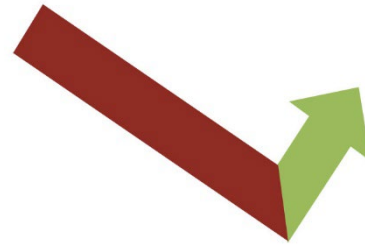


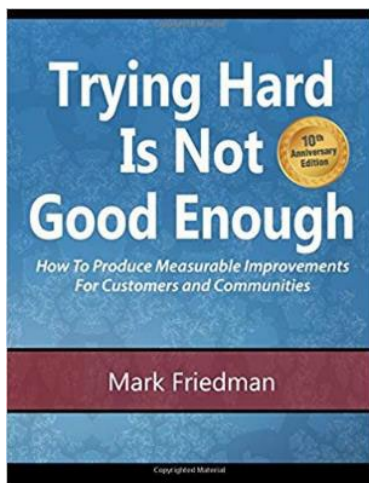
RBA

Turn the Curve Thinking



NO
EXCUSES
DRAMA
COMPLAINTS

Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) Fact Sheet



RESULTS

In RBA you start with results: a condition of well-being you want to achieve for children, adults, families or communities.

INDICATORS

In RBA parlance, indicators are measures that help quantify the achievement of a result on the population level (for example, in the whole city of San Francisco).

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measures of how well a program, agency, or service system are working. These measure impact of the program or strategy on program participants.

LEARNING MORE

RBA was developed by Mark Friedman, and more resources are available in his book, above.

What sets RBA apart?

SUITABLE FOR COMPLEX PROBLEMS

Results-Based Accountability™ is a disciplined way of thinking and acting to improve entrenched and complex social problems. Communities use it to improve the lives of children, youth, families, adults. RBA is also used by organizations to improve the effectiveness of their programs. In short, you start with results, and work backwards from the results you want to see to design (and continuously improve) the program or strategy you're using to ensure you begin to see those results come to life.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO RESULTS IN THE WHOLE POPULATION

In most evaluation frameworks, the focus is on that which can most easily be controlled: the program itself. RBA evaluates the program using performance measures (see definition to left), which it calls "performance accountability." But RBA also says that improving the lives of people directly touched by a program isn't enough. Is the program moving the needle toward the result for the whole population? This is measured through indicators (see left), and is what's known in RBA as "population accountability."

ROOT CAUSE THINKING

RBA is an excellent tool to address equity because it promotes "root cause thinking" and inspires creative partnerships and collaborations to address root causes, rather than using them as excuses for why progress toward results is slow.

FOCUS ON TURNING THE CURVE

RBA prioritizes "turning the curve" over setting unachievable targets. Have you ever found yourself setting SMART objectives for an evaluation, and later you shrugged them off because the context had changed, or something had happened outside of your control? RBA is built to avoid this trap, which undermines our accountability to bring about real change. In RBA, the values of indicators and performance measures are tracked and plotted on a regular basis, creating a "curve" which trends upwards or downwards. Each time a new data point is plotted, there is a discussion about whether the curve is turning in the right direction, with sufficient speed.

INHERENTLY MIXED METHODS

While RBA relies on quantitative data to plot the curves described above, the heart of RBA is in the discussions about the "story behind the curve." These stories are where the qualitative pieces of the evaluation come in, helping program staff determine why the curve looks the way it does, and what likely needs to change to get the curve moving in the desired direction, as quickly as possible.

COMMITMENT TO RESULTS

RBA is a bold choice. Performance measures fall under one of three questions: 1) How much did we do? 2) How well did we do it? 3) Is anyone better off? The RBA framework prevents a focus only on what can be easily counted (like the number of participants who attend a program) and pushes program planners to measure the real impact the program is having on people's lives.