REWIND, REMIND

Webinar Takeaways

The webinar ***Conducting Environmental Scans for Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change in Comprehensive Cancer Control*** aired on July 26, 2022. The webinar described a definition of environmental scans and discussed the four phases of Development, Implementation, Evaluation, and Dissemination in the environmental scan model published by the presenter. The webinar also described helpful resources for conducting environmental scans.

This document summarizes key takeaways and resources from the webinar, which can be viewed at the following link: https://youtu.be/mK6GiuQCAZ4.

The *American Cancer Society* **Comprehensive Cancer Control (ACS CCC)** team hosted the webinar. The ACS CCC team seeks to build the capacity of grant recipients in the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* **National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program** to implement policy, systems, and environmental change approaches and evidence-based promising practices in cancer prevention, screening, diagnostic follow-up, and survivorship.

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American Cancer Society® COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CONTROL

Conducting Environmental Scans

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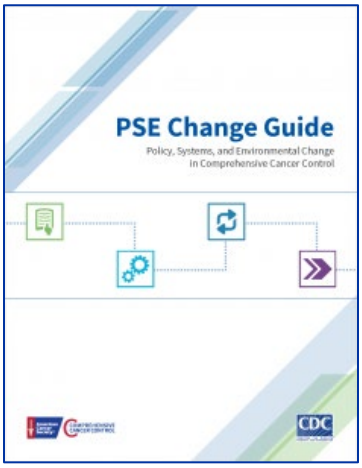
The goals of the webinar were to:

- Introduce the *PSE Change Guide* (1) created by the ACS CCC team.
- Provide a clear definition and structure for environmental scans as a public health tool. (2)
- Help participants to identify the steps for conducting a scan, increase their capacity to conduct scans, and increase their awareness of resources available to conduct scans.

Introduction

The *PSE Change Guide*, created by a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Cancer Society (ACS), was designed to be a practical tool for cancer coalition staff and partners to use for implementing PSE changes.



The *PSE Change Guide* defines a change framework consisting of four phases: Develop, Implement, Sustain, and Evaluate. The material in this webinar on environmental scans fits into the first phase (Develop) in the *PSE Change Guide* framework model.

The Literature on Environmental Scans

The past ten years of public health literature contains no consensus model for conducting environmental scans.

The Kentucky HPV Vaccination Environmental Scan Project

For example, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) funded 1-year Administrative Supplement projects that directed NCI-designated Cancer Centers to conduct environmental scans of local issues and barriers to HPV vaccination in their geographic catchment areas.

The goal of the specific project in Kentucky was to conduct an environmental scan that would inventory HPV vaccination activities underway in the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center and identify links between the cancer center and existing coalitions and programs.

A literature search in 2014 found no published models for environmental scans. Therefore, after completion of their scan activities, the Kentucky team published a 2016 paper entitled: *Environmental Scanning as a Public Health Tool: Kentucky's Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Project* (2). The goal of the paper was to help public health practitioners successfully apply the Kentucky project method of PSE scans in public health practice and research.

Present Day Literature about Environmental Scans

Since the 2016 Kentucky paper, there has been no significant progress in defining a process for environmental scans. Some healthcare-related papers in the literature have summarized their methods, but the general literature does not contain PSE-dedicated articles on how to conduct environmental scans, particularly in cancer prevention and control.

Instead, the term *environmental scan* has been generally used as a catch-all term to include needs assessments, landscape assessments, strategic planning efforts, or quality-improvement initiatives.

Even up to last year (2021), Charlton et al. (3) wrote that the literature did not contain a consensus definition for scans, despite their usefulness in informing both public health policy and practice.

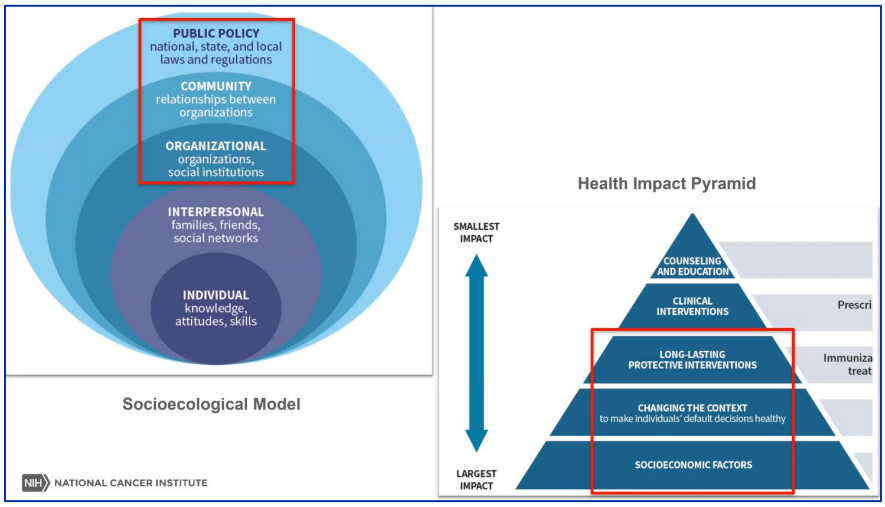
The Kentucky Project Environmental Scan Model

This webinar showed participants the seven-step process that the Kentucky team used for conducting an environmental scan for their HPV vaccination project.

In the public health context, scans are valuable for identifying a public health problem and all its aspects (policy, social, economic, legal, existing programs, participants, trends, etc.). A good environmental scan can be used to educate decision-makers and guide interventions.

Environmental scans can be conducted at the organizational, local, community, regional, or even national levels. They seem most useful for the outer layers (organizational, community, and public policy) of the Socio-Ecological Model (see the graphic below).

Scans are also useful in the foundational levels of the Health Impact Pyramid Model. The foundational levels move beyond the level of the individual and focus on long-lasting protective interventions to create positive decision-making contexts within larger-scale socioeconomic factors.



The Four Phases of an Environmental Scan

A scan should be comprehensive and iterative, meaning that you can iterate over the steps in the process to capture and enhance data and relationships in a dynamic real-world environment.

The four phases and seven steps of the Kentucky HPV Vaccination Project had these objectives:

Development

- Determine the leadership and capacity for the project.
- Establish the focal area and purpose of the scan.
- Create and adhere to a timeline; set incremental goals on the timeline.

Implementation

- Determine the information to be collected for the scan.
- Identify and engage partners.

Evaluation

- Analyze and synthesize results from the scan into a concise summary report.

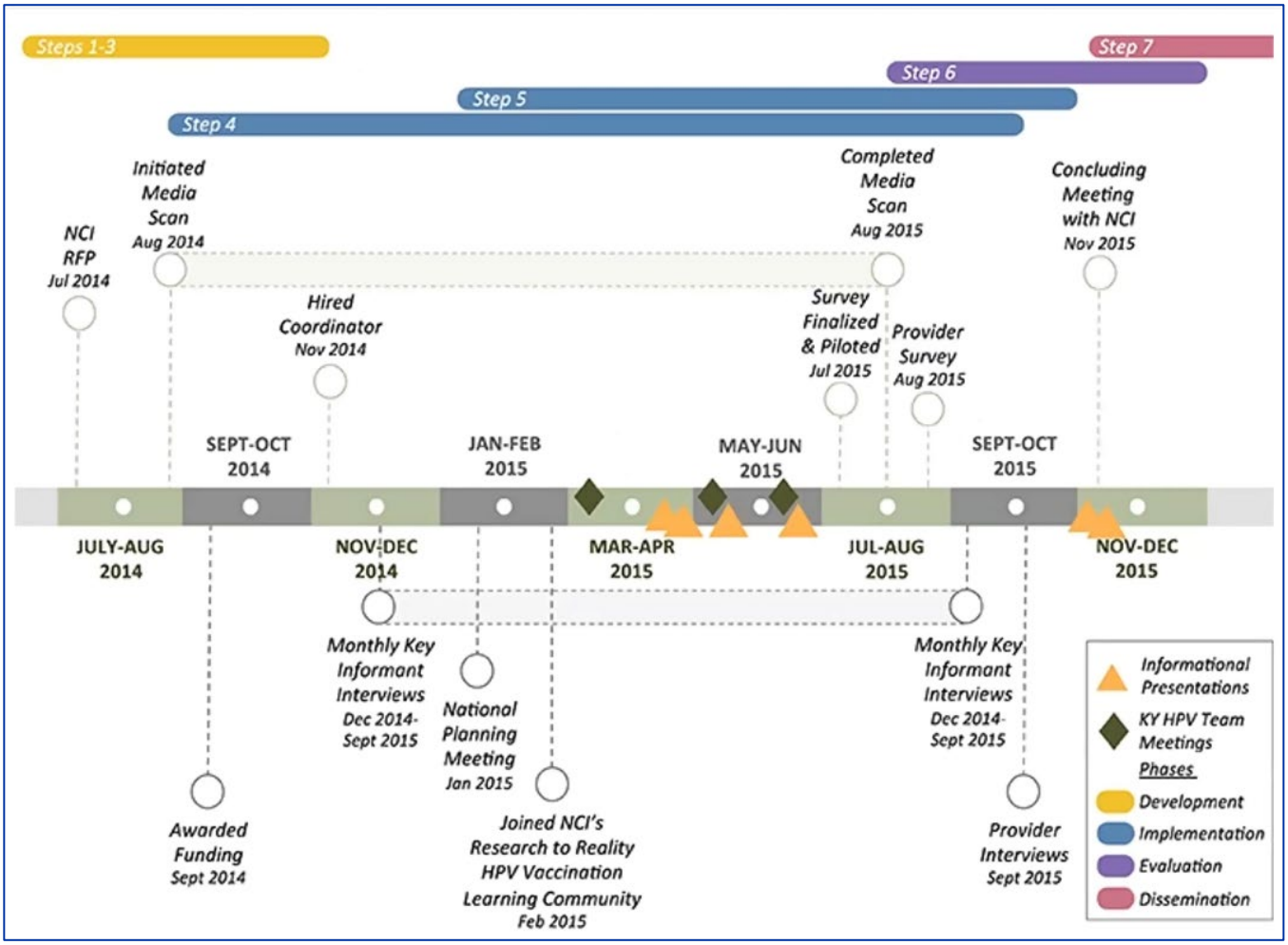
Dissemination

- Disseminate results and conclusions to key partners.

Example Graphic of the Kentucky Scan Project

The graphic below shows how the seven steps of the scan were positioned in the total timeline for the project. The seven PSE steps are marked by colored stripes across the timeline at the top of the graphic.

Notice that the steps overlap, indicating that there are no perfect boundaries between the steps. One step can begin before the previous steps are complete. Creating a graphic like this may be helpful to your environmental scan project. The right level of detail on the timeline is up to you.



The Seven Steps in the Kentucky Scan Model

Here is an annotated list of the seven steps in the Kentucky scan model.

Development Phase

- **Step 1. Identify a champion to lead the environmental scan.** You will need someone to be the champion because the champion is the central person and contact for the project.
- **Step 2. Specify a purpose for the scan.** Example: "The purpose of the HPV environmental scan was to identify all public health activities, research, and information related to HPV vaccination in Kentucky, develop or improve links with existing programs, synthesize findings into a usable format for dissemination to stakeholders, and look for applied research opportunities to increase HPV vaccination uptake."
- **Step 3. Establish a timeline with specific milestones.** Project hiccups and delays are likely, but a timeline will help you to plan for delays and move the project forward despite obstacles.

Implementation Phase

- **Step 4. What information do you want to collect?** Brainstorm all topics and resources. Add them to a dynamic list that changes with your knowledge and data-collection goals.
- **Step 5. Create a diverse, iterative list of people and organizations that have the information you listed in Step 4.** Partners are the key to success; be open to new connections, share the purpose of your scan to promote engagement, and share results with your partners.

Evaluation Phase

- **Step 6. Analyze and triangulate the data; synthesize the results into meaningful conclusions that are related to the purpose of the scan.** Try to make the conclusions actionable: identify productive strategies, issue priorities, intervention areas, and actionable PSE changes.

Dissemination Phase

- **Step 7. Share the results with all vested parties.** Use presentations and webinars, reports, white papers, cancer action plans, and other communication mechanisms that work for you and your partners. Also, share results with other decision-makers, policymakers, and others who can use and benefit from your work and findings.

Alternative Scan Phases

This webinar described the 7-step process used by the Kentucky team, but other process structures are possible. For example, Shahid et al. (4) used the 5-step process shown in the adjacent image.

You can choose your own number of phases and steps to fit the activities that you need for your project. But be sure to include all the necessary steps required to produce a good scan result.

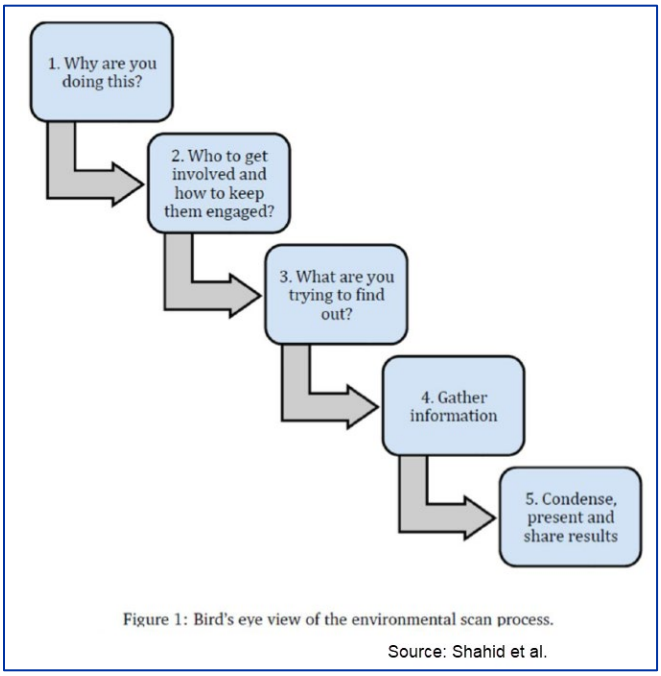


Figure 1: Bird's eye view of the environmental scan process.

Source: Shahid et al.

Resources Needed for an Environmental Scan

Here are some ideas for resources to help you conduct an environmental scan.

- Champion(s) for the project
- Volunteers and workgroup members
- Enough dedicated time and effort to complete the project
- Social capital: good relationships with partners, community members, experts
- Communications: phone, video, computer
- Data repositories: PubMed website and full-text articles, cancer registry, behavioral data
- Partners and collaborators: academic, organizational, and subject matter experts
- Funding for incentives, surveys, interviews, contractors, consultants, analysts, and travel

The first step to avoid being overwhelmed is to work on a smaller piece of a smaller project. For example, you might work on the purpose statement for a specific, smaller-scale project to avoid being overwhelmed by working on a larger regional or national project.

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7. GW Cancer Center. Specific training on PSE change for CCC programs and coalitions. https://cme.smhs.gwu.edu/gw-cancer-center-/content/action-policy-systems-and-environmental-pse-change-training