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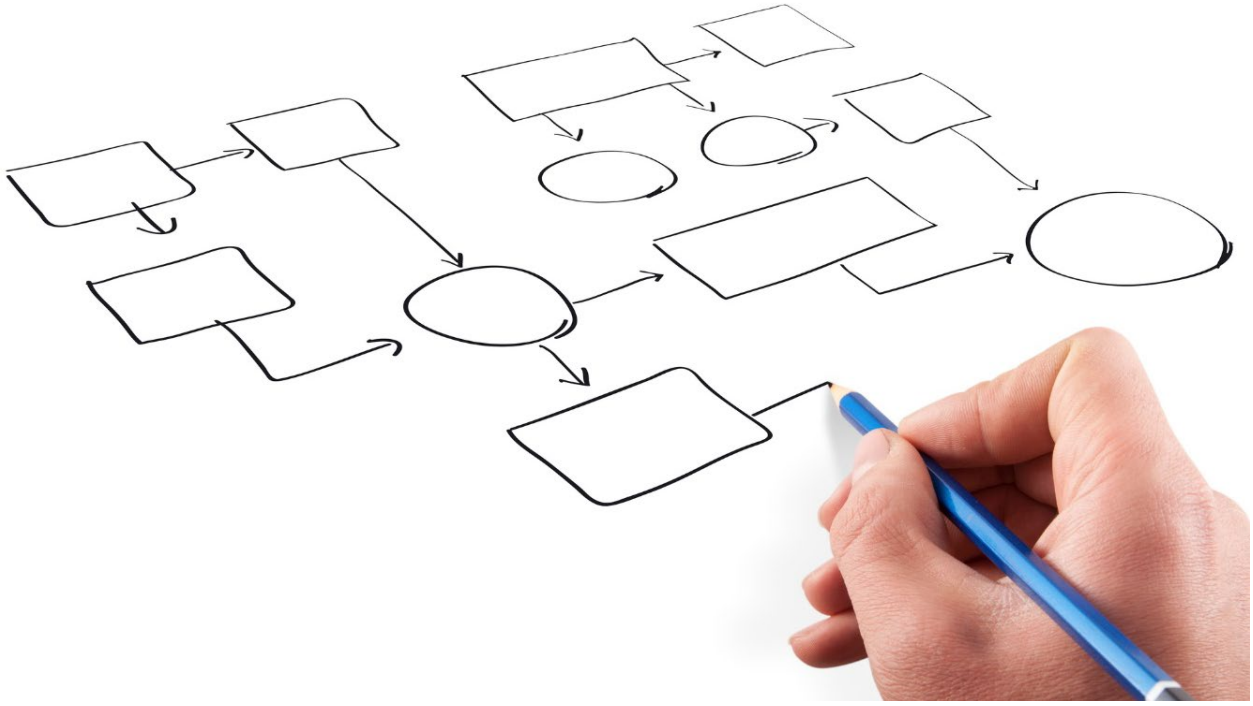
FOCUS ON

Logic Models: A Planning and Evaluation Tool



1st Revision: April 2025

Introduction

A logic model is a visual illustration of a program's resources, activities and expected outcomes.[1,2] It is a tool used to simplify complex relationships between various components and can be used during program planning, implementation and evaluation.[3,4] As a visual tool, a logic model can also help to create a common understanding between the various organizations, partners and community members involved in the program.[5] Similar to the way a road map outlines the route we will travel, a logic model shows how each activity will lead to our ultimate destination: the desired change.[3]

While there are many variations of and formats for logic models, there are common components across most logic models. This document provides an overview of these common components, describes how logic models can be used in program planning and evaluation, and provides examples of logic models.

A logic model can describe an activity, program, initiative, multi-component strategy, or policy;[1,6] we will use the term "program" to refer to all of these throughout this document.

Methods

This Focus On was developed from content in existing PHO knowledge products, supplemented by a grey literature search conducted through the Google search engine as well as input from PHO staff.

Components of Logic Models

Common components that most logic models share include a goal, inputs, activities, audience, outputs, and outcomes.[1-3,5,6,7,8] Some logic models also include strategies, describe the situation or context the program is occurring in, assumptions about the program, and external factors that may impact the program.[8] We have described each of these components below.

- **Goal**: A statement that reflects the broadest level of results to be achieved by the program.[9] The goal clarifies what is important about the program and includes the program's intended audience.[11] Generally, goals use action words such as reduce, eliminate, improve, or increase.[11]
- **Inputs**: The resources needed for program activities.[12] These can include staff and partner time, funding, materials and equipment, data and surveillance, and evidence.[12]
- **Activities**: The proposed events or actions that will take place as part of the program in order to achieve the desired outcomes.[12]
- **Audience**: The specific group that the program intends to reach.[4]
- **Primary Audience**: the main population which the program intends to reach.[4]
- **Secondary Audience**: groups who are impacted or influenced by a program but are not the direct recipients of the program.[4]
- **Outputs**: The direct products or results of the program's activities.[2] Outputs quantify activities by providing numeric values or percentages.[4]
- **Outcomes**: A measurable positive or negative change to the audience of the program based on achieving the program's goal.[2] Outcomes can be short-term, intermediate, or long-term.[12]
- **Situation**: The context that led to the creation of the program.[13]
- **Assumptions**: Underlying theories and beliefs about the program, including how we think the program will work. Our assumptions can influence the decisions we make and the development of the program.[8]
- **External Factors**: Factors that impact the program but are beyond the control of program planners and overseers. Factors may be positive or negative and are likely to influence program success.[8]
- **Strategies**: A broad approach or plan to facilitate change.[8]

Using Logic Models as Tools

As a tool, a logic model can serve multiple purposes throughout the lifecycle of a program, from the planning stage to evaluation and all steps in-between.

In the planning phase of a program, a logic model can serve as a planning tool by shaping program strategies, clarifying and setting priorities, and illustrating program approaches to stakeholders. It can help to identify gaps in program logic while also being used to negotiate roles and responsibilities of partners and staff. In addition, logic models can be used as a communication tool to gather support or funding for an initiative.[1,3,6] During implementation of an initiative, a logic model can help with program management by maintaining accountability to the activities or areas identified in the logic model.[1] It can also support program monitoring ensuring the program stays on track or identify areas in need of adjustment.[1] The logic model provides guidance on possible evaluation questions and what measures or indicators to use to identify program success. It also aids in identifying how program components should affect each other and facilitates measuring the degree to which an intervention is delivered as intended.[1-3]

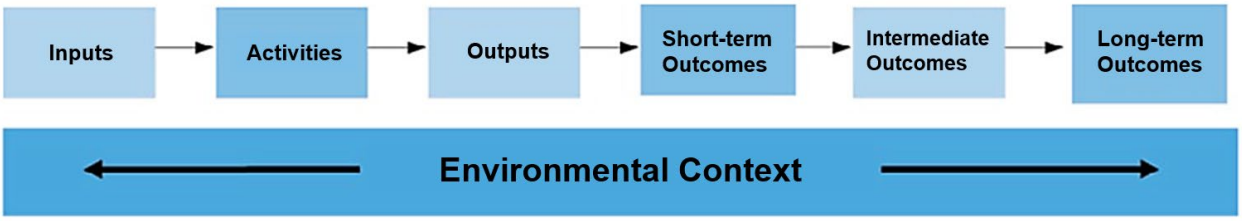
Logic models should be responsive to program changes. Significant changes that are made to a program which influence model components, such as changes in strategy, should be reflected in an updated logic model.[3] Periodic updates and revisions not only keep logic models current, but also helps staff and stakeholders stay focused on program outcomes.[3]

Examples of Logic Models

Logic models can be flexible in design: they can be simple or complex, read from top to bottom, bottom to top, or left to right. They can be shown in a linear fashion for simplicity, logical flow, and ease of understanding;[3,5] however, they can be presented in a cyclical model or be as visually engaging as needed. The design of a logic model is dependent on the type of information that is being presented and the needs of program staff, funders, and community members. The aim is not a one-size-fits-all approach, rather the components help to streamline and guide the development of the model and help to operationalize program interventions. Below are three different logic models which illustrate possible formats.

Figure 1: Logic Model Template

This logic model template demonstrates the relationships between the resources available (inputs), what the program intends to do (activities), and what you hope to achieve (outcomes),[2] and includes the environmental context in which the program operates. This context might include challenges, opportunities, and underlying assumptions.[2]



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/tobacco-control/pdfs/developing_eval_plan.pdf

Table 1: preVenture® Program Logic Model

This logic model describes a prevention program for youth aged 12 to 18 that promotes mental health and reduces the risk of substance use.[15] It lists components with implementation and operational details to give a fuller sense of the program.

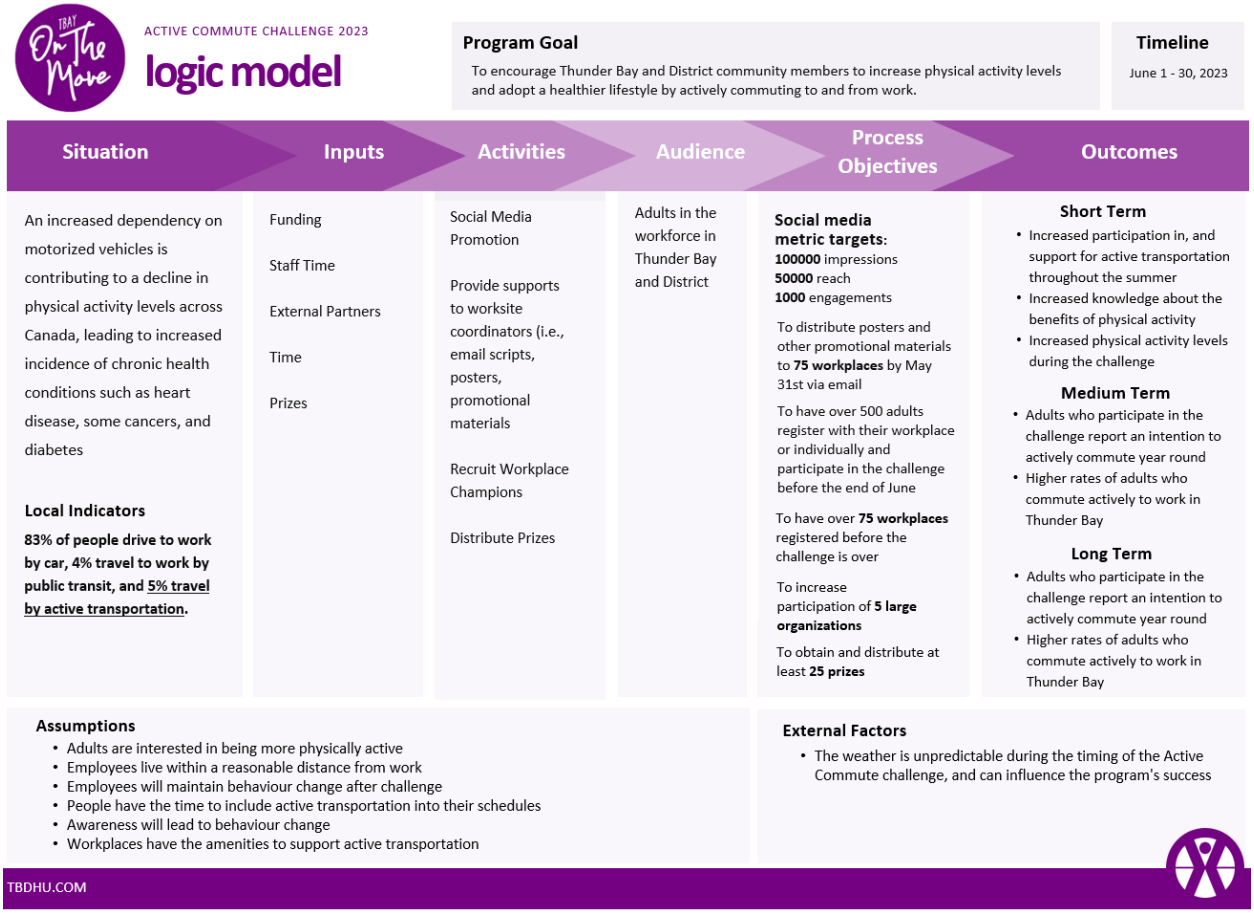
Components	Program Implementation and Operational Details
Target Group(s)	Students School Boards and School Staff Community Partners (Clinicians that are trained Facilitators)
Goals	1. To reduce the burden of chronic diseases of public health importance and improve well-being. 2. To achieve optimal health of school-aged children and youth through partnership and collaboration with school boards and schools. 3. The goal of the substance use prevention program is to reduce the burden of adverse health outcomes and injuries related to substance use by decreasing problematic use of alcohol in the general population. 4. To reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use.

Components	Program Implementation and Operational Details
Objectives	• To offer substance use prevention activities for youth in 100% of our communities (PV, OSAID, Planet Youth, Project Alert) • To conduct PV® workshops with KPDSB and RRDSB • To run PV® in 100% of grade 7 or 8 classrooms in Kenora and Rainy River districts
Activities / Services Strategies	**Awareness and Education:** • Promote and encourage uptake of PV through meetings, school communication products, website, social media **Skill building/personal skills:** • Ensure facilitators know about re-certification education requirements and complete them • Coordinate and facilitate debrief sessions with external partners and facilitators • Coordinate and facilitate internal education and sharing sessions to increase confidence and collective learning • Document, summarize and share facilitator feedback **Supportive environments:** • Maintain communication and connect all trained facilitators, maintain list of current certified facilitators • Distribute program supplies, track inventory of purchased and pre-purchased items • Continue to explore, discuss and support best implementation models for each context – i.e., targeted vs universal • Access and share implementation data from PV Montreal • Support workshop implementation by: o facilitating and/or co-facilitating sessions o helping secure spaces in schools and/or community locations o helping to purchase refreshments o providing schools with manuals and incentives o reminding partners to implement post workshop survey **Community Action/Collaboration/Partnerships** • Liaise with PV® Montreal – organize and support new facilitator training and annual certification process • Liaise with School Boards currently implementing PV with NWHU support (KPDSB, RRDSB) • Engage and connect interested First Nation communities and Indigenous agencies with PV contacts, resources • Coordinate and support local implementation planning with school mental health leads and NWHU staff • Maintain relationships and information sharing with provincial project partners (KCDSB, TNCDSB and School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) and Youth Wellness Hub Ontario (YWHO)) **Healthy Public Policy** • Encouraging use of post workshop survey and one year follow up survey (PASS system) o Monitor substance indicators from compass data in communities where PV has been implemented, use data to inform school board policies and procedures
Indicators (Measures)	• At least 50% of KPDSB grade 8 students will complete PV® workshops • At least 90% of RRDSB grade 7/8 students will complete PV® workshops • At least 30% of students report liking 'learning' during workshops • At least 20% of students report liking 'ambiance' during workshops

Source: Used with permission from Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU), preVenture® program logic model.

Figure 2: TBAY On the Move Logic Model

This logic model includes a description of the situation, the assumptions underlying the program, and external factors which may (or may not) impact the program.[16] It emphasizes the evaluation components of the program in terms of objectives and outcomes.



Source: Adapted with permission from Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU), TBAY on the move: active commute challenge logic model.

Conclusion

In the field of public health and health promotion, logic models continue to be viewed as a valuable tool. Logic models illustrate the relationship between program inputs, activities and desired outcomes. Logic models are dynamic and responsive to the particular needs of programs and initiatives. As planning and evaluation tools, logic models offer a clear and continuous method for establishing the flow of a program and identifying progression towards program goals.

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Summary of Revisions

Changes in this revision are summarized in the table below.

Date of Implementation	Description of Major Changes	Page
January 21, 2025	Updated Table 1 with recent example of logic model	3, 4
January 21, 2025	Updated Figure 1 and 2 with recent examples of logic models	3, 5
January 21, 2025	Copy editing, hyperlinks were verified and updated	Throughout

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