

# **Tools for Developing Theories of Change and Useful Outcomes**

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# Overview of Today's Session

- ◎ Today's presentation provides easy to use and fun tools to discuss and develop a program's theory of change that can lead to measurable and observable outcomes.
- ◎ The session will be valuable for program planning, grant writing and evaluation.

Outcomes?!?!?



# Outcomes are measurable and specific changes

- ⦿ Changes in people, organizations, or communities.
- ⦿ Changes in knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes or behavior.
- ⦿ Changes that your program/organization will hold itself accountable for achieving.

**May be measured quantitatively or qualitatively or BOTH**

**May be short-term, intermediate, or long-term changes.**

**So...Why are outcomes important?  
Why bother?**

# Thinking about Outcomes can...

- ◎ Start useful conversations about your programs.
- ◎ Help develop evaluative thinking in your program.
- ◎ Enhance and support a learning environment in your organization.

# What is evaluative thinking?

**Identifying  
Assumptions**



**Posing  
thoughtful  
questions**

**Actively seeking  
a deeper  
understanding**

**Making informed  
decisions as you  
prepare to take  
action.**

# Evaluative thinking involves...

- ◎ Valuing and using data to check progress and to make decisions.
- ◎ Asking questions about the data.
- ◎ What do the data mean? What are the data telling us? What else do we need to know?



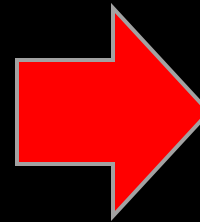


# THEORY OF CHANGE:

Provides the ‘Big Picture’ that connects your program’s outcomes to its strategies.



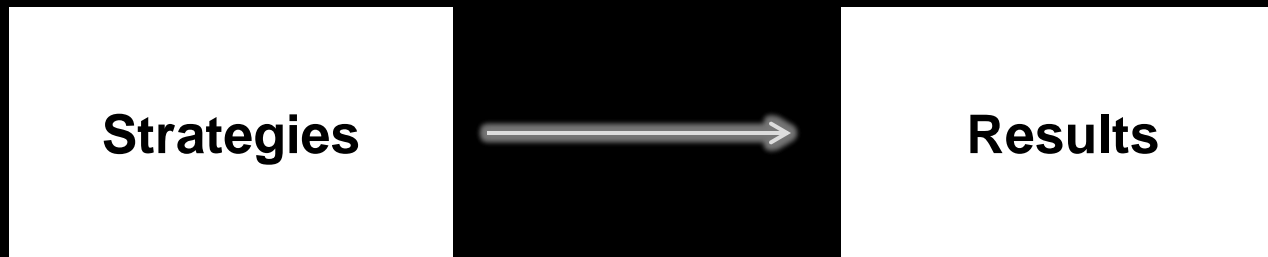
THEORY OF CHANGE



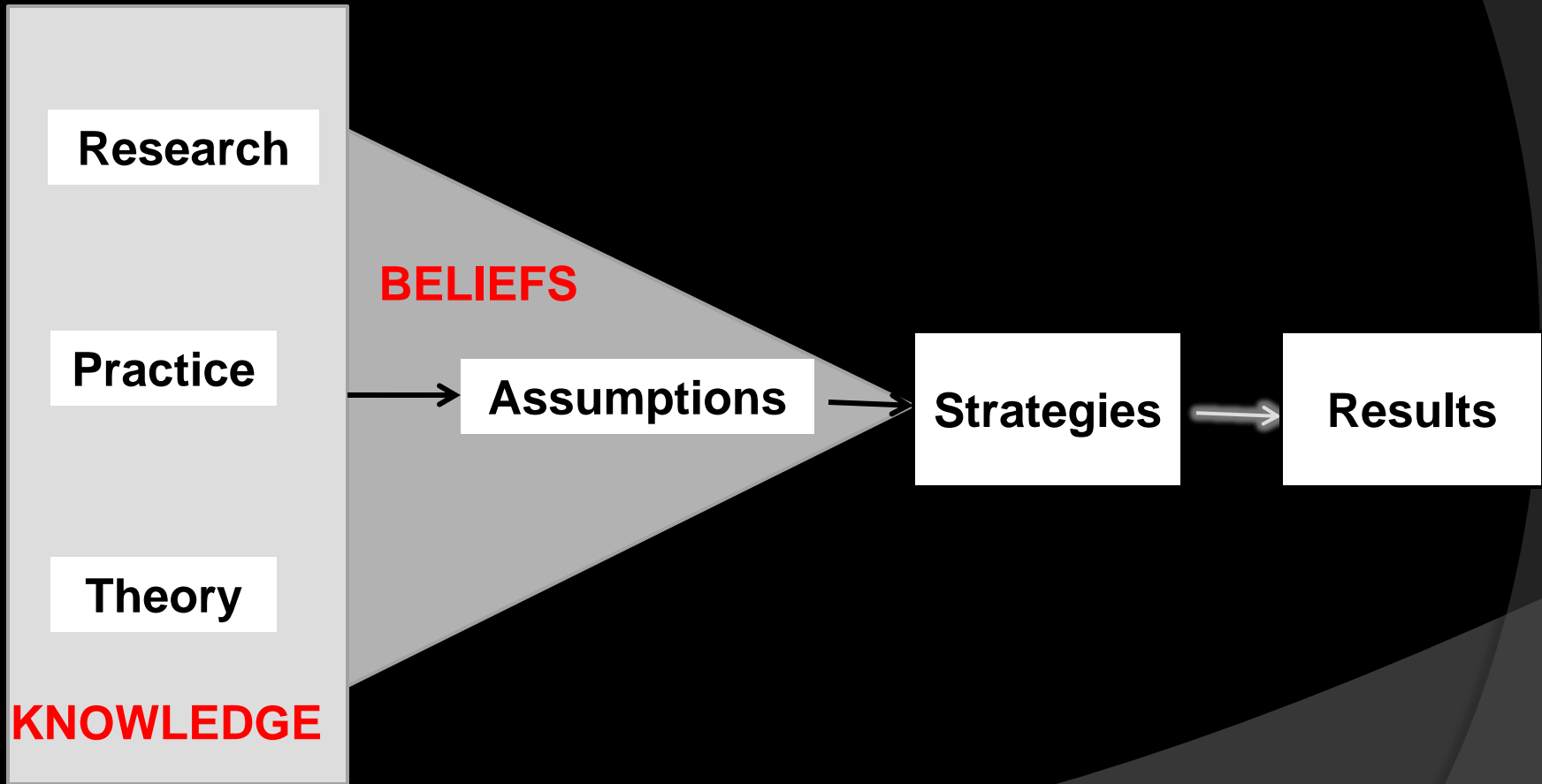
OUTCOMES

# Theory of Change (TOC):

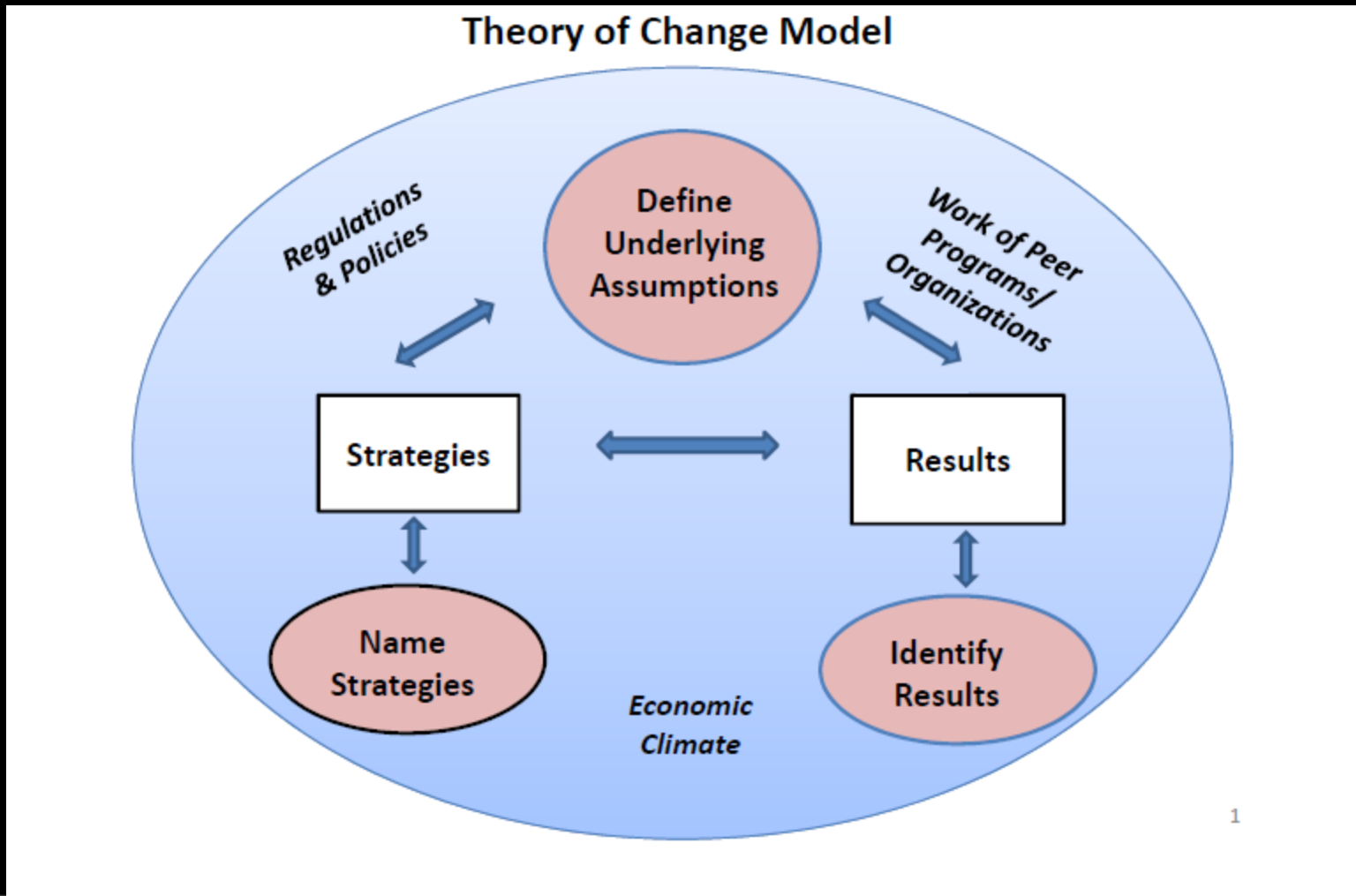
- ◎ Simple Model with just 2 elements:



# Your Assumptions:



# Using Knowledge and Beliefs to create a better model for TOC



# Handout: Steps to a Theory of Change

- ◎ Identify the desired results.
- ◎ Name the strategies that will deliver your intended results.
- ◎ Define the assumptions that support your specified strategies.
- ◎ Consider external environment.



**Break  
Time – 10  
Minutes**

# TOC Role Play Activity

- ◎ Find someone you don't know that well.
- ◎ One of you will be the Evaluator and one will be the Program Person.
- ◎ If you are not connected to a program, feel free to make one up based on your experience.
- ◎ Evaluator will interview the program person.
- ◎ After 10 minutes, switch roles.

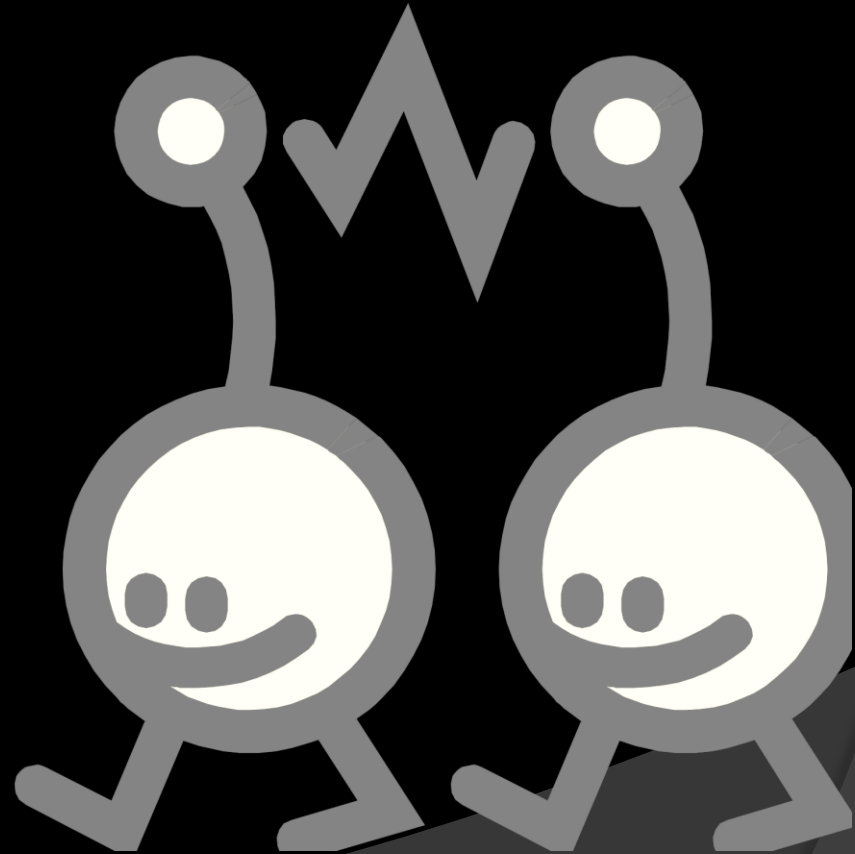
# Role Play Interview Questions

1. **Who does your program serve? Who are your clients??**
2. **What changes do you want to see in your clients? In your community?**
3. **What are your staff doing to achieve those changes?**
4. **How will you know if you are successful? What does success look like?**
5. **How do you know if things are going well? How do you know if something needs to change?**
6. **If you had a magic wand, what one thing would you change in your program? In your community?**
7. **What information or data help you make decisions today?**



# Theory of Change and Logic Models

- Linked to each other.
- Theory of Change usually precedes the Logic Model.
- Both should be open, organic and dynamic – subject to change based upon circumstances.



# Keep your TOC and Logic Model Alive with a Learning Agenda

- ◎ Create a learning agenda
- ◎ Have a short list of your assumptions and hypotheses that you can test to some extent - this will keep you re-visiting your TOC and logic model



**What will success look like? How  
will we know how we are doing?**

# What are indicators?

- ◎ A type of data that stakeholders agree will represent what success looks like for different areas of focus.
- ◎ Indicators ‘unpack’ the outcomes:
  - Measureable and observable.
  - Quantitative or Qualitative.
- ◎ Indicators answer the questions:
  - *“What will tell me if my program is successful?”*
  - *“How will I know we are successful?”*

# The Keys to Designing Successful Outcomes are being able to...

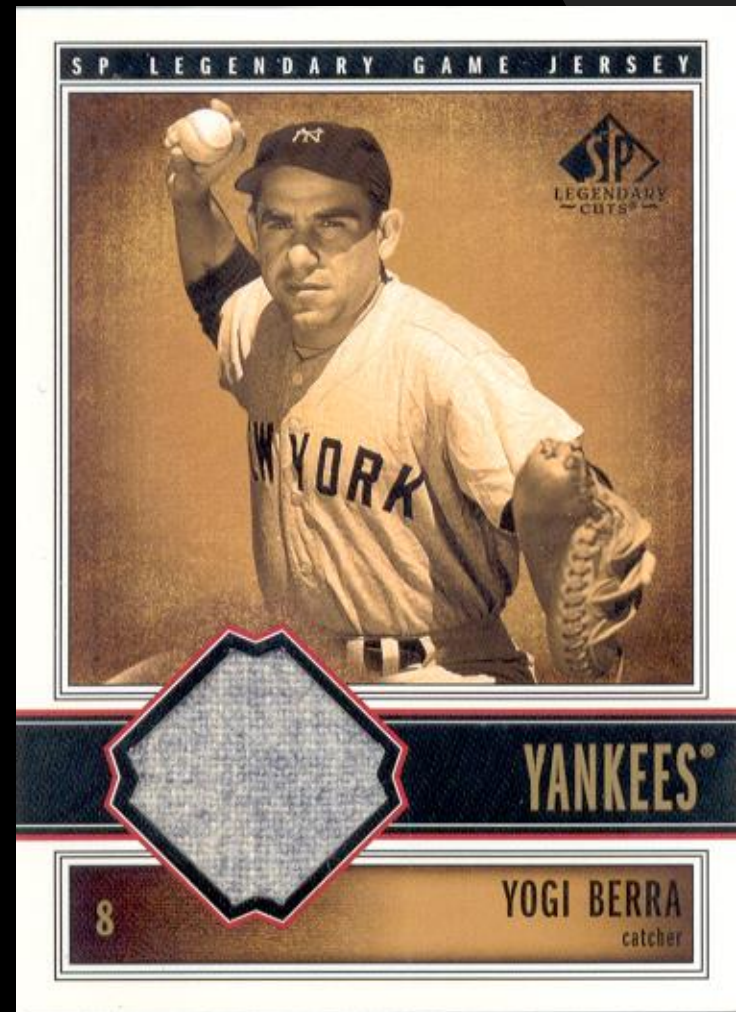
- ◎ Clearly define your program outcomes.
- ◎ Identify and employ the right strategies to achieve those outcomes.
- ◎ Defining what success looks like **OR** outcome indicators.



**So, when do we  
get to the fun  
part?!?!?**

"If you don't know  
where you are  
going, you will  
wind up  
somewhere else."

Yogi Berra



# QUESTIONS?



**For Handouts and the PowerPoint,  
please visit the Collaborative  
Solutions Consulting webpage at  
csc-nm.com or the Collaborative  
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page**

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