

# Program Evaluation on a Shoestring



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# In this session we will explore:

1. Why people don't do evaluation
2. The 3 phases of evaluation
3. Why not doing evaluation matters
4. The role of evaluation in best practice
5. Ethics and evaluation

## Bonus: Evaluation Resources

- Introduction to some free resources



I'd like to begin by finding out  
about your evaluation experience

What do you think?



Why do so many programs do so little evaluation?

# “Practical” Barriers to Evaluation Problems or Symptoms?

- Time
- Money
- Person power
- Skill level
- Self efficacy
- Conflicting organizational priorities



# Problem 1: Fearing Evaluation



We're afraid to know what we don't know

To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.



Bertrand Russell  
1872-1970

Evaluation can reveal four categories of information. Which is Feared?

	Already Known	Not Known
Good News		
Bad News		

Evaluation can reveal four categories of information. Which is Feared?

	Already Known	Not Known
Good News		
Bad News		

The earlier we detect “bad news”, the more we increase the chances of a good outcome

	Already Known	Not Known
Good News		
Bad News		

# Evaluation can also reveal good news!

	Already Known	Not Known
Good News		
Bad News		

# Problem 2: Undervaluing Evaluation



Often because we don't know what we don't know

# E-val-u-ation

can provide

Extremely **Valuable** Information

# E-valuation

can provide

Extremely **Valuable** Information

Once we really believe this, we are more likely to  
prioritize and do evaluation

# Where there's a will, there's a way

- People who really want to do evaluation, find ways to do it.
- Evaluation may pay its own way
  - \$ invested in evaluation may save \$\$\$ later on in the program
  - The earlier we start, the more we can save.

# Evaluation lessons from our fire safety colleagues



- “Size-Up” – EVERY time!
- The dangers of unfamiliar territory
- The dangers of very familiar territory
- The critical importance of sharing lessons learned

# Why Do Programs Fail?



# Modifiable barriers to implementation of effective programs

- Overly broad problem definition
- Incomplete diagnosis
- Unrealistic goals
- Poorly defined objectives
- Inadequate implementation planning
- Working in a vacuum
- Turf wars
- Planning gaps
- Cruise control and tunnel vision
- Inadequate or absent evaluation

# The biggest barrier is ....

- Overly broad problem definition
- Incomplete diagnosis
- Unrealistic goals
- Poorly defined objectives
- Inadequate implementation planning
- Working in a vacuum
- Turf wars
- Planning gaps
- Cruise control and tunnel vision
- **Inadequate or absent evaluation**

What do you think this means?

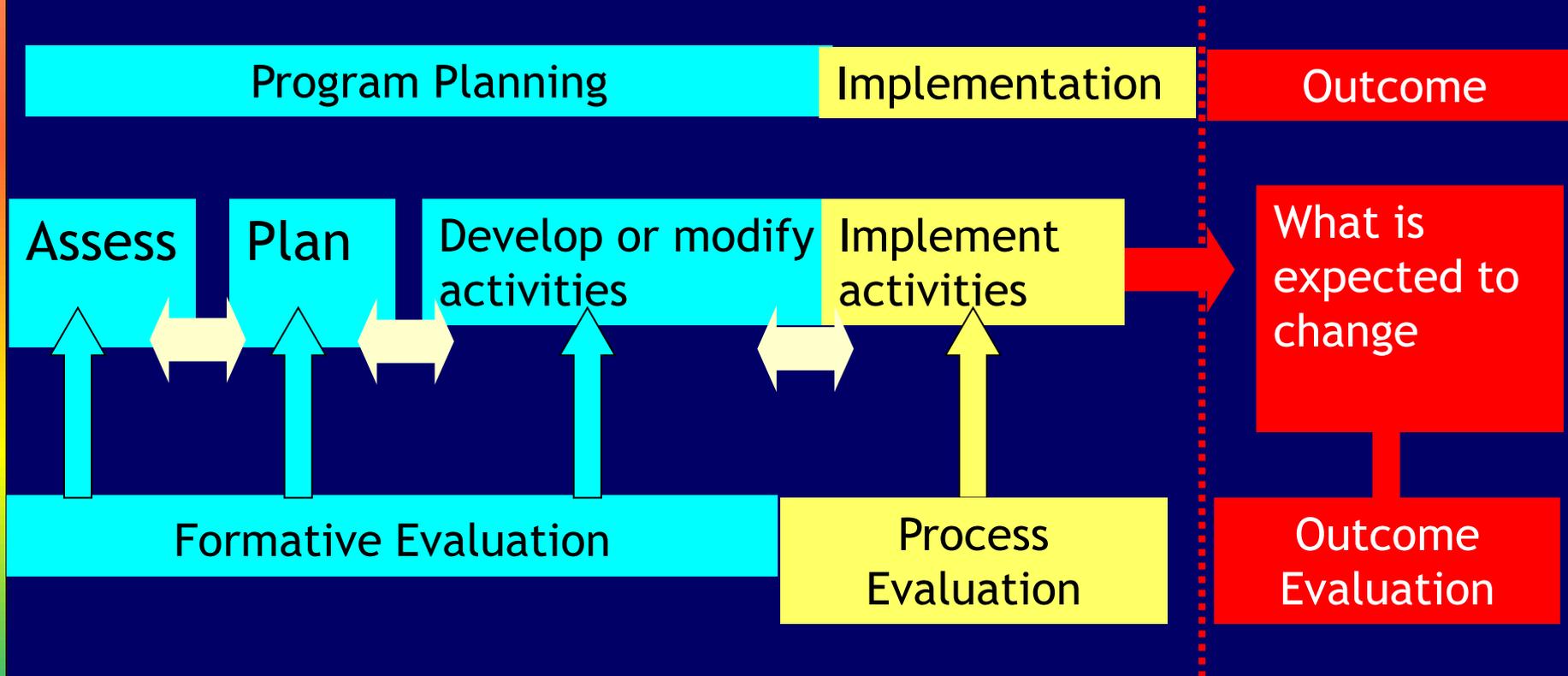
“Inadequate” evaluation

# 3 Phases of Evaluation

1. Formative
2. Process
3. Outcome
  - Short-term
  - Long-term

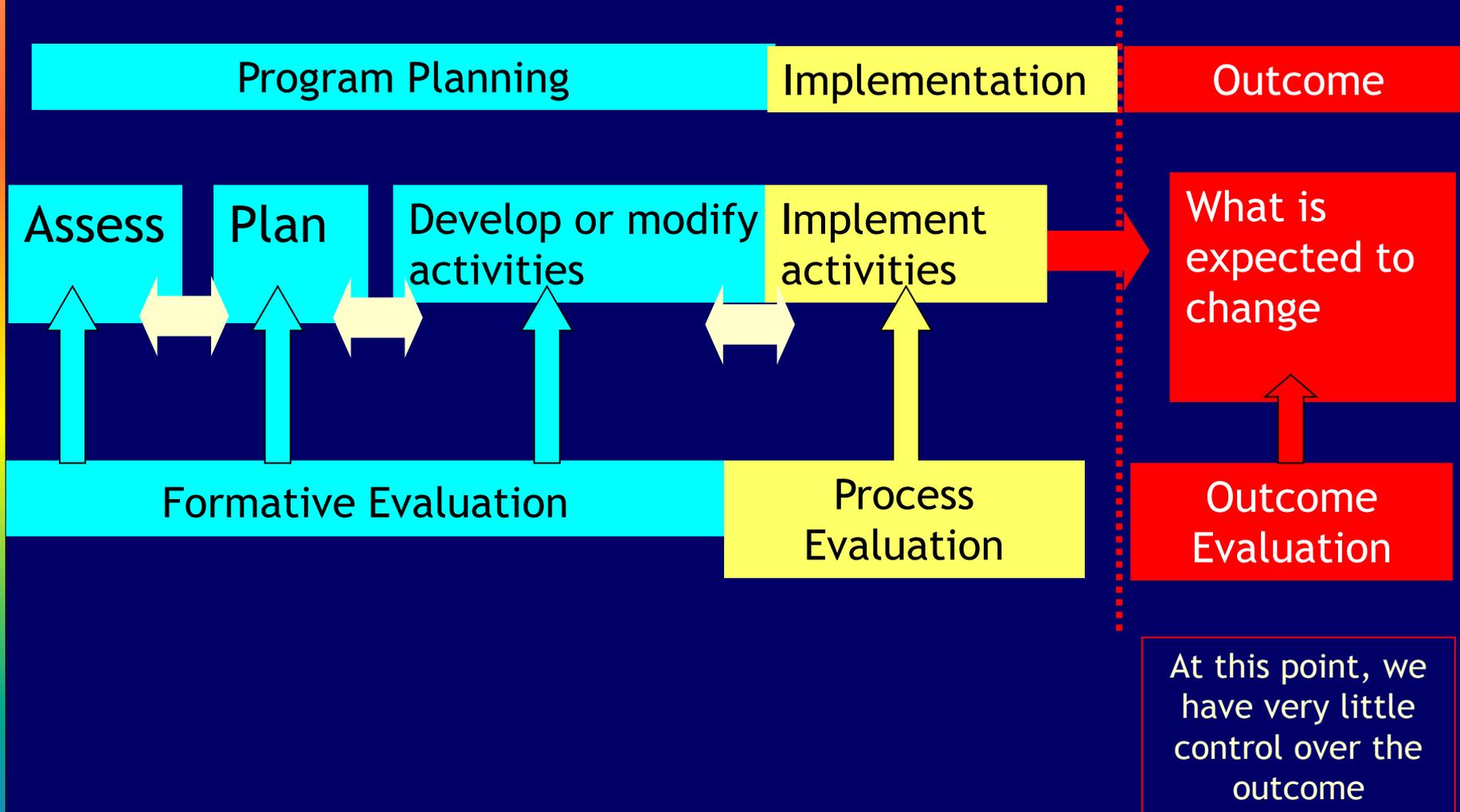
Which do you think is the most important?

# Program Stages and Phases of Evaluation



This graphic is adapted from one originally developed with Ronda Zakocs, PhD, MPH

# The Problem with Focusing Only on Outcomes Evaluation



This graphic is adapted from one originally developed with Ronda Zakocs, PhD, MPH

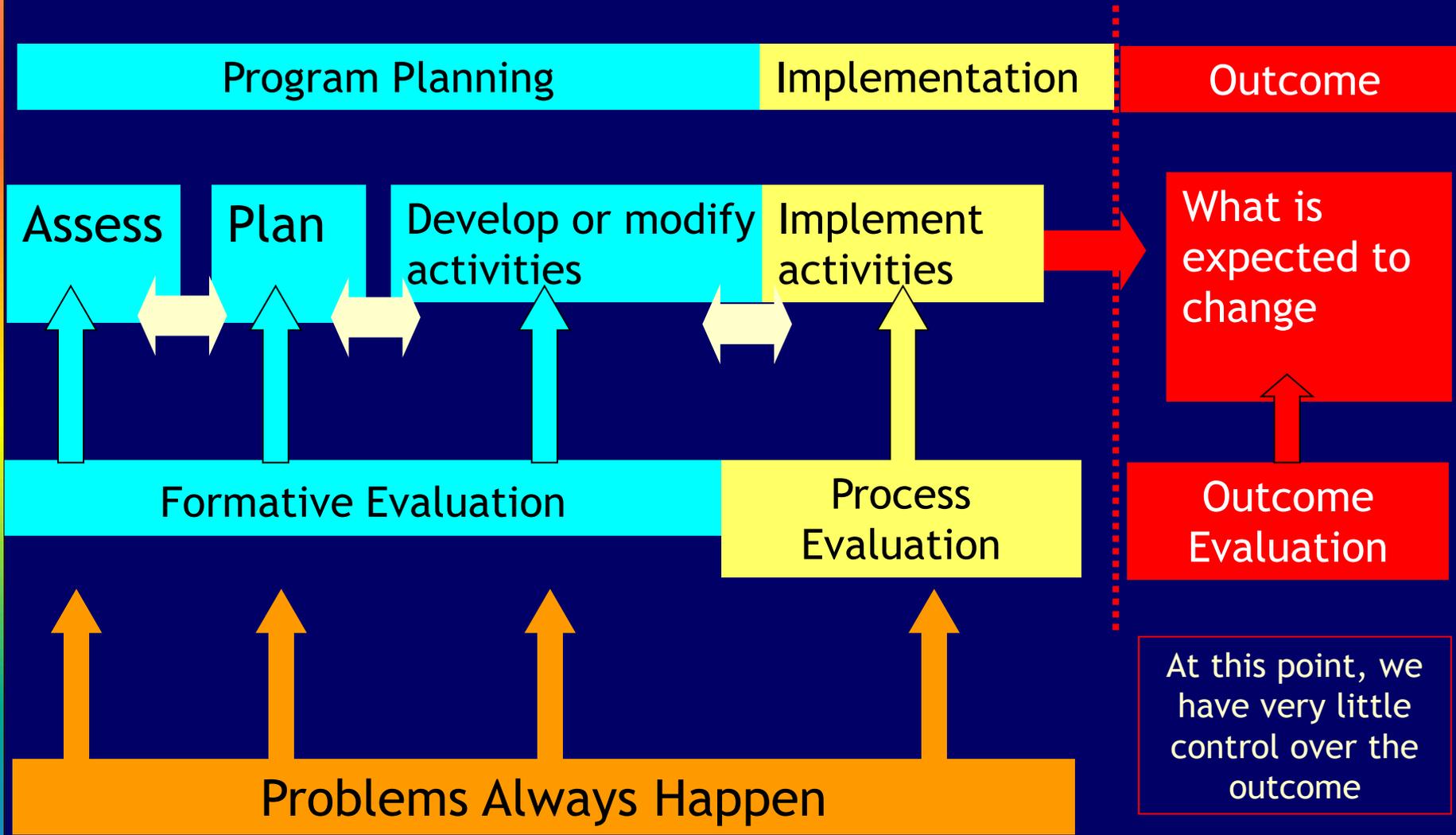


## What if a Program Worked?

Knowing what happened at the end of the program is still never enough

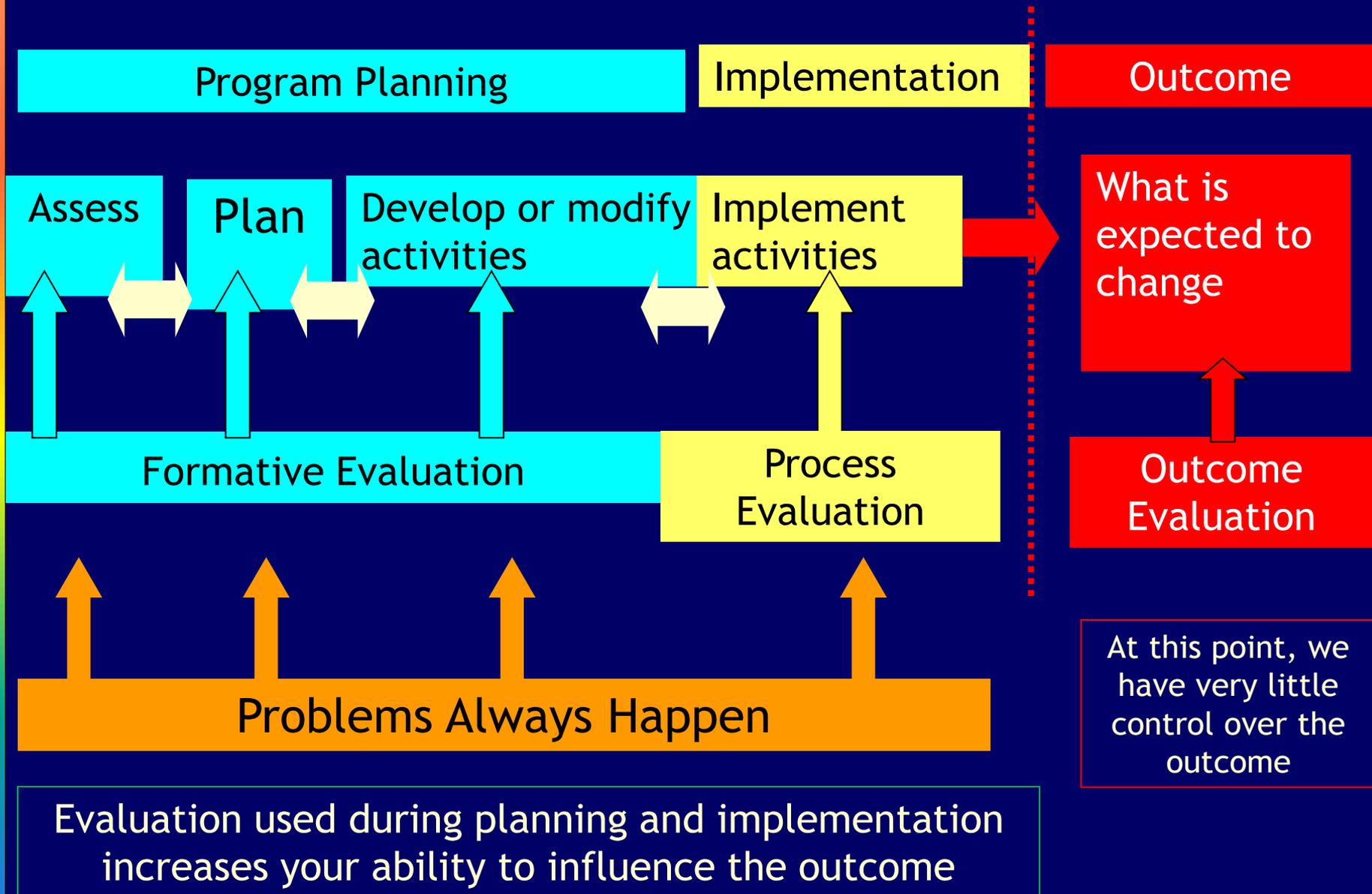
- We must know:
  - Why change happened/did not happen
  - How change was achieved

# FACT: There will be Problems & Challenges



This graphic is adapted from one originally developed with Ronda Zakocs, PhD, MPH

# Plan to Address Barriers to Successful Outcomes



# E-valuation

can provide

**Extremely Valuable Information**

The earlier you start, the more valuable it is

# Phases of Evaluation

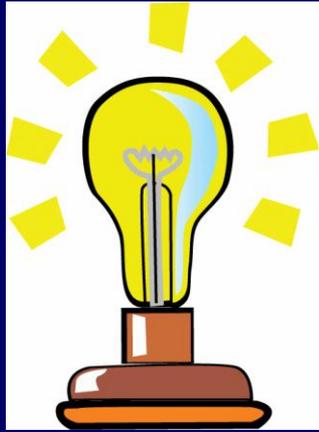


1. Formative

2. Process

3. Outcome

- Short-term
- Long-term



# Are you ready to respond?

- What does the term “formative” mean to you?
  - Please write down 5 words on a piece of paper. I’ll give you 15 seconds to do this.

# Let's list our words

- 
- 
- 
- 
-

# Commonly associated words

- Beginning/starting
- Shaping
- Testing or pilot testing
- Adjusting/tailoring
- Foundational

Please raise your hand if you wrote  
“Development” or “Developmental”



Yes, they're cute, but this picture is here for a reason.

What can child development teach us about evaluation?

# Mission Critical – Informed Beginnings

If the first button of one's coat is wrongly buttoned, all the rest will be crooked.

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600)



FORMATIVE = InFORMATIVE

Knowledge is Power ---

but only if it's the right knowledge

What Do You Want Your Injury  
Prevention Program to Do?

OR

How are you planning to spend your limited  
injury prevention funding?

**BEFORE** you invest resources in your intervention, have you answered these questions?

How will this change occur?

Why should this program approach work?

What are we doing and why?

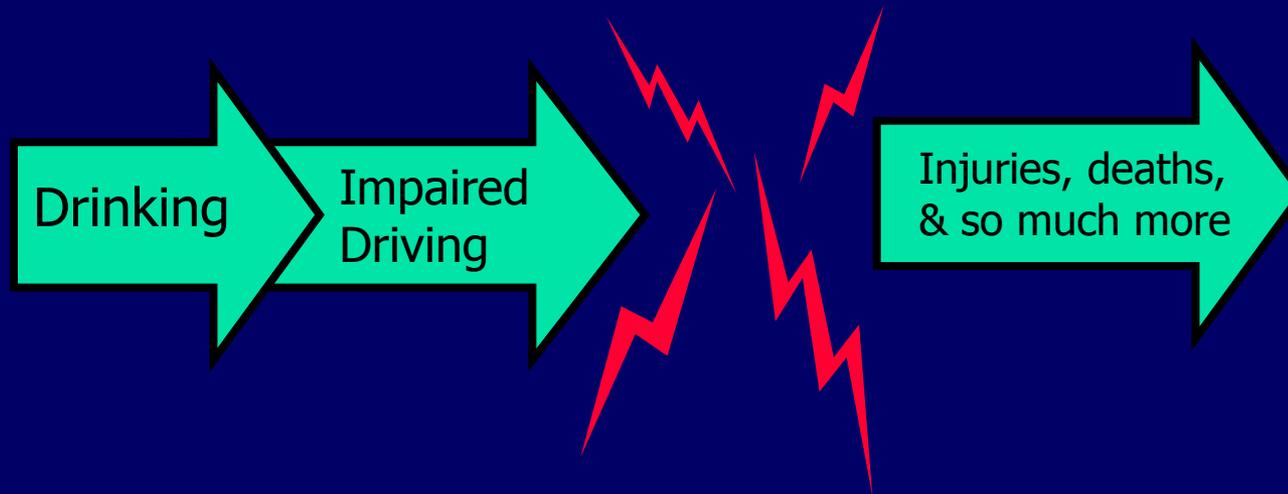
How will this change occur?

Why should this program approach work?

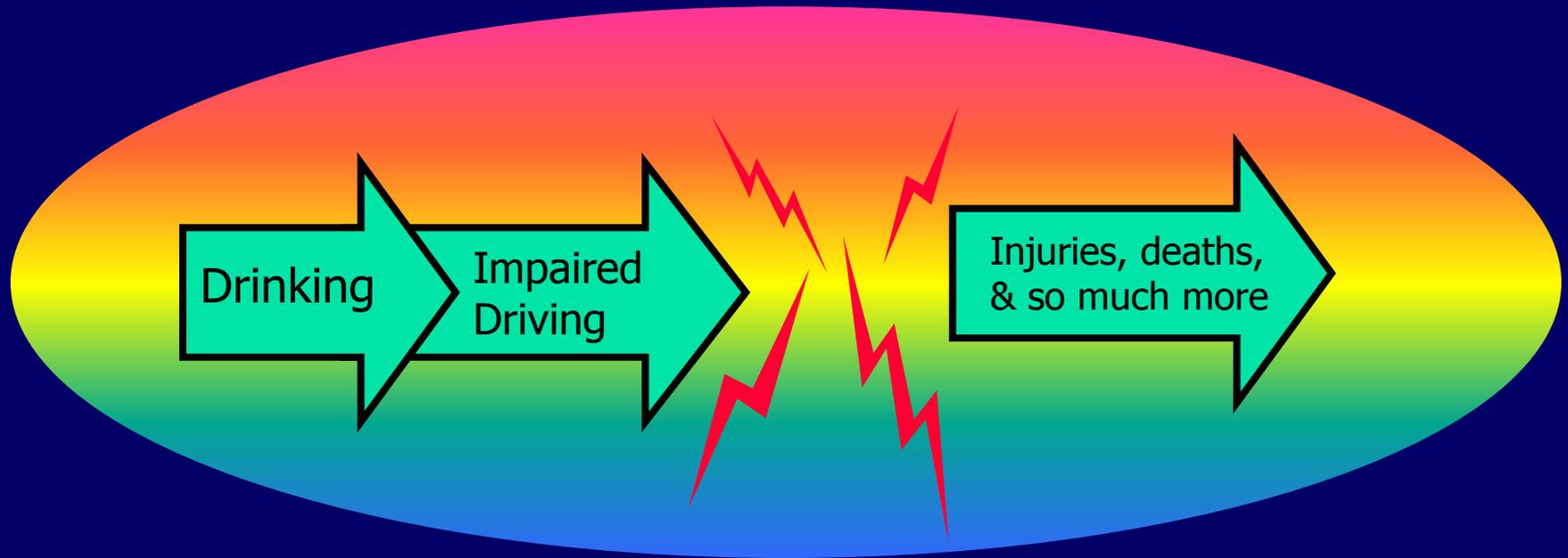
With so much prevention work to do and so little money, we cannot afford to ignore these questions. We need an informed STRATEGY, not Guesswork or Wishful Thinking

**We cannot afford to NOT do evaluation**

# Simple Causal Thinking is Not Enough to Build Effective Injury Prevention Programs



# We must consider the context



We need to understand:

- factors that support or inhibit this “causal pathway”
- physical environmental factors
- social environmental factors (social ecological)

# Evaluate (before implementation) to:

- Assess understanding of the causes and history of the problem, and of the possible countermeasures
- Assess involvement of stake-holders and help target and tailor the intervention
- Assess understanding of project goals, objectives, strategies and timelines
- Assess feasibility of goals and objectives; can you achieve and measure change? What must be evaluated and how?

# Evaluate (before implementation) to:

- Determine resources needed and available
- Identify barriers, opponents, positive change agents and other support
- Learn how to integrate previous experience and goodwill into these efforts
- Reach, inform, recruit key people
- Get to know the audience

You cannot succeed unless you

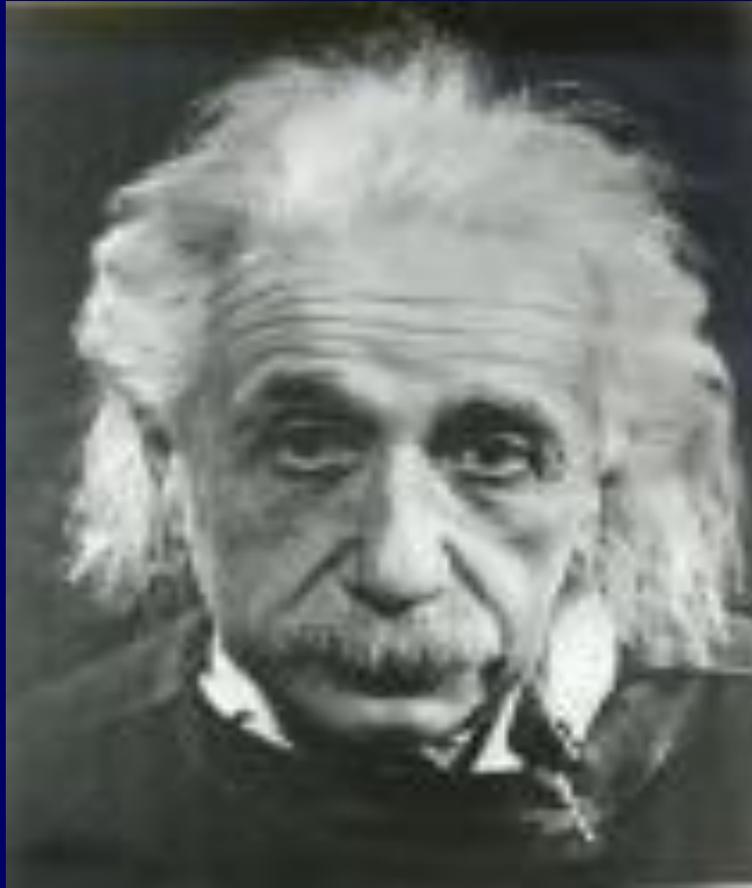
Get to know "the turf"



"You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."

Winnie the Pooh (A. A. Milne)

# Never underestimate the importance of curiosity



- "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."
- "The environment is everything that isn't me."

Albert Einstein  
1879-1955

# Critical Formative Thinking is Your Program Logic Coach

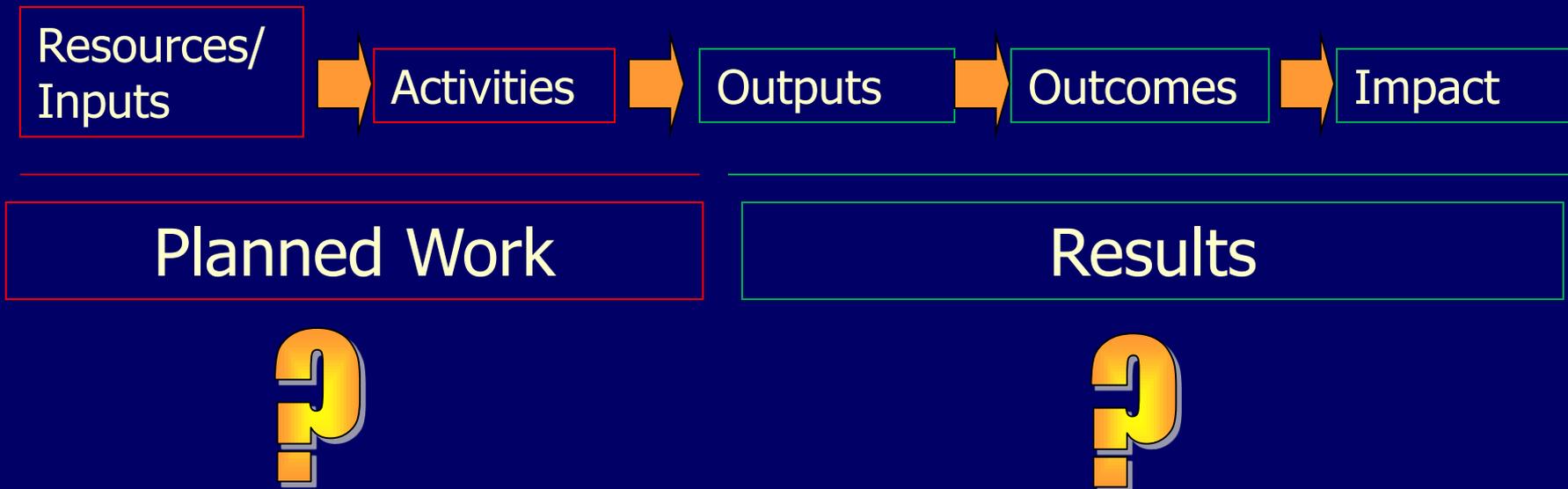
“Most of the value in a logic model is in the process of creating, validating and modifying the model ...

The **clarity of thinking** that occurs from building the model **is critical to the overall success of the program.**”

The W.K.Kellogg Foundation Guide to Logic Model Development Handbook  
(Downloadable at [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org))

# The Why Logic Model

- When we question our assumptions – using critical formative thinking - we can develop a more informed, useful and usable logic model



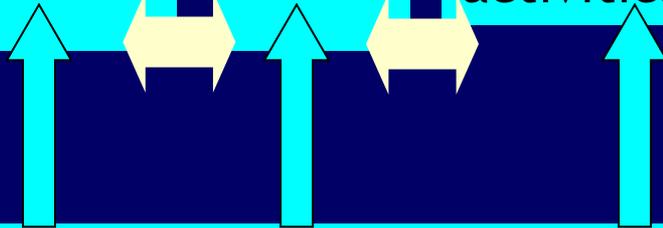
# Program Stages and Phases of Evaluation - 1

Program Planning

Assess

Plan

Develop or modify  
activities



Formative Evaluation ✓

# Phases of Evaluation

✓ Formative

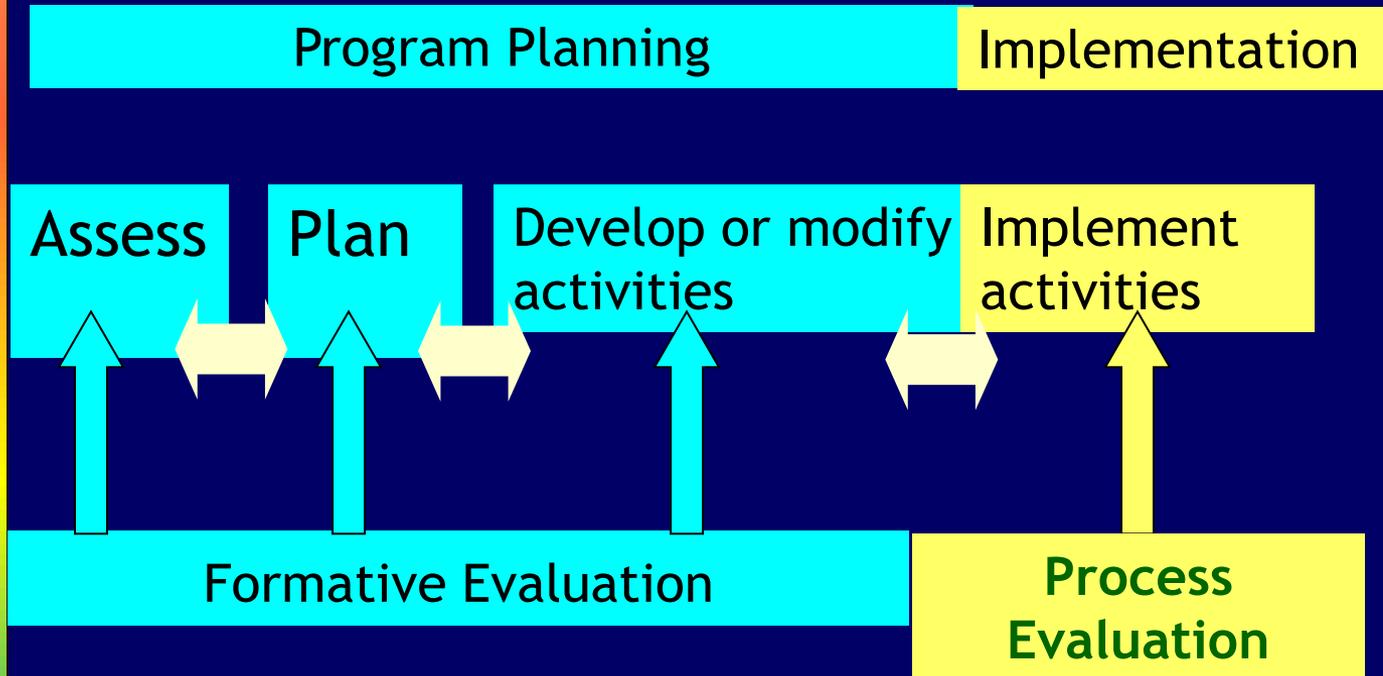


2. Process

3. Outcome

- Short-term
- Long-term

# Program Stages and Phases of Evaluation - 2



Once I know what's supposed to happen – and why -  
how can I be sure it's getting done?

# Process Evaluation

**What:** Evaluation of the program implementation & quality

**What:** Is it happening? If not, why?  
Are we experiencing problems?

**When:** Ideally, from the first day of implementation for the entire duration of the program

## Ask these questions **before** implementation:

- Are the desired changes well-defined and measurable?
- Are program activities well-described and measurable?

- If they are not, the program may not be implemented adequately.
- If they are not you can not evaluate the program.
- If an activity is too vague to measure, it's too vague to be effective.

# What changes are you measuring?



- Have you prepared a list of clearly defined endpoints:
  - Outputs (for Process Evaluation)
  - Outcomes (for Outcomes Evaluation)

# Which is it - Output or Outcome?

*Outputs:* Program implementation

- Monitors how the activities are being implemented
- Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative

*Examples:*

# attending event  
Level of participant satisfaction

*Outcomes:* Expected changes from program

- Measures what is expected to CHANGE as a result of program
- Assesses whether program activities are making desired changes in target populations

*Examples:*

Increased knowledge  
Increased helmet use rate



# Cost-saving common sense

- Process evaluation data can often be used as program accountability or “performance” measures.
- If you design the process evaluation early you have the opportunity to integrate evaluation and program management activities
  - and save time and money

# Phases of Evaluation

✓ Formative

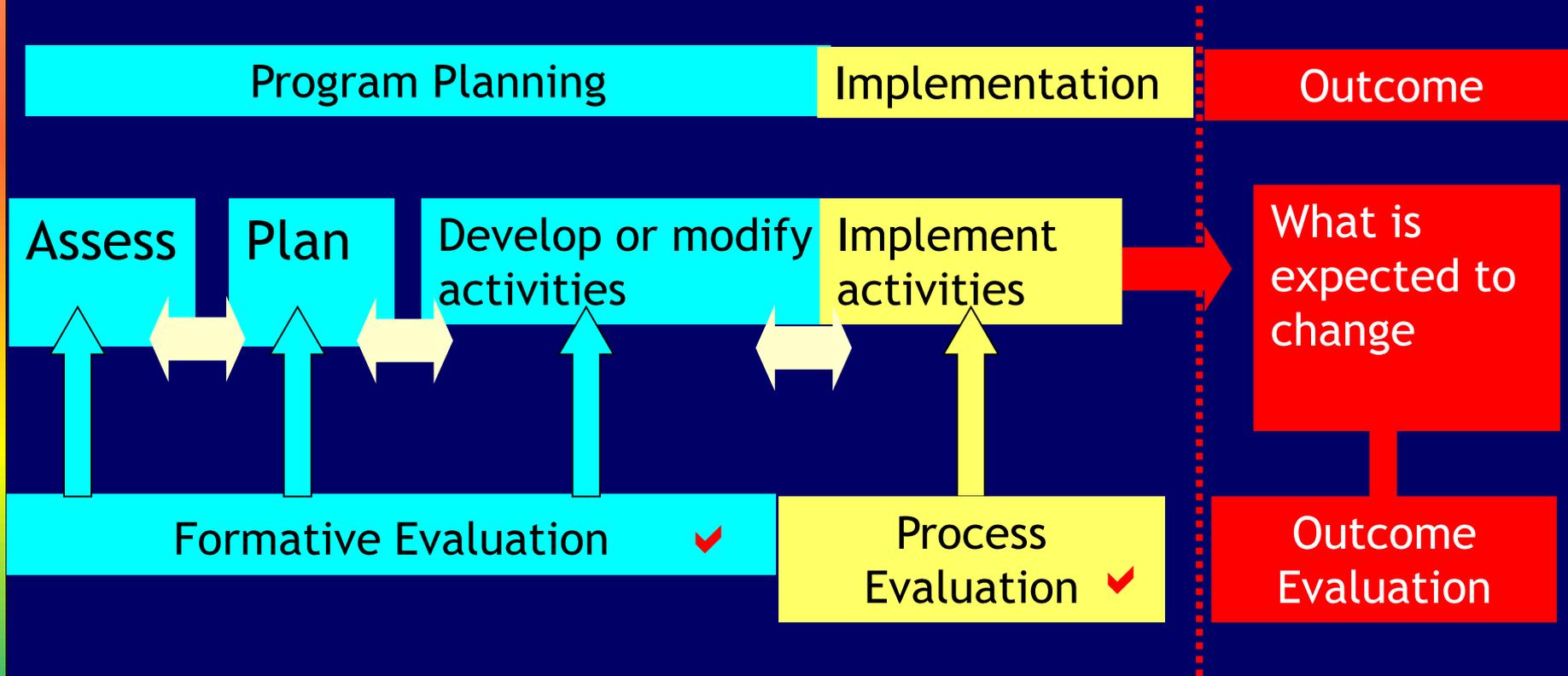
✓ Process



2. Outcome

- Short-term
- Long-term

# Program Stages and Phases of Evaluation - 3



# The Outcomes Challenge

- Which outcome?
- Problems:
  - It's hard to count what doesn't happen
  - It may take a long time to see change in injury rates
  - Small numbers
  - Funders, staff and partners become frustrated unless there are "wins"

# Using Phased Outcomes

Example: Completing a two-year graduate degree

Outcome



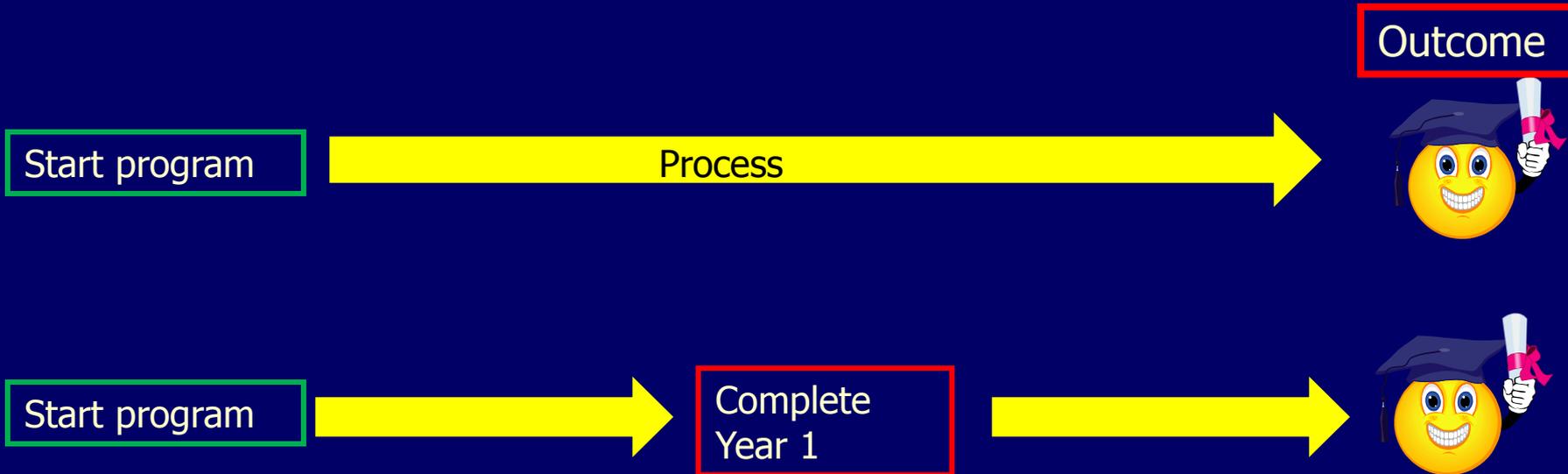
# Using Phased Outcomes

Example: Completing a two-year graduate degree



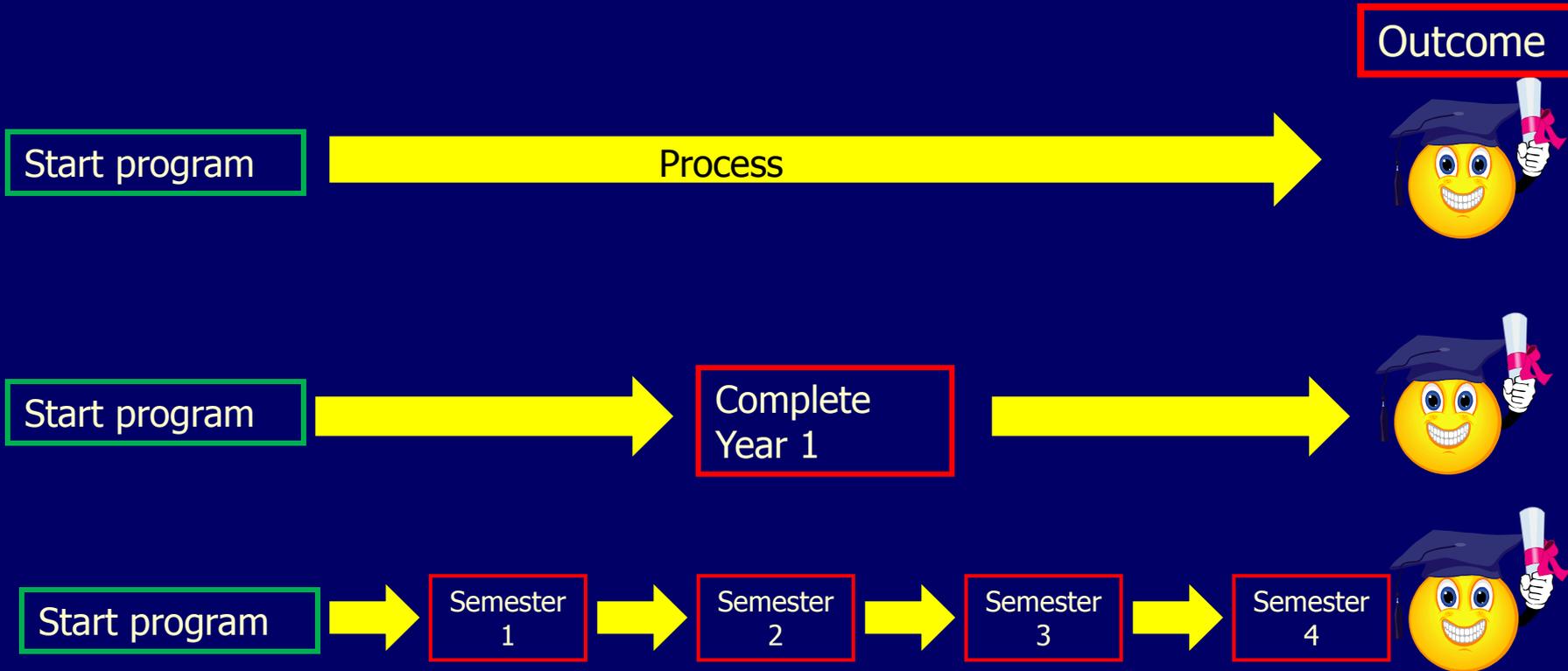
# Using Phased Outcomes

Example: Completing a two-year graduate degree



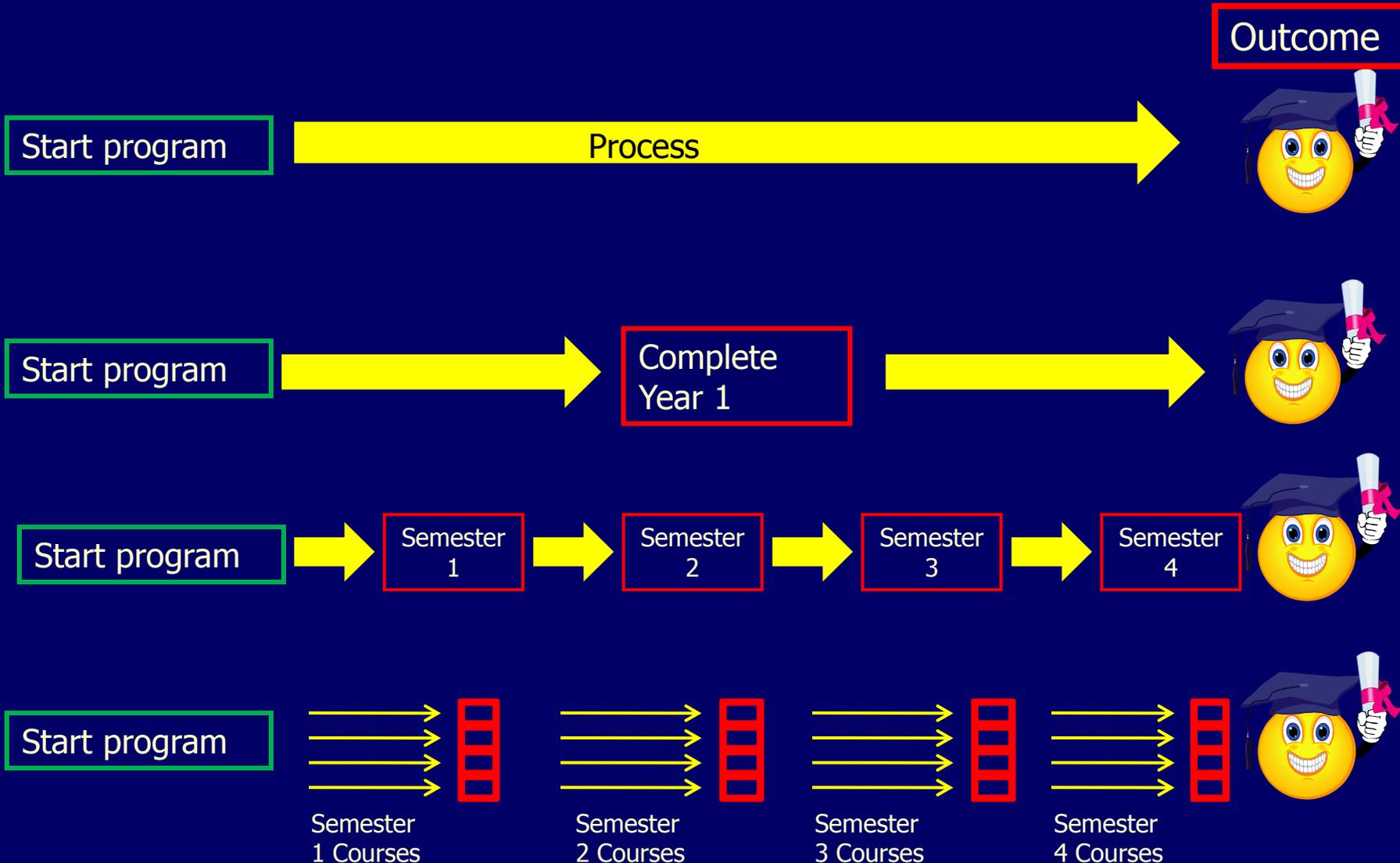
# Using Phased Outcomes

Example: Completing a two-year graduate degree



# Using Phased Outcomes

Example: Completing a two-year graduate degree



# Best Practice, Best Process & Evaluation

Best Practice is a management idea which asserts that there is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc.

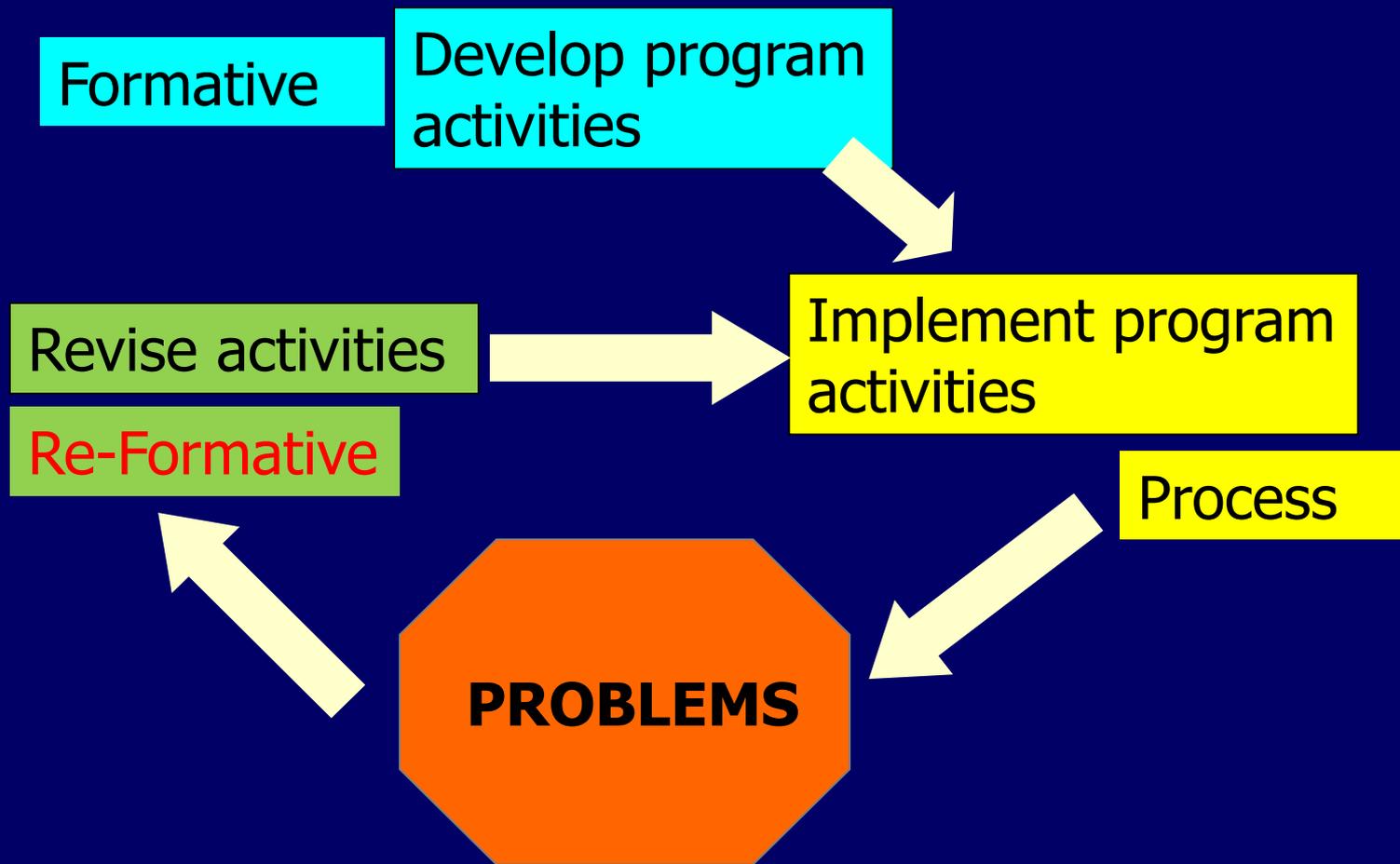
**... with proper processes, checks, and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications.**

In best process, formative evaluation may be used throughout the life of the program to answer many HOW, WHAT and WHY questions

Once the program is in the implementation phase, we may decide that we need to gather information to help us understand our process or outcomes findings. This would require us to initiate a **re-formative** thinking phase.



# Example: Formative - Process Evaluation Cycle



# Formative = Re-Formative (CQI)

- Continuous quality improvement
- Gathering feedback from program team and participants
- Answering the “why” and “how” questions
  - Why did it work?
  - Why did it not work?
  - How can we improve it now?
  - How can we improve it in future?
  - How can we avoid similar mistakes in future?
- Adapting programs to specific context

# The Importance of “Fit”

- We can't assume all “best practice” programs – even model programs – will completely fit our community
- Even apparently similar populations and situations may be different.
- Each may present unique challenges and opportunities



Photograph: Carolyn Cumpsty Fowler (2004)

# No Evaluation = Not Best Process = Not Best Practice = No Money



- Funding agencies increasingly require that we provide evidence that our programs are best-practice
- There are many resources to help us identify and develop best-practice programs

# Ethical practice requires evaluation!

If you don't believe this, let's think about the clinical setting

- Your child is hot and has an audible wheeze. Your pediatrician is unavailable so you go to the local ER.
- What if ...

# Ethical reasons for doing evaluation

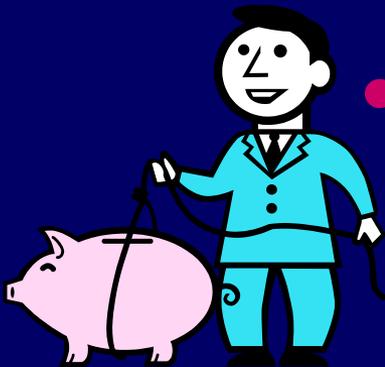


- Respecting our clients, and partners.
  - Communities are tired of being treated like “lab rats”

# Ethical reasons for doing evaluation



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  - Communities are tired of being treated like “lab rats”



- Responsible stewardship of resources
  - Money, trust, professional integrity

# More ethical reasons for formative evaluation

- First Do No Harm
  - Using the wrong intervention
  - Unintended risks



# More ethical reasons for formative evaluation

- First Do No Harm
  - Using the wrong intervention
  - Unintended risks



- Intervention Resistance
  - People become resistant to interventions





# Take Home Message

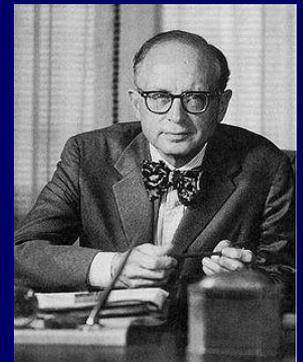
- Evaluation is more than a responsibility

It is:

- Our guide
- Our teacher
- Our financial advisor, and yes
- Our friend

# Famous Last Words

The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance -- it is the illusion of knowledge.



Daniel J Boorstin  
(1914 – 2004)



# Evaluation Resources

- There are many excellent evaluation resources available online.

## Some examples:

- Demonstrating Your Program's Worth (Thompson & McClintock's) CDC/NCIPC
- The Kellogg Foundation's Evaluation Handbook and Logic Modeling Guide (can be downloaded at [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org))
- The CDC's Evaluation Framework
- The CDC Oral Health Program's Success Stories Workbook
- The University of Wisconsin Extension Program Development and Evaluation Resources
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine Community Evaluation Resources
- The Harvard Family Studies Project Evaluation Resources
- Getting to Outcomes 2004 (Chinman, Imm and Wandersman) RAND
- Making Health Communication Programs Work (National Cancer Institute)
- and there are more!

You can do this ..



- Thank you for taking the time to join us today
  - Thank you for your active participation
- and, most of all,
- Thank you for everything you do to prevent injury!