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Theory of Change

How does my program create change?

A **Theory of Change** sums up your program's strategy and helps you achieve short- and long-term goals.

All sexual violence prevention programs share the goal of ending sexual violence, but each individual program approaches this in a different way. In your Theory of Change diagram, state your goal in a way that focuses on your specific program. Your goals may include increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors.

Other ways to describe Theory of Change:

- logic model
- program theory
- conceptual map
- mental model
- causal chain

What is an "outcome"?

An **outcome** is a change that you expect to observe as a result of your program.

In evaluating Theories of Change, we usually think of outcomes at three levels. These levels are short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes are also known as a program's "ultimate impact."

How "short" is short-term and how "medium" is medium-term?

The timeline is flexible, but here's a general guide:

Short-term outcomes = expected by the end of all training that is relevant to this particular outcome, whether it is one training session or multiple sessions

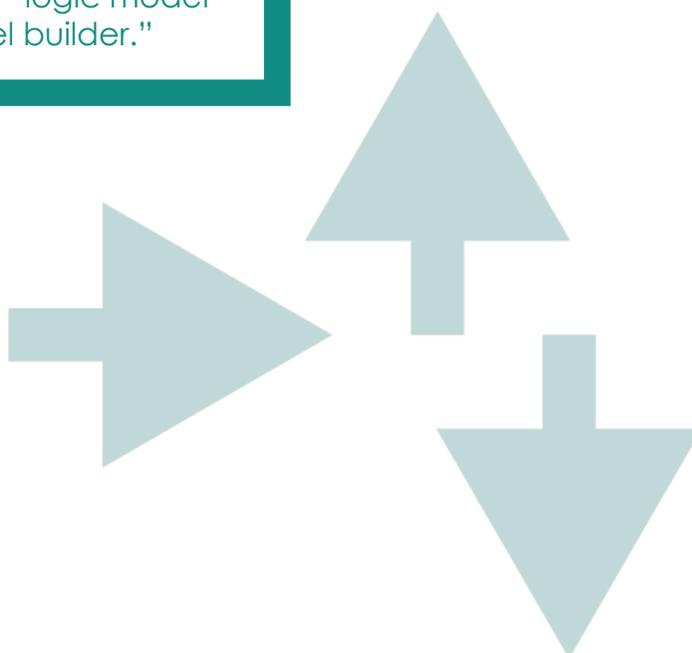
Medium-term outcomes = expected within 6 months to one year of training

Ultimate impact = expected any time after medium-term; just make sure the impact is something that you can measure

How to create your Theory of Change diagram

- 1) Ask yourself the questions shown in the Theory of Change example and worksheet.
- 2) Enter your answers into the Theory of Change worksheet.
It may help to write and revise your answers on a separate document, then enter your final text on the worksheet.
- 3) It's easy for a Theory of Change diagram to become too simple or too detailed. Ask others for input on your diagram.
For example, share a draft at a staff meeting and ask colleagues if it accurately sums up the work you do. Rely on this feedback to determine the best level of detail and make sure others can understand your Theory of Change.
- 4) You can always revise your Theory of Change if you make updates to your program or goals.

Theory of Change diagrams can read from left to right, top to bottom or bottom to top. The provided worksheet is a simple left-to-right diagram. If you'd like to see other Theories of Change, search online for "sexual violence prevention theory of change," "logic model worksheet," or "logic model builder."



MODULE 2: THEORY OF CHANGE EXAMPLE

Goal

What am I ultimately trying to do, and with whom?

Am I describing my goals in a way that focuses on my particular program?

Will I be able to measure whether I'm reaching these goals?

Decrease sexually coercive and violent behavior by fraternity brothers through improving their understanding of gender, power, and consent using Peer Opinion Leaders (POLs)

Inputs/Resources	Outputs		Outcomes / Results		
	Activities	Participants	Short-term	Medium-term	Ultimate impact
<i>Who and what are our resources? What are we investing in?</i>	<i>What will we do?</i>	<i>Who will we reach?</i>	<i>What do we hope to see in the short term?</i>	<i>What do we hope to see in the medium term?</i>	<i>What is the ultimate impact we hope to achieve?</i>
Funding from university Staffing: prevention trainer/program coordinator Curriculum for training Peer Opinion Leaders (POLs) Cooperation from fraternity leadership council Volunteers: POLs	Presentations to fraternity leadership council to obtain support and plan program activities POL training (interactive day-long training with gender-transformative content and skill-building for bystander intervention)	Fraternity council members POLs (64 total: 2 at each of 32 fraternities on campus)	POLs increase their own understanding of and commitment to pro-consent norms and... ...decrease their own endorsement of hostile masculinity POLs gain comfort in peer coach/ influencer role POLs build bystander intervention skills	POLs influence their fraternity brothers' commitment to pro-consent norms and... ...decrease brothers' endorsement of hostile masculinity POLs intervene in sexually coercive situations at fraternity events Brothers intervene with one another in sexually coercive situations at fraternity events	Rates of sexual coercion and violence associated with this university's fraternities decrease

MODULE 2: THEORY OF CHANGE WORKSHEET

Goal

Inputs/Resources	Outputs		Outcomes / Results		
	Activities	Participants	Short-term	Medium-term	Ultimate impact
<i>Who and what are our resources? What are we investing in?</i>	<i>What will we do?</i>	<i>Who will we reach?</i>	<i>What do we hope to see in the short term?</i>	<i>What do we hope to see in the medium term?</i>	<i>What is the ultimate impact we hope to achieve?</i>