

om  
buds  
man

The National **Long-Term Care**  
**Ombudsman** Resource Center



# PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: SELF-EVALUATION TOOLS FOR LONG- TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAMS

FEBRUARY 29, 2012



# **Overview of the Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Tool**

**Robyn Grant**

**Director, Advocacy and Outreach  
The National Consumer Voice for Quality  
Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice)**

# Purpose



- Improves the effectiveness of all ombudsman programs
  - Lays out elements necessary for effectiveness
  - Includes best practices, standards to strive for
    - ✦ Big Picture
      - Helps all programs move toward being the very best they can be
        - Bar is high
    - ✦ Day-to-Day
      - Identifies
        - Areas of strength
        - Areas that need improvement
      - Helps develop a plan for improvement

# Purpose



- **NOT** to evaluate your program or you as State or Local Ombudsman
- **NOT** to compare programs
  - No “passing score”
  - No national ratings/averages

# Components



- 13 Components
  - I. Program Access
  - II. Program Management
  - III. Complaint Handling
  - IV. Education/Information and Assistance
  - V. Training
  - VI. Systems Advocacy
  - VII. Program Integrity
  - VIII. Conflict of Interest
  - IX. Confidentiality
  - X. Legal Resources
  - XI. Fiscal Resources
  - XII. Relationships with Agencies/Entities/Individuals/Citizen Groups/Others
  - XIII. Accountability
- Each component consists of indicators
  - Indicators are the essential elements for an effective program

### III. COMPLAINT HANDLING

OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA) MANDATE – OAA § 712 (a)(3)(A)(D)(E); 712(a)(5)(B)(ii)(iii)(iv); 712(b)(1)

#### INDICATORS

Rate your program according to the following scale:

1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Mostly	5 Always
------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	-------------

#### A. Scope

1. The type of complaint work conducted by the program is consistent with the role of a resident advocate and is distinct and separate from the duties of other entities such as the regulatory agency, adult protective services or the nursing facility.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There are clear policies consistent with the OAA mandates regarding if and when ombudsmen and ombudsman assistants who visit residents report suspected abuse or neglect.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Ombudsmen are given clear guidance and training about how to handle the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resident is unable to give consent and has no representative</li> <li>• The resident is unable to give consent and the resident’s representative is acting in a way that is negatively affecting the resident</li> <li>• The ombudsman has generated the complaint and needs to determine how to best advocate for a resident</li> <li>• The ombudsman has witnessed or suspects abuse, and the resident does not want the ombudsman to take any action</li> <li>• The ombudsman has witnessed or suspects abuse, and the resident is unable to give consent</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL FOR COMPLAINT HANDLING: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Notes/General Comments about Complaint Handling:**

*Problems getting referral information back from the Department of Health*

➤ **Areas of Difficulty:**

*For each indicator that you rated as "1" or "2," identify: (1) the reasons why you are having difficulty with this indicator; (2) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have control; and (3) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have no control.*

➤ **Plans for Improvement/Recommendations:**

*For each indicator you target for improvement, identify your specific goal, actions steps, and time frames.*

TOTAL FOR COMPLAINT HANDLING: (1) 4 (2) 5 (3) 7 (4) 4 (5) 4

➤ **Notes/General Comments about Complaint Handling:**

Problems getting referral information back from the Department of Health

➤ **Areas of Difficulty:**

*For each indicator that you rated as "1" or "2," identify: (1) the reasons why you are having difficulty with this indicator; (2) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have control; and (3) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have no control.*

➤ **Plans for Improvement/Recommendations:**

*For each indicator you target for improvement, identify your specific goal, actions steps, and time frames.*



# Indicators with ratings of “1”



- # 4 The program has established policies and procedures for complaint prioritization and response times that require at least the following standards:
- # 11 Ombudsmen only examine residents’ records when the information is essential to complaint investigation
- #19 Ombudsmen follow-up on complaints referred to another agency.
- #20 Accurate, objective and complete documentation and case notes are maintained for each case handled by the ombudsman program.

TOTAL FOR COMPLAINT HANDLING: (1) 4 (2) 5 (3) 7 (4) 4 (5) 4

➤ **Notes/General Comments about Complaint Handling:**

Problems getting referral information back from the Department of Health

➤ **Areas of Difficulty:**

*For each indicator that you rated as "1" or "2," identify: (1) the reasons why you are having difficulty with this indicator; (2) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have control; and (3) the factors affecting this indicator over which you have no control.*

1. Reasons for difficulty
  - Hard to remember after case is referred – feels like case is done
  - Follow-up is often difficult to obtain from other agencies
2. Factors you can control
  - Remembering to do follow-up
3. Factors you cannot control
  - In some cases: whether you can get response back from other agencies

➤ **Plans for Improvement/Recommendations:**

*For each indicator you target for improvement, identify your specific goal, actions steps, and time frames.*

## Complaint Handling, pg. 29 continued

### ► Plans for Improvement/Recommendations:

*For each indicator you target for improvement, identify your specific goal, actions steps, and time frames.*

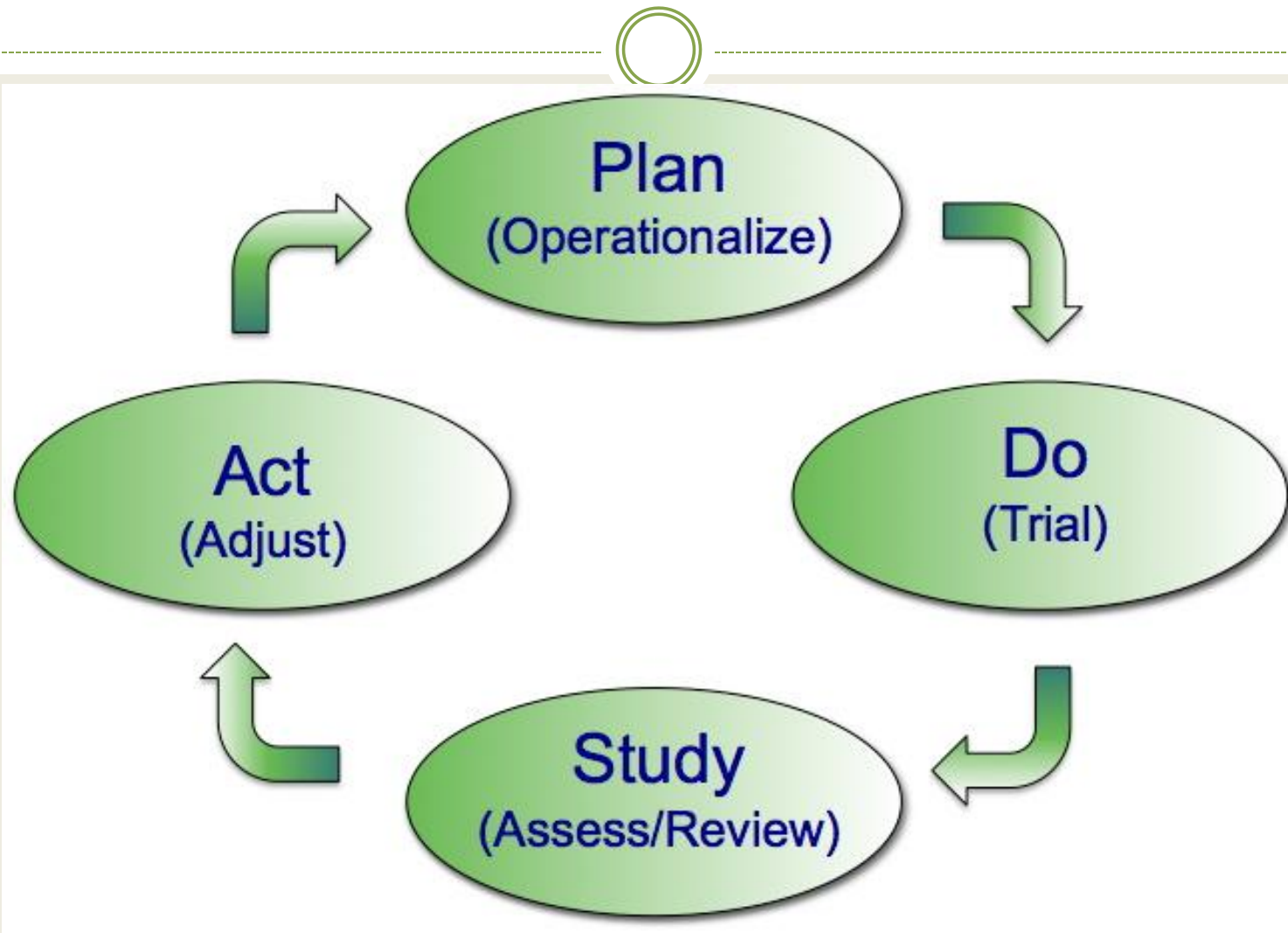
#### Goal:

*90% of cases reviewed will indicate that follow-up with a referral to another agency was done.*

#### Action Steps/Person Responsible/Time Frame:

- *Whenever a referral to another agency is made, a date for follow-up will be put on the calendar. Local ombudsman. Implement by: April 1, 2012*
- *Ombudsmen will call the referral agency on that date or the next day. Local ombudsman. Implement by: April 1, 2012*
- *A sample letter for follow-up will be developed. State Ombudsman. Letter to be completed by March 15, 2012*
- *The letter will be sent if no response has been received to phone call within a week. Local Ombudsman. Implement by: April 1, 2012*
- *All ombudsmen will be trained on this new procedure. State Ombudsman. Training to be completed by March 31, 2012*

# Continuous Quality Improvement





# **Using the Self-Evaluation Tool: A State Ombudsman's Perspective**

**Victor Orija**  
**State Ombudsman, Delaware**

# Why I Used the Tool



- Great tool for program improvement
- Provides actionable organizational information
- Assess our improvement needs and determine how and where to focus our resources
- Assess program efficiency
- Assess program effectiveness
- Assess program constraints and challenges
- Compartmentalize our improvement plan(s)
- Tell our story

# How I Used the Tool



- Two-Step approach
  - Initial use of the tool and then follow-up with staff
- Three staff meetings over a 3-month period
  - Discussion of each of the 13 components and the corresponding indicators
  - Opportunity for input from staff
  - Gained a better understanding of how each individual role fits into the overall goal
  - Developed action items for the components
- Assessed program effectiveness
  - Assigned a score to each of the 13 components on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)
  - Developed one- page document that lists all of the scores
  - Developed a scorecard that is discussed during monthly staff meetings

# Strengths of the Tool



- **Flexibility**
  - State Ombudsman can use tool independently or as a group activity
  - Examine one component or several at a time
  - Learning tool for BOTH new and experienced ombudsmen
- Program mandates applicable to each component are identified
- The components, indicators and activities are clearly defined (e.g. I. Program Access, A. Contacting the Program)
- Each component has space for the user to document additional comments, areas of difficulty and action plans
- The tool is comprehensive as the components address each area of responsibility for LTCOPs



# Strengths of the Tool



- Clear, Concise and Direct Guidance
  - II. Program Management, A. General (pg. 14)
    - ✦ 11. There is strong, ongoing two-way communication- including the dissemination of written information- between the Office of the State Ombudsman and local ombudsmen, as well as between local ombudsmen throughout the state
  - III. Complaint Handling, A. Scope (pg. 24)
    - ✦ 3. Ombudsmen are given clear guidance and training about how to handle the following situations (lists 5 situations regarding consent and reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation)
  - V. Training (pg. 33-39)
    - ✦ 34 indicators address specific types of ombudsmen training

# Benefits of the Tool



- Identified exemplary practices for maximum program effectiveness
- Improved buy-in from the staff as each realized they have a stake in the performance of the program
- Improved communication
- Output became a reporting tool for divisional leadership

# Lessons Learned from Self-Evaluation

- Identified performance gaps and jointly discussed potential resolutions/action items
- Everyone has a role in the overall mission and performance of the program
- Need for clearly defined job expectations
- Identified areas where resources should be focused
- *Current* state of the program vs. the *desired* state of the program
- Good quality assurance (e.g. determining exemplary practices regarding accessibility, visibility, complaint handling and effectiveness)



# **Using the Self-Evaluation Tool: A Local Ombudsman's Perspective**

**Shannon Gimbel  
Ombudsman Program Manager  
(LLTCO), Colorado**

# Why I Used the Tool



- The tool provided a new way to look at our program
- Identify areas of the program for improvement and determine how we can address those areas
- Identify the strengths of the program and assess how we can build on these strengths

# How I Used the Tool



- **Initial evaluation process**
  - Divided staff into two groups
  - Each group had a facilitator
  - Encouraged communication within groups using a format similar to learning circles
  - Overall goal for group discussion was to reach consensus on each indicator
  - Facilitators took notes on indicators without consensus
- **After group discussion**
  - The two groups came back together to discuss outcomes
  - Program manager, team supervisors (facilitators) and volunteer coordinator reviewed the notes and merged the answers
  - Program manager reviewed all indicators and wrote narratives for each component

# Strengths of the Tool



- Knowledge of Provisions and Program Responsibilities
  - Raised awareness of Older Americans Act mandates and policies to follow for each component
- Flexibility
  - Use as one comprehensive evaluation tool or select individual components for a focused evaluation
  - Can select components to review individually or as a group
  - Some components demonstrate how individual Ombudsman activity directly affects program effectiveness

# Benefits of the Tool



- Increased overall awareness of areas we need to improve and develop
- Helped identify areas which systemic change would be needed
- The tool can be used as a resource to document growth
- Due to the evaluation results we created and implemented different tools to assess and grow the program



# Lessons Learned from Self-Evaluation



- After the evaluation we implemented the following changes:
  - Program Fact Sheet (overview of program for outreach and media use)
  - Case Review Team Meetings (monthly meetings to analyze complaint data, resolution strategies and NORS consistency)
  - Improved training process
  - Case Audit Checklist
- The tool is only beneficial if you go back and review what was identified
- Use of the tool is an ongoing process not just a one-time event
- Programs have to be open to seeing what they are lacking



# **Introduction of the Self-Evaluation Mini-Tool**

**Amity Overall-Laib**  
**Manager, LTCO Program and Policy**  
**The National Ombudsman Resource Center**  
**(NORC)**

# What is the Mini-Tool?



- Purpose
  - “Snapshot” of the comprehensive tool for a quick, initial assessment
  
- Who Completes the Mini-Tool?
  - SLTCO or LLTCO
    - ✦ Independently
    - ✦ As a team (e.g. state staff, local ombudsmen, volunteers)
  - New SLTCO or LLTCO
    - ✦ Brief review of core elements of an Ombudsman Program
    - ✦ Review with their mentor or supervisor (e.g. SLTCO discuss evaluation with their State Unit on Aging Director, LLTCO discuss evaluation with Area Agency on Aging Director)

# How do I use the Mini-Tool?



- **Components/Indicators**
  - The Mini-Tool uses the original components and indicators
  - Only 3 indicators per component
- **Rating Scale/Component Score**
  - Rating scale and process is the same as the original evaluation tool (1-5)
  - Page numbers at the end of each component so the LTCO can go directly to the corresponding component in the comprehensive tool

# Mini-Tool



Example of one component (PDF version):

I. Program Access	1. The local ombudsmen and certified volunteers have large print business cards that identify them as being with the local ombudsman program.	1	2	3	4	5
	2. The local program initiates opportunities in the community to educate others about its services (e.g. at trainings, presentations, or discussions organized by other organizations/agencies; at service clubs or meetings of religious organizations, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
	3. Complaints are received from a variety of sources including: residents, families/friends, non-relative guardian/legal representative, governmental and non-governmental agencies, facility staff and ombudsman observation.	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

*For the complete Program Access component refer to pg. 11 of the Self-Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement Tool*

# Mini-Tool



Example of one component (Excel version- score is automatically calculated in rating column)

Evaluation Component	Indicator	Score (enter 1-5) 1= Never 5= Always	
I. Program Access	1. The local ombudsmen and certified volunteers have large print business cards that identify them as being with the local ombudsman program.		
	2. The local program initiates opportunities in the community to educate others about its services (e.g. at trainings, presentations, or discussions organized by other organizations/agencies; at service clubs or meetings of religious organizations, etc.).		
	3. Complaints are received from a variety of sources including: residents, families/friends, non-relative guardian/legal representative, governmental and non-governmental agencies, facility staff and ombudsman observation.		
For the complete Program Access component refer to pg. 11 of the Self-Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement Tool		TOTAL	0

# After the Mini-Tool



- In-Depth Analysis
  - Choose one component and analyze it further using the comprehensive tool
  - Develop an action plan to address the weaknesses of that component
  - After implementing the action plan, re-evaluate the component to gauge improvement
  - Move to another component or continue to work on this component if sufficient progress has not been made
- Continuous Improvement
  - These tools are not intended for one-time self-assessment, rather they can be used over time for *continuous* improvement



# Discussion



# NORC Resources



## Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Tools

- For State Ombudsmen:  
[http://www.ltcombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/State-PE-Tool-FINAL\\_o.pdf](http://www.ltcombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/State-PE-Tool-FINAL_o.pdf)
- For Local Ombudsmen:  
[http://www.ltcombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/Local-PE-Tool-Final\\_1.pdf](http://www.ltcombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/Local-PE-Tool-Final_1.pdf)

## Program Effectiveness and Quality

- [http://www.ltcombudsman.org/ombudsman-support/program-management#Program\\_Effectiveness\\_Quality](http://www.ltcombudsman.org/ombudsman-support/program-management#Program_Effectiveness_Quality)

## Program Management

- <http://www.ltcombudsman.org/ombudsman-support/program-management>

# Thank You!



We appreciate the thoughtful contributions and assistance from the State and Local Ombudsmen of the Self-Evaluation Tool committee:

Nancy Shaffer (CT), Chair of the NASOP Program Effectiveness Committee, Victor Orija (DE), Sarah Slocum (MI), Shannon Gimbel (CO), Frances Guice (GA), Debi Lee (NC) and Lynda Pickett (PA).



# The National **Long-Term Care** **Ombudsman** Resource Center

The National Long-Term Care  
Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC)

[www.ltcombudsman.org](http://www.ltcombudsman.org)

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
(formerly NCCNHR)

<http://www.theconsumervoice.org/>

This presentation was supported, in part, by a grant from the Administration on  
Aging, Department of Health and Human Services.