

# SPIRIT process evaluation: Some challenges and reflections

Abby Haynes  
Senior Research Officer, CIPHER  
[abby.haynes@saxinstitute.org.au](mailto:abby.haynes@saxinstitute.org.au)

saxinstitute



University  
of  
St Andrews



University of  
Western Sydney

**UTS:CenSoC**  
Centre for the Study of Choice



**UNSW**  
AUSTRALIA



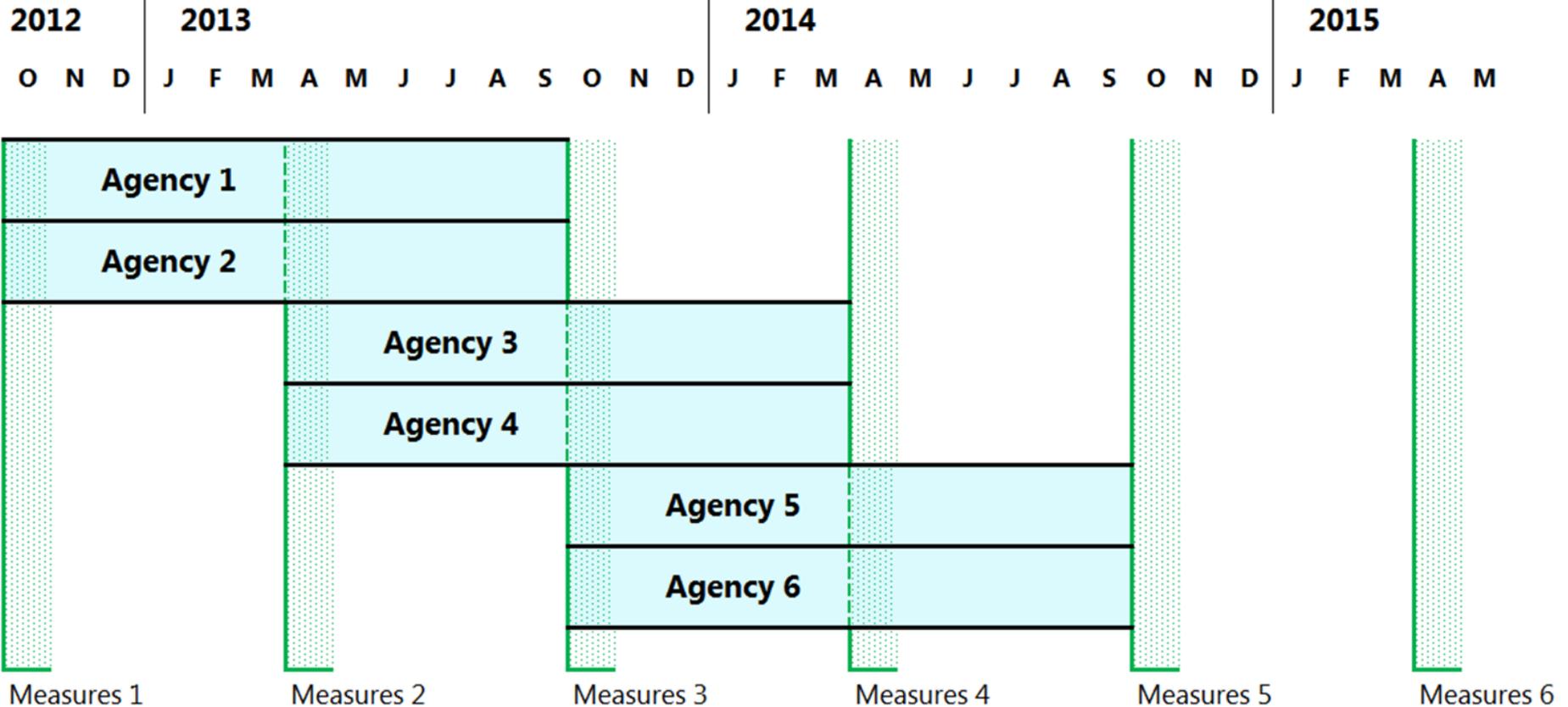
THE COCHRANE  
COLLABORATION®



**NSW**  
GOVERNMENT

**Health**  
Population  
Health

# Overview of SPIRIT



# SPIRIT components

1. **Audit, feedback & goal-setting**
2. **Leadership program**
3. **Agency support for research**
4. **Staff skills development \***
5. **Access to research/ers \***
6. **Systems for finding research \***

## Targeting:

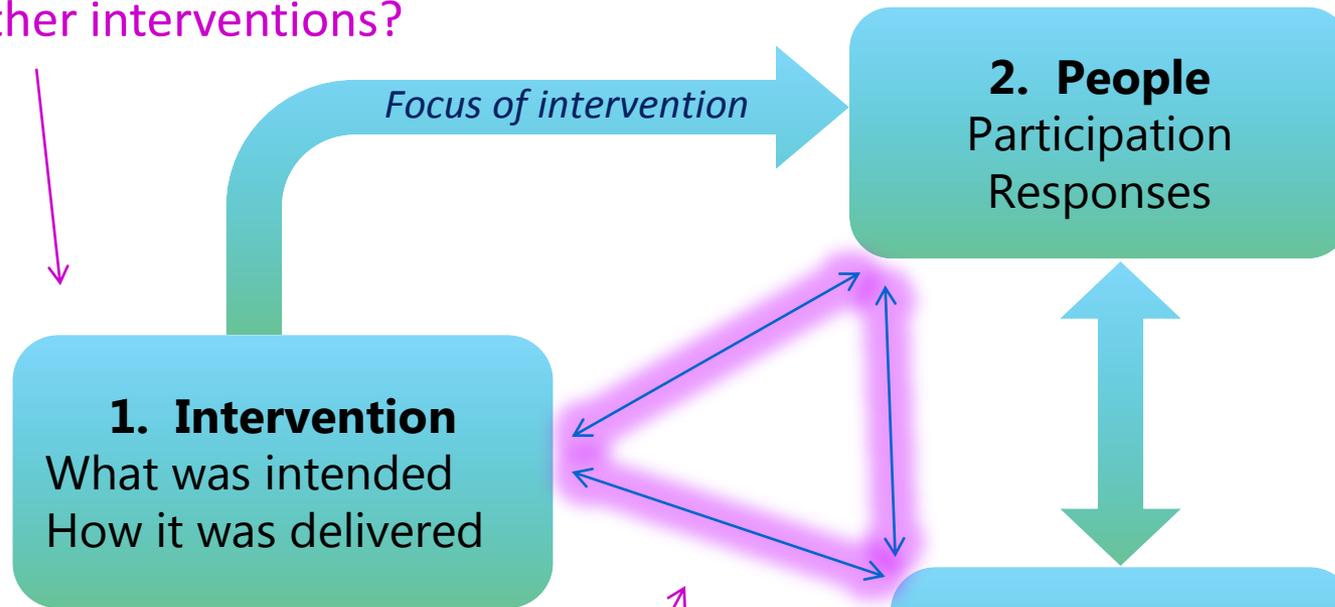
- **Value** placed on research
- **Skills of staff** in accessing, appraising, generating, interacting, using research
- **Systems** for using research

\* = Adaptable topics, content and presenters

# Overview of process evaluation

What lessons are there for other interventions?

How did people interact with the intervention?



## 1. Intervention

What was intended  
How it was delivered

## 2. People Participation Responses

## 3. Context Organisational Environmental

How was SPIRIT implemented in each agency?

How might the relationships between 1, 2 and 3 have shaped variations in effects in each agency?

What (unforeseen) effects did it have?

What was the context of the agencies?

# Data collection methods

- Interviews and ad hoc conversations with participants,  $n \approx 90$
- Observations of intervention sessions,  $n \approx 70$
- Interviews and ad hoc conversations with SPIRIT staff and providers
- Anonymous feedback forms
- Other opportunistic methods...

# Some process evaluation challenges

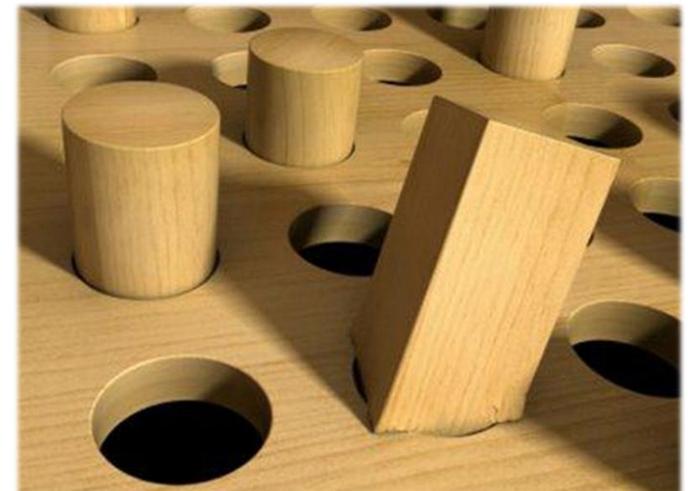
1. Understanding context
2. Explaining effects
3. Fidelity assessment
4. Getting the most from participants

# 1. Understanding context

- What do we need to know about context?
  - a. Business-as-usual: culture, practices, agenda-setting...
  - b. Knowledge for action: access, use, value, movement, legitimisation...
  - c. Leadership: styles, visibility, staff perceptions...
  - d. Constraints and supports for using research
  - e. Anything else that might affect outcomes
- How do we find it out?

# Understanding context: our approach

- What worked well?
  - Loosely structured interviews
  - Observations of interactive workshops
- What didn't work so well?
  - Information activity

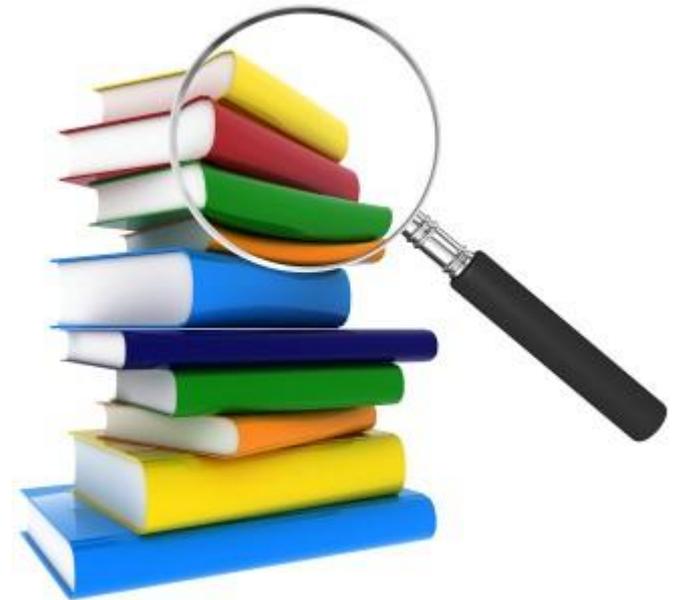


## 2. Explaining effects

- Variation in engagement, perceptions and responses
- Interpreting outcome findings

# Explaining effects: our approach

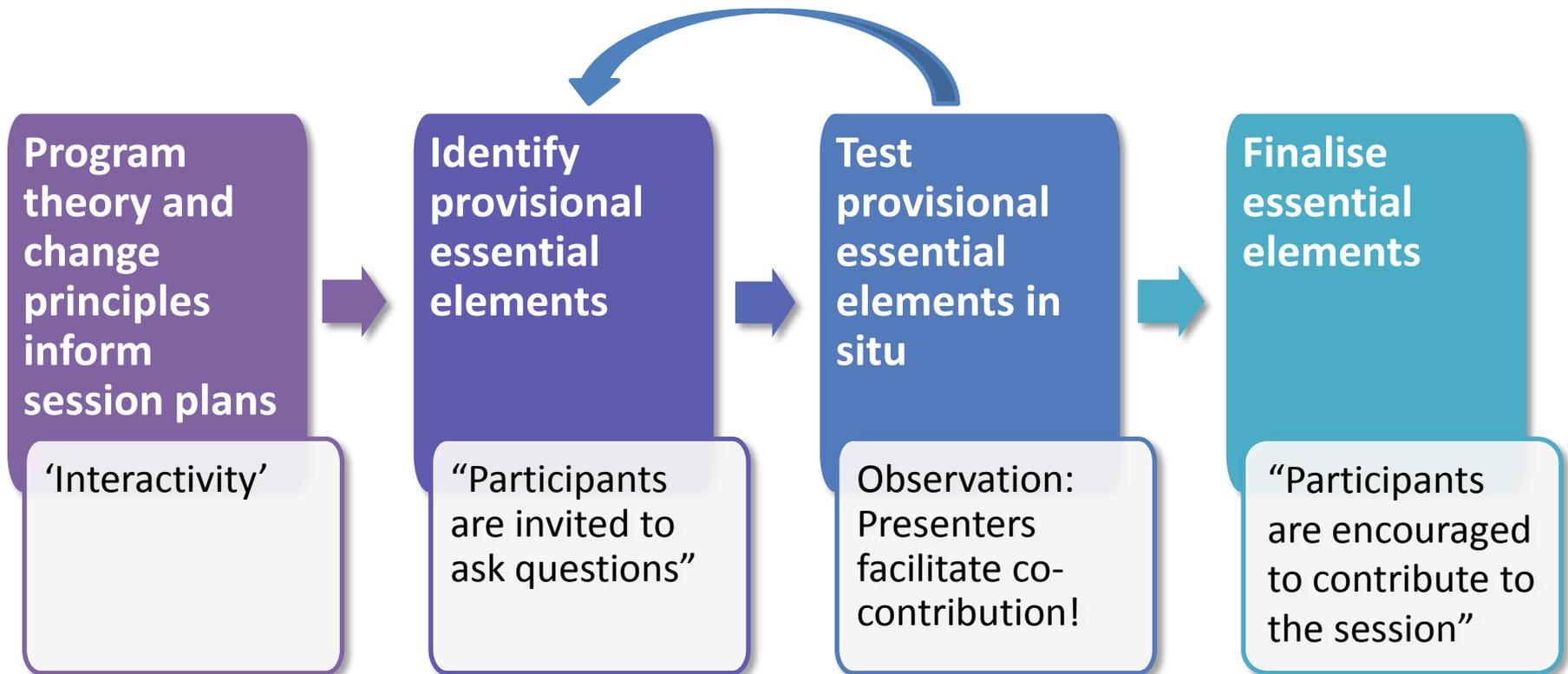
- What worked well?
  - Comparative case study approach
  - Liaison people as key informants
- What didn't work so well?
  - Unpacking impact

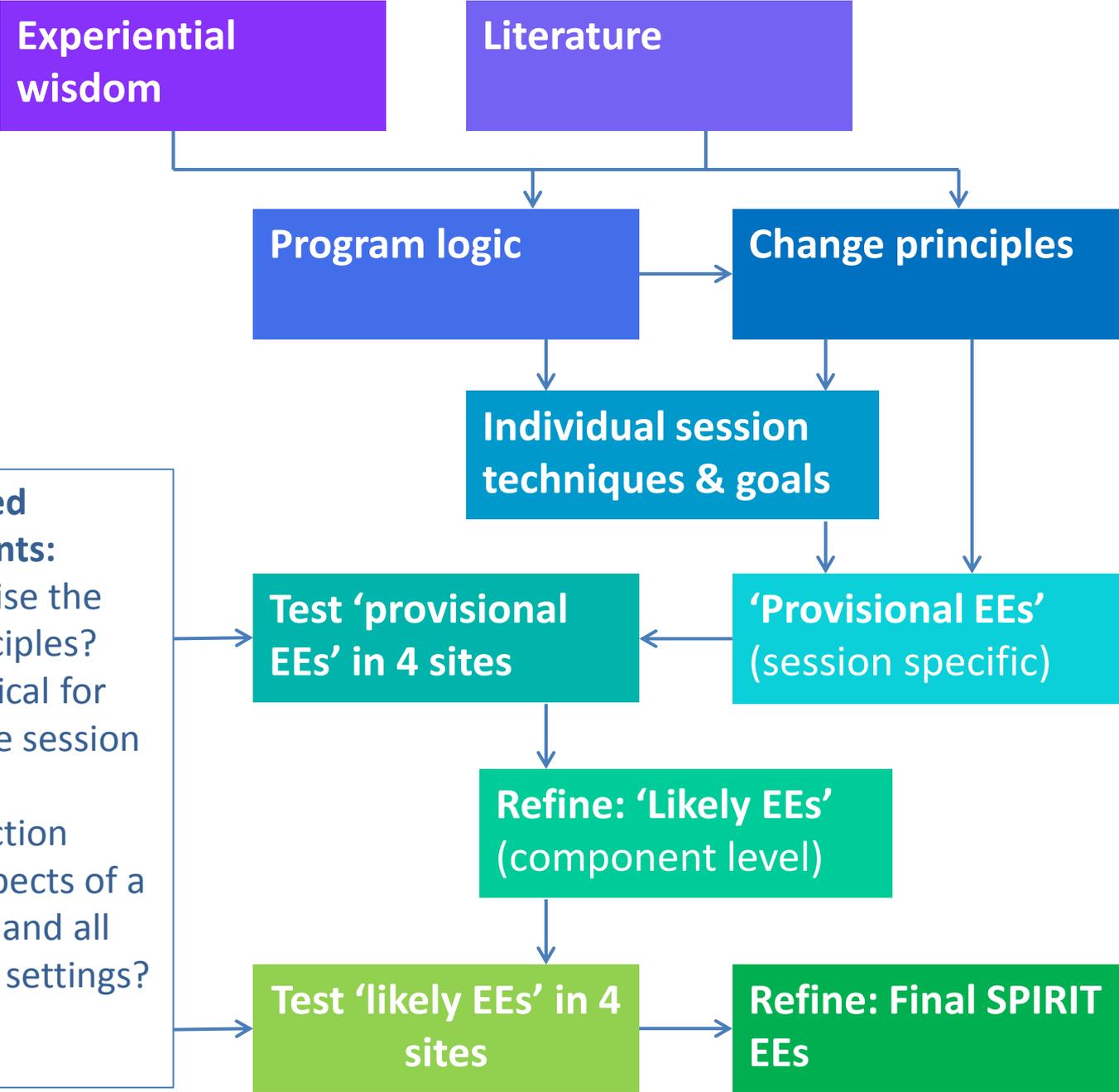


# 3. Fidelity assessment

- What are the *essential elements* of each activity?
- How can they function consistently across locally adapted intervention components in each site?
- What does fidelity look like across SPIRIT?

# Fidelity assessment: our approach





**Assessing applied essential elements:**

1. Do they realise the change principles?
2. Are they critical for achieving the session goals?
3. Do they function across all aspects of a component, and all intervention settings?

## 4. Getting the most from participants

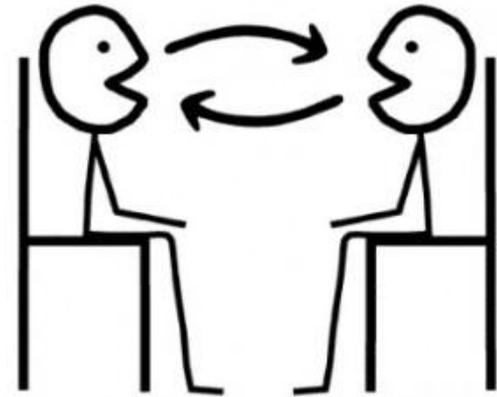
- Maximising access to data

*but also*

- Minimising “impost”

# Getting the most from participants: our approach

- What worked well?
  - Genuine dialogue
  - Verbal feedback and advice
  - Triangulation



- What didn't work so well?
  - Access to interviewees
  - Understanding policy processes in the context of a trial

# Departure points...

- Process evaluation is resource intensive, but vital for understanding *how* and *why*
- What evaluation approaches are others finding useful (and not so useful)?
- Our methods have not accessed the central phenomenon: 'policymaking'
  - Can we?
  - How?