

What Counts?

Finding Meaningful Metrics

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What are we talking about today?

- 1) Why are we here today?
- 2) What makes metrics meaningful?
 - a) What are metrics?
 - b) Why do we use metrics?
- 3) How can you make metrics meaningful?

“Not everything that can
be counted counts, and
not everything that
counts can be counted.”

-William Bruce Cameron.

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Why are we here today?

Why am I here today?

- Metrics are a powerful tool to learn and grow
 - Work at all levels: programs/events, broad services, whole organizations
 - Challenge old assumptions
 - Inspire new action
- They can also clarify your organization's purpose
 - Metrics define what success looks like for your organization
- I've spent years working with libraries to develop metrics
- I love asking people about their hopes and dreams for libraries and communities

What does success look like today?

- I hope that you will be able to create meaningful metrics and reconsider the meaning of existing metrics in your unique context.
- I hope that you are curious and engage with the information I share and with each other.
 - If you're an active listener and are willing to turn on your video, that will help me!
- I can't tell you what metrics you should have in your specific context during this presentation, but feel free to reach out to me with any questions that we don't answer here. My email is katie.fox@state.co.us

Padlet 1:

What challenge, situation or question motivated you to come today?

Themes

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What makes metrics meaningful?

2A

What are metrics?

Metrics are the
concrete ways that
we define, track, and
measure what
success looks like.

Some examples of library metrics

Context	Outcome/Impact	Metrics
Immigrant & refugee services weekly recurring drop in events	As a result of their experiences attending, members of immigrant communities will be able to connect with & learn from each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of participants that report learning something from a peer• % of event time that is spent in small groups or one on one
All library events & programs.	As a result of their experience attending library events and programs, participants feel welcome in the library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of participants who would recommend this event to a friend
Library database access	As a result of library databases, library users will have access to relevant resources that support their learning & development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of library card holders who know that they have database access through the library• Average cost per use by database
Library reference	As a result of immediate reference, library users with immediate information needs can efficiently access accurate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of reference users that rank their interaction highly• % of chat reference interactions that include an explanation of the source being cited and why it's reliable (based on sample)

2B

Why do we use metrics?

Padlet 2:

Why do you or your organization use metrics?

Do most of your answers connect to one of these ideas?

INTENTIONS

LEARNING

Metrics CAN

Track your progress on a goal

Metrics CANNOT

Tell you what your goal is

Measuring is only
useful when you are
measuring
something you care
about.

Why context matters

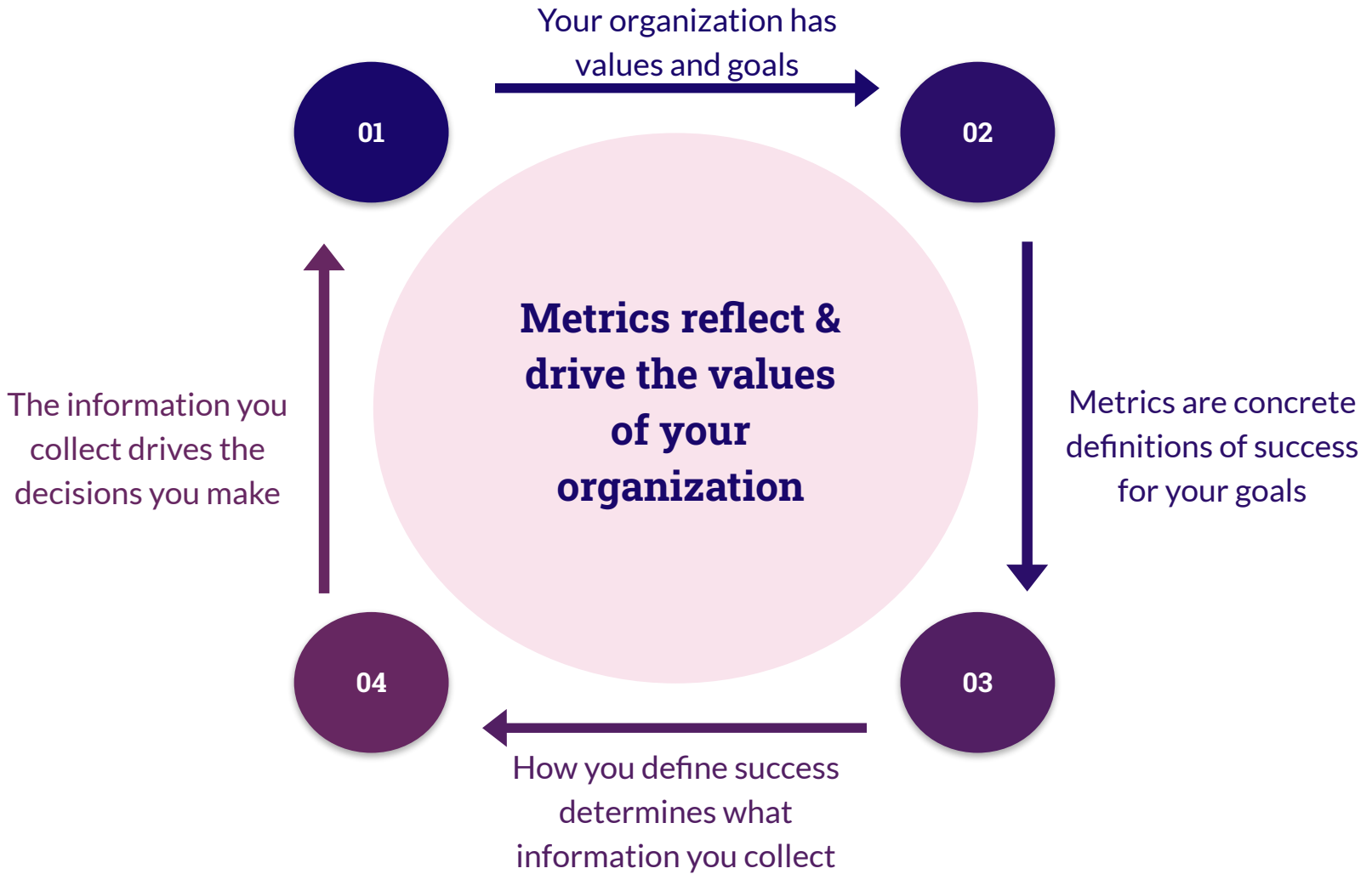


Understanding your
context means
understanding what
you care about.

How do you measure success in your personal life?

- I try to hang out once a month with a good friend of mine who lives 30 minutes away.
- I try to wish my friends a happy birthday, even if it's just a quick text.
- I try to go running three times a week.
- I try to clean the kitchen before I go to bed because my partner really appreciates that (and I like it too).
- Once a week, I try to wear an outfit I've never worn before to stay creative.
- I want to learn how to sew. I signed up for an online class, but I haven't even set up my sewing machine yet. At this point, success would just be setting up my machine!

Metrics are the concrete ways that we define, track, and measure what success looks like to help us achieve goals that we care about.



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How can you make metrics meaningful?

Order of Operations for Strong Metrics

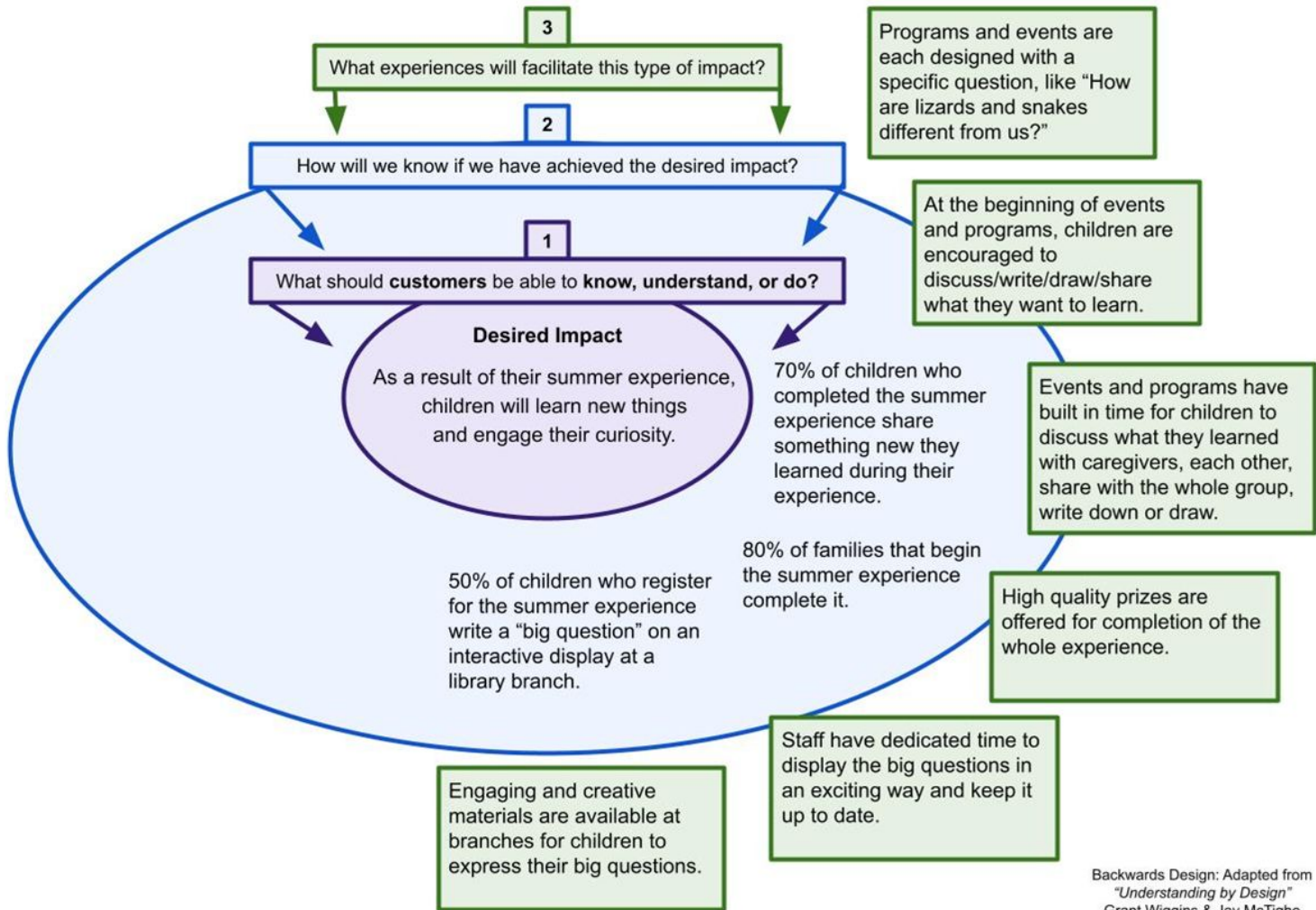
1. What do you care about? What impact is your organization trying to have?
 - a. Know who you are trying to impact
 - b. Explore why you care about it
2. Define what success looks like with words
3. Define what success looks like with metrics
4. Make sure your activities (events, programs, purchases, staff time) align to your metrics and to the overall impact

How do you put it all together?

There's many different tools to guide your thinking, including:

- The Logic Model
- Theories of Change
- Backwards Design

I use Backwards Design because that's what I learned and used as a teacher.



Padlet 3:

What specific metric is on your mind today?

Guiding Questions for Meaningful Metrics

1. How clearly does this metric align to an articulated outcome or impact?
2. Who cares about this metric?
3. Why do they care?
4. How can they act on it?
5. Whose perspective does this metric reflect or emphasize?
6. How do the people closest to this work feel about this metric?
 - At a minimum, this is the staff who do the work, ideally consider the community as well
7. How can this information be collected in a way that is ethical, accurate, and manageable for staff and participants?
 - Key elements of ethics are privacy and informed consent
 - Accuracy often involves staff being trained and consistently collecting data

Hey, I thought this workshop was about
writing metrics!

“Not everything that can
be counted counts, and
not everything that
counts can be counted.”

-William Bruce Cameron.

The hardest thing about metrics is figuring out which metrics will help you get better at what you care about.

-Me

1. How clearly does this metric align to an articulated outcome or impact?

Context: Summer of learning
Outcome: As a result of their summer experience, children will learn new things and engage their curiosity.
Metrics
1. Percentage of families who begin the summer of learning experience who complete it
2. Percentage of families who would recommend summer of learning to a friend or neighbor
3. Percentage of children who register for summer learning who write a “big question” on an interactive display at a branch

Padlet 4:

**Which metrics are least related to the
outcome?
Why?**




Metrics only have
meaning in context.

What should I do if there isn't an articulated outcome or impact?

Taking a first pass using the Guiding Questions

Work along with me to review your own metric using the handout.

Metric: % of families who begin the summer of learning experience who complete it

A. Meaningful Metrics Question	B. Quick assessment of metric on this question	C. Questions about this question	D. Next steps
2. Who cares about this metric?	Library leadership? Finance? The public? 	How do I find out who cares about this?	
3. Why do they care?	This is how we measure success for this service. 	But why is this our definition of success?	
5. Whose perspective does this metric emphasize or reflect?	I don't know that families care a lot about completion—so I think this is based on the library's definition of success. 	How hard would it be to find out how families think about success for their summer experience?	

Padlet 5:

- Based on the guiding questions, which element of your metric needs the most work?
- What are the most burning questions you have about these guiding questions?

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Wrap up

Padlet 6:

- What's the next step you need to take to make progress on your metric(s)?
 - What are you still thinking or wondering about?

Thank you!