How to seriously evaluate your camp outcomes

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Please utilize the audio that accompanies this presentation in order to benefit fully.

Goals of the session

❖ Overview of the evaluation process

❖ Understanding of key issues and concerns

❖ Be a good consumer of evaluative information

❖ Learn how to hire an evaluator

❖ Time for questions and discussion

Please ask questions as we go along

I applaud you for being here

Realities / Caveats

❖ Part of a trilogy of sessions

  ➢ How to seriously evaluate your outcomes

  ➢ Measuring the softer outcomes

  ➢ Process and implementation evaluation

❖ Can't tell you everything you need to know

❖ Evaluation is not quick, simple, or easy

Books on evaluation

General Texts

- Cambell, D. T. (1998). <u>Social experimentation.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Chelimsky, E., & Shadish, W. R. (1997). <u>Evaluation for the 21st century: A handbook.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Chen, H. (1990). <u>Theory-driven evaluations.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fink, A. (1995). <u>Evaluation for education and psychology.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mohr, L. B. (1995). <u>Impact analysis for program evaluation.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Preskill, H., & Torres, R. T. (1998). <u>Evaluative inquiry for learning organizations.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Orr, L. L. (1998). <u>Social experiments: Evaluating public programs with experimental methods.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Owen, J. (1999). <u>Program evaluation: Forms and approaches.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rossi, P. H., Freeman, H. E., & Lipsey, M W. (1998). <u>Evaluation: A systematic approach.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- United Way of America. (1999). <u>Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach.</u> Alexandria, VA: United Way of America.

Books on evaluation

Specific How-to subject areas

❖ Bradley, W. J., & Schaefer, K. (1998). <u>The uses and misuses of data and models.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

❖ Fink, A. (1998). <u>Conducting research literature reviews.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

❖ King, J, Morris, L., & Fitz-Gibbon, C. (1987). <u>How to assess program implementation.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

❖ Patton, M. Q. (1996). <u>Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

❖ Sapsford, R. (1999). <u>How to conduct surveys.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

❖ Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). <u>Mixed methodology.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Web sites of interest

* American Evaluation Association
  http://eval.org/

* Evaluation Links from Claremont Graduate University
  http://eval.cgu.edu/info/evallink.htm

* Evaluation Institute
  http://www.evaluatorsinstitute.com/

* United Way
  http://www.unitedway.org

What are your expectations?

Why are you here?

Outline

1) Introduction
   - i)   Goals
   - ii) Why evaluate?
   - iii) Problems with ways of knowing
   - iv) What is still often unknown
2) Steps in the evaluative process
   - i)   Needs assessment
   - ii) Understand completely what you do
     - (a) Process maps / logic models
     - (b) Theory-driven evaluation
     - (c) Implementation evaluation
   - iii) Pick which outcomes to evaluate
   - iv) Design an evaluation plan / methods
     - (a) Study design and methods
     - (b) Sampling
     - (c) Measures
     - (d) Ethics and consent forms
   - v)   Conduct the evaluation
   - vi) Analyze the results
   - vii) Utilize and disseminate the results
   - viii) Begin again – continuously evaluate
3) Top 15 evaluation mistakes
4) How to hire an evaluator
5) Different roles for evaluators

Why Evaluate?

❖ Utilize results to:
  ➢ Improve how outcomes are addressed
  ➢ Start a change initiative
  ➢ Examine strengths and weaknesses and reasons for both

❖ Distribute results to:
  ➢ Recruit, retain, and motivate talented staff
  ➢ Enlist and motivate able volunteers
  ➢ Attract new participants
  ➢ Engage collaborators – other agencies, parents, schools, etc.
  ➢ Garner support for innovative efforts
  ➢ Win designation as a model or demonstration site.
  ➢ Enhance public image
  ➢ Retain or increase funding
  ➢ Develop and justify budgets

How do you know if you give kids a world of good or not?

List of outcomes

Cognitive

- Appreciation of diversity
- Communal orientation
- Conflict resolution skills
- Creativity
- Hope & goals (future sense of self) / sense of purpose
- Environmental attitudes, awareness, and behaviors
- Leadership
- Locus of control
- Moral reasoning / character / ethics / values – e.g., six pillars framework: trust, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, & caring
- Extroversion
- Problem solving / planning

Emotional

- Emotional intelligence

  (Assertiveness, responsibility, cooperation, self-control, emotional self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, problem-solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, happiness, and optimism)

- Appropriate risk taking
- Receive positive attention / love / caring
- Fun
- General self-efficacy, independence, self-confidence
- Self-esteem / self-concept
- Self-discipline / delay gratification / restraint / impulse control / aka self-control

Behavioral

- Achievement motivation / success orientation
- Grades / cognitive development
- Behavior problems (externalizing and internalizing)
- Free-time activities at home
- Skill achievement or enhancement
- Friendship status (popular, neglected, rejected, controversial, average)
- Intergenerational relationships
- Health self-efficacy and behaviors
- Physical fitness

Spirituality
(Orients and gives meaning to our lives; Guidelines for living; Answer the question Why? for things like random nature of events, uncertainty of the future, and death)

Ways of knowing

❖ Parents and campers tell me

  Stories of how camp changed lives

❖ Because parents keep sending their kids back

❖ Measured actual behaviors

❖ Measured attitudes and mental states

Problems with ways of knowing

- ❖ Issues with qualitative data
  - ➤ Sins of memory
  - ➤ Social desirable responding

- ❖ Because of a camp's return rate

- ❖ Interventions that sometimes falter

- ❖ Valid and reliable information/data

❖ Transience

>Over time, things are forgotten

>E.g. When did Jane change exactly? How much did Jane do ____ before camp? What exactly was Jane like before camp?

❖ Absent-mindedness

>Not paying close attention

>E.g. Camp program was not monitored closely.

>>Reliable identification of camp outcomes and what lead to each

❖ Misattribution

>Change occurred elsewhere (school, church, mentor, friend). Source confusion

>E.g. DNA evidence vindicates conviction by eye-witnesses (90%)

>>Commercials, depression, Gambler's fallacy, beauty and intelligence, etc

❖ Suggestibility

>Incorporate information provided by others (marketing materials & director)

>E.g. Hypnosis, eye-witness testimony, leading questions, and reinterviewing

❖ Bias

o Memory encoding and retrieval are highly dependent on, and influenced by, preexisting knowledge and beliefs.

o So much of perception depends upon why the parents sent their child to camp in the first place

E.g.

o Parent(s) like you and confound that with results/outcomes.

o Counselors' rating of their children are in a way also rating their own performance

❖ Dissonance

o When given free choice and significant effort or money has been expended, people often believe their decisions and attitudes are correct.

o I said I like camp and I still do

E.g.

To justify their decision to send their child to your camp and spend money on that decision, parents will believe camp was beneficial and worthwhile.

Issues w/qualitative data – final slide

❖ **Social desirable responding**

- o Tell you what you want to hear to be nice
- o Don't want to deal with confrontation, so avoid the issue

❖ **Caveat**

- o This is not to say that all qualitative data is wrong or bad, but rather that there are critical issues which limit our ability to have faith in the results and determine cause.

- o Used appropriately, qualitative data is invaluable

- o Inappropriate use may do more harm than good

Because of camp's return rate

❖ Parents might send their children back to a camp for numerous reasons. They are not logical, bean counting psychometricians capable of accurately assessing all outcomes.

 ➢ IQ is most frequent assessment in the country, but teachers are poor predictors of it

 ➢ Self-esteem is most accurately assessed by the person, not others

❖ Even if parents were accurate predictors of outcomes, the model would be complex and different for every parent.

(A)   return decision = .43fun, .12 self-esteem, .27 safety, .18 liked director

(B)   return decision = .21fun, .24 extroversion, .55 friends returning

(C)   return decision = .36 environmental attitudes, .41 EQ, .23 creativity

(D)   return decision = .36fun, .22 liked director, .42 don't want to pick another camp

❖ The items in the equation and their accuracy would vary widely

Interventions that sometimes falter

❖School

❖Religion

❖D.A.R.E.

❖Camps

Valid and reliable information

❖ Valid

  o What you are *attempting* to measure is what is *actually* being measured

  o The assessment can discriminate between groups and predict future outcomes and behaviors

❖ Reliable

  o When the outcome is assessed again in a short period of time, stable outcomes should remain largely the same (self-esteem), and unstable outcomes should vary (mood).

  o Independent raters should come up with the same conclusion

❖ Very difficult to meet all the criteria
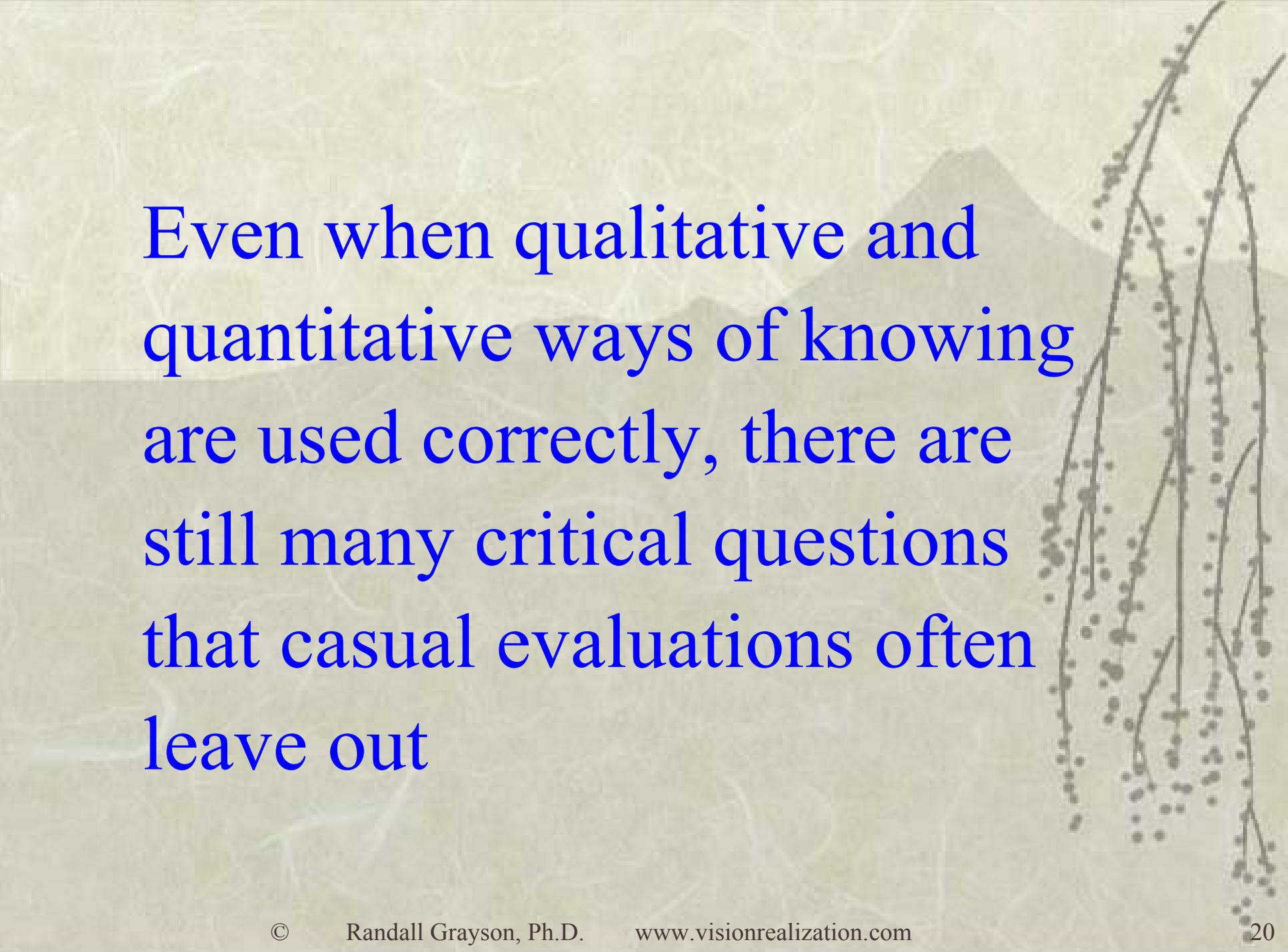
Even when qualitative and quantitative ways of knowing are used correctly, there are still many critical questions that casual evaluations often leave out

What is still often unknown

All of these apply for *each* outcome involved

❖ What are the processes involved?

❖ What is the magnitude of the effect?

❖ How many benefit?

❖ At camp, who does and does not benefit and why?

Age   Ethnicity   Gender   Number of summers

Socioeconomic level   Parenting style   Family functioning

Parental education   Number of siblings   Level & type of participation (outputs)

Child's desire to go to camp   Counselor group performance

Level on outcome   Parental camp experience   Very good school

Active in religious community   Strong, positive peer group

Child is good match with type of camp   Variability not captured by "Ethnicity"

Idiosyncratic experiences at camp   Other individual or social traits

Unknown – Part II

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">All of these apply for <u>*each*</u> outcome involved</p>

❖ Help any child or largely population served?

    Needs assessment – e.g. difficult child or level on outcome

❖ How long does the effect last?

    o Two, four, twelve, or twenty weeks after camp?
    o How would you tell an adult camper apart from a non-camper similar in every other way?

❖ Could the benefit be achieved cheaper and/or better elsewhere?

    o Session length
    o Type of programming
   o Another intervention

Review

Why Evaluate?

- ❖ Utilize results to:
  - ➢ Improve how outcomes are addressed
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  - ➢ Examine strengths and weaknesses and reasons for both

- ❖ Distribute results to:
  - ➢ Recruit, retain, and motivate talented staff
  - ➢ Enlist and motivate able volunteers
  - ➢ Attract new participants
  - ➢ Engage collaborators – other agencies, parents, schools, etc.
  - ➢ Garner support for innovative efforts
  - ➢ Win designation as a model or demonstration site.
  - ➢ Enhance public image
  - ➢ Retain or increase funding
  - ➢ Develop and justify budgets

Problems with ways of knowing

- ❖ Issues with qualitative data
  - ➢ Sins of memory
  - ➢ Social desirable responding

- ❖ Because of a camp's return rate

- ❖ Interventions that sometimes falter

- ❖ Valid and reliable information/data

- ❖ What is still often unknown
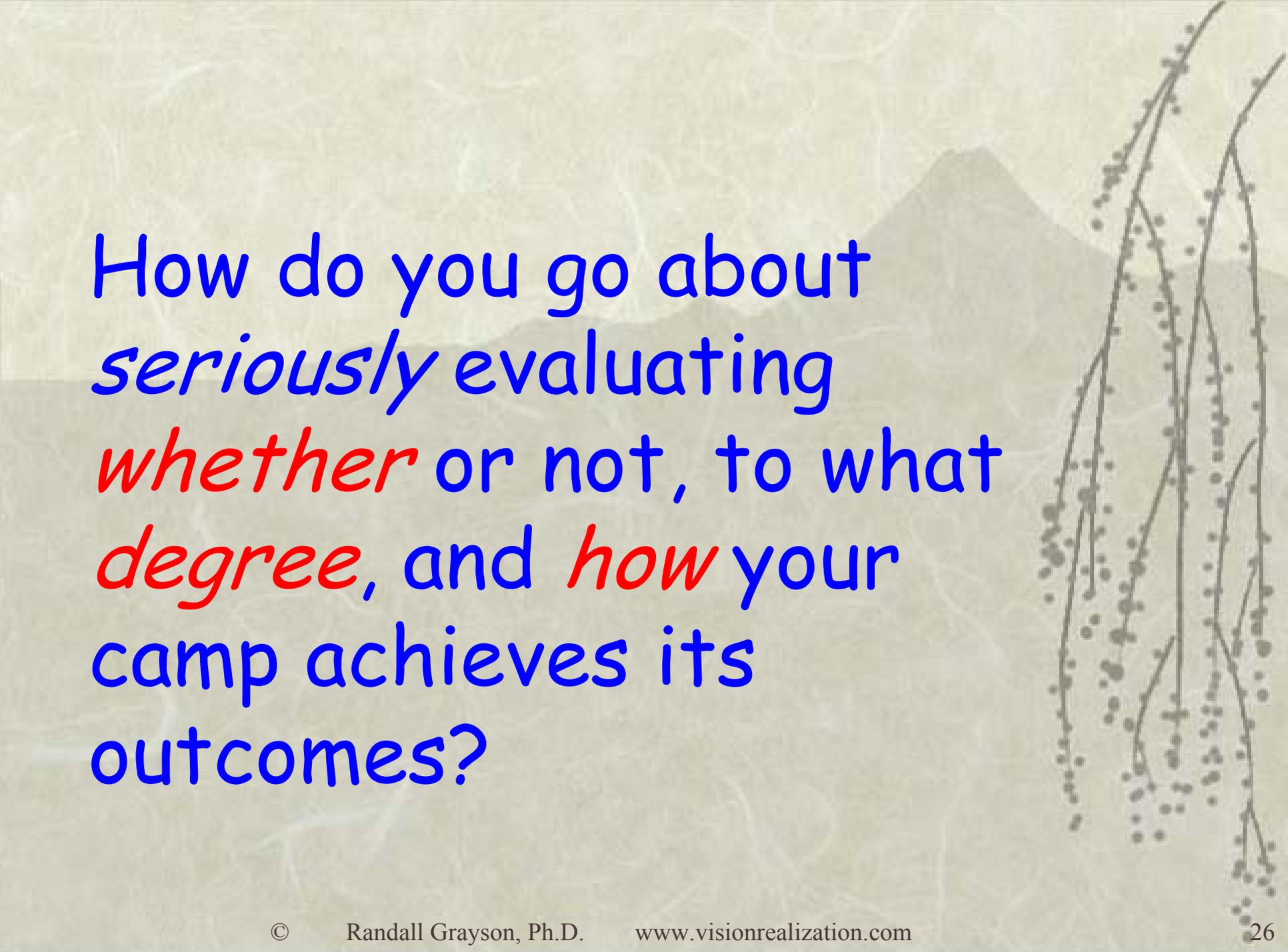
How do you go about *seriously* evaluating *whether* or not, to what *degree*, and *how* your camp achieves its outcomes?

Steps in the evaluative process

1. Needs assessment

2. Understand completely what you do

3. Pick which outcomes to evaluate

4. Design an evaluation plan / methods

5. Conduct the evaluation

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7. Utilize and disseminate the results

8. Begin again – continuously evaluate

Needs assessment

❖ What are the needs of the campers who show up on opening day?

High self-esteem   Poor schools   Poor social skills

Need spiritual connection   Good family

Moderate independence   Already respect environment

❖ It is unlikely that a camp influences all targeted outcomes to the same degree. What outcomes are in your "Tier 1" level of service?

Do the above two points match?

Do the campers need what you are offering?

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Process maps / Logic models

❖ How do you achieve your outcomes?
What are the processes involved?

❖ Do all stakeholders (parents, staff, campers, community, board) understand your processes?

❖ Are your processes theoretically accurate?

❖ Are they being implemented well?

United Way Model

Program Outcome Model

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES
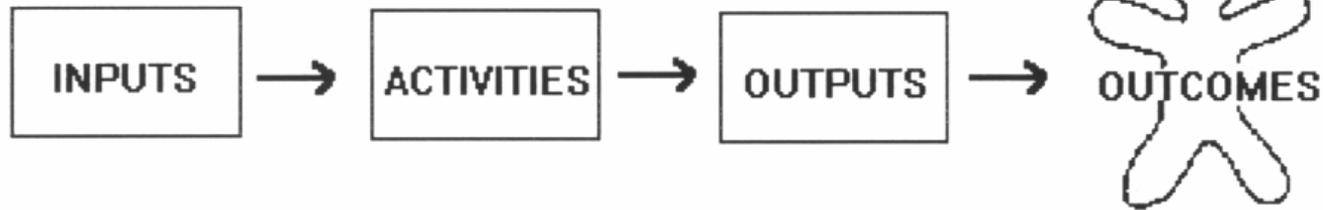
Resources dedicated to or consumed by the program

e.g.
- money
- staff and staff time
- volunteers and volunteer time
- facilities
- equipment and supplies

Constraints on the program

e.g.
- laws
- regulations
- funders' requirements

What the program does with the inputs to fulfill its mission

e.g.
- feed and shelter homeless families
- provide job training
- educate the public about signs of child abuse
- counsel pregnant women
- create mentoring relationships for youth

The direct products of program activities

e.g.
- number of classes taught
- number of counseling sessions conducted
- number of educational materials distributed
- number of hours of service delivered
- number of participants served

Benefits for participants during and after program activities

e.g.
- new knowledge
- increased skills
- changed attitudes or values

↓

- modified behavior

↓

- improved condition
- altered status

Camp adaptation of model

- ❖ Orientation (training)
- ❖ Low ratio (3:1)
- ❖ Natural resources
- ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Session length
- ❖ Quality of staff
- ❖ Organizational hierarchy / structure
- ❖ Staff motivation
- ❖ Microcosm community
- ❖ Safe, supportive environment
- ❖ Experiential learning
- ❖ Exceptional leadership on every level
- ❖ Adequate finances
- ❖ Individual treatment plan

What camp has   What cam

Inputs

Activi

Camp → Progra

Polic

Camp adaptation of model
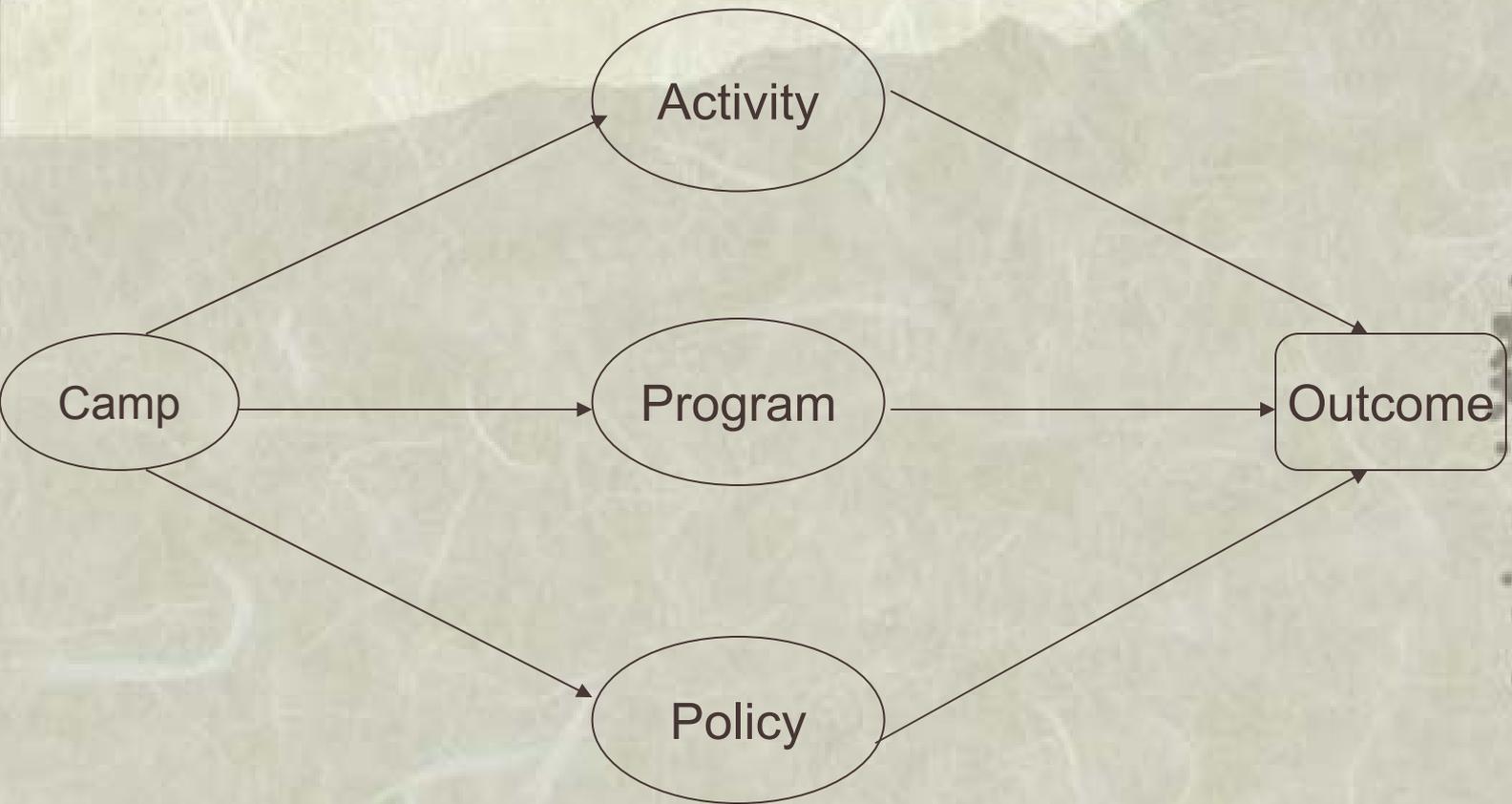
Defining what camp does

- ❖ Activities
  - ➢ Archery
  - ➢ 3 night hike
  - ➢ Climbing wall
  - ➢ Gardening
  - ➢ Chores & community jobs
  - ➢ Final banquet
  - ➢ Council and camp fire
  - ➢ Rest hour / Siesta
  - ➢ Camp counsel and camper elections
  - ➢ Friendship circle
  - ➢ Teaching stress management techniques
  - ➢ Running club

- ❖ Policies
  - ➢ Non-competitive
  - ➢ Camper bill of rights and responsibilities
  - ➢ Reduce, reuse, recycle
  - ➢ Only written contact with family

- ❖ Programs
  - ➢ Arts and crafts
  - ➢ Leadership program
  - ➢ Adventure program
  - ➢ Aquatics program
  - ➢ Sports program

"Deviations" from United Way Model

❖ Inputs
  ➢ Represent them with just the bubble "camp" when the aim is to communicate what camp does
  ➢ Need to evaluate inputs (e.g. staff training) in order to understand results on outcomes

❖ Outputs (number of times exposed to activity)
  ➢ On a conceptual level, this is unnecessary and confusing
  ➢ At camp, children are often exposed to components a roughly equal number of times
  ➢ When examining outcomes for an individual camper, outputs can be useful information
  ➢ On the whole, outputs are useful to consider when campers differ substantially in the activities or number of activities

❖ Orientation itself can be process mapped

Example with General self-efficacy
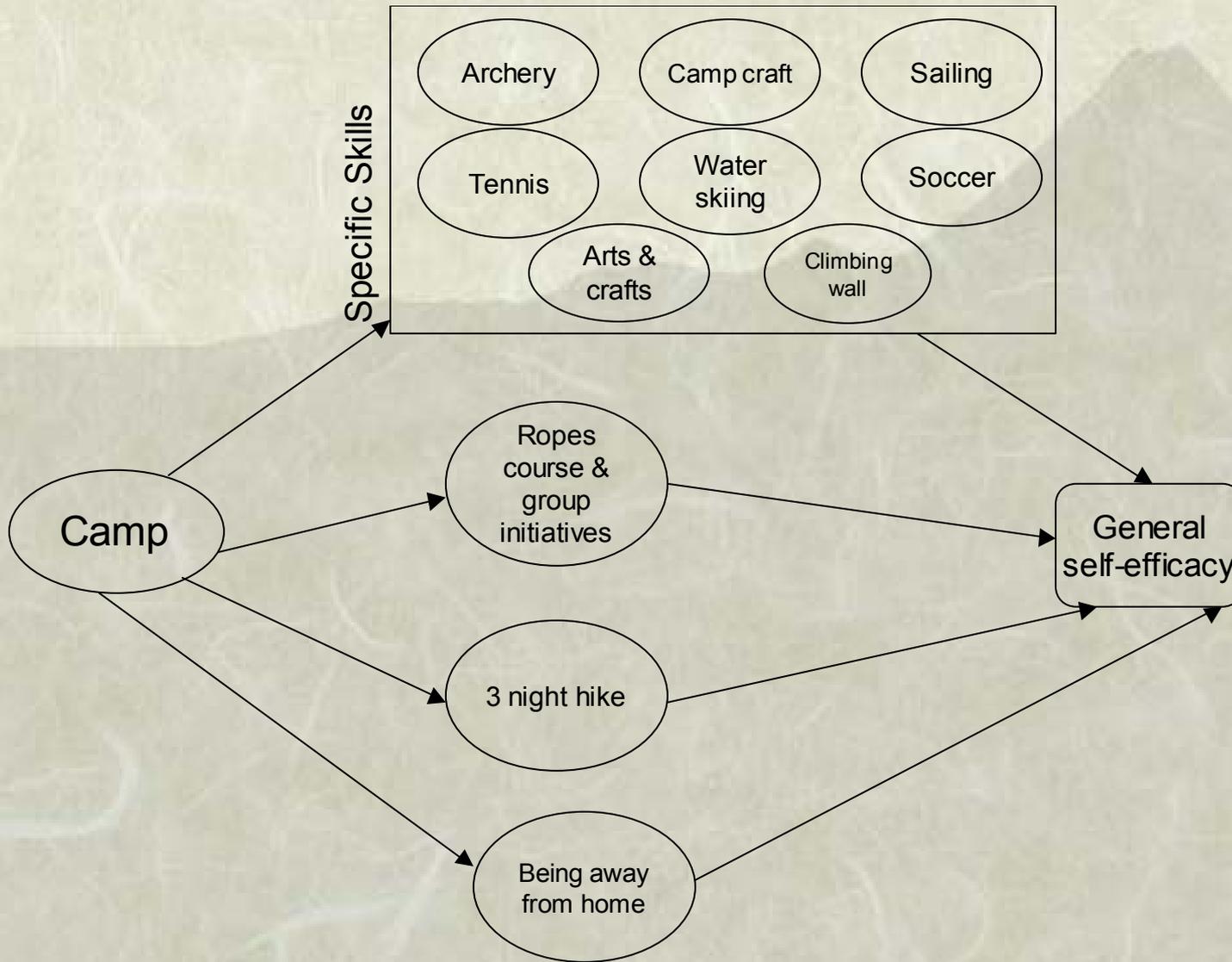
Need for theory

When trying to assess how it is you actually go about giving kids a world of good, you must use appropriate theories.

Drawing it does not = outcome

Camp

- Awards night where everyone gets one
- Sing songs about how special every person is
- Praise all effort regardless of actual outcome
- Write poems, papers, and plays about how special you are
- Personal mastery of specific skills & goal accomplishments

Increased Self-esteem
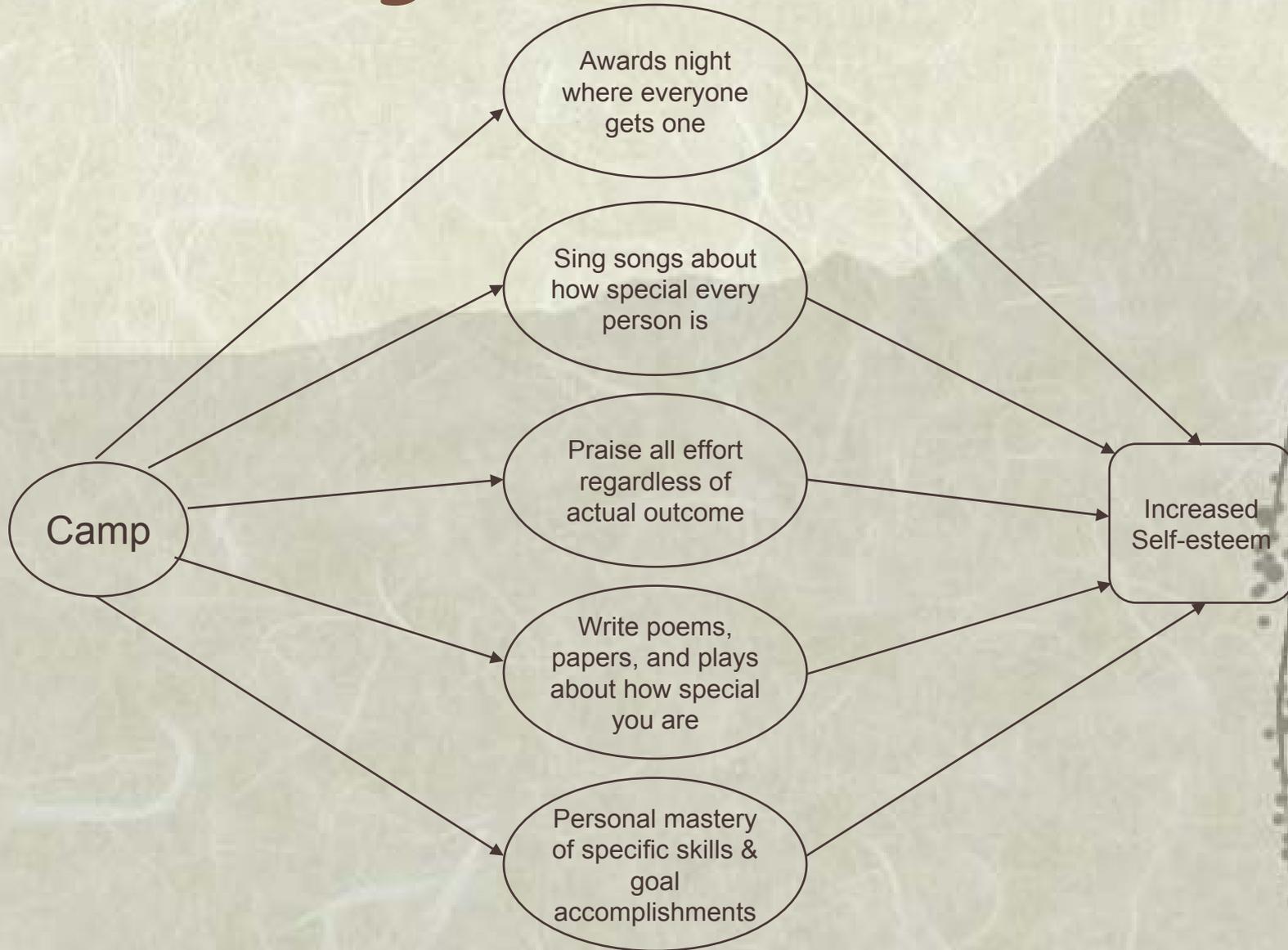
Sounds good on paper = not enough

❖ The D.A.R.E. program

  ➤ 4.5 million served kids by 1993. Targets 17 areas like drug use and misuse, attitudes, consequences, resistance skills, social skills, self-esteem, etc.

  ➤ 60 minutes once a week for 17 weeks

  ➤ D.A.R.E. instructors are trained for over 80 hours

  ➤ Results: effect sizes were either very, very small or non-existent (with the exception of knowledge) and were essentially gone 6 months later

  ➤ After careful evaluation and examination of theory, D.A.R.E. was redesigned and is now much better.

❖ POINT = need for theory and evaluation

Theory-driven evaluation

❖ Pick out what components will and won't work

   Self-esteem example

❖ Understand how effective components should be

   Is being away from home enough, or do we need
   a ropes course and challenging trip as well?

❖ For whom should the processes work?

   o Children with low self-esteem or social skills often
     need a different kind of process/intervention
   o Do first time campers with moderate levels on the outcome
     variable of interest benefit the most?

❖ Identify key components that might be missing

   D.A.R.E. example. Tells you where to look

Must utilize past
research –
literature review

Examples of useful theories & theoretical concepts

- Transactional analysis
- Systems theory
- Interdependence theory
- Reality therapy and parenting styles
- Influence – media, labels, and schemas
- 40 developmental assets
- Scaffolding and modeling

- Resiliency and at-risk youth
- Knowledge is a necessary but insufficient condition (Attitudes)
- Cognitive misers and 7 + or – 2
- Intergroup relations and conflict resolution
- Group socialization theory
- Theory of planned behavior
- Need for control and people
- Ritual
- Dissonance
- Attribution

- Teaching for transfer - metaphor, processing, framing, & sequencing
- Cooperative learning

- Benchmarking
- Knowledge management
- Process mapping
- Staffing theory and motivation
- Bases of power
- Leadership
- Ecological systems analysis
- Obedience, conformity and minority influence
- Equity theory
- Personnel selection

Plus theories related to given outcome of interest

List of outcomes

Cognitive

- Appreciation of diversity
- Communal orientation
- Conflict resolution skills
- Creativity
- Hope & goals (future sense of self) / sense of purpose
- Environmental attitudes, awareness, and behaviors
- Leadership
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- Moral reasoning / character / ethics / values – e.g., six pillars framework: trust, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, & caring
- Extroversion
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Emotional

- Emotional intelligence

  (Assertiveness, responsibility, cooperation, self-control, emotional self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, problem-solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, happiness, and optimism)

- Appropriate risk taking
- Receive positive attention / love / caring
- Fun
- General self-efficacy, independence, self-confidence
- Self-esteem / self-concept
- Self-discipline / delay gratification / restraint / impulse control / aka self-control

Behavioral

- Achievement motivation / success orientation
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- Free-time activities at home
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- Friendship status (popular, neglected, rejected, controversial, average)
- Intergenerational relationships
- Health self-efficacy and behaviors
- Physical fitness

Spirituality
(Orients and gives meaning to our lives; Guidelines for living; Answer the question Why?
for things like random nature of events, uncertainty of the future, and death)

A remaining quandary

❖ You've mapped your processes

❖ You've used theory

❖ You evaluated your key outcomes

❖ You found no effect on a few outcomes

❖ What do you make of those results?

  ➢ Theory failure – more needs to be understood?

  ➢ Program failure – camp can't help the outcome?

Implementation evaluation

❖ Examine the program components (bubbles) as they actually happen live at camp and assess to what degree they are functioning as intended.

(How to do this is the subject of another presentation)

❖ Color code your process maps
  ➢ Red   =   Not very effective
  ➢ Yellow   =   Moderately effective
  ➢ Green   =   Highly effective

Importance & effectiveness factored in

## size = importance
(based on theory and time and resources. Also, importance is on average, not for individuals)

color = effectiveness
(on average, not for individuals)
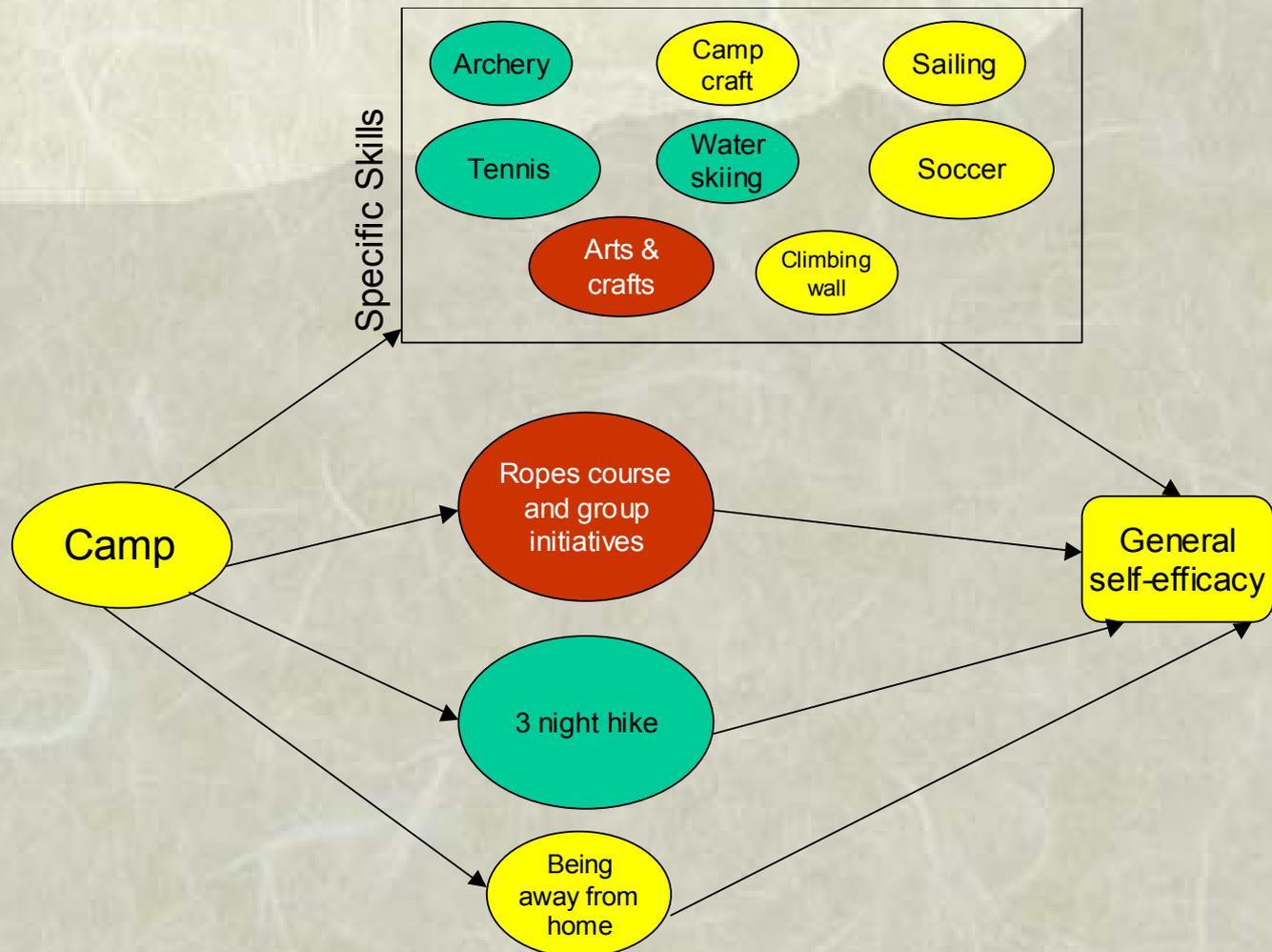
Specific Skills

- Archery
- Camp craft
- Sailing
- Tennis
- Water skiing
- Soccer
- Arts & crafts
- Climbing wall

Camp

- Ropes course and group initiatives
- 3 night hike
- Being away from home

General self-efficacy

Steps in the evaluative process

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Picking outcomes to assess

❖ To start with, pick the ones where you think you have the biggest effect

❖ Balance with ones that are most central to your mission

Limitations (logistics, money, attention span) on the number of outcomes once can assess

1. Study design and methods

2. Sampling

3. Measures

4. Ethics and consent forms

Study design and methods

❖ When to measure?
- o First day of camp & last day of camp designs
  - ✓ Remembering what they said
  - ✓ Counselors as accurate raters in the beginning
  - ✓ Camp environment, at first, might throw off their replies
  - ✓ How long do effects last? Manipulating outcomes in the lab
- o Before camp and "last day" of camp
- o Before camp, "last day," and some weeks afterwards

❖ How long to measure?
- o Longitudinal — over time
- o Cross-sectional — point in time
- o Sequential — both of above methods

❖ Who to measure?
- o Parents
- o Campers
- o Counselors
- o Teachers

Sampling

❖ How many is enough?
  ➢ Depends on your questions, logistics, and reality
  ➢ Rule of thumb = 30 campers for every question option (e.g. gender = 60)

❖ Who do we pick?
  ➢ Age – psychometrics & attention span
  ➢ Any subgroup that is of particular interest

❖ Recognize bias
  ➢ Campers may represent a unique population and results may not generalize
  ➢ Beware that returning campers are a self-selected group

❖ How do we pick them?
  ➢ Random
  ➢ Strategic

❖ Wrenches
  ➢ Initial response rate
  ➢ Attrition (75% or better final response rate)
     (phone calls, SASE, postcards, real signatures, less than 45 minutes, communicate benefit, money, chocolate, tea, more mailings, ...)

Measures

Issues

What to do

❖ Ability

➢ Age

➢ Ability to understand and complete

➢ Pick appropriate measures
➢ Adjust ages studied

❖ Motivation

➢ Boredom

➢ Don't care

➢ Check for consistency
➢ Sincerely ask for their help
➢ $2 bill attached to survey
➢ Participation is a choice

❖ Honesty

➢ Social desirable responding

➢ Attempts at deception

➢ Positive and negative impression scale
➢ $2

What exactly makes a good measure?

A. How was the test developed?
1. Did the test developers use widely accepted procedures, i.e., is it consistent with APA Standards?
2. Was the test sample(s) representative of the population you plan to use the test with?
3. Was the test developed on large enough samples?
4. Are the data for evaluating the test current?
5. Has the test been evaluated (and results published) by researchers other than the test developers?
6. Do test procedures reflect an appreciation for the unique characteristics of children (i.e., is the test age-appropriate)?

B. Is the test reliable?
1. Is the evidence of reliability appropriate?
2. Are indices of internal consistency high enough (coefficients above .80)?
3. Are scores stable overtime? Is the time span used to assess stability relevant to your purposes?
4. When interscorer or interobserver consistency is reported, are the reporters appropriate?
5. When more than one form of reliability is appropriate, are all relevant data reported?

C. Is the test valid?
1. In your opinion, do the test items measure what they are said to measure?
2. Is evidence of criterion-related validity reported?
3. Is the nature of the validity data consistent with your uses? If your research or clinical question is predictive, is the predictive validity of the measure reported?
4. When the test is designed to discriminate among groups, do test scores actually differ among group samples?
5. Are normative data reported? Are they relevant to the population you will use the test with?
6. Do test scores correlate with theoretically meaningful variables and are uncorrelated with theoretically irrelevant variables?
7. Has validity evidence been replicated, especially by someone other than the test developer?
8. Is evidence of construct validity reported? If so, is it persuasive?

What exactly makes a good measure?

D. How practical is the measure?

1. Can the child understand the test items?
2. Is the testing time within the attention span of the child?
3. Is the information to be provided within the child's abilities or experience to report?
4. Will the child cooperate with test procedures?
5. Is the measure sensitive to change?
6. How reactive is the instrument?
7. Can responses be easily biased?
8. Does the quality of the data match the amount of effort to collect it?

<div align="center">Flanery (1990)</div>

Related issues include:

➢ Significance, sensitivity, and effect size
➢ Matching measure to nature of camp – sensitive to influence
➢ State versus trait nature of many constructs – e.g. anxiety and self-esteem

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Flanery, R. C. (1990).   Methodological and psychometric considerations in child reports. La Greca, A. M. Through the eyes of the child: Obtaining self-reports from children and adolescents. (pp. 57-82). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

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Remaining measurement issues

- Qualitative
  - Interviews
  - Case studies
  - Focus groups
  - Youth participatory evaluation

- Quantitative
  - Surveys
  - Sometimes behavioral checklists

- Mixed methods
  - Use quantitative to objectively assess if outcomes were achieved and to what degree
  - Use qualitative to assess processes and to understand what the experiences of individual children were like

Sins of memory

Social desirable responding

Can be invalid

Difficult to meet standards

Motivation, ability, & honesty

Ethics and consent forms

- ❖ Participants
  - ➢ Have the right to withdraw from the study without any duress or consequences
  - ➢ Must be informed about the research project on the whole
  - ➢ Need to understand their responsibilities
  - ➢ Must be informed about if how their responses will be kept confidential
  - ➢ Are given a realistic appraisal of the risks of participation
  - ➢ Have impartial avenues to express their concerns

- ❖ Parents are not informed about their children's scale scores on psychometric measures and vice versa

- ❖ A review board assesses risk, gains, and worthiness

Work bugs out of measurement system

❖ Make sure data collectors are comfortable and competent

❖ Insure participants respond to procedures and measures as intended

❖ Sample data collected and analyzed should yield reports and information as envisioned

Steps in the evaluative process

1. Needs assessment

2. Understand completely what you do

3. Pick which outcomes to evaluate

4. Design an evaluation plan / methods

5. Conduct the evaluation

6. Analyze the results

7. Utilize and disseminate the results

8. Begin again – continuously evaluate

Conducting the evaluation

❖ Be serious and committed

➢ Time at all levels

➢ Staff involvement and buy-in

➢ Expense

o Materials

o Professional help

o Hire additional staff

➢ Anxiety

❖ So, why should you bother to evaluate?

Why Evaluate?

❖ Utilize results to:
  ➤ Improve how outcomes are addressed
  ➤ Start a change initiative
  ➤ Examine strengths and weaknesses and reasons for both

❖ Distribute results to:
  ➤ Recruit, retain, and motivate talented staff
  ➤ Enlist and motivate able volunteers
  ➤ Attract new participants
  ➤ Engage collaborators – other agencies, parents, schools, etc.
  ➤ Garner support for innovative efforts
  ➤ Win designation as a model or demonstration site.
  ➤ Enhance public image
  ➤ Retain or increase funding
  ➤ Develop and justify budgets

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Quantitative

❖ Step 1 is cleaning the data
(outliers, missing data, random responding, data entry errors, double-check reliability, inconsistent answers, etc.)

❖ Factor out the variability due to social desirable responding

❖ Know what the average and standard deviation are for your population

❖ Know what a clinically/meaningful change is

❖ Change scores are statistically invalid

❖ Examine what effect moderators have (e.g. number of summers)

❖ Statistical significance alone is almost meaningless (effect size)

   90% success is probably an unreasonable goal

❖ Don't violate assumptions of the statistics used (particularly N)

❖ Examine how long the effects last

❖ Examine processes and implementation of them

❖ Assess camp inputs

❖ Rich detail on a few campers

    o What their experience was like and what effect that may have had on their outcomes

    o Background information that may shed light on results

❖ At camp, who does and does not benefit and why?

Age   Ethnicity   Gender   Number of summers

Socioeconomic level   Parenting style   Family functioning

Parental education   Number of siblings   Level & type of participation (outputs)

Child's desire to go to camp   Counselor group performance

Level on outcome   Parental camp experience   Very good school

Active in religious community   Strong, positive peer group

Child is good match with type of camp   Variability not captured by "Ethnicity"

Idiosyncratic experiences at camp   Other individual or social traits

❖ The long causal chain
  ➤ Transactional view
  ➤ Dynamic systems view

❖ The "immeasurable" change

❖ Ultimate change – adults with and without a camp experience
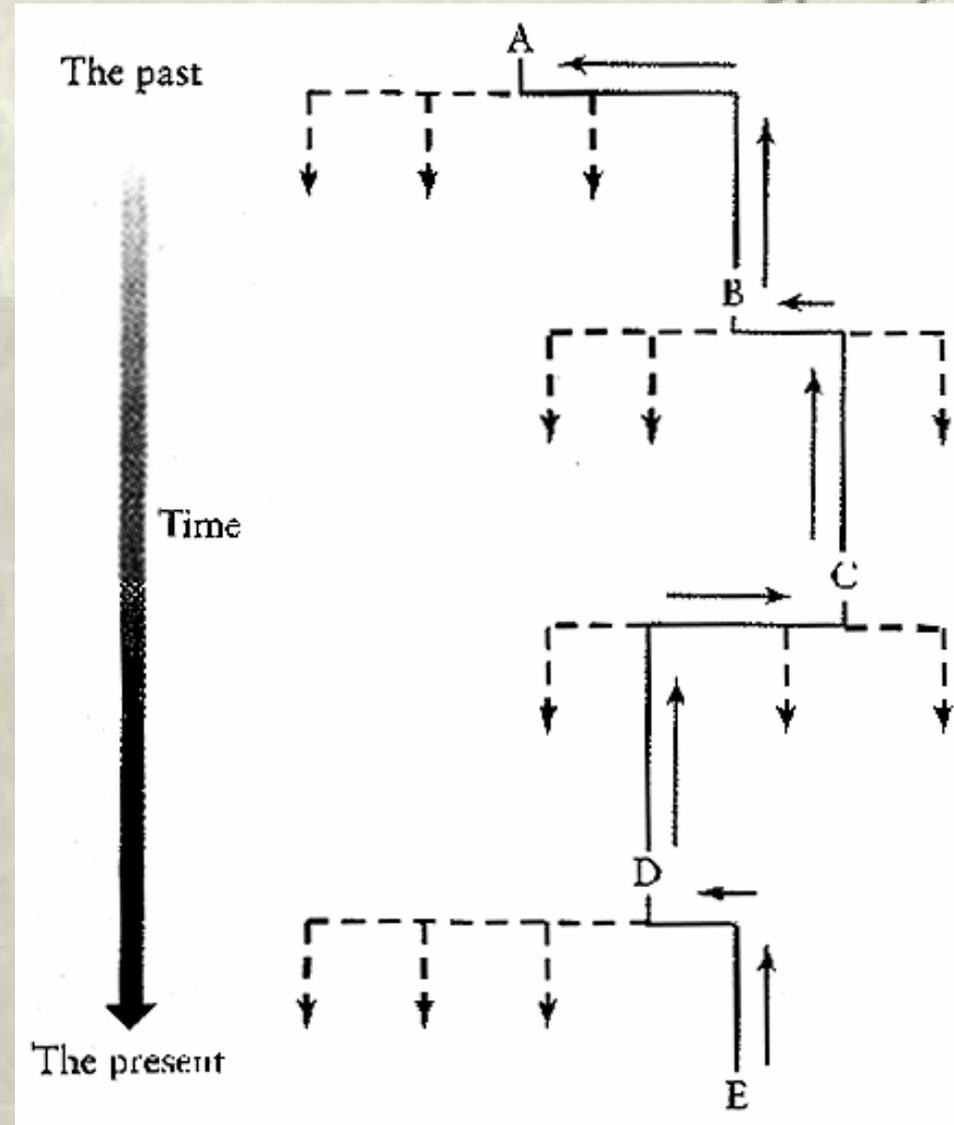
Utilize the results

❖ Everything that was on the "Why evaluate?" slide applies.

❖ Benefits of a serious, accurate evaluation include
  ➢ Tweak your processes
  ➢ Benchmark theoretically accurate processes with other camps and industries
  ➢ Improve how processes are implemented
  ➢ Communicate your mission and objectives more clearly and accurately
  ➢ In general, for every outcome you evaluate, the children will reap enormous benefits heretofore not possible, which, after all, it why we are all here in the first place

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Top 15 evaluation mistakes

1. Don't use fully valid, reliable, and appropriate measures that meet all the criteria
2. Behavioral indicators are not assessed
3. A thorough literature review isn't undertaken first
4. Evaluations are atheoretical – not theory-driven
5. Measure first and last day of camp
6. Long term effects of camp are not assessed
7. Use qualitative data alone
8. Try to use qualitative data to objectively assess outcomes or determine cause
9. Don't examine the processes involved
10. Don't examine the implementation of the processes
11. Only the campers' perspective is tapped – not counselors and parents as well
12. Examination of moderators is not thoroughly undertaken
13. The size of the effects noted are not calculated
14. Basic research methods are violated – random sampling, N, appropriate comparison groups, etc.
15. Sample bias isn't eliminated

How to hire an evaluator

❖ You may have a staff member, or a consultant may be best

❖ Should have expansive knowledge about everything in this presentation and others

❖ Should have a solid grasp of the theories relevant to summer camp and the outcomes you are interested in evaluating

   (field's include developmental, social, and organizational psychology as well as the field of recreation and leisure)

Different roles evaluators can serve

❖ Evaluation - systematic determination of the:
  ➢ merit (effectiveness)
  ➢ worth (cost)
  ➢ significance (effect size and social importance)
❖ Diagnosing / Explaining
  ➢ Needs assessment
  ➢ Process evaluation
  ➢ Implementation evaluation
❖ Recommending
  ➢ Need to be aware of all ramifications and implications of it
  ➢ Clients will likely blame the evaluation if they don't like the results
❖ Teaching evaluation

  Evaluation consultant – "I'm not doing the evaluation; you do it; I'm just consulting on the process."
❖ Monitoring

  On time, on budget, and on task.

Questions
&
Discussion