

MEASURING CHANGE

A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT EVALUATION OF COLLABORATIVE RISK-DRIVEN COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING IN ONTARIO

prepared for

**Ontario Working Group on Collaborative
Risk-Driven Community Safety**

prepared by

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This evaluation framework has been developed in response to my ongoing dialogue with a growing network of evaluators who have courageously stepped into the largely uncharted territory of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being. Welcome, and enjoy.

- Chad.



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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, four police agencies in Ontario took the initiative to formalize a relationship based upon sharing experiences and lessons learned in the field of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being. Joined by their partners from other human service sectors, police leaders from Toronto, Greater Sudbury, Waterloo, and Peel Region formed the Ontario Working Group on Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety (hereafter referred to as OWG). In their efforts to build capacity for improved collaborative risk-driven community safety in Ontario, the OWG tasked a group of advisors with several projects related to strategic communications and promotion of collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives; direct support and technical assistance to early adopter and demonstration initiatives; and, research and development on promising practices emerging from local applications. This evaluation framework has been developed to support ongoing research and development of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being in Ontario.

The purpose of this framework is to help support, guide and encourage current and future evaluation efforts on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being in Ontario. The hope of this framework is to build confidence in evaluators as they begin their work in a developmental, formative and/or summative approach to evaluation. This framework is aimed at a wide audience of evaluators in Ontario—one that includes evaluators from the private sector, academia, community organizations and various levels of government.

Since the 2012 onset of collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives in Ontario, evaluators from various entities have been engaged in supporting communities and their initiatives. To ensure that this evaluation framework is as thorough as possible, the author reached out to 19 different evaluators currently engaged in collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives in Ontario. During this outreach, evaluators were asked about their projects, their overall experience, and how this framework could be made of value to both current and future evaluators.

To meet their needs, this framework begins with a brief overview of the OWG, followed by a description of the consultation process with Ontario evaluators and an update on the status of their evaluations. The framework then outlines some of the opportunities in developmental, formative and summative approaches to evaluation. Following this is a description of the suggested themes that evaluators may wish to focus their work on: collaboration, risk, mobilization and outcomes. Next is a list of proposed evaluation questions followed by suggestions of indicators, data collection practices, and an encouragement for evaluators to disseminate and exchange their findings with one another. The framework then spends some time identifying how Ontario can build capacity for evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety in Ontario, and identifies the challenges evaluators may experience in their work. The framework closes with an outline of opportunities for collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being evaluators to mobilize, share information, and grow collectively.



Overall, there is a hearty appetite for research and evaluation on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives in Ontario. To date, several communities have already started down the path of conceptualizing, monitoring and measuring the success of their initiative. As mentioned, the purpose of this framework is to help guide current and future efforts to describe, assess, measure and/or test collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives in Ontario. In particular, this evaluation framework has been designed to help Ontario's growing network of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being evaluators achieve the following goals:

- Quality and excellence in evaluation.
- Ongoing collaboration among evaluators.
- Strong relationships with community safety and well-being stakeholders.
- A shared commitment to measuring collaboration, risk, mobilization, and multiple outcomes in community safety and well-being.

In achieving these goals, evaluators will enable community safety and well-being stakeholders with the following:

- Informed decision-making in government and community partnerships.
- Secure appropriate resources and capacity for evaluation.
- Develop value for the role of evaluation in community safety and well-being initiatives.
- Improved knowledge and understanding among community safety stakeholders.
- Ongoing development of leading practices in community safety and well-being.
- Continuous improvement of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives.



1.0 THE ONTARIO WORKING GROUP

Between 2012 and 2013, four different police agencies in Ontario had started their own separate endeavours in collaborative risk-driven community safety. Their individual efforts resulted in FOCUS (Furthering Our Communities—United Services) Rexdale in Toronto, CRISIS (Collaborative, Risk-Identified Situation Intervention Strategy) in Sudbury, a Connectivity Table in Waterloo Region, and a Situation Table in Mississauga (Russell & Taylor, 2014a). These initiatives were designed to engage multiple human service providers in the identification of risk, and a rapid mobilization of services around high-risk individuals to mitigate those risks and ultimately, prevent harm.

As each of these police agencies began to learn of what each other was doing, they felt that sharing their experiences and lessons learned would increase their collective ability to impact community safety and well-being outcomes in Ontario. To formalize this shared learning opportunity, they formed the Ontario Working Group for Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety (hereafter referred to as OWG). With funding from the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' Proceeds of Crime Frontline Policing Grant, the OWG engaged a number of community partners and advisors to accomplish the following objectives:

- Create a prototype framework for community safety plans.
- Develop measures and indicators for community safety plans.
- Construct guidelines for information-sharing and protection of privacy.
- Organize a symposium to share lessons learned with others.
- Support communications surrounding community safety initiatives and planning.

(Russell & Taylor, 2014a:4)

Since its inception in 2013, the work of the OWG inspired a considerable uptake of commitment to collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives and planning across Ontario. As of March 2015, initiatives have begun or were being planned for Amherstburg, Bancroft, Barrie, Belleville, Brantford, Chatham, Durham region, Fort Frances, Guelph, Haliburton, Kingston, London, Napanee, Port Hope, Cobourg, Niagara Falls, North Bay, Orillia, Ottawa and York Region (Russell & Taylor, 2015). Of course these new initiatives are in addition to the existing ones being implemented in Toronto, Sudbury, Waterloo Region and Peel Region.

In the past two years, efforts (Russell & Taylor, 2014) have been made to collate and present various learning opportunities from the past experiences of other collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives in Ontario. More recently, advisors (Russell & Taylor, 2015) to the OWG have been working with various communities to develop strategic communications to promote collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives; provide direct support and technical assistance to early adopter and demonstration initiatives; and conduct research and development on promising practices emerging from local applications.

In the 2014-2015 year, lead advisors Hugh Russell and Norm Taylor encouraged the OWG to expand the advisory team to include specialised advisors to support the OWG. This author was added to that team to bring specific emphasis on evaluation for the team's overall findings and recommendations. This evaluation framework has been created in direct support of the OWG and Ontario communities.

2.0 BUILDING AN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In building a framework to drive and support collaborative risk-driven community safety in Ontario, there is great value in describing the purpose and intent of evaluation frameworks. Whereas evaluation plans are designed to guide evaluation of a single initiative or project, an evaluation framework provides a context through which multiple evaluations can be supported across a wider spectrum. As other collaborators (Better Evaluation, 2015) in evaluation ascertain, an evaluation framework can include suggestions on guidance, data sources, logic model development, challenges and suggestions for success in evaluation. To be effective, evaluation frameworks should support accountability, build capacity for evaluation, foster communication, and generally help both evaluators and community stakeholders conceptualize their goals and ambitions for evaluation (Kahan, 2008).

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2011), there are six steps to evaluation: engage stakeholders, describe the program, focus the design, gather evidence, justify conclusions, ensure use and share lessons learned. Of these steps to evaluation planning, three are particularly relevant for developing an evaluation framework:

- Engage Stakeholders – by including those involved in evaluation.
- Describe the Context – outline the program or initiative that evaluations will focus on.
- Focus the Evaluation Design – identify the issues of greatest concern to stakeholders.

To develop the evaluation framework described herein, the author reached out to collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators in Ontario. This outreach provided an opportunity to develop an overview of the state of collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluation in Ontario. It also provided the author with an opportunity to survey the opinions of evaluators concerning the types of supports, tools, suggestions and topics that should be included within this provincial framework. These interactions, combined with a review of other evaluative work in this topic area, provided the foundation upon which this framework was built.

2.1 CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EVALUATION COMMUNITY

As noted above, to build an evaluation framework that is non-prescriptive, yet responsive to the needs of collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators, the author reached out to 19 evaluators, representing 12 evaluation teams providing evaluations of 15 initiatives in nine communities throughout Ontario. These communities include Brantford, Chatham-Kent, Guelph, Halton Region, Port Hope, North Bay, Sudbury, Toronto, Kitchener, Cambridge and Sault Ste. Marie. The evaluation teams were identified through correspondence with the OWG.

The initial outreach to evaluators occurred through email, followed up by a brief introductory phone call. During the email outreach, evaluators were asked to complete a brief survey (see Appendices) that would help the author get a sense of the progress of their evaluation, stakeholders, evaluation focus, evaluation questions, methodological approach, data sources, timelines, challenges they experienced, challenges they foresee, and suggested opportunities for collaboration among fellow evaluators. During February and March of 2015, the author received completed surveys from all 12 evaluation teams.

In a scheduled follow-up phone call, the author engaged each of the 12 evaluation teams in a more detailed discussion on matters more closely related to their experience as an evaluator working within

the area of collaborative risk-driven community safety. This included dialogue on what would help evaluators; important topics all evaluations should cover; main themes; stakeholder interest; challenges; and, a more in-depth discussion around what should inform a provincial evaluation framework on collaborative risk-driven community safety. On average, most discussions lasted 60 minutes and all 12 interviews took place over the telephone. During the phone conversation, the author requested electronic copies of any tools or reports that the evaluators could share.

2.2 THE CURRENT STATE OF EVALUATING COLLABORATIVE RISK-DRIVEN INITIATIVES IN ONTARIO

Outreach with the Ontario collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluation community revealed that initiative evaluations are at different stages of the evaluative process. Some are at the very early stages of conceptualizing logic models and identifying the parameters of their evaluation. Others have started both quantitative and qualitative data collection. A few have begun data analysis and/or have even completed reports on their analysis. Table 1 summarizes the various activities occurring in each community, by initiative.

Table 1. Evaluation Activities of Community Safety Initiatives in Ontario

COMMUNITY	INITIATIVE	EVALUATION ACTIVITIES		
		Evaluation Planning	Data Collection	Analysis and Reporting
Brantford	CRISIS*	●	●	
	Safe Brantford	●		
Cambridge	Connectivity Table	●	●	●
Guelph	Situation Table	●	●	●
Halton Region	Situation Table	●	●	●
Port Hope	Northumberland Hub	●		
North Bay	Gateway Hub	●	●	●
Sudbury	Rapid Mobilization Table	●	●	●
Toronto	FOCUS^ Rexdale	●	●	●
Kitchener	Connectivity Table	●	●	●
Sault Ste. Marie	Neighbourhood Resource Centre	●	●	●
	Situation Table	●	●	
TOTAL		11	9	7

* CRISIS = Collaborative Risk-Identified Situations Intervention Strategy.

^ FOCUS = Furthering Our Communities – United Services.

3.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVALUATION

As Ontario moves forward with various initiatives in collaborative risk-driven community safety, there are opportunities to pursue evaluation through three different approaches to evaluation: developmental, formative and summative. All three of these approaches to evaluation bring a different lens to our understanding of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being. Where they differ, is the point in time when they would be most appropriate, and more so, possible.

As Patton (2015) describes, *developmental* evaluation is well-suited for radical program re-design, initiatives that are still being developed, situations involving systems change, or a newly-emerging applications theory that has not yet been fully tested in a formative or summative context. In 2014, the OWG led some significant discussions with community safety stakeholders on the direction of collaborative risk-driven community safety. It became clear in those discussions that there is still room for ongoing conceptualization and refinement (Russell & Taylor, 2014a). A developmental evaluation approach would help track these innovations, frame concepts, identify issues and help assess different iterations of community safety initiatives across the province. That being said, the OWG also learned of the growing emergence of common practices in collaborative risk-driven community safety (Russell & Taylor, 2015). This would suggest increased opportunities in formative evaluation, and a gradual maturation away from developmental evaluation.

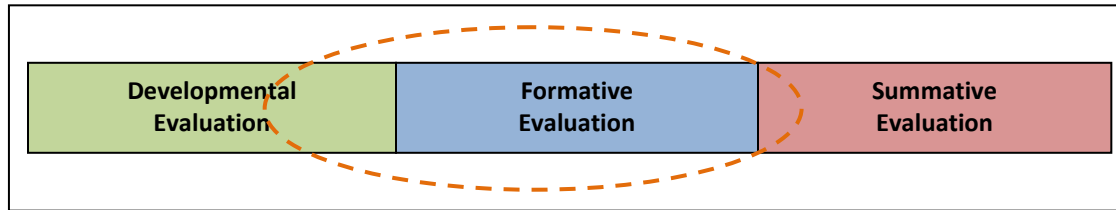
Through a formative approach, evaluators would have the opportunity to provide communities with opportunities to assess and improve their community engagement, collaboration, mobilization processes, risk identification practices and risk reduction efforts. There is a wide array of questions, observations and perspectives that evaluators could reveal through formative evaluation processes. Such an approach would not only improve the application and functionality of community safety initiatives in Ontario, but help prepare them for summative evaluations.

While we are currently a little ways away from a comprehensive summative approach to evaluation in Ontario, collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators should start thinking about ways they can measure the efficacy of their initiative—at least with respect to achieving short-term outcomes¹. Examining initial implications of community mobilization, service engagement and client connections to services may help evaluators demonstrate the extent to which Ontario's community safety and well-being initiatives are achieving preliminary success.

Were someone to inquire about the evaluability of Ontario's various collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives, they would likely find that most opportunities—at least for now—are in formative evaluation. However, there will be growing opportunities in summative evaluation as these initiatives become more refined and consistent. With respect to developmental evaluation, while several initiatives are starting to coalesce around a similar framework, there is still room for efforts by developmental evaluators. Figure 1 depicts the author's personal view of the maturity of evaluation that focuses on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being.

¹ One example is the Risk-Factor Tracking Tool developed by Babayan and Landry (2015b).

Figure 1.
The Current Progress of Evaluation in Ontario – Spanning Three Different Approaches



Although most of the current evaluation opportunities are formative in nature, the oval progress sphere in Figure 1 will definitely shift towards summative evaluation as these initiatives become more solidified. Being there are still important opportunities left in developmental approaches to evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives, this evaluation framework will attempt to support evaluation work occurring within any one of these three approaches.

3.1 EVALUATION THEMES

While there is currently room for evaluators to develop opportunities in developmental, formative or summative approaches to evaluation, one of the objectives of this document is to try and bring the good efforts of evaluators together—for the sake of everyone contributing to a more common knowledge and understanding of collaborative risk-driven community safety.

Through outreach to evaluators currently working on collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives in Ontario, several themes became apparent. These include collaboration, risk, mobilization and the multiple short- and long-term outcomes associated with risk reduction. Even the limited published work on this topic (Mcfee & Taylor, 2014; Nilson, 2014; Russell & Taylor, 2014) has tried to build a conceptual and practical understanding of community safety within these four themes.

It is not the intent of this evaluation framework to prescribe the direction, scope or focus of evaluation on collaborative risk-driven community safety. However, there is a hope that evaluators, and their stakeholders, will see the collective value that everyone will benefit from if evaluations on these such initiatives contribute knowledge and understanding within the themes of *collaboration*, *risk*, *mobilization*, and *outcomes*.

3.2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Driving evaluation is typically a number of questions developed through consultation with community stakeholders and reference to the goals and objectives of an initiative. Since most of Ontario’s efforts in collaborative risk-driven community safety are either beginning—or have recently succeeded in—forming partnerships, developing an implementation strategy, and collaborating to reduce risk; many of the salient questions evaluators may ask fall into the developmental or formative evaluation approaches. Of course, there are also emerging opportunities in summative evaluation that solicit their own types of questions.

Table 2 suggests a number of different questions that evaluators may want to consider in developing their own evaluation plans. These questions were derived from a look at current work (Babayan & Landry, 2015a; Babayan & Landry, 2015b; Newberry & Brown, 2014; Ng & Nerad, 2015; North Bay Parry

Sound District Health Unit, 2014a; Snelling, 2014) being done within an informal network of collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators, as well as through insights gathered for the OWG (Russell & Taylor, 2014b; Russell & Taylor, 2015), past evaluations (Broad & Doxtater, 2015; Litchmore, 2015; Nilson, 2014), as well as the author's own identification of relevant evaluation questions.

Table 2. Examples of Evaluation Questions in Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety

Evaluation Type	Evaluation Topic	Evaluation Questions
Developmental	Problem	What is the main issue this initiative is concerned with?
	Innovation	What innovation is required?
	Creation	How will this initiative be created?
	Conceptualization	What is this initiative about?
		What does this initiative involve?
	Principles	What are the key principles of this initiative?
	Leadership	Who is leading this initiative?
		Who are the key champions?
		Is there a steering committee?
		How is the steering committee organized?
	Ownership	Is there shared ownership of this initiative?
	Objective	What is the objective of this initiative?
	Evolution	How can this initiative evolve?
Vision	What vision drives this initiative?	
Communication	What communication is required?	
Formative	Identifying a Need	What is the state of community safety and well-being?
		What current pressures exist?
		What are the community demands?
	Determining Capacity	What are the required personnel?
		What are the required resources?
		What expertise is required?
		What level of agency engagement is required?
	Forming Partnerships	Who is involved?
		How are potential partners approached?
		What are the roles of partner agencies?
		How are expectations established?
		What are the mutual expectations?
		How are relationships formed?
	Developing a Plan	What activities are expected?
		Which staff resources will be involved?
		Who is involved in the planning process?
		How are goals developed?
		What are the benchmarks for success?
		Who will lead the development?
	Change	What internal change is required?
		What external change is required?
		What systemic changes are required?
		What realignment is required?
Implementation	What activities are undertaken in this initiative?	

		How are practices determined?
		What practices are most effective?
		What is the target group?
		How is the target group engaged?
		How does collaboration occur?
		How is risk identified?
		How does mobilization occur?
		How is risk addressed?
		What is consistent?
		What is irregular?
		What information is shared?
		What data are collected and stored?
	Consequences of Implementation	Has this affected service workload?
		Has this affected service provider-client relations?
		Has this affected service provider-service provider relations?
		Has this affected service provider-community partner relations?
	Satisfaction	Are service providers satisfied?
		Are community partners satisfied?
		Are clients satisfied?
	Benefits	In what way have service providers benefited?
		In what way have community partners benefited?
		In what way have clients benefited?
		In what way has the overall service delivery system benefited?
	Challenges	What are the failed expectations?
		What barriers have been encountered?
		What progress has been lost?
		What inefficiencies exist?
		What difficulties have occurred?
	Opportunities for Improvement	How can the partnerships be improved?
		How can implementation be improved?
		How can the practices be improved?
		How can collaboration be improved?
		How can risk identification be improved?
		How can mobilization be improved?
Summative	Impact on Service Providers	Are service providers more effective in their work?
		Are service providers more informed in their work with clients?
		Are service providers more knowledgeable of other services?
		Are service providers more connected in their work?
		Are service providers experiencing increased communication?
		Is there increased collaboration among service providers?
	Impact on Services	Are services more effective?
		Are services more efficient?
		How has the human service delivery system improved?
		Has there been a reduction in barriers to service?
		Is there greater capacity to address root causes of harm?
	Impact on Clients	Are clients gaining better access to services?
		Are clients engaging in services?
		Do clients feel supported?
		Are client needs being met?
		Has risk been reduced?

		How has risk been reduced?
		Are clients experiencing improved safety and well-being outcomes?
	Impact on Community Safety	Are there improvements in community safety? Is there a change in violence? Are community disturbances decreasing? Is there a reduced fear of crime? Are there fewer injuries? Is crime lower? Are there less accidents?
	Impact on Well-Being	Are there improvements in well-being? Have substance abuse patterns decreased? Are families better able to meet their basic needs? Has poverty decreased? Is there increased access to housing? Have graduation rates improved? Is employment on the rise? Is disease and illness declining?
	Sustainability	Is the initiative sustainable?
		Are the achieved outcomes sustainable?

3.3 MAPPING PROGRAM THEORY

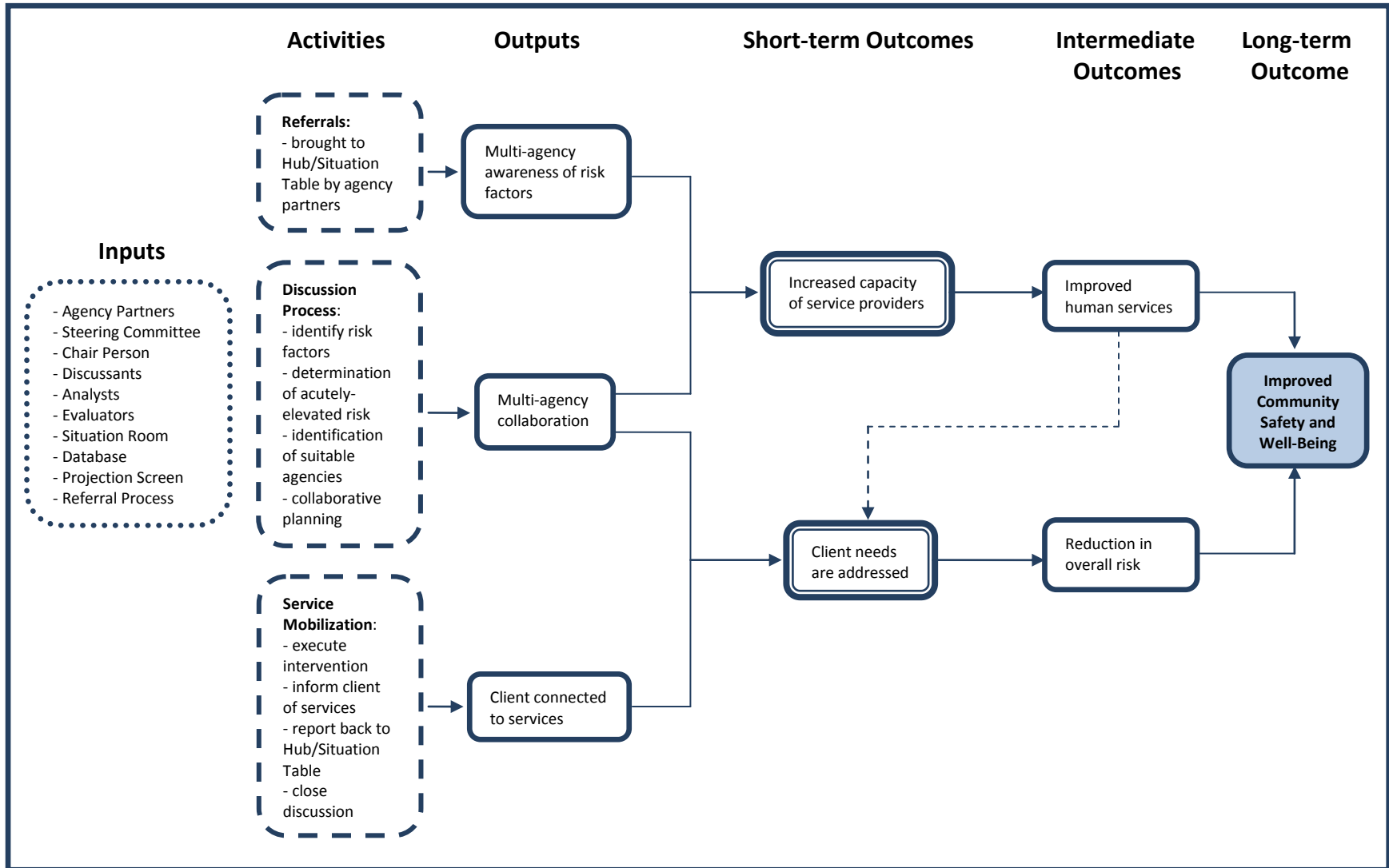
A common exercise undertaken by evaluators to conceptualize and verify proper understanding of a program is mapping a program’s theory. The result of this process is a logic model, which in a linear fashion, outlines a program’s inputs; activities; outputs generated by the activities; and intended outcomes that are produced en route to the program achieving its overall objectives. While there is no set template for mapping program theory for collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, some similar trends appear in the work of evaluators (Babayán & Landry, 2015b; Community Mobilization Sudbury, 2015; Nilson, 2014; North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, 2015) who have spent time conceptualizing the work of situation tables.

The common inputs for situation tables include agency partners, a meeting space, steering committee, chairperson, discussants, computer, projection screen, evaluator, data analyst, and referral process. The activities of situation tables typically include a referral process; a discussion process—which includes identifying risk factors, collaborative determination of acutely-elevated risk, identification of suitable agencies, and collaborative planning; and service mobilization—which includes intervention execution, connection to services, reporting back and discussion closure. Common outputs found in situation table logic models include multi-agency awareness of risk, collaborative partnerships, mobilization of services, client involvement in service planning, and engagement in services. Some of the short-term outcomes generated may include increased capacity or service providers, increased collaboration of service providers and client needs are addressed. Moving down the logic model, intermediate outcomes may include a lowering of risk and improved service delivery. Finally, the most common long-term outcome of situation table logic models is improved client outcomes, which contributes to improved community safety and well-being.

A sample logic model for collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives using the Situation/Hub model is provided in Figure 2. A glossary to help evaluators navigate through some common terms in the field is provided in the appendices.



Figure 2. Sample Logic Model for Situation/Hub Tables



3.4 ESTABLISHING INDICATORS

One of the important tasks of an evaluator is to identify and assign indicators for the variables they have chosen to measure. Whether an evaluation is driven by questions of development, process or outcomes, the indicators designed and included within the evaluation matrix become the core of that evaluation. Therefore, it is important for evaluators to be strategic and thorough in the development of their indicators.

With respect to influence over indicators, some research teams (Reed, Fraser & Dougill, 2006) advocate for a balanced approach to developing indicators. This balance occurs between developing indicators through an expert-led, top-down approach and developing indicators through a community-based bottom-up approach. While the former promotes consistency and robustness, the latter may ensure local accuracy and community buy-in to the data collection process.

While strategy, expert opinion and community consultation are important influencers of indicator development, another strong influence is data availability (United Way, 1999). While evaluators may intend to develop the best, most-valid and reliable indicators possible, data availability—compounded with evaluator resources, project timelines, and community capacity to provide the data—all play a major role in the assignment of indicators to variables appearing in the evaluation matrix.

As evaluators work through the different options of indicator development, there are two crucial things the author of this framework wishes to share. The first is that in order for evaluations of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being to be successful, there must be a strong and assertive push to engage community safety initiatives in ongoing monitoring and evaluative support. In order for this type of evaluation to be effective, communities must embrace the fact that evaluation needs to be part of the whole process of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being.

Another important note the author wishes to share within this discussion on indicators, is that the most difficult challenge in evaluation of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives is going to be linking initiative activities to the intended outcomes. As the ‘challenges’ section of this framework will discuss, community safety stakeholders see evaluation as a tool to verify attainment of the community safety and well-being outcomes. While changes in outcome data may be visible, linking those changes back to program outputs and short-term outcomes—in other words, verifying the program logic—will require a significant effort on a part of evaluators.

These two points have been addressed in this section to accomplish two things; to inspire evaluators to begin thinking about soliciting community support for ongoing monitoring; and to bring attention to a non-imperative, laborious—but nonetheless rewarding—endeavour in the measurement of community safety and well-being outcomes.

Suggestions of Indicators

The indicators suggested in this framework were developed within the broader context of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being in mind. Unless an evaluation team has been awarded with an impressive budget and unlimited time, it is very unlikely that one would see all of these indicators in the evaluation matrix of a single evaluation project. However, because Ontario evaluators are at different stages of their work in collaborative risk-driven community safety, a broad array of suggestions are provided.



One thing that evaluators may note about these suggestions of indicators is that they are primarily the types of indicators one would find in formative evaluation, and less for developmental and summative evaluation. This framework strongly supports evaluative work within a developmental evaluation approach; however the nature of developmental evaluation limits pre-described indicators. While this framework does offer several suggestions for indicators that would contribute towards a summative evaluation, a much more rigorous and comprehensive account of community safety and well-being outcome measures can be found in Russell and Taylor’s (2014b; 2014c) previous work for the OWG. In that work, Russell and Taylor provide an impressive assortment of indicators for measuring social development, prevention, risk mitigation and emergency response.

The indicators suggested in this framework are divided into the four main evaluation themes: collaboration, risk, mobilization and outcomes. This list of indicators is most relevant to initiatives which are designed to foster collaboration among multiple human service providers for the purposes of identifying risk; mobilizing services to reduce these risks; and, in turn, improving community safety and well-being. It should be noted that this list of suggested indicators is by no means comprehensive. Rather, it is intended to provide evaluators with a sense of some of the possible indicators which can be used for evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives in Ontario (see Table 3).

Table 3. **Suggestions of Indicators for Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety and Well-Being**

Evaluation Theme	Suggested Indicators	
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of agencies involved • Level of commitment among agencies • Service provider sense of collaboration • Formal agreements in place • Formal communication channels in place • Information sharing mechanism in place • # of opportunities for information sharing • Partner understanding of roles of others • Shared perspectives of the initiative • Cohesion among partner agencies • Alignment of agency priorities • Opportunity for ongoing feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared sense of responsibility • Shared sense of ownership • Awareness of mutual benefits • Comfort level of communication • Sense of interdependence • Sense of reciprocity • Shared value of relationships • # of meetings between managers • # of meetings between staff • # of shared interest initiatives • # of interagency activities • Shared sense of mutual risk
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of risk factors • # of acutely-elevated risk situations • # of risk reductions • # of situations reopening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved risk assessment scores • Changes in risk factors • Client perceptions of risk • Human service provider perceptions of risk
Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of situation referrals • # accepted as acutely-elevated risk • # of situations discussed • # of interventions planned • # of interventions mobilized • # of interventions completed • # of services informed • # of services connected • # of services engaged • # of agencies involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of agencies reporting back • # of agencies following up with client • # of referrals to outside agencies • Human service provider satisfaction • Duration of service provisions • Length of time to access services • # of situation rejections • # of agency tasks • # of systemic issues identified • Personnel commitments of agencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of agencies bringing situations • # of agencies participating in intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff availability to participate • # of intra-agency referrals
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved agency capacity • Improved service provider knowledge • Improved service responsiveness • Decreased wait times • Client satisfaction • Client access to services • Reduced barriers to service access • Reduced calls for police • Reduced charges • Reduced crime • Reduced victimization • Reduced fear of crime • Reduced emergency room visits • Reduced hospital admissions • Detox admissions • Reduced relapse • Addictions treatment completions • Addictions recovery • Alcohol consumption • Drug use • Client health status • Income assistance caseload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection reports • Child protection investigations • Child protection diversions • Child protection apprehensions • School truancy • School drop-out • School graduation • Breach of probation orders • Compliance with probation orders • Mental health admissions • Mental health status • Mental health breakdowns • Incidents of domestic violence • Incidents of public disturbance • Unemployment • Homelessness • Suicide • Evictions • Gangs • Mortality • Injury • Sickness

3.5 DATA COLLECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Once evaluators establish their indicators, the next important task is to collect data. Within collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, there are a number of different data collection opportunities. As in many other evaluation projects, data can be collected from internal reporting and documents; interviews or focus groups facilitated by the evaluator; or by external data sources that measure the desired condition.

Typically, evaluation data sources are described as primary or secondary. Within this framework, however, a third data source will be proposed: hybrid data. While other evaluation methodologists (Alkin, 2011; Hox & Boeije, 2005) typically distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* data collection, this framework highlights the important distinction of *hybrid data*. For the purposes of this framework, the sole hybrid data source is the data captured by many situation tables during their discussion process. These data are not only captured to support evaluation, but to support situation tables in their day-to-day activities of risk identification and service mobilization.

As Table 4 illustrates, there are three types of data which collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being evaluators will likely work with: primary, secondary and hybrid. Primary data are typically collected through interviews, focus groups, observations and surveys. Data sources include clients, human service providers, agency managers and community safety stakeholders. Secondary data can be collected through partner agency databases, community organizations, government databases, and various reports and publications. Finally, hybrid data are gathered through a Risk Tracking Database that provides opportunities for evaluators and community safety practitioners alike to benefit.



Table 4. Data Collection Sources by Method and Type

Data Type	Collection Methods	Sources
Primary Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Observations • Surveys • Evaluation instruments 	clients; human service providers; agency managers; community safety stakeholders
Secondary Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner agency database • Community organization database • Government database • Academic/Other database • Reports and publications 	partner agencies; community agencies; government agencies; scientists; other evaluators
Hybrid Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk tracking database 	data entered during live situation table discussions

Overall, there are some special considerations that evaluators may want to examine while planning their own evaluation of a collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being initiative. In particular, these include the *Risk Tracking Database*, client feedback, risk reduction and data linkage.

Risk Tracking Database

As several evaluators who the author reached out to in preparation of this framework describe, we should collect very similar process-level data across all common initiatives. One very common community safety and well-being initiative in Ontario is the launch of risk-driven rapid mobilization tables modelled after the Hub in Prince Albert, SK. Generically known as *situation tables* in Ontario, these venues for identifying risk, sharing limited information and executing a multi-sector intervention, provide a unique opportunity for process-level data collection.

As Russell and Taylor (2014c) describe in their earlier report to the Ontario Working Group, the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is in the process of piloting a de-identified risk and intervention database that helps situation tables gather the necessary information to assist in evaluation, but also to support ongoing discussions brought up at the situation table. Becoming known as the *Risk Tracking Database* in Ontario, this online interface provides situation tables with an opportunity to secure data and access those data to help further a discussion at the situation table, or to help in the analysis of risk patterns, mobilization of services, and other basic information.

The Risk Tracking Database was heavily influenced by the original 2012 Prince Albert Hub database developed through cooperation between Community Mobilization Prince Albert and the University of Saskatchewan’s Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies. A more recent version of the Hub database was uploaded onto a provincial platform by Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Justice – Corrections and Policing using Microsoft Case Records Management software. In an inter-provincial agreement between the governments of Ontario and Saskatchewan, the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services acquired a copy of the database, which it is currently piloting in North Bay.

According to its designers (Nilson, Winterberger & Young, 2015a:1), the Hub database in Saskatchewan yields multiple benefits. These include:

- Identification of systemic issues and root causes of social problems.
- Provide opportunities for analysis and research, resulting in new solutions to systemic issues and social problems.
- Effectively support ongoing Hub discussions.
- Protect privacy rights of individuals discussed at the Hub table.
- Account for the due diligence of Hub discussants in their efforts to reduce risk.
- Help improve the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the Hub discussion process.
- Build capacity for proper and systematic evaluation that assesses the reach, performance and impact of the mobilization process by measuring outputs and outcomes of the Hub discussion.
- Justify collaborative intervention as an effective tool of public safety and wellness.
- Assist in replication of the Hub model in other jurisdictions.

The Hub database in Saskatchewan, which has had considerable influence on Ontario's Risk Tracking Database, was piloted continuously over a two year period at the Prince Albert Hub. It has now been implemented in all of Saskatchewan's Hubs. Variables in the Hub database include: discussion type; subject gender; subject age cohort; subject role; whether discussion involves a YCJA conference; whether a discussion is a reopening; the old discussion number (if it is a reopening); risk factors; issue flags; study flags; originating agency; lead agency; supporting agency; open/close/pending dates; services mobilized; number of times discussed at Hub table; reasons for rejection/closure; transfer to another Hub; date of transfer; and destination of transfer (Nilson, Winterberger & Young, 2015b).

In Ontario, one of the initiatives piloting the Risk Tracking Database has been the North Bay Gateway Hub. After piloting the database, analysts from North Bay (North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, 2014b) reported findings on the number of referrals; concluded situations; number of individuals helped; age; gender; risk factors; originating agencies; lead agencies; assisting agencies; non-Hub assisting agencies; and study flags. The overall results of North Bay's analysis suggest that the database is user-friendly and an effective risk tracking tool for Hub practitioners.

As Ontario begins to move from piloting the Risk Tracking Database to implementing it in situation tables across the province, there are a few suggestions for evaluators and database developers. The first is that the single most important feature of the database is that it must be user-friendly. It is critical that data entry, including the number of variables on the database, is not so onerous and cumbersome that it undermines the synergy, speed and flow of the discussion process. Significant piloting of the Saskatchewan Hub database has resulted in guides for training Hub practitioners to participate in data-friendly Hub discussions that can accommodate data collection without slowing the pace and synergy of a Hub discussion (see Nilson, Winterberger & Young, 2015c). Ontario may want to consider developing the same strategy, so that consistent data collection produces good quality data without impacting discussions occurring at situation tables.

Another suggestion for evaluators and analysts alike to work with their local situation tables to create interest, ownership and buy-in to the Risk Tracking Database. Doing so will not only make data collection easier, but it will prevent frustrations and resentment towards data collection during situation table meetings.

A third suggestion for government and collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators is to develop a multi-sector Risk Tracking Database consortium. Although the Ministry of Community Safety

and Corrections has taken the lead in developing the Risk Tracking Database, continued buy-in, support and efficacy of the database requires feedback from all sectors involved in collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being. That being said, however, the partners involved in such a consortium must also subscribe to the notion that consistency is the key to quality data collection. As such, changes to the database should be minimal, and completed sooner than later.

One minor, yet feasible suggestion is for the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections to title the database, “*Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety and Well-Being Database*”. The reason for this is because the database offers much more than just tracking risk. It provides an opportunity to also track mobilization and connection to services—risk is just one part of the process.

A final suggestion for Ontario concerning the database is that communities need to be supported in their implementation of the database. While evaluators may very well have the skill and coaching ability to help their initiatives, there needs to be some central support for communities to access when they are having difficulty with data entry and/or extraction of the data. Proper training to data enterers and both situation table chairs and discussants, will help provide a good foundation for implementation of the database.

Client Feedback

Another suggestion for evaluators to consider in data collection is gathering perspectives from the client. Much of the limited work on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being (Broad & Doxtater, 2015; Litchmore, 2015; Nilson, 2014a; North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, 2014b) has called for interviews/surveys with clients who have been the subject of a collaborative risk-driven intervention. While feedback from human service providers involved with individuals in situations of acutely-elevated risk is very valuable, there needs to be more data gathered from their actual clients. Having a client perspective will deepen and enrich our understanding of the impact that collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being may have on clients, their risk factors, satisfaction, and perspectives on multi-sector teams offering supports through an intervention process.

Risk Reduction

One of the more important tasks for evaluators to engage in is the measurement of risk reduction. Currently, the field is wide open. Past evaluations (Broad & Doxtater, 2015; Litchmore, 2015; Nilson, 2014a; North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, 2014b) on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being have typically held ‘situation closure’ as an indicator of risk reduction. While this framework is not the appropriate venue to argue for or against such a measurement, other ways to operationalize risk reduction would be quite welcomed. Some suggestions (Nilson, 2014a) to future evaluators include developing an aggregate measure of risk reduction that incorporates data from multiple agencies; and/or developing a multi-sector risk assessment tool that is administered to situation table subjects before and after a mobilization of services and supports. In sum, this framework proposes that successful evaluation of collaborative risk-driven community safety requires us to open the book on methodological innovation and start writing a chapter on measuring composite risk.

Data Linkage

The final suggestion concerning data collection involves a discussion around data linkage. As governments support the development of partnerships to address complex issues such as poverty,

economic development and crime, there is a growing need for shared information systems among multi-agency networks (Wastell et al., 2004). As alluded to in this framework, measuring community safety and well-being outcomes will require a significant collaborative effort from all sectors in the human services. Collaboration among government and community-based organizations to link data and share information that will help measure various outcomes will not only save time, effort and expense for all those involved, but it will rapidly advance the measurement of outcomes (Plantz, Greenway & Hendricks, 2006).

In their powerful essay on collective impact, Kania and Kramer (2011: 36) argue that, “large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations”. In an effort to enlighten new opportunities for social change, Kania and Kramer reveal five conditions, that together, produce true alignment and lead to positive results in collective impact: “(a) a common agenda; (b) shared measurement systems; (c) mutually reinforcing activities; (d) continuous communication; and, (d) backbone support organizations” (p.39). Regarding *shared measurement systems*, there may be a real opportunity for evaluators to be a part of social change in Ontario—simply by working with organizations to realize the collective value of shared measurement. As more data become available from specific sectors involved in collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, we will develop a better understanding of risk reduction. Of course, that understanding is narrowed by the very silo the data originate. More optimal for comprehensive measurement of community safety and well-being, is a cross-sector, system-wide measure of aggregate risk reduction; followed by an aggregate measure of community safety and well-being outcomes.

In essence, just as community safety stakeholders are being innovative in their work on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, evaluators must also be innovative in their indicators and data collection. The author of this framework suggests that measuring community safety and well-being outcomes requires innovation in methodology. With proper privacy protections in place, evaluators must find ways to form links between databases that have historically been segregated.

3.6 DISSEMINATION AND EXCHANGE

As evaluators begin to wrap-up their contributions to our understanding of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, it is important that they start to consider dissemination and exchange of their work with other evaluators. In his description of the evaluative process, Alkin (2011) proposes that evaluation in itself, is a communication process. It is an opportunity for evaluators to share with others, what has been achieved and what improvements can be made to further improve the probability of success. Alkin furthers that evaluation is not merely an intellectual exercise resulting in a report, but should serve as an opportunity for evaluation stakeholders to learn and expand. In fact, evaluators can, and should, play a major role in helping communities use the evaluative process to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of their initiative.

In following Alkin’s advice, evaluators in Ontario should feel encouraged to share their work, demonstrate the utility of their indicators, and allow others to learn from their own challenges and limitations. As mentioned previously in this framework, the world of evaluation concerning collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being is quite small, but it is growing quickly. Helping other evaluators and community safety stakeholders learn from your work is the single best contribution an evaluator can make to the discipline. Communities should also be supportive and included in the process of results dissemination and knowledge exchange. Doing so will help improve collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being across Ontario and beyond.

3.7 BUILDING CAPACITY FOR EVALUATION

This document is designed to help support ongoing and future evaluations of collaborative risk-driven community safety in Ontario, however it will be of little help if there is no capacity for evaluation to be a part of the initiatives that would benefit from evaluation. In essence, this section reaches out to community safety stakeholders—who from a planning, partnership and budgeting perspective—are in a position to build capacity for evaluation.

There are a few things that would help communities build capacity for evaluation. These include the time and interest of community safety stakeholders to become involved in the evaluative process; access to available evaluators with sufficient experience in multi-sector collaboration initiatives; and financial or in-kind resources to make evaluation possible.

With respect to resources to make evaluation possible, both in-kind and additional financial support have allowed for evaluation on collaborative risk-driven community safety to occur in Ontario. As preceding sections in this document have revealed, private consultants, internal evaluators from partners to the initiative, and academics from universities have all joined the growing evaluation network in Ontario. There are pros and cons to each type of evaluator. Private consultants cost money, however, they can focus on an initiative and work quite efficiently. In-kind, internal evaluators trigger no actual costs, but they will often have other projects that they need to balance their efforts on. University-based evaluators will provide a well-rounded evaluation that receives a lot of attention, but there is both the question of cost and the demands of other projects that should be considered.

The author of this document rates the quality of work from private consultants, internal evaluators from partner agencies, and academics as 100% equal. Whatever needs and opportunities arise within an initiative will have a major impact on the type of evaluator that becomes involved in a project. Ultimately, however, the most influential factor for evaluator type will be access. In other words, who is available and interested to be a part of the initiative?

With respect to community stakeholders who have a planning, partnership and budgeting perspective, they are urged to make evaluation an integral part of their initiative. Growth and refinement can only occur if the experience, outputs and outcomes of an initiative are measured, documented and communicated to those involved in the initiative. With an admitted bias, the author of this document believes that there is an incredible value-for-dollar in involving evaluators in collaborative risk-driven community safety initiatives.

4.0 CHALLENGES IN EVALUATING COLLABORATIVE RISK-DRIVEN COMMUNITY SAFETY

One of the most useful things an evaluation framework can do is provide evaluators with a sense of the potential challenges they may face in evaluation. If evaluators are aware of these challenges before they even begin evaluation planning, it may help them more efficiently and effectively accomplish their evaluation goals. In her review of evaluation frameworks, Kahan (2008: 57) revealed several typical challenges in evaluation. These include:

- **Context** – pressure from external forces to only conduct certain types of evaluations with certain methods.
- **Resources** – lack of time, funding, energy, personnel, skills.
- **Measurement** – Inappropriate indicators; emphasis on one type of indicator.
- **Data Collection and Analysis** – insufficient or inaccurate data; limited access to data.
- **Sensitivity** – cultural, political or historical sensitivities.
- **Imbalance** – only outcome evaluations; only process evaluations.
- **Participation** – getting sufficient participation from different stakeholders.
- **Follow Up** – evaluation results are ignored.
- **Planning** – insufficient thought to design, methods, stakeholder engagement.
- **Power** – different power struggles between frontline staff, partners, managers.
- **Complexity** – multiple sites, partners and activities involved.

With respect to evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety in particular, there are a number of challenges that may emerge within each of the four themes proposed in this framework. Each challenge may present different barriers to different evaluations, but awareness of these challenges may hopefully help all evaluators.

Challenges in Measuring Collaboration

One of the most challenging factors for evaluators to address is collaboration itself. Prior to measurement of collaboration occurring, the structures around collaboration need to be plainly conceptualized in both practical and theoretical terms (Pautler & Gagne, 2005). This is not always easy, particularly when evaluating socially-innovative initiatives (Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2006).

Another challenge with measuring collaboration is that there are a number of variables upon which collaboration can be measured. These include frequency of collaboration (Brucker & Shields, 2003), the interdisciplinary-ness of the collaboration (Sicotte, D'Amour, & Moreault, 2002), strength of the relationships among collaborators (Gerdes et al, 2001), motivation levels of collaborators (Millward & Jeffries, 2001), decision-making patterns (Cashman et al., 2004) and satisfaction among collaborators (Farrar, et al. 2001). Such diversity can make the work of an evaluator quite complicated.

A final challenge with measuring collaboration is that the topic is complex, and involves the perspectives of multiple partners. To help provide support to evaluators, Knapp (1995) proposes three key factors required for evaluating collaborative initiatives:

- Ensuring that the perspective of all players in the collaboration is represented in the evaluation.
- Being specific about what is being measured in the evaluation, including processes, impacts and outcomes.



- Attributing effects to causes, which is often difficult because collaborative programs are multi-faceted and operate in complex systems.

Challenges in Measuring Risk

A second challenge for evaluators is measuring risk, and more so, a reduction in risk. As past researchers (Baird, 2009; Kraemer et al., 1997) observe, it is challenging to identify which risk factors increase the probability of harm in a given population. A risk factor for one population may not be a risk factor for another population. Similarly, predicting risk in an individual can become complicated as one characteristic may be considered a risk factor while another characteristic may be considered a protective factor (Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Kraemer et al., 1997). These conditions make uniform measurement of risk a challenge.

Before selecting an instrument to measure risk, it is important that evaluators are clear about the purpose and goals guiding the measurement of risk (Caudy, Durso & Taxman, 2013). It is also important to understand the various strengths and limitations of the tool, and to take into account who will be involved in the application of the instrument. Different instruments require different skill levels to conduct assessments and interpret the results (Austin, 2006). Within the realm of collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being, there are multiple sectors involved. This brings diversity into the perspective of risk, which may make administration of a standard risk measurement tool complicated.

In addition to challenges in measuring risk, there may also be challenges in measuring risk reduction and the link to interventions which are assumed to have reduced such risk (Belfrage & Strand, 2012). Evaluators should consider testing assumptions about risk reduction to ensure that the assessment and corresponding intervention strategy actually resulted in a reduction of risk itself (Byrne & Pattavina, 2006). When trying to attribute risk reduction to an initiative's intervention, evaluators should develop instruments that are sensitive to dynamic risk factors that will change on their own—with or without an intervention (Baird, 2009; Caudy, Durso & Taxman, 2013).

Challenges in Measuring Mobilization

When it comes to measuring the mobilization of community partners, there are a number of challenges that stem from the mobilization process. The reason for this is because mobilization itself is riddled with challenges (Murray & James, 2012). Within mobilization, each agency has a different area of responsibility and an overall approach to service delivery (Pirkis et al., 2004). In order for multiple service providers to collaborate effectively, each has to understand the service context of the other providers and commit to that collaboration (Beach, Webster & Campbell, 2005). Lastly, different understandings of the mobilization process among community partners, variation in the commitment of leadership, and a lack of early project support, all have a considerable impact on the conceptualization of mobilization (Trend & Holder, 1997). Without a solid conceptualization of the mobilization process, evaluators may have difficulty planning their evaluation.

Another challenge of measuring mobilization is that there is not a lot of evaluation literature to learn from. One scan (Giunta & Thomas, 2013) of evaluations on community mobilization found that there was very little empirical knowledge or systematic inquiry into how evaluation strategies can best be applied to collaborative partnerships engaging in systems-change efforts. This leaves little opportunity for evaluators to consider other evaluation methodologies on the topic.

A third challenge for evaluators is that the mobilization process itself is imbedded in social change, and therefore provides complex social, cultural, political and economic factors for evaluators to be aware of (Parker, 1996). On account of this, evaluators must consider a variety of activities and outputs, all within different contexts, and all through the different stages of the mobilization process (Wylie, 2011). This makes for measurement of mobilization to be a complex and detail-oriented endeavour.

Challenges in Measuring Outcomes

A final set of challenges in evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being is measuring outcomes. As a significant amount of work that evaluators will do in this area may very well be characterized as *developmental evaluation*, it becomes quite probable that the goals and concepts of an initiative are in the process of being framed while evaluators begin their own planning. This makes the identification of outcome indicators a challenge, simply because in this early stage, the role of the evaluator is often to foster adaptive learning—and where appropriate—intervene to shape the course of development (Dozios, Langlois & Blanchet-Cohen, 2010). This provides little opportunity to identify outcome variables, let alone operationalize them.

A related challenge in measuring outcomes for collaborative risk-driven community safety is that it involves multiple partners from multiple sectors. Measuring outcomes of an initiative that involves multiple partners may become difficult because each organization may have their own goals and perspectives on what the initiative is designed to achieve (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004). Similarly, differences may occur between client and service provider perspectives on what constitutes a successful outcome (Noble et al., 2013).

Another challenge in measuring outcomes is that the further along a linear logic model that evaluative inquiry occurs, the more difficult it becomes to verify linkages between outcomes and activities of the initiative (Plantz, Greenway & Hendricks, 2006). As the United Way (1999) shares, “a frequent problem is that available community indicators often are too broad to track change in the specific outcomes the initiative seeks to influence” (p.2). They add that identifying indicators of community outcomes which are specific enough to the condition of interest is often a difficult task. Evaluators must be able to demonstrate that change in the indicators can be taken as a reliable and valid reflection of change in the outcome.

A third challenge in measurement is that measuring community outcomes requires data from multiple sources. This will require exceptional planning and communication on the part of the evaluator. In many ways, this makes the measurement of outcomes quite vulnerable to the willingness, capacity and effort of community agencies to provide adequate data for outcome measurement. As evaluators try to gather data from multiple sources, they may encounter technical and ethical barriers to accessing data (Nancarrow, 2013); legal barriers or differences in agency mission (Urahn, 2015); or an unwillingness for scientists to share data (Tenopir et al., 2011). Additional barriers to accessing multi-agency data can also be structural, cultural, methodological or practical in nature (Lloyd & Harrington, 2013).

Finally, one of the more common barriers to outcome measurement in collaborative risk-driven community safety is the point of intervention itself. As human service providers from multiple sectors work to identify risk and mobilize appropriate services, it may become difficult for evaluators to identify where the point of an intervention stops (Nancarrow, 2013). Other intervention-related barriers include challenges with intervention reporting (Fallon et al., 2010); barriers in actual measurement of the

intervention (Strickland, 1997); fidelity limitations within intervention itself (Stuczynski & Kimmich, 2010); and, the ability of evaluators to account for all parts of a complex intervention that may have an impact on client outcomes (Campbell et al., 2000).

A Perspective from Ontario Evaluators

In conducting outreach with collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators in Ontario, the author spent time learning about the challenges they faced in their own experience. These challenges cover a wide array of topics; some that were covered in the literature reviewed above, and others that were not. To save the genuineness of their observations, Figure 3 shares their comments in raw form.

Figure 3. **Evaluator-Identified Challenges in Evaluating Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety**

- There is lack of direction and communication across the province. Lots of people are implementing various initiatives, and evaluating them, but there is currently nothing that ties us all together.
- Community safety stakeholders may not always have a strong background in research, and so may not realize the types of information that would be useful to the evaluator.
- The developmental nature of collaborative risk-driven community safety is challenging for evaluation planning.
- Communication gaps between frontline staff and upper management makes it difficult for evaluators to gain access to the information they need.
- There is a bit of role uncertainty among community safety stakeholders which makes it difficult to develop evaluation questions.
- Agencies want different things out of the evaluation, which makes the development of evaluation questions a significant challenge.
- Agencies are not naturally good at collaboration and sharing, so it is difficult to navigate through all the partners to get what is needed for evaluation.
- The complexity of community mobilization makes engaging initiative stakeholders difficult when trying to help them conceptualize their model.
- Being immersed into the model was an incredible luxury as an evaluator, however resources are needed to provide evaluators with that level of involvement across Ontario.
- Evaluators tend to work alone, or in small networks across the province. Without a sharing mechanism, it is difficult to engage and exchange lessons learned in measurement.
- Funders of evaluation have their own interests, which shape the direction, scope and focus of the evaluation.
- Not being able to link identifiable data makes measurement of client outcomes challenging.
- Friction among community partners makes it difficult to seek direction.
- There is a limited global understanding of what community mobilization is, and what it may look like in different communities.
- The timing of evaluation is challenging. Between fiscal year demands and summer holidays, there are large gaps with limited progress.
- It is difficult to evaluate a moving target. The evolution of the initiative to meet the needs of various partners presents a lot of variation in the model.
- It is very difficult to measure long-term community safety and well-being outcomes—let alone attribute them back to the model.
- All the situation tables in Ontario are funded differently, structured and staffed differently. That means evaluators are pulled in different directions.
- Being this is a multi-sector initiative, it's going to be challenging determining who will give the direction to use common measurement tools, processes and reporting structures.
- When all the community safety stakeholders are focused on trying to get the initiative up and running, it is hard to get them to focus on what is required for the evaluation.
- The demands of implementing an initiative sometimes results in evaluators being invited to come in well after things have already started.
- There are so many possible outcomes in collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being that trying to measure them becomes daunting. It is even more difficult to explain to community stakeholders the challenges in measuring them all.
- It is often a challenge to get managers to understand the time commitment required to participate in ongoing data collection and evaluation.
- Short timelines and limited budgets have an impact on the potential for any evaluation.

5.0 MOBILIZING A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING EVALUATORS

In order to build a strong foundation of research and evaluation in collaborative risk-driven community safety, there is a need for evaluators to have the opportunity to share their own experiences with conceptualization, stakeholder involvement, measurement, data collection, analysis and dissemination. As Nilson (2014a) notes in Canada's first evaluation of the Hub model, evaluating collaborative risk-driven community safety is a lonely place. By virtue of this largely being what some (Patton, 2011) would describe as a social innovation, there are relatively few evaluators, past studies or observations to learn from.

Of course, there are certainly large bodies of work on collaboration (Berg-Weger & Schneider, 1998; Claiborne & Lawson; Bronstein, 2003), risk (Greenburg & Lippold, 2013; Tanner-Smith, Wilson & Lipsey, 2012) and intervention (Kendall & Kessler, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Schensul, 2009). In fact, the composite nature of risk for those individuals and families most affected by social problems has prompted several observers (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2010; Hammond, et al., 2006; Huang, et al., 2009; Pronk, Peek & Goldstein, 2004) to advocate for multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing the needs of individuals presenting with composite risk. Some have even analysed the combined impact of collaboration, risk and intervention that were merged for the purposes of reducing crime and violence (Boyle et al., 2010; Braga, 2001; Engel, 2013; Kennedy, 2006; Violence Reduction Unit, 2015). However, very few (Broad & Doxtater, 2015; Litchmore, 2015; McFee & Taylor, 2014; Nilson, 2014a; North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, 2014b) have pulled all three of these concepts together in a way which is similar to the community safety and well-being efforts evolving in Ontario.

To advance the capacity of evaluators, and to advance our overall understanding of collaborative risk-driven community safety, there would be great value in mobilizing a network of community safety evaluators in Ontario. Through outreach to 19 evaluators currently engaged in this type of work, it became clear that an opportunity for sharing and exchange would be valued by all evaluators. Several evaluators engaged through this project strongly advocated for a face-to-face encounter—perhaps in the form of a conference, symposium or community of practice gathering. Others suggested that in addition to a face-to-face encounter, evaluators should have access to a single online sharing platform to post questions, their own work and engage with other collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators. Several also suggested that an online library, where not only evaluators, but community safety leaders and practitioners can access information, would build the collective knowledge of this topic throughout Ontario.

Past accounts (Canada Health Infoway, 2015; Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, 2003) of opportunities where evaluators have been brought together to collaborate and share, show promising results. This evaluation framework proposes three recommendations to help the collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluation network to become mobilized in Ontario.

- Organize an evaluator-planned community of practice event specifically for evaluators.
- Establish an online platform for collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluators to post questions, comments, tips; engage in dialogue; and share tools, instruments or reports.
- Establish an online central repository for relevant research and evaluation on collaborative risk-driven community safety that is publicly available to evaluators, community safety stakeholders, and academics, among others.

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APPENDICES



Ontario Working Group on Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety
EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
Email Survey to the Evaluation Community

- 1) What stage of the evaluation are you at (e.g. not started, planning, data collection, analysis, dissemination)?**

- 2) Who are the key stakeholders involved in shaping your evaluation activities?**

- 3) What does your evaluation focus on?**

- 4) What evaluation questions are guiding your work?**

- 5) What methodological approach are you taking in this evaluation?**

- 6) What data sources are you using/considering?**

- 7) What timelines (if any) are you expecting?**

- 8) What challenges have you had so far?**

- 9) What challenges do you foresee moving forward?**

- 10) What opportunities do you see for evaluators from across Ontario contributing (at least in part) to a shared understanding of risk-driven collaborative community safety and well-being?**

Ontario Working Group on Collaborative Risk-Driven Community Safety
EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
Questions to Guide Outreach Discussions with the Evaluation Community

- 1) What would best help to support development of evaluation planning for your community initiative?**
- 2) What do you feel are the main staples for evaluation that is focused on collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being?**
- 3) How do you see the whole realm of collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluation being organized for clarity?**
- 4) What are your stakeholders most interested in learning about through your evaluation?**
- 5) What challenges have you encountered? What challenges do you perceive to encounter?**
- 6) What mechanism would best bring the collaborative risk-driven community safety evaluation community together to share and make sure that at the very least, we're all contributing at least some type of similar data?**
- 7) Are there any other thoughts you have to help inform the development of a provincial evaluation framework for collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being?**



GLOSSARY

OF COMMON TERMS IN COLLABORATIVE RISK-DRIVEN COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING

Acutely-Elevated Risk	Level of risk that the Hub/Situation Table uses as a threshold for tabling new situations. Situations are determined to be of acutely-elevated risk where there is (1) a significant interest at stake, (2) probability of harm occurring, (3) a severe intensity of harm, and (4) multi-disciplinary nature of the needs which must be addressed in order to lower such risk.
Collaborative Risk-Driven Intervention	Where all of the relevant partner agencies approach the subject of a discussion with a voluntary opportunity of support. The key message delivered to the client is that they are in a vulnerable situation, and before conditions worsen, the diverse team of professionals can provide some immediate support to reduce their overall level of risk.
Discussion	The term used in reference to a situation that is considered by the Hub/Situation Table as being one of acutely-elevated risk, at which point the group will assign a number to the situation and begin collaborating to identify opportunities for risk reduction.
Discussant	The term used when referring to human service professionals who participate in Hub/Situation Table discussions.
Four Filters	Refers to the four filter process used by Hub/Situation Tables to determine acutely-elevated risk. Filter One – single agency determines if it has done all it can do; Filter Two – de-identified basic information is presented at the Hub/Situation Table; Filter Three – discussants collaboratively determine if acutely-elevated risk is present; Filter Four – a select group of discussants from appropriate agencies share (in private) additional information during their planning of a collaborative intervention.
Hub Subject	The individual or family to which the efforts of community mobilization are addressed.
Hub Practitioner	A human service professional engaged in collaborative risk-driven community safety and well-being.
Hub/Situation Table	A multi-disciplinary team of human service professionals that meets twice weekly for the identification, rapid development and immediate deployment of real-time interventions and short-term opportunities to address emerging problems and risk conditions identified and brought forward from the frontline operations of all participating agencies that comprise the Hub/Situation Table.



Steering Committee

Sets the direction and overall purposes of a Hub/Situation Table. It is made up of managerial representatives from each of the partner agencies involved in the collaborative partnership.

Systemic Issue

Are present where characteristics and applications of, or procedures affecting human service sector institutions, either serve as a barrier to, or plainly fail to, alleviate situations of acutely-elevated risk. Systemic issues are also present where large inefficiencies exist in producing expected outcomes.

