

# MASTERCLASS SERIES

## *in Systems Thinking*



### Equitable Systems Change Learning and Evaluation Methods to Support ECD Systems Improvement, Reform, and Transformation (Session 7)

#### SPEAKERS

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**HARVARD T.H. CHAN**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# Agenda

- 01 Workshop Overview & Introductions
- 02 Framing the Problem
- 03 Introduction to SCIE, CREE, Systems Leadership, and Inclusive & Equitable Research
- 04 Overview of the Equitable Systems Evaluation and Learning Framework
- 05 Reflection and Discussion



## Session Learning Objectives

1. **Identify ESC evaluation processes to**
  - a. Build the collective capacity of an ECD evaluation leadership team
  - b. Understand root causes of ECD system inequities
  - c. Clarify and develop equitable ECD systems change strategies
  - d. Co-design a culturally responsive, adaptive learning and evaluation strategy
  - e. Gather diverse information sources
  - f. Interpret and report transparent findings
  - g. Use the framework to support ECD systems change goals
2. **Apply and adapt these ESC methods for different ECD system contexts, system change strategies, diverse communities, and reform goals.**

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# Introductions



**Margaret (Meg)  
Hargreaves, PhD**

**Senior Fellow**  
Healthcare Evaluation

Equity-focused systems change evaluator; wife, mother; enjoy travel, swimming in freshwater lakes, and singing in choirs.



**Chandria Jones, PhD,  
MPH**

**Principal Research Scientist**  
Public Health

Health Equity Researcher, CREE Evaluator, Dog Mom, Disney Adult, Sci-fi Nerd committed to elevating community voice.



**Brandon Coffee-  
Borden, MPP**

**Senior Research Scientist**  
Healthcare Evaluation

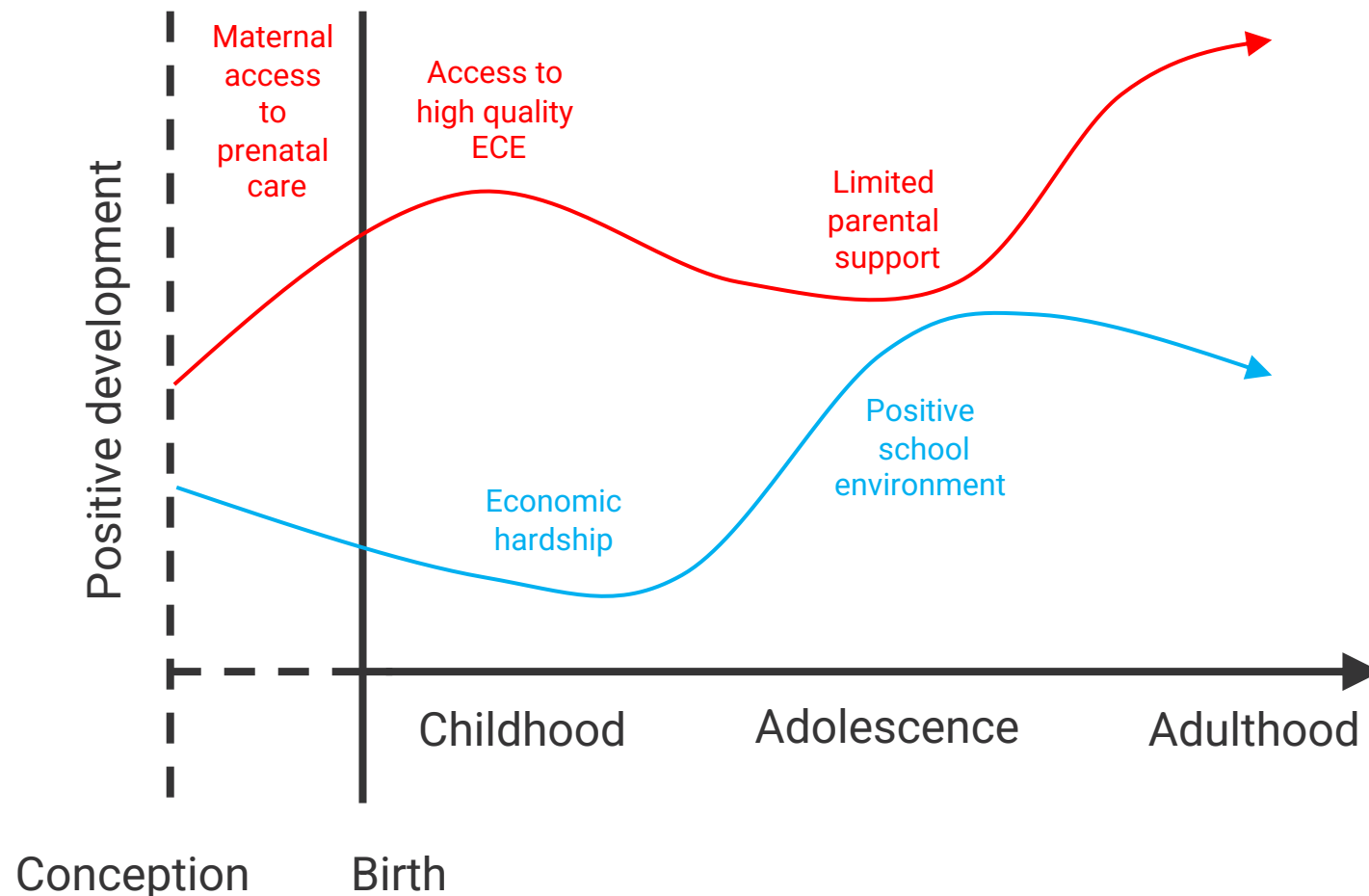
Evaluator and capacity builder; father of two amazing daughters; husband, son, brother; lover of books, television, and film; and amateur chef.

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# Framing the Problem

**What brings us here?**

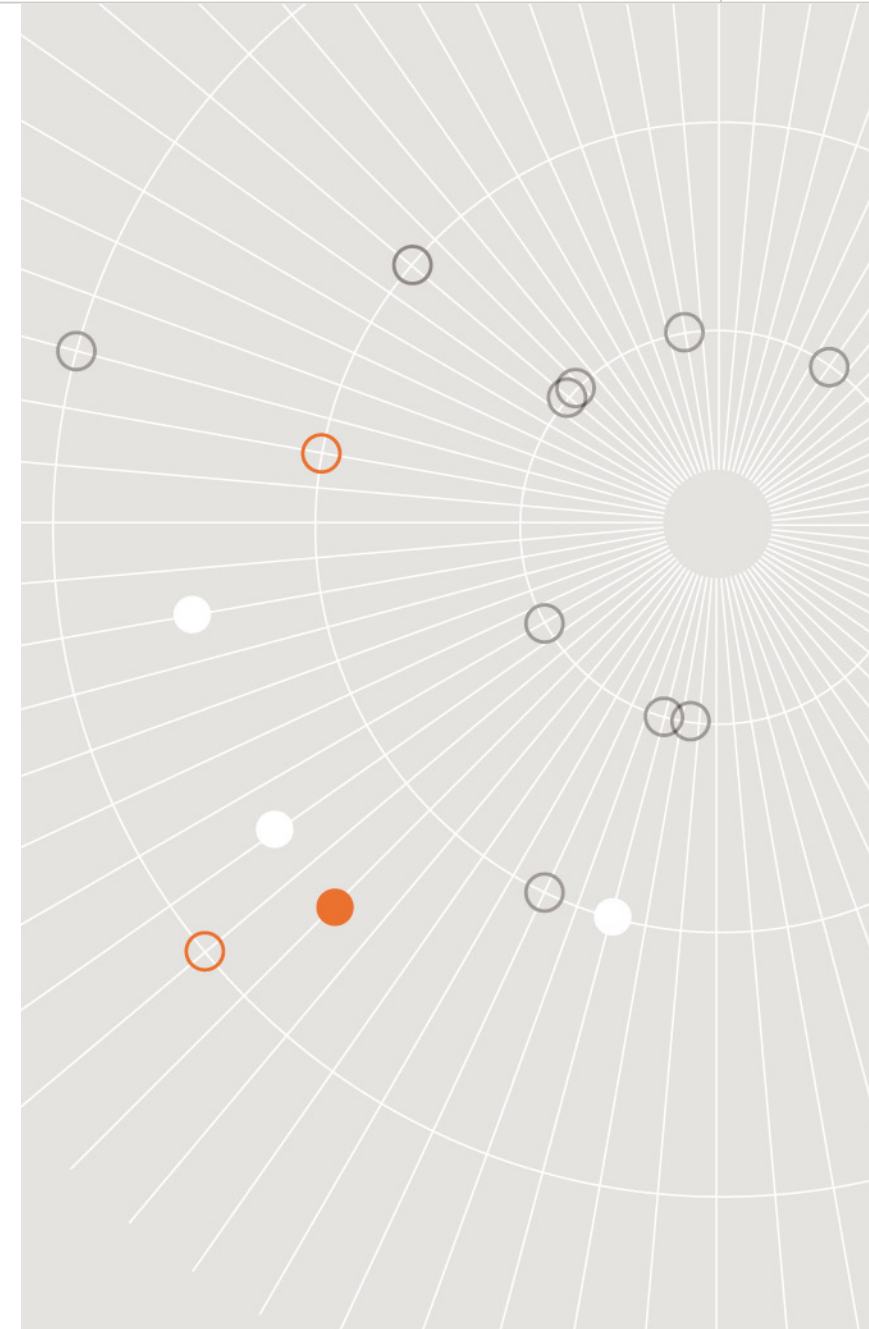
Recent research has furthered our understanding of the complex interaction between us and our environment.



- Close and ongoing interaction between our brains, bodies and surroundings
- Closely related to the concept of social determinants of health
- Life course perspective notes how early experiences place us on a future trajectory

Cultivating healthy and equitable early childhood environments requires a systems approach.

- Recognizing inequities across multiple domains that impact cognitive, social, and emotional development
- Grappling with multi-level, multifaceted problems that foster inequitable outcomes
- Changing structures, policies, practices, and norms and working with multiple organizations and institutions
- Building leadership capacity to understand and work on equitable systems change



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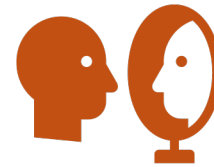
# Equity Science™ & Inclusive & Equitable Research Framework™

**Where do we begin?**

# Equity Science™

The study and practice of efforts to advance equity across social and behavioral science (and in the real world).

## Key Principles of Inclusive & Equitable (I&E) Research



Positionality &  
Self Reflection



Culture  
& Community  
Engagement



Democratization



Systems Focus



## Principle 4: Systems Focus

- Examine systems and structural changes needed (versus individual behaviors)
- Seek to understand how systems dictate and reinforce practices, policy, program and behaviors that portray and affect certain groups
- Gather data to understand how inequities are embedded in structures (e.g., policy) and systems of domination to ultimately develop ways to improve those systems

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# Equitable Systems Evaluation and Learning Framework (ESELF)

**How can we apply and iterate on *Principle 4 – Systems Focus* to evaluation?**

# Equitable Systems Evaluation and Learning Framework

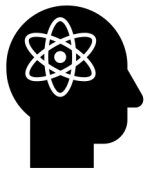


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# Prepare for the Evaluation

A successful evaluation requires a team with the needed knowledge and background

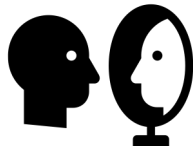
## Competencies



**Systems  
thinking /  
SCIE**



**CREE**



**Self-awareness  
& positionality**



**Facilitation &  
group  
process  
management**



**Flexibility &  
malleability**



**Diversity of  
background and  
subject matter  
expertise**

## Forming the Learning/Evaluation Team

- Clarify needed skills, competencies, and backgrounds.
- Determine a project structure and composition
- Complete a recruitment process, if needed.
- Prepare and orient team members to the project.
- Build the capacity of and support team members

Reflective practice supports critical thinking, adaptation, and interrogation of assumptions, including equity considerations.

### Both self-oriented and collaborative



### Tools and Approaches

- Critical System Heuristics (CSH) as reflective practice
- DATA Model of Reflective Practice
- Probing Questions for Evaluators' Reflection on Practice Decisions (Kundin 2010)
- After Action Reviews

Identify and engage those that have an interest, are impacted by, or that have influence.

**Multiple interested party analysis methods exist:**

- a. Salience Model of Stakeholder Classification (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood, 1997; Bradley, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld 1999)
- b. Power and Interest Matrix (Mendelow, 1991)
- c. Power, Interest, and Attitude Matrix (Murray-Webster and Simon, 2006)

**Develop and revisit the interested party analysis and engagement plan to remain adaptive**

- Purpose
- Recruitment
- Phases, levels, methods, and implementation
- Resources
- Feedback and evaluation measures

Please reflect on strategies and approaches you have used to...

- a. Prepare and support the evaluation team
- b. Identify interested parties and develop an engagement plan



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# Assess the Situation

Systems mapping is the visual depiction of a system to facilitate understanding

**The map serves as a comprehensive, rich, and evolving story of the context and key players' efforts to arrive at a better place.**

- Clarify the goal of the systems mapping effort, including its culturally responsive, equity focus
- Determine the degree of participation
- Decide on a mapping approach (causal loop diagrams, rich pictures, fuzzy cognitive mapping, etc.)
- Build your map
- Share the story and refine
- Utilize the map to act



Evaluation teams and leaders must make decisions and act strategically

**Grasping the situation and thinking strategically is often needed for:**

- Defining future strategy or direction
- Making decisions on resource allocation
- Navigating the complex and ever-changing landscape

**Methods and Tools**

- a. SWOT Analysis / TOWS Matrix
- b. PESTLE (STEEP, PEST, STEP, etc.)
- c. Soft Systems Methodology

Please reflect on strategies and approaches you have used to successfully map systems and understand situations and context.



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# Assess the Capacity of the Systems Change Effort

Consider “What is the systems initiative seeking to do?” with a particular focus on equity implications

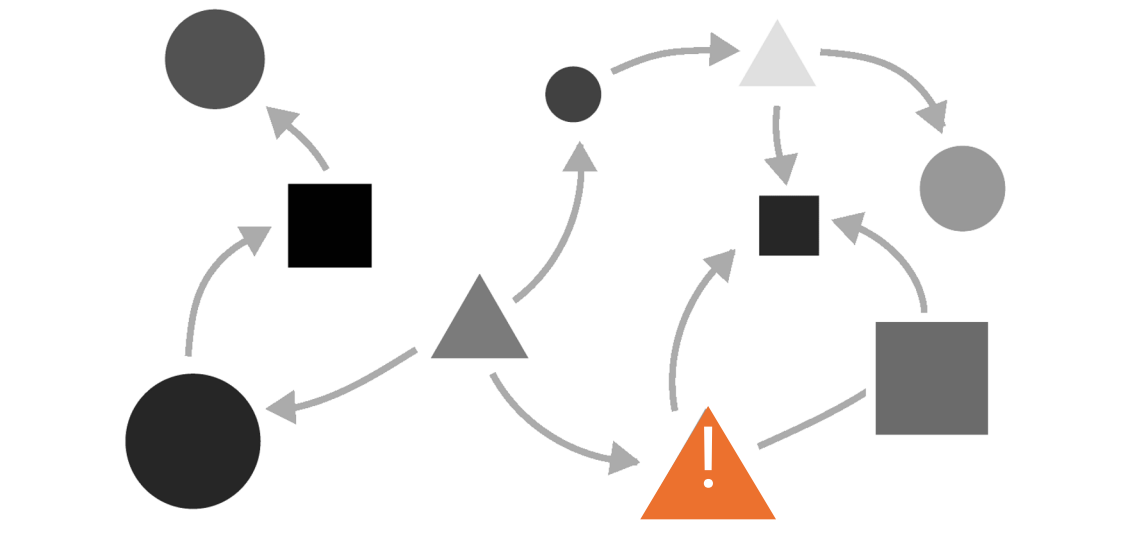
### Scope of change

- Incremental
- Reform
- Transformation

### Leverage points

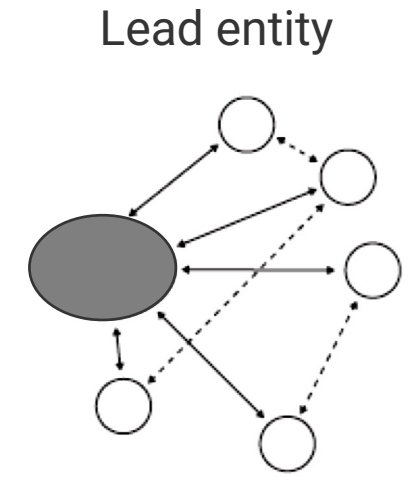
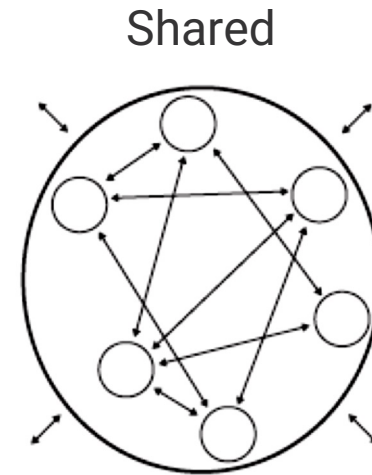
- Places within the system where a small shift in one area can yield significant changes

### Change strategies

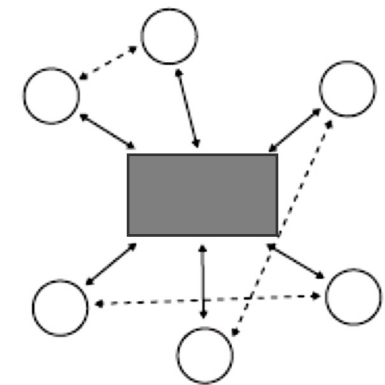


Consider “How is the systems change initiative organized?” and degree of equity in structure and process

- **Systems leadership:** Individuals or institutions that catalyze, enable and support systems-level change by mobilizing diverse actors to work together in new ways to achieve a shared goal.
- **Management / administration:** Coordination of structured tasks, activities, and deliverables to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Governance:** Rules, practices, and processes by which change agents relate to one another to accomplish their shared goals.



Separate administrative entity



Assess the capacity of the systems change effort to achieve its goals and advance equity relative to actual goals, structure, and processes

**Develop a capacity assessment approach:**

- Define the purpose
- Select key indicators and tools and collect data
- Analyze the data
- Reflect on the findings

**Document capacity at multiple levels**

- Community (collective community capacity, collective efficacy, sense of community, etc.)
- Group / network (membership, connectivity, infrastructure, resources, benefits of participation, power, etc.)
- Organization / institution (human, financial, programmatic, etc.)
- Individual (Skills, knowledge, self-efficacy, wellness, cultural competence, etc.)

The Collective Community Capacity Survey (C3) uses 11 subscales grouped into six domains to assess collective capacity for change.

| Domain                                                             | Subscale(s)                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Collaboration to create and practice a shared vision           | (1a) Shared goals and (1b) Cross-sector partnerships.                     |
| (2) Measurement and use of data to guide change efforts            | (2a) Change process and (2b) data use for improvement and accountability. |
| (3) Active engagement in change efforts                            | (3a) Diverse engagement and empowerment.                                  |
| (4) Distributed leadership in equity-focused change efforts        | (4a) Leadership, (4b) communication, and (4c) equity focus.               |
| (5) Effective, innovative change programs, policies, and practices | (5a) Multi-level change strategies.                                       |
| (6) Infrastructure to support, sustain, and spread change          | (6a) Scale of work and (6b) infrastructure.                               |

Please indicate the extent to which each statement describes your community, [COMMUNITY NAME].

[illegible]

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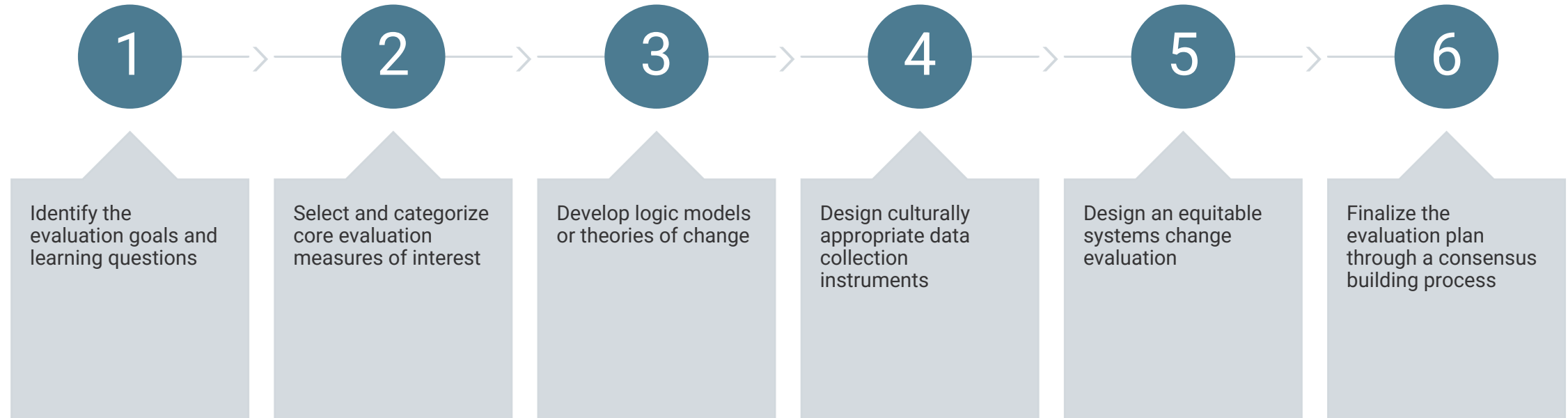
# Co-Design the Evaluation

## Purpose of the Co-Design Process

- Create a mutually beneficial process
- Incorporate the voices of people most impacted by the evaluation
- Establish the questions, learning processes, core concepts, participatory approaches, and methods appropriate to capturing the system dynamics
- Work collaborative with interested parties to understand how the system is constructed



## Activities for Co-Designing an Equitable Systems Change Evaluation



Please reflect on strategies and approaches you have used to successfully co-design evaluations.



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# Adapt the Methods & Metrics

## Adapt the methods and tools

- Include measures of systemic justice, structural equity, institutional diversity, and inclusion, interpersonal equality, personal self-efficacy, and agency.
- Measure shifts in equity-related system conditions, trajectory, leverage points, and level of alignment across sectors and levels.
- Adjust methods and metrics to adapt to changes in the initiative, its theory of change, environment, contextual dynamics, evaluation findings, and lessons learned.

## Sample Equity Indicators

- **Distributive equity:** Fair and just distribution of resources, services, and opportunities across different groups and geographic locations.
- **Equity in quality:** Consistency in the quality of existing services, supports, or opportunities across different groups and geographic locations.
- **Procedural equity:** Consistency in treatment or interactions with people from different groups and geographic locations.
- **Equity in influence:** Individuals from different groups and geographic locations have influence over decisions impacting their lives or communities.
- **Informational equity:** People from different groups and geographic locations have timely access to needed information.

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# Collect the Data

## Systems data collection

- Use mixed methods to capture quantitative and qualitative changes – processes and outcomes.
- Coordinate timing of data collection at different levels across place and time to capture patterns and sustainability of systemic change.
- Use clusters of measures and multidimensional indexes to capture complexity of system conditions, at different scales, disaggregated by location and population.
- Ensure data collectors are proficient not only in technical procedures but also in understanding cultural dynamics.
  - Consider methods like videotaping and subsequent review for enhanced training.
- Ground data collection efforts in shared lived experiences for the most culturally sensitive approach.

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# Analyze the Data

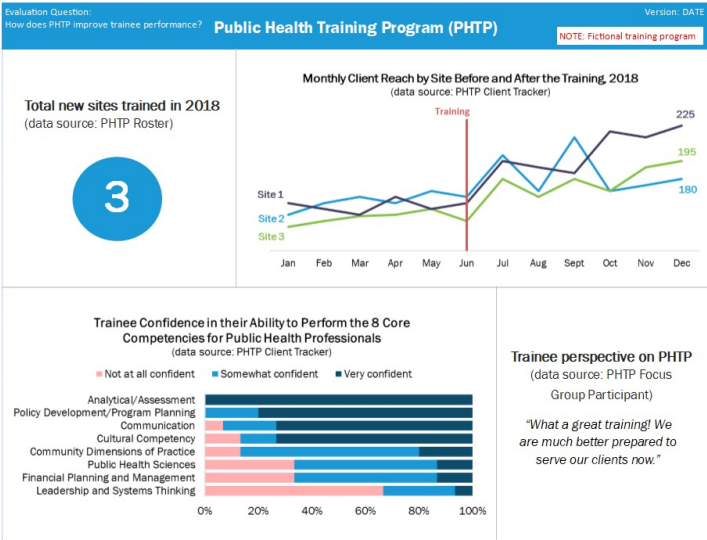
Accurate interpretation relies on a thorough comprehension of systems and cultural context.

- Interested party review enhance the ability to grasp the intricate layers of cultural context, thereby facilitating accurate interpretation.
- Disaggregating data and cross-tabulating allows for an in-depth exploration of diversity within various groups.
- Pay special attention to outliers, particularly those that demonstrate notable success.
- Keep in mind that data interpretation is influenced by those who interpret them, drawing upon shared lived experiences and language.

## Data parties can be used for participatory analysis and sensemaking.

A **data party** is a time-limited event of several hours where diverse audience members come together to collectively analyze data that have been collected.





Data Placemat



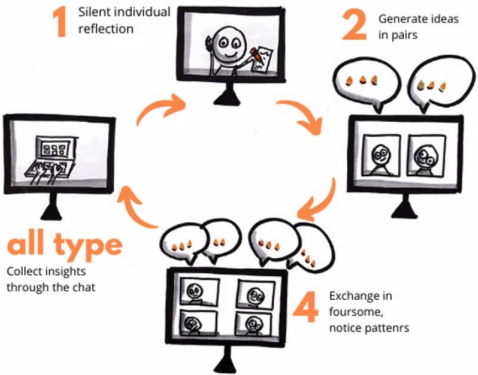
Data Walk



Trend Timeline

1-2-4-All

1-2-4-All



Source: <https://learning-moments>.

# Reflection

**Scenario:** Imagine you are part of a task force responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood education systems change initiative in your community. Your task force comprises representatives from local government, educators, parents, and community organizations. The goal is to ensure that all children, regardless of background, have access to high-quality early childhood education that supports their development and prepares them for success in school and beyond. You have finished collecting your data and want to host a data party for the task force.

- What data would be most important to analyze and co-interpret?
- How might different cultural backgrounds influence the interpretation of the data?
- What equity considerations should be taken into account?



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# Report and Use the Findings

Sharing findings in equitable ways and encouraging use is a fundamental responsibility of the evaluation team.

- Identify the dissemination goals
- Determine available resources
- Clarify potential users
- Meet the audience where they are at
- Address accessibility and barriers
- Create a dissemination workplan
- Balance key takeaways with background to support interpretation
- Encourage use and ongoing dialogue
- Define success carefully



Please reflect on other strategies you have used to report and use findings in equitable ways.



# REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION



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# Thank you.

