

Public Health Program Management: From Theory to Practice

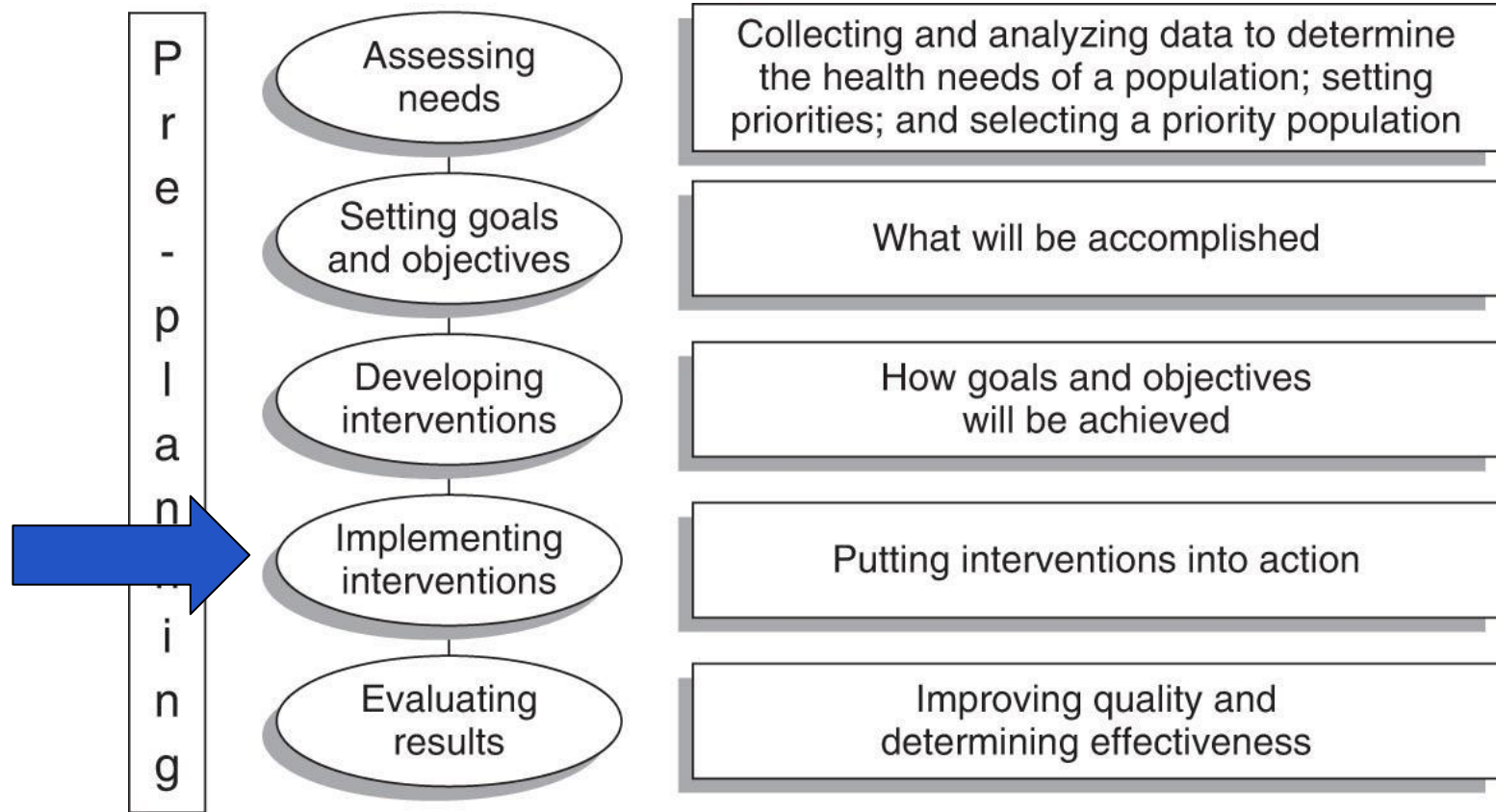
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Introduction



- My lens:
 - 7 years at Cambridge Public Health Department
 - 3 years at MHOA
 - Program management professional

A Generalized Model for Program Planning



What is Program Management?

Program Management is overseeing multiple related projects or ongoing activities that contribute to broader, long-term health outcomes.



Project Management: focuses on delivering a single project within scope, schedule, and budget.

Real World Example:

Overdose Prevention and Education Program

Multiple initiatives:

- Narcan trainings for community members
 - Narcan trainings for homeless service providers
 - NaloxBoxes in busy areas
 - Drug Take Back Days
 - Overdose data collection & dissemination
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Supervisory Management Responsibilities and Practices

Managers and Supervisors often **create, manage and maintain the organizational systems**. These systems are required to deliver products and services and run organizations efficiently and predictably.

Examples: Financial Systems, Human Resources, Contracts, Grants, Communication Measurement systems

These systems are relied on for continuity, alignment of resources, predictability, quality, replication, understanding of roles and responsibilities, measurement, budgeting, performance and productivity assessments, balance and sustainability use of resources, support of the organization's strategic initiatives etc. etc.

Essential Management Responsibilities and Practices

- How to create and present a financial budget
- How to use organizational financial systems
- How to use organization IT systems to enhance your work
- How to create a workforce plan and training plans
- How to set goals for your staff that aligns with the organization's initiatives
- How to create performance measures at all levels programmatic and desktop

Core Program Management Skills

Leadership & Supervision	Coordinate partnerships Supervise and support program staff
Financial Management	Project costs, create justifications, manage spending, and optimize financial resources
Strategic Planning	Assess and prioritize needs, develop strategic plans, and design new programs and projects
Operations Management	Implement programs and projects Keep things running within scope, schedule, and budget
Monitoring & Evaluation	Design monitoring and evaluation plans, collect data, analyze data, and identify and implement needed improvements
Problem Solving	Identify and address challenges Ensure programs are responsive, adaptable, and sustainable

Real World Example:

Overdose Prevention and Education Program

Leadership & Supervision	- Building working relationships, collaborating on programming with partners - Supervising interns
Financial Management	- Making an annual budget based on priorities - Spending every penny
Strategic Planning	- Making a logic model, strategic plan, and annual plans - Meeting needs of funders, partners, and administration
Operations Management	- Planning and coordinating events - Meeting management: making agendas, meeting facilitation
Monitoring & Evaluation	- Collecting process and outcome program data to assess our impact - Collecting quantitative and qualitative overdose data
Problem Solving	- Risk management - Changing scope, budget, and timeline in response to external factors

Other Program Management Skills

- Needs assessment
- Evaluation
- Data analysis
- Communications and marketing
- Project Management
- Quality improvement
- Cultural humility
- Time management

What else?

Learned Program Management Wisdom

1. Things will go wrong.
2. Things will take twice as long as you think (if you're lucky).
3. Planning ahead can prevent major problems down the line.

What else?

Common Program Pitfalls

- Insufficient needs assessment
 - Unclear goals and objectives
 - Mismatch between problem and solution
 - Low stakeholder engagement
 - Low community involvement
 - Weak leadership
 - Inadequate planning
 - Poor project management
 - Insufficient funding
 - Workforce shortages
 - Weak evaluation design
 - Lack of adaptability
 - Political changes
 - Lack of sustainability planning
 - Resistance to change
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Proactive Solutions

- Strong governance
 - Data-driven decision making
 - Systems thinking
 - Equity-centered design
 - Effective stakeholder management
 - Continuous quality improvement
 - Capacity building
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Risk Management

Many risks are predictable; some aren't.

For predictable risks, mitigating in advance may make all the difference.

What are some predictable risks?

- Staff turnover
 - Miscommunication
 - Incomplete or missing data
 - Low response rates for surveys/focus groups
 - Leadership changes
 - Funding coming to an end
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Real World Example:

Staff Turnover

Risk Description: Program Coordinator leaves their position

Probability: Medium

Risk Owner: Program Manager

Potential Impact: Delayed timeline, under budget

Response Strategy: Avoid and mitigate

Mitigation Actions:

Avoid staff turnover:

- Pay a competitive salary
- Promote professional development and career growth
- Cultivate a respectful work environment

Mitigate repercussions:

- Create a succession plan
- Cross-train employees
- Document protocols

Activity: Risk Management

What is one risk that your program faces?

Choose one risk your program may face and create a quick risk mitigation plan with these categories:

- A description of the potential risk
 - The probability of occurrence
 - The risk owner
 - The potential impact on objectives (e.g., scope, schedule and budget)
 - The response strategy (e.g., avoid, mitigate, transfer or accept)
 - The specific mitigation actions planned to address the risk
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Final Thought

Good public health programs are not successful because everything goes according to plan.

They're successful because program managers continuously use data, partnerships, communication, and quality improvement to adapt while staying focused on public health outcomes.

Make a plan, but be flexible.

Continued Learning

New England Public Health Training Center https://www.nephtc.org	The New England Public Health Training Center (NEPHTC) delivers a wide range of training programs and services that strengthen the public health workforce in New England. - Management and Skills (self-paced courses) - Management and Skills (webinars)
All Regional Public Health Training Centers (PHTCs) https://phtcn.org/about	The Public Health Training Center Network is a consortium of regional Public Health Training Centers that collectively represent the nation's most comprehensive resource for public health workforce development.
TRAIN Learning Network https://www.train.org/ma/home	TRAIN is a national learning network that provides thousands of quality training opportunities to more than 2 million professionals who protect and improve the public's health.
Public Health Learning Navigator https://www.phlearningnavigator.org	The Learning Navigator is a curated online resource supporting quality learning for the public health workforce. You can search for any training by keyword.

Thank you!

Questions?

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