Evaluating active living environment and policy changes in communities:
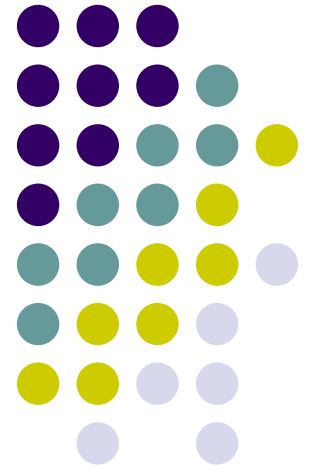# Concepts, strategies and methods

Larry Green & Judith Ottoson

Laura Brennan Ramirez & Cheryl Kelly

February 22, 2007

Active Living Research Conference

Session Overview

- Introductions: Larry, Judith, Laura & Cheryl
- Audience assessment
- Overview of seminar
- Larry & Judith
  - Kaiser Foundation
  - ALR grantees
- Laura & Cheryl
  - RWJF ALbD initiative
- Discussion/questions
- Interactive agenda setting: evaluation of environment and policy initiatives
  - Advancing research
  - Advancing practice

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ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN Increasing physical activity through community design

transtria
translate evidence
transfer skills
transform health

Evaluation Team

- Internal Project Team
  - PI: Laura Brennan Ramirez, PhD, MPH (Transtria)
  - Project Manager: Cheryl Kelly, PhD, MPH (Transtria)
  - Co-I: Ross Brownson, PhD (Saint Louis University School of Public Health)
- Evaluation Consultants
  - Beth Baker, PhD, MPH (Saint Louis University School of Public Health)
  - Kelly Evenson, PhD (University of North Carolina)
  - Susan Handy, PhD (University of California – Davis)
  - Jim Sallis, PhD (San Diego State University)
  - M. Katherine Kraft, PhD (Independent Consultant)
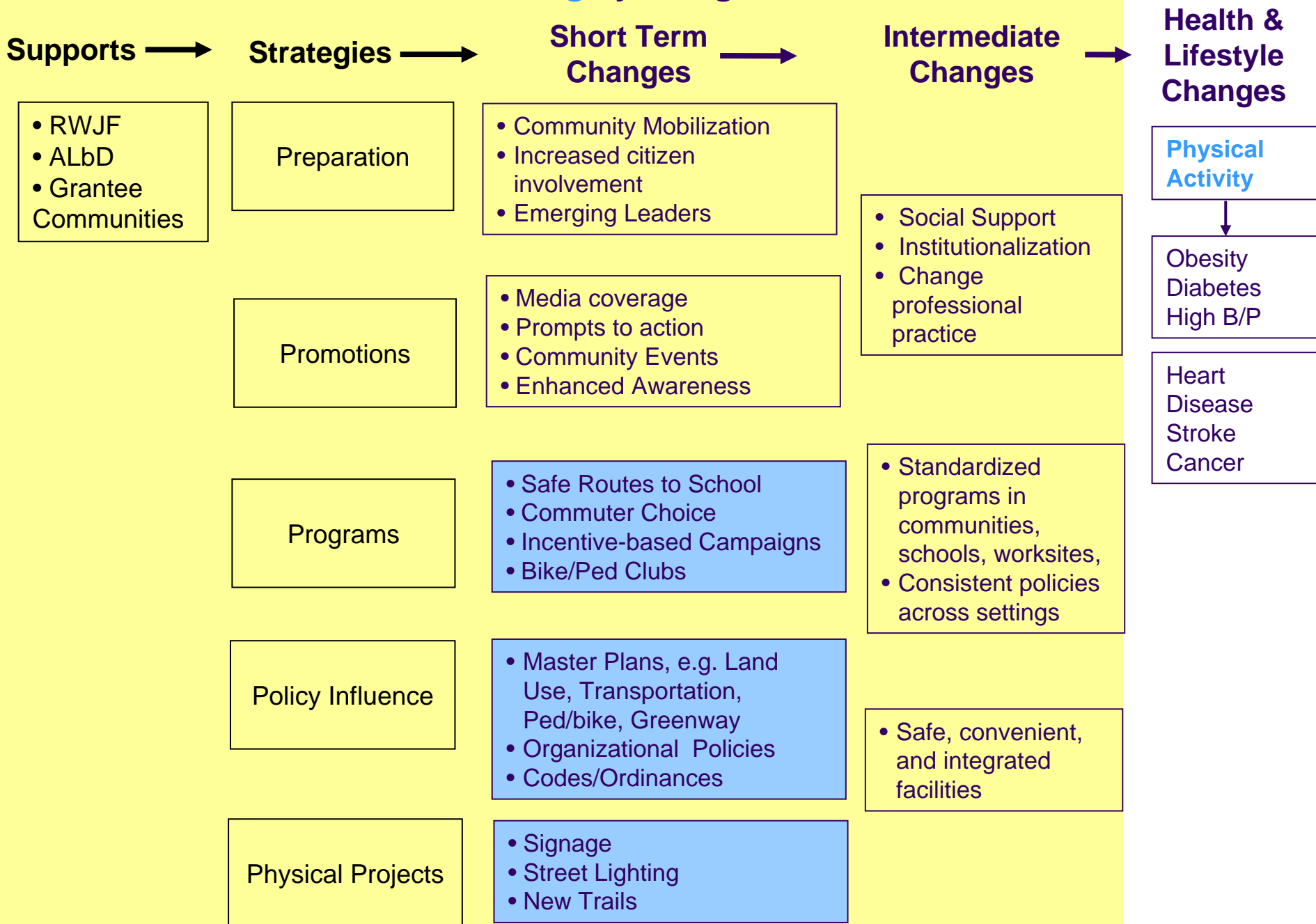
Evaluation Team

- Active Living by Design
  - Sarah Strunk, MHA (Director)
  - Richard Bell, MCP (Project Officer)
  - Phil Bors, MPH (Project Officer)
  - Helen Mahan (Project Officer)
  - Omisade Burney-Scott (Project Officer)
  - Mark Dessauer (Communications Officer)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
  - Laura Leviton, PhD (Senior Program Officer)

Evaluation Initiative

- *3 year evaluation (start November 1, 2006)*
  - *25 communities across the U.S. (intervention activities)*
  - ALbD National Program Office (technical assistance to communities)
  - RWJF Funding ($200,000 over five years)
- Guided by the ALbD Action Model
  - Preparation
  - Promotions
  - Programs
  - Policy influence*
  - Physical projects*

Active Living by Design Action Model

Supports → **Strategies** → **Short Term Changes** → **Intermediate Changes** → **Health & Lifestyle Changes**

Supports
- RWJF
- ALbD
- Grantee Communities

Strategies / Short Term Changes

| Preparation |
- Community Mobilization
- Increased citizen involvement
- Emerging Leaders

| Promotions |
- Media coverage
- Prompts to action
- Community Events
- Enhanced Awareness

| Programs |
- Safe Routes to School
- Commuter Choice
- Incentive-based Campaigns
- Bike/Ped Clubs

| Policy Influence |
- Master Plans, e.g. Land Use, Transportation, Ped/bike, Greenway
- Organizational Policies
- Codes/Ordinances

| Physical Projects |
- Signage
- Street Lighting
- New Trails

Intermediate Changes
- Social Support
- Institutionalization
- Change professional practice

- Standardized programs in communities, schools, worksites,
- Consistent policies across settings

- Safe, convenient, and integrated facilities

Health & Lifestyle Changes

Physical Activity

↓

Obesity
Diabetes
High B/P

Heart Disease
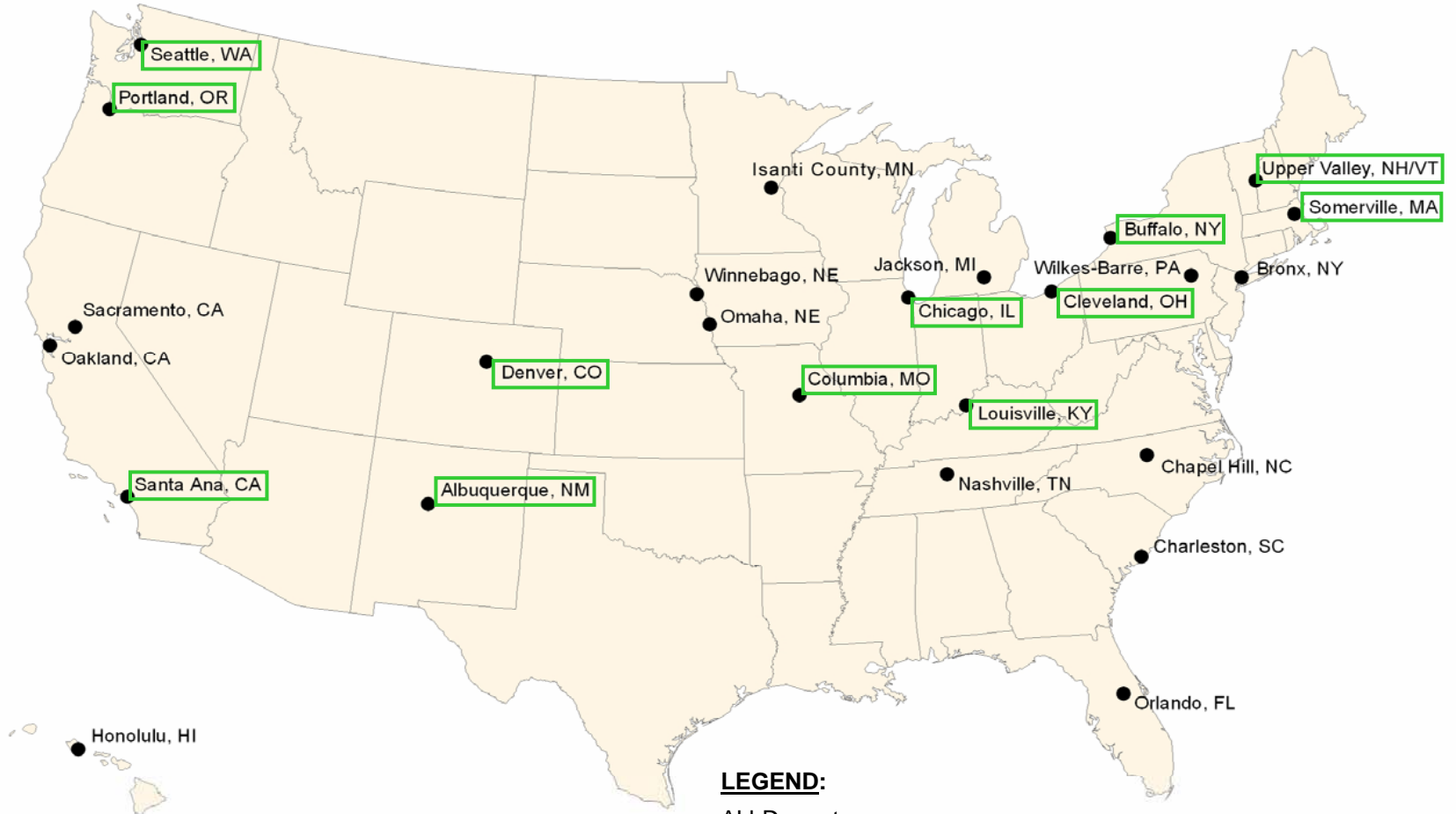Stroke
Cancer

Community Partnerships (CPs)

- 25 Communities
  - CP received $200,000
  - Populations such as children, adults, African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, lower income
  - Settings such as communities, schools, parks, worksites
  - Activities to address community design, land use, transportation, architecture, trails
  - Influence both recreation- and transportation-related physical activity

Active Living by Design Community Partnerships

ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN

Seattle, WA
Portland, OR
Isanti County, MN
Upper Valley, NH/VT
Somerville, MA
Buffalo, NY
Jackson, MI
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Bronx, NY
Winnebago, NE
Sacramento, CA
Chicago, IL
Cleveland, OH
Oakland, CA
Omaha, NE
Denver, CO
Columbia, MO
Louisville, KY
Santa Ana, CA
Albuquerque, NM
Chapel Hill, NC
Nashville, TN
Charleston, SC
Honolulu, HI
Orlando, FL

LEGEND:
ALbD grantees
ALbD and Healthy Eating by Design grantees

RWJF Evaluation Philosophy

- **To learn from a program, policy, or strategy.**
    - **How to improve the program**
    - **What works under what circumstances**
    - **An evidence base for:**
        - social change
        - practice in the field
        - Foundation grantmaking

- **The goal is to inform the field.**

- **To learn, we need collaboration.**
    - Intellectual collaboration
    - Planning and logistics

Audiences for the Evaluation

- "The field" – the policy and built environments that promote physical activity
- Other funders and co-funders
- Grantees – for sustainability
- The Foundation Board of Trustees
- Foundation Staff
- The ALbD NPO

Evaluation Means Assigning Value

- To policies and environments
- To programs
- To practices
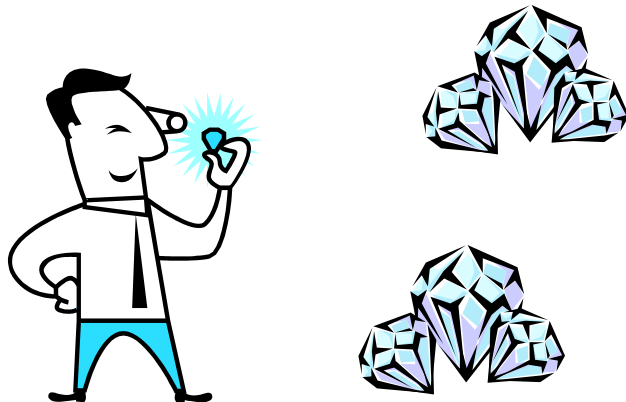
- Systematic inquiry
- Often research, might not be
- Conclusions justified by a standard of evidence

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Evaluation Is *Not*
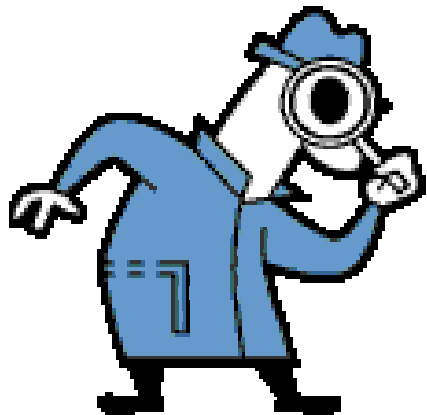
- Auditing
- Spying
- Grading
- Spin

The Evaluation Approach

Three components:

1. **ALR-funded studies** in two communities (Columbia, Somerville)
   - Comprehensive, local investigator-initiated with Project Director involvement and support
   - Launch in January 2007

2. **Policy case studies** in five communities (Albuquerque, Bronx, Louisville, Sacramento, Wilkes-Barre)
   - Led by Larry Brown, Columbia University
   - Launch in November/December 2006

3. **Cross-site evaluation** in all communities (at varying levels)
   - Led by Laura Brennan Ramirez and Cheryl Kelly, Transtria LLC
   - Launch in November 2006

ALBD Evaluation

ALbD Communities	ALR awards	Brown Case Studies	Brennan Ramirez Pre/Post	Brennan Ramirez Cross-Site
Albuquerque		X	X	X
Bronx		X		X
Buffalo				X
Chapel Hill				X
Charleston				X
Chicago				X
Cleveland			X	X
Columbia	X			X
Denver				X
Honolulu				X
Isanti				X
Jackson				X
Louisville		X		X
Nashville				X
Oakland				X
Omaha				X
Orlando			X	X
Portland				X
Sacramento		X		X
Santa Ana			X	X
Seattle			X	X
Somerville	X			X
Upper Valley				X
Wilkes-Barre		X		X
Winnebago			X	X

Evaluation Aims

- Assess the environmental impacts of physical projects and related policy changes (physical activity behavior, if possible)

- Document interventions implemented and intended/unintended consequences

- Identify strengths and challenges in planning, developing and implementing interventions

Evaluation Aims and Methods

- AIM #1: Assess the environmental impacts of physical project and related policy changes (physical activity behavior, if possible)
  - For communities that have implemented physical projects:
    - Document implementation through environmental audits and direct observation of community members' behaviors
  - For communities that have plans to implement physical projects, including Cleveland, Seattle, Winnebago, Orlando, Santa Ana and Albuquerque
    - Document pre- and post-observations through audits and direct observation of community members' behaviors

Pre/Post Evaluation

- Selection Criteria
  - Stage of intervention (before physical changes to environment)
  - Evidence of a policy and environmental intervention
    - Contract for work in place
    - Time frame for project completion
  - Focus of intervention (transportation or recreation)
  - Population (vulnerable populations, children)
  - Policy and environment focus

Evaluation Aims and Methods

- AIM #2: Document interventions implemented and intended/unintended consequences
  - Collect and analyze data from existing sources
    - PRS, Officer diaries, grantee reports
    - Examples: resources generated, percent of benchmarks achieved
  - Conduct key informant interviews with grantees and ALbD staff
  - Assess organizational capacity through an on-line survey conducted by key informants
  - Focus groups during site visits with staff, partners and community members

Existing Data

- Information exchange (August 2006)
    - Reviewed each CP and progress to date
    - Examined the ALbD Progress Reporting System (PRS)
- Existing evaluation reports of years 1 and 2
    - Kelly Evenson summary
    - ALbD summary
- CP documents (e.g. workplans, budgets)
- ALbD Lessons Learned

Key Informant Interviews: Themes

- Community Partnership's Maturity
  - Why established? How long?
- Multidisciplinary Partnership
  - Agencies/organizations/individuals involved?
  - Political support?
  - Community member participation?
- Lead Agency
  - Agency established in community?
  - Support for the partnership?

Key Informant Interviews: Themes (continued)

- Community Partnership Characteristics
  - Strengths of partnership? Leadership? Support?
  - Challenges of partnership? Participation? Resources?
- Financial Resources of Community Partnership?
  - Funding outside of ALbD?
  - Factors contributing to securing other funds?
  - Challenges in seeking additional resources?
- Sustainability of Community Partnership?
  - Plans for sustaining efforts after ALbD funding ends?
  - Future sources of funding?

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Key Informant Interviews: Themes (continued)

- Staff
  - How leadership was selected? Leadership paid employee or volunteer?
  - Changes in leadership? Why? Impact on partnership?
  - Skills and expertise of staff?
- Other
  - What would you do differently (starting over)?
  - Advice for other communities?
  - Benefits of partnership to addressing 5 P's?

Organizational Capacity Tool

- Partnership purpose and goals
  - Goals defined? Address community needs?
- Partnership functioning
  - Core leadership? Procedures defined? Organized mtgs?
- Partnership leadership
  - Adequate skills? Trust in leadership? Relationship with public officials?
- Partnership resources
  - Space? Equipment?
- Partnership and community served
  - Variety of community groups? Community knowledge about partnership?

Focus groups

- Describe populations and settings
  - Disadvantaged? Children? Schools? Parks?
  - Population changes? Challenges? Reach?

- Identify physical projects, policy changes, programs and promotions
  - Steps taken? Facilitators? Barriers?
  - Efforts not successful? Why?
  - Biggest impact on the community?

- Technical assistance from ALbD staff
  - Type? Satisfaction with ALbD staff? Satisfaction with PRS?
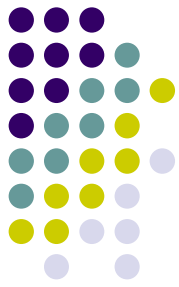
Evaluation Aims and Methods

- AIM #3: Identify strengths and challenges in planning, developing and implementing interventions
  - Use concept mapping
    - Focus prompt: "One specific action or change in your community to support active living is…"

The Concept Mapping Process

Plan: Develop a **Focus** and **Identify** Participants

Ge~~nerate~~
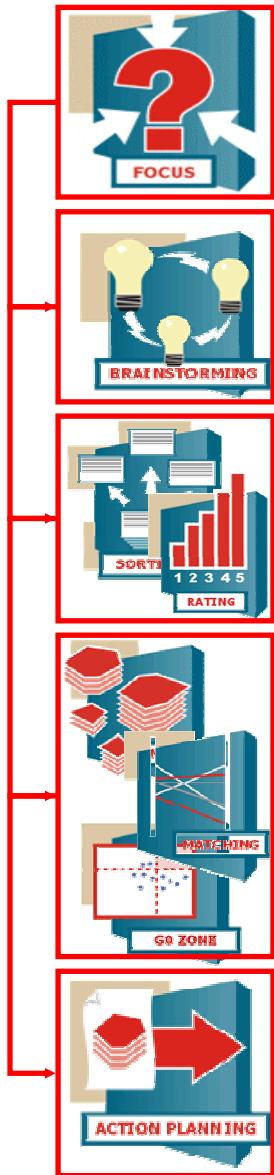
- **Focus:** e.g. "One thing that we are doing or could do in our setting that would more effectively integrate research with
- Understand the capacity of practitioners to use an evidence base. (5)
- Embrace tenure track models that promote a better integration of practice with research. (46)
- Conduct additional research into effective methods of dissemination. (49)
- Reward practitioners who incorporate science into their practice. (57)
- Implement pay-for-performance reimbursement based on measures derived from evidence-based guidelines. (65)
- Etc.

Str~~ucture~~

su

sort

rate

Com~~pute Maps~~ and Produ~~ce~~

Rating Sheet

Decide how to manage multiple tasks. 20
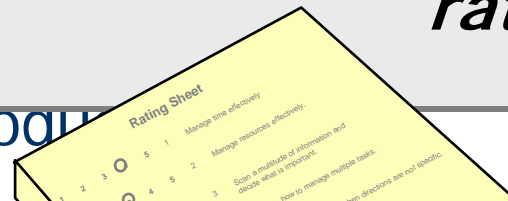
- Aggregate Sort Data
- Multidimensional Scaling
- Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

Int~~erpret~~

Conceptually _similar ideas_ are in _close proximity_
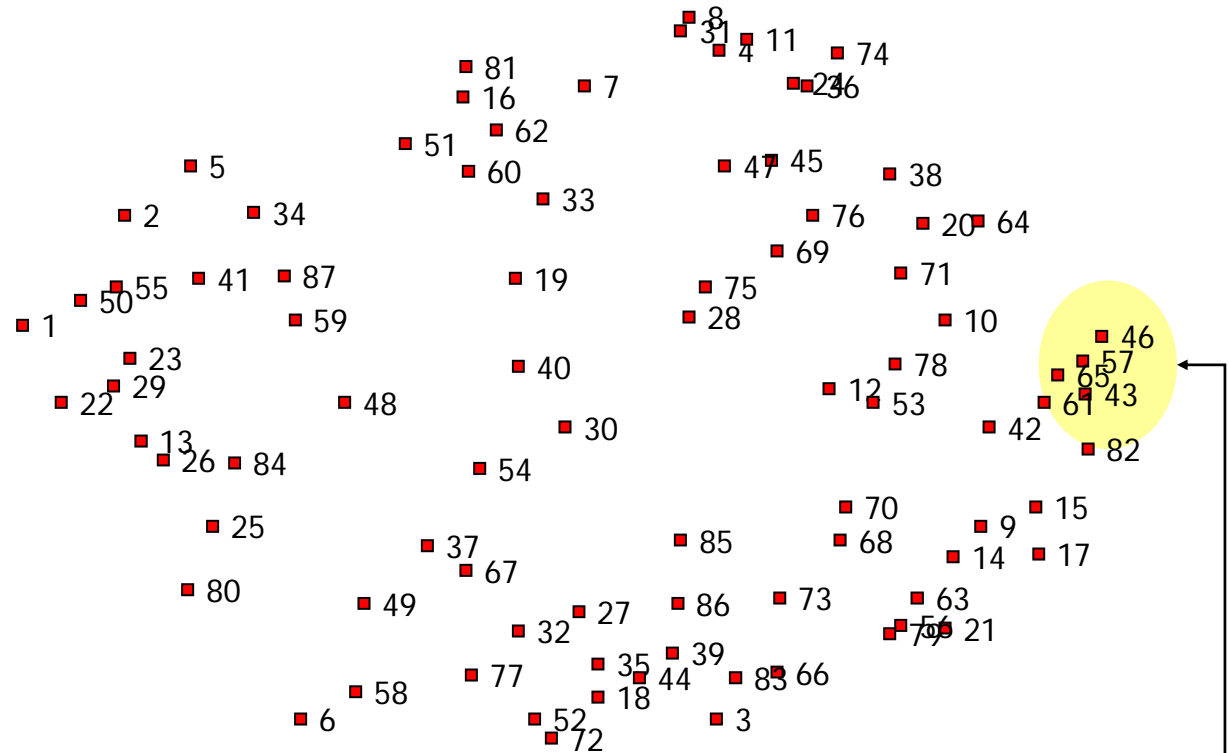
Embrace tenure track models that promote a better integration of practice with research. (46)

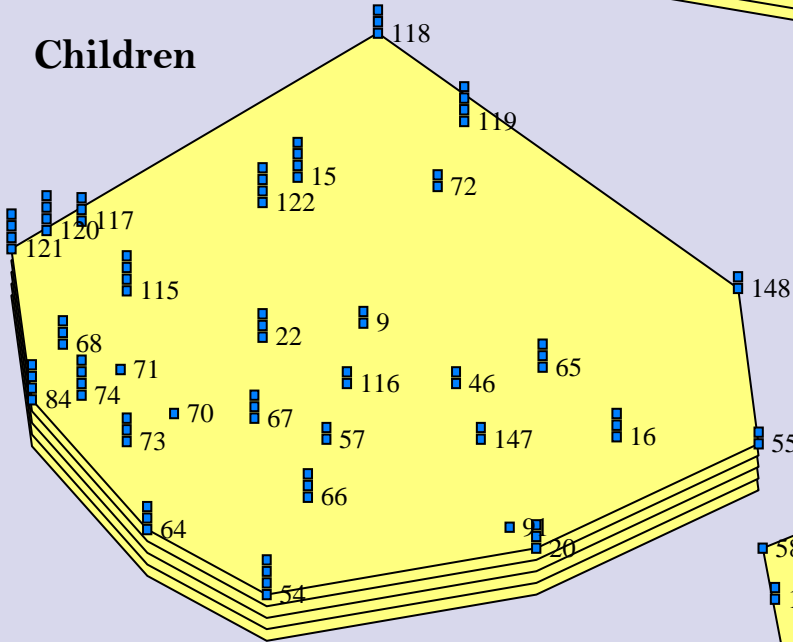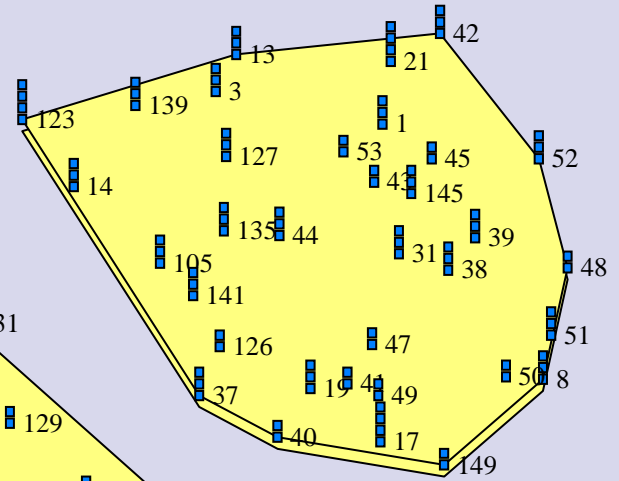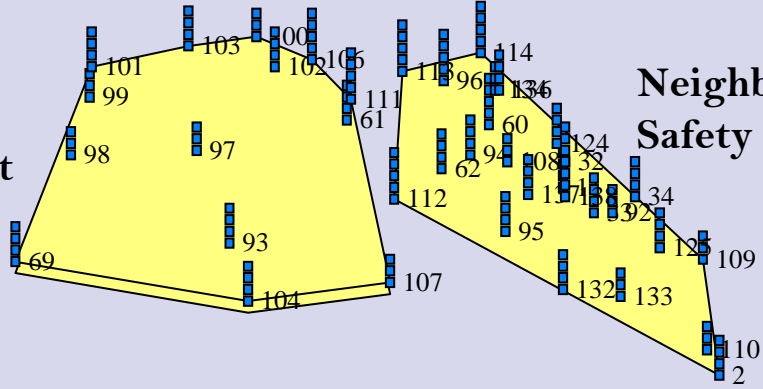Reward practitioners who incorporate science into their practice. (57)

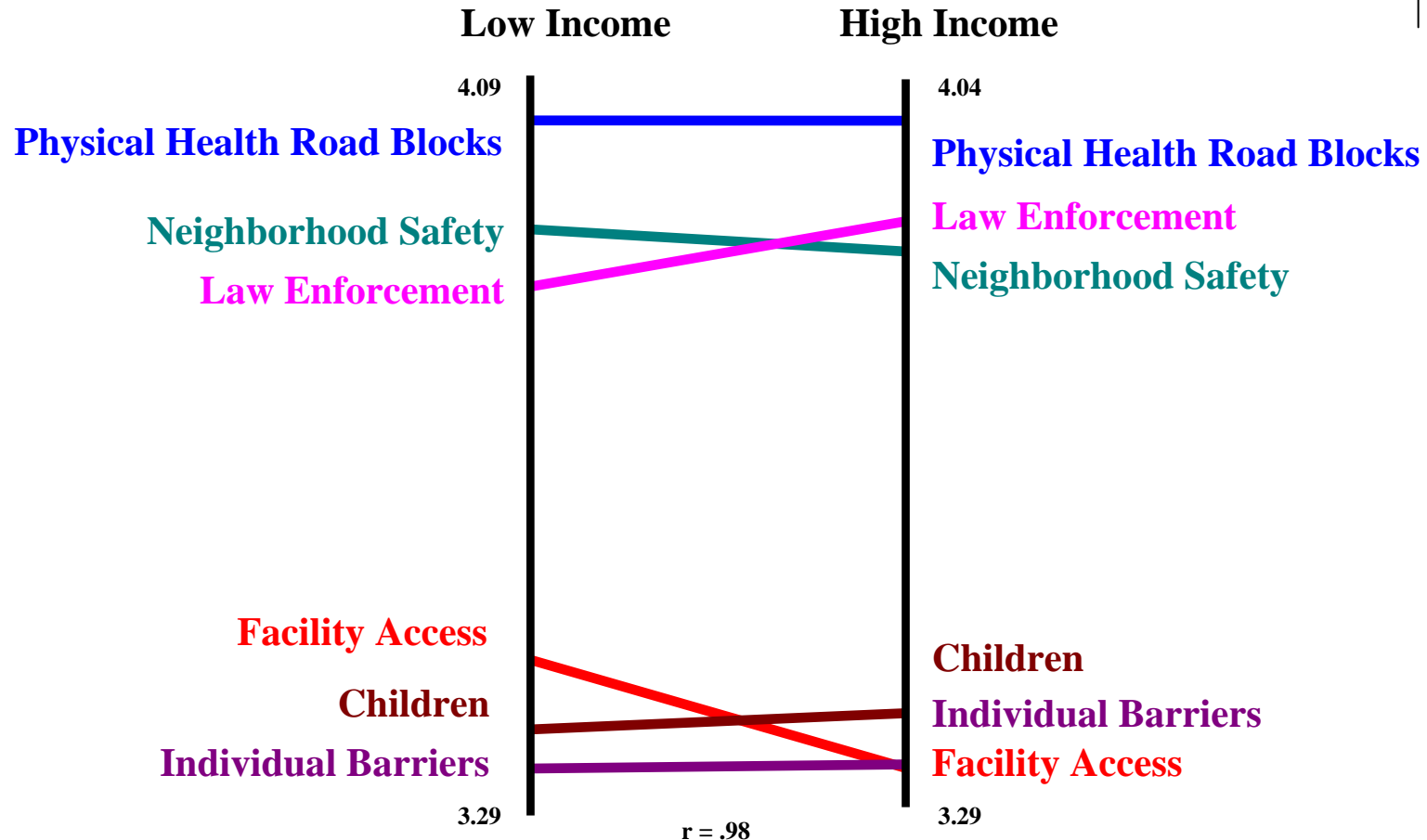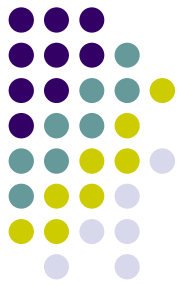Implement pay-for performance reimbursement based on measures derived from evidence-based guidelines. (65)

Ratings: We ask participants …

Importance:

• To rate each item according to how important they think each item is to the ALbD initiative in their community, compared to the rest of the items.

• Use the following scale:

1=Relatively unimportant

2=Somewhat important

3=Moderately important

4=Very important

5=Extremely important

Comparison across populations

Low Income   **High Income**

4.09   4.04

Physical Health Road Blocks   **Physical Health Road Blocks**

Neighborhood Safety   **Law Enforcement**

Law Enforcement   **Neighborhood Safety**

Facility Access

Children   **Children**

Individual Barriers   **Individual Barriers**

Facility Access

3.29   r = .98   3.29

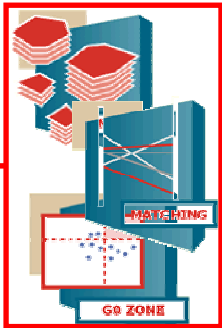# We are Now in the Brainstorming Stage....

Plan: Develop a **Focus** and **Identify** Participants

Generate (**Brainstorm**) Ideas: all participants

Structure Ideas: all participants *rate* and a subgroup completes a conceptual *sort*

Compute **Maps** and Produce **Reports**

Interpret and Utilize Maps

Timeline

- Year One (11/1/2006 – 10/31/2007)
  - 4 sites will be asked to participate in audits/photos, focus groups, interviews, and concept mapping
  - 6 sites will be asked to participate in pre-test activities, focus groups, interviews, and concept mapping
- Year Two (11/1/2007 – 10/31/2008)
  - 10 sites will be asked to participate in audits/photos, focus groups, interviews, and concept mapping
- Year Three (11/1/2008 – 10/31/2009)
  - 3-5 sites will be asked to participate in audits/photos, focus groups, interviews, and concept mapping
  - 4-6 sites will be asked to complete post-assessment

Products and Deliverables

- Summary
  - Across all sites
  - Recommendations for building community design initiatives
    - Policy, environment, promotion and program interventions
    - Emphasis on children and relatively disadvantaged populations
  - Evidence of changes to the community environment (audit data, photos) and, when feasible, the impact on behavior
- Reports
  - Each site and ALbD program office
  - Document successes and challenges, what worked well, what did not work so well
    - Community partnerships, technical assistance, impact of start-up resources

Grantee Benefits from Evaluation

- Collaborate on evaluation questions

- Evaluation *may* help with sustainability
  - through other funding sources

- Timely feedback and data sharing
  - for process data, very feasible
  - for outcomes, *be patient*

Agenda Setting Activity

- Evaluation of environment and policy initiatives from the RESEARCH perspective

  - What are our research questions?

- Evaluation of environment and policy initiatives from the PRACTICE perspective

  - What are our research questions?