



IF YOU DON'T DEBRIEF, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN: TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR CAMPERS AND YOUR CAMP

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Overview

Reasons for evaluation

Barriers and solutions

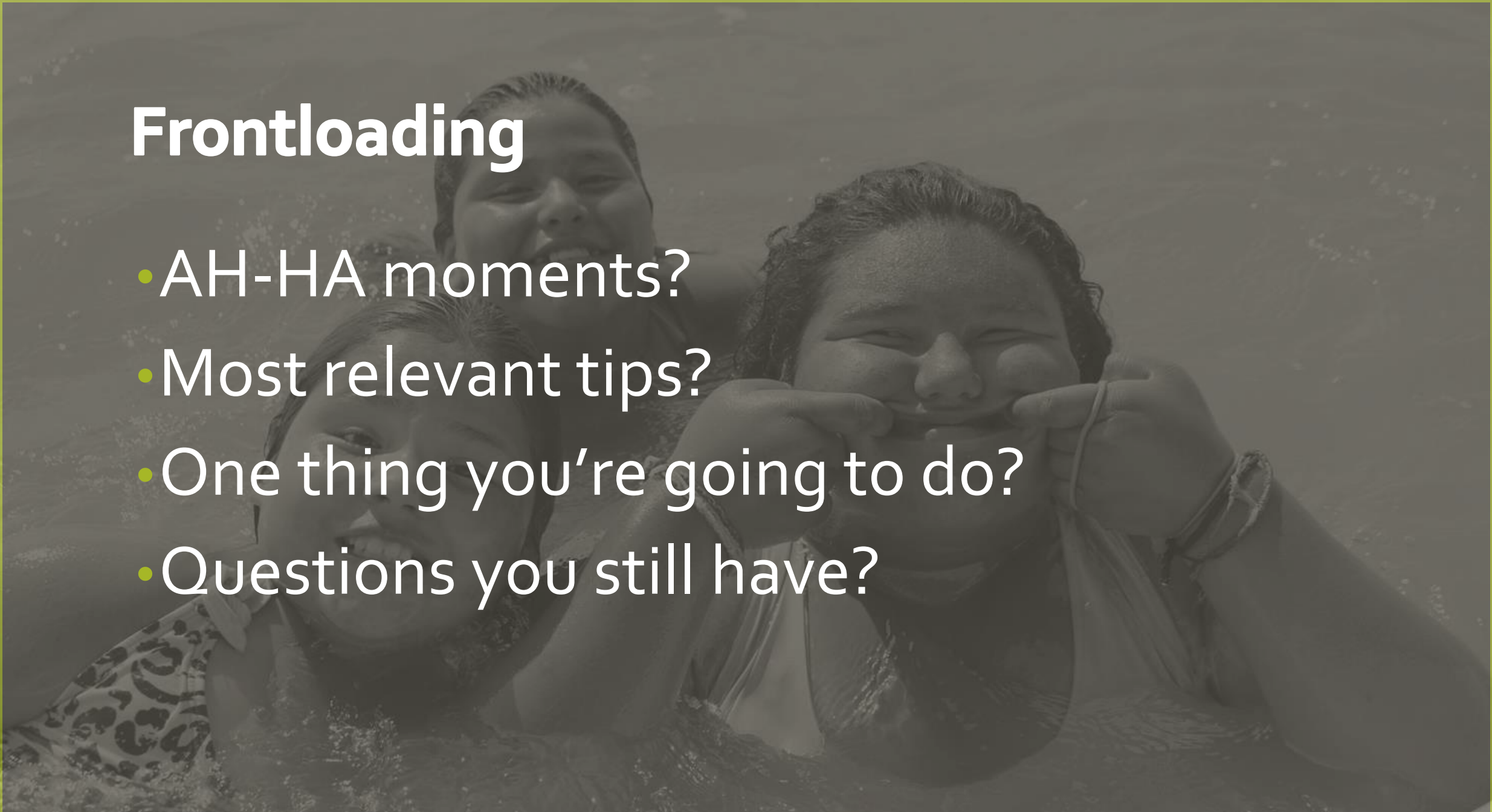
New approaches

Ideas and resource



Frontloading

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

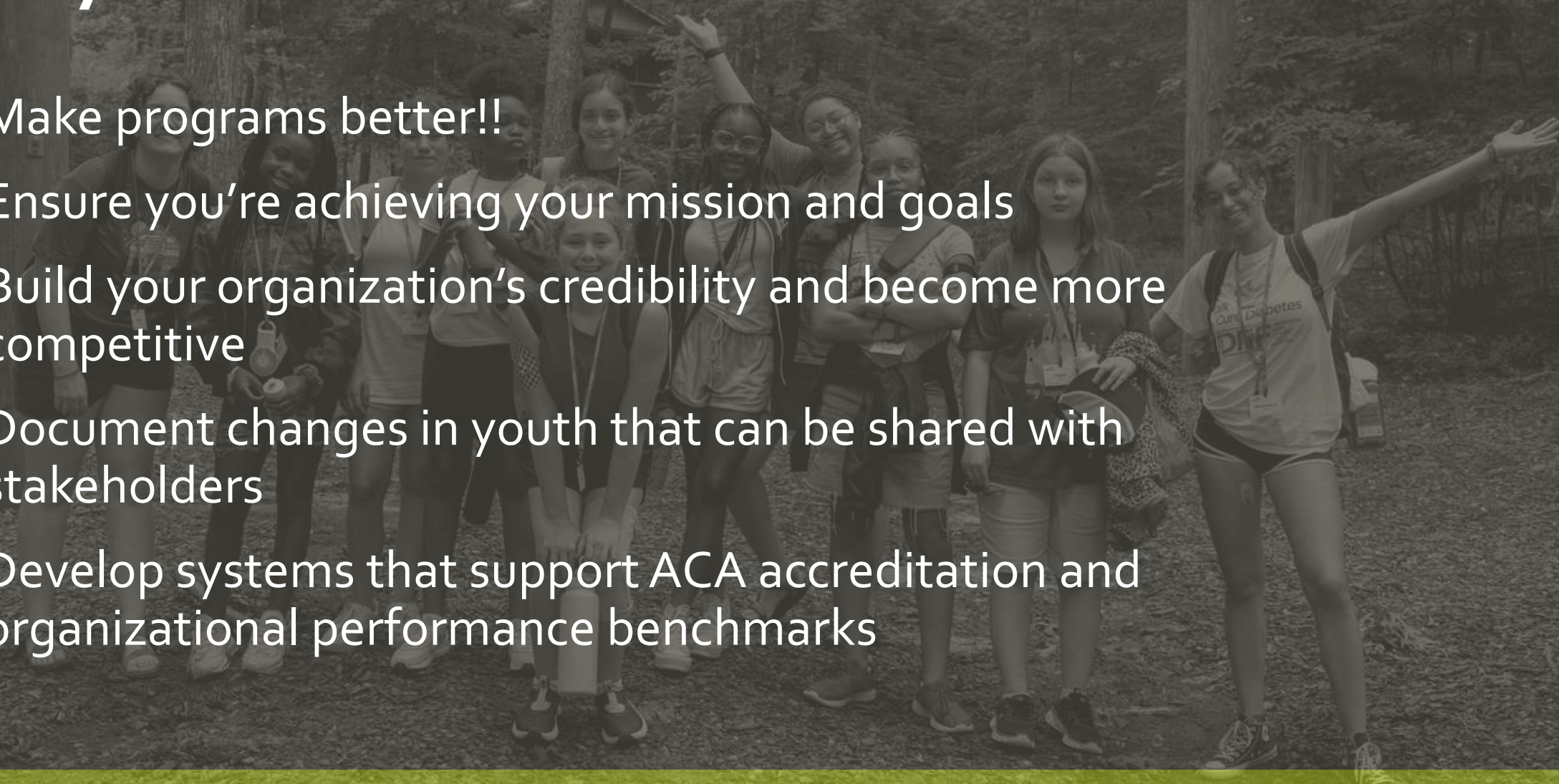


WHY EVALUATE?

Building an evidence base

Why evaluate?

- Make programs better!!
- Ensure you're 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 accreditation and organizational performance benchmarks



American Camp Association's

Accreditation Process Guide



2019
Edition



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

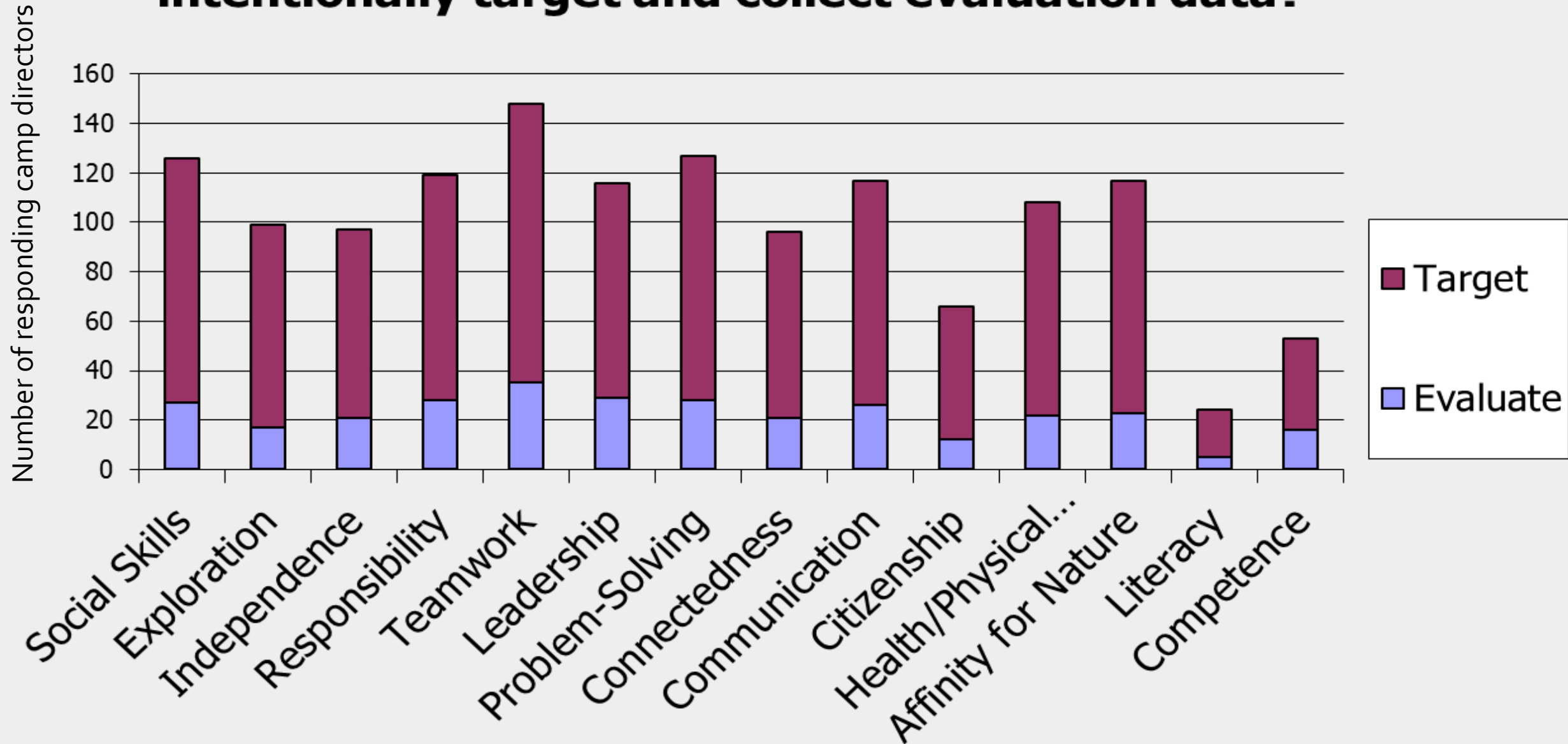
"AD.31 Camp Experience Evaluation: Camps should have an evaluation system that includes at least three sources of feedback to determine whether the stated goals/outcomes are met and is applied to improve the quality of the camp experience."

"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**

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?

Gauge Readiness

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



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, which programs underperform, & which programs are struggling?
- What trends can we identify in our programs and services?

Camper questions

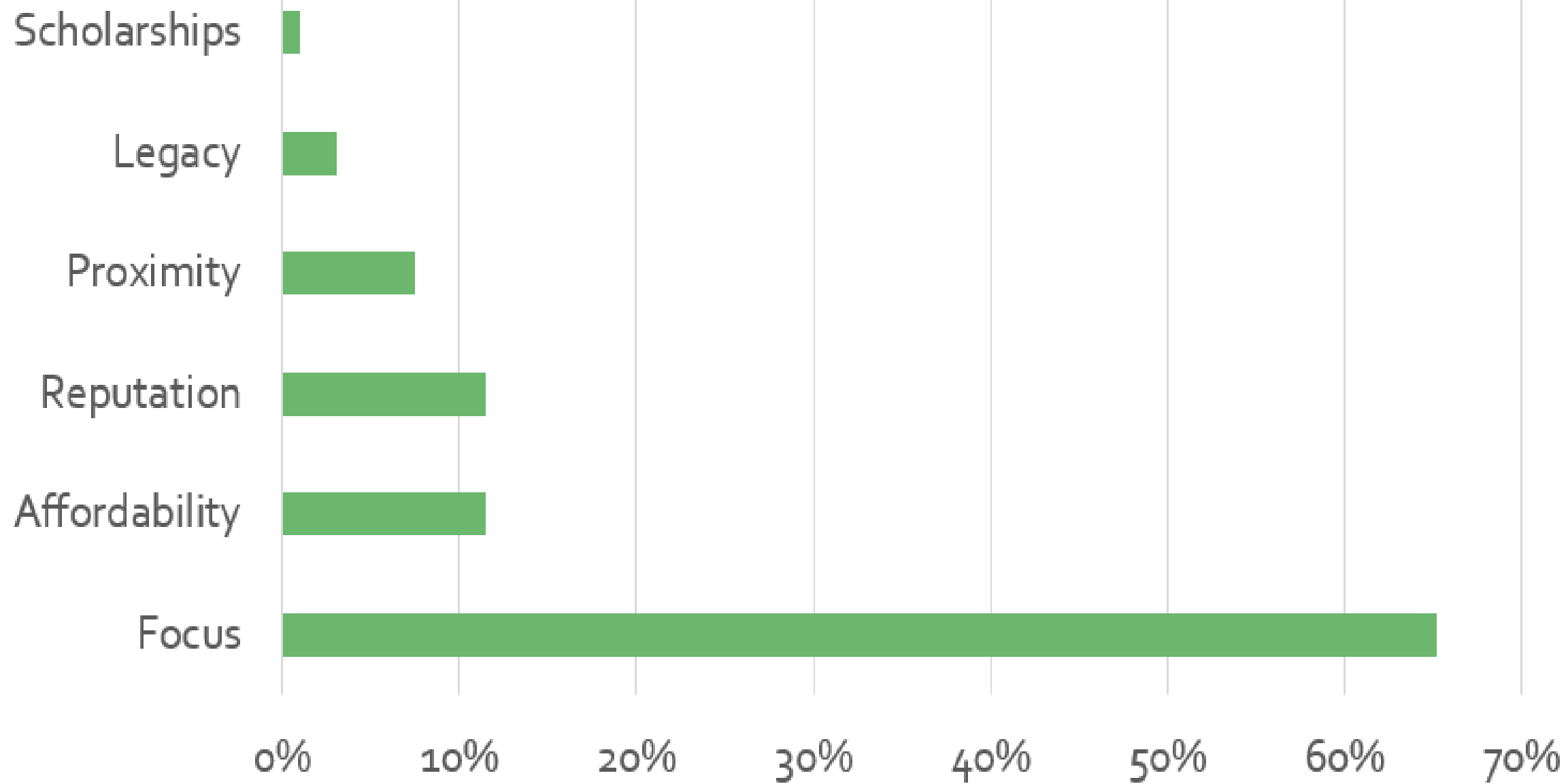
- How do we make youth better? Are there times when we make them worse?
- When we impact camper growth and development, how long do those impacts last?

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 the things we do, what do parents care about most?
- What are parents' "pain points"?
- Are our approaches aligned w/parents' needs?





BARRIER: LACK OF EVALUATION EXPERTISE



Collaborate

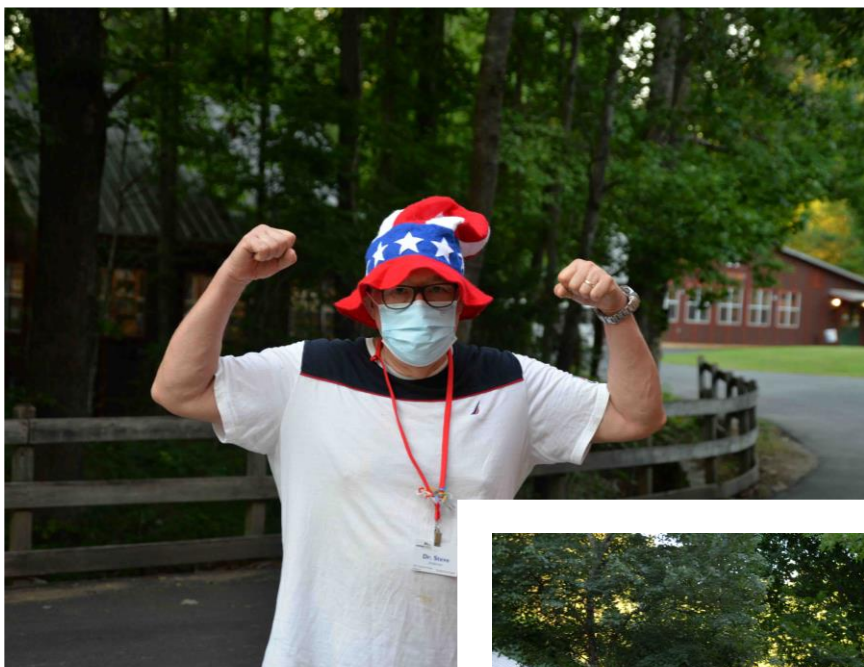
College and university faculty and students can serve as resources collaborators, or consultants

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



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

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

Be

Be careful with customization

Do

If you choose to design your own, do it right.

+ New chat

Cooperation Skills Survey.

Camp Cooperation Assessment

Leadership Assessment Survey

Youth Program Evaluation Thre

New chat

Bootstrapping Explained

Annual Summer Camp Marketi

Clear conversations

Upgrade to Plus

NEW

Dark mode

Updates & FAQ

Log out

ChatGPT



Examples

"Explain quantum computing in simple terms" →

"Got any creative ideas for a 10 year old's birthday?" →

"How do I make an HTTP request in Javascript?" →



Capabilities

Remembers what user said earlier in the conversation

Allows user to provide follow-up corrections

Trained to decline inappropriate requests



Limitations

May occasionally generate incorrect information

May occasionally produce harmful instructions or biased content

Limited knowledge of world and events after 2021

Please design 3 survey questions that assess the development of cooperation skills at a residential summer camp serving early adolescents.





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

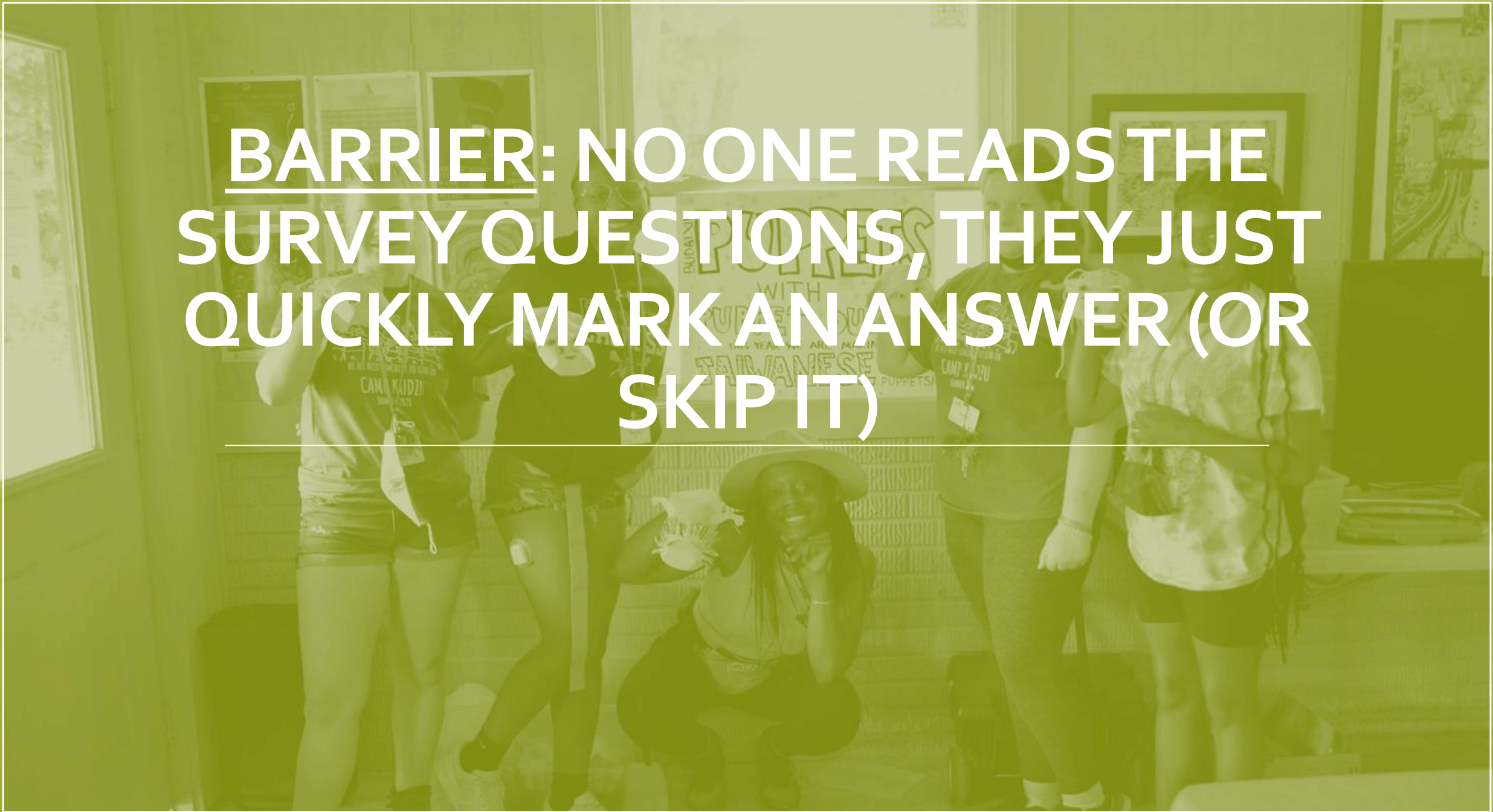
- Staff must have buy-in; they are key to the success of any camp evaluation effort
- Clearly identify roles and responsibilities
- Assign a camp staff who can be a “champion” of the evaluation process
- Give staff recognition for their contributions to the process



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

What is your child's gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-Binary

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



BARRIER:
LIMITED
EXPERIENCE
WITH DATA
COLLECTION
AND
ANALYSIS

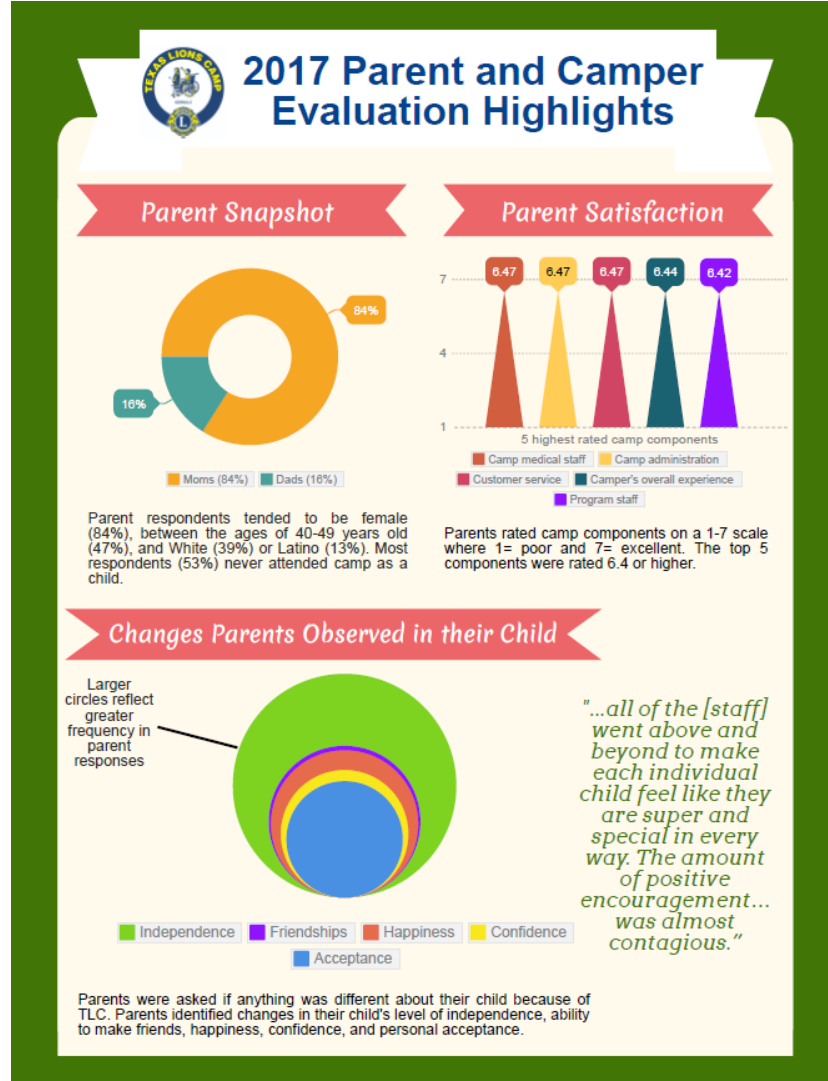


Engage a Collaborator or Consultant

- 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**





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

Consider

- Consider questions you wish you had asked (Gee I wish I...)

Assess

- Assess how the evaluation was actually implemented (Did staff have buy-in?, Was the evaluation implemented with fidelity?)

Celebrate

- Celebrate negative and null results (they NEED to be talked about!!)

Improve

- Improve your evaluation process and methods for next time



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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Presentation available now at:

Ryangagnon.com/presentations



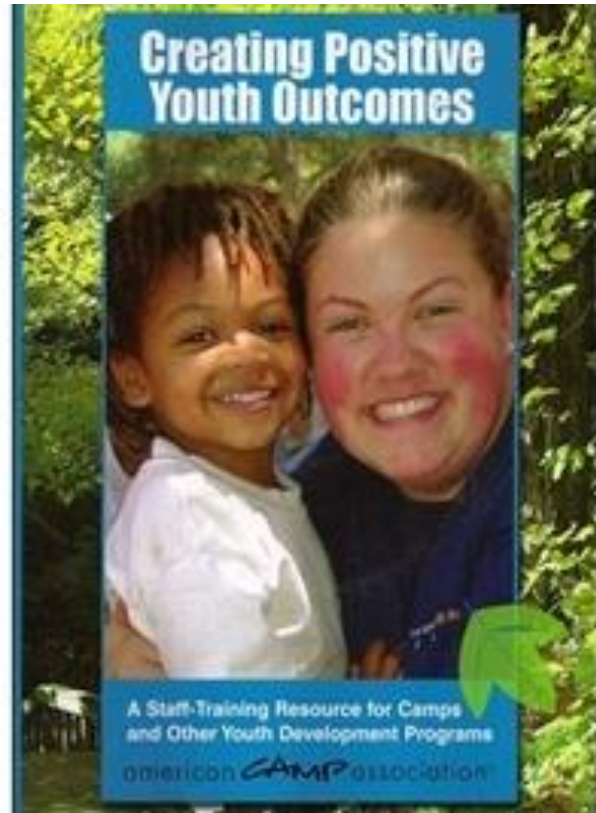
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RESOURCES

Tools for your Camp evaluation toolbox

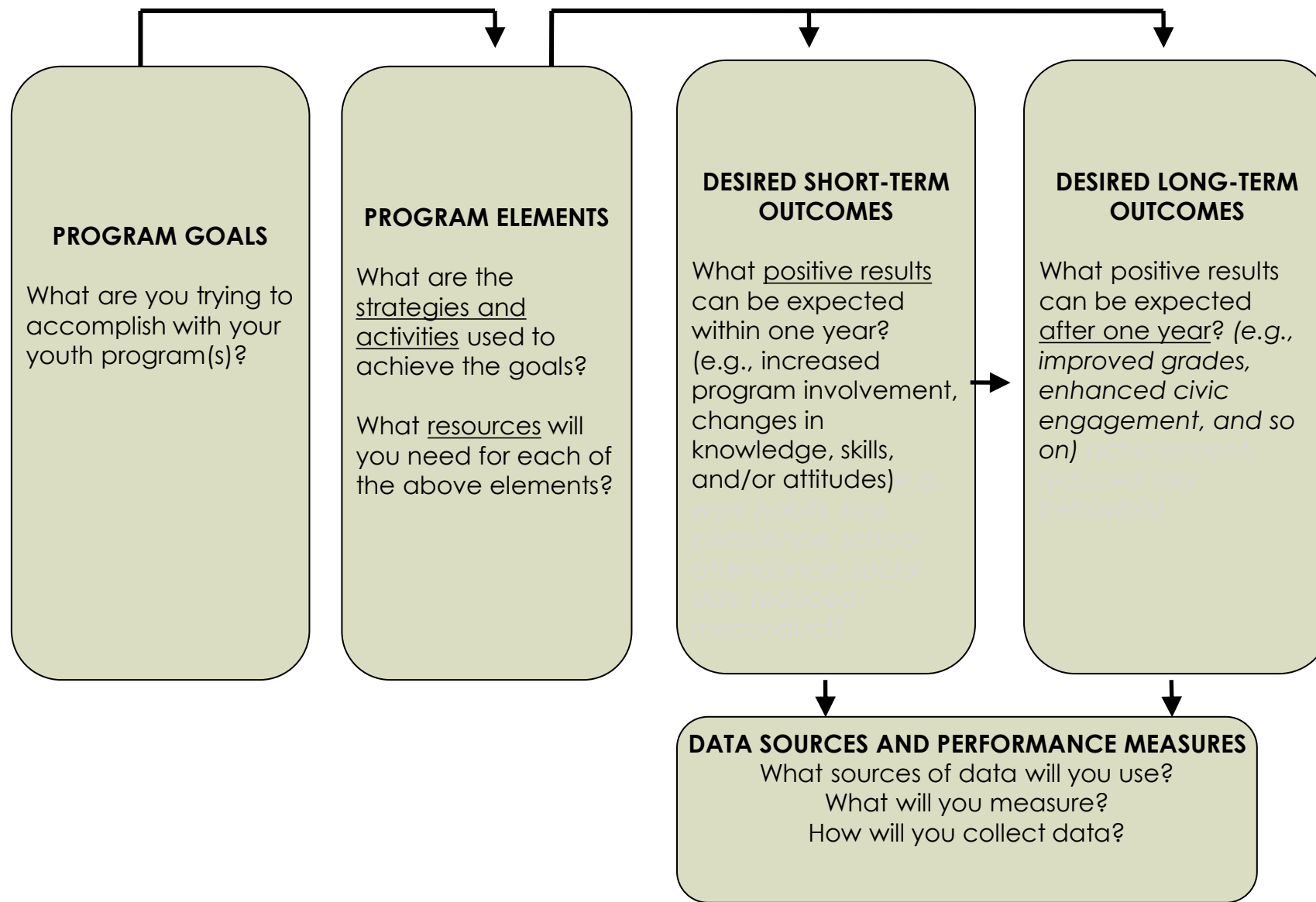


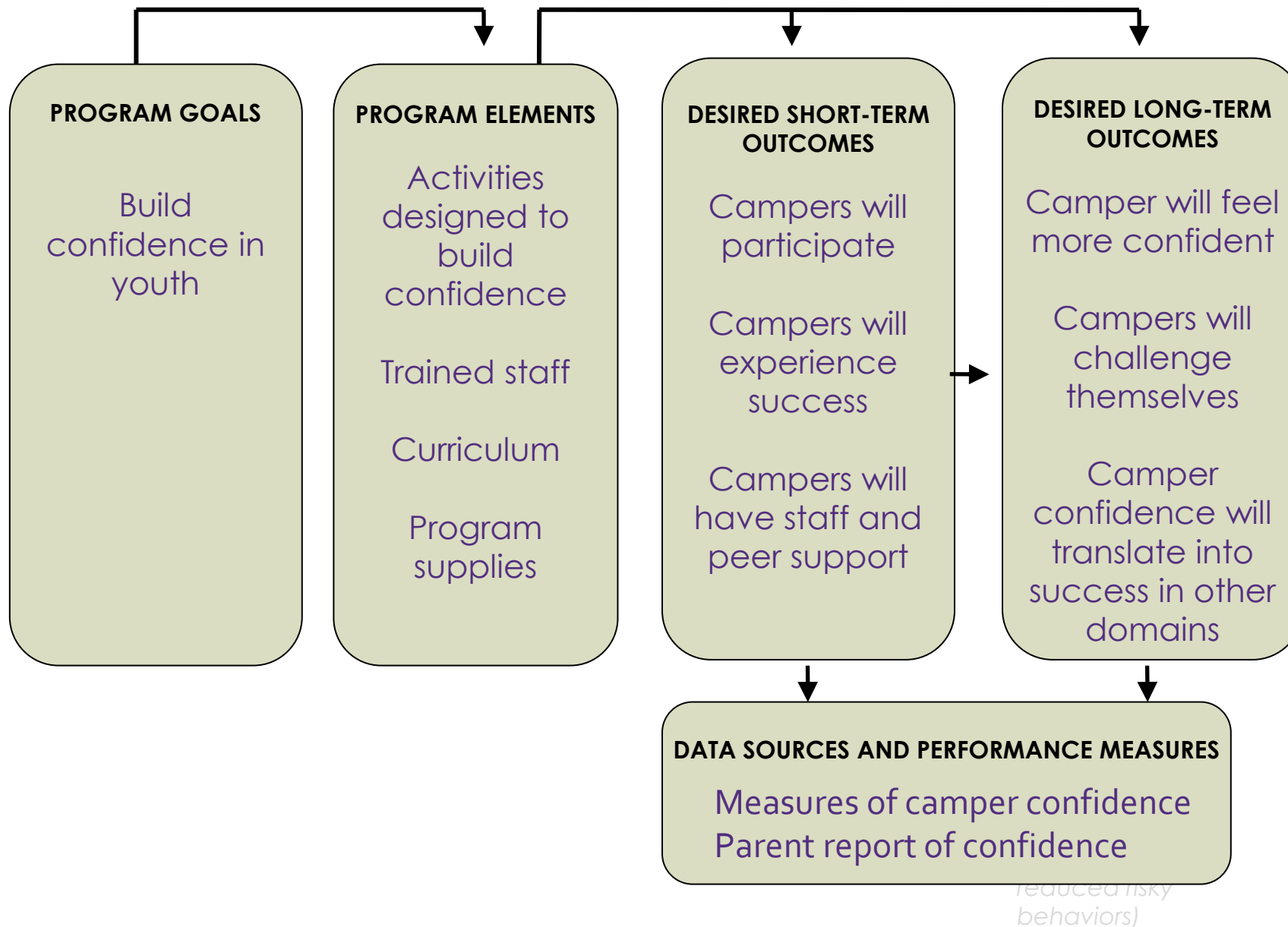
Creating Positive Youth Outcomes



- 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)

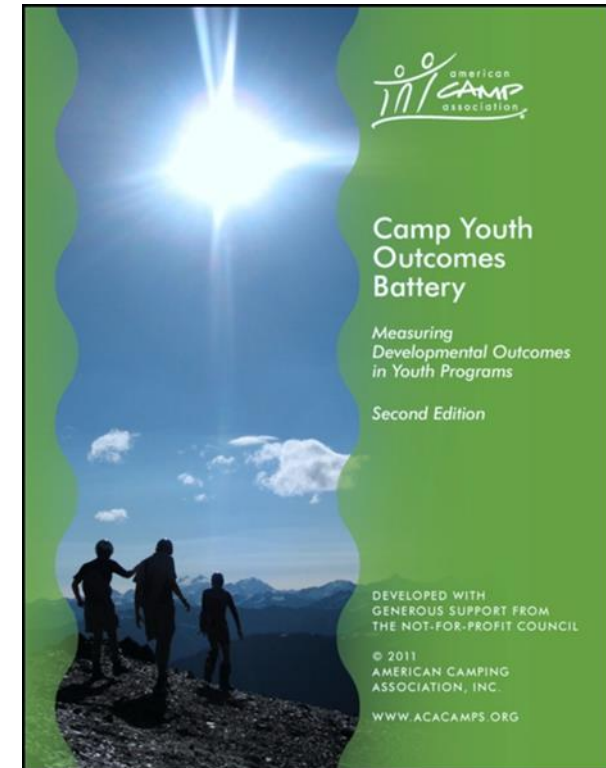
- Validated measure of parents' perceptions of their child's social-emotional development resulting from camp participation in five outcomes (Garst & Gagnon, 2016)
 - Communication
 - Responsibility
 - Self-regulation
 - Attitude
 - Exploration



ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery

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

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



ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery 2.0

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 Viz



Clipboard: Cut, Copy, Paste, Format Painter

Font: Arial, 11, Bold, Italic, Underline, Text Color, Background Color

Alignment: Wrap Text, Merge & Center, Indent, Orientation

Number: General, Currency, Percentage, Decimals, Fractions

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

Cells: Insert, Delete, Format

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

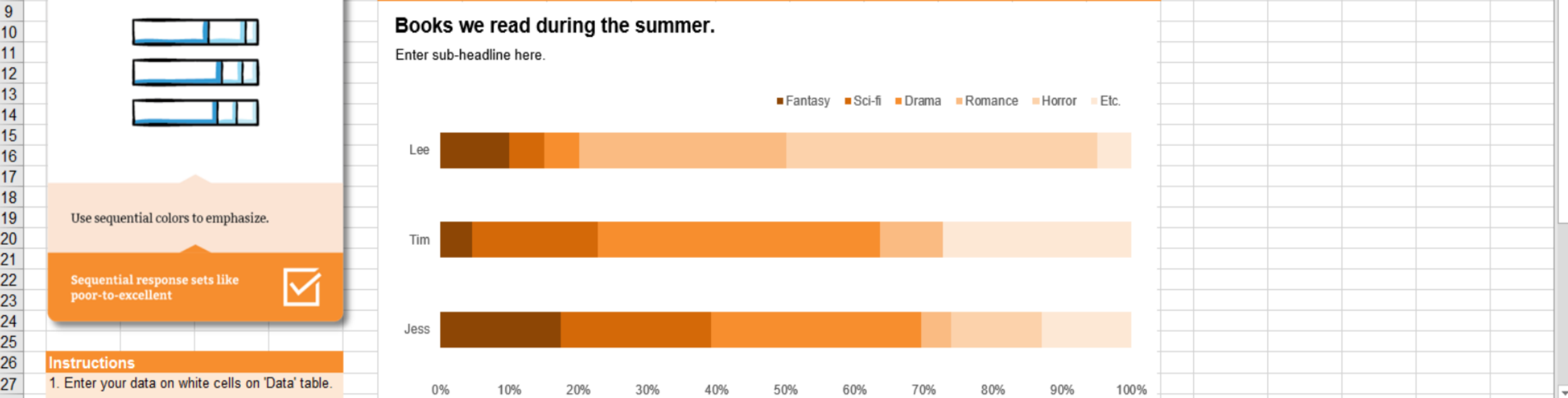
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J40 [X] [Y] [Z]

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



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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fx

We sold a lot of chocolate donuts.

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2							Data						Chart											
3							Chocolate	8.50																
4							Strawberry	3.50																
5							Other	0.50																
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26							Instructions						Chart Information											
27							1. Enter your data on the 'Data' table.						Headline	We sold a lot of chocolate donuts.										
28																								
29							2. In 'Chart Information' table, enter headline, sub-headline and source. It will automatically						Sub-headline	Enter sub-headline here.										
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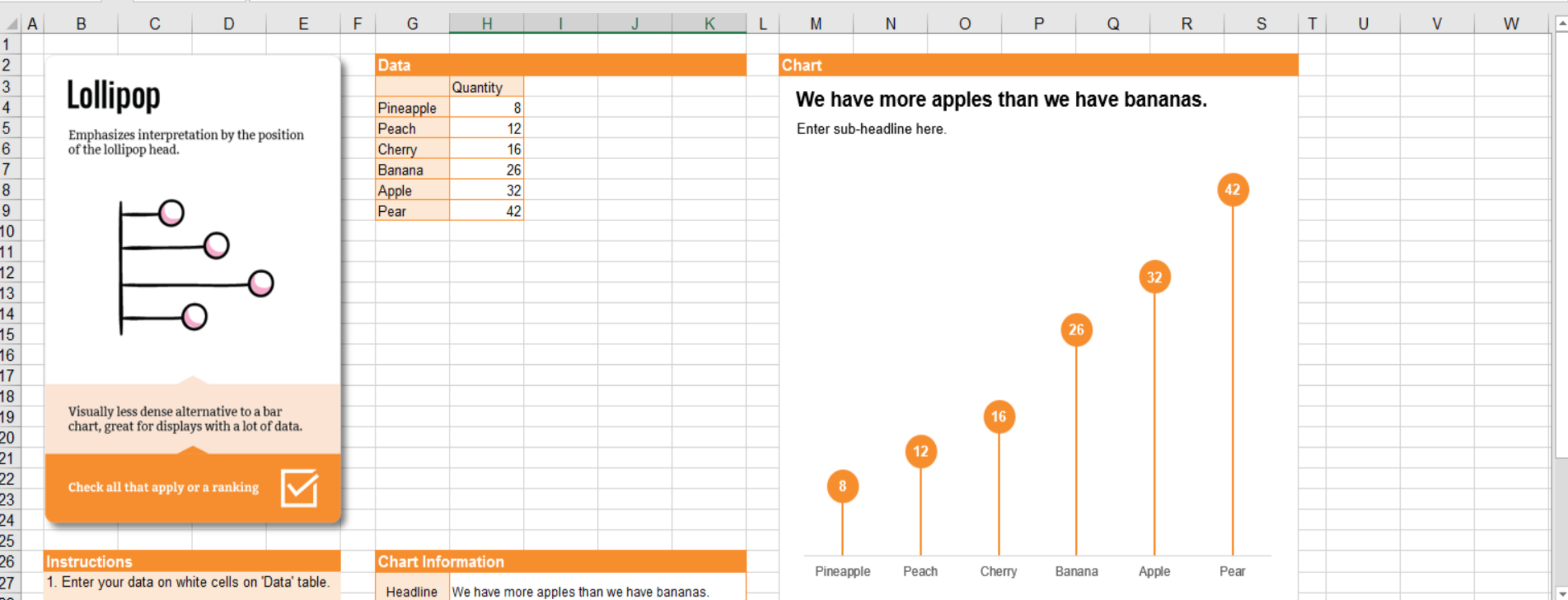
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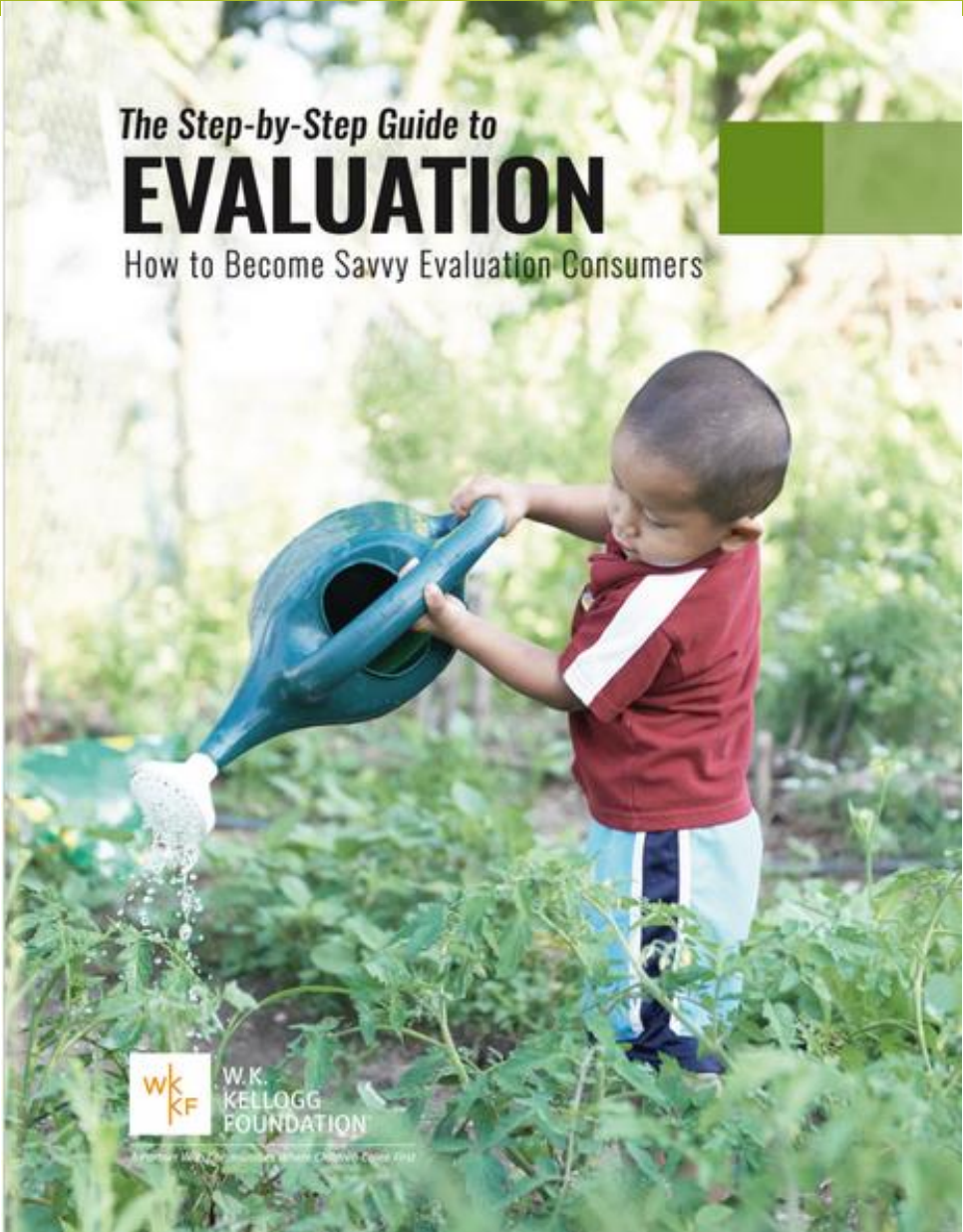
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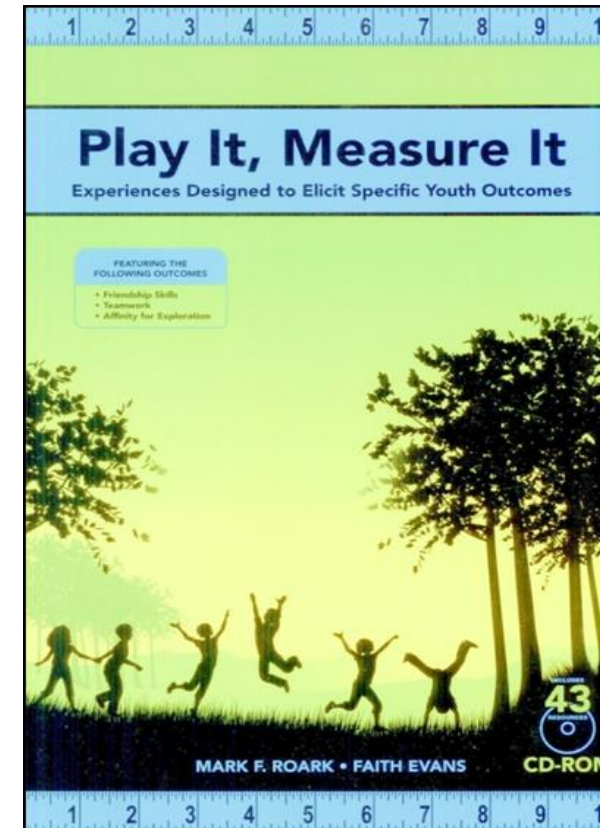


Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Guide



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?

