

SAC QUICKtips: SUMMATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Most educators are familiar with formative and summative evaluation, which is grounded in answering a series of questions. With summative evaluation, you answer questions about what resulted from people's actions.

Summative evaluation looks at how participants changed over time (outcomes), as well as how the system changes over time (impact). With outcome evaluation, we are looking at what changed in who over time as a result of SAP work. With impact, we look more at how systems changed as a result of SAP services over time. (See Quick Tips for Impact Evaluation.)

Outcome evaluation looks at how participant's knowledge, skills, attitudes, intentions, or behaviors changed over time. Several indicators can be helpful in measuring outcomes with Student Assistance.

- How many students working with the SAP improved attendance?
- How many students working with the SAP showed academic improvement? (can be in rates of homework completion, acquisition of new skills, quality of quiz or tests; does not need to be just quarterly grade changes.)
- How many students working with the SAP that were referred to community services followed through with the recommendation?
- How many students working with the SAP improved an attitude about attending school?
- How many students working with the SAP showed improvement in a health-related problem?
- How have behavior referrals, suspensions and expulsions changed as a result of SAP services?
- How many students stopped a particular behavior such as smoking or texting and driving as a result of SAP services?

Data can be gained from archival data as well as self-reports. Qualitative data from self-reports can be gained through written, electronic or personal interview methods. When asking students about results, consider asking students how they see a difference in what they think, feel, or do. You can gain insights which help to support the validity of your work as well as input for future directions.

Resources on prevention.org – Professional Resources – Student Assistance Center: Navigating the Course: a Student Assistance Program Sustainability Guide; Student Assistance Program Guidebook: A Resource for Schools.