

## Event Brief

### Webinar: Research and Evaluation Planning

June 16, 2021

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A [recording](#) of this webinar is available

### Purpose

In Phase 2, MHP-IF projects will contribute to new knowledge and use evaluation to inform project decisions and improvements. In this webinar we explored how to achieve these research and evaluation purposes with a focus on common gaps, including starting with worldview, choosing priority questions based on intended uses of information and stage of project development, choosing outcome concepts and measures, and understanding a project's influence on outcomes. The webinar was an overview of topics for the primary purpose of receiving feedback on Hub supports of highest interest to project teams. This webinar was tailored for the MHP-IF community. This event brief and resulting Hub supports are publicly available.

### Participants

The webinar was attended by 33 MHP-IF project team members, 3 Public Health Agency of Canada MHP-IF team members, and 6 Hub team members (Secretariat and a Hub consultant).

### Meeting structure

- Barb Riley, Hub Scientific Director, gave an overview of some central concepts and processes for planning intervention studies. She drew on Hub supports that are being considered or under development. Presentation slides are available in both English and French.
- Participants took part in polls to provide feedback on specific Hub supports designed to fill some common gaps. Polling took place at four timepoints throughout the presentation.
- The webinar concluded with a Q&A time.

### What did we learn?

#### Summary of learnings from the presentation

- Population health intervention research (PHIR) and evaluation represent two fields with different origins and are compared on many dimensions. They both focus on intervention studies and use methods for systematic inquiry. Whatever terms are used, clarity about the purpose of any systematic inquiry is most important. Purpose may include new knowledge development, decision-making, and accountability.

- **Situating systematic inquiry within worldview(s):** This step is often overlooked as part of a project's situational analysis. It involves identifying conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of projects that are reflected in various models and frameworks. Possible Hub supports include a curation of some of the most relevant frameworks for child and youth mental health promotion (CYMHP) and practical guidelines for applying an Indigenous lens.
- **Choosing priority questions:** Starting with use in mind (who needs what information, why, and when?) is also often overlooked and too many studies start with methods and measures. Priority questions should be chosen using principles of co-design and appropriate to the stage of project development. Hub tools to guide this process could include a matrix containing sample research and evaluation questions (organized according to types of questions by outcome level) and examples of questions relevant to different stages of project development.
- **Choosing and measuring outcomes:** The goals of the MHP-IF and CYMHP include desired outcomes at multiple levels (individual, community, structural). A common tendency is to try to measure too much. Choosing salient outcomes (primary, secondary, and unanticipated) based on study questions, common outcomes in CYMHP, and co-design is key. Relevant Hub supports could include a repository of common outcomes concepts for CYMHP, guidance for moving from general outcomes concepts to measures, and guidance for pre-testing outcomes measures/ instruments.
- **Understanding projects' influence on outcomes:** Understanding spheres of influence (control, direct influence, indirect influence) and the difference between attribution and contribution is a backdrop to making choices about study designs and about tracking intervention structures and process. Studies of practical value will describe how and why an intervention worked, for whom and under what conditions. Hub supports could include annotated resources on complexity-based approaches to intervention studies, study designs with feasible comparisons, and proposed minimum tracking for intervention implementation and project participants.

### Learnings from webinar polls

- A total of ten Hub supports were suggested with interest expressed in all of them. The supports of highest interest, and in the nearest term, included those related to project worldviews, choosing priority questions and proposed minimum tracking.

### How will learnings from this event be used?

- The feedback provided by webinar participants will guide the development and roll out of additional Hub supports on research and evaluation planning.
- Discussions started with this webinar will be continued as MHP-IF projects prepare for and journey through Phase 2 and include others with shared interests.

