

EVALUATION PLAN

5-Year Plan Development



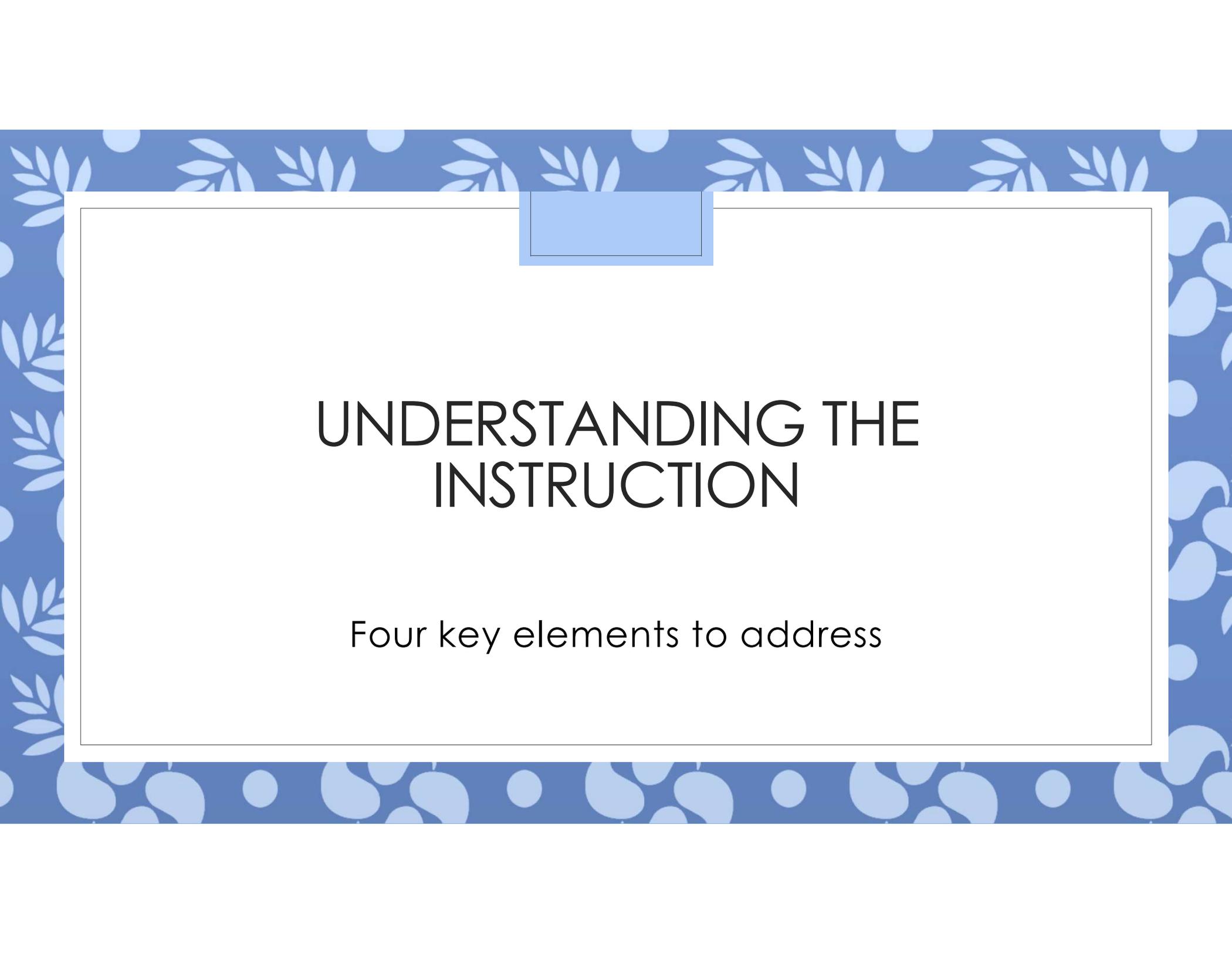
Agenda

- Instructions
- Guidance
- Weak and Strong Examples
- Additional Resource
 - PFH has developed a Practical Guide to Developing an Evaluation Plan tailored to DD Councils.

The Instruction

Describe how the Council will **monitor** progress on its goals and objectives, **review** its activities to understand how well they are working, and **use** evaluation to understand results beyond required performance measures.

Note: “the Council” refers to Council staff and Council members



UNDERSTANDING THE INSTRUCTION

Four key elements to address

Describe how Council staff and members will look at outcomes and key results for each objective, including any benchmarks, milestones, or other measures it develops to show progress over time.

Element #1

Describing Outcomes

Weak Example

- The Council will monitor activities under each objective and review reports from grantees. Progress will be discussed during Council meetings. The Council will ensure that projects are implemented as planned.

Strong Example

- For each objective, the Council will define short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes that describe the intended systems and policy changes for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Short-term outcomes may include increased knowledge, engagement, or leadership skills. Intermediate outcomes may include increased representation in decision-making roles or improved policies and practices. Long-term outcomes will focus on sustainable systems change, increased inclusion, and enhanced self-determination.
- Progress toward these outcomes will be measured using clearly defined performance indicators and annual benchmarks.
- **Why the Strong Version Works:**
- Focuses on outcomes, not just activities
- Identifies levels of change
- Connects to DD Act principles
- Demonstrates measurable progress

Key Results and Benchmarks

Weak Example

- The Council will track the number of trainings conducted and the number of participants served to determine progress.

Strong Example

- For each objective, the Council will establish specific and measurable key results aligned with intended outcomes. In addition to tracking outputs such as the number of trainings conducted, the Council will measure changes in knowledge, leadership capacity, policy engagement, and systems improvement.
- Annual benchmarks will be established for each key result. For example, the Council may set a target percentage increase in self-advocates serving on advisory boards or a defined number of policy recommendations influenced through Council-supported activities.
- Benchmarks will allow the Council to assess progress over time and adjust, as necessary.
- **Why the Strong Version Works:**
- Distinguishes outputs from outcomes
- Includes measurable targets
- Demonstrates forward-looking benchmarks

Evaluation Beyond Required Measures

✘ Weak Example

- The Council will collect required federal performance measures and submit reports as required.

✔ Strong Example

- In addition to federally required performance measures, the Council will conduct broader evaluation activities to assess long-term systems impact, policy influence, leadership development outcomes, sustainability, and access for a wide range of people.
- The Council will incorporate both quantitative data (e.g., participation levels, representation rates, policy outcomes) and qualitative data (e.g., participant experiences, case examples, stakeholder feedback) to fully understand the effectiveness of its strategies.
- This expanded evaluation approach ensures that the Council measures meaningful change beyond compliance reporting.
- **Why the Strong Version Works:**
- Goes beyond compliance
- Focuses on impact
- Includes qualitative and quantitative data
- Demonstrates commitment to systems change

Explain how evaluation activities will be accessible and understandable for all participants, and how feedback from individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, and others will be included.

Element #2

Accessibility and Stakeholder Feedback

Weak Example

- The Council will gather feedback from stakeholders as needed.

Strong Example

- The Council will ensure evaluation activities are accessible, available to a wide range of people, and written in plain language. Materials will be available in alternative formats and language access will be provided as needed.
- Feedback will be actively gathered from individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, self-advocates, community partners, and other populations through surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, and advisory input.
- Stakeholder feedback will be reviewed regularly and incorporated into strategic decision-making and project improvements.

Why the Strong Version Works:

- Explicitly names required populations
- Addresses accessibility
- Demonstrates structured feedback process
- Shows use of feedback in decision-making

Describe how Council staff and members will decide whether its strategies are effective, how they will regularly review and discuss progress, and how evaluation results will be used to guide decisions and improvements.

Element #3

Reviewing Effectiveness

Weak Example

- The Council will review reports annually to make sure projects are working and meeting their goals.

Strong Example

- The Council will review objective-level progress on a quarterly and annual basis through structured discussions during full Council and committee meetings.
- During each review, the Council will analyze: Progress toward established benchmarks; Trends and patterns in data over time; Barriers in reach or impact; Evidence of systems or policy change.
- If progress is limited or unintended outcomes are identified, the Council may modify strategies, provide targeted technical assistance, adjust funding allocations, or revise timelines to improve effectiveness.
- **Why the Strong Version Works:**
 - Describes a structured review process
 - Shows data analysis
 - Includes corrective action process
 - Demonstrates active oversight

Describe how Council staff and members will review progress on self-advocacy goals and how they will gather and use feedback to understand satisfaction with Council-funded projects and activities.

Element #4

Self-Advocacy and Satisfaction Measures

Weak Example

- The Council supports self-advocacy and will ask participants if they are satisfied.

Strong Example

- For objectives related to self-advocacy and leadership development, the Council will track measurable indicators such as increased participation in policymaking, representation on boards and committees, advocacy engagement, and leadership skill development.
- The Council will also assess satisfaction with Council-funded projects through structured surveys and feedback mechanisms that evaluate accessibility, quality of support, inclusion, and perceived impact.
- Self-advocate feedback will be reviewed annually to ensure leadership opportunities are meaningful and aligned with the principles of the DD Act.
- **Why the Strong Version Works:**
 - Includes measurable indicators
 - Specifies structured satisfaction assessment
 - Links back to DD Act principles

Weak/Strong Signals

Weak Narrative Signals

Focus on activities

General statements

No benchmarks

Compliance-only mindset

No corrective action described

Limited stakeholder role

Strong Narrative Signals

Focus on outcomes and impact

Specific processes and measures

Annual targets and milestones

Continuous improvement mindset

Clear strategy adjustment process

Meaningful stakeholder inclusion

Contact and Contract Information

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Training and technical assistance resources: itacchelp.org

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