



Resource Planning and Assessment (RPA) Tool User's Guide

Overview

Evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) in public health uses the best-available evidence to inform decisions. The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools's (NCCMT's) model for EIDM in public health (Figure 1) explicitly categorizes sources of evidence into four domains: local health issues, local context; community and political preferences and actions; research; and resources (including financial and human resources).

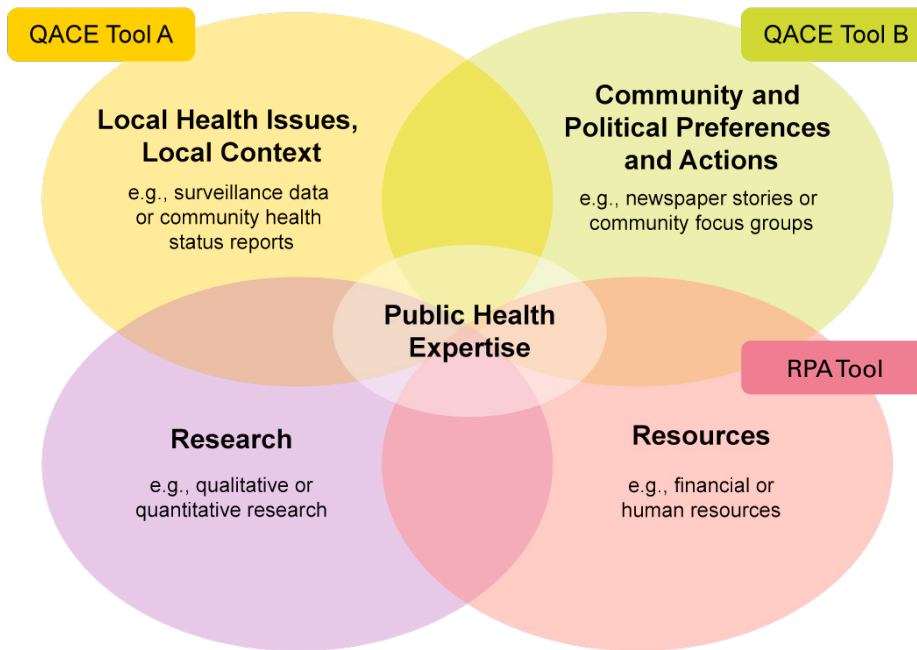


Figure 1: The NCCMT's Model for EIDM in Public Health

Evidence about these four domains is drawn together by practitioner expertise and then used to guide decisions about public health practice, programs and policies. In any given public health situation, the diverse factors may be weighted differently when making a final decision.

The RPA Tool helps you answer three questions:

What resources do you need to implement a proposed intervention/program/service?

Are the needed resources available?

Is the intervention/program/service feasible from a resource standpoint?

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When to Use the Assessment of Evidence Suite of Tools

The Assessment of Evidence suite of tools was developed for public health practitioners, decision-makers, policy-makers and funders to help them ensure that their decisions about interventions, programs and services are informed by relevant, high-quality evidence.

- The Resource Planning and Assessment (RPA) Tool was developed to help you identify all relevant resources.
- The Quality Assessment of Community Evidence (QACE) Tools were developed to assess the quality of evidence for: a) community health issues and local context and; b) community and political preferences and actions.
- See the NCCMT's Registry for "Appraise" tools for assessing the quality of research evidence.

Evidence about Resources

Resource considerations are one aspect of evidence that influence public health decisions. You may not be able to implement the very best intervention, based on strong research evidence and solid community evidence, if the resources are not available. Thus, as part of the decision-making process, it is important to gather evidence about resources.

For the purposes of public health decision making, evidence about resources includes financial or human resources, as shown in the "Resources" domain of the evidence-informed decision-making model (Figure 1).

More specifically, evidence about resources includes:

- Human resources, such as personnel, skills, training or certifications, and collaboration with key partners
- Material resources, such as equipment and supplies, honoraria and space
- Organizational support resources, such as leadership, information technology, promotion/media, administrative support and enthusiasm/buy-in

These are all examples of **Evidence about Resources**

It is important to assess the availability of resources before using them to influence decisions about implementation. You can identify evidence about resources needed to implement an intervention through internal organizational sources, public estimates of costs, similar previous interventions, descriptions in research publications and other sources. The RPA Tool provides guidance on assessing resource availability. You can also find some similar assessment questions in the [Applicability & Transferability Tool](#).

It is easy to quantify and cost some resources, such as the cost of purchasing equipment or the cost of hiring a health promoter for one year at .5 FTE. Other resources are more intangible, but they can still be important for the viability of an intervention. The intangibles could include the support of an internal champion, enthusiasm among community partners who want to collaborate, or policies such as physical activity requirements in schools that create a new opportunity for programming.

Resources in public health are finite, but can sometimes be shifted to support new interventions. Consider the opportunity cost as part of what is needed and available. What will be gained and lost if an effective intervention is implemented using the necessary resources? What will be gained and lost if the intervention is NOT implemented?

For more detailed information about resource estimation, considering time, cost, scope, quality and risk, see <https://www.wrike.com/blog/project-estimation-techniques/>.

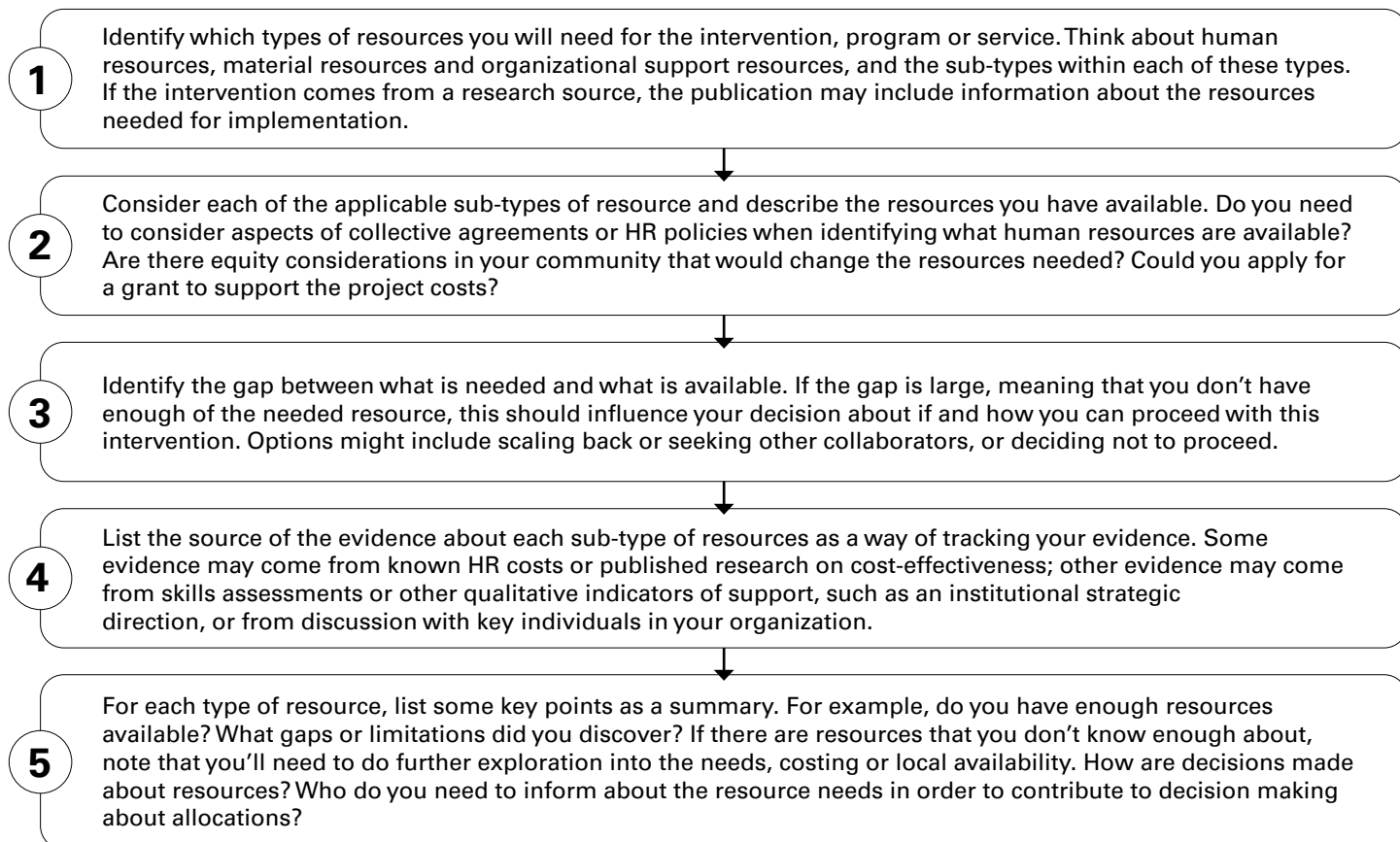
The Assessment of Evidence suite of tools is not intended to appraise Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous knowledges are based on systems that are distinct from Western ways of knowing. Decision-makers must also consider Indigenous knowledges in their local contexts, with guidance from Indigenous people and communities. [See relevant publications from the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health.](#)

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How to use the RPA Tool

The RPA Tool provides a systematic approach to identifying all of the resource needs for a particular intervention; itemizing those needs and what is available; and assessing whether you have enough confidence in the estimates of resource need and availability to use them to inform the decision-making process.

Keep in mind that the RPA Tool is flexible and may be applied differently in different situations. Here are the steps for using the RPA Tool:



Using the RPA Tool may lead you to an understanding of the limitations of the available resource evidence. For example, you may discover that you don't know how much promotion/media time you will require, or that the cost of space has not yet been determined. Limitations in resource evidence are to be expected, and they may reduce your confidence in your estimates of resources until you can obtain more detailed resource information.

If you want a deeper understanding of resource impact (i.e., how big the impact will be depending on the size of the resource investment), the [SUPPORT resource tool](#) can help. If you want to consider the overall feasibility of the intervention, program or service, the [NEDARC questions](#) may help.

You will usually consider several sources of evidence when making a decision. Bringing together multiple sources of evidence is part of the Synthesis step of evidence-informed decision making in public health. Using the RPA Tool, along with other Assessment of Evidence tools, can provide a transparent way of documenting the evidence base used to make decisions.

A subsequent step in EIDM is Adapt. As you consider whether you have the resources to implement an intervention, program or service, consider what would be needed to adapt that intervention to your local context. The [Applicability & Transferability Tool](#) can help by asking questions about how this new concept would work in your community.