

*USING DATA FOR DECISION-
MAKING: IT'S NOT AS HARD
OR SCARY AS YOU THINK!*

Lauren M. Workman, PhD

Pamela S. Gillam, MPA

Session Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the importance and benefits of using data to guide decision-making
- Identify types of data to use for decision-making
- Recognize how to prioritize data for decision-making
- Understand who to engage and how to engage them in making decisions with data

Data Collection v. Data Management

Data Collection	Data Management
Measuring, No use of data or reflection	Using information to manage decision making at multiple levels

Why use data for decision-making?

Increases learning...it is all about learning!

Helps build buy-in and support for changes; develops a sense of community through organizational learning

Makes us ask questions about our programs and policies to improve care and services

Provides evidence to support your argument

Creates the big “picture”

Works toward continuous improvement

- Identify areas for improvement to focus effort
- Regular monitoring to make mid-course corrections

Do we have the right data to make decisions?

Are you currently collecting the right data?

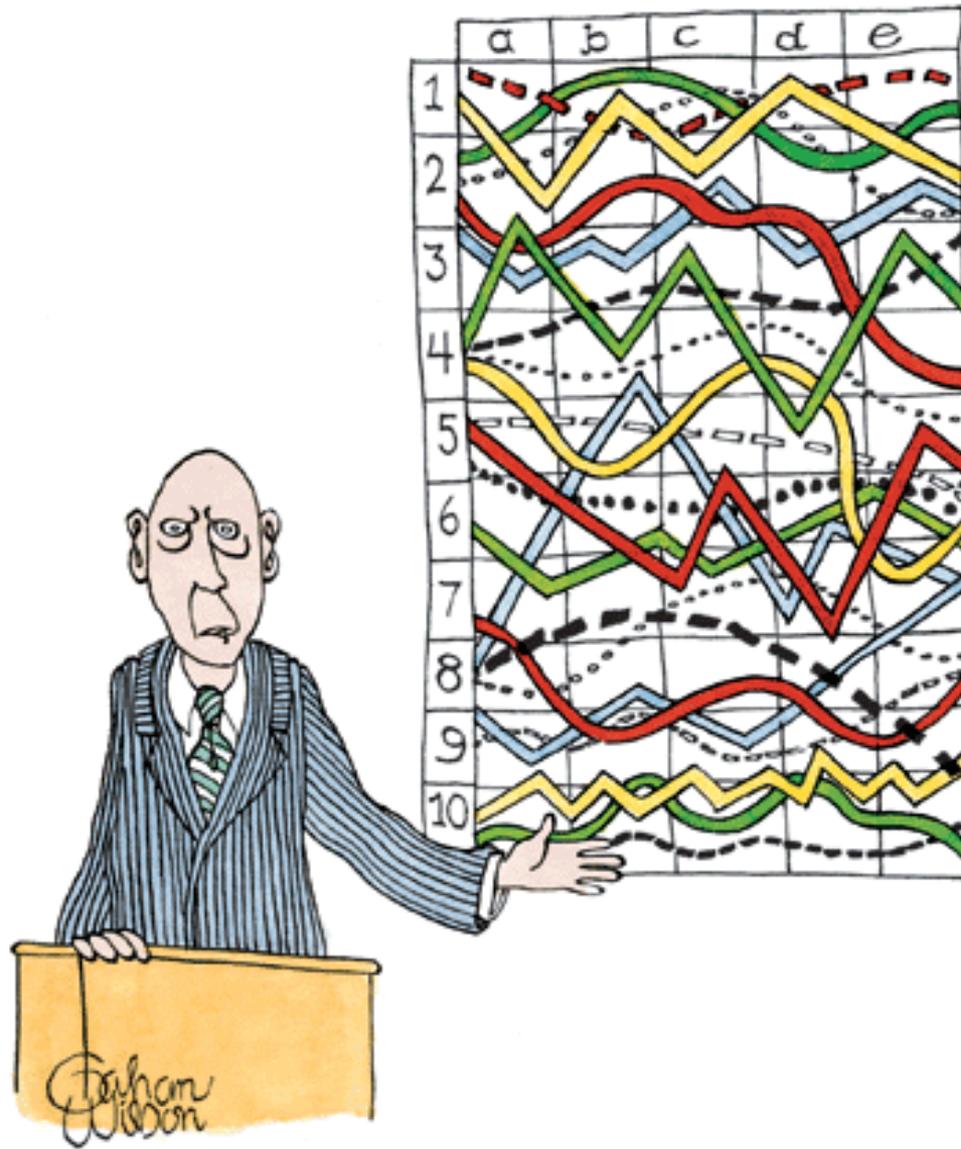
How are you collecting?

- Electronic System? Yes, or If not...
- A Workaround! Excel file, Paper log

GIGO: Garbage In, Garbage Out

- It is important that you know how to use the data system
- Reducing data entry errors

The Data Doesn't Have to Be Complicated



"I'll pause for a moment so you can let this information sink in."

What to Consider When Looking at Data

1. Look at Measures of Central Tendency

- ▣ Median
- ▣ Mean
- ▣ Mode

2. Look for and deal with Outliers

3. Pay attention to spread (variation)- Range

4. Ask, Is there room for Improvement?

If so, what should we do???????

How to Prioritize Data



YOU CAN'T LOOK AT EVERYTHING!!!
So, how do you choose?

Checklist for Picking the Right Data Indicators

Are your data...

- ❑ Capturing something important to your organization?
- ❑ Collected regularly and the same way every time so you can make the right comparison?
- ❑ Low cost?
- ❑ Quick to collect?



What if you still
have too many
data
indicators???

Prioritization of Data Points

Do you have staff with dedicated time to collect and analyze?

Go back to the questions

- ▣ What is it we really want to know????
- ▣ What data indicators will give us the biggest bang for the buck???

How to Prioritize Data



**DON'T SPEND HOURS TRYING TO
GET THE "PERFECT" DATA— FIND DATA
THAT ARE GOOD ENOUGH**

Who Should You Engage In Using Data for D-M?

First, ask yourself...

How many of you AS A TEAM look at data on a REGULAR basis at staff meetings?

Involve a range of stakeholders in the process of using Data for D-M

Include the typical...

- Leadership
- Program Managers

What do we mean by
“process”?
Presenting, reviewing,
asking questions,
making decisions

But also make sure you include..

- Direct service staff
- Consumers of services

This is the group that
usually gets left out!
Why should they be
a part???

Why You Should Engage Your Staff?



Builds buy-in and support.

Connects the value of why staff collect data to improved care

You don't know everything! Staff often know "what works and what doesn't work" and/or have great ideas.

SHOW ME THE



DATA

How Do You Engage Staff in Using Data?

Explain why the data they are collecting is important

- ❑ What questions are you trying to answer?
- ❑ How does the data reflect your progress achieving goals?
- ❑ Where does the data go once they collect it?

Share the data they collect with them

- ❑ Ask them questions: What is this telling us? What questions does it bring to your mind?
- ❑ If they identify issues, ask them their opinion on where to focus efforts for improvement

How Do You Engage Staff Using Data?

Build data sharing into regular meetings and look at it **REGULARLY!!**



Tips for Reporting Data



Put data in a useful format....visuals or graphics can simplify and help identify patterns

Balance ‘good news’ with ‘bad news’

When presenting, Involve multiple staff -- the “usual” and the “not-so-usual” staff

Once you've looked at the data, how do you decide where to start?

- 80/20 Rule
- Low hanging fruit

Note:

*Balance leadership priorities
with what the data says*

Example

The CARE Children's Network is implementing a program to improve the behavioral health of youth.

Our goal is for 80% of participating youth to graduate from the program.

What do we really want to know

Questions:

How many youth graduated from the program?

If they didn't graduate and they stopped the program, why did they stop?

Types of Data for Decision-Making

Data Indicators

- ❑ Number graduated from program
- ❑ Reasons for leaving the program

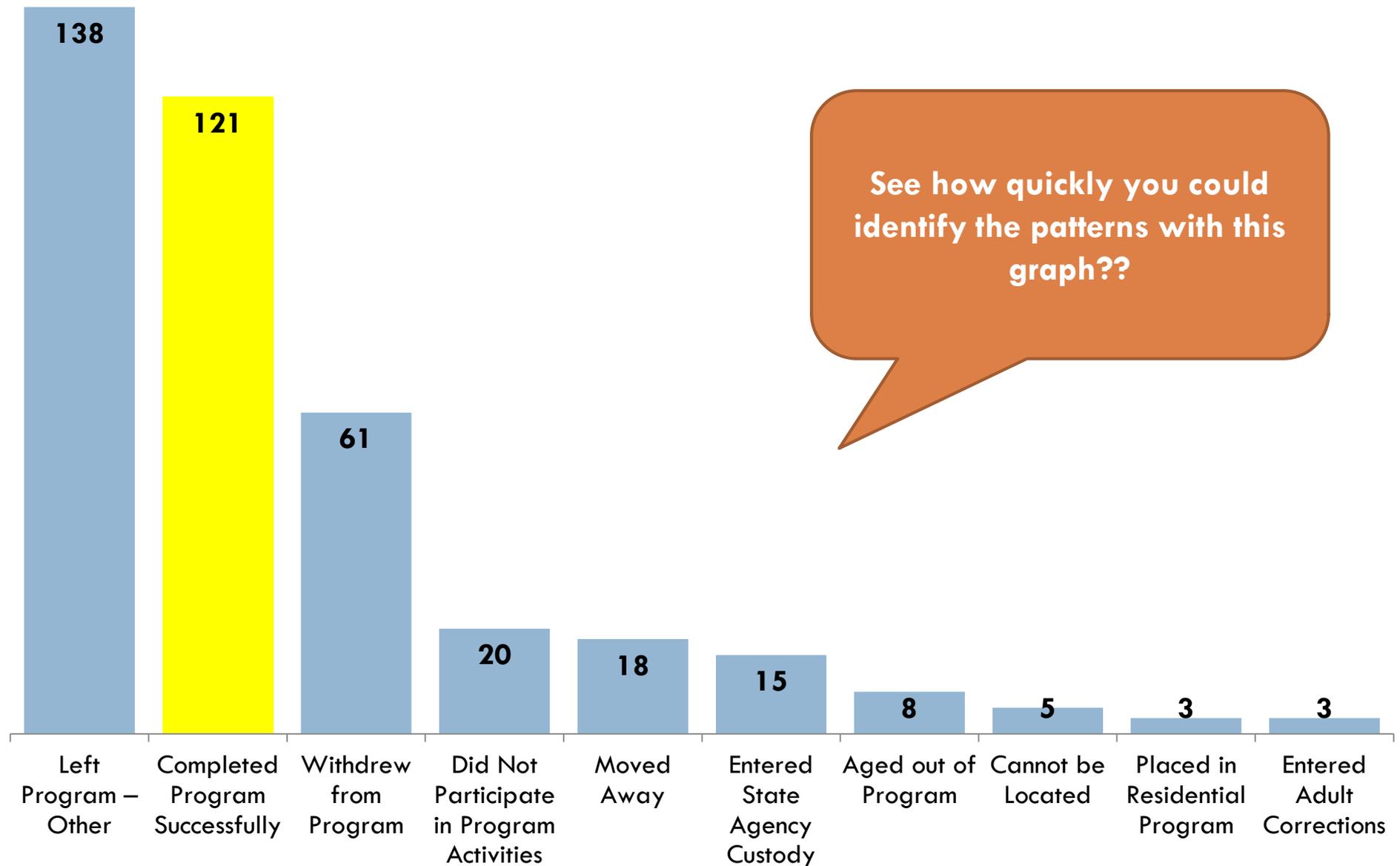
Checklist for Picking Right Data

- ❑ CARE leadership wants to know the effectiveness of the program
- ❑ We already collect the data regularly in our system
- ❑ Easy to get
- ❑ Have a staff person who can pull the data and run it

How many graduated from the program?

Reason for Closure	N	%
Left Program – Other	138	35%
Completed Program Successfully	121	31%
Withdrew from Program	61	16%
Did Not Participate in Program Activities	20	5%
Moved Away	18	5%
Entered State Agency Custody	15	4%
Aged out of Program	8	2%
Cannot be Located	5	1%
Placed in Residential Program	3	1%
Entered Adult Corrections	3	1%
TOTAL	392	100%

Same data— different visual



If they didn't graduate and they stopped the program, why did they stop?

Reason for Closure	Duration in Program (Number of Days)				
	N	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Left Program – Other	138	247	197	0	1,445
Completed Program Successfully	121	324	307	61	766
Withdrew from Program	61	247	184	9	1,080
Did Not Participate in Program Activities	20	227	193	6	501
Moved Away	18	297	284	80	754
Entered State Agency Custody	15	317	259	3	799
Aged out of Program	8	341	373	71	701
Cannot be Located	5	361	301	122	743
Placed in Residential Program	3	250	220	90	441
Entered Adult Corrections	3	424	410	320	541

Questions for You...



Who would you share this data with?

When/How would you share the data?

Where would you start to focus?

- ▣ 80/20 rule
- ▣ Low hanging fruit

Questions for Us?

