



CiMH Activity Typology

Goals, methods and evaluation

CiMH ACTIVITY TYPOLOGY

The California Institute for Mental Health (CiMH) conducts a variety of activities. This proposed CiMH Activity Typology is designed to support planning and monitoring of the training and technical assistance, policy development, and evaluation and research services that CiMH provides.

CiMH classifies its activities by three variables:

1. Goal(s)
2. Methods
3. Levels of evaluation

Each of these variables has a set of elements described below. The three variables come together in different combinations depending upon the activity. However, all combinations of goals, methods and approaches to evaluation are not available. For example, in some cases one or more of the possible Goals cannot be met by a particular Method of activity. Moreover, not all available combinations are preferable. For example, an activity may provide opportunity for several levels of evaluation, but only one may be preferred. The elements for each variable follow:

CiMH activity goals:

- Information dissemination – These activities disseminate information, usually regarding policies and/or practices.
- Changing attitudes and/or beliefs – These activities promote particular positions, practices, or policies. They are designed to influence the audience by supporting the change in attitudes and/or beliefs, in a manner that encourages them to adopt the position, practice, or policy promoted.
- Changing system operation – These activities support system change. Activities are part of a process of system change that is measurable and/or observable.
- Changing policy – These activities support changes in policy, and/or efforts to change policy.
- Changing practices – These activities support the adoption of particular practices.
- Determining effectiveness of system operation and practices – These activities assess and/or measure the effectiveness of particular practices.

CiMH activity methods:

- Training – Trainings are self-contained events in which a predetermined set of information is presented to a particular target audience. Training activities can be one-time events, a series of multiple events, or multiple events offered at one time, such as a conference. Training can be didactic or experiential. Training activities can provide professional networking opportunities – formal (receptions, etc.) and informal (breaks, etc.) – that benefit participants.

CiMH activity methods continued:

- Publications and multimedia products – These products include manuals, monographs, newsletters, CDs, DVDs, and materials presented in other media formats. The content is, of course, predetermined.
- Convening – CiMH organizes and hosts events in which key stakeholders in a particular area come together. These events support the dissemination of information, as well as relationship building and collaboration that can lead to shared goals and objectives to be incorporated into larger projects.
- Planning or problem-solving processes – CiMH designs and facilitates a process that results in problem identification, solution development, planning and, in some cases, plan implementation. These activities include the analysis of problems or areas of interest, usually culminating in a series of recommendations or findings. In most of these activities, CiMH convenes a group of experts and/or stakeholders in the project area. Plans, recommendations, and findings that result are often agreed upon and supported by identified stakeholders and participants in the project. These activities can provide professional networking opportunities – formal (receptions, etc.) and informal (breaks, etc.) – that benefit participants.
- Technical assistance – Technical assistance can be conducted by one or more contacts designated to assist sites, individuals, and/or groups reach a goal. Unlike training, technical assistance does not encompass predetermined presentation of particular information. Technical assistance is individualized and tailored to meet the needs of the site or individual. Interactions are organic and unstructured or less structured than in technical training sessions.
- Implementation activities – These activities directly support the implementation of a system change or practice. Dissemination activities are usually long-term activities that include a combination of all of the activity methods – including training, technical assistance, planning processes, and evaluation. The intention of dissemination activities is to change the behavior of a set of individuals and/or system function. These activities may incorporate professional networking opportunities – formal (receptions, peer-to-peer information exchange, etc.) and informal (breaks, etc.) – that benefit participants.
- Evaluation and research – These activities are designed to measure the effectiveness of a system, practice, or project.
- Levels of evaluation of CiMH activities:
 - Project-level evaluation – This level of evaluation reports on the delivery of the project. It can be done by CiMH or an independent evaluator, and will include information such as process status and confirmation of deliverables.
 - Participant-level evaluation – This level of evaluation measures the impact of the CiMH activity on the participants. This evaluation usually includes a participant self-report on satisfaction, knowledge or skill uptake, and/or change in attitudes and/or beliefs.
 - System or service-level evaluation - CiMH measures and reports data regarding specific changes in system functioning, service delivery and/or client outcomes that can be attributed to the activity.