

# Checklist for Planning and Implementing a Systems Change Evaluation

This checklist is intended for Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program evaluators and project directors and presents the essential steps—orient, plan, and implement systems change evaluation efforts—to follow when strengthening a TPP program evaluation with systems change elements.

## 1. Orient yourself to systems thinking concepts and practices

- Review systems thinking terminology and how it applies to TPP grant programs.
- Practice strategies that shift from linear to complex problem solving, for adopting a systems thinking mindset.
- Continually challenge your assumptions related to the cause and effect of events and the mental models that guide these ideas and beliefs.



Refer to [Strategies for Using a Systems Thinking Approach](#) during a staff meeting or supervisory session focused on systems thinking concepts. Using the prompts in this tool, discuss how to reframe your thinking when considering the complex challenges within your program. This may lead to a discussion of common systems thinking terms such as *system of care* and *systems change*. Reinforce to staff that your TPP program is part of a larger system that supports the well-being of adolescents and families.

## 2. Plan to evaluate systems change

- Discuss with your staff the systems change elements (institutional structures, parts, or pathways) that will be added to the evaluation and why they should care about these elements.
- Define the systems change questions you will add to your evaluation.
  - What is the type and extent of systems change taking place? In other words, how does the system (pathways and institutional structure) differ between baseline and follow-up?
  - How has the TPP program, and the community implementing it, contributed to this over-time change in the system?
- Incorporate your learning agenda questions and feedback loops into your systems change evaluation plan.
- Review your data plan and collection protocols and instruments, such as surveys, storytelling, and interviews, to ensure that they will capture the systems change elements you intend to evaluate.
- Assign staff roles to carry out the evaluation.



For sample systems change priorities and research questions, data collection planning ideas, and instrument templates, see section 2 (page 29) of [A Practical Guide to Evaluating Systems Change](#).

## 3. Conduct systems change evaluation efforts

- Collect and analyze data using equitable evaluation practices that include culturally relevant methods and measures to address power imbalances.
- Be open to various perspectives/interpretations of the data you are collecting in your program evaluation.
- Use a continuous learning approach to gain a deeper understanding of what brings about change.
- Consider how small changes may be influencing larger changes (zoom in and out throughout the evaluation).
- Review preliminary evaluation findings with your entire staff to bring in multiple perspectives, while looking for unintended effects and consequences.
- Observe changing patterns, perspectives, and narratives within the system
  - Look for increased or decreased energy, commitment, and engagement from partners.



Use the evaluation tools in section 2 (page 29) of [A Practical Guide to Evaluating Systems Change](#) to supplement your evaluation efforts. The [Sets of Principles for Evaluating Systems Change Efforts](#) includes practices and methods for capturing systems change outcomes.