



Using Rapid Cycle Evaluation to Increase SNAP E&T Enrollment and Engagement

SPEAKERS

Daniel Friend, Bridgette Acklin, Patty Ianiere

Goals for today



Understand the purpose and benefits of rapid-cycle evaluation (RCE)



Learn about each phase of the Learn, Innovate, and Improve (LI²) framework



Hear from program leaders on their experience using LI² in the SNAP E&T RCE study

What is RCE?

What can it do for you and When to use it?

Definition



RCE is a method commonly used to test program improvements



Usually incorporated in a program's continuous quality improvement (CQI) approach



RCE usually involves

- Leveraging "quick win" mixed methods data to gain insights
- Involves iterative testing and refinement

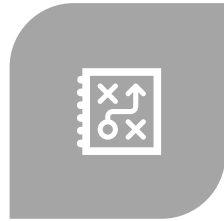


Starts small and expands based on success

Why use it?



QUICKLY GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE YOUR PROGRAM OR ADDRESS CHALLENGE



BUILDS IN OPPORTUNITIES TO ITERATIVELY TEST AND REFINE A STRATEGY



ENCOURAGES INNOVATION



IMPROVES CHANCES OF DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY



IMPROVES STAFF BUY-IN



GENERATES A RANGE OF EVIDENCE

Generates different types of evidence

e

- “Little e” evidence
- Generates insights to drive every day decision making
- Usually from descriptive designs (for example, a focus group of participants)

E

- “Big e” evidence
- Generates insights to move the field forward
- Usually from causal designs (for example, a random assignment study)

Generates different types of evidence

Programs generally use RCE for “little e” evidence

e

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Generating Big E Evidence

Goal of SNAP E&T RCE study



Motivation for study

- Providing high quality E&T programs is a priority for FNS and aligns with USDA's strategic goals.
- Focusing on ways to improve operations is a next step, following major investments, for example in the SNAP E&T Pilots.
- Using rigorous evaluation methods can shed light on which low-cost, small-scale changes might have a positive impact on service delivery and participant outcomes.
- Explore the use of RCE with staff who administer SNAP E&T programs

Goals of the study

Providing program staff with the tools to make evidence-based decisions

Quickly evaluating the effectiveness of program changes and identifying feasible changes to make improvements

Determining how the changes impact program and participant outcomes and their costs

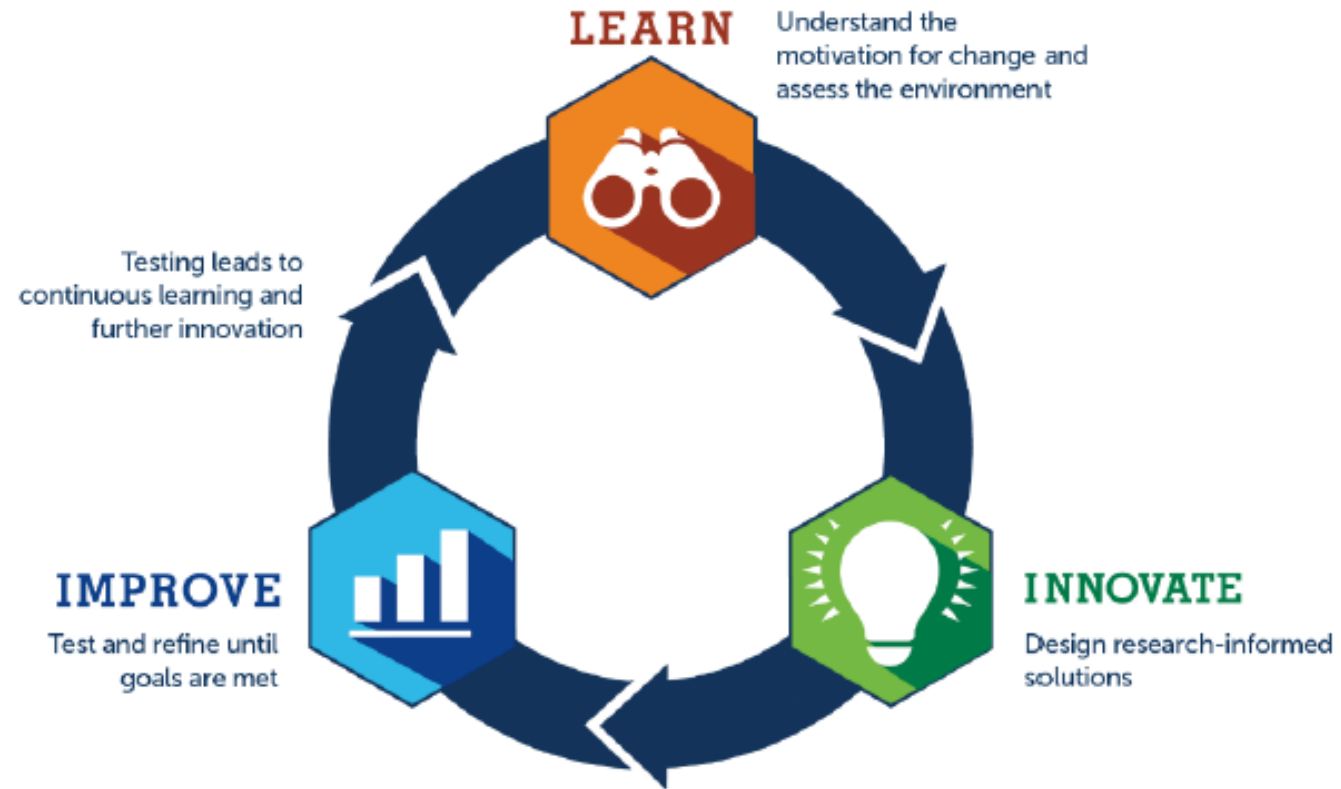
Determining the scalability of small-scale changes to other areas, States, or nationally

Learn, Innovate, & Improve (Li2)

A framework for program improvement and RCE



The framework



Phases

- **Learn:** Engage sites in strategic planning to identify key program challenges and select approach and specific solutions to test
- **Innovate** : Collaborate with sites to tailor the solutions to program context and target population
- **Improve:** Refine the solutions through a series of testing cycles

Benefits of LI²



LEVERAGES INSIGHTS FROM
ALL STAFF AT AN
ORGANIZATION



ENCOURAGES INNOVATION
AND CREATIVITY



FORMS RESEARCHER-
PRACTITIONER
PARTNERSHIPS



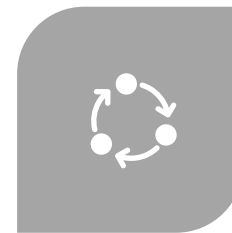
ENCOURAGES THE USE OF
EVIDENCE-/RESEARCH-
INFORMED STRATEGIES



IDENTIFIES ROOT CAUSES
OF CHALLENGES TO
DEVELOP EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES



IMPROVES STAFF BUY-IN



INCORPORATES ITERATIVE
TESTING AND REFINEMENT

Benefits of LI²



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Lots of overlap with benefits
of RCE!

The Learn Phase



Seeks to understand the array of challenges a program faces



Understand the impact the challenges have

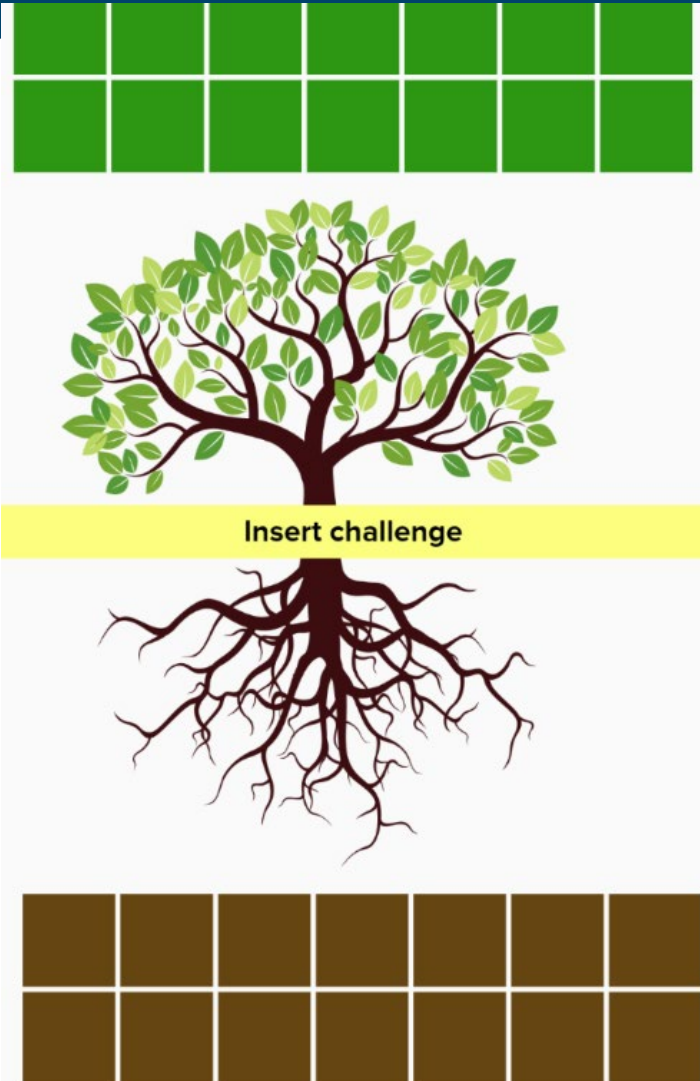


Prioritize challenges to address



Understand the drivers or the root cause of the challenges

Example: Getting to the root cause



- Problem tree analysis

Hear from the programs

- What were some of the challenges you initially identified?
- What were some of the root causes of the main challenges?
- What are some of the things you will take away in terms of how you identify and prioritize challenges?
- What is the challenge you are you addressing as part of the SNAP E&T project? Why is it important to you?
- What were other insights you gained from the Learn phase?

The Innovate Phase



DEVELOPS STRATEGIES OR
SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS ROOT
CAUSES

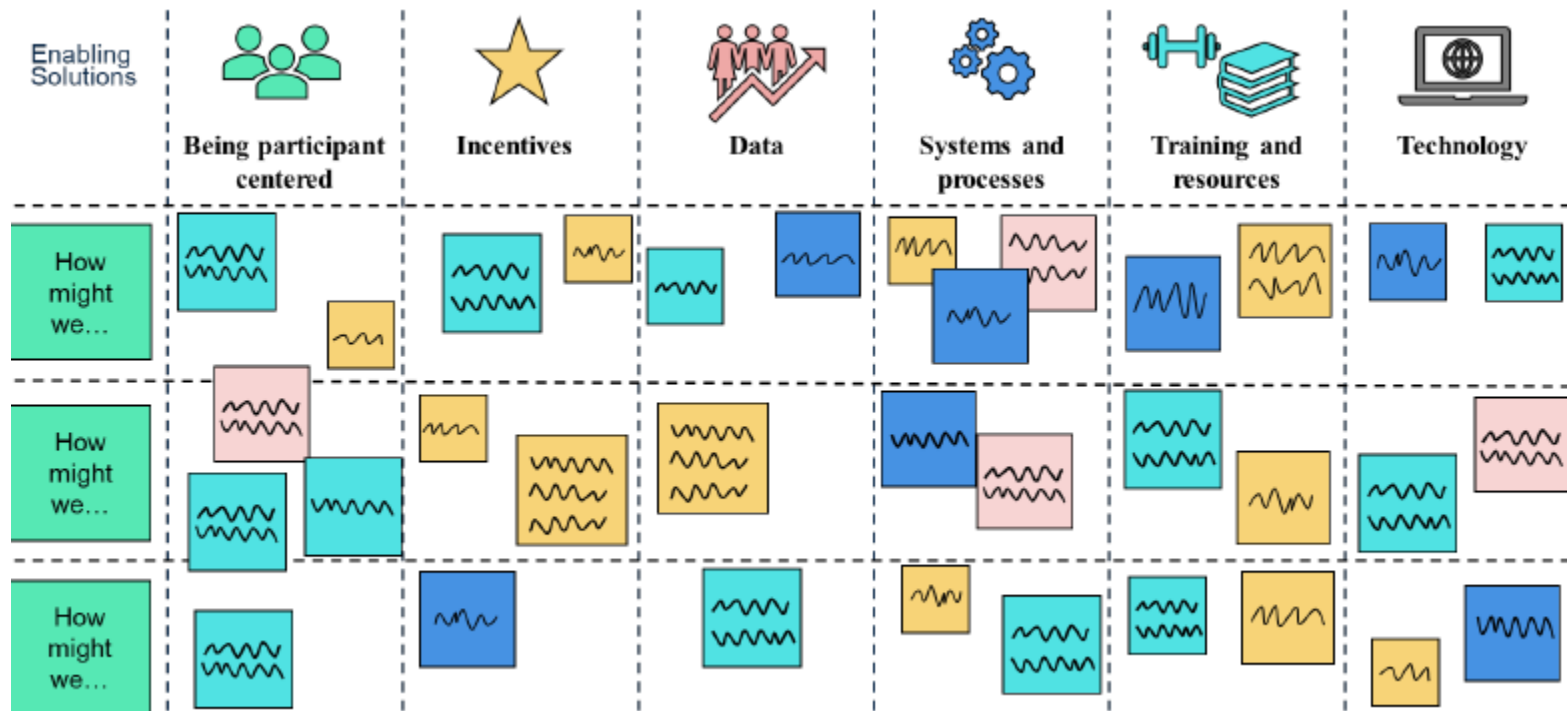


ENCOURAGES INNOVATION TO
DEVELOP IDEAL SOLUTION



TURNS IDEAL INTO REALITY BASED
ON BARRIERS AND CONTEXT

Example: Encouraging Brainstorming



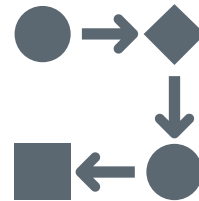
Hear from the programs

- What were some of solutions that your staff came up with?
- What are some of the things you will take away in terms of how you come up with solutions?
- What strategies are you testing for the SNAP E&T project? Why is it promising?
- What were other insights you gained from the Innovate phase?

Improve phase



Test the strategies using RCE methods



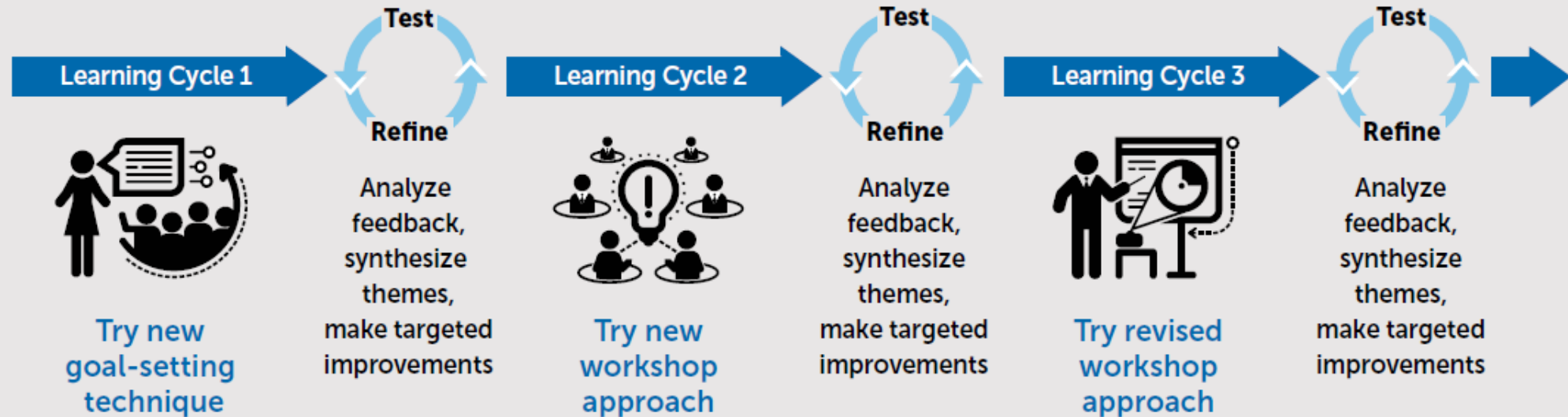
Iteratively refine strategies – repeating the Learn and Innovate phases as needed



Importance of failing fast

Example road test

An example of the road test process



Hear from the programs

- What are you hoping to learn from RCE?
- What some of the advantages you see in using RCE?
- If RCE shows positive findings, what would that mean for your program?
- If RCE shows room for improvement or that something not working, what would that mean for your program?
- Other thoughts on RCE?

Summary



RCE is a promising methods for testing program improvements



RCE generates evidence to help with every day decision making and can help move the field forward



LI² is a framework for program improvement that has many benefits



The Learn phase identifies root cause of challenges



The Innovate phase generates research-informed solutions



The Improve phase uses RCE to test and refine the solutions

Timeline of SNAP E&T RCE study



Questions?