

# Evaluating health promotion programs

Region of Peel  
September 27, 2013



## Learning objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand the basic content of each step in our evaluation model
- Reflect on how these steps can be applied to your situation
- Know how to access our products and services to support your evaluations

# Evaluation...we've all done it!

- **Program evaluation** takes it a step further
  - To focus on a **program**
  - And to be **systematic** about what information we use and how we use it

How have you been involved in program evaluations?

- a) Doing an evaluation of a program
- b) Having your program evaluated by someone else
- c) Providing data for an evaluation
- d) Reading evaluation reports

# Definition: program evaluation

- The application of systematic methods to address questions about program **operations** and **results**
- It may include ongoing monitoring of a program as well as one-shot studies of program processes or program impact<sup>1</sup>



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# Why should we evaluate a program?

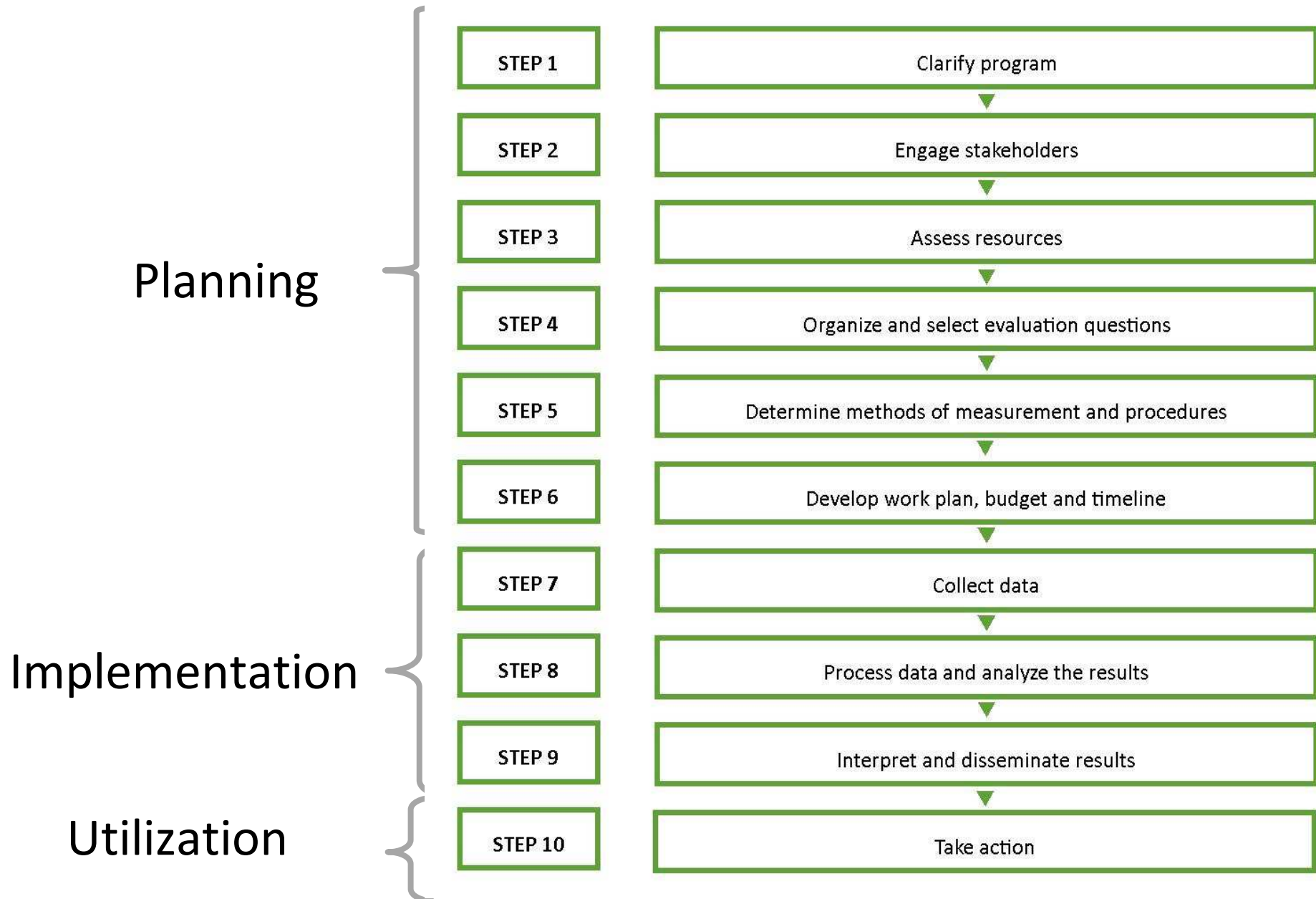
- For learning:
  - To provide information about the program
  - To compare different program types
  - To improve a program
- For accountability:
  - To measure the program's effectiveness or contribution
  - To demonstrate the program's value
  - To meet funding requirements

**Note:** we can also evaluate groups of programs, whole systems, series of events...not always a single program/single evaluation

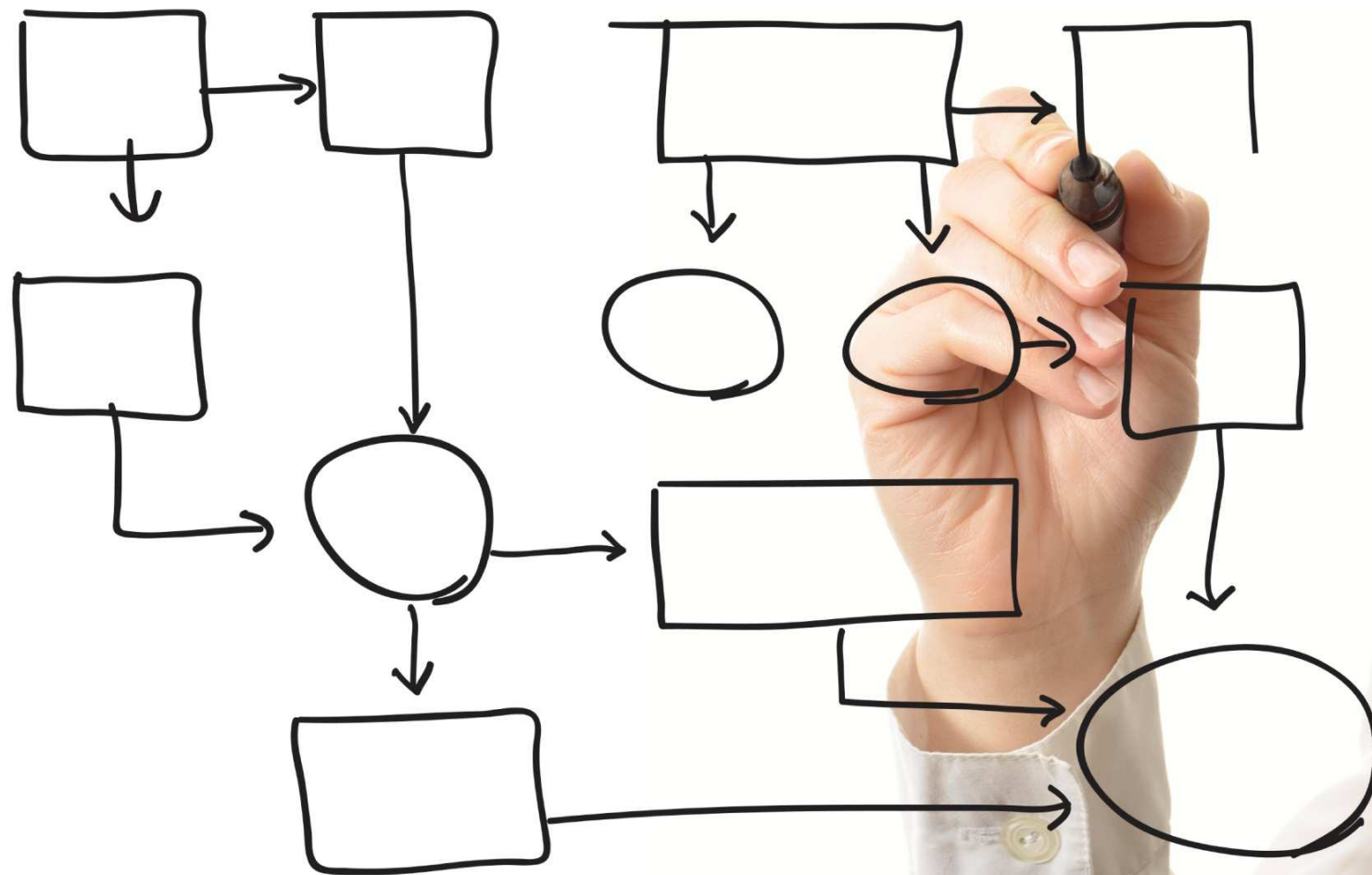
## Understand the reason(s) for your evaluation

- The ‘right’ evaluation depends on what you and the program stakeholders want to know.
- Evaluation could focus on the activities, outputs, reaching the population, the outcomes, the overall goal of the program ... or a combination of these.
- Choose evaluation questions that stakeholders actually care about and that will be used to make decisions.

# The **10** steps to evaluating a health promotion program



# Reality is often not linear





## Evaluation models

- Goal-based – achievement of desired goals and objectives
- Participatory – enhance utilization of results
- Developmental – early stage innovation addressing a complex problem
- Empowerment – emphasizes reflective practice and self-evaluation

## Step 1: Clarify program

- make sure that your program has clearly defined goal(s), populations of interest, outcomes, strategies, activities, outputs, and indicators
- Often accomplished using a logic model
- A logic model is a diagrammatic representation of a program
- It shows the **relationships** among:
  - **WHAT:** what does the program do?
  - **WHO:** who are the recipients of the program?
  - **WHY:** what outcomes are to be achieved?

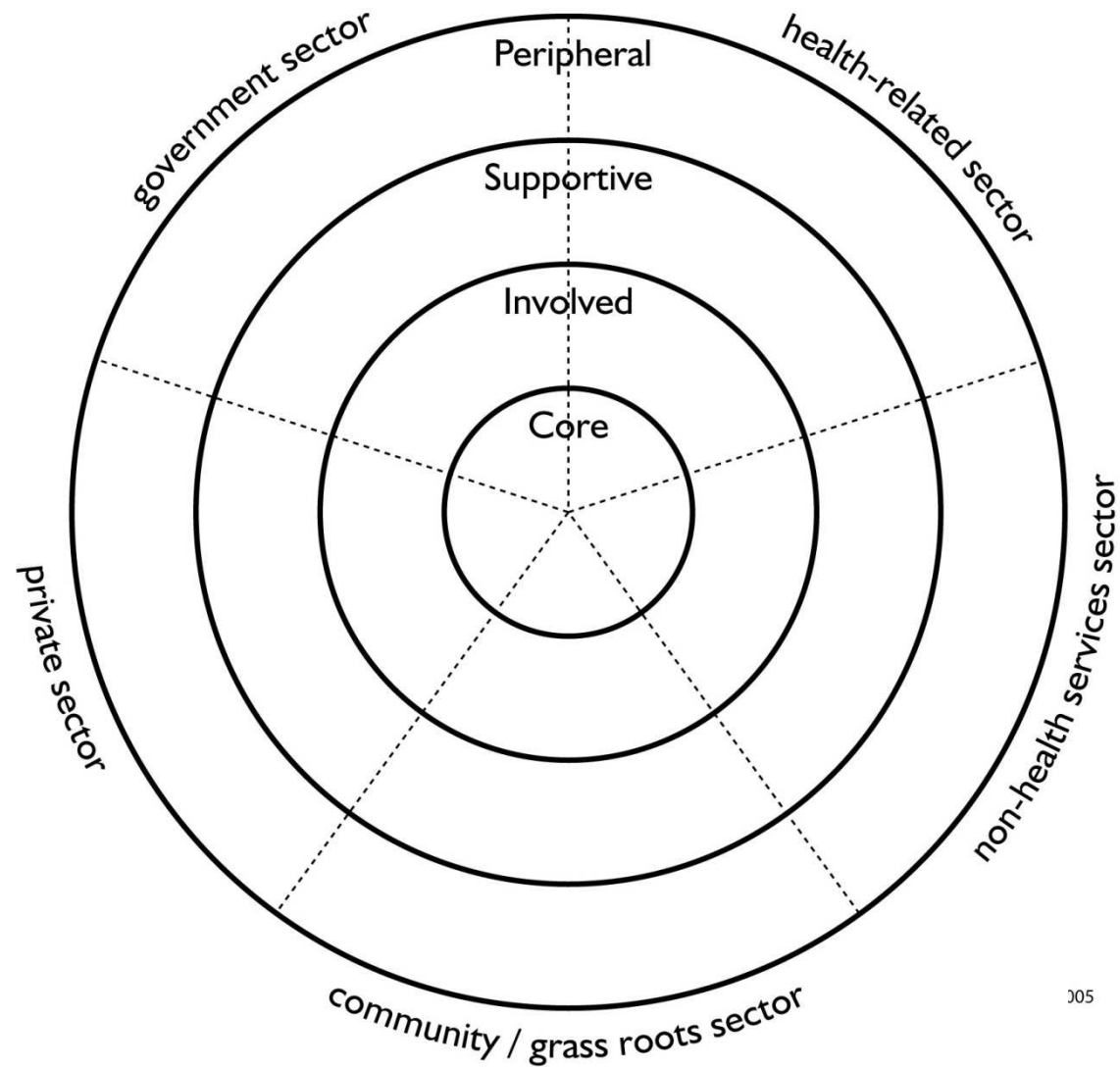
# Sample logic model outline

<b>Goal</b>			
<b>Population(s) of interest</b>			
<b>Long-term outcome objectives</b>			
<b>Short-term outcome objectives</b>			
<b>Activities</b>			
<b>Outputs/process objectives</b>			
<b>Resources</b>			

## Step 2: engage stakeholders

- Define your stakeholders, understand their interests and expectations, and engage them in program review
- This will help you develop your evaluation questions

# Who are our stakeholders?



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## Understanding stakeholder interests and expectations

- What do they want to know from the evaluation?
- How do they expect the evaluation to be conducted?

**What do they care about?**

**What kind of information will persuade your stakeholders?**

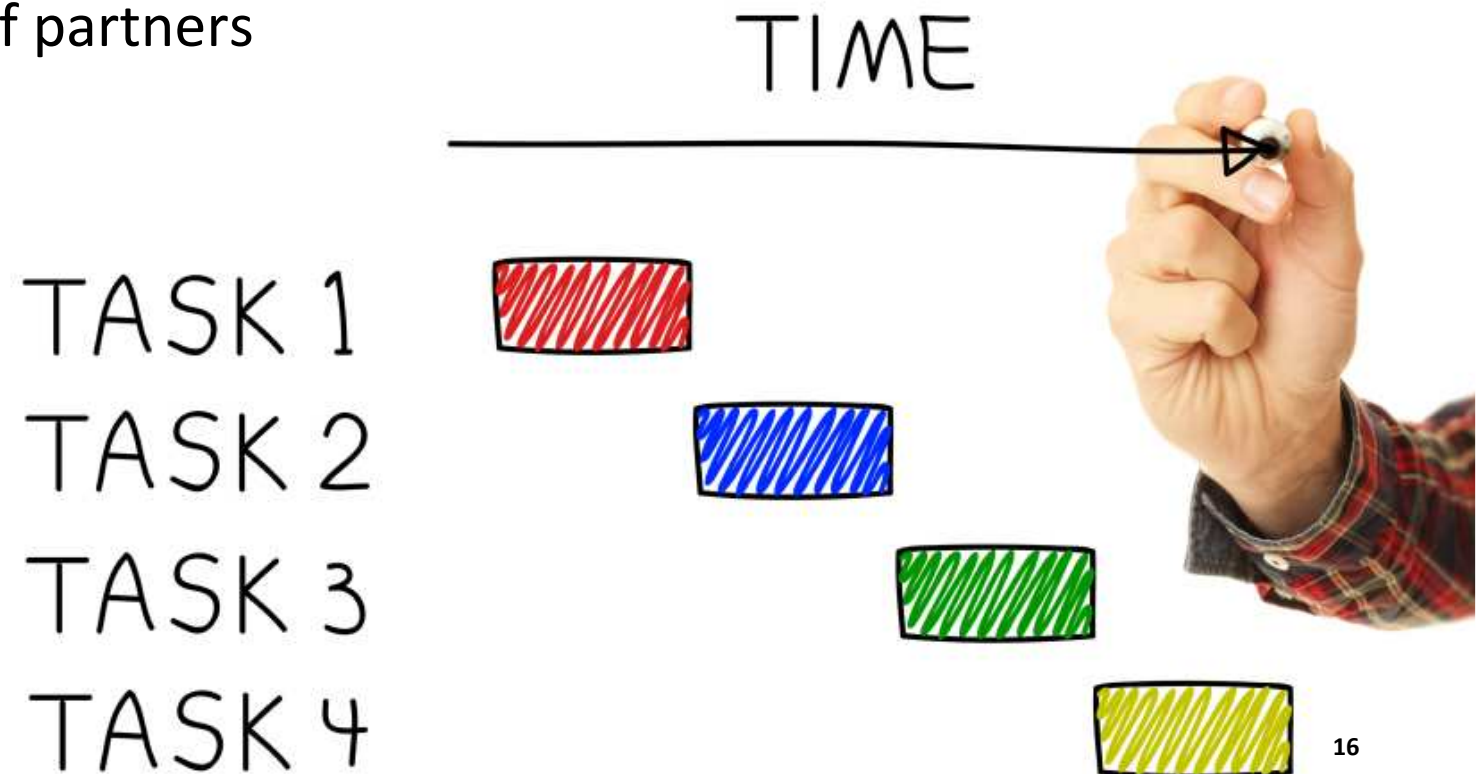
**Usually need to prioritize stakeholder interests due to budget limitations.**

## Step 3: assess resources

- Clarify staff time, money and other resources available for evaluation
- This will inform your evaluation design decisions

## Consider:

- Funds
- Staff and volunteer time and interests
- Timeline
- Equipment and tools
- Support of partners





## Step 4: organize and select evaluation questions

- Organize your evaluation questions by type:
  - Formative
  - Process
  - Outcome
- **Select** your key evaluation questions
- Think about:
  - What type of decisions need to be made with the evaluation data
  - Stakeholder interests
  - Resources

# Formative evaluation

Is used in the  
development  
and planning  
stages of a  
program

- **Situational assessment**  
Is there a need for this type of program?
- **Logic model development**  
Theory of change - how will the activities lead to the outcomes?
- **Evaluability assessment**  
Is the program ready to be evaluated?  
What type of evaluation?
- **Pre-testing materials**  
Is the message that we want to communicate being understood by our population of interest?

Process  
evaluation

Measures  
program activity  
and  
implementation

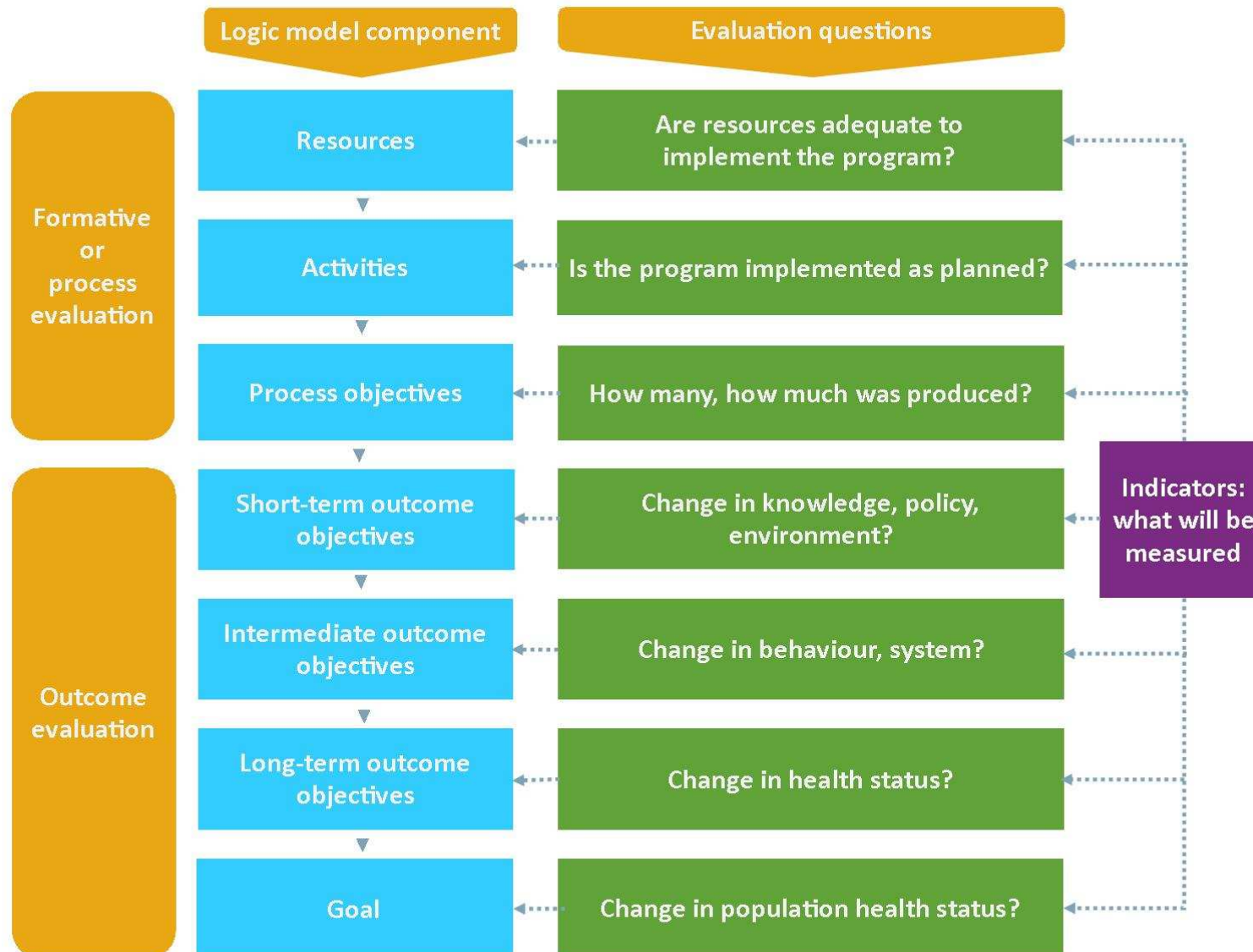
- Sometimes known as program tracking or monitoring
- Sample process evaluation questions:
  - Was the program carried out as designed?
  - Did we reach the desired target group?
  - How many participants attended each session?
  - What were the implementation facilitators and barriers?

# Outcome evaluation

Estimates  
success of  
program at  
meeting  
goals and  
objectives

- Measures change produced by program activities (i.e., the effect)
- It can be difficult to measure long-term outcomes
- Sample outcome evaluation questions:
  - Has there been an increase in physical activity levels?
  - Are participants more ready to quit smoking?
  - Have participants increased their knowledge of healthy eating?

# Evaluation types





## 5: determine methods of measurement and procedures

- **What** will you measure?
- **When** will you collect data?
- **How** will you collect data?
- **Who** will you collect data from?
- **Who** will use the data?

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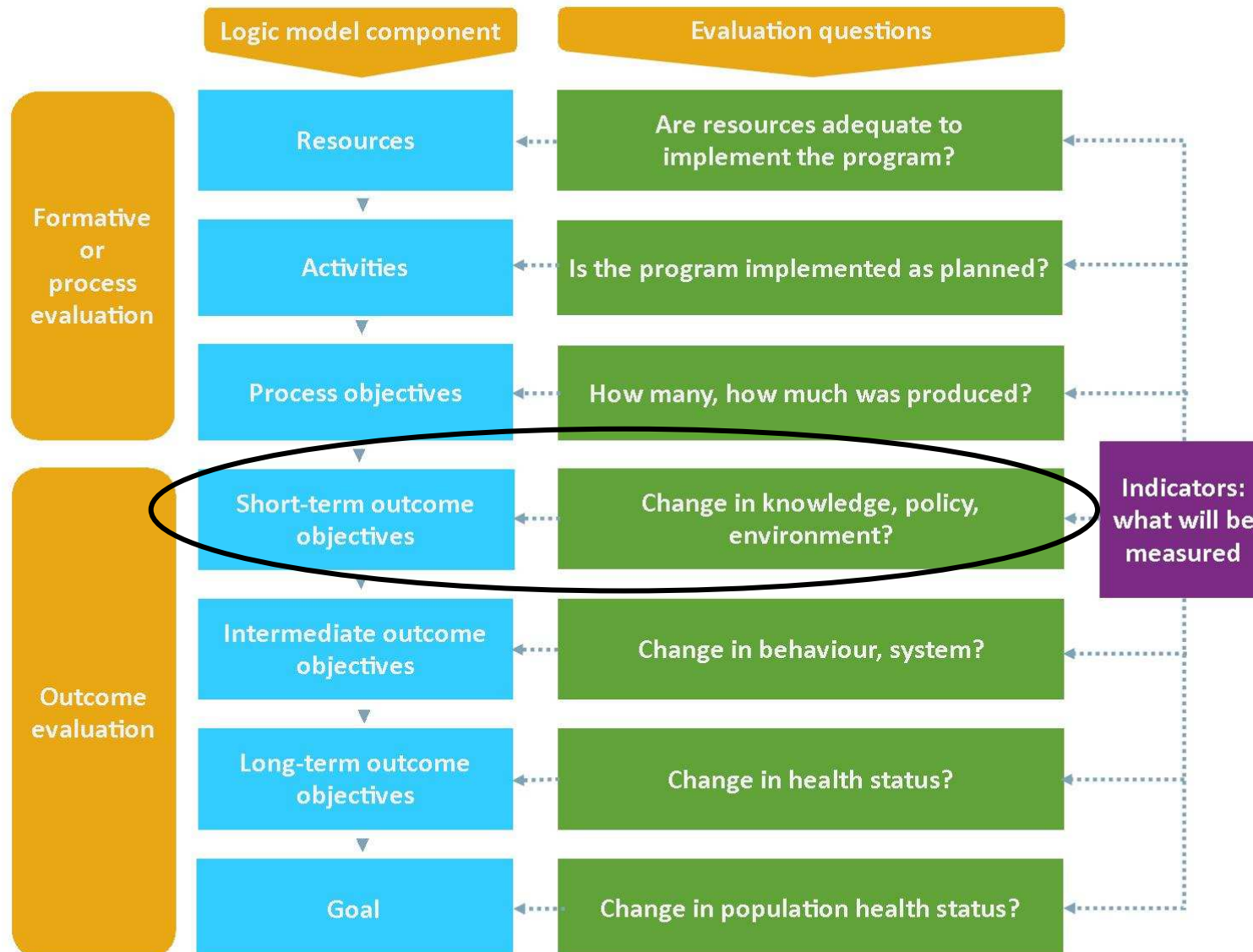
## Methods and procedures: **what** will you measure?

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- **Indicators** are ways of measuring the objectives
- Sometimes indicators exactly measure the objectives
- Often we need to find indirect ways of measuring our objectives



# Objectives and indicators



## Methods and procedures: **what** will you measure?

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- **Evaluation question:** Did we achieve our short-term objective?
- **Short-term outcome objective:**
  - By the end of the first year, 80% of participating parents will have increased access to affordable, nutritious food through participation in the community kitchen program.
- **Possible outcome indicators:**
  - # of participating parents reporting decreased reliance on food bank
  - % of participating parents who agree that they have increased access to affordable, nutritious food

## Methods and procedures: **what** will you measure?

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There are three main considerations for selecting indicators:

- Accessibility
- Reliability
- Validity

## Accessibility

- What are the barriers to obtaining data on your outcome indicators?
- Examples:
  - There is a limited sample of parents willing to complete the survey
  - Others?

# Accessibility

Common barriers include:

- Limited resources to accessing the information
- There is a limited sample in the region
- There is a fee to access the data
- Physicians are difficult to reach
- There are few people who have permission (or skills) to access the data

## Reliability

- Will it give consistent measurement over time?
- Examples:
  - If you ask the same question at different times, will they respond in the same way?
  - Does everyone understand the question in the same way? Is there too much room for interpreting the question?
  - Can emotions or other circumstances change respondents' answers from day to day?

## Validity

- How well does the indicator actually measure what it should?<sup>2</sup>
- Examples:
  - Self-reported weight versus actual weight?
  - If they say they 'like' it – it doesn't mean it is 'useful'

## Methods and procedures: **when** will you collect the data?

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- At what point in time?  
Before, during, after the intervention
- Frequency of data collection?



## Methods and procedures: **how** will you collect the data?

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### Four main data collection methods:

- 1) Talking to people
- 2) Getting written responses
- 3) Reviewing existing data or documentation
- 4) Observing and tracking

# Quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods



Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

Albert Einstein



## Methods and procedures: **who** will you collect data from?

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- Who is part of your sample?
- Will you have a comparison group?

- **The following ethical issues should be considered:**
  - Informed consent
    - Purpose/goal/objectives of the evaluation
    - Evaluation method
    - Potential risks
    - Potential benefits
  - Anonymity, confidentiality and security of data
  - How the participants will be informed of the results

## Methods and procedures: **who** will use the data?

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- Who needs to be persuaded?
- This will influence the types of measurements you use

# Components of an evaluation plan

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## Evaluation question

What do you want to know about the program?

## Objective (refer to logic model)

What did the program set out to do?

## Indicator (refer to logic model)

What will demonstrate success?

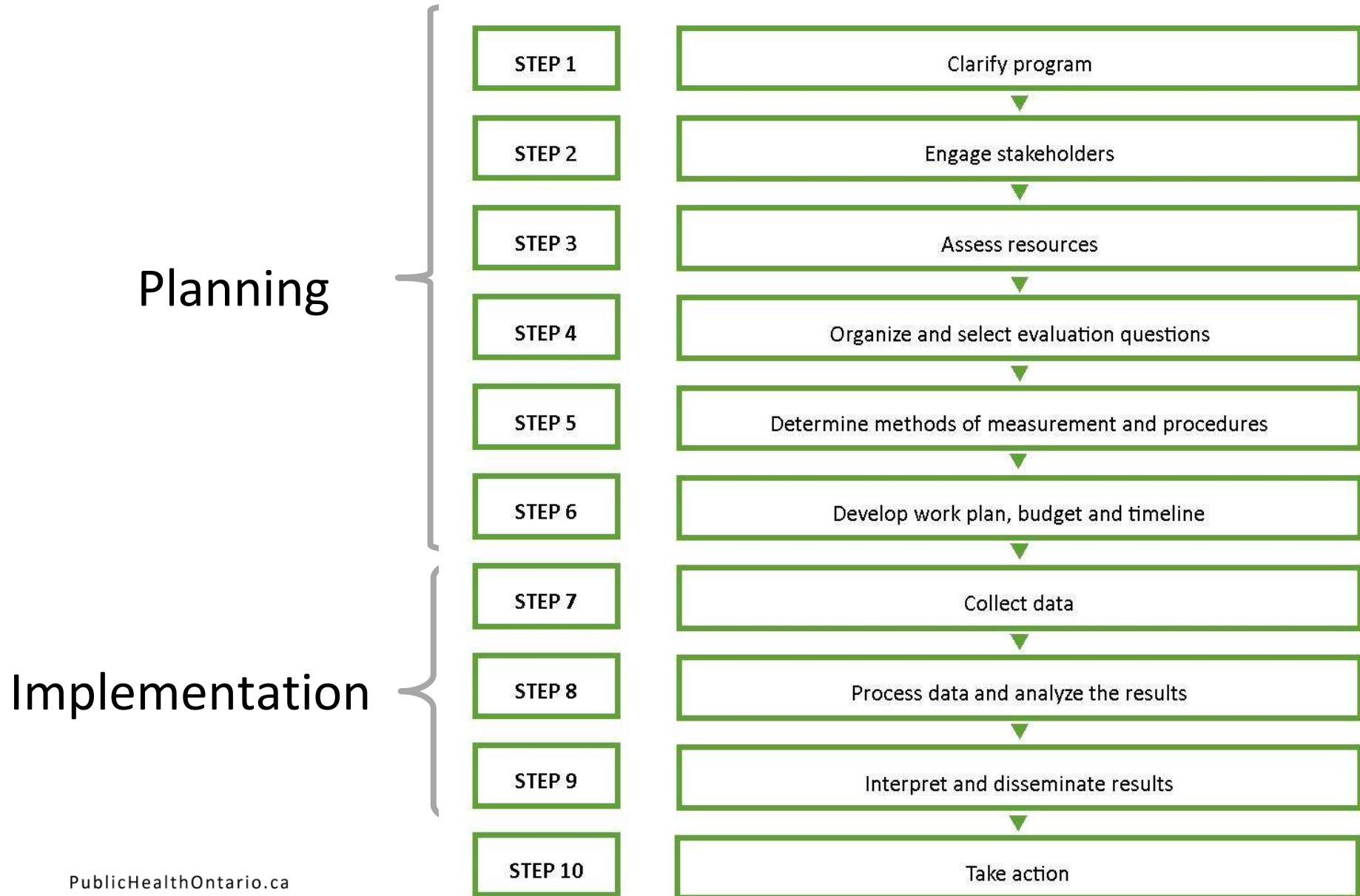
## Method of data collection

What tools will you use to collect the information you need?

## Step 6: develop work plan, budget and timeline

- Identify specific tasks, roles, resource allocations and deadlines for the evaluation
- In-house versus out-source?

# The **10** steps to evaluating a health promotion program





## Step 7: collect data

- Pilot test tools and procedures
  - Revise
  - Train
  - Collect data

## Step 8: process data and analyze the results

- Double-check at least 10% of data
- Put data in a format that can be summarized and interpreted
- Identify themes in qualitative data
- Enlist the support of a data analysis expert whenever possible

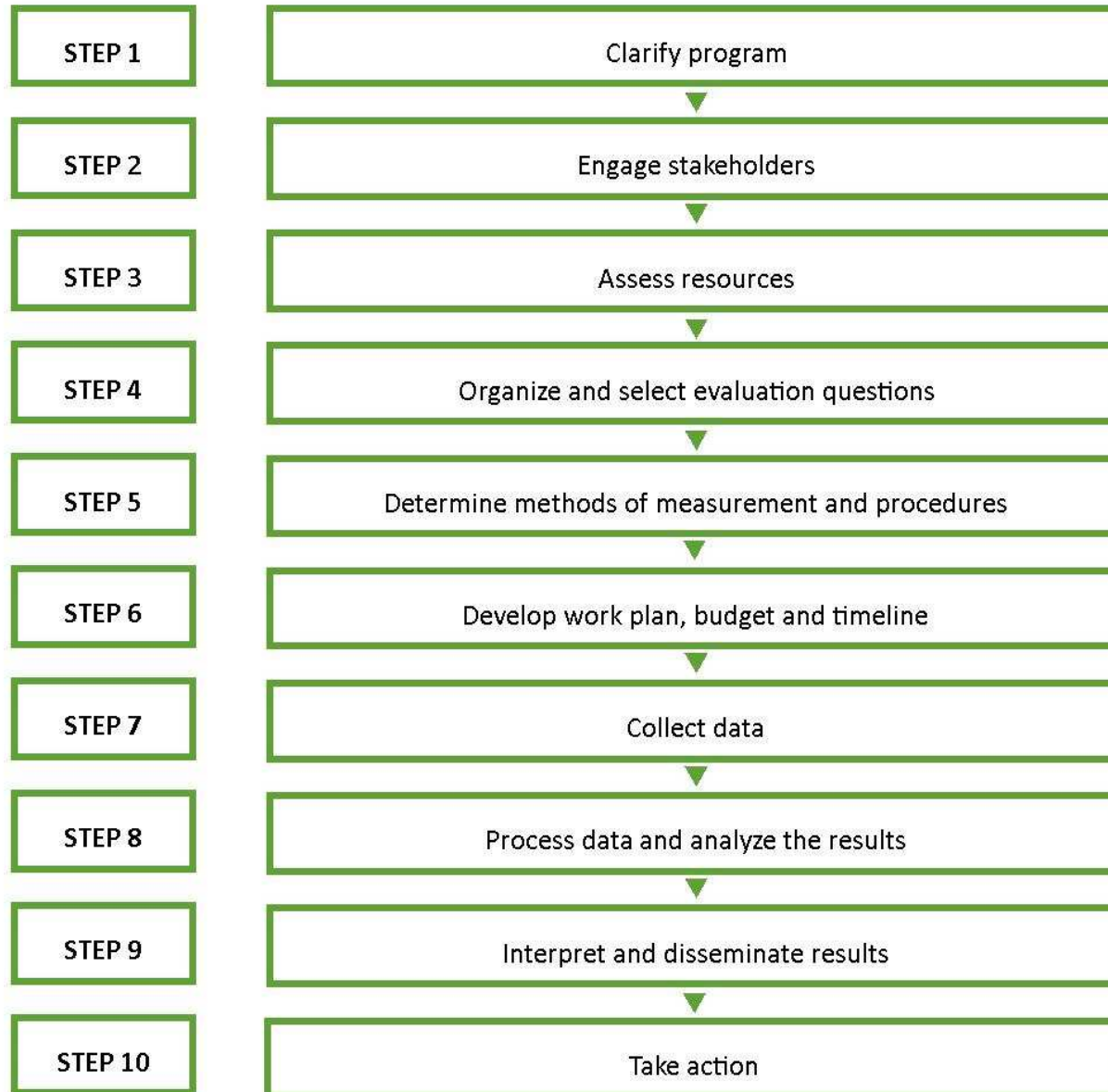
## Step 9: interpret and disseminate the results<sup>2</sup>

- Work with stakeholders to make sense of findings
- Draw conclusions based on the findings. What are the answers to your evaluation questions?
- Make recommendations on actions that should result from the evaluation
- Share results in formats that are tailored to specific audience needs/preferences



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# The **10** steps to evaluating a health promotion program

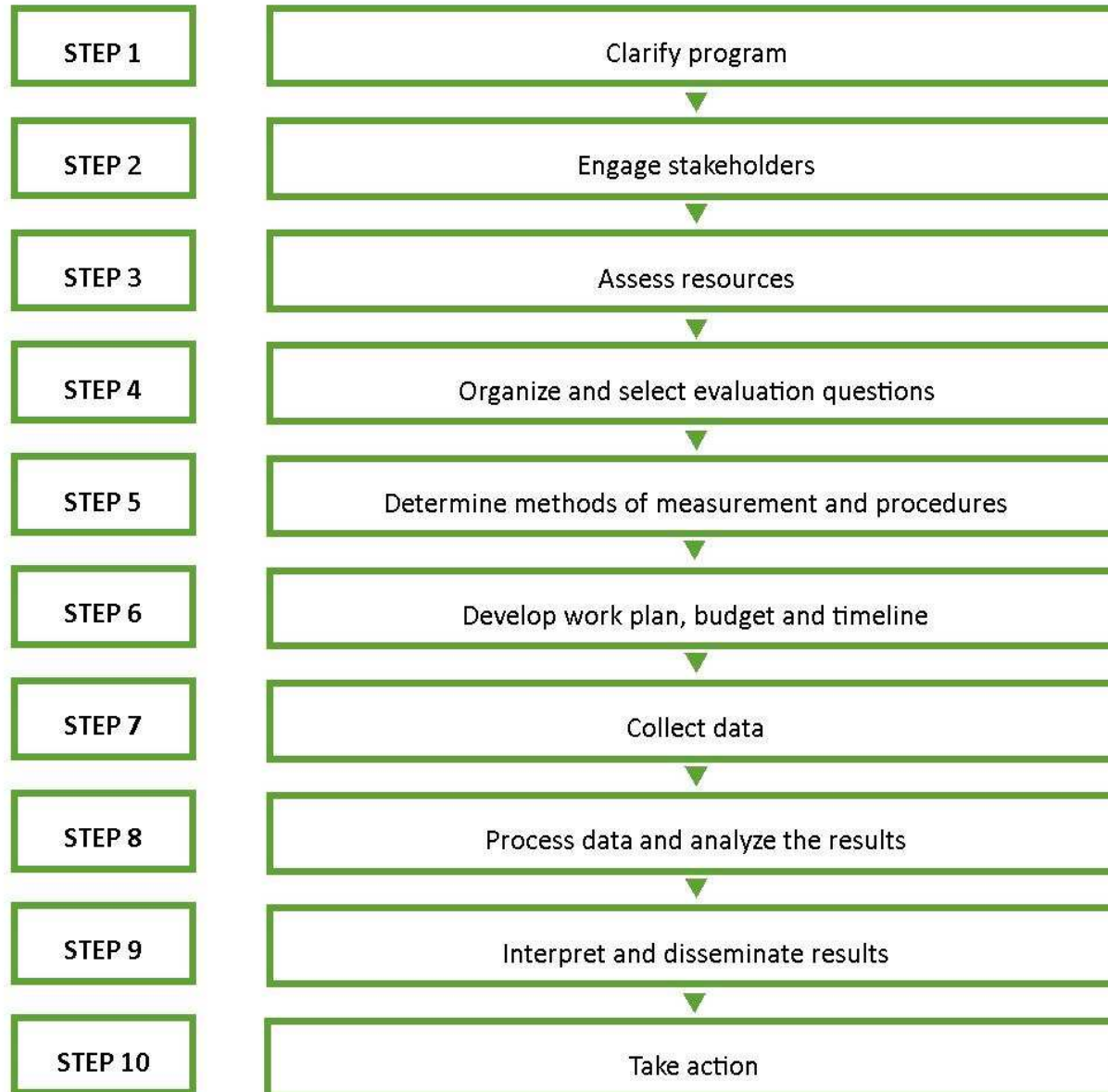


## Step 10: take action

- Involve your stakeholders
- Use the answers to your evaluation questions:
  - Try something different?
  - Keep doing something that worked well?
  - Improve program?
  - Replace program?

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# The **10** steps to evaluating a health promotion program



## PHO resources

- At a glance: ten steps to evaluating health promotion programs<sup>3</sup>
- Evaluating health promotion programs workbook<sup>4</sup>
- Health communication outcomes. At the heart of good objectives and indicators<sup>5</sup>
- Online Health Program Planner<sup>6</sup>
- Logic models workbook<sup>10</sup>

Resources are available in both English and French

## Other recommended evaluation resources

- Making evaluations matter: a practical guide for evaluators<sup>7</sup>
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook<sup>2</sup>
- Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs<sup>8</sup>
- Developing an effective evaluation plan<sup>9</sup>



## References

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Public Health Ontario wishes to acknowledge and thank THCU staff and many partners who contributed to an earlier version of this document.

THCU (originally known as The Health Communication Unit, started in 1993 at the University of Toronto) moved to Public Health Ontario's Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Department in 2011.

