Evaluating Youth Drop-In Programs: The Utility of Process Evaluation Methods

Derek J. Chechak
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Judith M. Dunlop
King's University College at Western University

Michael J. Holosko
Research Consultant

Abstract: *In North America, neighbourhood youth centres typically offer essential community-based programs to disadvantaged and marginalized populations. In addition to providing pro-social and supportive environments, they provide a host of educational and skill-development opportunities and interventions that build self-esteem, increase positive life relationships and experiences, and address social determinants of health. However, evaluators of such centres often have to work with moving changes in temporal components (i.e., service users, services, programs, and outcomes) that are unique and idiosyncratic to the mandate of the centre. Although there is an abundance of research on youth programs in general, there is a void in the literature on drop-in programs specifically, which this study aims to address. The lack of empirical research in this area inhibits knowledge about the processes of these centres. For this reason, the article concludes that process evaluation methods may be effectively used to substantiate the practice skills, knowledge, and managerial competencies of those responsible for program implementation.*

Keywords: *process, program evaluations, youth drop-in programs, youth engagement*

Resumé : *En Amérique du Nord, les centres de jeunesse communautaires proposent des programmes aux populations défavorisées et marginalisées. En plus d'offrir des environnements prosociaux et favorables, ils offrent une multitude d'opportunités et d'interventions visant à renforcer l'estime de soi, soutenir les relations et les expériences positives de vie et favoriser les déterminants sociaux de la santé. Cependant, les évaluateurs de ces centres doivent souvent s'adapter à l'évolution constante de certaines composantes (telles que les utilisateurs des services, les services, les programmes et les résultats) propres au mandat du centre. Beaucoup d'études ont été menées sur les programmes destinés aux jeunes en général, mais il y a peu d'écrits au sujet des programmes d'accueil. Ce manque de recherches empiriques dans ce domaine a un impact sur la connaissance des processus de ces centres. Ainsi, nous croyons que*

Corresponding author: Derek J. Chechak, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 33 Russell Street, Toronto, ON, M5S 2S1; Derek.chechak@camh.ca

l'évaluation de la mise en œuvre pourrait être utile afin de contribuer au développement des habiletés, des connaissances et des compétences en gestion des responsables de la mise en œuvre de ces programmes.

Mots clés : *processus, évaluation de programme, programmes d'accueil pour jeunes, participation des jeunes*

Although there is much research on youth programs in general, there is a void in the North American literature about specific drop-in program components that this practice note aims to address. Program managers of such programs must be able to gauge how their programs are working or not working; however, the lack of empirical research in this area inhibits practice knowledge about the precise processes of program implementation. In this practice note, we present a case-study of a youth-centre evaluation that had two goals: (1) to help develop its in-house self-evaluation capacity; and, (2) to systematically collect and analyze data that could be used in funding proposals and community education.

A participatory approach to evaluation was utilized that involved the executive director and board members, who worked with the evaluation consultants to ensure that the evaluation design was based on process and outcome measures that they considered important. We believe that participatory evaluation methods may be effectively used to substantiate the practice skills, knowledge, and competencies of those responsible for program evaluation (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, 2007; Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau, 2012; Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2008, 2012; Smith, 2010). We contend that this practice note adds a much-needed "real-world" example of how process evaluations can effectively support youth drop-in programming by identifying the specific evaluation challenges we experienced in this neighbourhood youth centre. We hope to demonstrate that it is possible to overcome some of the traditional evaluation challenges associated with drop-in programs and to extend the discourse about the utility of process evaluation methods applied to specific youth drop-in programs.

The youth centre we describe offers both structured and drop-in programs to support youth between the ages of 12 and 19 years, residing in a multicultural, densely populated, low-income neighbourhood. Since 1991, thousands of teenagers have participated in programs offered by this centre. It has earned a strong reputation in the local community as a safe place for youth to both socialize and learn valuable life skills ("Safe Haven," 2017). Historically, the centre's operating base came from fundraising activities; however, since a major casino opened in 1998, the number of local bingo halls—which were a key source of funding—decreased from 14 to 5. In danger of closing if it did not find alternative revenue sources, the centre needed to develop its own self-evaluation capacity in order to provide reliable and timely data to guide decision making and support future funding proposals.

PROCESS EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION

The process evaluation addressed the following research questions: (1) How were the values of the youth centre translated into program goals, objectives, and activities? (2) Has a sustainability plan been established for the youth centre to gather information on an ongoing basis? (3) Have reliable data been gathered to guide decision making about programs? (4) Were recommendations for program development and implementation based on data collected and analyzed?

As Holosko and Thyer (2011) note:

> A process evaluation seeks to answer what happened to who, and how in a program. This formative question triggers another more specific set of questions that require both qualitative and quantitative data:
>
> • Who delivers the program and how often?
> • To what extent was the program implemented as planned?
> • How is the program received by the target group and program staff?
> • What are the barriers to program delivery?
> • Was the data used to make program improvements/refinements? If so, what changes were made?
> • How were participants involved in the process evaluation?
>
> These questions are used to understand what was learned during the implementation of the program. They typically include program descriptions, program monitoring, and quality assurance. (p. 93)

This evaluation included elements of planning and design, data collection, engaging stakeholders, communicating results, and using data to direct and inform the program. To emphasize the centrality of process evaluation, however, we chose to focus this paper on why process evaluation was chosen, and how it fostered the utility of these methods through the use of program-level quality-improvement cycles.

Neighbourhood youth centres typically offer a combination of both structured and drop-in programs, and structured programs easily lend themselves to collecting outcome data. Examples include youth programs that promote the development of interpersonal and social skills (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010), increase physical activity (Beets et al., 2015), promote healthy identity development and increase academic competencies (Lapalme, Bisset, & Potvin, 2014), provide substance-use education (D'Amico et al., 2012), promote sexual and relationship health (Mathews et al., 2015), and discourage anti-social or delinquent behaviours (Taheri & Welsh, 2016). Nevertheless, while evidence-based practice has become the menu of choice for human-service providers and funders, process evaluations are an equally useful approach to enhance information-based program development. While process and outcome evaluations appear to offer the best (available) results in today's evidence-based world, in reality, drop-in components of community-based youth centres require a more flexible approach

for those youth who do not want to commit to a structured program. Process evaluations that measure youth attendance, activities, and satisfaction fulfill this need and deserve more acknowledgement overall.

This practice note seeks to fill this void in the literature and argues for the recognition that process evaluation is a valuable addition to building evaluation capacity. Youth centre drop-in programs are successful because they cater to local service users from diverse age, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds and offer an appealing level of flexibility to those who may experience barriers to regular attendance (Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014). However, demonstrating this success can be challenging because the available evaluation metrics produced may be sparse, less rigorous, or involve fewer participants than would be obtained from a formally structured program. There is also a benefit to establishing relationships with youth who are not able or willing to attend youth programs on a regular basis but who may be willing to engage with a service provider on their own terms without having to commit to structured programs. This is a time where one's identity formation and self-perception are of critical importance, but youth involvement with traditional health-care services is often met with reluctance (Coates & Howe, 2014).

In part, this challenge is mirrored in the current status of traditional youth-centre outcome-driven program evaluations. While there is some renewed interest in conducting research on youth-centre programs, it is clear that there were also lessons learned that have implications for conducting more rigorous evaluations. In this case, a summative or impact evaluation using a combination of qualitative and quantitative outcomes follows directly from process evaluation; however, it is important to note that our original evaluation design did include both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

One of the lessons learned was that there were formidable challenges to data collection, due to the need for parental consent for youth under 18 years of age. The assumption that parents would understand the evaluation approach being initiated for the first time at this neighbourhood youth centre was not confirmed when only a small number of consent forms were returned. Therefore, a decision was made not to publish the outcome data collected during the first phase of the evaluation. This lack of parental consent highlighted the need for the youth centre to develop a proactive outreach strategy to orient parents to the proposed, forthcoming evaluation strategy and provide them an avenue for questions and concerns regarding data collection. Given these barriers to data collection in neighbourhood youth centres, we contend that systemic process evaluation methods based on descriptive administrative data and agency records facilitate the collection of meaningful data to assist such programs.

METHODS

The research consultants used a utilization-focused evaluation approach described as "inherently participatory and collaborative in actively involving primary

intended users in all aspects of the evaluation" (Patton, 2008, p. 177). In this regard, utilization-focused evaluation, defined as a "process for helping partners select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory and uses for their particular situation," (Patton, 2012, p. 6), provided an important approach to supporting the youth centre's beginning self-evaluation capacity. The participatory evaluation approach utilized in this youth centre focused on program decision making and problem solving. Cousins et al. (2013) identified the participatory evaluation approach as a collaborative relationship "that must be negotiated between evaluators and members of the program community … if collaborative inquiry in evaluation is to be meaningful, productive, and healthy" (p. 15). Decisions regarding the evaluation were made by the collaborative evaluation team, including staff and board members, who decided what questions they wanted to ask, how data would be collected, who would be responsible for monitoring data-collection activities, who would be responsible for analyzing data, how data would be analyzed, and how the results would be disseminated (Grinnell et al., 2012). This ongoing capacity-building exercise to encourage self-evaluation reflects one of the principles of empowerment evaluation that Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) define as "the ability to enhance the stakeholder's capacity to conduct evaluation and to improve program planning and implementation" (p. 35). Furthermore, this evaluation design resonates with the transformative model of research that "supports the use of a cyclical model in which community members are brought into the research process from the beginning and throughout the process in a variety of different roles" (Mertens, 2010, p. 472).

The original evaluation design contained both process and outcome measurement strategies with a number of different methods and stages of data collection, including process elements such as a literature review of youth-centre programming, program description charts developed for each of the youth-centre programs, and analysis of the attendance and activity logs. Program descriptions were developed in collaboration with the youth centre for each program. Participants in the girls' group who had signed consent forms from their parents completed a pre-test and post-test using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989), and the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1988), as well as a qualitative participant-feedback sheet.

While the larger evaluation study addressed both quantitative and qualitative dimensions within a process and outcome design, we extracted the process data that were collected through attendance and activity logs and the feedback sheets. Process and outcome evaluations serve fundamentally different purposes and have distinct functions. Specifically, process evaluation methods are targeted to improving services (Chen, 2015, p. 10). In our evaluation, an examination of process data was integral to making informed decisions about the programs and also for the development of a self-evaluation capacity for the youth centre (Grinnell et al., 2012). The larger evaluation report was completed despite the smaller number of participants who had parental consent forms, and it was used by the executive director and the board to obtain funding from United Way and from the

provincial Ministry of Child and Family services. As Chen (2015) noted, an outcome evaluation is warranted "when stakeholders need credible evidence of their program's effectiveness" (p. 208), as was the case here. Given the number of youth participating at the centre but not participating in the structured programming, we felt it was necessary to highlight the ongoing challenges of evaluating drop-in programs, which, while they may be well attended, are not able to be evaluated on a pre-test, post-test basis and consequently do not reflect the reality of the centre's importance in the local community.

THE CASE ILLUSTRATION

As previously mentioned, the youth centre profiled here offers a combination of structured and drop-in programs that support positive growth and development for youth between the ages of 12 and 19 years. Programs offered by the centre include peer-group meetings to focus on life issues such as relationships, health, and sexuality; a computer resource lab for school work, research, studying, and internet access; crisis intervention and external referrals by staff; group recreation events such as basketball, volleyball, and floor hockey; game rooms including pool tables, ping pong, air hockey, and foosball; weekly youth-group meetings; and boys' and girls' groups. For the past 20 years, approximately 400 local children and youth have participated in these programs on a monthly basis.

We present process evaluation data from three critical components, which emphasize the role that these data play in furthering knowledge about such programs. All data analyzed for the process evaluation were anonymous secondary data, confidentially collected by the agency. In the first phase of the evaluation process, we analyzed one year's worth of aggregated data on attendance and participation in activities offered. In the second phase, we analyzed attendance and activity-level data for one additional year. At the same time, we included a qualitative youth-feedback data sheet that gathered information on likes and dislikes about the centre, as well as the building, staff, and youth willingness to recommend the centre to their friends. There was no direct contact between the researchers and the human subjects, and all data were collected voluntarily on site.

Critical component #1: Overall attendance data

Our initial process evaluation step began with an assessment of overall attendance. These data had been collected by the youth centre but never analyzed or presented in aggregate form. Graphic representation of these data was important to the agency to show the large numbers of youth who attended, and it was part of the agreement when designing the evaluation strategy. Grinnell et al. (2012) support this approach to reporting such data, noting that "using pie charts, bar graphs and other visual representations helps to communicate data to all audiences" (p. 41). These attendance data were organized into simple charts and graphs and presented to the local United Way by the executive director and board members. An example of this is shown in Figure 1 in the Appendix. These visual data helped

to facilitate an understanding of just how many youths were involved in programming and how important is was for funding to be provided. Further, this visual presentation allowed the youth centre to communicate clearly and resulted in the youth centre receiving United Way funding for the first time in its 20-year history.

These data were presented in the most useful and easy-to-access way for program managers, as they could readily assess changes in attendance over time and explore variations from both internal and external perspectives. Internally, these data provide a trigger for completing a more detailed analysis about activities being offered, quality of relationships with staff, and levels of engagement demonstrated by participants toward the centre overall. Externally, the emergence of other agencies with similar programming, increasing family or employment pressures, or reputational concerns within the community may be negatively influencing attendance. Taken together, attendance data demonstrate the value of process evaluation for tracking and ensuring ongoing service delivery.

The aggregated attendance data revealed that the youth centre provided services to a predominantly male population throughout the year, which yielded valuable information for future planning. Conversely, recognizing the lack of participation by female youth in the centre resulted in implementing a program that was more oriented to female youth. These attendance data also showed that the centre was very busy during the March Break, which suggests its particular importance as a local service provider when classes aren't in session.

Critical component #2: Activity attendance data

As sub-group analyses of the overall attendance data, activity-level attendance data added insights into the popularity of the centre's specific drop-in activities. Monitoring activities is essential for program managers, as this offered a strategic platform to address service quality, or interest in particular activities and the use of resources. When activities are poorly attended, staffing and financial resources could be redistributed toward more popular, engaging, or meaningful activities. When activity data were combined with supplementary qualitative data from service participants (described below), program managers were ideally positioned to learn from attendees exactly what they wanted their neighbourhood youth centre to provide. It is important to note that while these qualitative feedback data are described separately as a critical component, they were analyzed together and provided to agency leadership in the form of a final report to inform future planning.

Critical component #3: Youth-feedback qualitative data

During the final third phase of the process evaluation, a qualitative youth-feedback form was developed by the evaluation team, and participants voluntarily and anonymously completed it while attending programs. Youth were asked about their primary reasons for attending the youth centre, aspects of the centre they would like to change, perceptions of the physical structure and staff, and their likelihood to recommend the centre to peers. The following suggestions were received verbatim: offer more outdoor equipment, host more barbeques, buy new

computers, build a hockey rink, larger facility, larger gym, and limit the number of people in the gym at one time.

Content analysis of the data was undertaken and revealed two issues that were readily apparent from the data. First, one suggested response—"impose age limits"—received substantially more endorsements than the other items. Second, the fact that "nothing needed to change" was an equally popular response was encouraging as it demonstrated the success of the youth centre's operations. Nevertheless, further exploration was needed to determine why these youth wanted an age limit imposed at the centre, as this information was not ascertained from the activity log alone. Since a process evaluation is useful in monitoring what works and what does not work, we carefully analyzed the youth-feedback form and found valuable information to inform ongoing decision making on this drop-in program component. More specifically, it became apparent from the analysis that the participation of older youth in the basketball drop-in program was not working as envisioned.

In its original conception, older youth were asked to mentor younger youth when they played basketball together. In the words of the younger youth, "these men took over the court" and left no room or time for participation of younger youth. In this example, we noted the true value of using process evaluation to effectively improve service delivery. Qualitative data from the feedback forms were analyzed halfway through the evaluation and shared with the youth centre executive director. This situation was soon resolved when the executive director developed a new training and orientation program for older youth so that they could understand more clearly what their mentor role was supposed to be and how it should be carried out. Interestingly, all of the older youth mentors were graduates of the youth-centre programs themselves and had been recruited for the mentor program because of their interest and support of the programs. By swiftly intervening in this way, program implementation was enhanced to reflect what had been its original intention—to use a mentor/youth model through basketball as a way of increasing not only athletic skills but interactional relationship skills as well. This scenario is also an example of how a developmental evaluation approach could be used within an ongoing or already established program, in terms of using data for real-time intervention.

DISCUSSION

Despite some inherent challenges, there are several reasons that it is important to document and evaluate what is happening in youth drop-in programs. First, it is good business sense to monitor program usage. Second, it puts the youth centre on a secure footing to have current statistics that reflect youth attendance and participation in activities. Third, gathering qualitative feedback from youth engaged in drop-in programming allows for responsive changes in more timely programming that reflects youth perspectives on what is important to them. Perhaps the most obvious lesson learned here was the knowledge that such drop-in centres are

a refuge and safe haven for many youths in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Futch Ehrlich et al., 2017). Furthermore, being receptive to the youths' feedback as users of the drop-in service increased the likelihood that resources will be effectively coordinated to meet identified community needs (HeartWood, 2013). In short, their voices were heard and responded to.

Such evaluation data can also be used for measuring repeated concerns over time and can provide direction to agency administrators about impending resource, as well as programming, needs. For example, the prospect of replacing the gym floor at this centre first came to light through this qualitative feedback form, and, given the importance of basketball and gym sports to these youth, the agency prioritized fundraising for its replacement. The floor was ultimately replaced a year later, ensuring an appealing and welcoming environment for the youth who participate in sports activities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, we identified a drop-in youth centre in a disadvantaged community with a strong track record of providing services designed to improve the lives of its participants through both structured and drop-in programming ("Safe Haven," 2017). We highlighted the use of a temporal systematized process evaluation and its value to the youth drop-in components of the centre. Using this case illustration, we revealed three critical components demonstrating the utility of this process evaluation. We demonstrated the inherent difficulties for drop-in youth centres to show their effectiveness in an evidence-based world that is focused primarily on outcome data. As shown, outcome evaluation cannot fully demonstrate the true success of a program where the youth participants are sporadic attenders, due to the pressures they experience living in disadvantaged communities.

Many lessons were learned in this process evaluation. One of the most telling was the importance of collecting participatory feedback as a conduit for ensuring effective program implementation. In the vignette presented, the primary lesson tabled was that sometimes program implementation does not come even remotely close to the planned intervention. Without the process evaluation, the youth centre may have seen a decrease in attendance with no recourse to understand what was truly going on. Therefore, gathering supplementary qualitative data from the youth and incorporating their responses into program changes in a timely manner influenced their level of engagement and participation, as well as the overall effectiveness of the youth drop-in program. Further, while the centre may diligently record attendance and participation/activity data that demonstrates the status of youth engagement, even with the graphic representation of these data, all program managers would know is that they stopped coming, not why. In addition, one of the limitations of this evaluation was that data were received only from attendees of the youth centre. Expanding data collection efforts to include those youth who were eligible to attend but never chose to would have provided additional information about what the centre could do to attract this cohort of youth.

Process evaluations that utilize qualitative feedback offer program managers additional valuable information about service delivery that cannot be captured as effectively in any other way. Such information is important and offers an immediate and timely look into what is really going on in an agency. For instance, would the basketball program have failed without the feedback from younger youth? We suggest that without attending to the miscalculated implementation of the basketball mentor/youth relationship, we would have seen a wholesale withdrawal of younger youth, who perceived they had no power to change any of these dynamics. Once their feedback had been listened to, a mid-course correction avoided a withdrawal that would have in fact deprived a whole cohort of younger youth of a healthy and enjoyable drop-in youth program in the safety of their own neighbourhood.

The fundamental purpose of any type of program evaluation is to improve the services that providers offer to program participants or service recipients. Recognizing that there are many challenges to bridging research and practice, well-designed process evaluations allow service providers to explore barriers to implementation and establish necessary changes to programs in real-time through feedback provided to those who are in a decision-making role (Posavac, 2016; Schoster, Altpeter, Meier, & Callahan, 2012). We have argued here for process evaluation, as it not only offered attendance and participation data for this drop-in program but also allowed us to gather qualitative feedback from attending youth. We hope that this practice note and the case illustration here have highlighted how useful process-evaluation data collection can be to the successful engagement and participation of local youth who seek a positive experience and a learning opportunity through participation in drop-in programs at the neighbourhood youth centre.

REFERENCES

Beets, M. W., Shah, R., Weaver, R. G., Huberty, J., Beighle, A., & Moore, J. B. (2015). Physical activity in after school programs: Comparison with physical activity policies. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, *12*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2013-0135. Medline:24509828

Chen, H. T. (2015). *Practical program evaluation: Theory-driven evaluation and the integrated evaluation perspective*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Coates, D., & Howe, D. (2014). The importance and benefits of youth participation in mental health settings from the perspective of the headspace Gosford Youth Alliance in Australia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *46*, 294–299. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.09.012

Cousins, J. B., Whitmore, E., & Shulha, L. (2013). Arguments for a common set of principles for collaborative inquiry in evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *34*(1), 7–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214012464037

D'Amico, E. J., Green, H. D., Jr., Miles, J. N. V., Zhou, A. J., Tucker, J. S., & Shih, R. A. (2012). Voluntary after-school alcohol and drug programs for middle school youth: If

you build it *right*, they will come. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *22*(3), 571–582. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00782.x. Medline:23264722

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., & Pachan, M. (2010). A Meta-analysis of after-school program to promote personal and social skills in Children and Adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *45*(3–4), 294–309. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6. Medline:20300825

Fetterman, D., & Wandersman, A. (2005). *Empowerment evaluation principles in practice*. New York, NY: Guildford Press.

Fetterman, D., & Wandersman, A. (2007). Empowerment evaluation: Yesterday, today and tomorrow. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *28*(2), 179–198. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214007301350

Futch Ehrlich, V. A., Bright, J., DeBate, R., Freeman, C., Harris, P. C., Hirsch, B. J., … & Somerville, K. (2017). Universal challenges, specific contexts: Insights from looking within and across different after-school settings. In N. L. Deutsch (Ed.), *After-school programs to promote positive youth development* (pp. 21–36). Springer Briefs in Psychology. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59141-4_2

Grinnell, R. M., Jr., Gabor, P., & Unrau, Y. (2012). *Program evaluation for social workers: Foundations of evidence-based programs* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Harter, S. (1988). *Self-perception profile for adolescents*. Denver, CO: University of Denver.

HeartWood. (2013, July). *What makes for a successful youth centre*? Halifax, NS: Author. Retrieved from http://heartwood.ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/YGP.pdf

Holosko, M. J., & Thyer, B. A. (2011). *A pocket glossary for commonly used research terms*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Lapalme, J., Bisset, S., & Potvin, L. (2014). Role of context in evaluating neighbourhood interventions promoting positive youth development: A narrative systematic review. *International Journal of Public Health*, *59*(1), 31–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-013-0449-2 . Medline:23430065

Mathews, C., Eggers, S. M., de Vries, P. J., Mason-Jones, A. J., Townsend, L., Aarø, L. E., & De Vries, H. (2015). Reaching the hard to reach: Longitudinal investigation of adolescents' attendance at an after-school sexual and reproductive health programme in Western Cape, South Africa. *BMC Public Health*, *15*(608). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-1963-3. Medline:26141155

Mekinda, M. A., & Hirsch, B. J. (2014). After-school programs. In D. Dubois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd ed., pp. 221–232). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). Transformative mixed methods research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *16*(6), 469–474. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364612

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Patton, M. Q. (2012). *Essentials of utilization focused evaluation*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Posavac, E. J. (2016). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rosenberg, M. (1989). Rosenberg self-esteem scale. In K. Corcoran & J. Fisher (Eds.), *Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook* (pp. 408–409). New York, NY: The Free Press.

"Safe Haven": Sandwich Teen Action Group helps to keep kids off the street for 26 years. (2017, October 5). Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/safe-haven-sandwich-teen-action-group-helps-to-keep-kids-off-the-street-for-26-years-1.4331196

Schoster, B., Altpeter, M., Meier, A., & Callahan, L. F. (2012). Methodological tips for overcoming formative evaluation challenges: The case of the Arthritis Foundation Walk with Ease program. *Health Promotion Practice*, *13*(2), 198–203. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839910384060. Medline:21677115

Smith, M. J. (2010). *Handbook of program evaluation for social work and health professionals*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Taheri, S. A., & Welsh, B. C. (2016). After-school programs for delinquency prevention: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *14*(3), 272–290. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204014567542
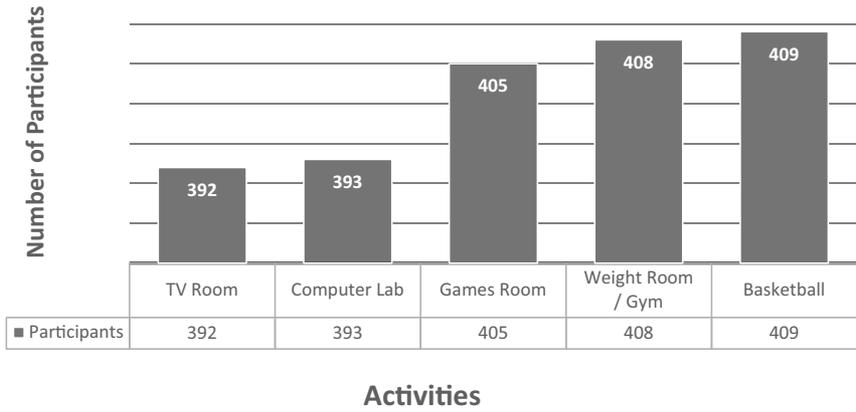
AUTHOR INFORMATION

Derek Chechak is an evaluator with the Provincial System Support Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. His background includes working with adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses in acute care, outpatient, and forensic mental health care settings. He has served in various evaluation capacities through university-community partnerships, and as a research associate for principal investigators in the non-profit sector.

Judith M. Dunlop is Professor Emerita in the School of Social Work, King's University College at Western University in London, Ontario. She has taught community organization and development at both undergraduate and graduate levels across Canada and the United States. She has also worked as a community planner and research consultant on projects in public health, child welfare, neighbourhood regeneration, and service user/service provider planning groups.

Michael J. Holosko is a research consultant, now retired from his position as the Pauline M. Berger Professor of Family and Child Welfare at the University of Georgia, School of Social Work. He has taught in schools of social work, nursing, public administration, and applied social science in Canada, the United States, Hong Kong, Sweden, Australia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. He also works as a consultant to a variety of health and human-service organizations and industries in the areas of program evaluation, organizational development, leadership, visioning, and organizational alignment.

APPENDIX

Activities	TV Room	Computer Lab	Games Room	Weight Room / Gym	Basketball
▪ Participants	392	393	405	408	409

Figure A1. Activity/attendance data for one month ($N = 1{,}230$)