

Program planning using the FLIP method

Designing effective health promotion programs is about finding creative solutions between visionary dreams and practical solutions. Nothing will be achieved unless you have the vision to imagine a better reality for yourself, your family, your friends and your community. However, nothing can be achieved unless you have the patience and pragmatism to seek out effective achievable solutions. Big problems must be broken down into small components that can be solved. Big plans must be broken down into small incremental steps that can be achieved.

First things first

Unfortunately, the same two mistakes are often made over and over again.

- People race to the solutions without first taking the time to make sure they understand what the problem is. This is a guaranteed way to end up solving the wrong problem!
- People don't take the time to clearly and precisely define what the problem is. Vague definitions of the problem result in poorly defined goals. These types of goals are almost impossible to achieve and impossible to measure.

It's really not that hard, provided you remember to FLIP. Start by making sure you understand the problem, then FLIP to the solutions.

It's as easy as one, two, three:

1. Make sure you have clearly defined the problem, then FLIP to the goal.
2. Make sure you understand the key behavioural, environmental and social contributing factors.
3. Identify the key causes of the problem, then FLIP to your objectives.

The recipe is easy to remember

1. One part vision

2. Three parts analysis

Step 1: Clearly identify the problem.

Step 2: Stop and think! Why does the problem occur? Identify the key environmental, social and behavioural contributing factors.

Step 3: Having completed this analysis, you should now be able to clearly identify the key causes of the problem.

3. Two 'FLIPs'

The first FLIP from the problem creates your goal

The second FLIP from causes creates your objectives

4. A decent dash of pragmatism

5. A strategic cooking plan that encompasses:

who you need to help

what ingredients you need to make it happen

when you need to add the ingredients

Give it enough time to cook properly

6. Taste (or evaluate) to make sure it worked out the way you hoped.

Step 1. Identify the problem

Once the problem is clearly defined, it is easy to FLIP to the goal

- a. Assess needs and identify key issues
- b. Set priorities (what really matters?)
- c. Define the target group (who is at risk?)
- d. Establish rationale (why should we bother to do this?)
- e. Reality check (does the available evidence justify your assessment?)



Define the problem in a sentence



then FLIP



to the goal

Step 2. Analyse the problem

Why does the problem occur? Identify the key behavioural, environmental and social contributing factors

- a. Brainstorm the problem
- b. Identify contributing factors. Take a comprehensive view and try to identify:
 - behavioural contributing factors
 - environmental contributing factors
 - social contributing factors.
- c. Draw a “concept map” of the chain of causation
 - how do the contributing factors you identified relate to the problem?
 - is it a direct or an indirect cause of the problem? If indirect, what are the intermediate steps that cause the problem. Put these on the map.
 - try to identify the best opportunities to interrupt this sequence of events
- d. Now its time for a reality check. Is it really worth the effort? Ask yourself two important questions about the potential causes you identified:
 - does it really matter (ie. is it important)?
 - can it be changed?

		Is it important?	
		No	Yes
Can your group change it?	No	Useless activity	Futile activity
	Yes	Insignificant activity	Strategic activity

- e. Hopefully by now you have identified what you consider to be the most important causes of the problem (causes that are worth changing and can be changed!) Now it's time to move on to step three.

Step 3. Identify the key causes

Once the key causes of the problem are clearly identified, it is easy to FLIP to the objectives

- Based on your analysis in step 2, write down the key causes of the problem
- FLIP to objectives



Step 4. Design your solutions

Review each objective in turn. Based on your analysis in step two, decide what you can do to fix that particular cause of the problem

- Review each objective in turn.
- Decide what strategies you can implement to fix that particular cause of the problem.
- Be comprehensive. For example, an awareness raising program that advises the target community to just 'wise up' and change their behaviour is unlikely to be successful if it isn't supported by programs that fix the underlying environmental and social contributing factors.
- It is a good idea to try and think of a group of strategies that together try to fix the important behavioural, environmental and social contributing factors.

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
↓	Design strategies			↓	↓
Define your strategies					
	Strategies to address Objective 1	Strategies to address Objective 2	Strategies to address Objective 3	Strategies to address Objective 4	Strategies to address Objective 5
Behavioural strategies					
Environmental strategies					
Social strategies					

Step 5. Reality check

Now that you have identified some strategies you could use to achieve your objectives and ultimately your goal, it is time to

STOP, STAND BACK & CHECK YOUR FACTS!

a. Check your facts

- review your rationale (does the your program make sense in terms of the rationale)
- review your data (does it justify what you are proposing)

b. Has anyone else ever tried to address the same problem?

- how did they understand the problem?
- how did they address the problem?
- did it work?
 - if it did, why reinvent the wheel!
 - if it didn't, why not? Make sure you don't make the same mistakes!

c. Check current best practice

- can the program you are proposing be justified by current best practice?
- check the Ottawa Charter, does your program address all five domains?
 1. build health public policy
 2. create supportive environments (does the environment facilitate healthy choices)
 3. strengthen community action (help the community to solve its own problems)
 4. develop person skills (give people the skills they need to be healthy)
 5. reorient health services (to prevention rather than cure)

d. Capacity audit. Do you have everything you need to succeed?

- do you have the expertise?
- do you have the resources?
- do you have the authority?
- If not, who does?



e. Is anyone important missing?

- would they be willing to help?
- how are you going to involve them?

f. Impact assessment. Will the proposed program really achieve the your goal?

IMPACT = EFFECTIVENESS x REACH x SUSTAINABILITY

g. Is there any thing else you need to know before you start?

- does this information already exist? Who has it? How can you access it?
- If not, how are you going to generate this information?

h. Do you need to test your ideas before you start?

- unless a strategy has been successfully tried before, A PILOT IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA as it gives you the opportunity to fix problems before it is too late

Review & modify steps 1 to 4,
based on what you have learnt

Step 6. Implement the program

Now it's time to convert your plans into action

a. Review each strategy in turn and answer the following questions:

WHAT?

- What needs to be done?
- What do you need to be successful (people, expertise, resources)?
- What are the barriers to success?

WHO?

- Who is going to take responsibility to make sure it happens?
- Who needs to be involved?
 - who are you targeting?
 - who has a valid stake in the outcome?
 - who do you need to help?
 - who has the expertise?
 - who has the resources?
 - who has the authority?

WHERE?

- Where are the people you need to help?
- Where are the resources you need to succeed?
- Where are the barriers to success?

HOW?

- How are you going to get the help you need?
- How are you going to get the resources you need?
- How are you going to overcome any barriers to success?

WHEN?

- When does it need to be done by?

Be specific, be realistic and be practical!

Now, write out your plan.

OBJECTIVE ONE			
	Task What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When should it be finished?
Strategy 1a			
Strategy 1 b			
Strategy 1c			

Step 7. Evaluate the program

Once the objectives and strategies have been clearly defined, it becomes easier to design your evaluation

Don't be afraid of evaluation, because you don't need to be.

Evaluation is nothing more than measuring whether or not your program worked!

There are three types of evaluation:

PROCESS EVALUATION (evaluates the strategies)

- were strategies implemented as intended?
- did they reach the target group?
- did they work in the way intended?
- were the materials and interventions used of good quality?

- **FORMATIVE EVALUATION** is an important type of process evaluation

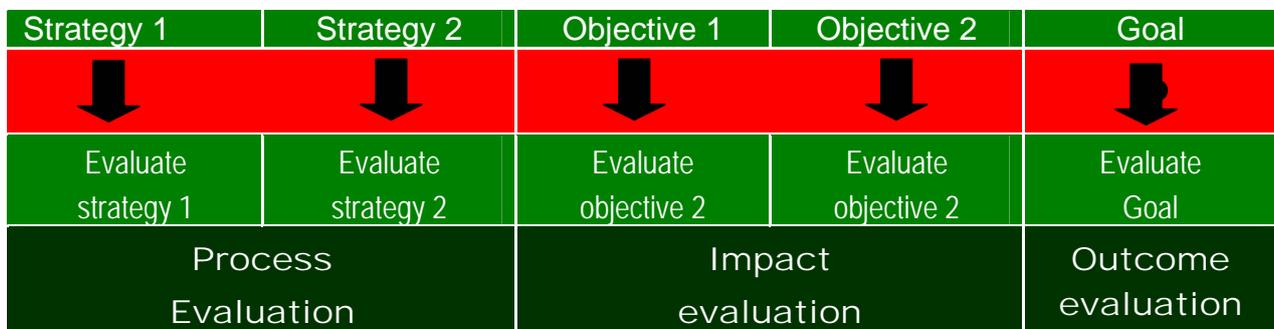
- pilot your strategies - make sure they really work
- monitor your strategies – can they be improved?
- identify and fix unexpected problems

IMPACT EVALUATION (evaluates the objectives)

- measures the immediate effects of the project
- were the objectives of the project achieved?

OUTCOME EVALUATION (evaluates the project goal)

- measures the long term effect of the project
- was the goal of the project achieved?



The key to a successful project AND a successful evaluation is:

- specific, clearly stated and achievable GOALS
- specific, clearly stated and achievable OBJECTIVES
- specific, clearly stated and achievable STRATEGIES.

The best evaluations are planned as part of the project.

Remember, the academic research agenda is different than yours:

- the research agenda is to prove that the strategies resulted in the outcomes
- given the complexity of the causes of health and safety, and the difficulty of objectively measuring outcomes, this can sometimes be very difficult
- **BUT THIS IS NOT REALLY YOUR PROBLEM**
- you may be content to observe that your project was associated with a better outcome for your community, but don't really need to prove the link.