Exploring the Impact of NORC-SSPs on Participants: The NORCs National Evaluation Initiative

2009 NORCs Annual Meeting
March 22-24, 2009
Baltimore, MD

Barbara Joyce Bedney, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Robert Goldberg, Esq.
The UJC National NORCs Evaluation: *Goals*

- To understand the impact of NORC-SSPs on the older adults who participate in them
- To provide policy makers with valuable data and information regarding NORC supportive service programs
The UJC National NORCs Evaluation: History

• Interviews with NORC communities regarding planning and implementation issues

2006-2007: Outcomes Evaluation
• Surveys of NORC participants in 24 NORC communities
The UJC National NORCs Evaluation: Challenges

• Identifying variables known to be important to aging in place
• Identifying variables that are relevant to all sites and that transcend the need for local flexibility
• Identifying variables that are measurable
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Variables

- Social isolation
- Awareness and use of community services
- Volunteerism
- Self-reported health
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Methods

- Voluntary participation in short anonymous survey:
  - Demographic questions
  - ‘Agree-disagree’ questions about social activity, volunteering, health, and service awareness/use since NORC participation
- IRB approval obtained
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Sample

- Convenience sample
- 461 NORC-SSP participants from 24 different communities:
  - 357 females (77.4%)
  - 94 males (20.4%)
  - 10 unknown (2.2%)
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Sample

Age distribution

50-59: 12 (2.7%)
60-69: 77 (17%)
70-79: 189 (41.8%)
80-89: 146 (32.3%)
90-99: 26 (5.8%)
100+: 2 (0.4%)
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Sample

Living Arrangements

- Alone: 305 (66.2%)
- Spouse/Partner: 118 (25.6%)
- Other family: 27 (5.9%)
- Non-family: 7 (1.5%)
- Other: 5 (1.1%)
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: 
Sample

Percent of respondents that live alone, by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Live alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Sample

NORC Participation

Committee member: 104 (22.6%)
Activities participant: 331 (71.8%)
Service user: 213 (46.2%)
Other: 21 (4.6%)
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Sample

Length of involvement with the program

- 0-6 months: 71 (16.2%)
- 7-12 months: 88 (20.1%)
- 1-2 years: 194 (44.3%)
- 3-5 years: 70 (16%)
- 5 years+: 15 (3.4%)
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: **Findings**

Percent of respondents that strongly agree or agree with the following statements:

- I talk to more people than I used to: 88.1%
- I know more people than I used to: 87.8%
- I participate in activities or events more than I used to: 84.0%
- I leave my home more than I used to: 72.0%

Percent of respondents that strongly agree or agree with the following statements:

- I know more about community services than I used to: 95.4%
- I know who to ask for assistance more than I used to: 92.2%
- I use community services more than I used to: 81.4%

Percent of respondents that strongly agree or agree with the following statements

I volunteer in the community more than I used to 48.1%

Percent of respondents that strongly agree or agree with the following statements

I feel healthier than I used to 70.5%

Percent of respondents that strongly agree or agree with the following statements

I believe I am more likely to stay in the community than I used to 88.1%
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: *Conclusions*

- Results suggest that NORC-SSPs are an effective way to increase socialization and reduce social isolation among community-residing older adults.
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Conclusions

- Results suggest that NORC-SSPs are an effective way to link community-residing older adults with services that can help them age in place
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Conclusions

- Results suggest that community-residing older adults who participate in NORC-SSPs feel they are healthier and more likely to stay in the community as a result of their participation in the NORC-SSP.
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Conclusions

• Results suggest that NORC-SSPs can increase volunteerism among community-residing older adults
The 2006-2007 National Evaluation: Conclusions

• Overall, results suggest that NORC-SSPs are an effective way to promote the health, well-being, and ability of community-residing older adults to successfully age in place
Planning the 2009 National Evaluation

*Independent variable:*
- Participation in a NORC-SSP

Possible *demographic* variables:
- Gender and age
- Living arrangements
- Type of participation
- Length of involvement
- Others?
Planning the 2009 National Evaluation

Possible dependent variables:
- Social isolation/social support
- Self-reported health
- Access to services
- Physical activity
- Feeling useful to others
- Expectations of institutionalization
- Self-perceptions of aging
Planning the 2009 National Evaluation

Let’s Discuss!