

# Appendix G

## Glossary

*(Words in italics are defined elsewhere in the glossary.)*

**attrition.** When participants in an evaluation are no longer available at subsequent data collection points.

**benefit.** Net program outcome, usually translated into monetary terms.

**collaborative (or participatory) evaluation.** An evaluation organized as a team project in which the evaluator and representatives of one or more stakeholder groups work together to develop the evaluation plan, conduct the evaluation, and disseminate and use the results.

**comparison group.** In a quasi-experimental design, a naturally occurring group of untreated *targets* that is compared with the *treatment group* on outcome measures.

**control group.** The group that does not receive the treatment (or intervention). In an experiment, the performance of this group is compared with the *treatment group* to assess the effect of the treatment (or intervention).

**cost.** The value of each resource that is consumed when the program implements a service procedure.

**cost-benefit analysis.** Analytical procedures for determining the economic efficiency of a program, expressed as the relationship between *costs* and outcomes, usually measured in monetary terms.

**cost-effectiveness.** The efficacy of a program in achieving given intervention outcomes in relation to the program *costs*.

**experimental method.** Used to study a phenomenon in which one or more independent variables are manipulated and performance on one or more dependent variables is measured.

**external evaluation.** An evaluation in which the evaluator who has primary responsibility for developing the evaluation plan, conducting the evaluation, and disseminating the results is not part of the program (e.g., the CAC).

**extraneous variable.** Any *variable* that masks the relationship between the *independent variable(s)* and the *dependent variable(s)*.

**focus group.** A small panel, whose members are selected for their knowledge or perspective on a given topic, that is convened to discuss the topic with the assistance of a facilitator. The discussion is usually recorded and used to identify important themes or to construct descriptive summaries of views and experiences.

**formative evaluation.** Evaluation activities undertaken to furnish information that will guide program improvement. Formative evaluations are aimed specifically at improving a program or performance based on information from a *program monitoring* evaluation, and the information is reported back to program staff. Formative evaluations ensure that program materials, strategies, and activities are of the highest possible quality and that the program is feasible, appropriate, meaningful, and acceptable to the *target* population and users of the program.

**generalizability.** In experimental designs, being able to extend the results of an experiment beyond the *sample* tested to the population from which the *sample* was drawn. In terms of evaluation, the extent to which results can be extrapolated to similar programs or from the program as tested to the program as implemented.

**impact.** The net effect of a program.

**incidence.** The number of new cases of a particular problem or condition that are identified or arise in a specified area during a specified period of time.

**independent variable.** A variable systematically manipulated by the experimenter in order to determine the effect of one variable on another (the *dependent variable*).

**logic model.** The assumptions about what the program must do to bring about the transactions between the *target* population and the program to produce the intended changes in social conditions.

**outcome variable.** A measurable result of services.

**power analysis.** A statistical analysis that estimates the likelihood of obtaining a statistically significant relation between variables, given various sample sizes and true relations of certain magnitude. Used as a method of determining how many subjects are needed to ensure there is sufficient power to detect differences between groups (i.e., reject the null hypothesis).

**pre-post design.** A type of quasi-experimental design in which only one or more before-intervention and after-intervention measures are taken and then compared.

**prevalence.** The number of existing cases with a particular condition in a specified area at a specified time.

**process evaluation.** A form of *program monitoring* designed to determine whether the program is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients.

**program evaluation.** The use of social science procedures to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs that are adapted to their political and organizational environments and designed to inform social action in ways that improve social conditions. Program evaluation is the process of judging whether a program is achieving or has achieved its intended goals.

**program goal.** A statement, usually general and abstract, of a desired state toward which a program is directed.

**program monitoring.** The systematic documentation of aspects of program performance that indicate whether the program is functioning as intended or according to some appropriate standard. Monitoring generally involves program performance related to program process, program outcomes, or both.

**program objectives.** Specific statements detailing the desired accomplishments of a program.

**program theory.** The set of assumptions about how the program is related to the social benefits it is expected to produce and the strategy and tactics the program has adopted to achieve its goals and objectives. Two subsets of program *theory* are *impact theory*, relating to the nature of the change in social conditions brought about by program action, and *process theory*, which depicts the program's organizational plan and service utilization plan.

**quasi-experiment.** A research design in which *treatment* and *comparison groups* are formed by a procedure other than *random assignment*.

**random assignment.** Assignment of potential *targets* to *treatment* and *control groups* on the basis of chance. Each participant has an equal opportunity of being assigned to any one of the research conditions.

**rate.** The proportion of a population with a particular problem, or the occurrence or existence of a particular condition expressed as a proportion of units in the relevant population (e.g., deaths per 1,000 adults).

**reliability.** The extent to which scores obtained on a measure are reproducible in repeated administrations, i.e., consistency (provided all relevant measurement conditions are the same).

**sample.** The group of participants selected from the population who are assumed to be representative of the population about which an inference is being made.

**selection bias.** A confounding effect produced by preprogram differences between program participants and eligible *targets* who do not participate in the program.

**social research methods.** Procedures for studying social behavior that are based on systematic observations and logical rules for drawing inference from those observations.

**summative evaluation.** Evaluation activities undertaken to render a summary judgment on certain critical aspects of the program's performance (for instance, whether specific goals and objectives were met).

**survey.** Systematic collection of information from a defined population, usually by means of interviews or questionnaires administered to a sample of the population.

**target.** The unit to which the program intervention is directed (e.g., the family, the multidisciplinary team).

**theory.** The concept and design of a program.

**treatment group.** The group that receives the treatment (or intervention).

**validity.** The extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure.

**variable.** A thing or event that can be measured or manipulated.