

Outcomes and Indicators

Outcomes are often a critical part of program development and evaluation. There are evaluation models that don't require pre-determined outcomes (goal-free evaluation, for example), and innovative program development models often do not involve pre-establishing specific outcomes and rather look for emergent outcomes. However, most of us will be involved in developing and implementing programs and evaluations that require some level of specificity around outcomes or what we hope to achieve with our efforts.

We are all working to end sexual violence, but what will it take to get there? What are the short-term changes that will serve as signposts that we are on our way to that bigger vision? Those questions point to the outcomes we need to work on. Notice that these questions don't ask what we need to **do** to get there but rather what we need to **change**.

Developing good and meaningful outcomes takes some practice.

On the simplest level, the outcome answers the question: What do we hope will be different in the world as a (partial) result of our efforts?

These changes might be in various domains:

- Community and social norms
- School or community climate
- Individual attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors
- Relationship dynamics
- Organizational operations and practices

In order to be measurable, your outcome should include a clear **direction of change**. Usually that's indicated by either the word **increase** or the word **decrease**, but you might also have outcomes that seek to **improve** or **maintain** a condition.

When it comes time to measure your progress toward your outcome, you'll have to ask yourself a different question. How will you know if that outcome has been met? What will be different? This should give you more specific indicators of the change, and those **indicators** will drive outcome-related data collection.

Writing Outcomes

Your vision is to end sexual violence and to create safe, healthy, and thriving communities in the process. So, what changes do you need to make along the way to get there?

Let's say your vision is a long-term impact that is 20+ years on the horizon. What will the world look like five years before you get there? And five years before that? And yet five more? And one year before that? If you can envision this, you can set your short-, mid-, and long-term goals that get you toward the ultimate impact you seek.

The first sheet below asks you to jot down some thoughts about that. Brainstorm these ideas, and let your brainstorm be driven by your vision and also by relevant theories of behavior and social change.

Then, you have to consider your own **domain of impact**. That is, you need to figure out which of these changes your work will address. Once you know where your place is, you can work on your own outcomes out of those changes using the outcomes section.

Visioning Brainstorm

- **20 years from now** - safe, healthy communities!

- **15 years from now** - To reach that 20-year goal:

- What does there need to be more of?

- What does there need to be less of?

- **10 years from now** - To reach that 15-year goal:

- What does there need to be more of?

- What does there need to be less of?

- **Five years from now** - To reach that 10-year goal:

- What does there need to be more of?

- What does there need to be less of?

- **One year from now** - To reach that five year goal:

- What does there need to be more of?

- What does there need to be less of?

Outcomes

Use the following as a guide to turn your general statements of change into outcome statements that resemble the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound) Goal format. You might decide not to immediately turn your 10- and 15-year goals into smart goals, but it will help you to make them as specific as possible so you can check the logical connections between the entire chain of outcomes you are building.

If you can, draw this out by hand on a piece of paper or white board so you can draw lines to connect goals from each year to goals in the subsequent year. Remember: Your goals should build on each other. Don't be constrained by linear tables and charts - feel encouraged to make the chain of outcomes colorful and include pictures. You should be inspired by your vision for change.

One Year General vision of change:

We will

increase

decrease

maintain

improve

Five Year General vision of change:

We will

increase

decrease

maintain

improve

10 Year General vision of change:

We will

increase

decrease

maintain

improve

15 Year General vision of change:

We will

increase

decrease

maintain

improve

By how much?

By how much?

By how much?

By how much?

By when?

By when?

By when?

By when?

If we achieve this, then we can: (link to goal in 5-year column)

If we achieve this, then we can: (link to goal in 10-year column)

If we achieve this, then we can: (link to goal in 15-year column)

If we achieve this, then we can: