Change theory

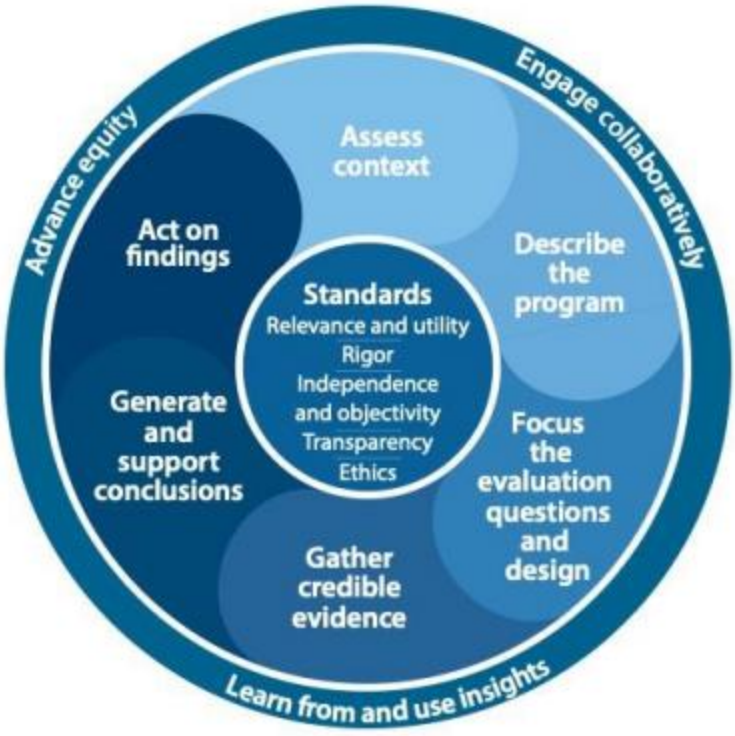
What change/process theory?

The change theory I am using for my DNP project is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Program Evaluation Framework. A program evaluation (PE) systematically gathers data to examine and analyze whether a program is efficient and effective, and outcomes are consistent with anticipated results. The framework includes these six steps to collect and evaluate outcomes: (a) assess the context, (b) describe the program, (c) focus the evaluation question and design, (d) gather credible evidence, (e) generate and support conclusions and (e) act on findings (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024). These steps integrate the following actions including engage collaboratively, advancing equity and learning from insights and evaluation standards including relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency and ethics. Assessing the context includes readiness, interest holders, place and evaluation capacity. The program description might include a logic model. Gathering credible evidence includes data collection and an analysis plan and then interpret the findings and use the evidence to make recommendations.

I chose this change theory/framework because the CDC's program evaluation answers pertinent questions related to my project including program implementation, effectiveness of the program, attribution of outcomes to the project implementation, identifying confounding factors that could contribute to the program outcomes and efficiency of the program. The CDC action guide also includes worksheets and templates to guide the evaluation from assessing the context to acting on findings.

Figure 1

CDC Program Evaluation Framework



Applying change or process theory in practice

I am aligning the steps in the CDC framework with the required sections of my program evaluation project to ensure I am accurately and effectively evaluating the program. I am also using the worksheets so I do not miss important steps in the process.

What nursing/borrowed theory?

The program I am evaluating, and my program evaluation's theoretical framework is underpinned by Patricia Benner's philosophical foundation of knowledge progression, development of skills, and professional growth, introduced in "From Novice to Expert" **(Benner, 1982)**. Benner's novice-to-expert framework develops the expert nurse by clinical competence acquisition and patient care comprehension at different stages of professional growth through academic inquiry and clinical experience. The concepts behind Benner's theory highlights skill attainment and practice and situational understanding of new nurses through different stages up to expert nurses.

Benner aptly links the concept of my program and improved patient outcomes. I am evaluating a program focused on nurse professional development, clinical expertise, knowledge and education attainment, research and evidence based practice and the provision of safe and effective patient care and was partially derived from Benner's novice to expert model, which effectively aligns my evaluation with this theory.

Applying nursing or borrowed theory in practice

I use this theory to guide and organize my data collection into different categories including new graduate nurses, nurses new to the organization and expert nurses to determine a trend in outcomes. Her theory stresses the development of skill performance and not just the passage of time which helps me notice trends in how nurses learn and improve their quality metric outcomes. Additionally, because the program stresses education, research and growth, nurses have the opportunity for participation to various aspects of nursing, thus elevating their practice through skill exposure throughout the duration of the program. My data collection and analysis perfectly aligns with Benner's theory and highlights the professional growth in nurses included in the evaluation. My potential PDSA also focuses on achievements in nursing skill and education.

Synergy of Theory Choices

The CDC program evaluation and Benner's From Novice to Expert both evaluate systems through stages, that is, each next step builds upon the last. While developing my PDSA and recommendation for program change, the CDC framework guides my actions of recommendation for program improvement and Benner's theory shows me what areas to focus on, including educational and professional growth and development and refinement of skills. At all stages of the CDC framework, Benner's theory guides my outlook on how to assess and

described the program, evaluate the design, gather and analyze the data and make recommendation for program change through the lens of nurse professional development and expertise. Benner places guardrails on all steps of the evaluation process so I do not lose sight on the program goals of elevating nursing practice and improving patient outcomes. The CDC framework and Benner's nursing theory align well nursing specific program evaluations, enhancements and provisions of new interventions.

References

Benner, P. A. (1982). From novice to expert. *American Journal of Nursing*, 402–7. Retrieved September 9, 2024, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED384695.pdf#page=130

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (August 20, 2024). *CDC program evaluation framework*. https://www.cdc.gov/evaluation/php/evaluation-framework/index.html