



Creating Meaningful Evaluations that Serve the People and Communities that Need Them Most

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Starting points about evaluation

0 < what we're doing < enough
& what we know

there is no such thing as a
neutral intervention

OK. I'm ready to talk about evaluation. Just so we're clear, when I say "evaluation" I mean,

- external accountability
- internal accountability
- documenting effectiveness
- documenting process
- documenting activities
- quality improvement
- proof
- monitoring

OK. As long as you know the difference between outputs, outcomes, objectives, goals, indicators, impact and benchmarks. Let's get counting!

Remind me how this helps when we don't even have enough staff to do the stuff we think actually makes a difference..

What exactly are we supposed to be counting?

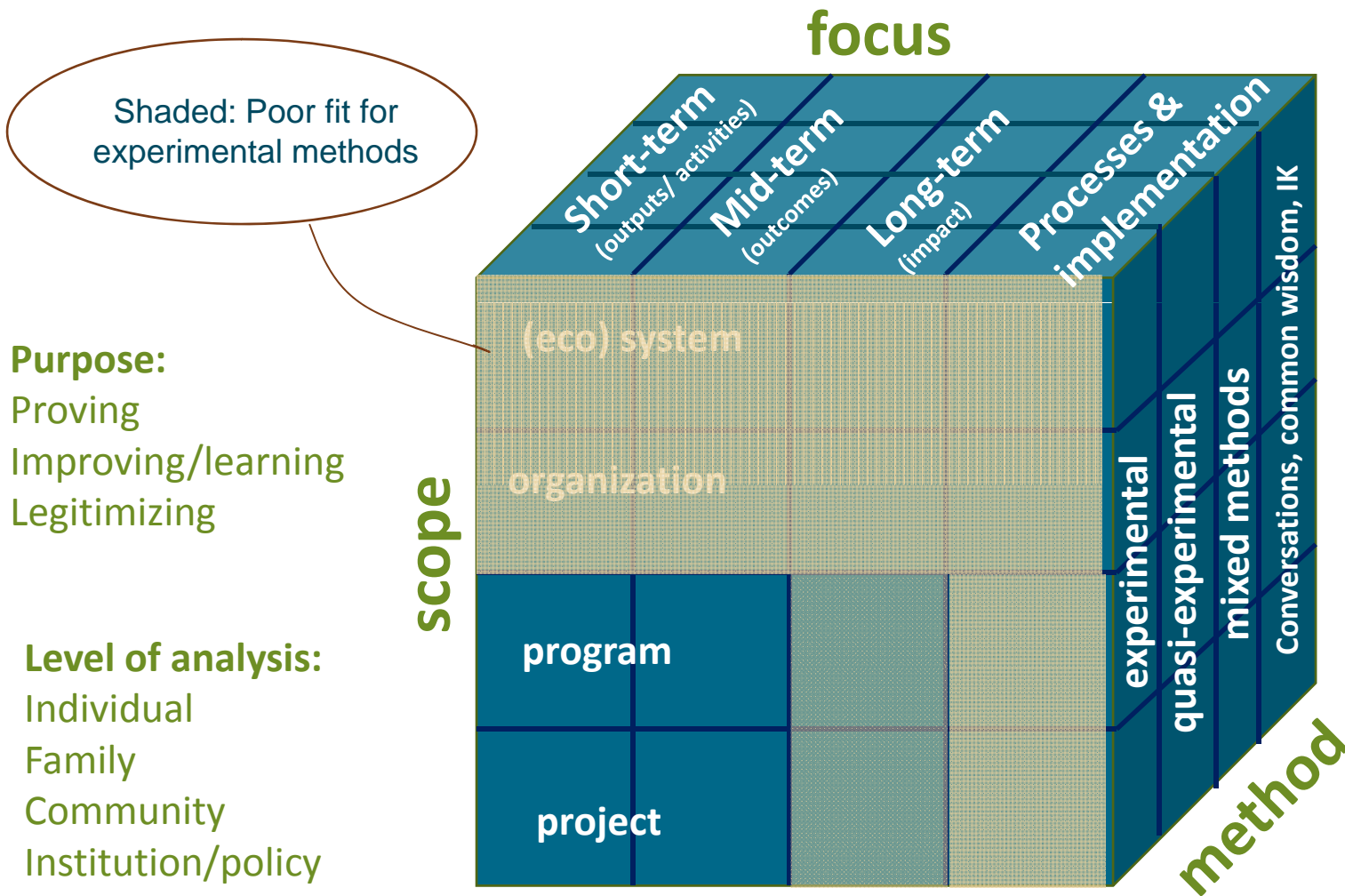


A suggestion about our shared responsibility:

- work within and throughout our systems to help survivors be better off.
- employ tools that tell us whether what we are doing is actually helping, and make changes if it's not.
- be literate about the tools others are impressing on us, so that we can be part of informing whether these are the right tools (and what the questions are) before we see the results.

Being accountable to our communities requires that we actively seek out and employ rigorous and relevant means to assess impact and adjust our course.

Different cells hold different answers to the question, “Does it work?”



Concepts of scope, focus, method matrix: after Murray and Cutt, 1998

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Are we fitting the model to the question, or finding questions that fit our models?

Good fit for experimental methods and linear, rational models	Intervention characteristics	Require a systemic approach and models designed for complexity
Homogeneous	POPULATION	Heterogeneous and multiply challenged; highly influenced by other systems
Highly transferable, relatively independent of other systems	SETTING	Community-embedded and context-specific, may depend on other interventions
Individual/family	LEVEL OF IMPACT	Multiple, including community-change
Defined model	STASIS	Dynamic and evolving
Empower individuals to help themselves (SERVICES)	POWER	Empower individuals to help themselves and change their communities (MOVEMENT)
Clear pathways through model	ELEMENTS	Host of elements drawn on without a recipe

Over-reliance on experimental design is a validity and social justice issue

we are risking:

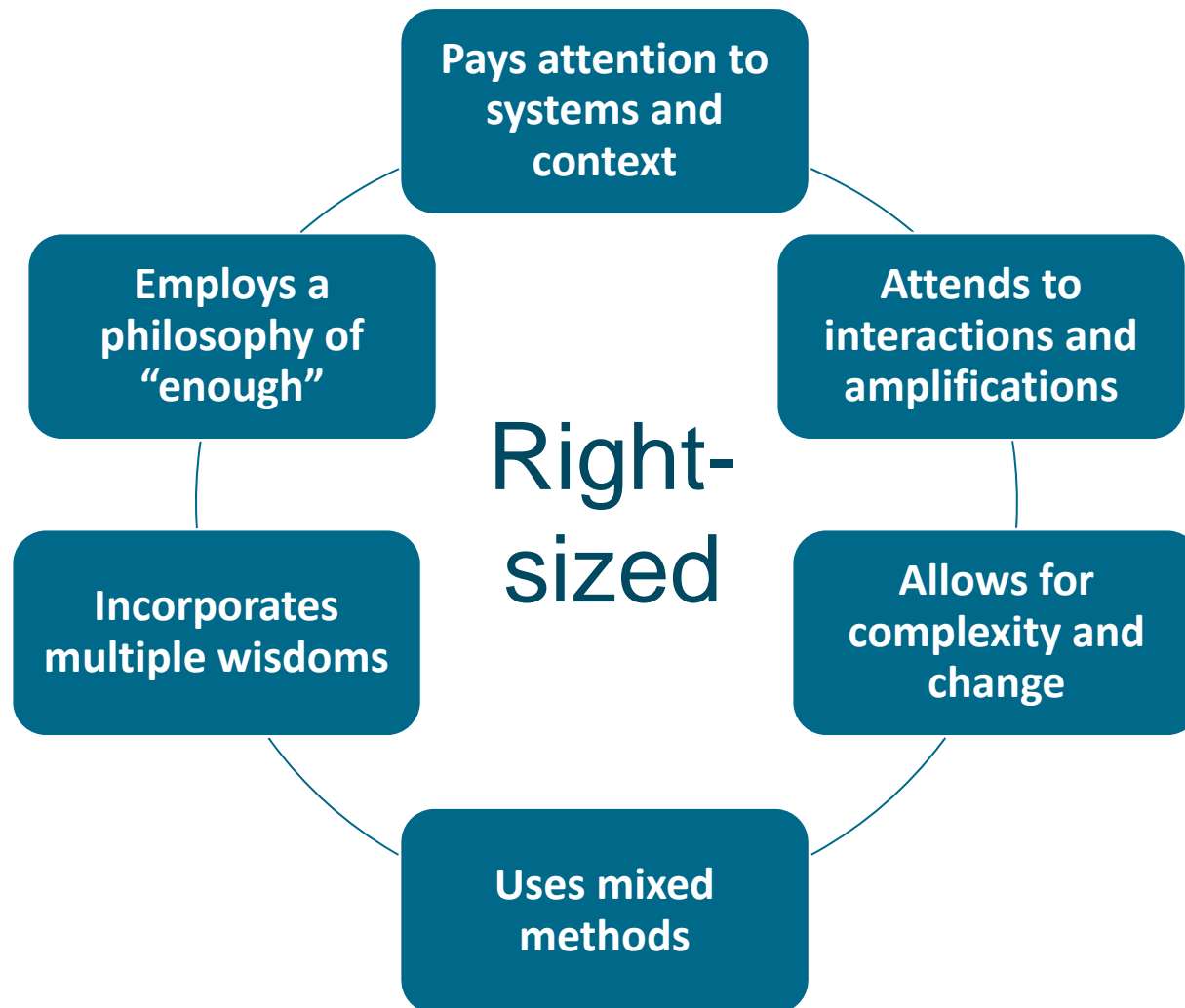
1. Further marginalization of and harm to marginalized populations
2. Reinforcing socially unjust policies and practices
3. Distortion of practice and policy
4. Irrelevance
5. Missing what we're not looking for
6. Not differentiating between necessary and sufficient

Not evaluating is also a validity and social justice issue

we are risking:

1. Further marginalization of and harm to marginalized populations
2. Reinforcing socially unjust policies and practices
3. Distortion of practice and policy
4. Irrelevance
5. Missing what we're not looking for
6. Not differentiating between necessary and sufficient

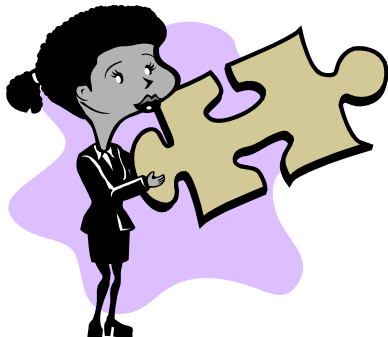
A more complete approach to evidence and evaluation



This is about whether survivors are better off.... What if they're not?

- If evaluation indicated that a program in another state doesn't work, isn't helping, or made things worse for survivors, what should happen?
- If evaluation indicated my program doesn't work, isn't helping, or made things worse for survivors, what should happen?

Wait a minute...



Maybe with all the hoopla about methodology we're missing something really important....

Content!

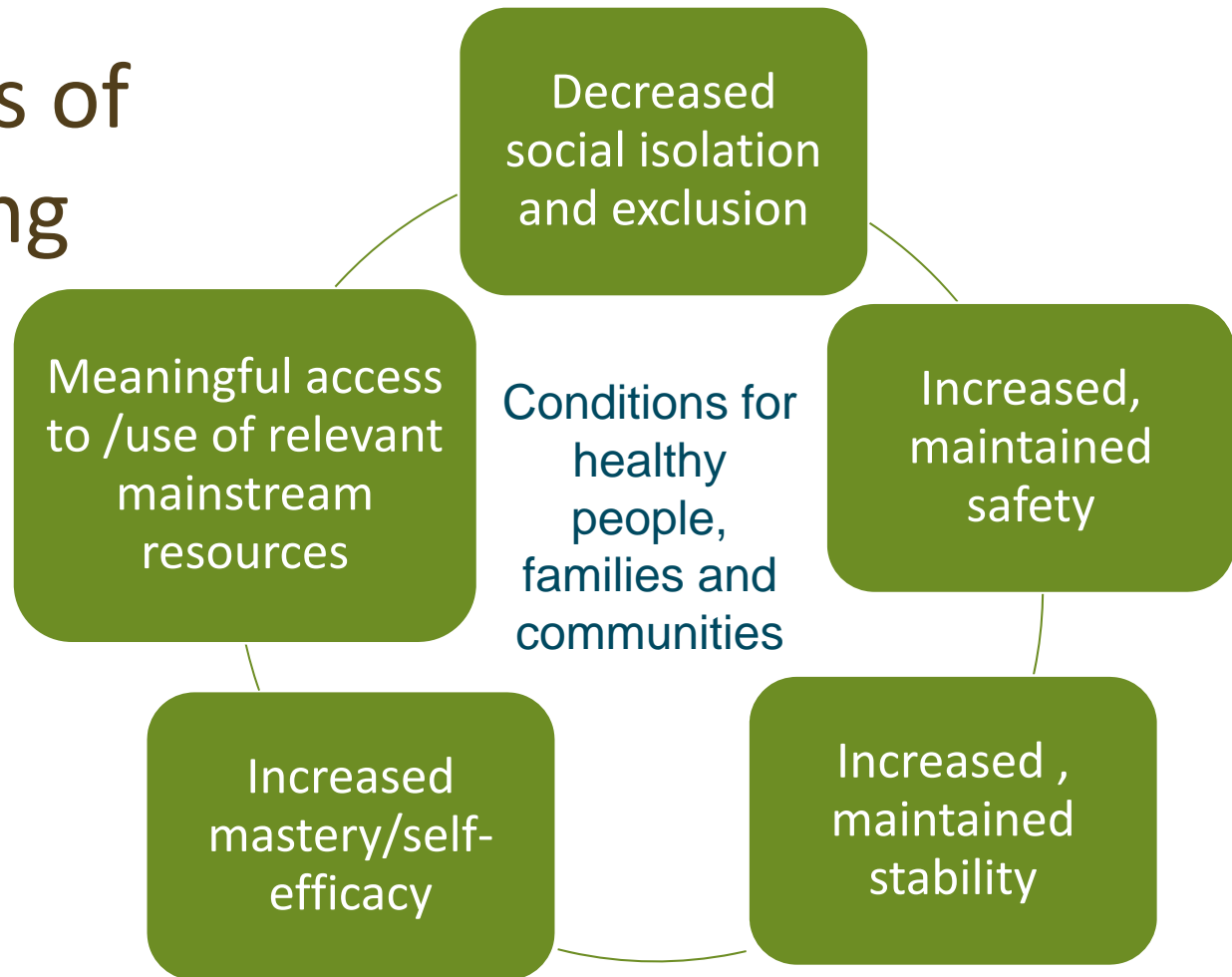
What does it mean to be successful?

(No, silly cartoon lady. Successful is not about your program— that's about being effective. Survivors and their families are successful. Hopefully programs help with this.)

What we all need

domains of wellbeing

Breaking inter-generational cycles of poverty, violence and trauma requires we simultaneously support progress in these five domains – at the individual, family and community levels



Paying attention to five domains at multiple levels

Direct services

*System partners
(community, police,
employers, schools)*

*Government
and institutions*

Individual/
Family*

Organization/
Agency

Community/
Context

Policy

Highly tailored to
context– not entirely
predetermined

Ambitious, meaningful, predictive
of long-term wellbeing, valid for
comparative purposes, plastic
enough to respond to major
external forces

Decreased social
isolation and
exclusion

Meaningful use of
relevant
mainstream
resources

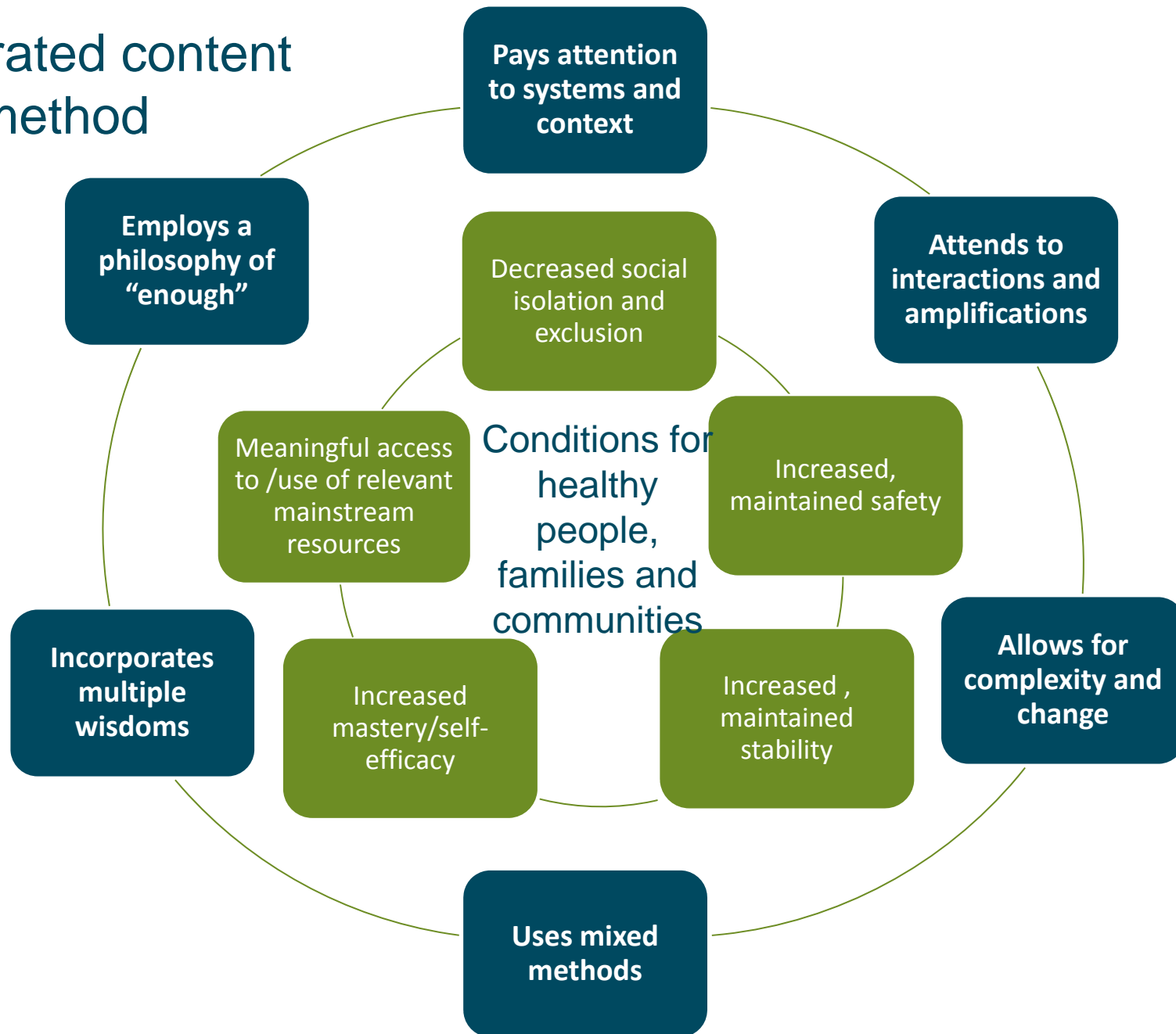
Increased
mastery/self-
efficacy

Increased,
maintained
stability

Increased,
maintained safety

* *What is best for the individual may not be best for the family, of course.*

integrated content and method



So now that we've got that evidence-based thing squared away, let's have one more cup of tea and go evaluate our amazing program to show it's making a difference!

Sounds great! Except... who's going to pay for it? Do you think we have to cut program staff to fund data staff?

Wait a minute.... You could really be hurting someone (truly)! Why not just implement one of these handy dandy pre-proven evidence-based practices?





(Sigh). Seems like I've got to have it all figured out and be ready to show the world with data what a difference we're making, or else I should just import something someone else has done. I wish I could figure out whether I'm making a difference (and not bankrupt my program in the process), but also learn from and figure out how to adapt pieces of other interventions to do better...