



# Developing an Evidence-Informed Approach to Human Services Programming: Translating Research into Practice

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# Why Use an Evidence-Informed Approach?

- Research studies and the value of integrating the most appropriate research and evidence in order to achieve improved client outcomes.
- Evidence-informed practice (EIP) has become an emerging component of the delivery of a variety of human services.
- The Federal government continues to push for the use of evidence across the board in government programming.

# Challenges and Concerns Implementing EIP in Human Services Field

- Capacity of some social service agencies or programs
- Relevance, applicability, and adoptability of EIP concepts to direct service contexts.



Qualitative description analysis to gather information from participants in a nationally-funded pilot targeted to improving EIP institutionalization, findings included:

(1) Inconsistent understanding and utilization of evidence in program design and implementation;

(2) Common inhibitors and universal facilitators to integrating EIP in actual practice; and

(3) Consistent need for continuous support and training for sustainability of EIP in the human services.

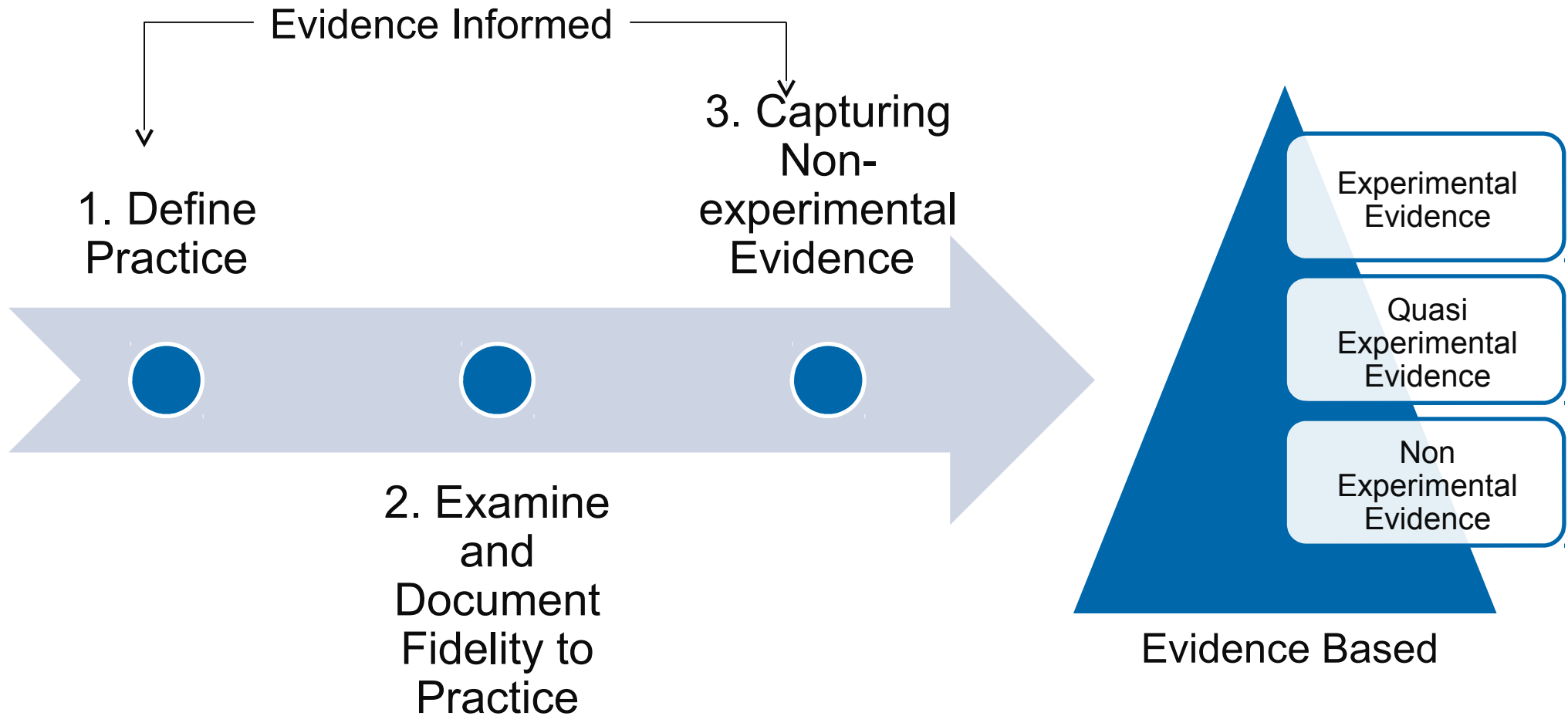
# Lessons Learned

- Program Model & Implementation
  - Context: Unintended Impact
  - Program Theory: Good Evidence
  - Prioritizing: Clients needs vs. Evidence Informed Practices
- Making Data Actionable
  - Balance quantitative data with qualitative data
  - Balance aggregated and disaggregated data
  - Competition data demands

## Lessons Learned - *Continued*

- Disconnect between funders, policymakers and researchers
  - Variation in expectations
  - Availability of lessons learned
  - Generalizability of the research

# Generating Evidence: The Evidence Pathway



# Importance of Technical Assistance

## Moving Innovation Forward by Building Evidence of Effectiveness

### Evidence Informed



### Obtain evidence of positive program outcomes

#### Create or Refine:

- Logic Model
- Implementation Materials

- Evaluate program's quality
- Document program's process
- Establish continuous process improvement protocols

- Conduct pre-/post-intervention evaluation to measure outcomes
- Conduct process evaluation

- Carry out evaluation with a comparison group (quasi-experimental design)
- Conduct regression analysis (quasi-experimental design)
- Perform multiple pre- and post-evaluations (time series design)
- Conduct meta-analysis of various studies

- Conduct evaluation with random assignment (RCT)
- Carry out multiple evaluations with strong comparison group (quasi-experimental design)

Adapted from: Wilson-Simmons, R. (2012, March). *Annie E. Casey Foundation Center for Effective Family Services & Systems*. PowerPoint presented at the Promising Pathways Innovation Institute, Washington, DC.



# Final Thoughts



- Leadership Matters
- Value of a Data Specialist
- Tools are Valued and Empowering

**What is needed is a culture that promotes learning from individual promising practices, as well as clusters of programs and initiatives with similar goals that can be adapted to a new context. It should become a continuous cycle of innovating, testing and reassessing, supporting optimal implementation. Understanding what worked, how and for whom, provides greater opportunities for scale up.**