

# Theory of Change

December 15, 2022

Laura J. Landry  
Judi's House/JAG Institute



# Evaluation Trainings

## Data Basics

Data capture & basic  
data utilization

## Program Evaluation Basics

Types of evaluation –  
approaches, goals

## Theory of Change

Define your model – first  
step in planning

## Evaluation Planning

Steps – key questions,  
design, measures

# Objectives

- Summarize the purpose of conducting a theory of change process
- Identify the core steps of theory of change/logic modeling
- Explain how to use theory of change and logic models to achieve evaluation goals



# Purpose

- **Introduce tools that can aid in creating an evaluation plan**
- **Understand how theory of change applies to your program**
- **Understand how to create a logic model**



# What is Theory of Change?





How much do you already know about  
Theory of Change?



# Two terms: Theory & Change

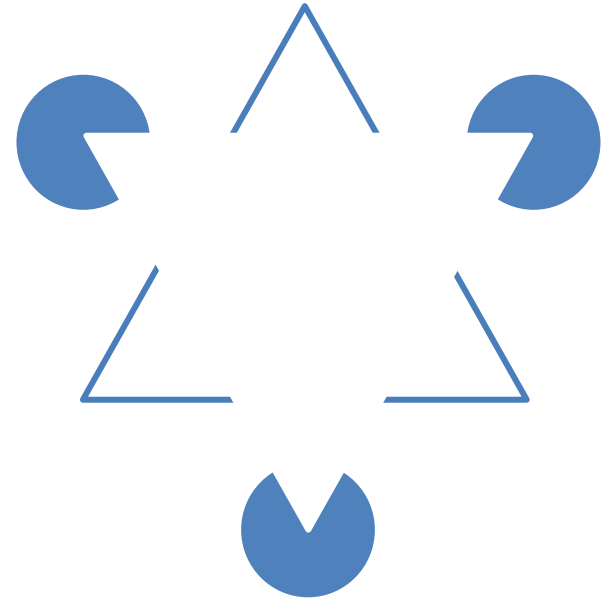
- **Change: What you aim to achieve with your program**

Increased optimism	Strengthened family connections & communication	Consistent school attendance	Improved school behaviors
Develop new coping skills	Decreased in aggression	More emotional regulation	Less self blame and guilt
Decreased fears and worries	Decreased loneliness	Increased identification of grief reactions	More attuned caregivers



# Two terms: Theory & Change

- Theory: How & why change happens
- Pathways



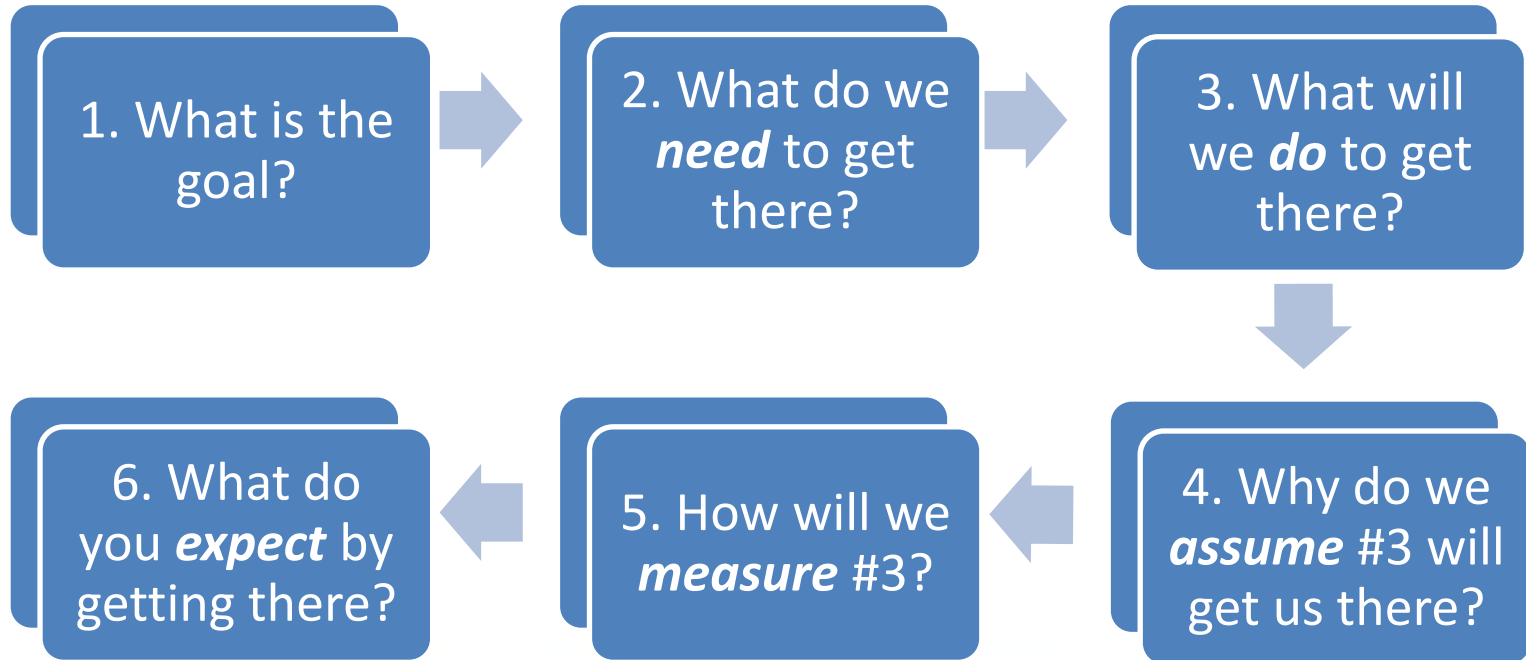


# Theory of Change

- Method that explains how & why a program is expected to lead to change
- Articulates cause
- Explanatory



# Theory of Change



# What is a Logic Model?





How much do you already know about Logic Models?



# Logic Model

- Description of what a program does & what its outcomes are
- Visual summary of program



# Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts

# Logic Model

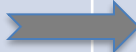
Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<p><b>IF – THEN</b> statements help us move from column to column</p>				

# Logic Model


Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<p data-bbox="272 464 658 518"><b>IF</b>  <b>THEN</b></p> <p data-bbox="117 743 1823 798"><b>IF – THEN</b> statements help us move from column to column</p>				



# Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<p data-bbox="620 464 1010 521">IF  THEN</p> <p data-bbox="117 743 1823 805">IF – THEN statements help us move from column to column</p>				

# Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<p data-bbox="993 459 1383 514" style="text-align: center;">IF  THEN</p> <p data-bbox="117 743 1823 798" style="text-align: center;">IF – THEN statements help us move from column to column</p>				

# Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<p data-bbox="1387 464 1779 521">IF → THEN</p> <p data-bbox="117 743 1823 801">IF – THEN statements help us move from column to column</p>				

# Why do Theory of Change or create a Logic Model?





How has logic modeling helped your organization?



# Purpose & Benefits

- **Evaluation specific:**
  - Helps get stakeholders on the same page about the program
  - Provides direction and clarity for program evaluation
  - Guides selection of data to collect
- **Identifies components needed to reach outcomes**
- **Clear communication to engage stakeholders**





How would you explain Theory of Change/Logic Modeling to a friend?



# What steps are involved in Theory of Change/Logic Modeling?





# Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts

# Logic Model

<b>Goal</b> Purpose of the Program – what your program aims to achieve	<b>Inputs</b> Resources needed to implement the program	<b>Activities</b> Program services provided – actions that make the program work	<b>Outputs</b> Products of activities (counts)	<b>Impacts</b> Intended effects – changes that result from program

# Goal

---

GOAL				

- **What your Program is working to achieve – big picture, purpose**

## Dinner Party

- Have fun with friends
- Enjoy a satisfying meal



# Inputs

	INPUTS			

**Resources needed for the program; similar to a checklist**

## Dinner Party

- Dinner ingredients
- Plates, cutlery, napkins, drinks
- Space, friends

## Flow

- How does this relate to the goal of the dinner?
- What do the inputs lead to?
- IF-THEN



# Activities

		ACTIVITIES		

## What services your program provides

### Dinner Party

- Cook and serve the meal
- Greet friends as they arrive
- Hang out and chat

### Flow

- How does this activity relate to the input?
- What can we expect to result from this activity?
- IF-THEN



# Outputs

			OUTPUTS	

Products of the program's activities. Can be "counted"

## Dinner Party

- # of friends invited; # who attended; AVG hours attended
- # of plates served

## Flow

- Does this output make sense as a product of the activity?
- Are there any gaps?
- IF-THEN



# Impacts

				IMPACTS

**Effects or change the outputs have on the client**

## Dinner Party

- Stronger friendship and connection and feeling of happiness

## Flow

- How does the impact relate to the output?
- How does it relate to the other elements of the model?
- How can evaluation help us measure this impact?



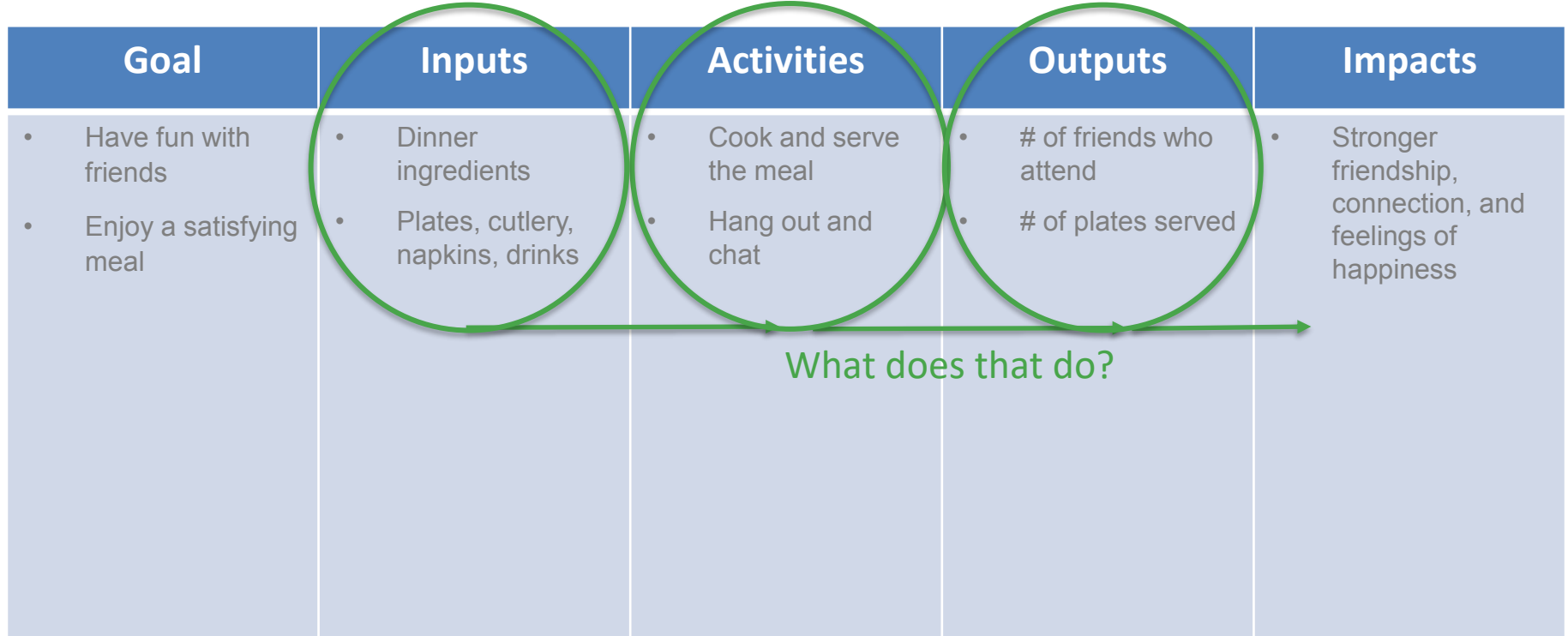


What is the difference between Outputs & Impacts?





# Dinner Party Logic Model

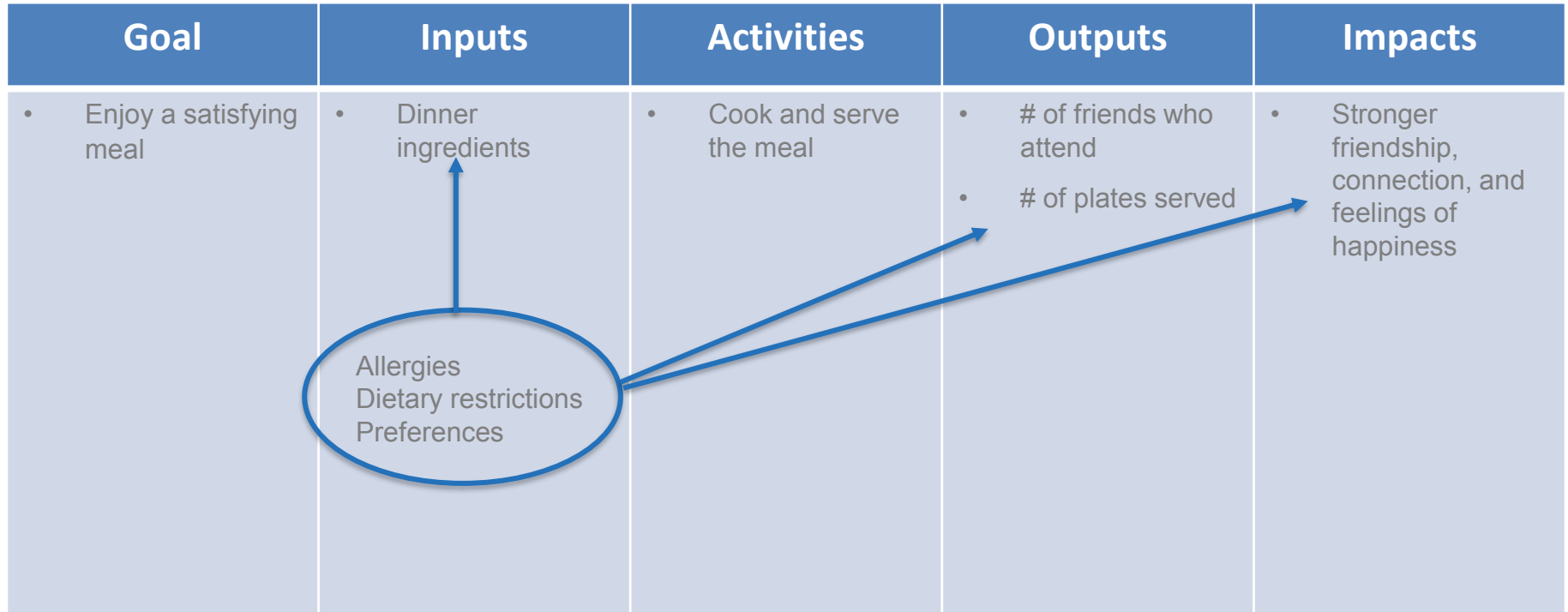


# Dinner Party Logic Model

Goal	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have fun with friends</li><li>• Enjoy a satisfying meal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dinner ingredients</li><li>• Plates, cutlery, napkins, drinks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cook and serve the meal</li><li>• Hang out and chat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• # of friends who attend</li><li>• # of plates served</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stronger friendship, connection, and feelings of happiness</li></ul>

← How do we get here?

# Dinner Party Theory of Change



# Approach – Core Steps

- Engage stakeholders
- Select & complete template
- Check for flow
  - IF-THEN statements
  - What does that do?
  - How do we get here?
- Consider Theory of Change questions: How? Why?
- Use to guide your evaluation



**How does this connect to evaluation?**



# Achieve evaluation goal

- **Clear picture of program to evaluate**
- **Guide selection of data**
- **Framework for evaluation**



# Wrapping-Up



# Take Aways

---

- **Theory of Change is explanatory – focused on HOW and WHY our program makes change**
- **Logic Models are descriptive – focused on WHAT our program does**
- **Together they inform evaluation plans by outlining data to collect, make programs easy for stakeholders to understand, and help tell our story of impact**
- **Core steps include engage stakeholders, select & complete a template, check for flow, call out assumptions, use to guide evaluation**







## Learnings from this session



# Upcoming Trainings

## Evaluation Planning

- Spring 2023

## Data Basics

- 2023 TBD
- Recording currently available online @ NACG website [here](#)

## Program Evaluation Basics

- 2023 TBD
- Recording currently available online @ NACG website [here](#)



# Questions?



