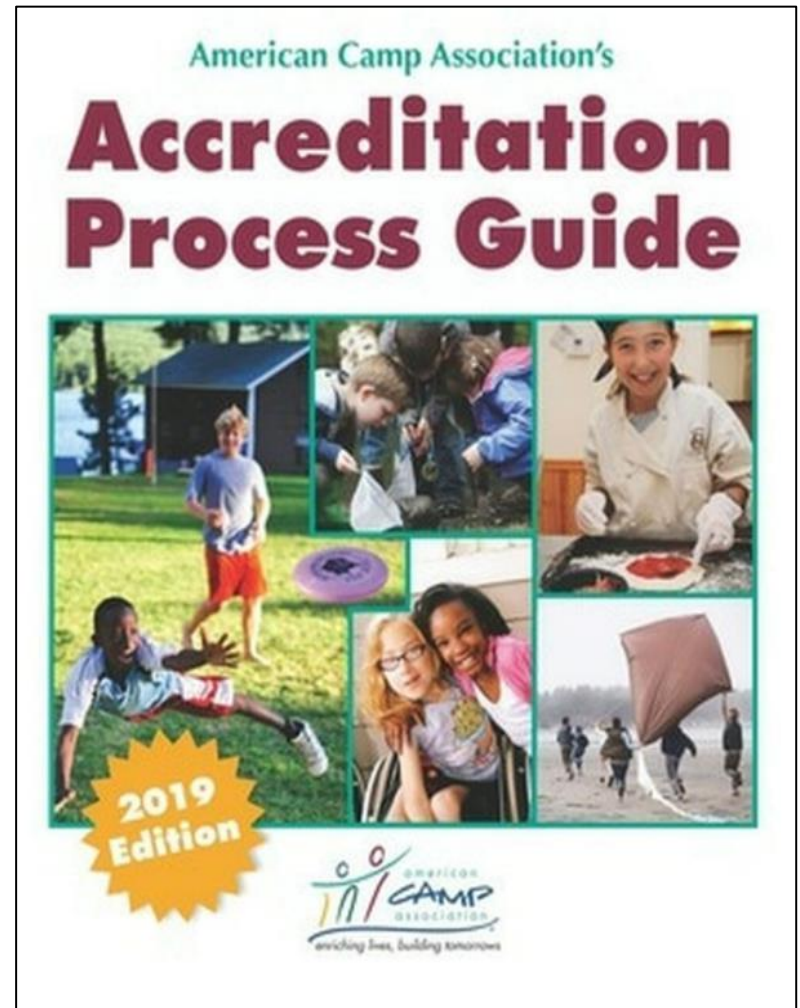
Why evaluate?

Core Standards

“The camp should have a written statement of goals, identify measurable outcomes, train staff to help campers achieve them, and inform parents and campers of these intended outcomes.”

Administration: Program

“AD.31 Camp Experience Evaluation: Camps should have an evaluation system that includes at least three sources of feedback to determine whether the stated goals/outcomes are met and is applied to improve the quality of the camp experience.”

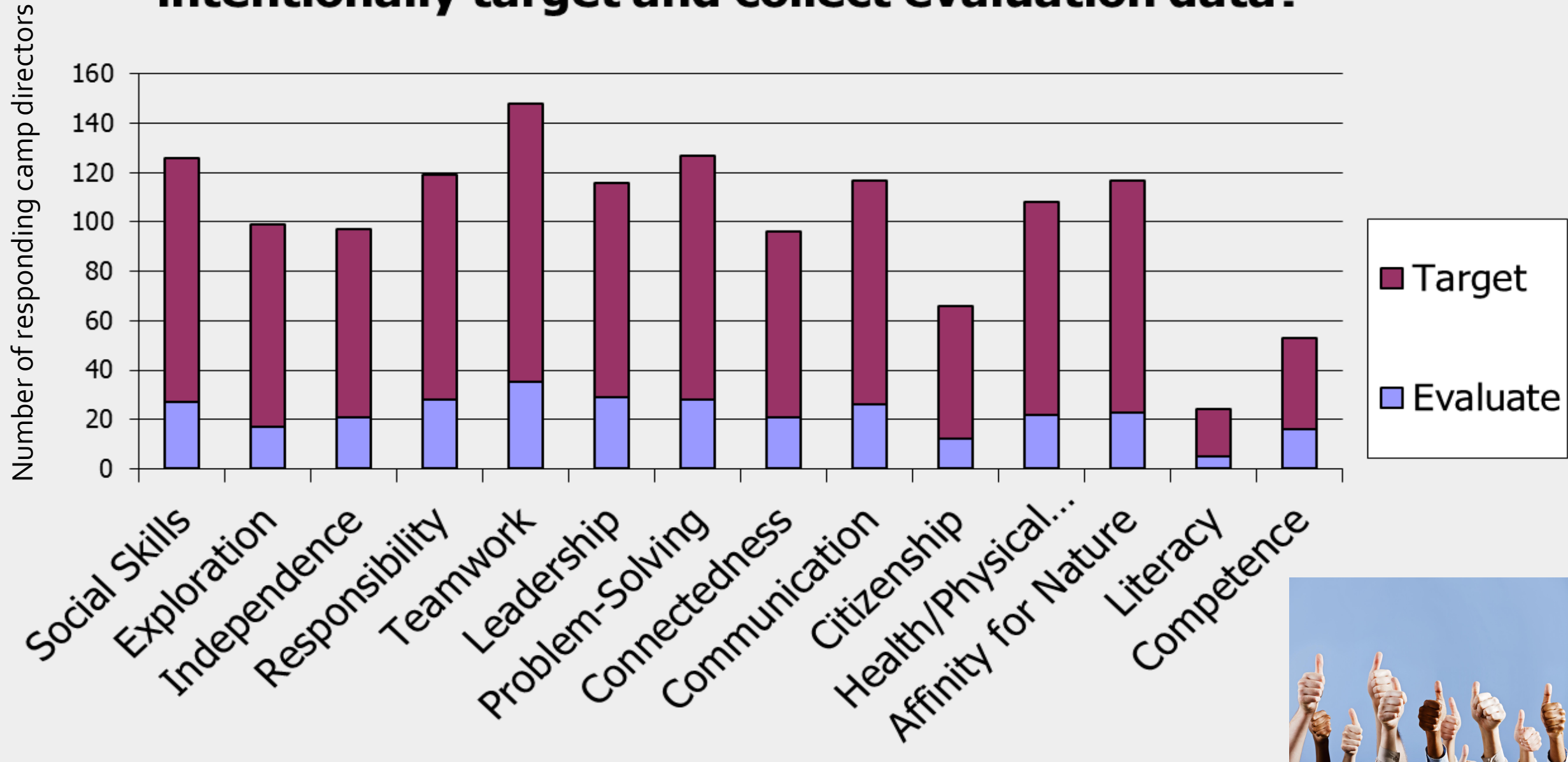


"IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE SOMETHING, YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT. IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT, YOU CAN'T IMPROVE IT."

(DR. H. JAMES HARRINGTON)



For which development outcomes do you intentionally target and collect evaluation data?





Barriers and Solutions

What Tends to work in camp evaluation?



**BARRIER: Lack of organizational history
with evaluation**

Gauge Readiness

- Are you ready to evaluate camp? (This checklist can help.)
- Involve staff in conversations about needed data that would help you improve programs/services, better understand stakeholder needs, and so on.

1.	Do you have a camp mission statement?
2.	Are camp staff trained to understand your camp's mission ¹ statement?
3.	Do you think parents are aware of your camp's mission? Are parents informed of your camp's mission?
4.	Do you have written goals ¹ and objectives ¹ for your camp?
5.	Are camp staff trained to understand and implement the goals and objectives of your camp?
6.	Are parents informed of your camp's goals and objectives?
7.	As part of camp orientation, do you inform your campers of your camp's mission statement, goals, and objectives?
8.	Is your camp accredited or thinking about meeting the standards of accreditation? Does your camp currently meet the requirements for camp standard PD-6 (Camp Goals and Outcomes), and camp standard PD-7 (Camp Experience Evaluation)?
9.	Have you ever surveyed or interviewed your campers, staff, or parents?
10.	Do you involve others in helping you to evaluate your camp program?



BARRIER: Not sure where to start



“The important and difficult job is never to find the right answer, it is to find the right question”

(Peter Drucker)

Begin With Good Questions

Program questions

- What are my top 3 programs, and which programs underperform?
- What trends can we identify in our programs and services?

Camper questions

- How do we make youth better? Are there times when we make them worse?
- When we impact camper growth and development, how long do those impacts last?

Staff questions

- How can I better prepare my staff for their roles and responsibilities?
- What staff characteristics are most related to positive outcomes in campers?

Parent questions

- Of all the things we do, what do parents care about most?
- What can we do to improve our parent engagement efforts?



Scholarships

A horizontal bar chart with six categories listed on the y-axis: Scholarships, Legacy, Proximity, Reputation, Affordability, and Focus. The x-axis represents percentages from 0% to 70% in 10% increments. The bars are green. The 'Focus' bar is the longest, extending to approximately 65%. The other bars are: Affordability (~11%), Reputation (~11%), Proximity (~8%), Legacy (~4%), and Scholarships (~2%).

Category	Percentage
Scholarships	2%
Legacy	4%
Proximity	8%
Reputation	11%
Affordability	11%
Focus	65%

Legacy

Proximity

Reputation

Affordability

Focus

0%

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%



BARRIER: Lack of evaluation expertise

A large group of diverse young people, mostly students, are posing for a photo in front of a yellow school bus. They are arranged in several rows, some sitting on the ground, others standing. Many are wearing blue t-shirts. Some are making hand gestures like peace signs. The background is slightly blurred, showing the front of the bus and some trees.

Collaborate

- College and university faculty and students can serve as resources collaborators, or consultants
- ACA's online community ("ACA Connect")
- Collaboration elements: equal partners, sensitive to organization needs/history, openness, ability to leverage strengths to overcome weaknesses, clear communication.

BARRIER:
Evaluation hasn't
been a priority in
the past



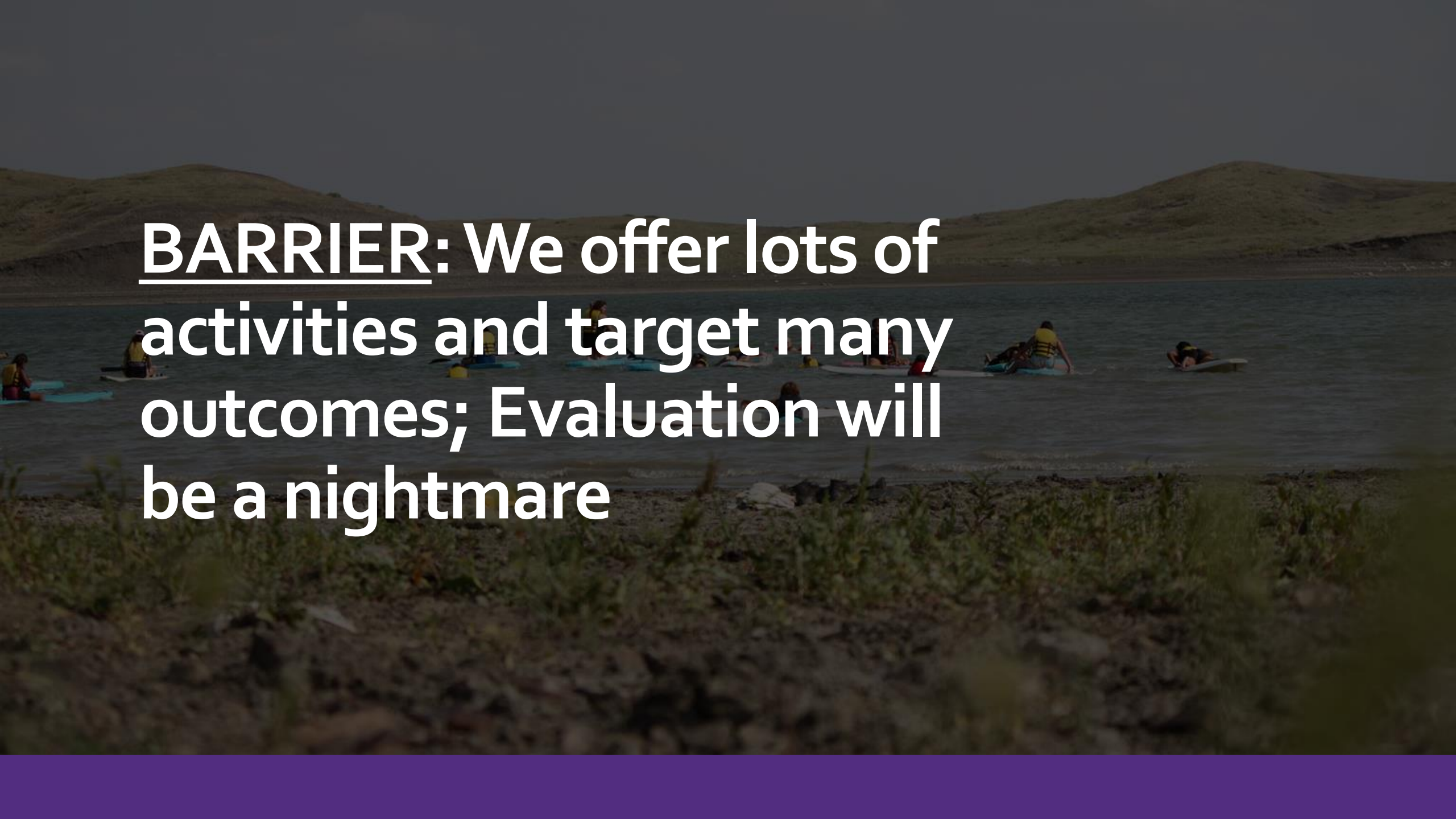
Resource Your Evaluation Efforts

Organizations fund
what they value, and
they **value what they
fund**

Treat evaluation like a
“program area” that
receives appropriate
resources and staff
attention

Identify your needs
well in advance; Begin
with the end in mind



A group of people are kayaking on a calm lake. In the background, there are rolling hills under a clear sky. The foreground shows a rocky shoreline with some green vegetation. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

BARRIER: We offer lots of activities and target many outcomes; Evaluation will be a nightmare



Focus on a Small Set of Outcomes

Don't try to target too many outcomes in one summer. Don't collect data you're not going to use.

Consider your mission as a starting point. What outcomes are most central to your mission? (For example...is satisfaction part of your mission?)

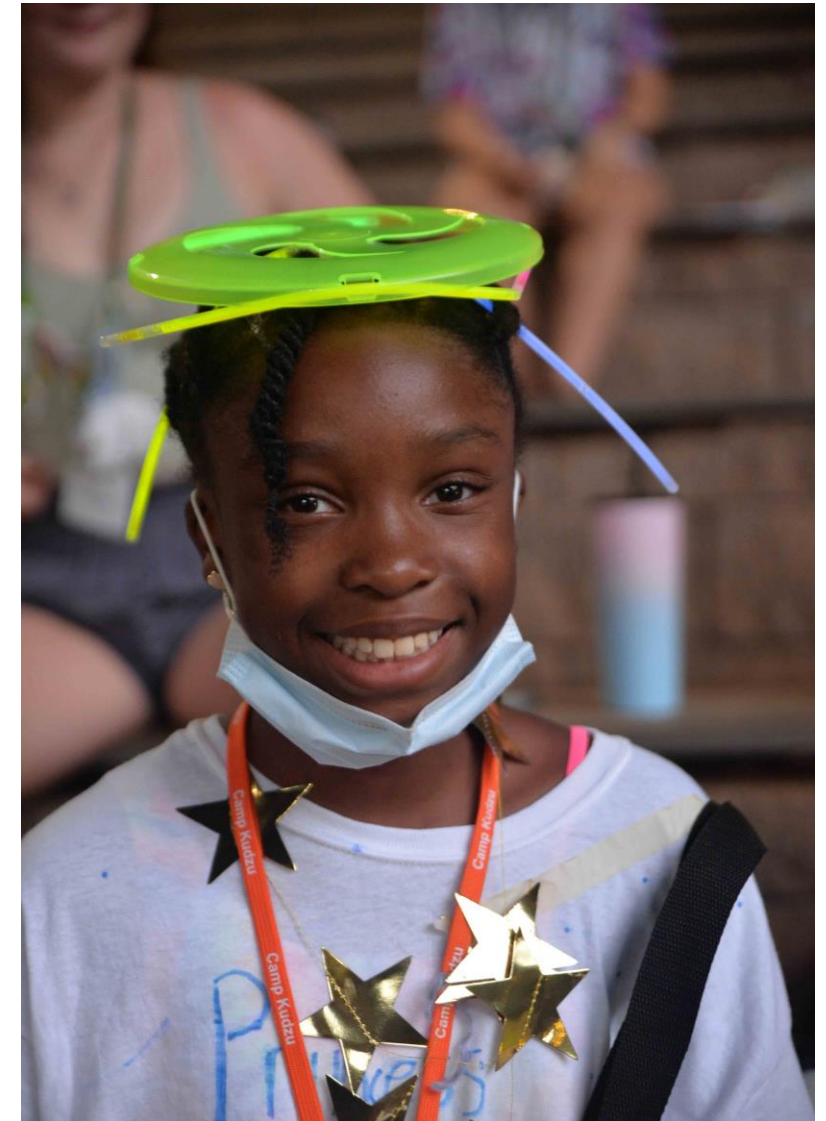
As you think about outcomes, consider the relationship between what staff do and the result for youth participants (i.e., "If staff do this, then campers will....")

Establish Benchmarks

Identify benchmarks as you create your evaluation plan (for your org's evaluation process; for your targeted outcomes)

High-quality camps benchmark their programs with comparable (often exemplary) camps

Create a common jargon and shared understanding of what you want to accomplish. Staff benefit from goals and tangible metrics



BARRIER:
Unsure about
what types of
data we should
collect

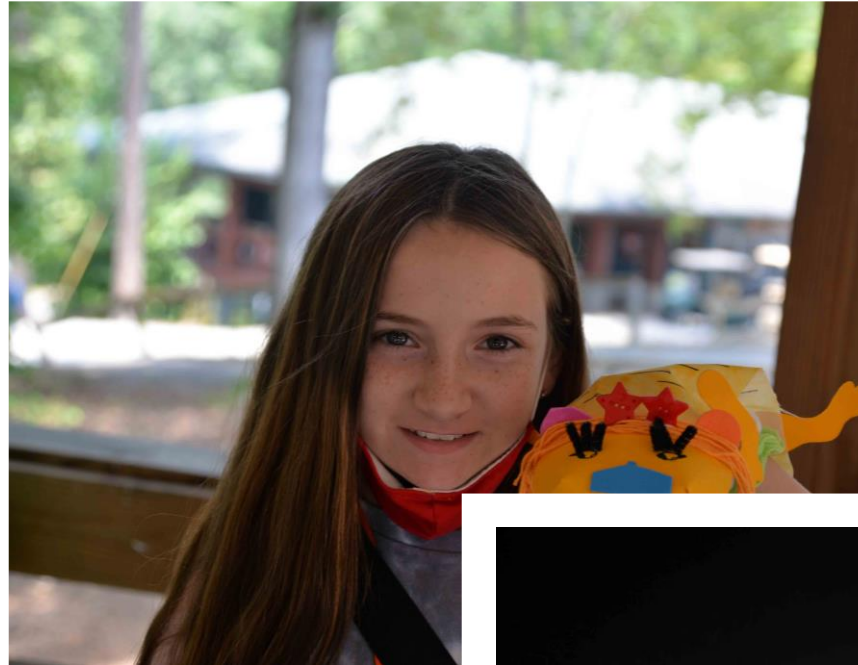


Numbers and Words

Data collection begins with good evaluation questions (see previous point about where to start)

Using numeric scales (quantitative data) as well as open-ended questions or oral responses (qualitative data) can help you answer different questions

Consider your capacity to collect and analyze the data, and then collect what you can manage.



BARRIER:
Our eval form was
created years ago,
but we don't know
how to improve it

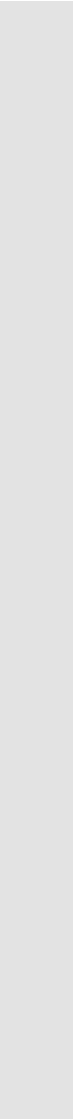


Use Existing Measures

Use existing, previously tested and validated measures, scales, instruments (avoid “redoing the wheel”)

Be careful with customization

If you choose to design your own, do it right. (See previous point about collaboration)



BARRIER:
Evaluation takes
too much time



Focus, Pilot, Simplify

- Evaluation does take time, but it shouldn't overly burden the people you're collecting data from
- Test your measures with small "pilot" groups. Have staff review your measures, as well as individuals outside your organization (look for errors, omissions, confusing or extraneous questions)
- Remove questions that aren't central to your evaluation effort (remember the importance of "good questions"). Shorten your measures and methods as much as possible.

BARRIER:
Stakeholders
(campers, parents,
staff) don't seem to
care about
evaluation



Secure Staff Buy-In

Staff must have buy-in; they are key to the success of any camp evaluation effort

Clearly identify roles and responsibilities

Assign a camp staff who can be a “champion” of the evaluation process

Give staff recognition for their contributions to the process



Engage Your Stakeholders

Tell stakeholders why their input is important, and how they can get involved in the evaluation process. Help them understand how critical they are to the ongoing quality of the camp experience.

Don't rely on only one method of communication for engaging stakeholders in camp evaluation processes...some systems may fail, some are more effective than others

Market your evaluation efforts intentionally (like a separate program)



BARRIER: No one
reads the survey
questions, they just
quickly mark an
answer (or skip it)



Ask Better Questions

Tell them why it matters! How will camp be better because of their feedback?

Assign staff to closely monitor on-site camper survey processes

Provide incentives to encourage quality completion

If you use online surveys, must ensure a fail-safe way to collect email addresses.

Have follow-up processes to give people a 2nd opportunity to respond.



Pay Attention to How your Evaluation is Implemented

A focus on quality and intentionality requires commitment

Don't let great get in the way of good

Administration must support program design and data collection procedures

It is critical that an evaluation plan be implemented by staff as designed (i.e., fidelity)

All the work you do to target outcomes won't matter if the quality of the data is poor or if your response rate is low



Prepare for the Unexpected

Asking questions of your stakeholders may provoke new and unplanned reactions

Some communications may be directed to Spam, Junk, or “Clutter” folders

Surveys might not be printed correctly

Procedures might be forgotten or overlooked

What is your child's gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-Binary

BARRIER: Limited experience with data collection and analysis



Engage a Collaborator or Consultant

Use your collaborator or consultant to help you use the best approach for data analysis given your questions, your method, and the quality of your data.

Web-based tools designed to produce simple results can help



BARRIER: Not
sure how to report
findings in a
meaningful way





BECAUSE OF CAMP KUDZU...

- Camp Kudzu got me T1D ready for college
- Because of Camp Kudzu I can keep fighting and thrive
- Camp Kudzu is the best week of the year
- Camp Kudzu makes me want to manage my blood sugar better and serve others
- Camp Kudzu makes me advocate and communicate better
- Camp Kudzu makes me want to (re)connect with the T1D community
- Camp Kudzu helps me feel less alone

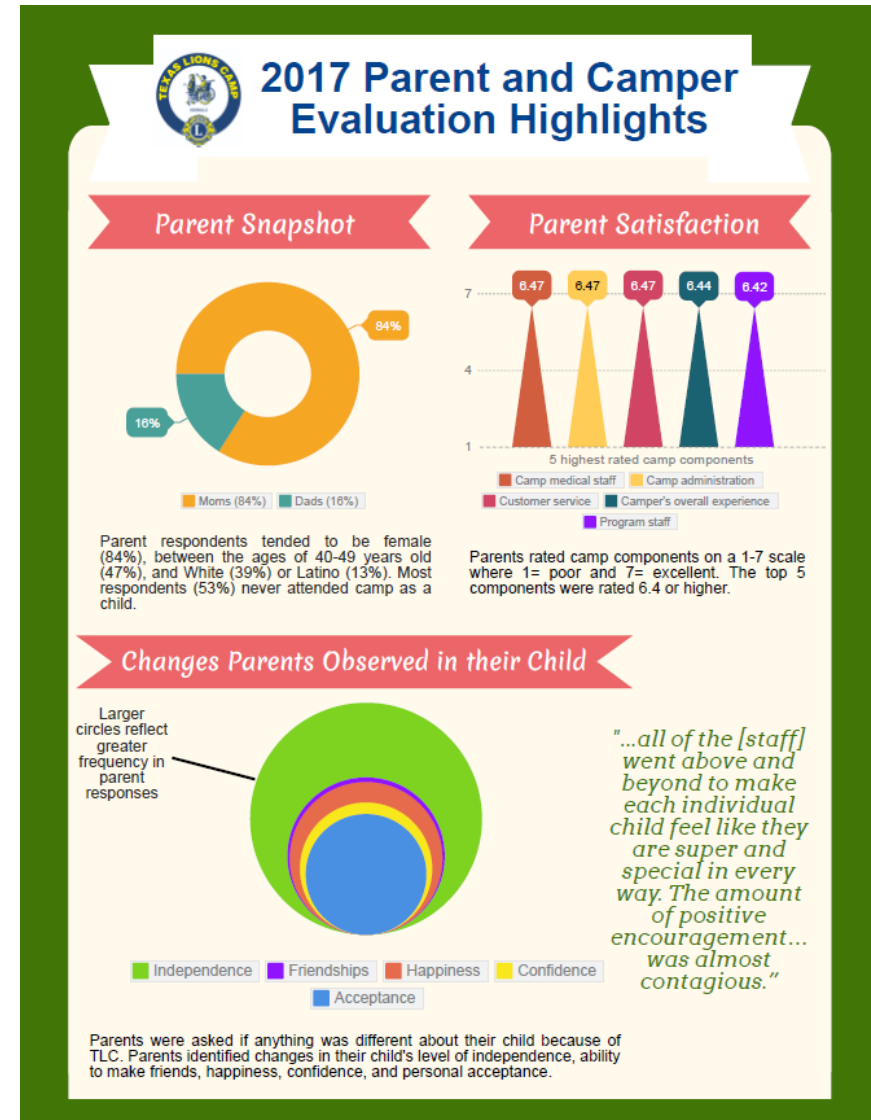
Visualize

Graphically represent your results

Integrate findings with other organizational info: context, history, activities, performance

Highlight key findings to diverse stakeholders

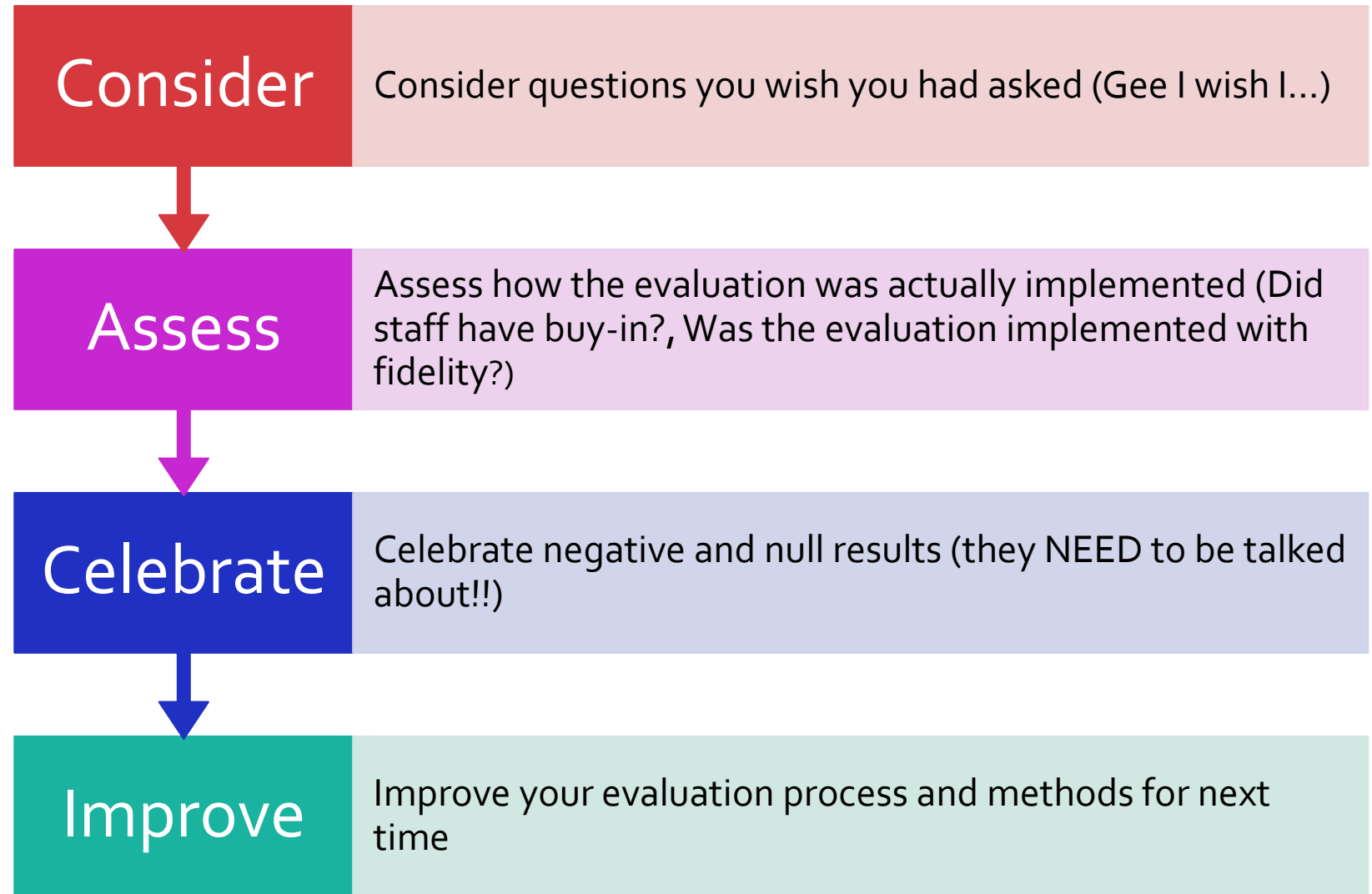
Train yourself: YouTube, Google





BARRIER: We tried evaluation last year, and it wasn't successful

Embrace the Opportunity to Improve Your Organization's Evaluation Processes



What's your plan?

AH-HA moments?

Most relevant tips?

One thing you're going to do?

Questions you still have?

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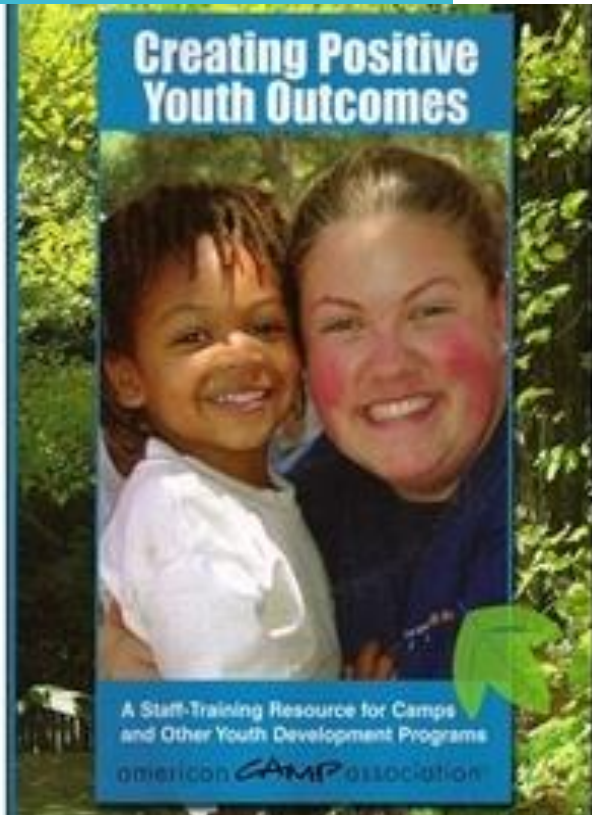
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Resources

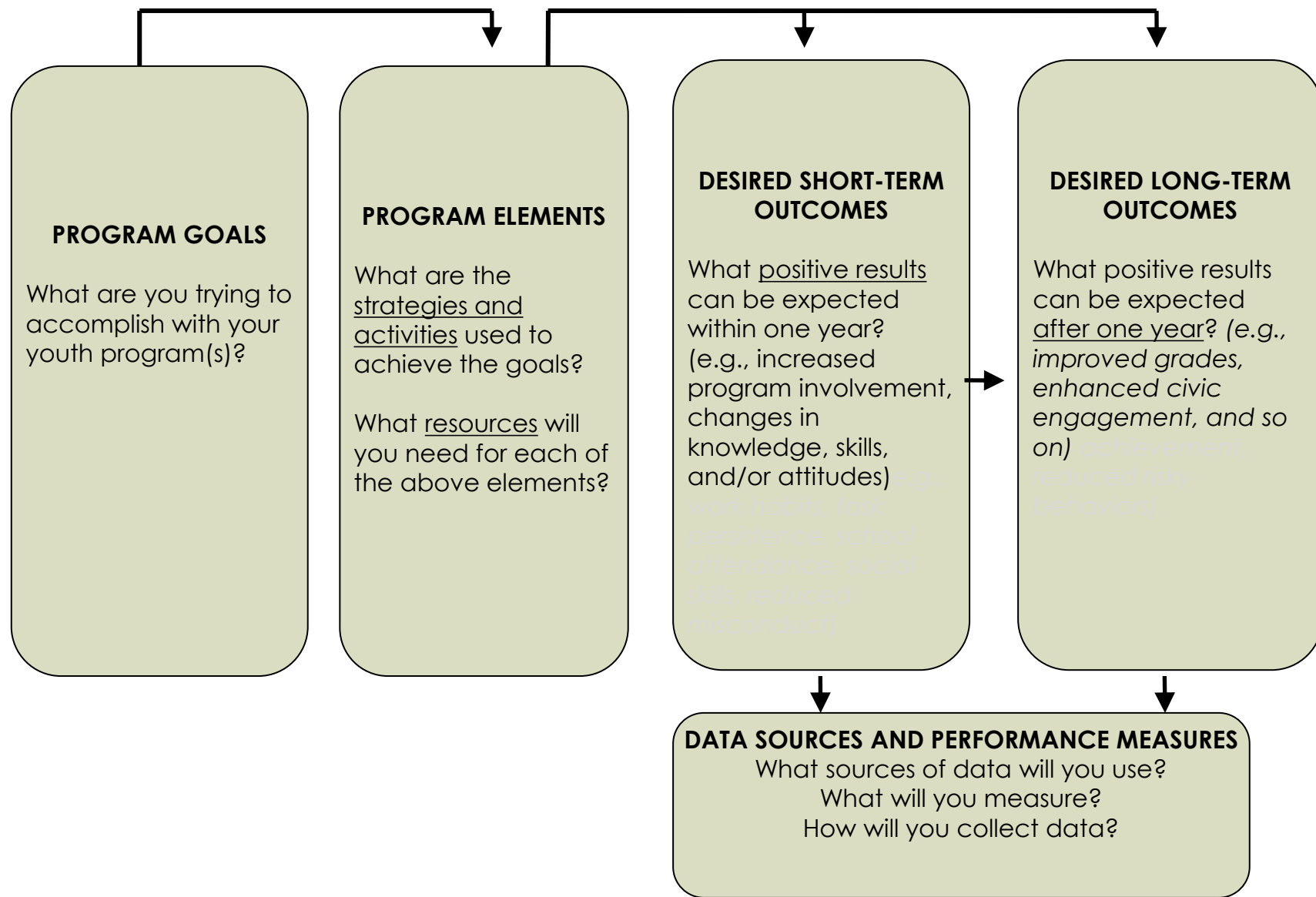
Tools for your Camp evaluation toolbox

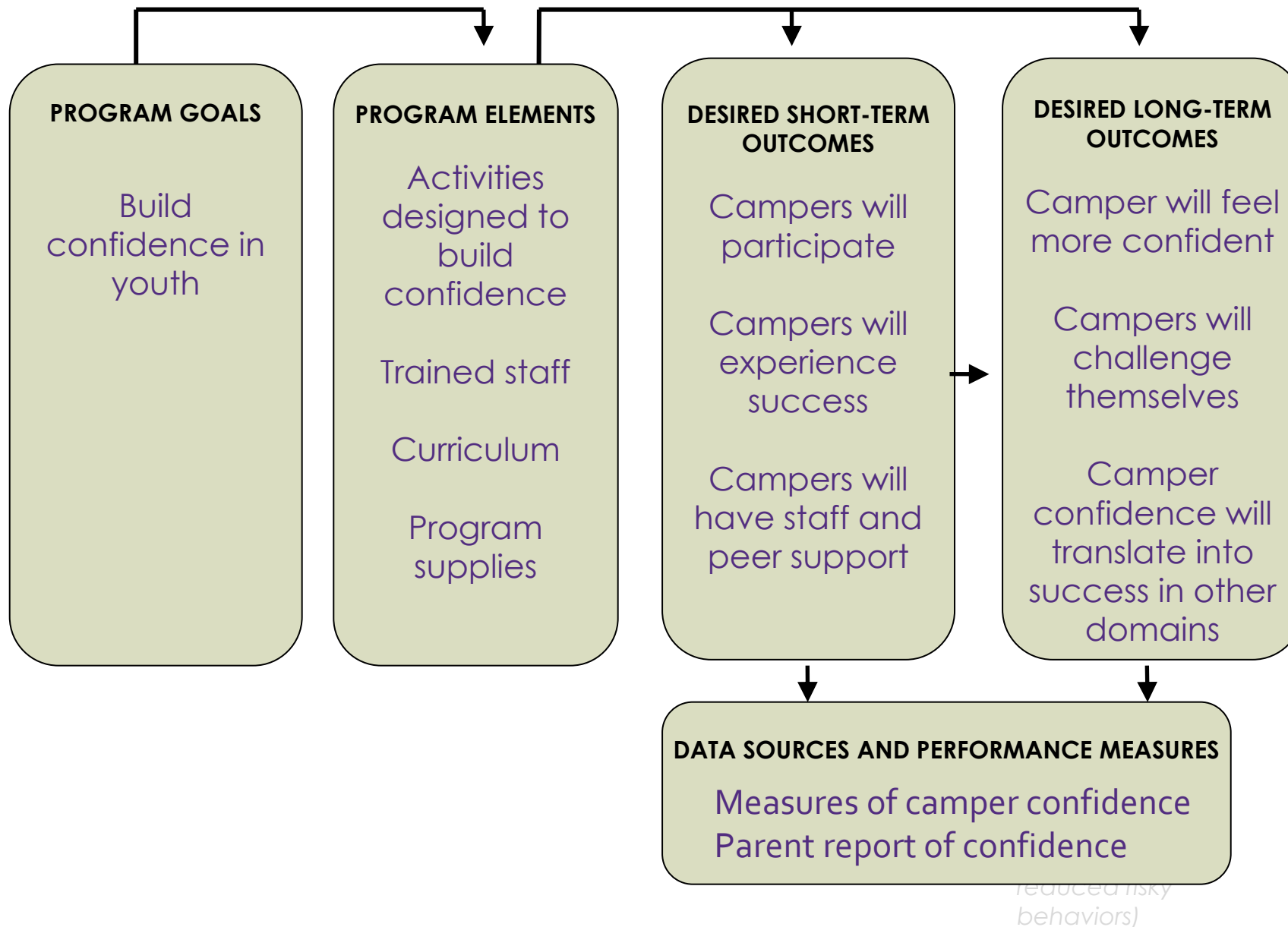




- A 7-step process for program evaluation to help you increase positive youth outcomes.
- A book and resource CD include:
 - the evaluation outline
 - goals & objectives you might target
 - a facilitator's guide for staff training
 - copy-ready checklists and worksheets
 - forms for refining targeted outcomes







Parent Perceptions of Developmental Outcomes (PPDO)

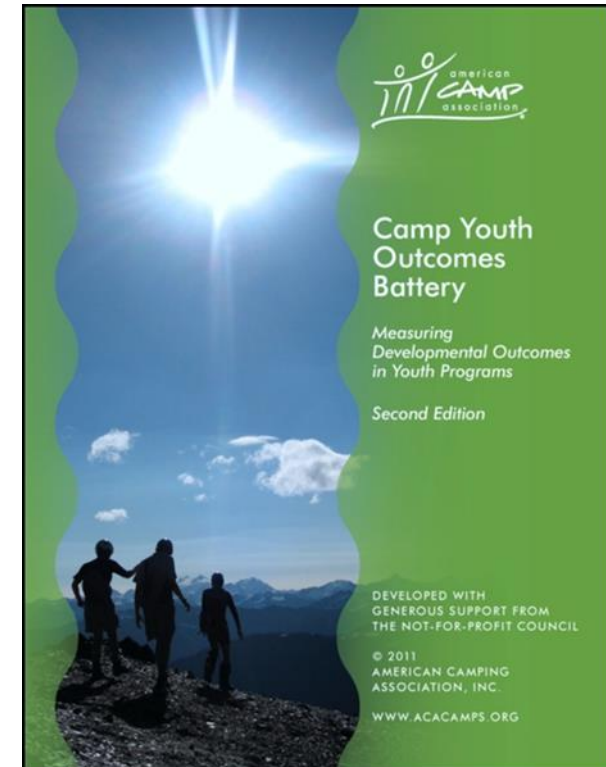
- Validated measure of parents' perceptions of their child's social-emotional development resulting from camp participation in five outcomes (Garst & Gagnon, 2016)
 - Communication
 - Responsibility
 - Self-regulation
 - Attitude
 - Exploration



Self-report scales developed and tested
in camps with youth ages 7 and up

ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery

Affinity for Nature
Camp Connectedness
Friendship Skills
Independence
Interest in Exploration
Problem-Solving Confidence,
Responsibility
Spiritual Well-Being
Teamwork



ACA YOB 2.0!

Measuring Outcomes Just Got Simpler! Introducing YOB 2.0 Analysis Tools!

The basic format of the Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB-Basic) is available online! These measures assess how much youth (10-17 years old) increased on 11 youth development outcomes, allow you to collect data electronically, and automatically produce statistical reports to help you understand your results. This online system:

- Can be set up for quick, easy administration from iPads/tablets if an internet connection is available (eliminates manual data entry)
- Offers easy online manual data entry if outcomes are gathered by paper surveys
- Generates automatic statistical reports and charts
- Produces unlimited customizable surveys based on your camp's needs
- Is simple for youth to complete (each of the scales generally has 5 to 13 questions)
- Includes preset demographics: gender, age, race/ethnicity, years at your camp, session length, and enjoyment.
- Offers up to 10 additional customizable variables on each survey (cabin, session, unit, etc.)



Chart Chooser for Data V



CutCopyFormat Painter

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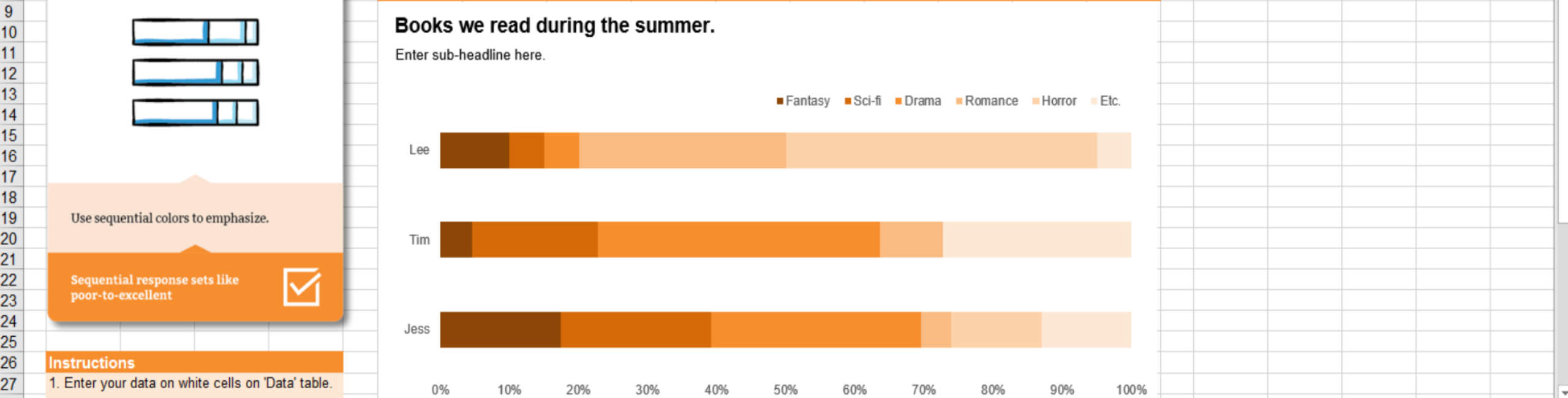
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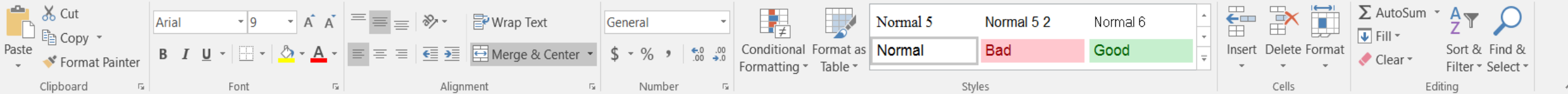
J40

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V

		Fantasy	Sci-fi	Drama	Romance	Horror	Etc.
Jess		4	5	7	1	3	3
Tim		1	4	9	2	0	6
Lee		2	1	1	6	9	1

Chart



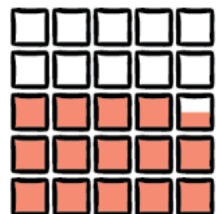


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H27     We sold a lot of chocolate donuts.

Icon array

aka: Pictograph. An icon array displays one shape repeatedly. Some of the shapes are altered in some way (usually by color) to represent a proportion.



Easier to interpret than a pie.

A couple (less than three) of percentages

[illegible]

Chocolate	8.50
Strawberry	3.50
Other	0.50

Chart

We sold a lot of chocolate donuts.

Enter sub-headline here.



Source: (Enter source here.)

Chart Information

Headline	We sold a lot of chocolate donuts.
Sub-headline	Enter sub-headline here.

Instructions

1. Enter your data on the 'Data' table.
2. In 'Chart Information' table, enter headline, sub-headline and source. It will automatically

Clipboard: Cut, Copy, Paste, Format Painter

Font: Arial, 9, Bold, Italic, Underline, Text Color, Background Color

Alignment: Wrap Text, Merge & Center

Number: General, Currency, Percentage, Decimals

Styles: Normal 5 2, Normal 6, Normal, Bad

Cells: Insert, Delete, Format

Editing: AutoSum, Fill, Clear, Sort & Filter, Find & Select

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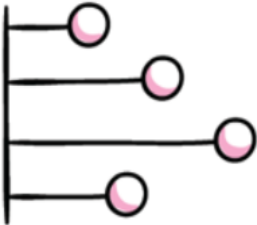
H31 Source: (Enter source here.)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Lollipop

Emphasizes interpretation by the position of the lollipop head.



Visually less dense alternative to a bar chart, great for displays with a lot of data.

Check all that apply or a ranking ☒

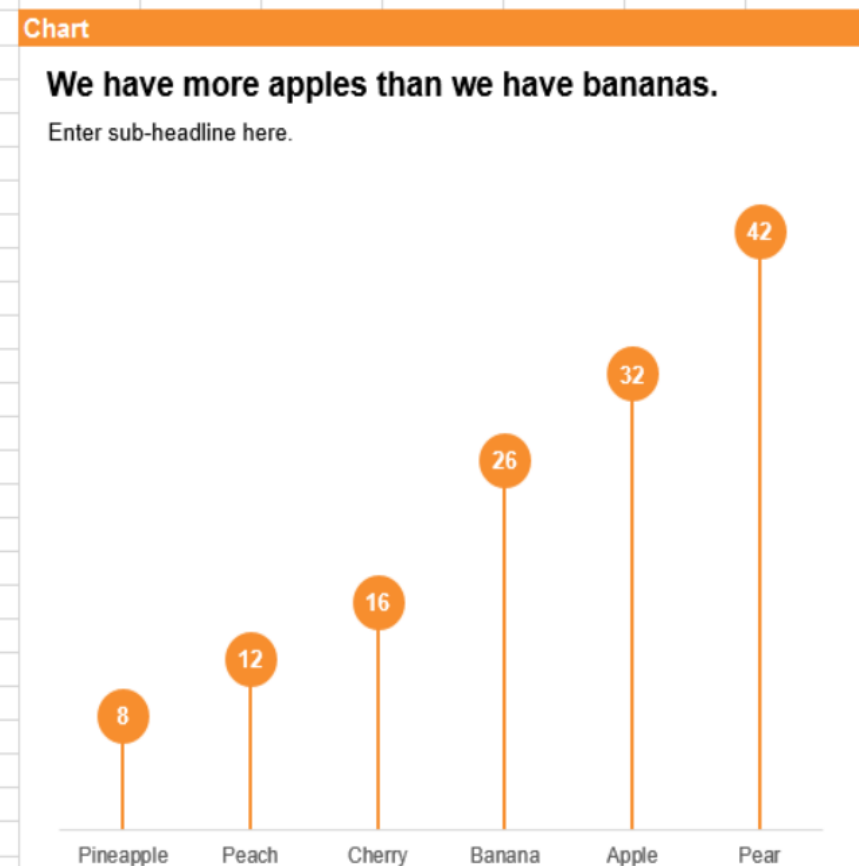
Instructions

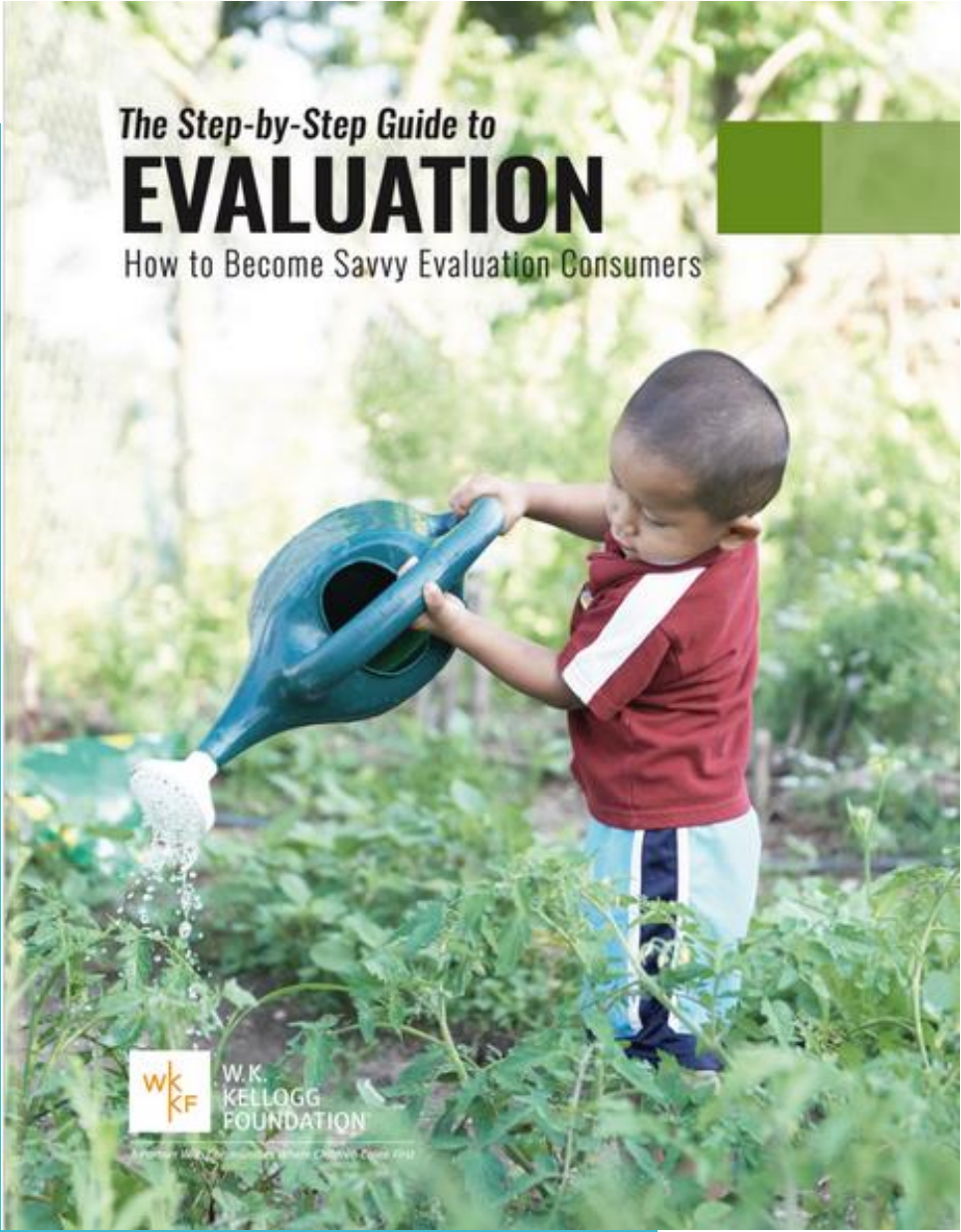
1. Enter your data on white cells on 'Data' table.

Data	
	Quantity
Pineapple	8
Peach	12
Cherry	16
Banana	26
Apple	32
Pear	42

Chart Information

Headline We have more apples than we have bananas.





Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Guide

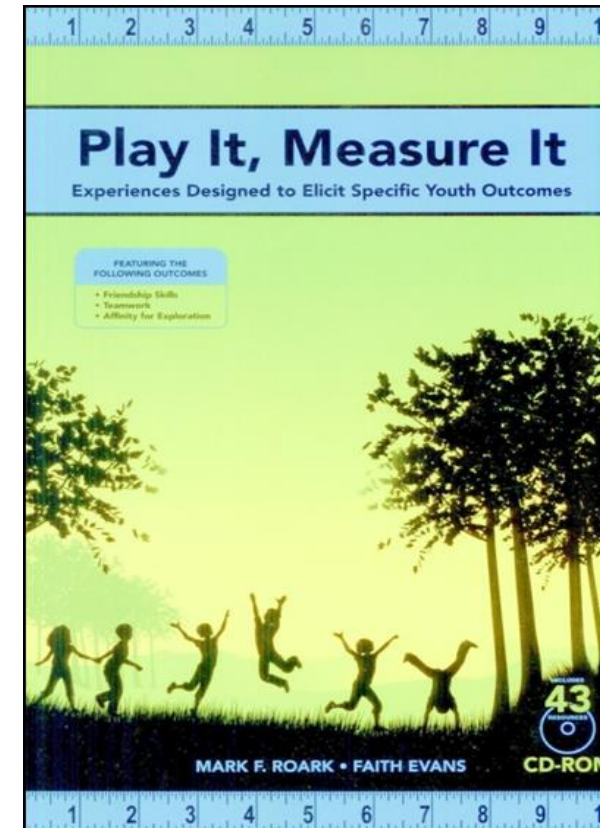


Play It, Measure It

Features three (3) of ACA's outcomes scales
(friendship skills, teamwork, and
exploration)

Ties each outcome area to specific
games/activities that can be played in camp

Sequence of activities that elicit a specific
youth outcome that can be measured using
ACA's YOB



Make a Plan

How will you use what you learned today?

