Assessing Organizational Capacity: The Why and How

February 26, 2015
This webinar was developed by Child Trends under contract #GS-10F-0030R/HHSP23320130043G for the Office of Adolescent Health; US Department of Health and Human Services as a technical assistance product for use with OAH grant programs.
How is the assessment used?

• The assessment is intended to:
  ▪ Help organizations honestly assess capacity
  ▪ Identify challenges
  ▪ Develop a plan to increase capacity

• The assessment is not intended to
  ▪ Be punitive
  ▪ Be used by OAH to make funding decisions
Presenters

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Senior Research Scientist
Child Trends

Brandon Stratford, PhD
Research Scientist
Child Trends
Objectives

- After this webinar, attendees will be able to:
  - Define organizational capacity.
  - Explain the critical role that organizational capacity assessments play in successful program implementation.
  - Complete OAH’s Organizational Capacity Assessment for Teen Pregnancy Prevention.
  - Describe how the results of an organizational capacity assessment can be used to develop a plan to improve their capacity to implement an EBP.
Fayetteville Youth Network
• Features of the webinar include:
  ▪ Interactive polls
  ▪ Handouts
  ▪ Q&A box
  ▪ Resources list
  ▪ Feedback survey
Agenda

• What is organizational capacity?
• Why assess organizational capacity?
• Getting familiar with the OAH Organizational Capacity Assessment for TPP
• What to do after the assessment?
• Q&A
Organizational capacity is “the ability of an organization to fulfill its mission through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and a persistent rededication to assessing and achieving results.”

• Have you ever been involved in a formal process to evaluate organizational capacity?
Why does the organization matter?

What is it? Why do it? The assessment After the assessment

Organization

TPP Program

Youth
Components

What is it? Why do it? The assessment After the assessment
Leadership capacity

- The ability of the leadership team to develop a vision, set priorities, and inspire others in order to achieve the organization’s mission

- Is the organization’s leadership team actively involved in providing direction and inspiring others in achieving the organization’s mission?
Operational capacity

The ability to obtain and maintain the resources – including human resources – to carry out the organization’s institutional and programmatic activities

- Does the organization have the people, skills, space, funding, and other “stuff” necessary to carry out institutional and programmatic activities?
• The ability to use resources in an effective and efficient manner

   *Does the organization implement policies and procedures that result in the cost-effective delivery of programs and services?*
• The ability to monitor and assess activities and respond to changes both within the organization and in the broader community

- Does the organization collect data that is used to ensure programs and services are making a difference for youth? Is the organization able to “change course” when necessary?
Polls

What is it? Why do it? The assessment After the assessment

Leadership Operational Management Adaptive
• Why assess your organization’s capacity?
  ▪ Helps with program selection
  ▪ Ensures that your budget is realistic
  ▪ Identifies gaps/challenges early so you can plan ahead
Benefits of assessing capacity

- How can assessing capacity help with...
  - Staffing & materials
  - Finances
  - Management policies and practices
  - Sustainability
Sustainability resources

- What is it?
- Why do it?
- The assessment
- After the assessment

http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/sustainability.html
Organizational capacity & sustainability

Organizational capacity and sustainability

- Build a leadership team
- Be adaptable
- Assess the environment
- Secure community support

- Secure diverse financial opportunities
- Integrate program services into local infrastructure
- Create strategic partnerships

- Create an action plan!
• How was OAH’s assessment developed?
  ▪ Reviewed literature on organizational capacity
  ▪ Reviewed multiple existing organizational capacity assessments
  ▪ Ensured that items reflected the particular needs of TPP programs
  ▪ Obtained input from current TPP grantees for relevance and time burden
Organizational Capacity Assessment for Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)

What is the Organizational Capacity Assessment for Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)?
This assessment is intended to guide you through a process of assessing your organization’s strengths and challenges related to implementing your Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program. Some questions relate to general organizational resources; others are specific to your TPP program. It is important to adopt a team approach to the completion of this assessment. Involving multiple individuals with various perspectives and ensuring that team members have adequate time to collect accurate and comprehensive data will help you obtain meaningful results. The assessment covers:

- **Leadership capacity** – These items assess how well your TPP program aligns with your organizational mission and the capacity of your organization’s leadership team to support your TPP program.
- **Operational capacity** – These items assess whether your organization has sufficient funding for general operations as well as the necessary resources to implement your TPP program.
- **Management capacity** – These items assess whether your organization effectively and efficiently manages financial resources, staff performance, and strategic relationships with partner organizations.
- **Adaptive capacity** – These items assess how well your organization uses data to achieve sustainable impacts and meet the changing needs of your community.

## Assessment Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Capacity</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational Capacity</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General operations</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPP program-specific operations</td>
<td>7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Capacity</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing financial resources</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing strategic partnerships</td>
<td>11-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adaptive Capacity</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
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</table>
Organizational capacity and Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)

What is organizational capacity?

Organizational capacity is “the ability of an organization to fulfill its mission through a blend of sound management, strong governance and a persistent rededication to assessing and achieving results”\(^1\). A number of frameworks have been developed to help organizations define and assess their organizational capacities. The Conservation Company\(^2\) has developed one such framework which has been adopted by a number of non-profits and funders. It consists of the following four capacities:

Leadership capacity — The ability of the leadership team to develop a vision, set priorities, and inspire others in order to achieve the organization’s mission. Is the organization’s leadership team actively involved in providing direction and inspiring others in achieving the organization’s mission?

Operational capacity — The ability to obtain and maintain the resources — including human resources— necessary to carry out the organization’s institutional and programmatic activities. Do the organization have the people, skills, space, funding, and other “stuff” necessary to carry out institutional and...
• Making your assessment work for you!
• Making your assessment work for you!

Process: Prioritize

What is it? Why do it? The assessment After the assessment

Collect data
Monitor
Prioritize
Plan
• Making your assessment work for you!

- Collect data
- Monitor
- Prioritize
- Plan

Process: Plan
What is it? Why do it? The assessment After the assessment
• Making your assessment work for you!
- **Timing**
  - Before selecting a TPP program
  - While implementing a TPP program
• Identifying team members
  - Leadership team
  - Program staff
  - Management staff
  - Finance staff
  - Others (e.g., youth, community partners, etc.)
• Fayetteville Youth Network
  ▪ Administrative
    o Executive director
    o Administrative assistant
  ▪ Afterschool program
    o 1 program manager
    o 12 team leaders
    o 36 program staff
  ▪ Substance abuse program
    o 1 program manager
    o 4 counselors
    o 6 case manager
  ▪ Total staff = 62
• Invite team members
  ▪ Send assessment ahead of time

• Initial meeting
  ▪ Invite staff with authority to access data and/or assign tasks
  ▪ Assign specific items
  ▪ Set follow-up meeting (allow 1-2 weeks for data collection)
### Leadership Capacity (8 items)

The following items will help you assess how well your proposed activities align with your organizational mission and the capacity of your leadership team to support your activities.

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**Leadership Capacity Score (Sum Items 1-8): **_______/16 = ________%
### Adaptive Capacity (10 items)

The following items will help you to assess your organization’s general capacity to collect and use data to improve performance and achieve sustainable impacts.

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<td>1</td>
<td>Our organization’s performance management database provides immediately accessible (“real time”) reports for all programs. Summarize the types of reports that are available to monitor program quality (program attendance, participant short-term outcomes, staff activities, etc.):</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Our organization has staff dedicated to the implementation and maintenance of our performance management data system who can provide training and assistance to other staff. Summarize the amount of staff time dedicated to the performance management data system on a weekly basis (e.g., 1 full-time employee (FTE)):</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Our organization has staff who analyze data in an ongoing way for quality improvement. Summarize the ways in which your organization employs data to improve performance:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Data review meeting to set priorities

- If feasible, ask team members to forward data to entire team 1-2 days in advance.
- Allow ample time for discussion of findings.
  - Consider 2-3 hours for this meeting.
  - If your team is larger than 6-8 members, consider breaking out into smaller groups based on the 4 capacities.
• Data review meeting (continued)
  ▪ As a team, identify priorities.
    ○ May be based on scores, current stage of program implementation, or other contextual factors

• Schedule planning meeting.
  ▪ This may involve different/fewer staff.
• **Planning meeting(s)**
  - If multiple priorities were identified, sub-teams can be assigned particular priorities.
  - Ensure that staff with authority to implement plan are involved early on.
• Schedule a follow-up meeting with relevant staff to develop an integrated plan.

  - Plans should include:
    - Specific targets (SMART)
      - Specific
      - Measureable
      - Achievable
      - Realistic
      - Time-oriented
    - Specific point person
Monitoring meeting(s)

- Schedule meetings with relevant staff to monitor progress.
  - Assign a specific point person for each goal.
  - Regularly schedule meetings with relevant staff to review progress.
    - Meetings may be more frequent at the beginning.
The following items will help you assess your organization’s capacity to manage partnership relationships.

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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Our organization has a number of relationships with community partners that effectively enhance our ability to engage with youth in our target population and/or increase our ability to mobilize resources. Provide examples of some past and current partnerships: School district, local health clinic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Our organization develops specific criteria when seeking to identify potential strategic partnerships with other organizations. We look for a specific set of resources in a partner and make sure to include those things in an MOU.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>We have examined our need for partnerships to carry out our TPP program and have identified potential partner organizations. List some potential partners and the need they are expected to fill: Local health clinic – expertise in TPP</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>We have established strategies to ensure high quality program delivery among partner organizations, including providing training when relevant. We write expectations in the MOU but don’t really check to make sure they have the capacity to follow through. We just assume that they can do it if they sign the MOU.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>We have established formal and informal strategies to ensure effective communication with partner organizations. We communicate well at beginning, but then it falls off. For example, very little communication with school staff in current afterschool program. Teachers don’t return student progress forms.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>We have established strategies for measuring the effectiveness of partnerships (e.g., monitoring program referrals/recruitment, assessing the quality/fidelity of program activities, etc.). We write expectations in the MOU but don’t really have policies for what to do if we don’t think our partner is meeting expectations. This has been a problem in the past.</td>
<td>0</td>
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Managing Strategic Partnerships Score (Sum items 11-16): _______/12 = _______ %
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<td>We have established strategies to ensure high quality program delivery among partner organizations, including providing training when relevant. Summarize your strategies for ensuring that partners are able to deliver high-quality services: <strong>We write expectations in the MOU but don’t really check to make sure they have the capacity to follow through. We just assume that they can do it if they sign the MOU.</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>We have established formal and informal strategies to ensure effective communication with partner organizations. Summarize your strategies for maintaining effective communication with partner organizations, including frequency: <strong>We communicate well at beginning, but then it falls off. For example, very little communication with school staff in current afterschool program. Teachers don’t return student progress forms.</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>We have established strategies for measuring the effectiveness of partnerships (e.g., monitoring program referrals/recruitment, assessing the quality/fidelity of program activities, etc.). Summarize your strategies for evaluating effectiveness of partnerships: <strong>We write expectations in the MOU but don’t really have policies for what to do if we don’t think our partner is meeting expectations. This has been a problem in the past.</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Managing Strategic Partnerships Score (Sum items 11-16): 6/12 = 50%
What happened next?

- The executive director, program managers, and one case manager who had previously worked at a local health clinic formed a planning group.
  - Money was built into the TPP budget for:
    - Training for partner organizations
    - An upgraded data system for one partner organization with no electronic database
    - Quarterly in-person meetings during the first year
  - MOUs explicitly list how partner performance will be evaluated
Steps to conduct assessment

1. Collect data
   - Identify team members
   - Assign items

2. Prioritize
   - Meet to review data
   - Identify priorities
3. Plan
   - Develop a plan
   - Ensure leadership buy-in

4. Monitor
   - Implement plan
   - Assign responsibility
   - Monitor progress
   - Make adjustments as needed using data
Objectives

• Define organizational capacity.
• Explain the critical role that organizational capacity assessments play in successful program implementation.
• Complete OAH’s Organizational Capacity Assessment for Teen Pregnancy Prevention.
• Describe how the results of an organizational capacity assessment can be used to develop a plan to improve capacity to implement an EBP.
Questions?
Organizational Capacity and Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Organizational Capacity Assessment

Needs and Resources Assessment Tip sheet:

Performance Management Assessment:

Performance Management Tools:
http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/performance-management.html#program

Collaboration Toolkit:

Sustainability Resources:
http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/sustainability.html
• Topic: Positive Youth Development Practices and Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs
  - April 7th
  - 2:00-3:00pm EST
Feedback