



CENTRE FOR
COMMUNITY
BASED RESEARCH



EVALUATION
CAPACITY
NETWORK



Social Sciences and Humanitie
Research Council of Canada

EVALUATING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

SLIDE DECK #1:
Introduction to Community-Based Evaluation

Do You Want To Evaluate Your Programs To Better Serve Your Clients?

You are in the right place!



A community-based approach to evaluation helps you to **tailor your evaluation** in a way that is useful for your organization and your clients.

This series of slides decks will help you to **plan and implement** a community-based evaluation in your own organization.

What This Slide Deck Covers

Introduction to Community-Based Evaluation

- I. What is community-based evaluation?
- I. Why evaluate early childhood development programs?
- I. What is evaluation capacity?
- I. How to use these slides



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What Is Community-Based Evaluation?

Opening Exercise

Consider this statement: “Evaluation always makes programs better”

- If this statement was a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, where would you stand?
- Have you always had the same opinion or has your opinion changed over time?
- If you have changed your opinion, what caused the change? If not, what might change your opinion?



Thinking Evaluation

What comes to mind when you hear the word evaluation?

- The word evaluation at first may not seem inspiring. However, evaluation can be embraced as an **opportunity for strategic learning, evidence-based decision-making, innovative reflexive practice**, and more.
- The trick is to make evaluation work for you and your organization.
- Intrigued? Read on!



Defining Evaluation

- Let's start with the basics. What is evaluation?
- Evaluation can be defined as an **organized** and **systematic** approach to **collecting information** (about activities, impacts, and effectiveness) **that helps to improve a program** (or organization) and **describe its accomplishments**.



The Drivers of Evaluation

REACTIVE

- In response to funder accountability

PROACTIVE

- For healthy organizational improvement
- For adaptive management in developing innovation

MEANINGFUL EVALUATION

- Not only **does** evaluation
- But also **uses** evaluation results



A Community-Based Approach

- How is community-based evaluation different from other approaches to evaluation?
- What makes evaluation distinctively “community-based”?

Let's consider the hallmarks, goals, and phases of a community-based approach



Three Hallmarks of Community-Based Evaluation

Community-based evaluation strives to be ...

Stakeholder-
Driven

Ensure that the evaluation is practically relevant to stakeholders and is driven by the program's unique theory of change

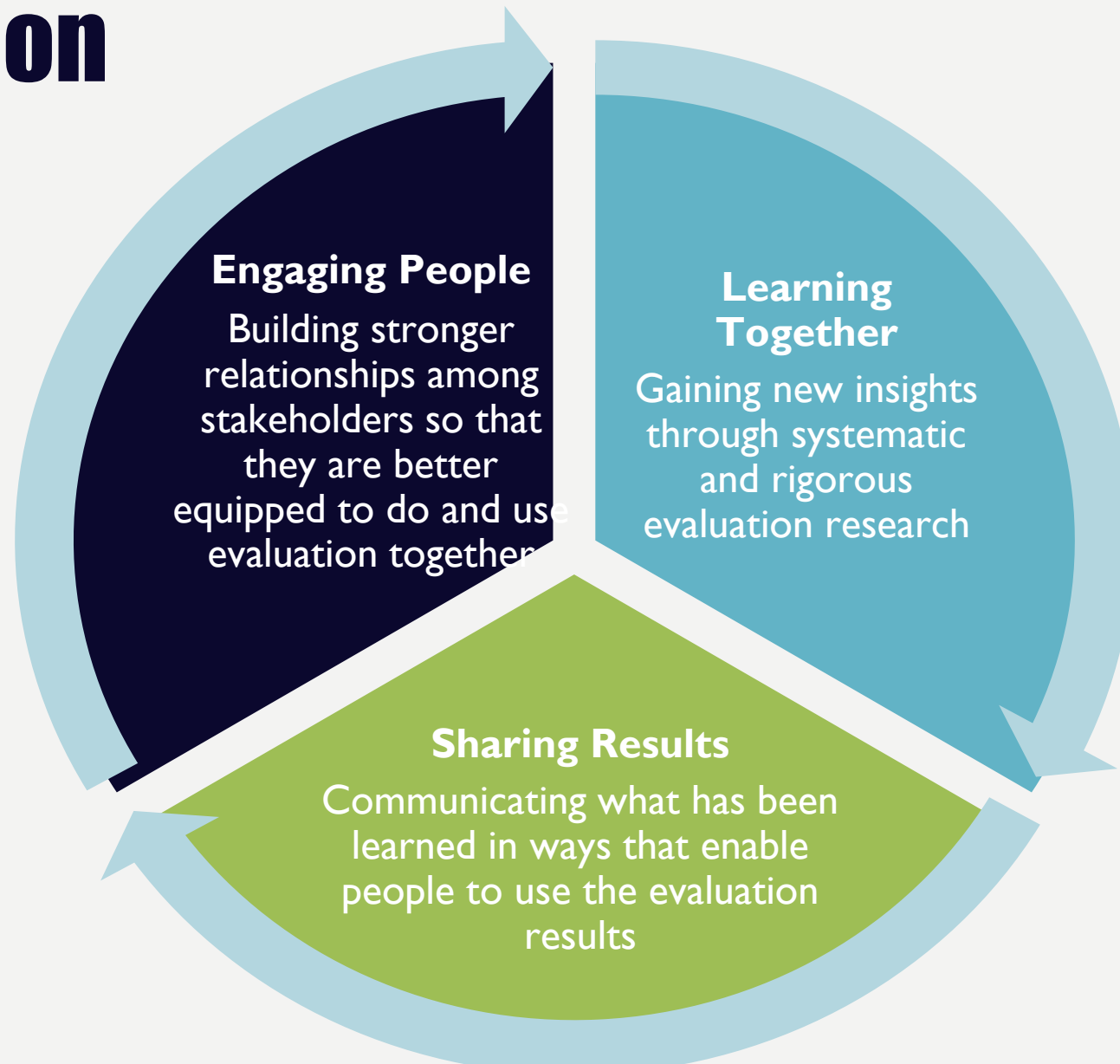
Participatory

Program stakeholders and researchers equitably share control of the evaluation agenda through active and reciprocal involvement in the evaluation design, implementation and dissemination

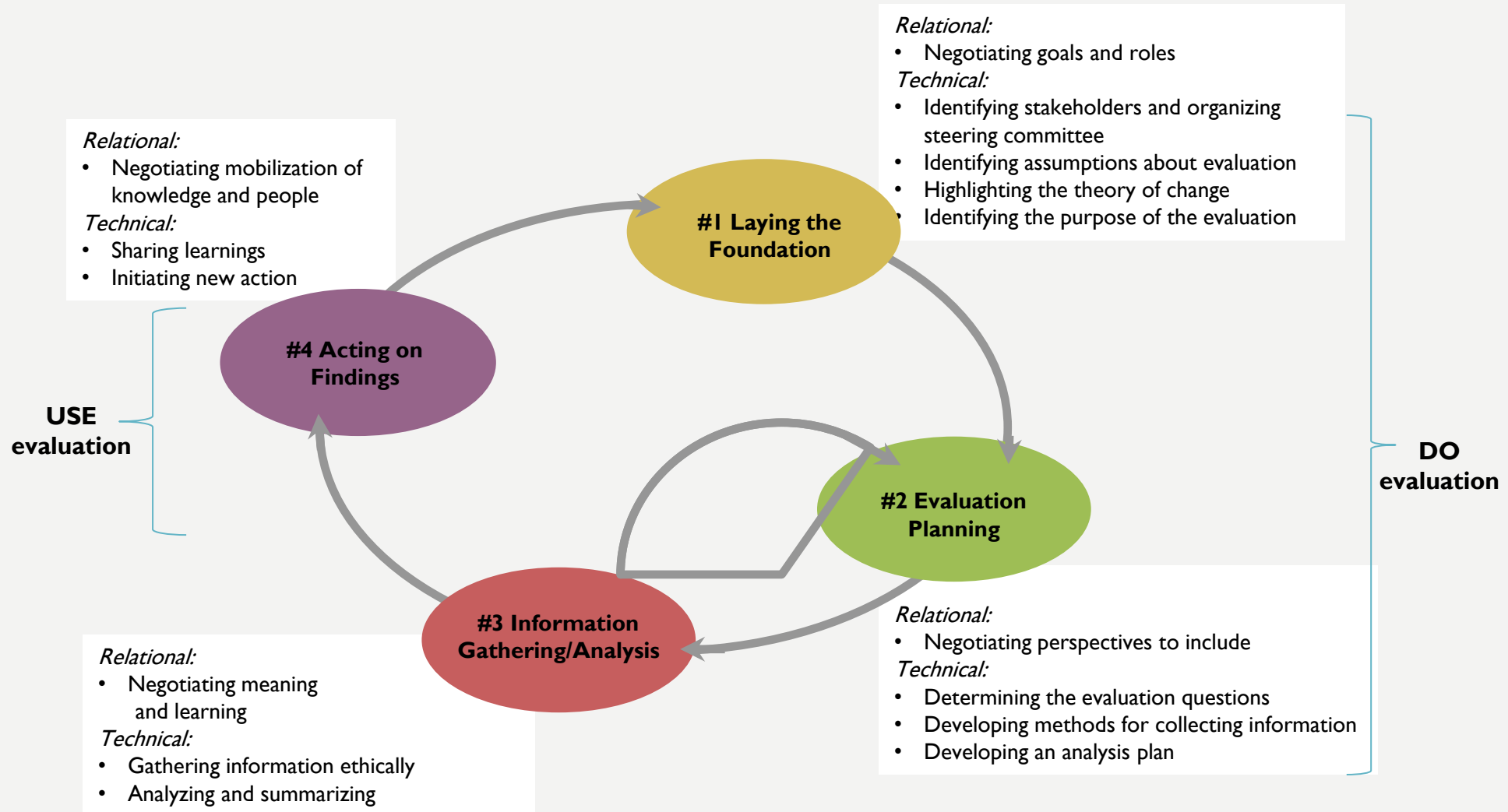
Action-
Oriented

The evaluation process and results are useful to stakeholders in making improvements to the program and contribute to communities where everyone is supported and belongs

Three **Goals** of Community-Based Evaluation



Four Phases Of Community-based Evaluation



In the remaining slide decks, we will unpack this diagram, one phase at a time.

Implementation Strategies



Stakeholder steering group

- Providing guidance and “conscience” • Facilitating cross-stakeholder perspectives

Diversity on research teams

- Including people with lived experience • Privileging facilitation & mobilization skills

Ongoing training and support

- Equipping researchers for consistency • Equipping partners for deeper engagement

Open forums and feedback events

- Sharing & verifying results • Discussing & prioritizing solutions

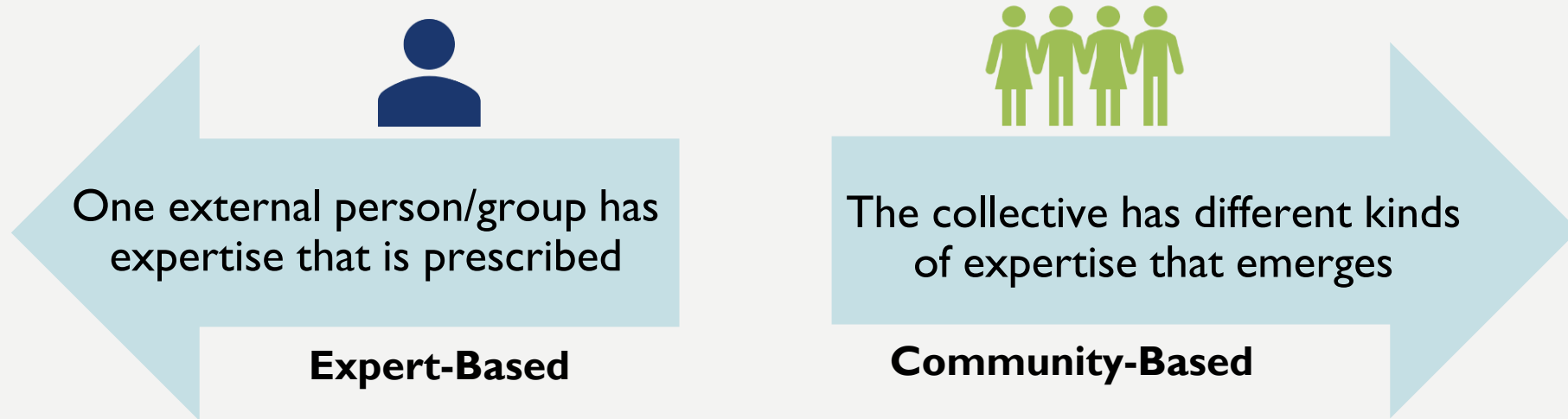
Clear and creative summaries

- Crafting digestible written, oral & visual summaries • Inviting artistic expressions

Plans for future action

- Deciding on concrete recommendations • Determining next evaluation cycles

Two General Approaches To Evaluation



Whether or not you use external consultants to help with your evaluation, a community-based approach helps to make the evaluation meaningful and useful to you.

Summary Definition

An “approach that involves **active participation of stakeholders**, those whose lives are affected by the issue being studied, **in all phases of research** for the purpose of **producing useful results** to make **positive changes.**”

Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998, p.12



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Why Evaluate Early Childhood Development Programs?

Why?

Evaluating early childhood development programs allows us to ...

- Better understand how practices, programs, and policies are working
- Generate evidence that informs decision-making
- Improve existing practices and programs to optimize child development

(Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000)



The Need...

...for evaluation in the early childhood development field:

- Children's development in their early years significantly affects the economic and social wellness of our communities. (Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010)
- Policies and programs that support the development and wellness of children in their early years provide great return on investment by reducing the need for interventions in later years. (Deane et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2007; Heckman, 2008; OECD, 2012; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000)
- Despite Canada's investment in early childhood programs, indicators show shortfalls. In 2016, UNICEF ranked Canada 26th of 35 high-income countries for child well-being.
- Indigenous children and English-language learners of immigrant and refugee backgrounds are less ready to begin education, and are made vulnerable by economic, cultural, and language differences. (Gokiart et al., 2014a, Georgis, Gokiart, & Kirova, 2018)

The Gaps...

...in evaluating early childhood development programs:

- More and more, program managers are asked to provide successful evaluation results when seeking or renewing funding
- There are few readily available tools to assist in measuring outcomes
- Often there can be too much data which confuses decision-making and slows implementation
- Historically evaluations have been top-down which doesn't allow for the same community self-determination, innovation, and use of insights that support child wellness as community-based evaluation

(Gokiart, 2018)

In Summary...

Evaluation

- Evaluation of existing programs and policies will allow us to understand what is working and what is not

Community-Based Evaluation

- A community-based evaluation will help to address some of the challenges in the early childhood development in Canada by showcasing successes and identifying areas of improvement in a culturally sensitive and practical manner

Supporting Action

- Local and timely evidence-based information resulting out of evaluations supports beneficial action and decision-making

But We Lack Capacity!

- Community-based evaluation sounds great, but where do we even begin?
- What happens if we lack the capacity to conduct evaluation?
- What does evaluation capacity even mean?



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What Is Evaluation Capacity?

Evaluation Capacity

At the individual level

- Skills
- Knowledge, and
- Attitudes

At the organizational level

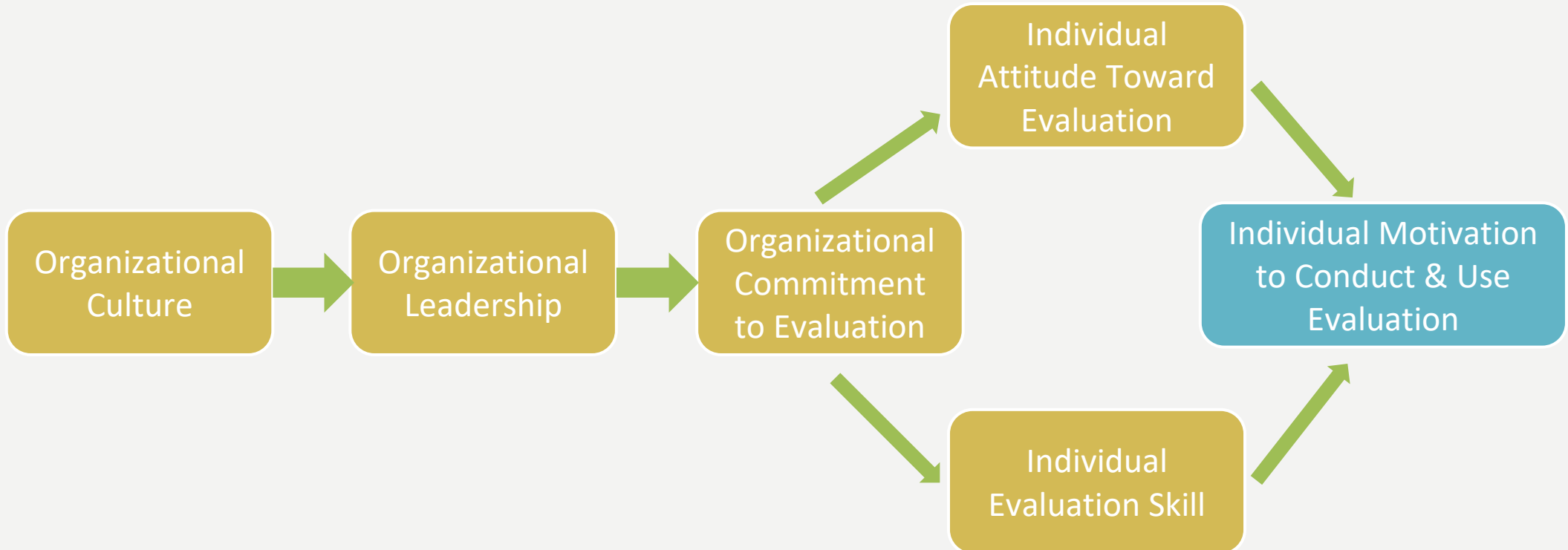
- Required resources and have
- Supportive cultures

At the environmental level

- Funding requirements
- Evaluation expectations
- Potential lack of resources that hinder execution



Building A Culture Of Evaluation In Your Organization



Source: El Hassar, B. (2018). Development and validation of an evaluation capacity instrument for the early childhood field. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Your Turn

Think of these questions...

- What barriers to evaluation might there be within your organization?
- What individual barriers might hold you back from evaluation?
- **What is your group's capacity to evaluate your early childhood development programs?**



Test your evaluation capacity with this [evaluation readiness tool](#)

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About These Slide Decks

Background To These Slides

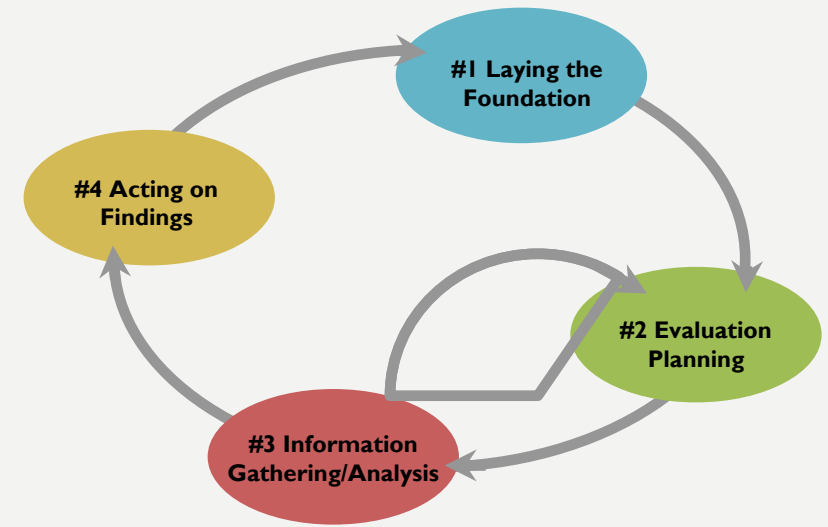
The series of **five slide decks** along with a complimentary **evaluation workbook** are intended to equip individuals and organizations in the early childhood field who want to learn about how to take a community-based approach to their evaluations. The tools are part of the EvalHub of the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) that emphasize an approach to evaluation that is community-driven, participatory and action-oriented.

These tools were developed by the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) in collaboration with the Evaluation Capacity Network. The Ontario Network of Community Action Program for Children/Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CAPC/CPNP) Projects was an external reference group to ensure the tools are relevant and meaningful to those working in the early childhood field.

The slides and evaluation workbook were originally designed as part of a national project “Evaluating Refugee Programs”, led by CCBR and ECN. This project aimed to build evaluation capacity in the resettlement sector (www.eval4refugee.ca). During this project, the slides were presented to over 300 workshop participants in 12 communities across Canada.

These slides and the complimentary evaluation workbook also draw on input from community stakeholders through CCBR’s history of working on over 400 projects on a variety of social issues since 1982.

Overview Of The Slide Decks



★ Slide deck #1: Introduction to community-based evaluation

Slide deck #2: Laying the foundation in community-based evaluation

Slide deck #3: Community-based evaluation planning

Slide deck #4: Information gathering and analysis

Slide deck #5: Acting on findings



LEARNING OBJECTIVES



WHAT

Understand the basics of community-based evaluation



WHY

Understand why community-based evaluation is important for early childhood development programs



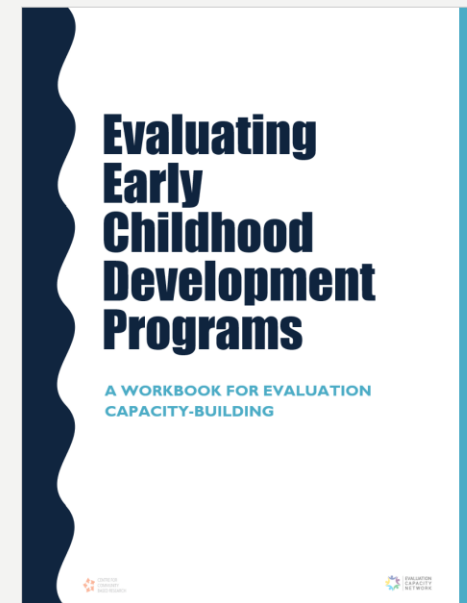
HOW

Understand the basic steps for conducting your own community-based evaluations

How To Use These Slide Decks

This is a self-study tool that you can review at your own pace.

Start with the **slides** and practice on the **evaluation workbook**.



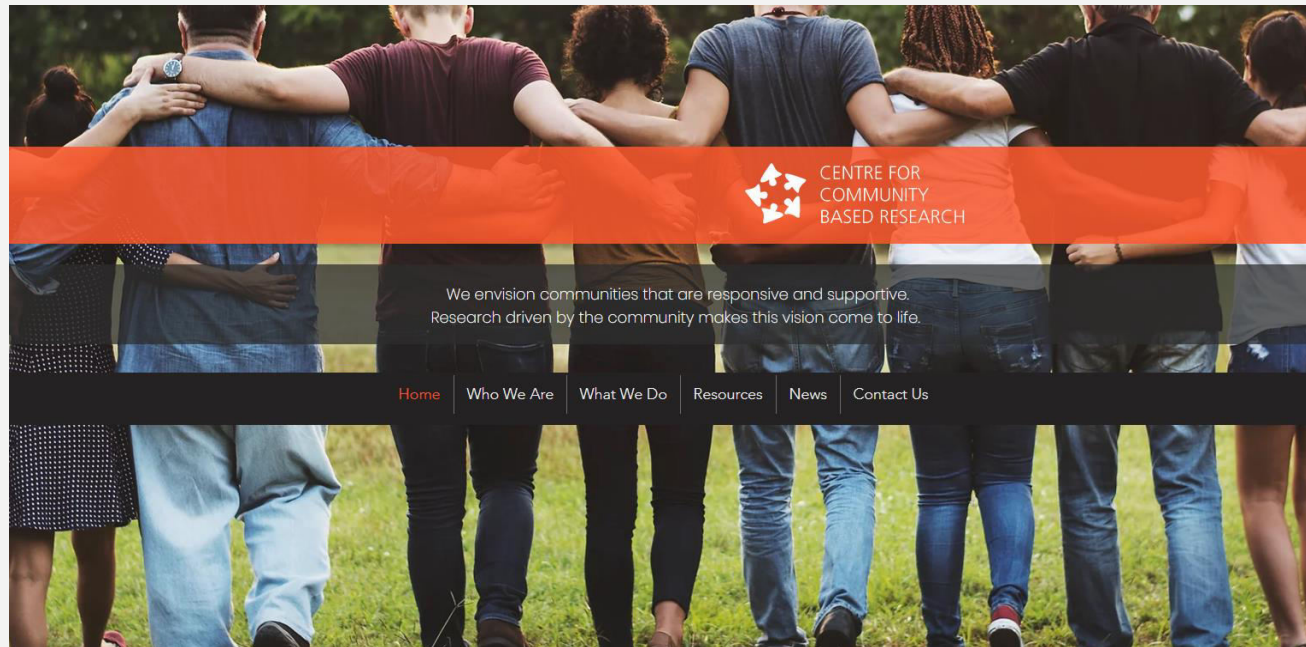
look for  to find the corresponding exercise page on the workbook!

Visit www.evaluationcapacitynetwork.com to access

- The complimentary evaluation workbook
- Complimentary live webinars' recordings

About CCBR

- The Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) is a non-profit organization located on the University of Waterloo campus. It is a champion and pioneer of collaborative and action-oriented research in Canada. Established in 1982, CCBR uses research and education to build more responsive and supportive communities, especially for people who experience limited access to power and opportunity. CCBR has conducted over 100 projects related to family support and early childhood development.
- Learn more at www.communitybasedresearch.ca



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About ECN

- The Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN), located on the University of Alberta campus, is a national interdisciplinary and intersectoral research network focused on enhancing the evaluation capacity of the early childhood field and social sector more broadly. ECN draws on the skills and expertise of academics, students, evaluators, funders, and community organizations across Canada to curate and create evaluation learning opportunities, access to resources and expertise.
- Learn more at www.evaluationcapacitynetwork.com



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