CDC Evaluation Coffee Break

Evaluation Management: Coordination Across Multiple Teams

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Welcome to today's Coffee Break, presented by the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team in the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We are fortunate to have Jan Losby as today's presenter. Jan is from CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and is a behavioral scientist on the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team. My name is Eileen Chappelle and I am today's moderator. I am also a member of the Evaluation Team.

The information presented here is for training purposes and reflects the views of the presenter. It does not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Today's Topics

- ❑ Background
- ❑ Tool & Definitions
- ❑ Examples
- ❑ Resources
- ❑ Q & A

It seems that we are all being asked to collaborate, coordinate, and either manage or work on evaluation projects that cut across teams, content areas, and departments. While being a part of this work can be quite exciting and rewarding, it can also present some unique challenges.

In today's session, I'll start off with a bit of context and definitions related to project management. I'll then highlight a tool that can be used to coordinate evaluations and will walk through a few examples.

And I'll wrap up with some resources and answer any questions you may have.

Quick note…

Today's session is an introduction to key concepts and ideas and
not a "how-to" session.

Session uses language from project management that can be applied to evaluation projects and evaluation management.

Two quick notes:

Today's session is an introduction to key concepts and ideas and not a "how-to" session.

Throughout today's presentation I'll use the generic term "project management." Managing an evaluation project certainly falls in the category of project management.

Project Management

"Project management is like a troupe of performers standing in a circle, each juggling three balls and swapping balls from time to time." — G. Reiss

"The P in project management is as much about 'people management' as it is about 'project management.'" — C. Fichtner
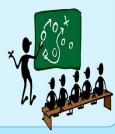
What is project management?

"Project management is like a troupe of performers standing in a circle, each juggling three balls and swapping balls from time to time."

"The P in Project Management is as much about 'people management' as it is about 'project management.'"

From these two quotes you can see that in project management there are lots of moving parts, lots of tasks, and likely lots of people.

Elements for Successful Project Management

✓ *Possess strong leadership & communication skills*
✓ *Understand big picture as well as all tasks and sub-tasks*
✓ *Identify all players*
✓ *Define roles of each*
✓ *Define responsibilities of each*
✓ *Specify level of engagement of each*

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- Define responsibilities of each
- Specify level of engagement of each

There are many tools available to assist you in organizing projects. I've picked one tool that is quite popular and it is flexible enough to apply to most evaluation projects. It is especially useful in clarifying roles and responsibilities in cross-functional/departmental projects and processes. Whether you are working in WISEWOMAN, Sodium Reduction, Coverdell, or the State Public Health Actions Program, you should be able to apply features of this tool to your work.

A **RACI matrix (Responsible-Accountable-Consulted-Informed matrix)** *describes participation by various roles in completing tasks for a project.*

***Can also be called a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) or Linear Responsibility Chart (LRC).*
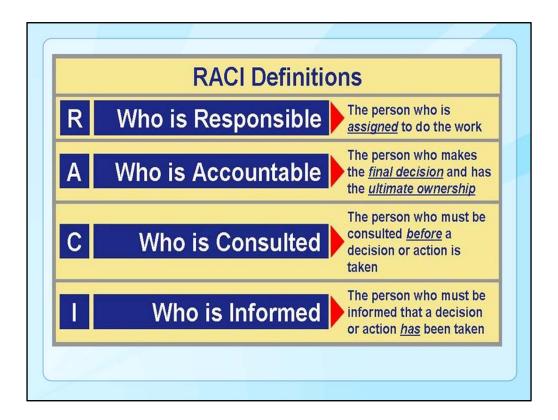
References:
A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide). PMI Standards Committee, Project Management Institute. 2010.
Jacka M, Keller P. (2009). Business Process Mapping: Improving Customer Satisfaction. John Wiley and Sons.
Cleland D, Ireland L. (2006). Project management: strategic design and implementation. McGraw-Hill Professional.

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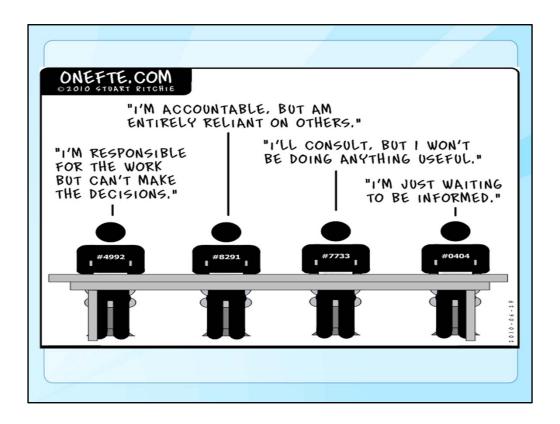Let's look at the definitions of each role.

RACI Definitions

R	Who is Responsible	The person who is _assigned_ to do the work
A	Who is Accountable	The person who makes the _final decision_ and has the _ultimate ownership_
C	Who is Consulted	The person who must be consulted _before_ a decision or action is taken
I	Who is Informed	The person who must be informed that a decision or action _has_ been taken

R stands for Responsible and is the person or role who performs the work. This person is the 'doer' of the task or activity. The person who is 'Responsible' does not need to be accountable for that task.

A is for Accountable and is the person or role who has the final authority and accountability for a given task. This person is ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the task, and the one who delegates the work to those _responsible_. In other words, an _accountable_ must approve/sign off on work that the _responsible_ provides. There **must** be only one _accountable_ specified for each task. This accountability cannot be delegated to other roles or individuals.

C is for Consulted and is the person or role who is consulted or whose opinion is sought **before** performing the task. These are typically subject matter experts and there is **two-way communication.** Information is given and advice is offered.

I stands for Informed and is the person or role who is informed **after** a task is completed—those who are kept up-to-date on progress, often only on completion of the task or deliverable. In contrast to the consulted, for the informed there is **one-way communication.** You need to assign the 'Informed' roles properly, as otherwise it may lead to miscommunication and delays.
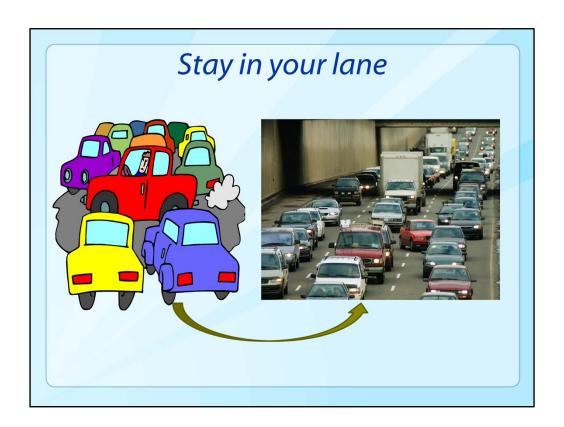
This slide basically says the same thing as the last—with some added humor. It's a reminder of who's doing what and which people have specific expectations and responsibilities.

Responsible says, "I'm doing the work, but I'm not making the decisions."

Accountable says, "I'm accountable and reliant on others to see that the work is done."

Consulted, who is the person that you seek advice from **before** performing the task, says, "I'll consult and give my opinion, but I'm not doing the work."

Informed are basically updated after the completion of a task.

Several years ago when I was at a meeting, the facilitator referred to roles as being equivalent to staying in your lane when you are driving. This image always stuck with me. It is a great visual when you think about how to move forward with an evaluation project. The cars—or in our case, people—can be stuck in traffic or stuck in spinning circles of discussion with little movement or progress. I think we've all been in meetings like that!

With RACI, there is the potential for the cars to get organized and for people to stay in their own lanes. By clarifying roles and responsibilities at the initial stage of the design process, RACI helps:
- Set up the proper expectations among team members and reduce future misunderstandings.
- Eliminate duplication of effort.
- Improve communication by setting up the proper expectations among team members.
- Identify the owner of a task clearly and assign accountability to that role.
- Ensure that the correct people are involved in a project.
- Clarify baton hand-offs and task, role, and responsibility boundaries.
- Improve functionality of cross-functional and cross-content projects.

Let's walk through some examples with a RACI matrix. Any of these matrices can be applied to your evaluation projects.

RACI Template

"Who's involved"

"What needs to get done"	Role A	Role B	Role C	Role D
Function / task 1	R	A	C	I
Function / task 2	A	R	C	I
Function / task 3	C	R		A
Function / task 4	R	C	I	A
Function / task 5	I	A	R	

At the most basic level, RACI is a simple table with tasks (what needs to get done) for the rows and the people involved for the columns.

Some steps to help you create a matrix:

- Determine the functions, decisions, tasks, and activities that will make up the process or project. These are the rows.
- Identify who will be the project's participants. These are the columns.
- Identify how each participant is involved with each function, decision, task, activity.
- Fill out the grid with the letters R, A, C, or I. Remember, some cells can be left blank.

Basic Example

	Evaluator	Evaluation Team Lead	Subject Matter Expert	Department Head	External Stakeholders
Create Evaluation Plan	R	A		I	C
Create Data Collection Tools	A R	I	C		
Acquire Existing Data	R	A			
Communicate Evaluation Progress to Internal Stakeholders	C	A R		C	I

In this example, I listed a few evaluation tasks—such as create an evaluation plan, create data collection tools.

If we look at the first row for the task of creating an evaluation plan, we see that the evaluator is responsible—there's an R in that person's column— and the evaluator's supervisor is accountable—so he or she is actually assigning work activities to the evaluator. And the department head is informed while external stakeholders are consulted. For the purpose of this example, I kept it simple, with one column for external stakeholders. I'm certain you work with multiple stakeholder groups, so you could add additional columns to represent each of these groups. This would remind you which specific groups you needed to connect with for each task.

In the next row, there are changes in all of the roles and responsibilities and subject matter experts are being consulted for data collection tools.

In the third row, you can see that no one is consulted or informed. Not all tasks need these roles.

In the last row, you can see that the evaluation lead is fulfilling two roles: the responsible and the accountable to communicate evaluation progress internally and externally.

While the next two slides are quite busy to see all of the details, they give you the idea that the RACI matrix can be expanded or contracted depending on your project. This one shows considerable detail in the tasks as well as the functional teams.

And good news! No special software is needed; you can use an Excel worksheet for something like this.

Multiple Teams Example

RACI Matrix Template

Project Deliverable (or Activity) \ Role	Project Leadership					Project Team Members					Project Sub-Teams					External Contributors				
	Role #1	Role #2	Role #3	Role #4	Role #5	Role #1	Role #2	Role #3	Role #4	Role #5	Role #1	Role #2	Role #3	Role #4	Role #5	Role #1	Role #2	Role #3	Role #4	Role #5
Initiate Phase Activities																				
Plan Phase Activities																				
Execute Phase Activities																				
Control Phase Activities																				
Close Phase Activities																				

And here's another example with multiple teams and roles within those teams.

The idea is that the tool/spreadsheet itself should be a help to you and enhance project management and it isn't just another assignment to create or maintain.

Tips and Hints	
R	✓ *Each row should have at least one Responsible.* ✓ *If a task has more than one R, then the task should be brainstormed further to see if it can be split into two tasks.* ✓ *If a column has many R's, the role may have too much work to do. Try to break the task into small sections and delegate to other roles.*
A	✓ *Each row should have ONE and only ONE A.* ✓ *If a column has many A's, this could mean that this role could be a bottleneck. Try to see if these tasks can be shared.*

The next two slides are more for your reference if you chose to create a matrix for your project. These are intended as tips and hints for looking at patterns across rows and down columns.

For example:

- If a task has more than one R, then the task should be brainstormed further to see if it can be split into two subtasks.

- If a column has many R's, the role may have too much work to do. Try to break the task into small sections or delegate some of these tasks to other roles.

- If a column has many A's, this could mean that this role could be a bottleneck, meaning that that person is accountable for every task in the matrix.
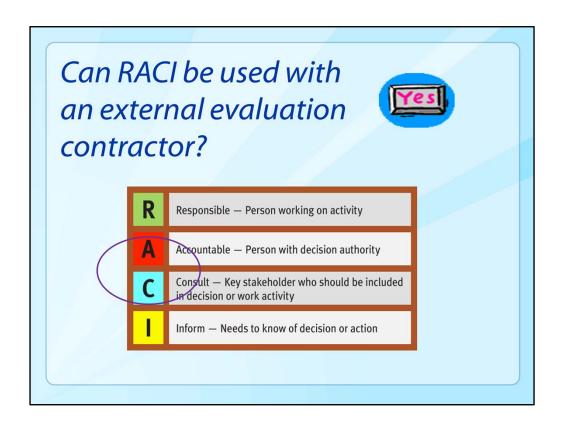
Tips and Hints *(continued)*	
C	✓ *The number of Consulted roles should be minimized.* ✓ *When there are many people who are assigned as 'Consulted' roles, the time it take to accomplish the task increases.*
I	✓ *Too many I's is also not a good sign.* ✓ *Minimize the I's so that only those who need to be informed are informed.*
Odds -n- Ends	✓ *If a column has no empty spaces, that means that Role/Person is involved with all tasks. See if you can reduce C's and I's for this Role.* ✓ *If a column has no A's or R's, perhaps this role can be eliminated from this process.*

A few other hints for C and I:

When there are many people who are assigned as 'Consulted' roles, the time it take to accomplish the task increases.

Too many I's is also not a good sign. Minimize the I's so that only those who need to be informed are informed.

If a column has no empty spaces, that means that Role/Person is involved with all tasks. Since this person is busy and involved in all tasks, see if you can reduce C's and I's for this Role. This could be an important time saver.

Can RACI be used with an external evaluation contractor?

Yes

R	Responsible — Person working on activity
A	Accountable — Person with decision authority
C	Consult — Key stakeholder who should be included in decision or work activity
I	Inform — Needs to know of decision or action

Sometimes the Public Health Department or funded site engages an external evaluator. When an evaluation is being contracted to conduct the work, it is critical that Public Health Department or funded site be a part of the process.
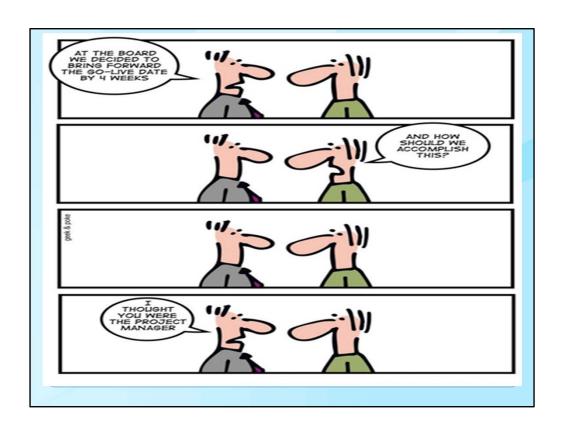
Think about where you, your team, or your organization fits into the RACI matrix. Very often this will be focused on the A and the C. You likely wouldn't be doing the work (R) and you wouldn't want to find out about activities/decisions after the fact (I).

Tips

✓ *A person's role may vary by task*

✓ *Check-ins and revisit roles—especially with staff turnover*

✓ *Skilled at facilitation*

✓ *This tool doesn't have magical properties—there is still LOTS of hard work to manage complex projects and organize people*

I'll leave you with a few tips:

- A person's role may vary by task. As we saw in the earlier evaluation example, the evaluator served as the R, the A, and the C. So the evaluator is wearing many different hats.

- Check-ins and revisit roles—this is especially critical with staff turnover.

- As you can imagine, designating roles and responsibilities is only the first step—the implementation and management of the work starts next. This is where you (or whoever is managing the work) will need to have keen facilitation skills and meeting management skills. Next month's Evaluation Coffee Break is on this topic, and you'll be introduced to some techniques to successfully engage people.

- This tool—or really any tool—doesn't have magical properties; there is still LOTS of hard work to manage complex projects and organize people.

Just a bit of humor to close with and remind us that communication is vital for any successful endeavor.

Two people are talking and one person makes a statement: "At the Board Meeting we decided to bring the work forward by 4 weeks."
Second person replies: "And how should we accomplish this?"
First person says: "I thought you were the project manager."

This really summarizes the importance of communication at the beginning of a project, during a project, and throughout critical steps in a project.

In summary,
- RACI is a good communication tool. Without RACI or some other way to clearly delineate roles and tasks, there will likely be poor communication and improper process definition and poor hand-offs from task to task.
- RACI makes sure each and every task is owned by a role/person.

On this slide there are links to several resources.

Free RACI matrices and templates.

Microsoft Office has no/low cost options. This is affordable because most users already have the software; e.g., MS Excel, MS Access, and MS Project.

Gantt Charts for tracking tasks and time.

Method123 is a website with free project management resources.

The **Work Breakdown Structure** is used to plan a project by breaking it down into smaller, more manageable tasks, and it provides a structural view into the project.

I've also include a link to a posting on the American Evaluation Association (AEA) site where several evaluators have shared resources and ideas related to project management.

We'd like to hear from you…

- *Questions and Answers*

- *Short Feedback Poll*

Question 1: How often do I need to update the RACI matrix?

Response: Good question. There isn't a hard and fast rule on this. I'd suggest making the matrix at the start of a project and if it's a 3-year project, you'd likely want to revisit the matrix every 3-6 months. Of course, you'd do this even more frequently if there were a high number of staff members coming and going.

Question 2: What do I do if people who are in the Informed role act as if they are in the A or C role?

Response: That is certainly a challenge and one that does happen. I'd recommend having a strong orientation at the start of any task—sharing the RACI matrix and clearly describing everyone's roles and responsibilities. If the issue still continues during the actual meetings or as the work moves forward, you may need to pull this person aside and talk with them one-on-one.

> # Reminders!
>
> *Standing day and time:*
> *2nd Tuesday of the month, 2:30–2:50 p.m. (ET)*
>
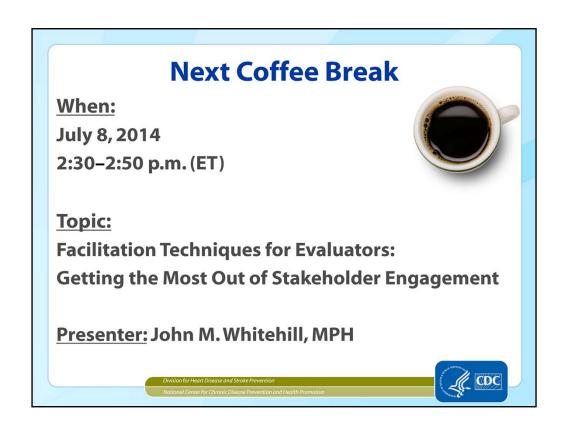> *All sessions are archived and*
> *the slides and script can be accessed at:*
> **http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/podcasts.htm**
>
> *If you have any questions, comments, or topic ideas,*
> *send an email to:*
> **AREBheartinfo@cdc.gov**

All sessions are archived and the slides and script can be accessed at our Division website. Today's slides will be available in 2-3 weeks.

If you have any ideas for future topics or questions, please contact us at the listed email address on this slide.

Our next Coffee Break is scheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 2014, and is entitled Facilitation Techniques for Evaluators: Getting the Most Out of Stakeholder Engagement. The speaker is John Whitehill from our Evaluation Team.