
**EVALUATING NUTRITION EDUCATION:
STEPS FOR MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

Making Theory Work For You

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14 September 2005

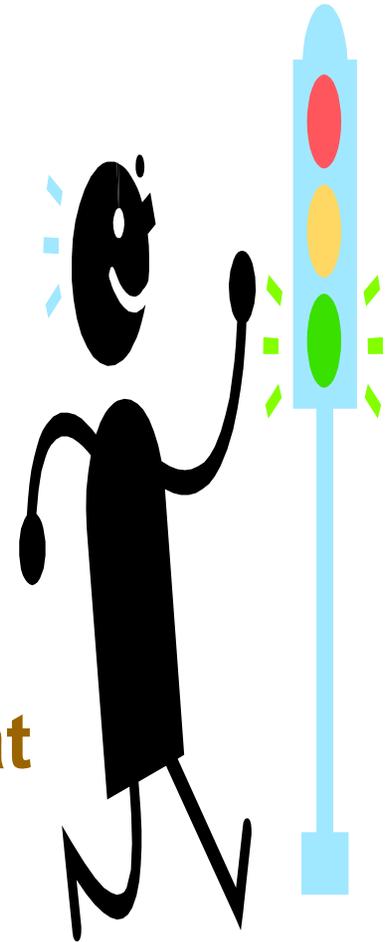
**FNS National Nutrition Education Conference 2
Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, Science, Community
Arlington, Virginia**

Theory – Definitions

- **General principle that explains or predicts facts or events (6th grade vocabulary)**
 - **Explanation for some phenomenon based on observation, experimentation, and reasoning (NASA)**
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Theory – What it IS

- Attempted **EXPLANATION** for observed facts or phenomena
- **PLAUSIBLE** or scientifically acceptable
- **DYNAMIC** – gains acceptance through testing in a variety of circumstances
- Model or idea that **PREDICTS** what will happen under different circumstances

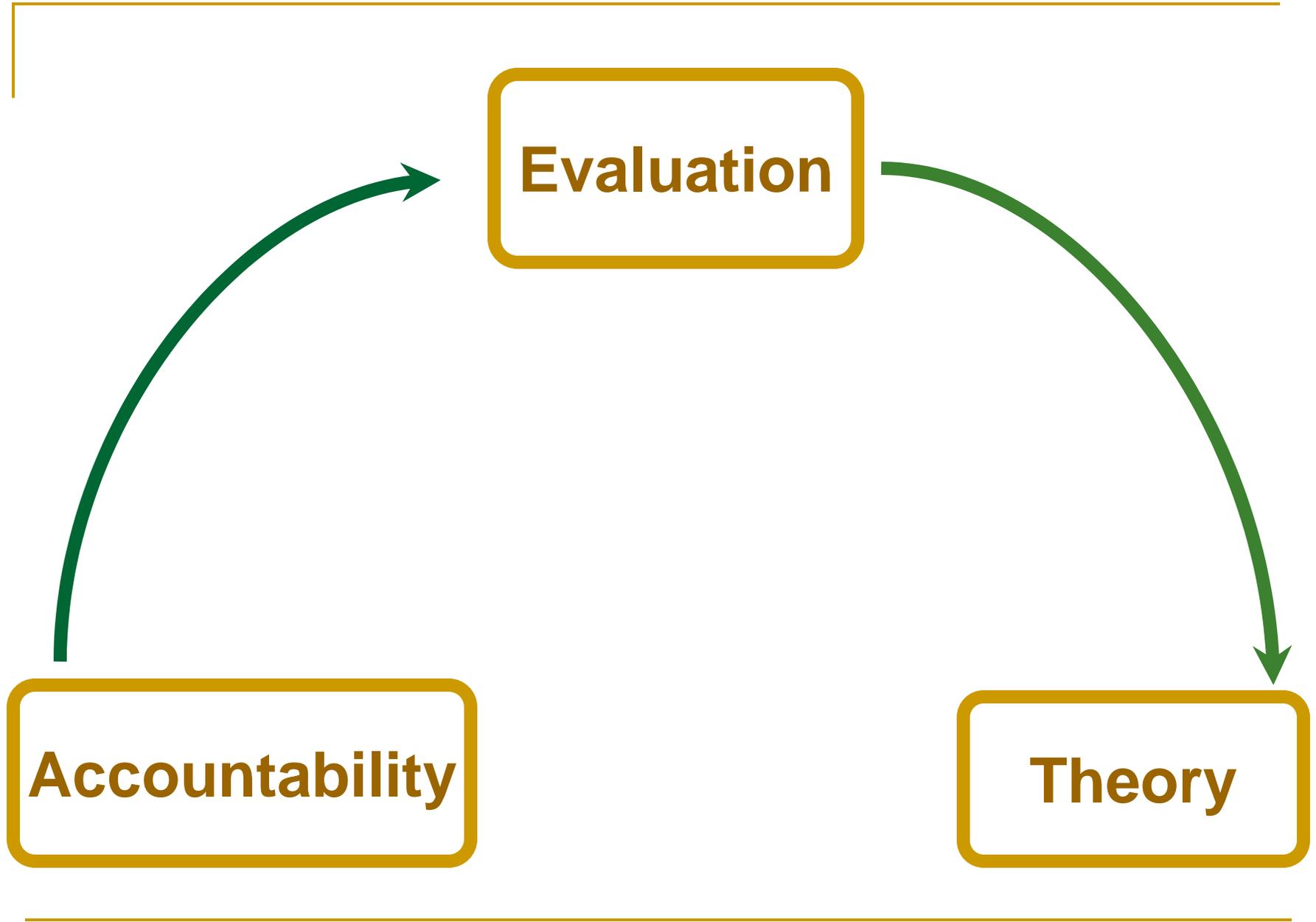


Theory – What it is NOT

- **Fact**
- **Reality**
- **Applicable in all situations**

Every theory has limited application!





Accountability

Evaluation

Theory

Program Theory/Theory Driven Evaluation Can:

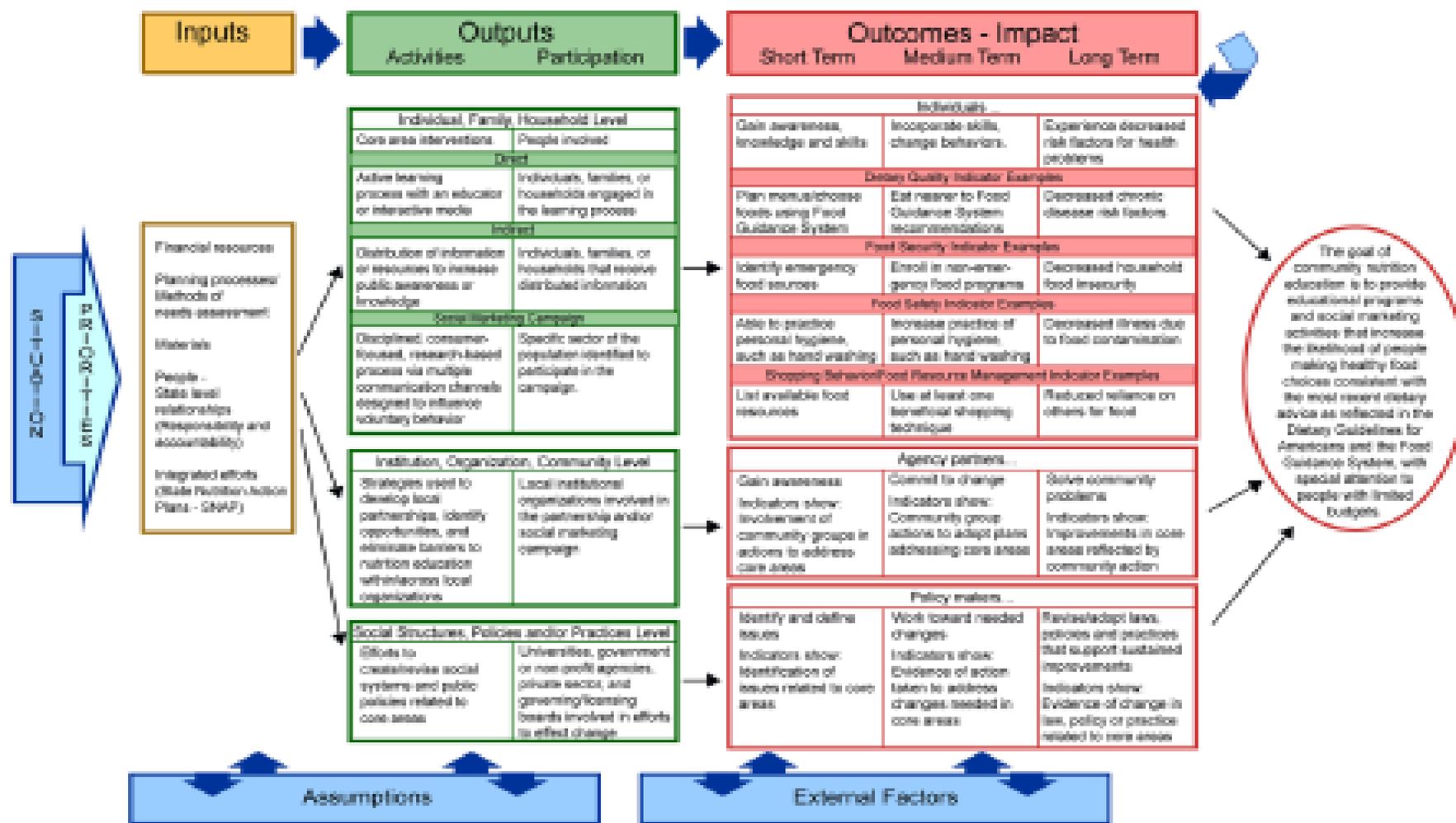
- **Provide a logic framework for planning data collection**
- **Claim a reasonable approximation of a causal explanation**
- **Help evaluators (and program administrators, supervisors, deliverers, others) understand and tell why and how a program works**

Program Theory =

Program Logic + Social Science
Theory

“Synthesis of both stakeholder program logic and social science theory to define what a program does, in what manner, and how much of an effect each goal and objective can have on the outcome.”

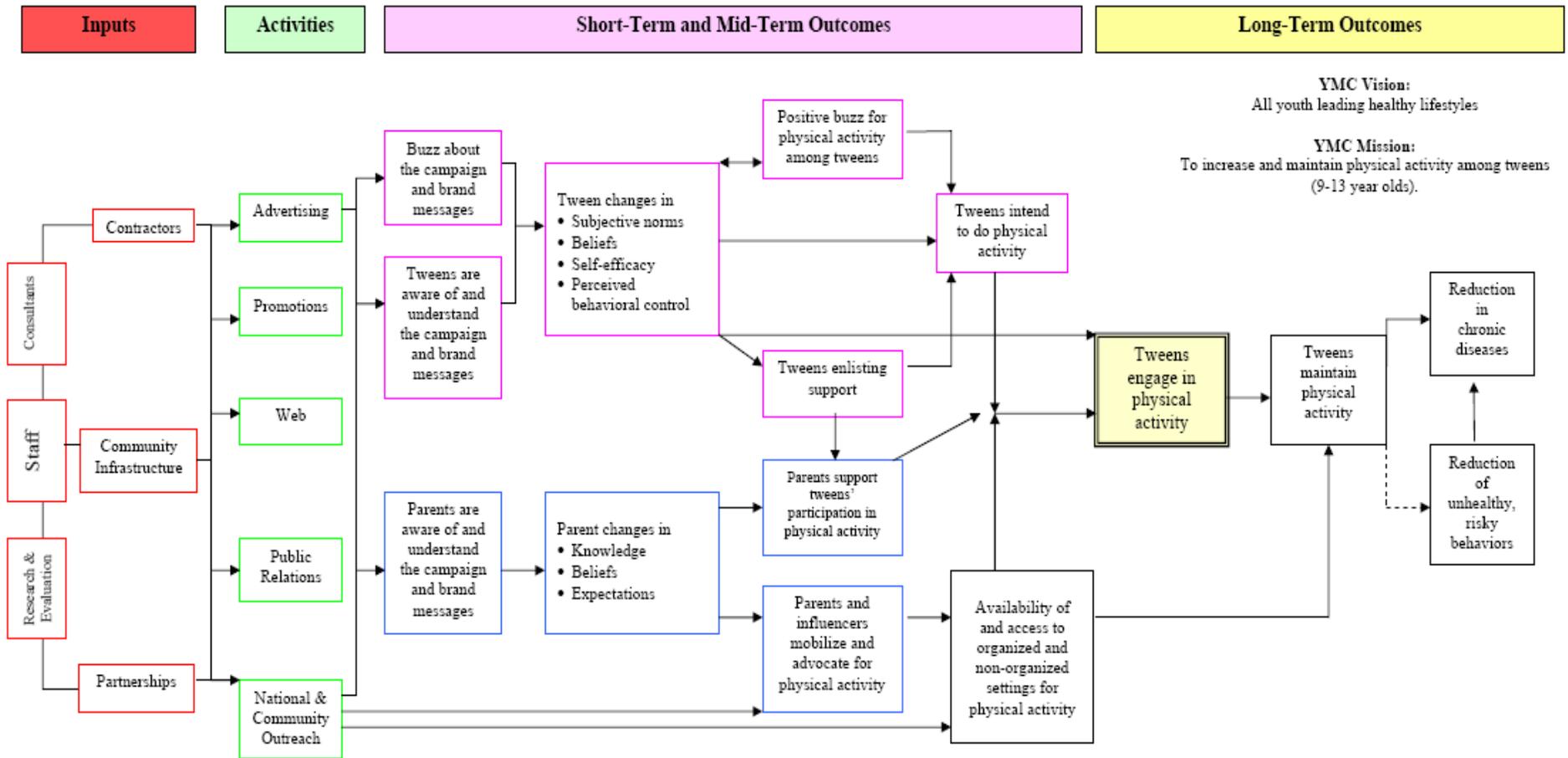
The Community Nutrition Education (CNE) Logic Model – Overview



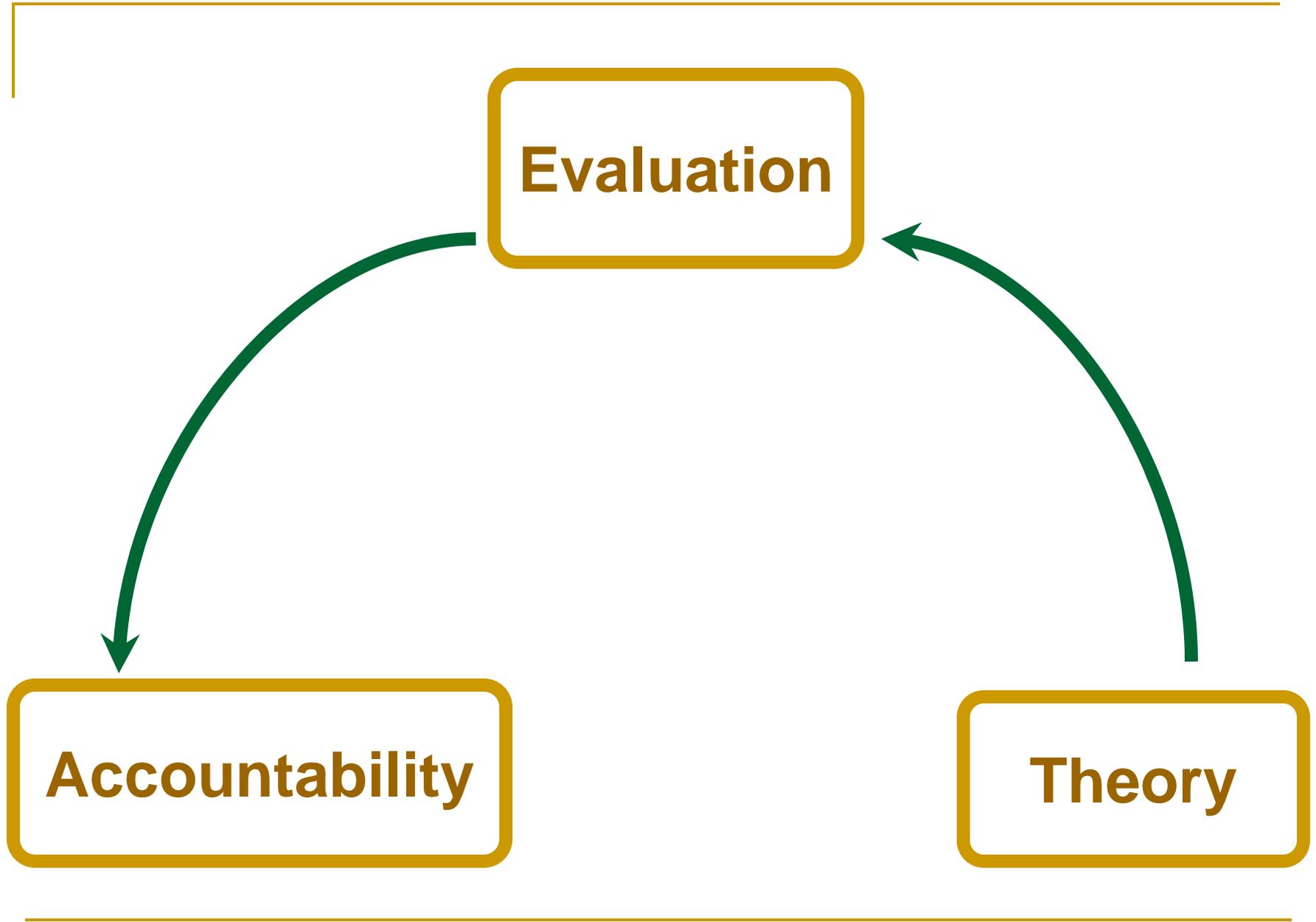
The Community Nutrition Education (CNE) Logic Model – REVISOR DRAFT, March 2005; Helen Chapman and CNE Logic Model Workgroup

For details on initial development see J. Nutr. Educ. Behav. 2005; 37:197-202

CDC's YOUTH MEDIA CAMPAIGN, VERB™ LOGIC MODEL



- <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/research/PDF/5.04-logicmodelRes.pdf>



What about You?

- **Start where you are. Theory comes from:**
 - **Local knowledge and wisdom**
 - **Research and evidence base**
 - **“Best” or “Promising Practices”**
 - **Evaluation studies**
 - **Other lessons from the field**
 - **General social science theories of change**

What about You?

- **Contribute to the development, refinement, and/or testing of what is in place**
 - **Use insights gained at professional meetings to strengthen your program; build theory into your program**
 - **Assist with testing (Example - CNE Logic Model beta testing)**
 - **Raise questions with intent to build knowledge**
 - **Work collaboratively with others; share knowledge gains**
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Program Theory – Cautions

- Too much focus on outcomes
- Too little focus on testing theory
- Perfecting the key to the wrong lock
- Remaining static
(Attending to context only at the front end)



- Adapted from Taylor-Powell, March 31, 2005

Acknowledgements

- **CNE Logic Model Workgroups 1 & 2**
 - Sue Butkus, Helen Chipman, Ruby Cox, Jamie Dollahite, Cindy Frederick, Carol Giesecke, Stephen Green, Betty Greer, Gail Hanula, Mark Harden, Larry Jones, Wanda Koszewski, Deborah Little, Lydia Medeiros, Jeff Olson, Beverly Phillips, Sharon Sass, Isabel Valentin-Oquendo
 - **Intra-agency and Inter-agency Evaluation Committees and Workgroups**
 - **Administrators**
 - **Instructional Technology Specialists**
 - **You!**
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 - Verb Campaign Logic Model. See www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/research/.
 - www.eval.org
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