

Research Method Workshop II

January 14, 2016, 8 am - 12 Noon

Title: Economic Evaluation – Social Work Research Applications

Presenters:

Kevin Frick, Professor & Vice Dean for Education, The Johns Hopkins Carey Business School
Jim Kunz, Associate Professor of Social Work, McDaniel College

Abstract

Economic evaluation is a research and decision making tool that can add scientific, potentially transparent, and well-structured information to the social work resource allocation process. To date, relatively little formal economic evaluation has been done within social work research.

The term economic evaluation is generally used to refer to cost- effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis when articles appear in the peer- reviewed literature. The results can be interpreted pragmatically as “which alternative program gives the most bang for the buck.” However, in spite of the relatively simple colloquialism, the terminology in economic evaluation can be confusing to social workers, and social work researchers sometimes confuse the terms. Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses can be powerful tools, but to be used correctly, effectively, and efficiently, the strengths and weaknesses of these tools must be understood.

To promote the understanding of economic evaluation among social work researchers, the first half of the workshop will address five questions:

1. How much should these techniques influence decision making, and how much are they influencing decision-making?
2. Where does the science for this type of analysis come from?
3. What do all the terms for different types of analyses mean?
4. What methods are necessary to perform different types of analyses?
5. What might come next in the field as it is being applied to social work?

To focus the discussion, the presenters will demonstrate how economic evaluation might be brought to bear on a select number of the Grand Challenges for Social Work. During the second half of the workshop, participants will be guided as they seek to apply an economic evaluation to a social work research question of interest.

Career Level and Prerequisites

All levels welcome, no prerequisites