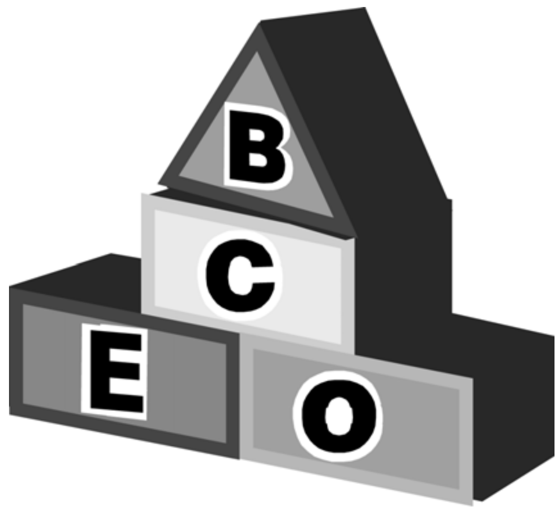
BUILDING **C**APACITY IN **E**VALUATING **O**UTCOMES



A TEACHING AND FACILITATING RESOURCE
FOR COMMUNITY-BASED
PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

University Of Wisconsin-Extension
Cooperative Extension
Program Development and Evaluation
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5B: Quantitative and qualitative methods	7	Individuals will… • increase their understanding of quantitative and qualitative methods and the relative merits of each. • increase their understanding of mixed-methods as a way to minimize the weaknesses of a single method. • increase their understanding of *reliability* and *validity* relative to quantitative and qualitative methods.	Differences between quantitative and qualitative methods	7	Handout-2 *Quantitative and qualitative scenarios* Handout-3 *Methods for collecting information* (Quick Tip #8) Slides 4-6 Poster paper, markers
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			Practice using observation	29	Publication *Collecting evaluation data: Direct observation* (G3658-5) Handout-16 *Observation scenarios* Handout-17 *Instructional skills observation checklist* Poster paper, markers
5I: Interviews	33	Individuals will… • increase their understanding of interviewing as an evaluation data collection method and get tips for effective interviewing. • increase their ability to conduct effective interviews.	Ins and outs of interviewing	33	Poster paper, markers Whistle or other noisemaker Slides 59-69
			Practice interviewing	35	Poster paper, markers Whistle or other noisemaker
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6B: Planning for data analysis	6	Individuals will… • understand the importance of planning for data analysis before collecting data. • know what to consider in planning for analysis.	Developing a data analysis plan	6	Handout-3 *Common data analysis techniques* Handout-4 *Community activist survey* (or invite people to bring their own questionnaires and work on their own evaluations) Handout-5 *Data analysis plan worksheet* Handout-6 *Data analysis plan worksheet – Completed sample.* Poster paper, markers Slides 4-7

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		Who should be involved in interpreting the data? 26	Poster paper, markers
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Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

Section	Page	Desired outcomes	Activities	Page	Materials needed
7A: Purpose of communicating	3	Individuals will… • increase their understanding of the importance of communicating about evaluation both during the process and at the end. • check their own efforts in using their evaluation findings.	Why communicate?	3	Handout-1 *Why communicate about evaluation?* Handout-2 *Checklist: How well are you "using" your evaluation findings?* Slides 1-3
7B: Ways to communicate	5	Individuals will… • increase their knowledge of ways to communicate and use their evaluation findings. • increase their knowledge about which type of communication is most appropriate based on the audience and purpose.	Types of communications and reports	5	Handout-3 *Types of communications and reports* Slide 4 Poster paper, markers Index cards
			Practice communicating!	6	Handout-4 *Case scenario* Poster paper, markers
			Analyzing samples of communications and reports	7	Handout-5 *Sample communications/reports (Press release, Impact brief, and Grant request)* (As an alternative, select other samples that are relevant for the people you are working with and their learning needs.) Handout-8 *Grading exercise – Impact statements* Poster paper, markers Individuals' own samples of communications and reports

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7C: Planning for communicating and reporting 10	Individuals will… • increase their understanding that use of evaluation results doesn't just happen; people must plan for communicating and disseminating evaluation results. • increase their ability to plan strategically to ensure that evaluation findings get used.	Developing an evaluation communication plan 10	Handout-9 *Evaluation communication plan* Handout-10 *Who is your target audience?* Handout-11 *Matching communication type to audience* Handout-12 *Types of reports for different audiences* Slides 5-11 Poster paper, markers 5-6 different hats
7D: Effective communications 14	Individuals will… • increase their ability to effectively communicate and report their evaluation findings.	Basic report outline 14	Handout-13 *Evaluation report outline* Slides 12, 13 Poster paper, markers Whistle or other noisemaker
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			Creating an evaluation contract	8	Handout *Evaluation contracts checklist* Handout *Checklist for negotiating an agreement to evaluate an educational programme* Handout-3 *Evaluation contract* Poster paper, markers
8C: Budgeting for evaluation	10	Individuals will… • increase their understanding of the costs that are involved in evaluation work. • increase their ability to develop an evaluation budget.	What are the costs?	10	Handout C*hecklist for developing and evaluating evaluation budgets* Handout-4 *Costs of different data collection methods* Handout-5 *Worksheet — Estimating costs for data collection* Poster paper, marker Clothesline or masking tape
			Creating a budget	12	Handout-6 *Budget scenarios* Handout-7 *Evaluation budget worksheet* Handout-8 *Evaluation budget tips* Poster paper, markers
8D: Managing evaluation	13	Individuals will… • better understand the value of having a management plan. • be able to develop a simple management plan for an evaluation.	Developing a management plan	13	Handout-9 *Time required for evaluation* Handout-10 *Evaluation management plan* Handout-11 *Sample evaluation timeline* Poster paper, markers

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Introduction

Since the mid-1990s when “outcomes” hit the community scene, community-based groups and practitioners have been struggling to understand outcomes, document outcomes, and build an outcomes-based approach. The demand for evaluation has risen to new heights. Community-based organizations have turned to their county-based Extension educators, the face of the state university in many communities, for help with evaluation and documenting outcomes.

To respond to these local requests, a team of University of Wisconsin-Extension educators came together in late 2003 to design a curriculum for helping community partners meet their evaluation needs. We represented four programs areas: family living, 4-H youth development, community and economic development, and program evaluation. We drew upon our experience in community education, years of conducting evaluation workshops and building evaluation capacity, existing UW-Extension evaluation publications and materials, and our strong traditions in adult learning. As we were organizing our first draft, a Sage Publication that mirrored our work was released: *Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 Activities for Teaching and Training* (2005) by Hallie Preskill and Darlene Russ-Eft. We used it to help frame our materials, we reference their activities, and we hope we have added to the field of evaluation capacity building. We pilot tested the first face-to-face training in 2006 and we continue to refine, add to, and disseminate the materials at workshops and conferences and through the web.

Purpose

Building capacity in evaluating outcomes: A teaching and facilitating resource for community-based programs and organizations (*BCEO Resource*) provides 93 activities and materials for practitioners working in and with community-based programs to use in building the capacity of individuals, groups, and organizations in evaluating outcomes. It provides, in one place, a complete set of practical resources that can be readily used or modified when working with community-based programs. Applications in other settings are also possible.

The *BCEO Resource* features activities, case examples and hands-on practice to facilitate learning and application. It includes

- A *Facilitator’s guide* that provides resources, tips, and strategies for evaluating your own work as you build capacity in evaluating outcomes.
- Eight units that cover the core topics of evaluation from getting ready and planning to engaging stakeholders; focusing the evaluation; collecting, analyzing, and using data; and managing an

evaluation. Each unit includes hands-on activities, handouts and a slide presentation.

- A glossary, key resource list, and bibliography.

What is evaluation capacity building?

Capacity building is consistent with transformational education and empowerment education. It has gained popularity in recent years and is found across various fields including community, economic, and environmental development; agriculture; youth development; and health promotion. It is seen as a foundation of sustainable communities. *Capacity building* refers to the activities that help an individual, group, organization, or community define and realize goals or perform more effectively. In this manual, we are focused on *capacity building in evaluating outcomes.*

Capacity involves knowledge, skills, and problem-solving and decision-making capabilities, as well as resources, supports and structures.

Evaluation capacity building involves the activities and processes that help create, strengthen, and sustain evaluation capacities of individuals and communities. Such activities and processes include training, technical assistance, mentoring, coaching, developing and/or sharing materials, supporting communities of practice, building resources and supports, and promoting a favorable organizational environment to sustain evaluation. These activities and processes can be described in a three-component framework of:

(1) professional development (e.g., training, technical assistance, mentoring, supporting communities of practice);
(2) resources and supports (identifying and supporting evaluation champions, organizational assets, and evaluation materials; securing financing; using technologies) and
(3) organizational environment (encouraging leadership; facilitating demand; enhancing incentives, structures, policies, and procedures). [Taylor-Powell and Boyd, 2008]

The materials provided in this *BCEO Resource* manual are largely for (1) above – professional development activities as part of capacity building: teaching, training, technical assistance, mentoring, coaching, and supporting communities of practice. As a professional development process, capacity building is learner-centered, participatory, and context-dependent. There is no one model or approach that fits all situations or audiences. For an individual, group, organization, or community to understand, value, and consistently practice quality evaluation, a long-term process of support is generally required. Single trainings rarely achieve significant change. Our ultimate goal is for individuals, groups, and communities to have the technical skills, motivation, and abilities to evaluate outcomes and internalize evaluative inquiry into their habits and daily work routine.

Who is this for? Target audience

The *BCEO Resource* is for Extension educators and other practitioners working with community-based programs (evaluators and non-evaluators) who are training, mentoring, and supporting program staff and community organizations in documenting and reporting outcomes. This includes individuals who are:

1. Working with community organizations (coalitions, volunteer groups, nonprofits, schools, agencies, local governments) to build evaluation capacity of organizations and their members.
2. Working with program staff (Extension colleagues, teams, or units) in a mentoring, liaison, or leadership role to help colleagues learn about, gain confidence in, and be able to conduct useful evaluation.

While the materials can be used for single workshops or sporadic technical assistance in evaluation, *building capacity* connotes a longer-term, multi-faceted process of support and assistance. An explicit goal is to develop a sustained evaluation competence and capability within individuals and organizations. In this way, evaluation becomes a routine part of an organization's work as part of being a learning organization.

We've found program staff and community practitioners working in a variety of settings, responding to a mix of community-driven needs. These different scenarios where the *BCEO Resource* might be helpful include:

- You've been asked to provide a series of workshops on "outcome evaluation" for the county social service agencies. You see this request as a stepping stone to other avenues for building capacity in evaluation and community capacity in general.
- You are a member of an "outcomes management" group formed by the county administrator to bring a results-based management structure to county government.
- You are responsible for helping newer colleagues understand and conduct evaluation. You've been doing evaluation for many years but mentoring and helping others is a different focus.
- You work closely with several United Way agencies that are struggling with required outcome measurement expectations. You want to "come along side" and help these agencies meet their requirements as well as build a sustainable evaluation process.
- You are a member of a local coalition that needs to document outcomes and include outcome statements and logic models in grant proposals. You've offered to wear the "evaluator" hat and help the group meet its needs.
- You are working with the school district in implementing a wellness policy and want to be able to integrate evaluation into the process to document progress and outcomes.

- You are the trainer and technical advisor to a multi-site program effort that expects each site to collect data and report to a centralized reporting system.
- You work with diverse audiences and are continually trying to expand your evaluation toolkit with new approaches and methods for building the capacity of your partners, including youth and volunteers.

Description of the BCEO initiative – BCEO logic models

A logic model helps define and describe a program. Logic models are useful in program planning, evaluation, and communications and are used as “best practice” throughout this *BCEO Resource*. Two logic models describe the BCEO initiative. The first logic model (Fig. 1) describes the evaluation “capacity builders” level. It shows the expected series of activities and outcomes for building the knowledge and skills of those who will build evaluation competence in others. The second logic model (Fig. 2) describes the ultimate purpose of this initiative. The “capacity builders” now go out into their communities and work with their colleagues and others who need and want to be able to evaluate outcomes. The “capacity builders” help them gain the knowledge, skills, and practices to effectively meet their accountability and learning needs.

Our guiding principles

The *BCEO Resource* will…

- Include practical, relevant materials that can be immediately applied
- Be comprehensive, housing all core evaluation materials in one place
- Demystify evaluation
- Be true to the principles and best practices of community-based evaluation
- Be true to the principles and best practices in adult learning
- Allow for flexible use, recognizing that each context is different and users will adopt and adapt the content to meet their particular needs
- Be learner-driven
- Be easy to navigate so pertinent materials can be found
- Seek to create a process that fosters learning and continued growth in evaluation

Research foundations

Capacity building of community organizations is rooted in the community empowerment movement of the 1970s [Crisp, Swerissen & Duckett (2000)] and is based on the popular adage of *teaching people to fish* for building independence and self-sufficiency. It is intertwined with the research traditions of transformational learning and education [Mezirow (2000); Freire (2000)]. Within evaluation, capacity building is grounded in the principles and practices of participatory evaluation [Cousins and Earl (1995); Patton (2008); Whitmore (1998)], empowerment evaluation [Fetterman, Kafterian & Wandersman (1996)], and self-evaluation.

Evaluation capacity building is the intentional practice "to create and sustain organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its use routine" that has grown in stature and disciplinary recognition since the mid-1990s [Compton, Baizerman & Stockdill (2002); Bamberger (2000); Boyle & Lemaire (1999)]. It is the development of sustainable evaluation in organizations. It involves a variety of activities from training, technical assistance, and ongoing support to collaborative work and facilitating organizational change to support a culture of evaluation.

The promise of the value of evaluation capacity building is its role in good governance and efficient public management [Schaumburg-Muller (1996)], improved public sector performance [Mackay (1999); Hatry. et al (2003)], increased attainment of goals [Hauge (1998)], and enhanced organizational learning [Preskill and Torres (1999); Cousins, Goh, Clark & Lee(2004)]. Evaluation embedded in organizational culture is synonymous with a learning organization. Capacity in evaluation leads to more effective programs that lead to improved outcomes.

Community-based evaluation is a practical, realistic type of evaluation that combines the standards of evaluation – utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy [Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994)] with real resources and cultural contexts of community settings.

Core background materials for this *BCEO Resource* include:

Planning a program evaluation (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

Planning a program evaluation: Worksheet (G3658-1W) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (2006)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF

Enhancing program performance with logic models [Taylor-Powell, Jones, & Henert (2002)]

What's inside

The *BCEO Resource* contains eight content units. Each unit has three parts. The first part contains the main content divided into sections with activities; the second part contains all of the referenced handouts; the third part contains the slides that can be used to support learning. On each unit tab is a table of contents with page numbers for finding a particular section, activity, or handout.

At the front of the resource is a "Content guide" that provides a quick overview of the content, including the desired outcomes for each section, the activity titles, and a list of the materials needed for the activity. This guide is intended to assist in planning programs based on these materials.

Many activities are structured as formal training, but they can also be used and adapted for informal environments and with any number of people.

Resource citation information

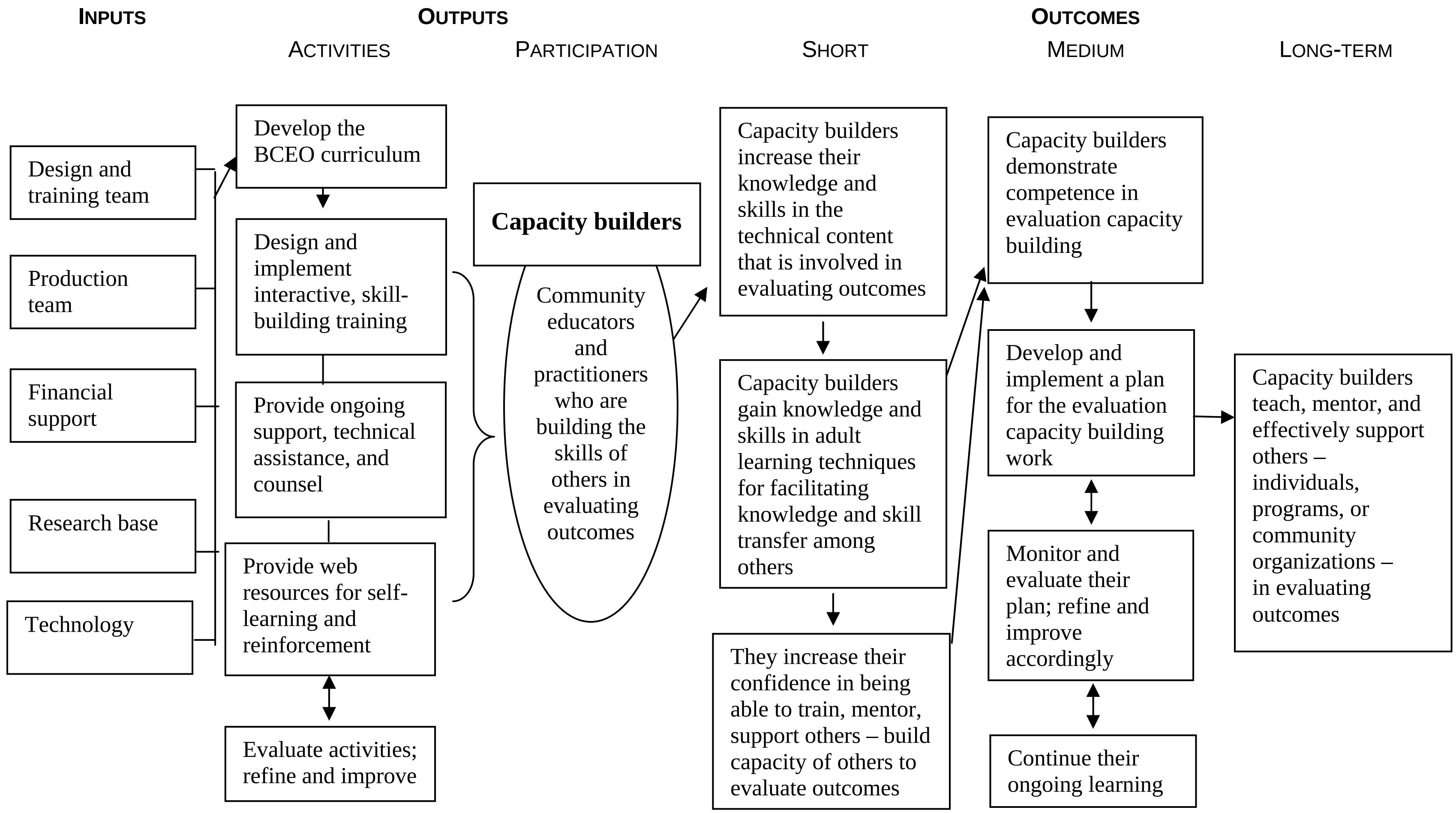
Materials cited in the content are linked to the bibliography by title and the citation information shown in brackets such as [Taylor-Powell (1997)].

For University of Wisconsin-Extension publications available from the publications website (`http://learningstore.uwex.edu`), the link in the main content sections is to a PDF version of the document. Information on ordering printed copies of the brochure is available in the entry in the bibliography.

For University of Wisconsin-Extension Quick Tips that have been included in the handouts, you can also retrieve the original PDF version of the handout from the Program Development and Evaluation website (`http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/`).

Fig 1. BCEO Logic Model 1: Evaluation capacity builders level

Situation: Community educators and practitioners (evaluation "capacity builders") are being asked to help individuals, programs, and community organizations be able to meet the growing accountability demands by evaluating outcomes. They rely on their own practice and experience, but many lack skills, resources, and supports to be able to effectively build the capacity of others to evaluate outcomes.

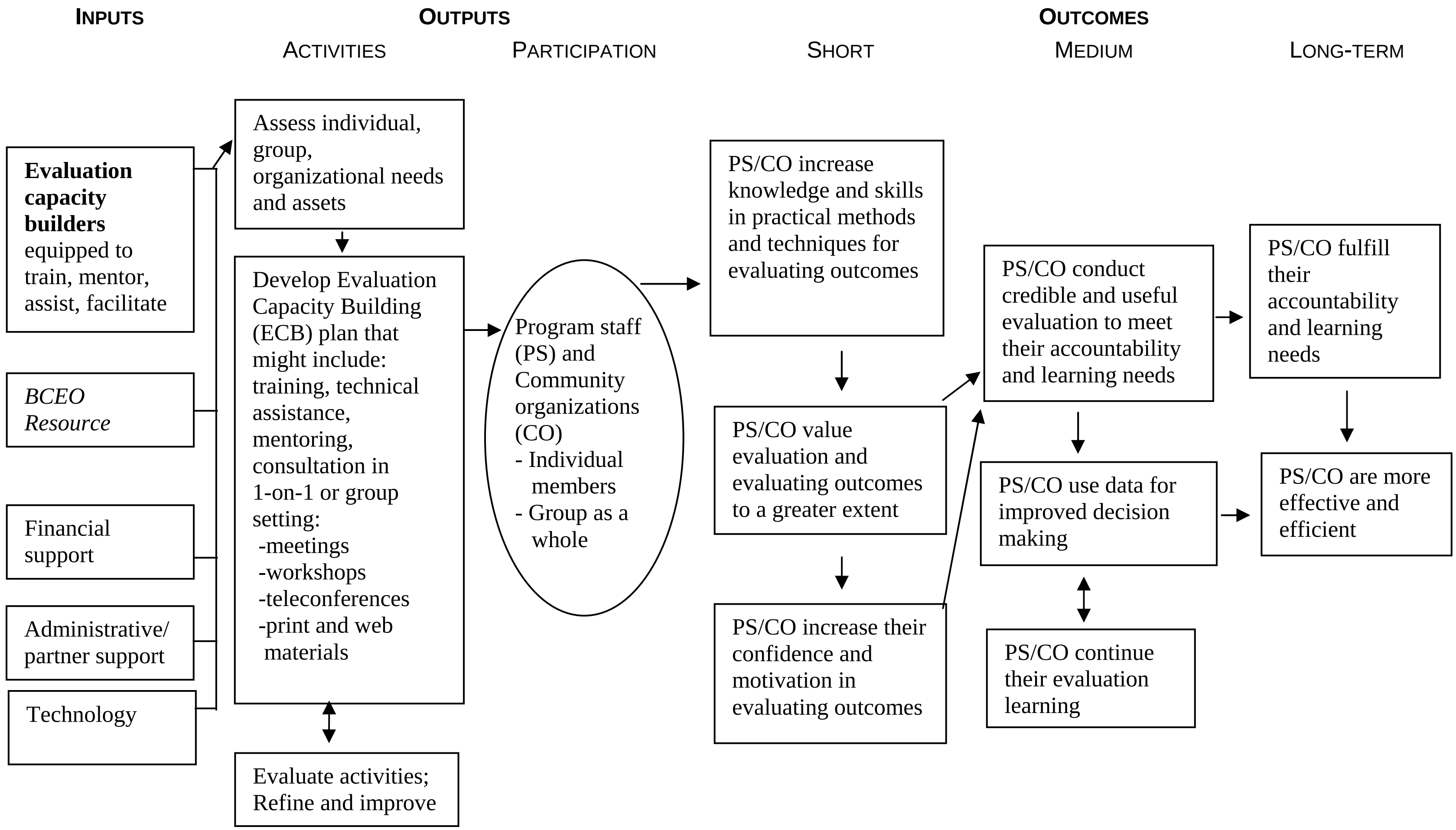


Assumptions: Resources and ongoing supports are adequate; the *BCEO Resource* is appropriate and user-friendly; adult learning principles are appropriate for audience; capacity builders have requisite interest and knowledge

External factors: other competing demands on time; other vendors fill need; change in policy away from outcome focus

Fig. 2 BCEO Logic Model 2: Program and community organization level

Situation: Program staff and community organizations are struggling to understand outcomes, document outcomes, and build an outcomes-based approach to meet their accountability and learning needs. Publics want to know how community problems are being resolved. Funders demand evidence of results and expect evaluation plans in grant requests. Yet, many program staff lack the background and skills to effectively evaluate outcomes.



Assumptions: Evaluation capacity builder is well prepared and motivated; *BCEO Resource* is appropriate for PS/CO; participants are motivated and interested; resources, supports and a favorable organizational environment exist or are being developed

External factors: Other competing demands on time; funders/public change expectations

Facilitator's Guide

Page

Facilitator’s guide

One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.

-Sophocles, 400 BC

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

- Chinese proverb

If we are always arriving and departing, it is also true that we are eternally anchored. One’s destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things.

- Henry Miller, American novelist

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand

- Confucius

What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.

- Aristotle

What is your role in building capacity in evaluating outcomes?

- Trainer: alone or as co-teacher with subject matter expert; evaluation consultant; community or local partners
  - Small group; large group
  - Direct or train-the-trainer (teaching others to be peer coaches/capacity builders)
  - Online and web-based offerings
- Technical assistance provider
  - Personalized, real-time consultations
  - Quick support for an immediate need
  - Face-to-face; by phone, web, or email
- Resource developer
  - Create or customize materials for specific needs and context of audience
- Champion
- Mentor
- Coach
- On-the-side guide
- Group facilitator
- Advocate – proponent of outcomes and evaluating outcomes
- Other…

Not always do we start with a long-term capacity building purpose in mind, nor is it appropriate. Individuals, groups, and organizations have different levels of readiness and needs. Following are some examples of situations and ways in which the *BCEO Resource* might be used at the community level. Similar scenarios might exist in other contexts.

- A local United Way agency has found the funding applications it receives are incomplete, poorly written, and not clearly articulating intended outcomes and how they will be evaluated. You have had a strong working relationship with the United Way. You offer to partner with them to develop a multi-session program on identifying and evaluating outcomes. You use the manual to design the program and find handouts and slides to include as learning materials. You anticipate some ongoing technical assistance may be needed.
- You are a member of a Housing Partnership that is discussing their goals for the upcoming year. You know the Partnership did not evaluate whether or not they achieved their intended outcomes last year so you explain how important it is to think about evaluation at the beginning instead of leaving it to the last minute. You offer to lead a workshop at the next meeting when members will discuss the value and purpose of evaluation and what they might do. You use sections of the manual to prepare the workshop.
- You are co-authoring with another county agency a grant application that requires an evaluation plan. At the next grant-writing meeting you share resources from the manual with your co-authors and work with them on developing an evaluation plan for the proposed project.
- You are approached by a youth organization that has just realized that it needs to report project outcomes to its funder. They did not think about evaluation from the beginning and are not sure what to do. Recognizing this is a “teachable moment,” you select relevant pieces from the manual to develop an evaluation primer that you use as you help them develop a plan and evaluate their project. Your hope is that they will use the primer when they begin their next project.
- A county department head has approached you to help him examine how his department can do a better job of articulating intended outcomes and then evaluating them. You copy several key handouts and bring them with you to your lunch meeting.
- You’ve been asked by the County Finance Director to assist with a County Department Head meeting to help managers realize the importance of writing effective outcomes for the upcoming county budget. You design a one-hour workshop and offer technical assistance to the managers as they write their outcomes.

Principles of adult learning

Adapted from materials prepared by: Merry Klemme, Annie Jones, and Joan Cybela; University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension

As we think about building capacity in evaluating outcomes, it is important to remember that adults bring particular interests, attributes, and learning styles to the situation.

1. Adults have a foundation of life experiences and knowledge. They relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences.

   Therefore, help relate new material to what is already known; tap into experience.

2. Adults are generally autonomous and prefer self-directed learning.

   Therefore, provide for some choices and control over the place, pace, and options for learning.

3. Adults are goal-oriented; they have a purpose, goal, or need for learning.

   Therefore, the more relevant the learning is, the more learning will take place.

4. Adults are practical; they want to learn something they can apply.

   Therefore, show the relationship between what they are learning and how they can use it. Provide opportunity for adults to practice and reflect and help them discover why the content matters to them, their clientele, and their communities.

5. Adults are people whose changing physiological needs (vision, hearing, and physical comfort) impact learning. Learning can be impacted as much as 25% by the physical effects of the learning environment.

   Therefore, attend to such physical considerations as learning spaces/rooms, adequate lighting, comfortable room temperature and air flow, a good sound system, seating arrangements that encourage interaction and foster a sense of community, comfortable chairs, room set-ups that allow for movement, refreshments, and readily available drinking water.

6. Learning is an active process and adults prefer to participate actively.

   Therefore, make provision for active participation and hands-on learning.

7. Learning that is applied immediately is retained longer and is more likely to be used.

   Therefore, employ techniques that allow adults to immediately apply material in a practical way.

8. Learning is facilitated when adults are aware of their progress.

   Therefore, use techniques that provide opportunities for self-appraisal.

Learning styles and educational methods

Consider the seven different learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, numeric, musical, interpersonal (relating to others), and intrapersonal (reflecting within). The three most common types are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The more people "do," the more meaningful the learning experience. Learners might not remember what you tell them and they might not remember what they read – but they will absolutely remember what they practice and teach others.

Consider that we remember:

- 20% of what we read;
- 20% of what we hear;
- 30% of what we see;
- 50% of what we see and hear;
- 70% of what we see, hear, and discuss; and
- 90% of what we see, hear, discuss, and practice.

Educational methods

In this *BCEO Resource,* we suggest a variety of educational methods. While many of the methods are structured for use in a workshop setting, they can be adapted and used in various situations and for different purposes. Some will be appropriate for certain audiences and not for others. Pick and choose and adapt. Consider cultural appropriateness, different learning styles and individual characteristics.

Method	Description
Affinity diagramming	Clustering of ideas or items to identify common themes and understandings. Everyone writes responses to the problem or question on separate cards (sticky notes). Invite people to group their cards (in silence or interactively). Discuss the groupings. Agree upon an arrangement.
Around the room (Carousel brainstorming)	Round robin contribution of ideas about topics or questions. Write topics or questions on sheets of poster paper, post the sheets around the room, distribute colored markers, and direct each group to a sheet of poster paper. Provide X number of minutes at each station (3-5 minutes is usually sufficient). Use a stop watch or timer to begin the rotation. The groups rotate in clockwise fashion to each poster paper, adding and piggybacking on previously-written comments. Before disbanding, a member of each group summarizes the comments at its last station for sharing as a whole group.
Brainstorming	Open group generation of ideas. Questions are developed in advance and used to stimulate free-flowing generation of ideas. Recorder captures comments/key points.
Buzz sessions	Small, informal group discussions, usually of 3-4 individuals; or, each person may turn to the person sitting next to him or her. Provide questions or topics to discuss. Individuals hesitant to participate in large group setting may share in small group. Invite group members to share key points from discussions.
Case scenario	Individuals are presented with a real-life scenario representing a situation, dilemma, problem, or opportunity. They analyze and discuss the case and answer a series of questions pertinent to the topic.

Method	Description
Creative expression	Individuals are given creative materials – paper, colors, clay, paints, etc. to make a poster, sign, bookmark, image for a computer screen. Or, the activity might include creating a dance, music, or a theatrical scene.
Data dialogue	Individuals discuss a piece of data or certain results. The discussion might open with, "What do you expect the data to show?" Or, "What is surprising about this result?"
Debate	Individuals or teams argue the pros and cons of a particular issue, topic, or question.
Games	Use common, popular games such as Matching: Create cards that have terms, definitions, concepts, and/or strategies written on them. Shuffle the cards and give one to each person. Have participants find others with matching cards or match their cards to a poster. Other games include: Puzzles; Pictionary; Jeopardy
Hats galore	Hats are used to represent different stakeholders, perspectives, opinions.
Interview a partner	Individuals work in a pair and interview each other about their program/situations, responses to a question, or thoughts about an issue.
Metaphor madness	Use metaphors, similes, or analogies to connect with evaluation or an evaluation topic. Invite individuals to think of a metaphor, for example, to describe *outcome*. Or, use a basket of toys or household objects that people select from to talk about evaluation. For using metaphors, see discussion in Patton, 2008: 52-57.
Opinion line	Signboards of strongly disagree to strongly agree are placed along a line on the floor or wall. Individuals respond to statements of beliefs/values about an evaluation topic by standing at a spot representing their response. Read statements and have participants make their "vote" on the line. Take time after each question to discuss why they put themselves at that place on the line. Variation: Make a circle and ask those who agree with the statement to step into the circle.
Peer critique	Individuals bring their own evaluation plan, instrument, report, communication, etc. that the group reviews and critiques.
Reflection	Questions posed at the end of a learning experience to reinforce key concepts, share ideas, and encourage individuals to think about how they can apply the material to their own situations.
Role play	Individuals or teams adopt and act out the role of key evaluation stakeholders or situations, playing and simulating a real-life situation. Provide enough background to bring the role to life. Clearly explain the purpose of the role play.
Roundrobin table conversations	Individuals move from table to table, discussing questions or topics that have been placed on the table. One person stays at each table and records the comments of the various people that come to the table. Explain that each table group will have X minutes to discuss the question on the table. When the whistle blows, individuals are to move to another table that has a different question. The recorder stays at the table and records key points from the conversations. The World Café (www.theworldcafe.com) provides a useful process for engaging in collective learning through conversation.
Share your own	Individuals are asked to share an evaluation experience, a "best or worst" example, an everyday "life" example, or examples from their work. Or, a participant provides a case for other learners to discuss, resolve, provide help with, etc.
Teach each other	Individuals learn about a particular concept and then share that understanding with the others. In small groups, they prepare a "lesson" to help everyone understand the concept. They are encouraged to include their own experiences, real-life examples, innovative teaching/learning processes. Each group then "teaches" its topic to the rest.

Engaging learners: Tips to consider

Adapted from materials prepared by: Merry Klemme, Annie Jones, and Joan Cybela; University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension

We know that engaging learners in as many ways as possible will help them give *and* take as much as possible any learning experience. As you prepare, plan for ways to involve learners mentally, emotionally and physically. Some suggestions are offered below. Though you'll be drawn more to some than others, they're all important. Apply as many as are workable and appropriate for your audience, keeping in mind your cultural context.

1. Advance preparation

How might you prepare learners in advance so they arrive ready to engage? Consider communicating learning outcomes so they can anticipate what they'll learn. Invite them to think about what they already know about the content, and what they hope to gain. Ask them to reflect on what relevance the content has in their lives. Direct them to readings, web-based resources, mental or written exercises, or hands-on activities. As appropriate, invite them to bring their own examples and projects to work on.

2. The opening

Prepare brief statements that trigger learners' interest in the topic, while teaching them at the same time! Formats like *"Did you know …?"* work well. Use these statements on table tents, wall posters, entrance signs, overheads, etc. Make them colorful with interesting lettering and graphics. Try a "think, pair, share" activity – ask a question and have the participants think about the answer, or encourage people to reflect on a past experience; then they get into pairs and share. Or, try sharing stories or anecdotes, humor or cartoons, pertinent news items, songs that apply to your theme, ice breaker activities, or demonstrations – especially those with results the participants do not expect. Be creative – a good opening makes a difference!

3. Create environment

Provide for a physical and psychological learning environment that promotes openness, thought, and discussion. Appropriate light, sound, temperature, ventilation, comfortable chairs, room arrangements that invite interaction and space to move around, varied learning resources, time for stretching and mental breaks, refreshments, use of color, music – these are but a few elements that heighten alertness and stimulate learning, and they tell learners that you care and that something extraordinary is about to happen. You may not have control over all of these, but strive for those within reach!

Consider these elements:

- clear signage
- music on arrival and when appropriate
- healthy refreshments (i.e., drinking water, fruits, assorted nuts, cheeses, whole grains, selections reflecting cultural mix of learners)
- flowers or plants
- bright cloths/color for refreshment and resource tables
- space to physically stretch and move around
- engaging materials
- nametags, room set-up, and ice breakers that facilitate group interaction and sense of a learning community

4. Develop relationships

Meet and greet. Take time to get acquainted! Share something interesting about yourself and your passion for the topic. Adults often like to know the credentials of the facilitators. Provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other. Who are they? Why are they here? What do they already know about this topic? What problems have they encountered with it and what use do they have for it?

5. Start with the big picture

Fit participants with panoramic lenses. Help them see the larger implications of what they are involved in. What broader purpose does the content serve?

- Let learners know where they're going. Provide an overview of the subject, not just the timetable.
- Consider creating a mind-map that visually displays the full learning journey. Color it in to show progress.
- Examine the "end" first – where you all hope to be by the end of the learning time together – and work backwards. It provides a context for the full learning spectrum.
- If you are doing a series of trainings or workshops, provide an overview of the series. Show how each workshop connects to the big picture. Use graphics or a design to provide an overview.

6. Use a mix of activities and methods

Variety is not only the spice of life; it's an *essential* ingredient for learning! Balance your presentation with an engaging mix that stimulates all of your learners' senses – the visual, auditory, reading-writing, and kinesthetic dimensions of learning. Passive listening and viewing *do not* generate learning. Keep lectures to a minimum. Stimulate critical thinking. Integrate activities and exercises that are fun, interesting, and humorous. Consider:

- <u>Visual resources</u> such as video, slides, real objects, photographs, graphs and charts, graphic images, etc.
- <u>Auditory resources</u> such as brief lecture, large and small group discussion, problem solving with a partner, brainstorming, recorded or live music and sound, etc.
- <u>Reading-writing resources</u> such as print-based materials, quiet reflection, journaling, note taking, mind mapping, etc.
- <u>Kinesthetic resources</u> such as hands-on experiences, working with equipment, manipulating objects, physically moving about, role-playing, etc.
- Engage emotions: Help learners find and experience an emotional connection to your topic.
- Seek moments of laughter! Humor is a powerful learning tonic!

7. Facilitate dialogue and co-learning

Encourage discussion, opinions, and cordial disagreement. Adults have much experience and knowledge to share. We have much to learn from each other.

8. Make time for reflection

Reflection is one component of experiential learning – do-apply-reflect. It helps people reinforce what they learn and transfer that learning to other aspects of life. Therefore, include purposeful questions and activities that facilitate reflection, expression of ideas, and sharing.

9. Transfer learning

Suggest strategies and opportunities that will help learners *"try on"* their new learning once they're back at work. Where can they turn for help, resources, reinforcements, and counsel?

10. Monitor and evaluate

Check in – see how things are going. Adults learn better when they set their own goals and are able to monitor and see their progress.

Learning tools and ideas

Peripheral learning tools

Peripheral teaching-learning tools are resources for communicating content in a non-conscious, non-directive way. Brain and learning research suggests that up to 99% of learning is non-conscious. We're not aware of learning taking place. Peripheral learning tools are used to contribute to and reinforce learning. Compliment learning by creating and using quotations, cartoons, images, photographs, graphs, interesting yet readable fonts and brief stories.

Select content that:

- is particularly relevant and critical to the learner.
- can be communicated in brief statements or thought-provoking questions and/or images.
- is likely to provoke discussion, reflection and co-learning.
- Post content on
- large, easy-to-read posters for mounting on walls.
- table tents (folded cards placed on tables to reinforce and stimulate learning).
- nametags.
- welcome signs.

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are any physical objects that engage the learner in touching, feeling, and manipulating. They stimulate the brain, either as part of the learning experience or to provide opportunity for movement. Examples:

- Basket of objects (clay, puzzles, stress balls, brain teasers, small toys) placed on tables for people to explore and use throughout the workshop
- Puzzles, game pieces, cards, objects (tools, household items) used as part of the learning activity
- Paper table cover with markers that invite people to doodle or draw

Energizers

Energizers are planned opportunities to recharge and energize. Examples:

- That's me! Prepare a series of statements appropriate for your group and read them one at a time. Ask participants to stand up or raise their arms above their heads and shout, "That's me!" if the statement applies to them. Example statements:
    - o I have grandchildren that I love.
    - o I work for a nonprofit organization.
    - o I have lived outside the United States.

- I like evaluation.
- I've been to a movie at a movie theater within the past week.
- I exercise every day.
- I know how to construct a logic model.

- Pilates or yoga: Invite a participant or an instructor to lead the group in some simple exercises.
- Air drawing/body writing: Draw or motion in the air an evaluation term or idea. May use any body part such as elbow, leg, or foot.
- Brain breaks (see page 13)
- Exercise: Take a 5-minute walk, play stand up-sit down, etc.

Ice breakers (See examples on page 19.)

Why use an ice breaker?

- Create a positive atmosphere
- Facilitate learning
- Help people to get to know one another
- Help people to relax
- Break down social barriers
- Energize and motivate
- Help people to think outside the box

When you are planning to use ice breakers, ask yourself these questions:

- Why am I thinking about using an ice breaker?
- What ice breaker could create the experience needed?
- Is the ice breaker appropriate – culturally sensitive and respectful of learning styles?
- How will I introduce it, facilitate it, and close it?
- Can I deliver the ice breaker – is it comfortable, do I have the time, supplies, etc.?

Parking lot

Hang a sheet of poster paper on the wall to create a "parking lot" – a place to record questions or issues that need to be addressed but aren't exactly on the current topic of discussion. Both the facilitator and participants put items in the parking lot. Parking lot items should be revisited and addressed before the end of the workshop.

Graffiti board

Hang a piece of poster paper on the wall or in the hallway and designate it as a place where people can write anything they want. You may invite people to post ideas and remarks in response to a particular question or leave it as an open space to capture anything on people's minds.

Enhance learning through movement

Prepared by: Joan Cybela, Professor and Teaching-Learning Specialist (retired), University of Wisconsin - Extension (Modified July 2008)

Movement is essential to learning. Current brain research establishes links between movement and learning. Dr. Carla Hannaford (2005), neuroscientist and educator, notes that almost daily, new research is illuminating the strong neural links between areas in the brain involved in movement and those involved with cognitive activity. She states that our bodies are very much a part of all our learning, and learning is not an isolated "brain" function. Every nerve and cell is a network contributing to our intelligence and our learning capability.

Eric Jensen (2000), author and internationally recognized educator and expert in the brain-based teaching movement, agrees. He challenges that the role of today's educator is not to provide content but to engage learners with relevant content in meaningful ways so that it is learned, valued, and, hopefully, enjoyed… not just "covered."

Movements that stimulate the vestibular system are especially helpful to the learning process. This sensory-motor system, considered the entryway into the brain, is connected between the semicircular canals of the inner ear, brainstem, eyes and core muscles. It regulates our equilibrium and our sensation of movement and is an important component of the brain's ability to maintain alertness. Via the reticular activating system, the vestibular system wakes up the brain and prepares it to take in new information.

Hannaford suggests cross-lateral movements (where limbs on one side of the body cross the body's midline and coordinate with limbs on the other side of the body) for stimulating the vestibular system and for improving the nerve communication between the brain's two hemispheres. See *Brain Gym* [Dennison, P. & Dennison, G. (1994)].

Movement anchors thoughts, and Hannaford notes that many learners have a distinct tendency to think better and more freely while engaged in repetitive, low concentration physical tasks such as knitting, chewing, and playing with clay and other manipulative objects that involve skilled movements of both hands in concert. You can engage in these while learning, particularly successfully if you're an auditory learner (i.e., one who learns well by listening).

Equally important to movement and learning:

- Drink plenty of water, the "elixir" for the brain. Water comprises more of the brain (with estimates of 90%) than of any other organ of the body. Encourage learners to drink water before and during learning experiences to help "grease the wheel," enabling the brain to function at optimal levels. A hydrated brain is a happy one!
- Create learning conditions that "enrich" the brain [Jensen, 2006]. Neuroscience research suggests that the brain learns best in stimulating, non-threatening learning environments that include novel and meaningful activities, humor and music (appropriately used), physical movement, adequate challenge, limited stress, good nutrition, and social interaction.

Examples of Smart Moves

1. Brain Buttons

This exercise helps improve blood flow to the brain to "switch on" the entire brain before introducing content. The increased blood flow helps improve concentration skills required for reading, writing, listening, etc.

- Put one hand so that there is as wide a space as possible between the thumb and index finger.
- Place your index and thumb into the slight indentations below the collar bone on each side of the sternum. Press lightly in a pulsing manner.
- At the same time put the other hand over the navel area of the stomach. Gently press on these points for about 2 minutes.

2. Cross Crawl

This exercise helps co-ordinate the right and left brain by exercising the information flow between the two hemispheres. It is useful for writing, listening, reading, and comprehension.

- Stand or sit. Put the right hand across the body to the left knee as you raise it, and then do the same thing for the left hand on the right knee just as if you were marching.
- Do this slowly and deliberately, either sitting or standing, for about 2 minutes.

3. Hook-ups

This works well to calm the mind and improve concentration in situations that may cause nervousness.

- Stand or sit. Cross the right leg over the left at the ankles.
- Take your right wrist and cross it over the left wrist and link up the fingers so that the right wrist is on top.
- Bend the elbows out and gently turn the fingers in towards the body until they rest on the sternum (breastbone) in the center of the chest. Stay in this position.
- Keep the ankles crossed and the wrists crossed and then breathe evenly in this position for a few minutes. You will be noticeably calmer after that time.

Resources:

Dennison, P., & Dennison, G. (1994). *Brain gym* (Teachers Edition, Revised). Ventura, CA: Educ-Kinesthetics, Inc.

Hannaford, C. (2005). *Smart moves – Why learning is not all in your head* (2nd ed.). Salt Lake City, UT: Great River Books.

Examples of Brain Breaks

Brain breaks are simple exercises to energize or relax a group through physical movement. Physical movement increases the oxygen in the blood stream and leads to improved concentration. In addition, adding a movement of physical action to a learning point will improve recall.

1. With your forefinger and thumb of each hand pinched together, extend your hands out in front of your face and trace large circles in the same direction. Keep your lips and teeth together. Now trace the circles in the other direction. Now try moving one hand clockwise and the other counter-clockwise. Swap again.
2. With your writing hand, hold an imaginary pencil in front of your face and write the keywords from your lesson in the air. Say the letters of the words as you write. When you have finished, try to write them backwards. For fun, write the keywords in the air with your nose! Watch your neighbor and try to guess what the word is. Now try it with your ear!
3. Hold your ears and slowly roll your ear lobes between finger and thumb. Do it nice and slowly and all the way around your ear. How does it feel?
4. With your elbows at shoulder height, practice making big circles, then small circles, forwards and backwards.
5. Do finger aerobics! With a partner, sit alongside each other or on either side of your desk. Your partner should place both hands flat on the desk and so should you. Take turns lifting different fingers without taking any other fingers off the desk. Do it together and in sequence. Start with simple lifts with each finger in turn, then taps, then bends, and then big stretches! Now one of you be the aerobics instructor and the other has to do exactly the exercises the instructor demonstrates!
6. Practice shoulder shrugs. Roll your shoulders forwards, then back.

Group process

Norms and operating procedures for group work, training, workshops

Ground rules help ensure that the setting is safe, respectful, and comfortable. These are generated by the group but may include rules such as:

- Value everyone's input.
- Participate fully; share experiences and perspectives.
- Speak one at a time so everyone can hear; avoid side conversations.
- Ask questions; there is no such thing as a silly or irrelevant question.
- Disagree respectfully.
- Things that are said are confidential.
- Have fun!

Ask the group to establish its own norms and operating procedures or add to the list above.

Invite group members to signal by raising their hands if they agree to abide by these ground rules.

Post ground rules on a wall to serve as a reminder.

Ways to get acquainted

- Interview a partner: People pair up and interview each other – then share what they've learned with the group. Questions might cover topics such as names, where people work and their roles, what they hope to learn, and/or one interesting thing about them (e.g., hobby, place they like to visit).
- 4 C's: Each person writes down on an index card a favorite color, cuisine, country to visit, and "closet" dream. The cards are shuffled and redistributed. Each person reads aloud the car she picks and everyone guesses who wrote it.
- What's your story? People share within small groups: (1) something they like about evaluation, (2) something they do not like about evaluation, (3) a fun/funny evaluation story. One example of each is then shared with the full group.
- Ask people to introduce themselves and describe a few details of their ideal, perfect dream vacation.
- See examples of ice breakers on page 19 for other ideas.

Ways to divide people into groups

Ask people to "turn to the person next to you," or "fFind two people you don't know very well." Or, use one of the following techniques:

- Deck of cards – four suits are the four groups
- Birth month: Have the group divide by those born in January, February, etc.
- Colored marbles, stickers, sticks, plastic Easter eggs, erasers, etc. – as many different colors as number of groups needed
- All wearing a certain color or type of clothing/footwear – blue in clothing, brown shoes etc.
- Group by names beginning with A-M…
- Mix by work experience: those with over 10 years experience, 5-10 years experience, less than 5 years experience
- Plastic animals (cows, horses, chickens, etc.) or other items (chess pieces, plastic flowers, insects, etc.) – as many different types as number of groups needed
- Paper play money of different denominations
- Play dough or clay of different colors (secondary purpose as a learning peripheral)
- Index cards with different rubber stamp designs stamped on them
- Fun stickers (cartoon characters, animals) or dots placed under chairs or on nametags
- Different types or colors of candy (peppermints, butterscotch, fruit flavors, M&Ms) that people pick from a basket
- If groups do not need to be exactly even, use things like the types of hobbies/cars people drive/modes of transportation people prefer, types of toothpaste people use, or preferences for different types of music
- Puzzle pieces: Using large piece puzzles, give each person a puzzle piece. Form groups by putting the puzzle together. You might create a large puzzle with the words "outcome" or "evaluation"
- Evaluation words: Write different evaluation terms on separate cards. Like cards form the group.

Selecting a group recorder/reporter

- Select any date at random. The person whose birthday is closest to that date becomes the recorder.
- Choose the person who will have the next birthday.
- Choose a person who lives closest (or farthest) from the site.
- Choose the person newest (or oldest) to the organization.
- Choose a person who has been in his or her position 1 year or 5 years.

Evaluating your own capacity building work

This section provides a few examples of ways in which you can evaluate your evaluation capacity building efforts. You will need to adapt these ideas to meet your specific work and evaluation needs. Remember that some capacity building work focuses on the individual – changes in individual knowledge, skills, behaviors, decision making, etc. Other evaluation capacity building work focuses on changes at the program, organization, and/or community level. Be clear about your focus. The following ideas cover the mix. Apply the same principles discussed in this manual to your own evaluation work.

Create your own logic model of your capacity building initiative
(*model best practice)*

- Who is the intended target audience: individuals, team/group/unit, organization, community?
- What are the desired outcomes: changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, motivations, confidence levels, behaviors, practices, actions, policies…?
- Do the activities you've planned logically connect to the changes you want to help support?
- Use your logic model to determine appropriate evaluation questions to ask and when to collect data.

Measuring short-term outcomes: knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, motivations…

- Use activities in the manual such as the Opinion Line or the "What do you think" activities as pre-post assessments. Record responses as a pre-assessment. Then, repeat the activity and record the responses as a post assessment to assess participants' changes in attitudes and knowledge.
- Invite people to set their personal learning/achievement goal at the start of the capacity building work. At the end of the process, invite people to review their goal and comment on their level of achievement.
- Create personal report cards: Each person lists the knowledge and skills she/he would like to achieve (or use a pre-created, standardized list). During and at the end of the capacity building work, the individual assesses her progress or partners with another and they assess each others' progress.
- For a series of workshop sessions: At the start of each subsequent session, give each person a term or concept from the previous

session and have them define the term or explain the concept to the rest of the participants. This serves as a way of reviewing the previous sessions' materials and is a way for you to check knowledge gained and retained.

- End-of-session evaluation options:
    - Group discussion
    - Single post survey
    - Retrospective post-then-pre survey

Measuring longer-term outcomes: use, application, transformation

- Compare pre-program outcome evaluation plans/reports. Ask for copies of outcome evaluation plans/reports before the program and then 3-6 months after the program. Assess change. You could ask the participants to explain what changes they made in their outcome evaluation plans/reports based upon what they learned from your teaching and then you can verify those changes by comparing the two documents.
- Mail a pre-program goal-setting statement to individuals several months after the program to assess their levels of achievement.
- Distribute a follow-up survey or conduct interviews with program participants.
- Conduct a key informant interview with a funder, supervisor, or other individual who is in a position to see evidence of change and report on it.
- Hold a focus group with key participants after several months to assess competency and application of skills.
- Compare pre and post organizational characteristics to assess individual vs. organizational or program changes. Conduct key informant interviews with administrators and organizational members at all levels across the organization for evidence of change.

Using the materials in this *BCEO Resource*

The activities, handouts, and slide presentations available in this resource may be used for any type of situation…

- A training, workshop, or series of workshops
- Handouts or background materials for meetings and sharing of resources and information
- Support materials for mentoring or coaching of individuals or groups
- Quick support
- Technical assistance
- Ongoing support of an individual, team, or organization to fully integrate evaluation and evaluating outcomes into work routines and learning
- Telephone and email communications
- Email list group

Many of the activities are structured as if for use in a workshop or training setting. However, workshops and trainings are only one way that capacity can be built. Think about how you can use these materials formally and informally to consistently add value.

This is not a strict curriculum that must be followed in any set order or way. Materials may be selected, adapted, and supplemented to best meet your learner's needs. Many of the materials are stand-alone pieces that can be copied and used.

Tips:

- When possible, use the individual's own project/plan/tool. For example, invite people to bring their own outcome evaluation plan to work on.
- Use a mix of activities and methods over time.
- Customize materials and communications to reflect the individual's particular project, question, or concern.
- See the potential of turning a one-shot request or call for technical assistance into ongoing support and capacity building.
- Identify evaluation advocates and champions within the group or organization.
- View every opportunity as having educational potential.
- Take advantage of every "teachable" moment to build capacity in evaluation by asking questions, sharing resources, sending a logic model greeting card, integrating evaluation concepts into messages, etc.
- Spend time building relationships; trustworthy and relevant assistance parlays into subsequent support that will build and sustain capacity.
- Remember that people learn evaluation by "doing" it.

Examples of Ice Breakers

Prepared by
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Many of these ice breakers can be used for various purposes. Remember to check the cultural appropriateness of any activity. Know your audience – use these activities as appropriate.

Ice Breaker Technique	Purpose
4 C's Each person writes down on a card his/her favorite color, cuisine, county to visit, and "closet" dream. The cards are shuffled and redistributed. Each person reads aloud the card she chose. Separately, group members write down who they think wrote it. At the end, see who guessed the most correct responses. Or, everyone guesses.	-Get acquainted -Team building
Guess Who? Distribute a piece of paper to each participant. Ask participants to: 1. Write something about themselves unknown to the rest of the group. 2. Fold up the paper and put it in a paper bag/basket. 3. Have a volunteer pick out a piece of paper, read it aloud, guess who the person is, and give a reason for their choice. Go around the room, giving everyone a chance to draw and guess. Or, ask participants to write down: • something they are good at • something they like about evaluation • something they don't like about evaluation • a favorite family vacation During the session, read the clues and have the group guess which person is being described.	-Get acquainted -Build relationships -Just for fun
Card Game Prepare a poster that shows each suit from a deck of cards and a sentence starter. Let each participant select a card from a deck of cards that contains only the numbers 2-6 of each suit. The person tells as many things to complete the sentence as the number on the card. Examples of sentence starters: Heart – I like to…. Club – I equate evaluation with… Diamond – My life is… Spade – A favorite outdoor activity is…	-Get acquainted
Let's Ketchup! Place a bottle of ketchup on each table. Invite each person to identify the most unusual thing that they have eaten or seen eaten with ketchup. The "winner" (most unusual) is awarded the bottle of ketchup.	-Get acquainted
Dream Vacation Ask participants to introduce themselves and describe details of a dream vacation.	-Get acquainted
Favorite T-shirt Ask attendees to bring (or wear) their favorite T-shirt to the meeting. Once all participants have arrived, ask each person to show his shirt to the group and explain how the T-shirt best resembles his personality (the way he is feeling at that moment; his expectations for the meeting, etc.). Sets the tone for a "casual" meeting.	-Get acquainted -Set an "informal stage"

Ice Breaker Technique	Purpose
Table Talk Prepare 3-5 questions related to the program topic. Copy the questions – either one set per table or per individual. Invite each person sitting at the table to respond to the questions. Sample questions: What is the first evaluation you remember? What do you like about evaluation? What do you dislike about evaluation? Or, ask general “get acquainted” questions such as: What is one thing that makes you unique? What is one thing you learned on your first job? If you could have dinner with any person, living or dead, it would be ___________because__________________.	-Get ready to learn -Get acquainted
The Numbers Game Ask participants to list all of the numbers they can think of that define them. They can either list the number or what the number represents, e.g., “work phone number” or “920-232-1973.” After one minute, have them form groups, share the numbers they listed, and figure out who has the most (legitimate) numbers.	-Get acquainted -Energizer
Three Truths and a Lie Distribute an index card to everyone and ask people to write four statements about themselves; one of the statements should be false while three should be true. Explain that the goal is to fool people about which is the lie. Allow five minutes to write statements. Then have each person read the four statements and have the group guess the lie.	-Get acquainted
What in the World? Print the following questions on poster paper for all to see: “Why in the world are you here?” “What in the world do you hope to get out of this program?” “What in the world do you value most?” With everyone standing in a circle, facing in, toss a blown-up globe to a person and ask her to answer the questions. Then, the person tosses the ball to someone else and so on until everyone has had the opportunity to share.	-Get acquainted -Get ready to learn
If I Had a Hammer Participants compare the “tools” they learned about in the session to real tools (or drawings of tools). Ask participants to think of the tools they became acquainted with during the session. Instruct them to make analogies between the tools on display (or on the sheet) and the tools they heard about during the session. When participants are finished, ask them to explain their analogies for each tool to the group. Variation: Ask participants to select a tool then make analogies. Tip: This activity is good to introduce a topic or to gain closure on an informative or skill-building session.	-Review and reinforce learning
Personal Bingo Before the get-together, find out one particular characteristic about each participant (favorite hobbies, books, vacation spots, number of children, favorite foods, etc.). Prepare a bingo card with one characteristic written in each square. Make enough copies for each participant to have one. Invite the participants to mingle and identify a person for each square who then signs her/his name on the corresponding square. Continue until the bingo card is complete. Only open-ended questions should be used.	-Get acquainted

Ice Breaker Technique	Purpose
How Many Beans? Set a jar of beans (marbles, M&M's, etc.) in front of the group. (Be sure you know how many beans are in the jar.) Ask participants to estimate the number of beans and record their estimates. Ask each participant to pick a partner and together estimate how many beans are in the jar. Again, they should record their estimates. Now invite each pair to join another pair. The four-person team estimates the number of beans and records its estimate. Ask these groups to join another foursome, estimate the number of beans as a group of eight, and record its estimate. Repeat with a group of sixteen. Ask for the final estimates and then share the actual number of beans. Discuss: What effect does an increasing number of members have on the accuracy of a group decision? Why/how did the number of members influence decision making?	-Team building
Line Up Invite people to line up in order according to any parameter, such as: 1. shoe size 2. length of arm's reach 3. alphabetically by favorite color 4. number of siblings 5. hair color, lightest to darkest 6. age, youngest to oldest 7. length of time with current employer 8. number of pets owned 9. hair length, longest to shortest 10. the number of bones ever broken With enough participants to form teams, you can have "races." Challenge the teams to line up as fast as possible, with the first team lined up being the "winners."	-Get acquainted -Energizer -To divide into groups
Are You Alert? Place twenty unrelated items on a tray and cover it. Participants (or teams of participants) have one minute to look at the objects on the tray. Recover the tray. People then write down as many things as they can remember. Repeat the activity one more time. The person/team who remembers the most items wins.	-Energizer -Team building -Use observation skills
Ball Toss Announce a topic (something associated with the session, the course content, the company, etc.). Then pass around an inflatable beach ball. (Make sure everyone is ready before you throw.) When someone catches the ball, they shout out something related to the topic and then toss the ball to someone else.	-Energizer
Magic Wand Pass around a magic wand (could be a paper towel roll with glitter). Identify a topic relevant to the content of the program to focus the "wish." *You have just found a magic wand that allows you three wishes. You can change, have, or be anything you want. What three wishes would you have and why?* Invite people to share their wishes in pairs or small groups.	-Get ready -Identify challenges and opportunities -Just for fun
Marooned Divide into small groups of 4-6 individuals. *You are marooned on an island. What five items would you have brought with you if you knew that there was a chance that you might be stranded?* Five items per team, not per person. Invite the groups to write their items on poster paper to discuss and defend their choices with the whole group.	-Team building -Just for fun

Ice Breaker Technique	Purpose
Longest List Divide into groups of 3-6 people. Distribute a topic to each group (or use the same topic(s) for all groups). Give the groups three minutes to write down as many answers as they can. At the end of three minutes, ask the groups to count the number of items they have for each topic and reward the winner. Possible topics: • Times and places you have to wait • Times and places you are most likely to laugh • Times and places you need coins/change • Times and places you wear gloves/mittens	-Team building -Stimulate thinking -Just for fun
Who Did it Right? Ask for six volunteers. Distribute a bath towel to each one and ask the volunteers to fold the towels as they would at home. Then ask them to stand and/or come to the front of the room with their folded towels. Ask the audience: *Who did it right...who did it wrong...how many fold like this?* Ask the "folders" to explain why they fold the way they do. Engage the group in a discussion: What is the purpose of this exercise?	-Appreciate different perspectives
If You… This activity can be used in any learning situation, with participants who know one another well or with complete strangers. Keep it quick and fun. These starters could be focused on the learning content for the day to serve as a check or informal assessment. Stand up if you… 1. were born on February 29. 2. have or had a dog named Spot, Midnight, Lucky, or Shadow. 3. prefer winter to summer. 4. like pizza with anchovies. 5. volunteer for charity fund drives. 6. were born in another state. 7. were born in another country. 8. have been to Idaho. 9. write songs or poetry. 10. have an organized, clean desk. 11. have a twin brother or sister.	-Get acquainted -Energizer
Ball or Yarn Toss Review With everyone standing in a circle, facing in, toss a foam ball, beach ball, or beanbag to a person and ask her to tell what she thought was the most important concept from that session (or biggest "aha," or reflection on a discussion topic, etc.) Then, the person tosses the ball to someone else and so on until everyone has had the opportunity to share. An alternative is to use a loosely wound ball of yarn. State a question that each participant is to respond to. Holding the end of the yarn, toss the ball to a member of the circle who answers the question. Ask him to hold on to the yarn and toss the ball to another participant. Continue tossing the ball until all participants have been introduced and are holding on to the yarn. As the ball of yarn comes back to you, summarize the responses and describe the "web of support" that has been formed.	-Review and reinforce learning

Unit 1: Getting ready

Unit 1: Getting ready

For many, evaluating outcomes involves a new way of thinking or a different approach to evaluation. This is true for individuals as well as for groups or organizations as a whole. Individuals *and* organizations need to prepare – "get ready" – to engage in the learning and doing that is involved in evaluation. Research shows that if individuals and organizations are not ready to engage in evaluating outcomes, progress is slow and success is unlikely.

This unit includes three sections to help individuals "get ready" (1A, 1B, and 1C) and two sections to help organizations "get ready" (1D and 1E).

Individual readiness

Section 1A: Fear and loathing

Evaluation is often seen as "scientific" and complicated. It may be equated with statistics, objective truth, experimental methods, and difficult data analysis. Many people see evaluation as a specialized field that demands expertise and training. They may feel scared, worried, and defensive. Other people may be "required" to do evaluation by grantors or other stakeholders and are annoyed by the increasing demands for accountability. When preparing for evaluation, people often find it helpful to "let out" their concerns and anxieties.

Section 1B: Clarifying language – *Evaluation, outcomes*

It is common for people to "talk past each other" as they work together on outcome measurement. They may use the same words but mean different things. Jargon abounds: measurement, input, accountability, impact, outcomes, outputs, assessment, reliability, results, logic model, indicators, data, goals, objectives, quantitative, qualitative, and so on. People may even have different understandings of the word ***evaluation.*** What do people mean by the words they use? Clarifying language may be the most important first step in evaluating outcomes.

What?

So what?

Now what?

While there are many definitions of *evaluation*, one established definition is offered by Patton on page 39 of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* [Patton (2008)]:

> **Program evaluation** is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding.

Likewise, a shared understanding of ***outcomes*** is essential. *Outcomes* are the changes in individuals, groups, families, organizations, businesses, and/or communities that can be logically linked to our program activities**.**

Section 1C: Exploring motives and benefits of evaluation

People engage in evaluation for a variety of reasons. They come with different motivations. They see different benefits. Understanding one's own reasons and motivations as well as those of others involved in the evaluation is important step in "getting ready."

Organizational readiness

Section 1D: Assessing organizational readiness for evaluating outcomes

Research shows that a variety of factors affect an organization's ability to be successful in measuring outcomes. These factors include clear mission, vision, values, and goals (usually a result of a strategic planning process); strong leadership commitment and value placed on evaluation; requisite human, financial, and technological resources; and investments in staff training. All of these factors do not have to be in place when an organization begins evaluation, but a favorable environment is necessary for useful and worthwhile results-based management. Assessing incentives and barriers is a good place to start.

If the organization does not have a strategic plan or has not engaged in a strategic planning process or "outcome-focused" planning process, it is important that the organization does so before engaging in the outcome evaluation process.

Section 1E: The outcome management work group

Organizations often create a working group to lead the results-based movement. Group membership, structure, mandate, operating procedures, responsibilities, and tasks all need to be discussed and worked out.

Resources

Mobilization matters: Outcome-focused planning for community mobilization [United Way of America (2002)] http://www.liveunited.org/Outcomes/Resources/upload/MMNL1No9.pdf

Training program on strategic planning: Government and community applications [UWEX Strategic Planning Program Team (2005)]

Utilization-focused evaluation (4th ed.) [Patton (2008)]

Section 1A: Fear and loathing

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of different perspectives and their own attitudes about evaluation.
- increase their understanding of common challenges and barriers in evaluating outcomes.
- unleash their anxieties and emotions about evaluating outcomes.

⌘ Activity
Let it all out…

Purpose

To help people release anxieties and pent up emotions about evaluation

Materials needed

Slide 2

Handout-1 *My magical evaluation tool*

Poster paper, marker

Process

- Help everyone to envision being afraid, hesitant, and uncertain. You might use props or body movements to demonstrate trembling, shaking, release of emotions; and/or physically let the emotions out, e.g., shake your arms and move your body to release tension.
- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm responses to this question:

  What comes to mind when you hear the word *evaluation?*

  Encourage people to be spontaneous and rapid in their comments. Write these down on a sheet of poster paper. Encourage people to keep adding to the list – to *let it all out* – until there are no other remarks.

  Facilitate an open discussion of these feelings/emotions/remarks.

- **Partners:** Distribute the handout *My magical evaluation tool* (or poster paper) and colored markers.

  Explain the activity:

  - This is your chance to create a magical tool that will make your life easier as you do evaluation. First, take a few minutes to think about what such a tool would be: What would make your evaluations easier? Then, work in pairs (or teams of threes) to share your ideas and invent a tool together. Take about 10 minutes to draw your magical tool. Then, post it on the wall and be prepared to explain your tool so that we can fill our magical toolbox with these helpful tools.

  Wrap up this activity with the following questions:

  1. Are there any commonalities among the tools? If so, what are they?
  2. What frustrations or challenges do the magical tools reflect?
  3. What can you do to remove those frustrations?

Reflection questions

- How can anxieties and frustrations inhibit your ability to learn and progress?
- What can you do to reduce any such anxieties about evaluation?
- What did you learn about yourself and/or others from this activity?

⌘ Activity

Understanding perspectives about evaluation

Purpose

To help people acknowledge their own (and see others') perspectives about evaluation

Materials needed

Four signs that read: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

Clothesline or masking tape

Process

- **Opinion line:** Invite people to participate in an opinion line. Place the clothesline or masking tape on the wall or floor; and place the signs at equal distance along the line from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Create your own statements or use four or five of the statements below. Ask everyone to stand near the sign that most closely represents their opinion as you read each statement. Take time to facilitate conversation about why individuals took the positions they did.

Sample statements:

Evaluation is a valuable tool to determine an organization or group's effectiveness.

Evaluation takes time away from important programming.

Evaluation should be everyone's responsibility.

Evaluation is best done by professionals with training and skills.

As long as we provide useful services, we don't really need evaluation.

Politics determine program decision making, not evaluation data.

Evaluation can help organizations discover where change is occurring or needs to occur.

Evaluation takes staff time and resources.

No data is better than poor data.

Some data is better than no data.

Reflection questions

- What additional statements might you add?
- Did you hear a perspective that you hadn't considered before?
- How might you deal with different perspectives and create an environment that values evaluation?

⌘ Activity
Common sentiments about evaluation

Purpose

To help people express their own sentiments and understand the range of sentiments that can affect people's interest in evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-2 *Common sentiments*

Note cards

Process

Choose one of the following options:

1. Ice breaker

- Write each of the statements from the handout *Common sentiments* on a note card.
- Invite each person to draw one card.
- As people introduce themselves to others, have them read their card and explain whether they agree with the statement and why.

2. Group discussion

- Form groups of 3-4 people. Have each group select one person to serve as the recorder.
- Distribute the handout *Common sentiments.*
- Assign two statements from the handout to each group. Ask each group to discuss the statements and prepare a rebuttal for each one. The group recorder should keep notes and be prepared to present the rebuttal for each statement to the whole group.
- Have the recorders share the rebuttals and facilitate an open discussion of each statement.

Reflection questions

- What sentiments are most likely to affect your work?
- What additional sentiments have you heard? What would you add to this list?
- How would you handle such sentiments in your own work?

Section 1B: Clarifying language – *Evaluation, outcomes*

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of common terms used in evaluation.
- be able to define *evaluation*, *outcomes*, and other key terms.

⌘ Activity
Defining *evaluation*

Purpose

To help people establish a common understanding of the word *evaluation*

Materials needed

Slides 3-5

Paper

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute paper, encourage people to write personal definitions of *evaluation*. Ask: "What does *evaluation* mean to you?"
- Present the Patton definition of evaluation (slide 4)

  > Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding.
  > [Patton (2008), p. 39]

- Dissect the definition and facilitate a discussion about the meaning of the following words or phrases:
  - systematic
  - collection of information
  - activities, characteristics, results
  - to make judgments, improve program effectiveness, inform decisions, increase understanding

- Invite individuals to compare the Patton definition with their own definition. Ask: “What is different? What is the same?”
- Come to a general consensus on a basic definition for the term *evaluation* to be used as you work together. Write the definition on poster paper and post it on the wall for all to see.

Reflection questions

- What is something you hadn’t thought about *evaluation* before?
- What part of this definition of *evaluation* is new to you?
- Do other people you work with use a similar meaning for *evaluation*?
- Why is it important that people working together on evaluation share a common understanding of the word?

⌘ Activity
Defining *outcomes*

Purpose

To help people better understand the meaning of *outcomes* and how a focus on “outcomes” is different than a focus on “what we do”

Materials needed

Slides 6-10

Paper

6x9” index cards, markers

Process

- Invite everyone to think about what *outcomes* means to them. Ask them to write down on a piece of paper one example of an outcome.
- Encourage individuals to share their examples with the group.
- Use slides 6-10 to clarify the definition of *outcome* and to distinguish between *activity* and *outcome*.
- Discuss the metaphor for *outcomes* on slide 8. Challenge individuals to create their own metaphors to explain the concept of *outcome*s. Distribute index cards and have people write their metaphors on the cards and then submit them.

- Read the metaphors aloud and, as a group, vote on the top three metaphors. Post the “winning” metaphors on the walls or use them as learning peripherals.

Reflection questions

- What, if anything, did you learn about outcomes today?
- Do you think that everyone you work with has a similar understanding of outcomes?
- Reflect on your organization’s reports to stakeholders. Are you reporting activities or outcomes?

Section 1C: Exploring motives and benefits of evaluation

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- better understand motives for engaging in evaluation.
- increase their understanding of the benefits/value of evaluation.

⌘ Activity

Why evaluate?

Purpose

To help people understand their own and others' reasons for evaluating

Materials needed

Handout-3 *Why am I evaluating?*

Slides 11, 12

Paper

Poster paper, markers

Process

Choose one or both of the following activities:

1) Ask everyone to think about why they are evaluating and to write their reasons on a piece of paper.

- Form groups of 3-4 people and encourage the members of each group to share their responses with each other.
- Ask each group to make a bulleted list of reasons on a sheet of poster paper.
- Have a volunteer from each group share the group's list.
- Facilitate discussion about questions such as these:
  1. Why does it matter what your purpose is?
  2. What if each person involved in the outcome evaluation has a different purpose?

2) Distribute the handout *Why am I evaluating?*

- Ask people to complete the checklist individually, first by checking the items that apply and then by prioritizing the checked items (starting with 1 as the most important reason). Individuals should add any reasons they have that do not appear on the list.
- Form groups of 3-4 people, and invite the members of each group to share their responses with each other and discuss:
    1. Were there any reasons that did not appear on the list?
    2. Why is it important to explore your own purpose first?
    3. Which reasons are most important for each of you?
    4. Why might each person or organization have different reasons or priorities for evaluating?
- Rejoin as a full group, and invite volunteers to share key points from their discussions.

Reflection questions

- What is one reason people evaluate that you didn't know before?
- What difference do you think it makes to better understand people's motives behind evaluating?
- Are there any benefits to evaluation that you hadn't considered before? If so, discuss.

⌘ Activity

What's in it for me (WIIFM)?

Purpose

To help people fully realize the benefit and value that comes from evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-4 *Assessing the benefits of evaluation*

Poster paper, marker

Process

- **Brainstorming:** As a whole group, brainstorm about the value of evaluation:
    1. to the individual
    2. to the organization
- Invite volunteers to share testimonials, including personal stories.
- Distribute the handout *Assessing the benefits of evaluation.*
- Discuss the benefits listed on the handout. Which are individual benefits and which are benefits that the organization gains from evaluation?
- Add to the list as appropriate.
- Ask each person to rank order the list – prioritizing the top 10 values. Give a #1 to the most important benefit, #2 to the second most important benefit, and so on.
- Share results and discuss:
    1. Why is it important to acknowledge that the value of evaluation may be different for the individual and the organization?
    2. How can you use identification of the value an individual or organization places on evaluation as a tool for motivating people to engage in evaluation?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn from this activity?
- Which of the various benefits had you not thought of before?

Section 1D: Assessing organizational readiness for evaluating outcomes

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the factors that influence success in outcome measurement.
- increase their understanding of their own organization's readiness.
- increase their understanding of the organizational barriers that exist when engaging in evaluation.

⌘ Activity

Assessing your organization's readiness for evaluating outcomes

Purpose

To help people to be able to assess their organization's readiness to engage in evaluating outcomes

Materials needed

Handout-5 *Tool: Assessing your organization's readiness for evaluating outcomes*

Handout-6 *Tool: Getting ready*

Handout-7 *Readiness action plan*

Slides 13-20

Note to facilitator

Two assessment tools are included in the handouts (see also the Preskill & Torres citation under "Additional resources"). Use any one, or adapt and create your own. The assessment tool may be used (1) for discussion purposes – to help individuals understand the various factors that influence an organization's ability to successfully evaluate outcomes. Or, it may also be used (2) as a self-assessment tool for members of an organization. In the latter situation, you will need to establish a process to determine: Who will complete it? How will information be collated? How will the information be analyzed and discussed? How will an action plan be set?

You may want to provide individuals with more than one copy of the assessment tool so they can use one in class and use the other one with their board or staff.

Process

1. For discussion purposes:

- Form groups of 4-6 people. Distribute the assessment tool.
- Ask each individual to complete the tool relative to his/her own organization and then discuss together as a small group their responses to each item.
- As a large group, discuss the following questions:
    1. How easy was it to fill out the assessment?
    2. What is the importance of each of the listed characteristics?
    3. Are there factors, other than the ones listed here, that might influence the successful implementation of outcome evaluation in your organization?
    4. Would this tool be useful for others in your program or organization?

2. For organizational self-assessment:

- Distribute the assessment tool to each organizational member to complete. Provide adequate time for everyone to complete the form.
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Identify a recorder for each group.
- Explain that each small group should do the following:
    - Discuss why the characteristic is important.
    - Share their ratings for each characteristic, discussing perspectives and comments.
    - Agree on a single rating for each characteristic. (Group members may have to negotiate and compromise.)
    - Identify *one* priority area most in need of work, to start.
    - Create an action plan to address the priority area.
- Distribute the handout *Readiness action plan* and invite the group to specify who will do what, when, and the resources needed to accomplish the tasks.
- Invite the recorder from each group to summarize the key points from the group's discussion and share the group's action plan.

Reflection questions

- Why is this type of organizational assessment important?
- What can your organization do to address poor ratings?
- How might you use the assessment with your organization?

Additional resources

Activity 67: Building a supportive evaluation environment [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 350-351]

Evaluation capacity development group toolkit [Russon & Russon (2005)] http://www.ecdg.net/toolkit.htm

Managing the transition to outcome-based planning and evaluation [Clegg & Associates (1998)]

Nonprofit organizational assessment tool: Outcome measurement [Lewis (2000)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/nonprofits/management/assess_outcome.cfm

Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE). [Preskill, H. & Torres, R. T. (2000)]

Utilization-focused evaluation (4th ed.) [Patton (2008)]

⌘ Activity
Barriers and facilitators to evaluating outcomes

Purpose

To help people recognize potential obstacles and assets that can hinder and facilitate outcome evaluation work

Materials needed

Handout-8 *Barriers and facilitators to evaluation*

Slides 20, 21

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Form groups of 3-4 people. Distribute the handout *Barriers and facilitators to evaluation* and explain that this is a list of common barriers that can hinder evaluation and a list of assets that can facilitate evaluation in an organization.
- Invite the small groups to review the lists and add to them from their own experience. Rejoin as a full group and discuss these questions:
  1. Which barriers are most common?
  2. Which facilitators are most common?

- Assign two barriers from the list to each small group. Distribute poster paper and markers. Ask each group to write down each barrier and at least one solution that would address each barrier. Post each group's work for all to see.
- Compile the list of solutions and distribute (later) to the group members.

Reflection questions

- Why is it important to identify and acknowledge barriers to evaluation?
- What did you learn during this activity?

Section 1E: The outcome management work group

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge about what is involved in managing an outcome management system.
- begin developing a plan for establishing an outcome management work group, if appropriate.

⌘ Activity
Developing an outcome management work group

Purpose

To help people understand the value and processes of an outcome work group and begin developing their own work group action plan

Materials needed

Handout-9 *Developing an outcome work group*

Handout-10 *Outcome management work group action plan*

Process

Note to facilitator: For related information, refer to the Activity "What good is an evaluation advisory group?" in Section 8A of Unit 8.

- Invite individuals to share any experiences they've had with work groups they've been a part of. What were the strengths of the work group? What were its challenges?
- **Brainstorming:** As a group, brainstorm answers to these questions:
  1. What would be the purpose of an "outcome management work group"?
  2. Why might you want to establish such a work group?
  3. What would you expect it to achieve?
- Distribute the handout *Developing an outcome work group*. Explain that the list provides *suggestions* of steps to consider in creating an outcome management work group. There is no recipe

that works in all cases. Everything depends upon the organizational situation and the purpose of the work group.

- Ask people to work in groups of three to review and discuss the handout.
    - What do you see that makes sense? What seems like a good idea? What is irrelevant?
    - What additional items would you add to the list?
- Give the groups at least 15 minutes to review and discuss the handout and add additional items to the list.
- Ask for volunteers to share key points from their discussions.

For groups ready to become an outcome management work group:

- Distribute the handout *Outcome management work group action plan.*
- Explain that this handout is just a suggested format and that they can change and modify the format as they wish.
- Establish a process and timeline for creating their work group action plan. This may take multiple meetings and evolve over time.

Reflection questions

- Why might an outcome management group be important and useful?
- Are there any possible negative consequences to having an outcome work group that we need to consider? If so, what are they?

Additional resource

Key steps in outcome management [Lampkin & Hatry (2003)]
http://www.urban.org/publications/310776.html

MY MAGICAL EVALUATION TOOL

Draw a magical tool that will make your life easier when it comes to evaluating your project or program. Then give the tool a title.

Title of my magical tool:

____

COMMON SENTIMENTS

"Evaluation is all about statistics and numbers. I was never good at math and I'm certainly not any better now."

"I do programming and service delivery. I am not an evaluator."

"I don't have time to evaluate *and* serve my clients."

"Evaluation and all this outcomes stuff is just a fad. It will blow over soon enough."

"There is no way an evaluation will ever be able to capture all the complexities of this program."

"Evaluation is a waste of resources. The politicians will do what they want anyway."

"Evaluation is too time-consuming and complicated."

"We've had bad experiences. We've spent a lot of time and money and still didn't get very useful information."

"Funders (administrators) will use the information against us."

"Collecting data upsets the trust and relationships we've built."

WHY AM I EVALUATING?

Reason	Check if relevant	Rank (1 = highest priority)
1. To tell others what we are doing/achieving		
2. To see if our objectives are being achieved		
3. To learn about what works, what doesn't, and why		
4. To be able to improve our work		
5. To see how people were impacted by the program/our effort		
6. For a job promotion or pay increase		
7. Because it is required		
8. For planning purposes		
9. To determine the program needs and assets		
10. To be able to share successes and failures		
11. To decide if we should drop this program		
12. To decide if the program needs to be changed		
13. To determine priorities		
14. To apply for a grant/secure resources		
15. To gain a feeling of achievement and/or satisfaction		
16. To motivate and interest people in the program		
17. To make better decisions		
18. To justify the program		
19. For recognition		
20.		
21.		
22.		
23.		
24.		
25.		

ASSESSING THE BENEFITS OF EVALUATION

What is the value of evaluation?	Circle Individual (I) or Organization (O)	Prioritize your TOP 10 (1=highest priority)
1. Provides answers to your questions	I O	
2. Helps you know what difference you are making	I O	
3. Validates your successes	I O	
4. Helps improve decision making	I O	
5. Leads to improved programming	I O	
6. Leads to better resource allocation	I O	
7. Provides data to be able to communicate the value of your program	I O	
8. Increases your understanding about the program and people being affected	I O	
9. Fulfills accountability demands	I O	
10. Satisfies supervisor, funder, organization	I O	
11. Leads to continued support; attracts support	I O	
12. Enhances the knowledge base	I O	
13. Leads to publicity and recognition for you, the program and your organization	I O	
14. Contributes to staff improvement and development	I O	
15. Facilitates communication with clientele	I O	
16. Helps generate resources	I O	
17. Facilitates creation of new partnerships	I O	
18. Makes it possible to compare your work to others	I O	
19. Is useful in performance appraisal	I O	
20. Gives us reason to be satisfied, as appropriate	I O	
21. Gives us reason and opportunity to celebrate	I O	
22. Provides a way to demonstrate scholarship	I O	
23. Provides opportunity to publish	I O	
24.	I O	
25.	I O	

TOOL: ASSESSING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S READINESS FOR EVALUATING OUTCOMES

This tool is designed to help organizations consider some of the factors involved in successfully evaluating outcomes. It is not necessary that all factors are in place before starting to evaluate, but a supporting and conducive environment is important. There is no right or wrong answer. Mark the number that best describes how you feel about each statement.

0=don't know; 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

Characteristic	Your rating
a. We have a clearly defined and commonly understood mission statement, vision, and values/beliefs.	0 1 2 3 4 5
b. We have identified priorities that are reflected in our goals.	0 1 2 3 4 5
c. The leaders in our organization are committed to results-based management and measuring outcomes.	0 1 2 3 4 5
d. There is general commitment to evaluation throughout the organization.	0 1 2 3 4 5
e. Human, fiscal, and computer resources are available for planning and implementing outcome measurement.	0 1 2 3 4 5
f. There is a plan and timeline for our outcome evaluation process.	0 1 2 3 4 5
g. We have a common evaluation language/framework in the organization.	0 1 2 3 4 5
h. Stakeholders/funders are expecting our organization to report outcomes.	0 1 2 3 4 5
i. Staff are interested in evaluating outcomes.	0 1 2 3 4 5
j. Staff have skills to conduct evaluation.	0 1 2 3 4 5
k. Our organization supports professional development.	0 1 2 3 4 5
l. Evaluation is rewarded in our organization.	0 1 2 3 4 5
m. Evaluation processes, data, and findings are valued.	0 1 2 3 4 5
n. Evaluation data are used (will be used) within the organization to improve programs, guide resource allocations, and support planning.	0 1 2 3 4 5
o. Evaluation data are used (will be used) outside the organization to enhance public image, increase funding, and share promising practices.	0 1 2 3 4 5

Adapted from Fitzsimmons, E., & Crave, M. T. (2003). *Is your organization prepared to valuate outreach?* [Assessment instrument]. Preparing your organization to evaluate outreach session presented at the UWEX Outreach Conference, Oct. 14, 2003, Madison, WI.

TOOL: GETTING READY

Aspect	Done?	Needs Improvement ?		
		None/ N.A.	Some	Much
1. The executive director/president and board of directors are committed to the process of outcome measurement.				
2. The executive director/president and board of directors are committed to participating in whatever parts of the process relate to their responsibilities.				
3. The organization has clearly stated why it is going to measure outcomes.				
4. A plan has been developed to clearly communicate the importance of outcome measurement to all important publics, including staff (volunteers and paid staff).				
5. Adequate resources for planning and implementing outcome measurement have been allocated.				
6. An outcome measurement manager has been designated and adequate time from other responsibilities have been freed up.				
7. An outcome measurement work group has been formed.				
8. The outcome measurement work group has been provided orientation on the outcome measurement process.				
9. A plan has been established for keeping the board of directors and other stakeholders informed of progress being made on the outcome measurement system.				
10. A decision has been made whether to apply outcome measurement initially to all existing programs or only to one or a few programs.				
11. Programs identified for initial outcome measurement represent a substantial portion of the organization's activity.				
12. A timeline for major implementation steps has been completed.				
- The timeline takes into consideration existing organizational deadlines and events.				
- The timeline takes into consideration the length of the typical course of service (e.g., weekly meetings for one month; weekly activities for one year).				
- The timeline takes into consideration the length of time after the start of the program/service that you would expect to see at least initial outcomes.				
- The timeline takes into consideration the time schedules of external resources that you may need (volunteers, students, consultants, etc.).				
13. An outcome measurement plan with the elements mentioned above is distributed to key players (all levels of paid staff, volunteers, funders, board members, and committee members that will have a role in outcome measurement.				
14. The organization has allowed adequate time for review and modification of the outcome measurement plan.				

Source: Lewis, Andrew (2000). Outcome measurement assessment tool: Outcome measurement. The Nonprofit Management Education Center. University of Wisconsin Extension. http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/nonprofits/management/assess_outcome.cfm

READINESS ACTION PLAN

What will be done	**Who** will do it	**When**	**What resources** are needed

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO EVALUATION

Which barriers to evaluation exist in your organization?

- ❑ Lack of time; staff are overcommitted
- ❑ Lack of money and other resources
- ❑ People don't think that their programs and activities can be measured
- ❑ Lack of awareness of the value evaluation brings to the organization, self, and funders
- ❑ Limited knowledge and skills in evaluation
- ❑ Resistance to change and moving beyond the "status quo" to new approaches
- ❑ Too many other priorities
- ❑ Lack of commitment to evaluation by leadership, board, and staff
- ❑ Limited continuity within the organization's leadership, board, staff, membership, etc.
- ❑ Ongoing conflict issues that consume the organization
- ❑ People believe that programs (or they) can be hurt by evaluation data
- ❑ No incentives to do evaluation
- ❑ Limited use of evaluation data once it is done
- ❑ ____________________
- ❑ ____________________
- ❑ ____________________

What are the assets that can help facilitate evaluation in your organization?

- ❑ Staff want to do quality evaluation
- ❑ Administration encourages evaluation and values evaluation data
- ❑ There are trained staff who can help with evaluation design, methods, analysis
- ❑ There are members in the community and elsewhere with evaluation skills to draw on or contract with
- ❑ Evaluation is considered to be everyone's responsibility
- ❑ Computer equipment, software, and other resources are available to help conduct evaluation
- ❑ ____________________
- ❑ ____________________
- ❑ ____________________

DEVELOPING AN OUTCOME WORK GROUP

Which of the following steps might your outcome management work group follow? What else will you want to consider? (Add these to the list.) Remember, each situation and work group is different. The steps listed here are just suggestions.

Possible steps	Yes	No	Maybe	To do
Find out about what an outcome management work group is; learn from others' experiences.				
Develop clear statements explaining the reasons for the outcome measurement initiative and the organizational outcomes the initiative is expected to achieve.				
Develop a plan to clearly communicate the importance and value of outcome measurement to all key stakeholders, including staff (paid and volunteer).				
Determine the purpose and "charge" of the outcome work group, as part of the outcome measurement initiative.				
Identify potential members (key staff leadership).				
Determine whether and to what extent work responsibilities will be reallocated to allow for participation in the work group.				
Identify organizational assets that can support the work				
Determine major implementation steps and set a timeline for their accomplishment.				
Determine a strategy and timeline for training staff (volunteers) and providing ongoing support/assistance.				
Determine a strategy and timeline for communicating with and engaging key stakeholders, including board, top leadership, and other key players.				
Identify resources that are needed: Are they available and/or do they need to be secured?				
Develop a strategy for ensuring that products (e.g., logic models) and data coming out of the system are used. The information should be presented in a clear and understandable form, communicated to others, and used in organizational decision-making and operations.				
Develop a process for monitoring and evaluating (1) how well the work group is performing and (2) how well the overall outcome measurement initiative is progressing.				

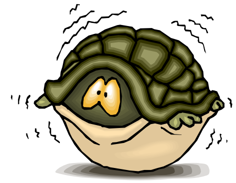
Outcome Management Work Group Action Plan

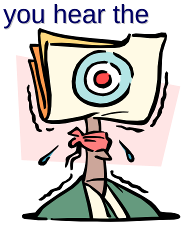
Use or adapt this chart to create an action plan for your outcome management work group.

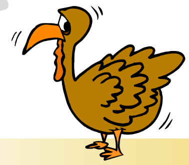
Task	Who will do it	Timeline	Resources needed	Progress made
Communicate with entire staff via email message and newsletter about outcome management initiative	Dave	By April 30	n/a	Email sent, 4/24 Newsletter article, 4/30
Identify staff who could participate in the work group	Dave, in consultation with Ann and administrative leadership	By May 15	n/a	Done, 5/10; 12 staff identified
Discuss/invite each member personally; establish the team	Dave	May 30	n/a	Done, 5/28; all 12 are enthused and agree to participate
Identify ways in which work responsibilities for each individual can be reallocated to allow for participation in the work group	Dave and administrative leadership	By June 10	n/a	Done, 6/10 alternative work assignments identified.
1st meeting – charge to team	Dave and Ann	June 14	Printed "charge" Meeting agenda Room; goodies; equipment	Agenda completed; monthly meeting schedule determined

Getting ready

What comes to mind when you hear the word *evaluation*?







What does *evaluation* mean to you?

On a piece of paper, write down your definition of *evaluation.*

Definition of *evaluation*

Definitions of *evaluation* may vary by approach and field of practice.

We use:

> Program evaluation is… "the **systematic collection of information** about the **activities, characteristics, and results** of programs to **make judgments** about the program**, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions** about future program development, and/or **increase understanding**."
>
> – Patton, 2008

Source: Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

In simplest terms, evaluation answers 3 questions:

What?

So what?

Now what?

An *outcome* is…

the change that occurs as a result of our activities and investments.

A new way of thinking…

FROM:
- What are you doing?
- What activities do you deliver?
- Who participates? How many?

TO:
- So what?
- What difference are you making?
- What results were achieved?
- Who benefited? How?

ACTIVITIES → OUTCOMES

A metaphor for outcomes:

Not how many worms
the bird feeds its young,
but
how well the fledgling flies

–United Way, 1999

Source: United Way of America. (n.d.). *Outcome measurement: What and Why?: An overview*. Retrieved July 31, 2008, from http://liveunited.org/Outcomes/Resources/What/upload/TPsOMWhatandWhy.pdf

Create your own "outcome metaphor"

Create your own metaphor or drawing that will help you remember the meaning of *outcome.*

Metaphor: a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea in place of another

What does the term *program* mean?

Program refers to the object of evaluation: direct service interventions, community mobilization efforts, research initiatives, surveillance systems, policy development activities, outbreak investigations, laboratory diagnostics, communication campaigns, infrastructure-building projects, training and educational services, administrative systems.

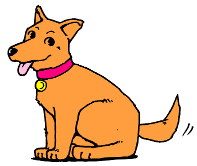
–CDC, 1999

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1999). Framework for program evaluation in public health [Electronic version]. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report,* Vol. 48, No. RR-11, (September 17). Retrieved July 31, 2008, from http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm

Why am I evaluating outcomes?

"Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive proof that you are wonderful."

–Ann Landers



What's in this for you?

Benefits of evaluating outcomes:
- Program/organizational improvement
- Improved accountability
- Better ability to describe what a program does – program description for stakeholders
- Data for fund raising
- Data for public relations
- Input for policy decision making
- Better planning
- Satisfaction in knowing how you are doing

Assessing organizational readiness for evaluating outcomes

Does your organization have a clearly defined and commonly understood/supported

- Mission – what your organization does
- Vision – what your organization should look like in the future
- Values/beliefs/principles – what you value/ believe – manifested in how you behave

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
13

Assessing organizational readiness for evaluating outcomes

- Are your identified priorities reflected in your goals?
- Are the leaders committed to evaluation?
- Is there a general commitment to evaluation throughout the organization?

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
14

Assessing your organization's readiness…

Does your organization have the resources needed to do outcome evaluation?

Human

- Leadership – committed and involved
- Board and staff – understand the purpose
- Time – of leadership, staff, and participants

Fiscal

- Often entails some financial commitment

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
15

Assessing your organization's readiness…

- Is there a plan and a timeline?
- Is there a common framework/language for evaluation?
- Do funders/stakeholders expect reporting of outcomes?

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
16

Assessing your organization's readiness…

Is your organization going to be reporting to a funder?

If so, the funder may have a specific format or expectation for reporting outcomes.

- Design outcome evaluations to meet the format or expectation.
- Remember, mission/vision/values are core to what you do – don't compromise by "chasing" dollars that don't "fit" your organization.

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
17

Assessing your organization's readiness…

- Are staff members interested in outcome evaluation?
- Do they have skills to engage in outcome evaluation?
- Does the organization support professional development for staff?

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
18

Assessing your organization's readiness…

- Is evaluation rewarded in your organization?
- Are evaluation processes, data, and findings valued?
- Are evaluation data and findings used?
- Do staff know/see how their evaluations are used?

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
19

Assessing your organization's readiness…

- Is evaluation data used by the organization to improve programs, guide resource allocations, and support planning?
- Is evaluation data used outside the organization to enhance its image, increase funding, and share promising practices?

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
20

Barriers to evaluating outcomes

- Lack of leadership commitment
- Limited time and resources, including computer technologies
- Limited knowledge and skills in evaluation
- Attitude that programs cannot be measured
- Fear that evaluation data will hurt programs
- Lack of use or misuse of evaluation data

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
21

Assets in evaluating outcomes

- Committed leadership
- Resources allocated for outcome measurement
- Evaluation expertise exists or can be secured
- Evaluations are used
- Incentives exist for doing quality evaluation

Building Capacity to Evaluate Outcomes
Unit 1: Getting ready
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Unit 2: Developing an evaluation plan

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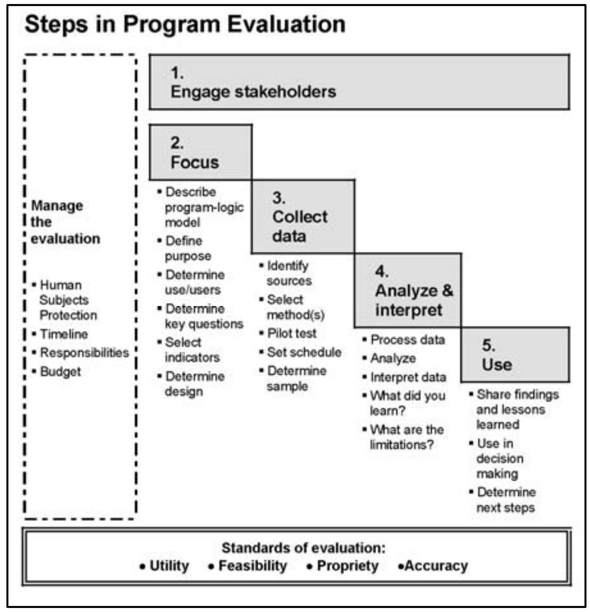
This unit introduces the core steps for planning an evaluation. Different agencies or funders may use slightly different wording, number of steps, or graphical designs to display evaluation planning, but, in principle, the process is the same. The unit also covers key topics including human rights protection, cultural influences and quality standards.



Note to facilitator

This unit introduces evaluation planning. Each step is further covered in the subsequent units of the manual.

Section 2A: Planning your evaluation to measure outcomes

This section introduces the steps and uses an evaluation plan worksheet to help people know what to include in an evaluation plan. An evaluation plan is the written “blueprint” or “roadmap” for the evaluation. Ideally it is developed at the same time as the program is designed. In reality, most people and organizations develop an evaluation plan when they need to conduct an evaluation.

Section 2B: Protecting human subjects

When you conduct evaluation, you impose on others. How respectful are you of the rights and privacy of individuals involved in your evaluations? Many organizations have an Institutional Review Board (IRB), or similar type of ethical review, that governs these issues. Community groups or organizations that do not have formal review boards or procedures may wish to review the work of others.

Section 2C: Cultural competence in evaluation

Culture is an essential and integral part of working in communities and organizations. Communities and organizations are diverse in many ways, and these differences are a source of valuable perspectives and insights. Ignoring them can result in invalid and potentially harmful evaluations. Embracing them can result in stronger evaluations.

Section 2D: How "good" is your evaluation?

As you evaluate outcomes, you want to follow the standards and best practices of evaluation. This section includes a checklist and explanation of the professional standards that have been established within the field of evaluation:

- **Utility:** serve the information needs of intended users
- **Feasibility:** be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal
- **Propriety:** act legally, ethically, and with regard for the welfare of those involved and those affected
- **Accuracy:** reveal and convey technically accurate information

In addition to the standards, there are five principles that guide the practice of evaluators [American Evaluation Association (1994)]:

- **Systematic inquiry.** Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries that adhere to the highest standards, explore strengths and shortcomings, and communicate the approaches and methods used.
- **Competence.** Evaluators provide competent performance for stakeholders.
- **Integrity/Honesty.** Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
- **Respect for people.** Evaluators respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.
- **Responsibilities for the general and public welfare.** Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

Definitions

Anonymity: assurance that no one, including the researchers, can link data to a specific individual

Confidentiality: assurance that any identifying information acquired through the evaluation will not be released or included in any way

Ethical behavior: actions that conform to moral and professional standards of conduct

Ethics: "principles of morality, particularly those dealing with the right or wrong of an action" [Newman and Brown (1996), p. 20]

Privacy: a person's interest in controlling the access of others to self

Professional standard: a principle mutually agreed on by people engaged in a professional practice (such as evaluation), that, if met, will enhance the quality and fairness of that professional practice

Resources

Guiding principles for evaluators [American Evaluation Association (1994)] http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp

Guiding principles training packet [American Evaluation Association (n.d.)] http://www.eval.org/GPTraining/GPTrainingOverview.asp

Human subjects protection [University of Wisconsin-Extension (n.d.)] http://www.uwex.edu/hsp/

Planning a program evaluation (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

Planning a program evaluation: Worksheet (G3658-1W) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (2006)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF

"Summary of the standards" in *The program evaluation standards* (2nd ed.) [The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, Inc. (1994)] http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/

Section 2A: Planning your evaluation to measure outcomes

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of how to develop an evaluation plan.
- increase their knowledge of the steps involved in planning and conducting an evaluation.

⌘ Activity
Key steps in planning an evaluation

Purpose

To help people understand what is involved in developing an evaluation plan and what they need to do

Materials needed

Publication *Planning a program evaluation* (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

Publication *Planning a program evaluation: Worksheet* (G3658-1W) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (2006)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF

Slides 3-11

Poster paper, markers

Note to facilitator

This activity covers the five key steps displayed in the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet.* Standards of evaluation and guiding principles are found in Section 2D, human subjects protection is found in Section 2B, and managing the evaluation is covered in Unit 8.

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to the questions below. Select and/or add questions appropriate for your audience and purpose.
  1. What do you need to think about when planning an evaluation?
  2. What has been your experience with evaluation planning?
  3. What kinds of plans have you seen? Used? What does the funder require?

- Distribute the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet* and review the five key steps on the front page. Refer to and use the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation* as needed.
- **Teach each other**: Form small groups of 3-4 people each and assign each group one of the five steps. Ask each group to prepare a five- to seven-minute "lesson" to help everyone understand the step: what it is, what is involved, and why it is important. Distribute the labeled sheets of poster paper and markers for people to use. Encourage group members to refer to the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation* and to include examples from their own experience.

  Have each group "teach" its step to the rest of the group. Invite questions, examples, and additional input.

  Wrap up the activity by asking for volunteers to identify one key concept they will take home. Points to include:

  - Steps are presented in order and appear linear, but the process is not.
  - "Engage stakeholders" extends across the top to indicate that stakeholders can be involved at any point of the process or throughout the process.
  - The depth and level of detail that is included in each step will depend upon the purpose and scope of the evaluation.
  - No one planning process fits all situations.
  - It is often useful to start by considering what information you want in the final report and how you want it to look. Start with "the end in mind."
- **Case scenario:** Using the following scenario and the steps in evaluation planning, plan an evaluation of a familiar activity, such as a family night out going to the movies:

  > The Smith family includes a mom, a dad, and three children, ages 8-12. Once a month, the Smiths go to a movie together. They call it their "family night out." There are two primary outcomes of this family night out: (1) the family has fun and (2) the family spends time together. You are a group of evaluators that want to determine if the "family night out" is achieving its desired outcomes.

  (Step 1) Who should have a say in evaluating the family night out? (Who should be involved in evaluating the evening and how will their voices/opinions be included?)

  (Step 2) What is the "family movie night" – what does it consist of? What is your purpose in evaluating it? Who will use the results of your evaluation – How? What do you want to know?

(Step 3) Who will you ask/where will you get your information? How?

(Step 4) How will you make sense of the information you get?

(Step 5) What will you do with the information you collect?

- Keep it moving – this is for fun. Don't get mired in the details or semantics.
- Share and compare your plans.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about evaluation planning?
- What does this mean for your own efforts to evaluate outcomes?
- How might planning an evaluation be similar/dissimilar to planning that you do in your everyday life?
- How is using an evaluation planning worksheet similar/dissimilar to the evaluation planning you currently do?

⌘ Activity
Practice: Create your own evaluation plan

Purpose

To help people develop their own evaluation plan to measure outcomes and gain from peer support and learning

Materials needed

Publication *Planning a program evaluation: Worksheet* (G3658-1W)
[Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (2006)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF

Handout-1 *Evaluation planning – Next steps*

Note to facilitator

It is expected that everyone is familiar with the key steps and concepts that make up *Planning a Program Evaluation*. If they are not, see the previous activity.

Process

In this activity, people work on their own program evaluation, either in teams or as individuals. Remind people that while they may be working alone for the purpose of this activity, people engaged in evaluation usually work with others to design and implement an evaluation. In fact, one of the first steps is to “engage stakeholders” – that is, identify who and how others will be involved in the design and conduct of the evaluation (covered in Unit 3).

- Distribute the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet* and the handout *Evaluation planning – Next steps*.
- Invite people to complete as much of the worksheet as possible and to make a list of the questions they have and information they need in order to complete their evaluation plan. It is possible that they will need additional training and/or support relative to the various steps (see other units). Individuals should list their specific training and information needs. They can fill in the handout *Evaluation planning – Next steps* or make notes in the margins of the evaluation worksheet itself.
- Then, pair individuals/groups up with another. Invite them to use this opportunity to share their plan with another to get feedback and input.
- Wrap up with a discussion of the following questions:
    1. How far did you get on your plans?
    2. What were some things you hadn’t thought about before?
    3. What issues arose as you worked on your plan?
    4. What next steps, additional needs, or questions do you have?

Reflection questions

- Do you think that using the *Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet* will help you to be more systematic and thorough with your evaluation? If so, how?
- What is one thing you learned about planning an evaluation?
- What is one thing you intend to apply in your own work?

⌘ Activity

Common challenges with planning an evaluation

Purpose

To help people by raising their awareness of common problems with planning an evaluation and by identifying possible solutions

Materials needed

Handout-2 *Common challenges with evaluation planning*

Process

- **Share your own:** Form pairs or small groups and invite people to share with each other a best- or worst-case story from their personal experience of "not planning" or when lack of planning caused problems. These examples may be from everyday "life" or from their work. Have an example of your own ready to share.

  Rejoin as a full group and ask for just one or two amazing stories!
- Discuss these questions as a group:
  1. How might these experiences apply to your evaluation work in measuring outcomes?
  2. Why is taking time to plan in advance important?
- Distribute and discuss the handout *Common challenges with evaluation planning*. Invite individuals to share their personal accounts and add to the list.
- Assign two of the challenges to each group. Ask each group to identify one or two ways to combat each challenge. *How would you deal with each? What steps would you take?*

Reflection questions

- Is there any way in which you've changed your ideas about planning?
- How might you ensure that you (and your group) allocate time for planning the evaluation?
- How can you avoid these common challenges in the future?

Section 2B: Protecting human subjects

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the meaning of *human subjects protection.*
- increase their ability to plan for and address human subjects protection in their own evaluation.

⌘ Activity

Protecting the rights of evaluation participants

Purpose

To help people increase their understanding and application of human rights principles

Materials needed

Handout-3 *What is Human Subjects Protection? (3 pages)*

Handout-6 *Case scenarios – What should we do? (2 pages)*

Handout-8 *Worksheet: Our plan for human subjects protection*

Slide 12

Poster paper, markers

Note to facilitator:

Be prepared to answer questions about human subjects protection (use the handout *What is Human Subjects Protection?* as desired), relevance to community-based outcome evaluation, and requirements and expectations of the organization and funder. Consent forms and use are covered in Unit 5.

Process

- **Brainstorming**: Invite people to brainstorm answers to the questions below. Select/add questions appropriate for your group.
    1. What does *human subjects protection* mean? Why should I care?
    2. Why is it important to talk about protecting the rights of those involved in evaluations?
    3. Have you seen or do you know of cases where people's rights have not been respected?
    4. What is your organization's policy for human subjects protection?
- **Case scenario**: Form groups of three people and distribute the handout *Case scenarios – What should we do?*

  Assign one scenario to each group and invite the group members to discuss the scenario and answer the questions at the bottom of the handout. Distribute poster paper for people to write down their answers so they can share them with the full group.

  Invite each group to share key points from its discussion. Challenge each group by asking *What issues or questions arose as you discussed your scenario?* Encourage everyone to add to the discussion.
- Wrap up by having groups (or individuals) complete the handout *Worksheet: Our plan for human subjects protection* for their own program. Provide time and assistance to help people complete their plans.

Reflection questions

- What do you think is/will be the most challenging aspect of human subject protection for your organization?
- What will you do in your evaluation to ensure that your respondents and evaluation participants are fully protected?

Additional resource

IRB guide book [Penslar & Porter (n.d.)]
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/irb/irb_guidebook.htm

Section 2C: Cultural competence in evaluation

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the influence of culture on evaluation.
- increase their ability to design and implement evaluations that are culturally appropriate.

Background resources

"Beyond basic training: 10 strategies for enhancing multicultural competency in evaluation" in *The evaluation exchange* [Cowles (2005)]
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue30/bbt1.html

Cultural competence in a multicultural world, Chapter 27 of The Community Tool Box [Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas (2007)]
http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1027.htm

"In search of cultural competence in evaluation: Toward principles and practices" in *New directions for evaluation* [Thompson-Robinson, Hopson, & SenGupta (Eds.) (2004)]
http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787976547.html

Multicultural Health Evaluations – Series of reports commissioned by *The California Endowment* on multicultural health evaluation, appropriate for helping any organization explore evaluation within a multicultural and culturally competent context. [The California Endowment (n.d.)]
http://www.calendow.org/Collection_Publications.aspx?coll_id=74&ItemID=416

"Multicultural and cross-cultural aspects of evaluation" in *Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training* (Chapter 3) [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 53-73]

"Strategies that address culturally responsive evaluation: A guide to conducting culturally responsive evaluations" in *The 2002 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation* (Section IV) [Frierson, Hood, & Hughes (2002)]
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057_5.pdf

⌘ Activity

What is culturally competent evaluation?

Purpose

To help people better understand the meaning of *culturally competent evaluation*

Materials needed

Slide 13

Poster paper, markers

Creative materials – colored paper, colored pencils, clay, paints, etc.

Process

- **Brainstorming**: Write the following questions on a sheet of poster paper and invite people to brainstorm answers. Ask a volunteer to record the responses on another sheet of poster paper.
    1. What does it mean to be *culturally competent* when evaluating outcomes?
    2. If you say that you are a culturally competent evaluator, what knowledge or skills should you possess?
    3. What influence does culture have on evaluating outcomes?
    4. Why should you care about culture?
- Encourage individuals to share experiences or examples of ways in which culture affected an evaluation they were a part of. Have one of your own ready to share.
- Form groups of three people and distribute poster paper.
- Ask each group to define ***cultural competence,*** write its definition on poster paper, and post it on the wall.
- Place the following definition on poster paper and post it in front of the group.

    > Cultural competence: "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations." [Cowles (2005)]

- Invite the group to discuss and critique the definition in relation to their own definitions.

- Settle on a definition (description) of *cultural competence* that will guide everyone's group and/or individual work in evaluating outcomes.
- **Creative expression**: Distribute markers, colored card stock, and fun poster-making materials. Invite everyone to write the definition on the card stock and make a placard to take home and post in a visible place.

Reflection questions

- What have you learned about cultural competence?
- Had you thought about the term relative to evaluation before?
- How do you think this concept applies to your own evaluations?
- What, if anything, do you plan to do differently in your own evaluation practice?

⌘ Activity
Practicing cultural competence in evaluation

Purpose

To help people increase their awareness of how culture influences evaluation and ways to make their own evaluations more culturally sensitive and appropriate

Materials needed

Handout-9 *Cultural considerations*

Handout-10 *Ways to make your evaluations more culturally sensitive*

Handout-11 *Cultural characteristics*

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Form small groups of 3-4 people who do not know each other.
- Distribute the handout *Cultural considerations* and poster paper.
- Invite each group to discuss the questions from the handout and make notes on poster paper for sharing with others. Take a few minutes for each group to share key points from its discussion.

- Distribute the handout *Ways to make your evaluations more culturally sensitive*. Read each item, encouraging reactions, additions, and discussion. Invite the group to add to the list with items they do not see represented.
- Ask program teams to work together or return to the same small groups formed earlier.
- Distribute the handout *Cultural characteristics* and ask the groups to discuss and answer the questions found on the handout.
- Ask for volunteers to share highlights from their group discussions.
- Wrap up by inviting people to share one idea they have – one step they will take – to make their own evaluations more culturally competent.

Reflection questions

- What do you think are the biggest challenges in being more culturally competent? Where do opportunities lie?
- In what ways are you thinking differently about culture and its influence on your evaluation?
- How can our assumptions affect an evaluation? What can we do to test and correct our assumptions?
- What skills or knowledge would you like to develop in this area? How might you do that?

Section 2D: How "good" is your evaluation?

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the professional standards that guide the practice of evaluation.
- increase their knowledge about the five guiding principles for evaluators.
- increase their ability to check their own evaluation plans to ensure quality work.

⌘ Activity
Program evaluation standards

Purpose

To help people become aware that there are standards of professional practice that should guide their evaluation work

Materials needed

Handout-12 *The Program Evaluation Standards (2 pages)*

Handout-14 *Ways to Improve the Quality of Your Program Evaluations* (Quick Tip #9) (2 pages)

Handout-16 *Case scenarios – Ethical dilemmas (2 pages)*

Poster paper, markers

Slide 14

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to the questions below. Select and/or add questions appropriate to your group.
    1. What are professional standards?
    2. Why do such standards exist?
    3. Should you be concerned about standards in your own evaluation work? Why or why not?

- **Teach each other**: Form four groups, one for each of the four standards: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Distribute poster paper and the handout *The Program Evaluation Standards,* and/or the handout *Ways to Improve the Quality of Your Program Evaluations* (Quick Tip #9).

  Assign one of the four standards to each group. Post the following questions and ask each group to review the standard and prepare a short "lesson" that covers the answers to these questions:

  1. What is this standard intended to do?
  2. Why has it been included as a standard? Why is it important?
  3. How might you consider/include this standard in your own evaluation work?

  Have each group "teach" its standard to the rest of the group. Invite questions, examples, and additional input.

  Wrap up by asking for volunteers to identify one key concept they will take home with them.

  Remind everyone that "ethics" and "ethical behavior" are extremely important in evaluation practice, as elsewhere. Then ask:

  What does "ethical practice" mean and how does it apply to your evaluation work?

- **Case scenario:** Form small groups and distribute the handout *Case scenarios – Ethical dilemmas.* Assign one scenario to each group and invite the group members to discuss the scenario and answer the questions. Distribute poster paper for people to write down their answers. Each group should be prepared to share and defend their course of action during the full group discussion.

  Invite each group to share key points from its discussion. Encourage everyone to add to the discussion.

- **Buzz session:** Form small groups of individuals (mix up previous groups). Write the following 4 questions on large poster paper and ask each group to discuss:

  1. What is propriety and ethics in evaluation and why should you care?
  2. How can you determine if an evaluation might put participants in jeopardy? If the likelihood is possible, what will you do?
  3. Do ethical issues change if the evaluator is internal (a staff member or other affiliated person) rather than an external evaluator (hired or volunteer not regularly associated with the organization)? If so, how?
  4. How might the personal values of an evaluator threaten the evaluation process? Provide an example.

Give the groups a set amount of time. Alert them 2 minutes before they are to finish.

Invite each group to share key points for each question.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about standards of quality in evaluation?
- What challenges do you foresee in applying these standards to your practice?
- What will you do in your own evaluation practice to ensure quality?

Additional resource

- The *American Journal of Evaluation* [Sage Publications] includes an *Ethical Challenge* in each issue. These challenges are useful examples to use and discuss.

⌘ Activity
Guiding principles for evaluators

Purpose

To help people know what is expected of them in their own evaluation practice or what they should expect of any evaluator they might hire

Materials needed

Handout-18 *Guiding principles for evaluators*

Slide 15

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Form groups of 3-4 people and distribute poster paper and the handout *Guiding Principles for Evaluators.* Ask each group to review the five principles that guide evaluation practice.

- Invite the groups to consider themselves evaluators and to write down ways in which they pay attention to each principle.

  What do they do in their practice of evaluation that shows that they…

  1. use systematic inquiry?
  2. are competent?
  3. are honest and have integrity?
  4. respect people?
  5. clarify and take into account the interests and values of others?

- **Brainstorming:** Wrap up the activity by inviting everyone to brainstorm answers to this question:

  How might you use these guiding principles in your evaluation work?

Reflection questions

- What might be the consequences of not following guiding principles for evaluators?
- If you were hiring an external evaluator, how could you guarantee that the evaluator applied these principles in his/her own work?

Additional resource

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) Ethics Committee has developed a free training package and facilitator guide for teaching the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* [American Evaluation Association (1994)] available at http://www.eval.org/GPTraining/GPTrainingOverview.asp. You may wish to use this training packet in its entirety or portions of it.

⌘ Activity

Checking your evaluation plan

Purpose

To help people by creating a peer learning opportunity to discuss and improve evaluation plans

Materials needed

Handout-19 *Checklist – How good is our evaluation?*

Handout-14 *Ways to improve the quality of your program evaluations* (Quick Tip #9) (2 pages)

Handout-20 *Checklist – Checking against the standards (2 pages)*

Copies of individuals' evaluation plans

Process

Note to facilitator: Ask individuals to bring their own evaluation plans to share.

- **Peer critique**: Form pairs or small teams that make sense depending upon the evaluation plans that are being discussed.

  Distribute the three handouts. Explain that each person is to share her plan with her cohort group. The other group members should ask the person questions, seek clarification, and provide suggestions for improvements, as needed. Explain to everyone that in order for this activity to be worthwhile, it is extremely important for each person who shares an evaluation plan to receive constructive and useful feedback that will improve the quality of the evaluation.

  Invite the groups to use the handout *Checklist – How good is our evaluation?* as they review and discuss the plans. They should complete one of these checklists for each evaluation that they review. Be sure that the person whose evaluation is being reviewed gets the completed checklist. The other two handouts can be used as reference and resource materials.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you can do to strengthen your existing evaluation plan?
- What is one thing you learned about planning an evaluation?
- What is one thing you intend to apply in your own work?

EVALUATION PLANNING – NEXT STEPS

Use this sheet to list your questions, information needs, and necessary tasks and/or actions in order to complete your evaluation plan.

Gaps – things I need to find out about or learn about	From whom or where will I get that information?	What do I need to do?

COMMON CHALLENGES WITH EVALUATION PLANNING

- Not allowing enough time for planning or for implementing the plan.
- People don't like to plan; they like to "do."
- People feel that you can't know what will happen so there's no reason to plan.
- There is no consensus about what the program is or what the outcomes are, so planning to evaluate the outcomes is difficult.
- One person writes the plan, but executing the plan involves many people.
- People think of evaluation as data collection and jump to methods without giving adequate attention to the preceding steps.
- There are insufficient resources to carry out the plan; the plan doesn't reflect reality.
- People overlook internal assets that can be used to carry out the plan.
- The plan becomes just a written document that no one is committed to or uses.
- Planning does not include or take into consideration what key stakeholders want to know.

Add your own challenges:

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What is Human Subjects Protection?

Excerpts from material prepared by the Human Subjects Protection Administrator.

Source: University of Wisconsin-Extension. (n.d.). *Human subjects protection*. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from http://www.uwex.edu/hsp/

What is the "Human Subjects Protection" effort all about?

Human Subjects Protection is about safeguarding the welfare and protecting the rights of individuals who participate as subjects in research and non-research assessment. This gets accomplished by employing the highest standards of research ethics (core principles) and applying these in "best practice" approaches to research and non-research assessments involving human subjects. Of particular concern are issues of *vulnerability* of the subjects of one's inquiry, protection of the subjects' *privacy and confidentiality*, and the level of *risk* inherent in the questions being asked.

What are the *core principles* that guide Human Subjects Protection?

Three core principles (known as "The Belmont Principles") guide Human Subjects Protection: *respect* (acknowledging the dignity and freedom of every person); *beneficence* (maximizing the benefits of the research/non-research assessment and minimizing the harms associated with the effort); and *justice* (equitable selection and recruitment and fair treatment of subjects).

What rules are behind Human Subjects Protection?

The formalization of a code of ethical conduct for research involving human subjects came as a result of the trials of Nazi doctors who used concentration camp inmates as research subjects. Included in the legal judgment and sentences handed down at the culmination of the trial were ten points describing required elements of conducting research with human subjects. These points came to be known as the Nuremberg Code.

Is there a federal policy?

A number of federal regulations enacted in the 1970s and 1980s were designed to protect human research subjects. In 1979 The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research published the "Belmont Report." This work identified the basic ethical principles that underlie all human subject research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (The Belmont Principles).

The basic federal regulations (45 CFR 46) for protecting research subjects is known as the Common Rule (Dept. of Health and Human Services Regulations), adopted by numerous federal agencies and departments. The federal regulations provide three basic protections for human subjects involved in research: review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB); commitment to use informed consent; and institutional assurances that the regulations will be applied to all research.

What are the criteria to decide whether or not research is ethical?

From the principle of respect for persons comes the need to conduct an initial (and continuing) informed consent; voluntary participation, including the opportunity to withdraw; and maintenance of the welfare of each subject. Does the consent process maximize autonomy? Does the protocol maximize autonomy? Have additional protections been put in place for vulnerable populations? Does this study maximally protect subject privacy?

From the principle of justice one needs to evaluate the social and scientific value of the research, the scientific validity of the research, and determine whether the research has a favorable risk-to-benefit ratio. Is the research design adequate? Have the risks been minimized? Have the benefits been maximized?

From the principle of justice one needs to evaluate whether there is fair subject selection, including the criteria for inclusion and exclusion and the methods of recruitment. Does recruitment for the research or assessment target the populations that will most benefit from the effort? Does it unfairly target a population? Are the inclusion/exclusion criteria fair?

What is the definition of a "human subject"?

A human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research or doing a non-research assessment either: 1) obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual; and/or 2) gains access to identifiable private information, even if obtained indirectly.

What if I'm working with existing data that someone else collected?

If you are using data collected by someone else that includes identifiable private information about a living individual, it is treated no differently than if you asked that individual for the information directly. Remember, the definition of a human subject is not limited to those living individuals about whom the investigator conducting research or doing a non-research assessment obtains data through intervention or interaction directly. It may also include those living individuals about whom one gains access to identifiable private information, even if obtained indirectly.

What is informed consent?

Informed consent is simply seeking permission. Subjects are to be "duly informed" of the potential risks and benefits of the research or non-research assessment, and offered the right to say "no." Stating the purpose of the activity, identifying who is involved, clarifying issues of confidentiality, asserting the voluntary nature of one's participation, providing contact information, and seeking permission prior to conducting the research or non-research assessment provide the basic components of a legally effective agreement to proceed. The bottom line is that the private or personal information of participants does not belong to us. Investigators are asked to honor subjects by "asking before you take." The requirement to obtain informed consent is derived from the principle of respect for persons.

What needs to be included in the informed consent?

Whether passive or active, appropriate consent notices must include: title of project, names and contact information of investigators, a statement of the purpose of the study, an outline of the procedures (as appropriate), a confidentiality statement, an assertion of the voluntary nature of participation, information about who to contact (if not the investigator), the location of the research approval (if applicable), and an informed consent statement or signature(s) (as appropriate).

When does active consent need to be used and when is it okay to use passive consent?

Active consent (documentation proving that the individual agrees to participate, such as a signed agreement) should be used in cases where participants, or their parents or guardians, may reasonably express some concerns over participation, if not beforehand, perhaps during or after the research. Vulnerable populations, often, but not always, signal that it may be appropriate to seek active consent. The type of inquiry often hints strongly at whether active or passive consent (simply alerting the participant, in writing or orally, that participation is voluntary and that the act of participating provides evidence of agreement to do so) is appropriate. When highly personal, private, or other sensitive information is being sought, or generally when inquiries may provoke personal or community-level concerns about the research or assessment, it is wise to use active consent.

Is it always a requirement that parents or guardians provide written permission for their children to participate?

The consent paradigm for research with children is that parents or legal guardians give permission for their children to become research subjects. Children ages 11–17 also provide *assent* (they sign too, but as a secondary feature to their parent's or guardian's approval). Our "best practices" philosophy would suggest that this also be the rule when conducting non-research assessments involving youth. Taking our prompt from the waivers of parental permission that are found in the Common Rule (they also apply to other elements of informed consent, regardless of age), the following may justify deviation from a strict use of the requirement for parental permission (and child assent):

1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects;

2) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects;

3) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and

4) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

Can a research subject quit the study prior to its conclusion once they've agreed to begin?

An ethical researcher must permit subjects to withdraw for whatever reason (they do not have to provide one) at any time. Any real or perceived negative consequence for not participating, or a unique benefit for participating (other than reasonable remuneration), in a study is regarded as coercing participation. The freedom to volunteer for research without coercion or undue influence from others is a central feature of autonomy that is derived from the principle of respect for persons.

What does it mean to tell a subject that their information will "remain 'confidential'"?

A researcher can only tell a subject that their information will remain confidential, without any qualifications, when there are no identifiers that link her/his responses to them. If one gathers the information through an interview, then one cannot make this claim. If one gathers the information on a document that has unique identifiers that link that subject with the document that will be retained, then one cannot make this claim. If one has a small or unique sample and seeks demographic or other private data that could make it clear who a particular respondent is, then one cannot make this claim. The courts have found that other interests may be more compelling than a researcher's desire to keep a respondent's information confidential, and there have been times when litigation forced a researcher to produce files that linked a particular subject with their responses. In cases when one endeavors to keep the information private but one's protocol demands that identifiers be used to track subjects, the claim of confidentiality should be modified to state that "responses will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law."

What are "vulnerable populations"?

Vulnerable populations include groups of people who may be more susceptible to coercion or undue influence, or may not be able to make an informed decision on their own, such as: youth under 18 years of age, institutionalized individuals, or others where participation may be considered involuntary.

What is meant by "sensitive information"?

The level of risk that is inherent refers to that which could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation. Sensitive personal information or private-behavior-related inquiries may also raise the level of "risk" inherent in the inquiry. The researcher would do well to consider this from the perspective of the subject, the subject's family or personal acquaintances, the subject's work, home, or community setting, etc.

What information might be considered "sensitive"?

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), amended by the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," has a provision that requires parental consent before minor students (at schools receiving any funding from the U.S. Dept. of Education) are required to participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning: political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parents; mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or income. While we stop short of endorsing this list as always applying to our work, it offers a fair sense of the degree of sensitivity that would likely result in an investigator being expected (or required in the case of research) to carefully construct an ethically rigorous protocol, including the use of active consent.

Case Scenarios – What Should We Do?

1. Community Teen Theater Troupe

You join forces with other youth-serving agencies, community service organizations, and adult and youth residents in the community to address issues. A teen theater troupe is established to teach youth and adult audiences about youth issues and the available community resources. The troupe has a total of 12 trained members and two adult advisors. Teams of four youth and one adult are utilized for each presentation. Presentations include impromptu skits on issue topics with audience participation in talk-back sessions. Topics for the individual presentations are identified by the agency or organization sponsoring the presentation. Available options include teen sexuality, sexual preference, alcohol and drug use, and teen parenting. Audiences range from 10–100 people, the majority being youth.

Due to grant funding, the coalition needs to document the impact of the theater troupe in the community. Audience members are asked to voluntarily complete an inventory of their personal practices related to selected topics. Audience opinion lines are used as a teaching/evaluation strategy at many of the sessions. In addition, questionnaires are used to collect information on levels of awareness and knowledge on selected topics, as well as intended changes in practice or behavior as a result of the presentation. Teen theater troupe members are also a source of evaluation data. They keep diaries that document their experiences and thoughts as they participate in the theater troupe. Information from the diaries may be used as personal testimonies on the impact of the program.

The coalition plans to use the information collected for:

- continued grant support for the theater troupe
- reports to their individual agencies
- news releases
- briefing papers for local school and elected officials
- presentations to the general public

2. Youth Leadership with the Local Tobacco Control Coalition

As a member of the county tobacco coalition, you work with other coalition members in developing the local Fight Against Tobacco (FACT) youth group. Your role is to develop, teach, and evaluate the leadership development of this cohort of youth. The leadership development program with the FACT group is two years old and you would like to evaluate the degree to which the youth have learned leadership skills and the effectiveness of the cohort method for learning. You feel that a focus group process conducted during a regular cohort FACT meeting would be best for gathering data to be consistent with the cohort model and to be able to reach a majority of the program participants. At this point, you plan to use the data you collect to improve the leadership development program and to report the impact of your efforts to the county extension committee, the tobacco coalition, and your funder. The coalition has indicated that they are interested in sharing the data in their reports to the Division of Public Health as part of their grant reporting process.

3. Community Garden Interviews

You are a partner on an extensive community garden project that involves a number of collaborating agencies. One of these agencies is required by its funding source to submit an evaluation report. The report will be used for both program improvement and communicating the project's overall impact. This agency has asked you, as a key collaborating partner, to assist in the evaluation by conducting interviews of participants involved in the project. The questions focus on how participants' lives have been enriched, both socially and nutritionally, as a result of their participation in the project. You are more than willing to help. One of the reasons you are so excited about the community garden is because it involves participants from all walks of life including elementary-, middle school-, and high school-aged youth; pregnant women; and low-income adults living in a community development block grant neighborhood. The project has become so popular that the local newspaper interviews you at different times throughout the growing season to communicate the process of the project.

4. Parenting Class for Teen Mothers

You are a member of the community coalition of agencies that focuses on parent education. The coalition has recently noted an increase in the number of young women who are parents and are still in high school. To address this issue, the coalition wants to conduct parenting classes for these young moms. The school district volunteered to recruit the young mothers, the Family Resource Center will donate classroom space and refreshments, a family day care provider will donate free childcare during classes, and the County Health Department will purchase teaching materials. You will develop the curriculum and teach the classes.

The curriculum you developed is designed to be taught in eight one-hour sessions. Twelve teen moms have joined the class, and you have taught the first three sessions. You have built a good rapport with the group, but the actual sessions do not seem to capture their interest and you are not sure what, if anything, they are learning.

You decide to develop a questionnaire that they will complete at the end of the next class asking them to suggest topics they would like to have addressed in the remaining classes and how the teaching could be improved. They will not write their names on the questionnaires.

Discuss the scenario and address the following questions:

1. Are human subjects involved in the evaluation? What age, gender, status, etc.?
2. How will the information that is collected be used?
3. How many participants will be part of the evaluation?
4. Is it likely that the participants can be matched to their response?
5. Is a plan for human subject protection needed? Why or why not?

WORKSHEET: OUR PLAN FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION

Name of Program: ____

Do the human subjects represent a vulnerable population? .... YES ...... NO
Is it likely that participants can be linked to their responses? .... YES ...... NO
Will evaluation results be shared publicly? .... YES ...... NO

Based on your responses and other human subjects protection considerations, determine what actions you need to take to protect individuals' rights and privacy as part of your evaluation.

Actions we will take	**Who is responsible**	**By when**	**Resources needed**

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. How might each of the following participant characteristics affect how you design and implement your evaluation?

- Language
- Age
- Abilities: mental, physical, social
- Male-female interactions, communication styles, family relationships, decision-making styles
- Attitudes to conflict
- Concept of time
- Approaches to knowing and ways of knowing

2. What do the following data collection methods assume about the respondent?

- Written questionnaire
- Mailed survey
- Email survey
- Web survey
- Observations
- Interviews

3. How might you make the following data collection methods more culturally sensitive?

- Written questionnaire
- Mailed survey
- Observations
- Interviews

Ways to Make Your Evaluations More Culturally Sensitive

1. Examine your own biases and attitudes and their probable origins.

2. During the early stages of planning the evaluation, take time to explore the cultures and any cultural issues that might affect your evaluation.

3. Educate yourself about the cultural groups involved in your program and/or evaluation. Listen to people tell their stories, ask questions, read, and learn. Consider an activity where people bring in crafts/recipes/artifacts from their cultures to share, and share your own.

4. Engage members of the cultural groups to participate in the design and implementation of the evaluation or in an evaluation advisory group. Incorporate diverse perspectives and opinions.

5. Be flexible in your choice of evaluation design and data collection methods.

6. Use multiple sources of information and data collection methods.

7. Remember that evaluation may take more time if you need to build trusting relationships with new groups.

8. Reject the myth of color blindness. Everyone is touched by race. It shapes how others see you and how you see yourself.

9. Recognize that the culture you belong to – your own identity group – affects your perspectives and behavior. Culture is who you are. This is true for everyone you meet, including program participants and stakeholders.

10. Work with others who differ in race, ethnicity, orientation, abilities, etc. in order to broaden and develop our own perspectives.

11. Engage in self-reflective thinking and writing to better understand your own culture in order to better understand others.

12. Don't assume that one way, or your way, is better.

13. Always be respectful.

14. Avoid jargon and exclusive language and behaviors.

15. Demystify evaluation.

16. Other strategies:

    ____

    ____

Adapted from Preskill, H., & Russ-Eft, D. (2005). Activity 12: Cultural sensitivity in evaluation. In *Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training* (p. 66). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. and Cowles, T. (2005, Summer). Beyond basic training: 10 strategies for enhancing multicultural competency in evaluation [Electronic version]. *The Evaluation Exchange*, Vol. XI, No. 2. Retrieved August 4, 2008 from http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/ten-strategies-for-enhancing-multicultural-competency-in-evaluation

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. What different cultural characteristics are represented in your program?

- Nationality (e.g., Irish, Italian, Japanese)
- Ethnicity (e.g., Latino, Hmong)
- Race (e.g., Asian, African, Caucasian/White)
- Sexual identity (e.g., heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender)
- Gender (e.g., male, female)
- Religious beliefs (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Protestant, Catholic)
- Occupational status (e.g., manager, employee, self-employed, unemployed, state or federal worker, service industry)
- Physical attributes (e.g., physical disability, size, skin color)
- Class (e.g., blue/white/pink collar, upper/middle/lower)
- Relationship status (e.g., in a committed relationship or not, celibate)
- Age group (e.g., youth, senior, early adulthood)
- Geographical/regional residency (e.g., urban, rural, Southerner, Northerner)
- Others specific to your context____________________________________

2. What do you know about the different characteristics represented in your program?

3. How might the cultural characteristics affect the way you design and implement the evaluation?

4. What assumptions do you have about the abilities, characteristics, and interests of those who will be involved in the evaluation?

THE PROGRAM EVALUATION STANDARDS

Sound evaluations of educational programs, projects, and materials in a variety of settings should have four basic attributes: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy.

The Program Evaluation Standards, established by sixteen professional education associations, identify evaluation principles that, when addressed, should result in improved program evaluations containing the above four attributes.

UTILITY STANDARDS

The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.

U1 Stakeholder Identification Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 Evaluator Credibility The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 Information Scope and Selection Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

U4 Values Identification The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 Report Clarity Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 Report Timeliness and Dissemination Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 Evaluation Impact Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

FEASIBILITY STANDARDS

The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 Practical Procedures The evaluation procedures should be practical to keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained.

F2 Political Viability The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 Cost Effectiveness The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value, so that the resources expended can be justified.

PROPRIETY STANDARDS

The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 Service Orientation Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 Formal Agreements Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 Rights of Human Subjects Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 Human Interactions Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation, so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 Complete and Fair Assessment The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 Disclosure of Findings The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings, along with pertinent limitations, are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

P7 Conflict of Interest Conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

P8 Fiscal Responsibility The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

ACCURACY STANDARDS

The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 Program Documentation The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 Context Analysis The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 Defensible Information Sources The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 Valid Information The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 Reliable Information The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 Systematic Information The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed, and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 Analysis of Quantitative Information Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 Analysis of Qualitative Information Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 Justified Conclusions The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 Impartial Reporting Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.

A12 Metaevaluation The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards, so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Source: The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, Inc. (1994). Summary of the standards. In *The program evaluation standards* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc

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Quick Tips 9

Quick Tips

Ways to Improve the Quality of Your Program Evaluations

Improve the quality of your UW-Extension program evaluations by using these four main ideas – utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy. The American Evaluation Association[1] embraces these as standards for "good" program evaluation.

Below are some questions you should ask when you plan, conduct and review UW-Extension program evaluations. Compare your plan, design and/or summary to the ideas presented here, some of which have been adapted to evaluation in the context of UW-Extension. Ask yourself, how well does my program evaluation address each item? In what ways can I make changes to the current or planned program evaluation to better address these items?

Discuss these items with an evaluation specialist, mentor, program area colleague or program leaders – anyone who can help you improve your program evaluations and who is interested in learning about the results of your educational programming.

Utility: How useful is your program evaluation to you and your audience(s)?

1. **State purpose clearly.** Clearly state the purpose(s) of the evaluation – the reason(s) why you are doing your evaluation.

2. **Consider audience(s).** Describe the users of the evaluation and the type of information they require, request and find credible.

3. **Communicate findings.** Plan how to share the information with others, what format(s) will you use and how you can increase the chances that they will use the information.

4. **Provide value.** Draw a connection between your evaluation and how it provides useful information that serves the stated purpose of the evaluation. Discuss whether the evaluation provides new information and/or if it confirms previous information.

Feasibility: How practical is your program evaluation?

1. **Show practicality.** Show that your evaluation does not disrupt the program or its participants and that you can implement it as planned given the costs, resources and situation.

2. **Consider political viability.** Predict any political contingencies or potential consequences that might affect implementation of your evaluation or the use or misuse of its results.

3. **Calculate costs relative to benefits.** Determine whether the value of potential

[1] The standards are selected and adapted from *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, (1994); http://www.eval.org/EvaluationDocuments/progeval.html that serve as professional guidelines for program evaluation.

continued

 10-08

Quick Tips 9 - Ways to Improve the Quality of Your Program Evaluations continued

findings might be justified in comparison to their cost – include your time and labor, support staff time, photocopies, transcriptions of audiotapes, postage and other expenses.

Propriety: How appropriate is your program evaluation for those who are involved?

1. **Respect people and their rights.** Review and follow UW-Extension guidelines regarding informed consent and protection of vulnerable populations at http://www.uwex.edu/hsp. Demonstrate honesty, ethical practice and respect for human dignity in your choice of your evaluation plan, methods and use of results.

2. **Disclose findings properly.** Plan the appropriate communication of findings to all persons involved in or affected by your evaluation.

3. **Assess completely and fairly.** Examine strengths and weaknesses of the program so that you can use the information for program improvement.

Accuracy: How accurate is your program evaluation and the technical information it conveys?

1. **Describe program and its implementation.** Describe and document your program clearly and accurately and present evidence that your program is clearly identifiable as an effort of UW-Extension.

2. **Explain evaluation procedures.** Describe your evaluation questions and procedures in enough detail so that someone else could replicate your evaluation and/or determine its adequacy.

3. **Demonstrate defensible information sources.** Describe your sources of information in enough detail so that their appropriateness can be determined.

4. **Ensure valid and reliable information.** If you use quantitative measures, demonstrate validity – that you measure what you claim to measure – and reliability – that you use measurement that is "consistent and stable from one use to the next."[2]

5. **Use appropriate analyses.** Analyze data appropriately and correctly. Describe qualitative and/or quantitative analyses in a way that would allow them to be replicated by another person.

6. **Draw justified conclusions.** Link your interpretation to the data. Consider alternative explanations for documented program outcomes. Do not draw generalizations beyond what your evidence can support.

7. **Report impartially.** Communicate the evaluation findings and not your feelings, opinions or biases.

[2] Vogt, W. (1999). *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

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Case Scenarios – Ethical Dilemmas

For each of the dilemmas presented below, consider these questions:

1. **What ethical principles are involved in this situation?**
2. **What are at least two options to consider?**
3. **What would you do?**

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1. You find out the evaluator you hired interviewed youth participants in the program without their parent's consent.

---

2. You run out of time to conduct your program evaluation, so you decide to have the people who came to today's session complete the questionnaire. These individuals have all been in the program for 2 years and represent about 20% of your total number of participants.

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3. You have two people entering the survey data. You find out they have been entering data differently but your report to the funder is due by 5 p.m. today.

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4. You find out the evaluator you hired participated in a program similar to your program and spoke out strongly about how the program was a waste of her time.

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5. The evaluation your staff designed collects personal information about participants that would reveal their identity to anyone reading the evaluation report.

---

6. The information you gather in your evaluation clearly indicates the program is not achieving its intended outcomes. Your board plans to use the evaluation report to make budgetary decisions. If the program is cut, it will affect the jobs of three staff members.

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7. You are a "pro choice" advocate in your personal life. You have been assigned to evaluate the outreach efforts of a "pro life" organization. You believe that people should make their own choices and not be manipulated or deliberately influenced by others. Yet, you also believe in being an agent of change and helping agencies and program people make improvements in their programs.

8. You have been assigned by your agency's Executive Director (E.D.) to implement a comprehensive evaluation of a community-wide initiative that included your agency. You met monthly with the E.D. throughout the evaluation to keep him informed of progress. You have now submitted the full report. While there are some positive results, the evaluation also uncovered some weaknesses and some particular areas that did not function well where the intended outcomes did not occur. These points are discussed in the report that provides a balanced view of both strengths and weaknesses. The sponsor focuses only on the positive results, disregarding the full analysis and areas of weakness. He releases a press release in the community's primary paper that praises the program and its accomplishments, citing the recent evaluation study that identifies you personally.

9. You are leading a team of colleagues that will be evaluating program effectiveness of your organization based on achievement of intended outcomes. The primary audience for these evaluation results is the funder for the programs being evaluated. The political grapevine suggests that serious budget cuts will result in the elimination of less-effective programs. In some cases this funder represents the primary source of the entire agency budget. Your team fears for their jobs if the results are not favorable. As you design the evaluation instrument, you are conflicted about the questions you will ask and the level of rigor you will use. Your name will go on the evaluation report as leader of the team.

   You sincerely believe in the value of the programs for the individuals and families they serve and have seen firsthand the impacts on their lives. You weren't happy with the intended outcomes written (hastily in your opinion) by the grant writer who wasn't very familiar with the actual work.

10. Your evaluation of a youth-serving program is designed to answer the question, "Are the types of activities offered by the Center developmentally appropriate for the young people?" You conduct the study. You review the research literature. You do direct observations. You interview staff and youth and you have them complete a short survey.

    Your find is: Yes, the activities are excellent. They are designed in ways that clearly provide young people the opportunity and support they need for healthy development.

    Here is the catch: You observe that the activities are high quality when they are implemented. The problem is that they are implemented in an inconsistent fashion and often implementation is low quality. This is because some staff sometimes sneak out for a "break," leaving the young people with insufficient supervision. Sometimes staff seem unmotivated to implement the activities as they were designed.

    Should you talk about implementation even though this was not your mandate?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATORS

The American Evaluation Association (1994) has established a set of principles to guide the practice of evaluation. The Guiding Principles for Evaluators can help you identify the basic ethical behavior to expect of yourself and of any evaluator. They include:

Systematic Inquiry: Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquires about whatever is being evaluated.

Competence: Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.

Integrity/honesty: Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.

Respect for people: Evaluators respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.

Responsibilities for general and public welfare: Evaluators clarify and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

American Evaluation Association. (1994). *Guiding principles for evaluators.* Retrieved February 15, 2006, from http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp

CHECKLIST —
HOW GOOD IS OUR EVALUATION?

Name of Program: ____

A. Does the evaluation address the five key steps? (Refer to the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet* used in section 2A.)

1. Engaging stakeholders
   - a) Key evaluation stakeholders are identified and names listed .... YES........ NO
   - b) Ways in which the stakeholders will be involved are included .... YES........ NO
2. Focusing the evaluation
   - a) The program is clearly described; a logic model is included .... YES........ NO
   - b) There is a concise, clear evaluation purpose statement .... YES........ NO
   - c) Evaluation users are specified and expected uses listed .... YES........ NO
   - d) Key evaluation questions are clear and make sense given the scope and nature of the program .... YES........ NO
3. Collecting information
   - a) Sources of information appear relevant .... YES........ NO
   - b) Methods of data collection seem adequate and culturally appropriate .... YES........ NO
   - c) Timing of data collection is included .... YES........ NO
   - d) Sample is defined .... YES........ NO
   - e) Details of pilot testing are included, if appropriate .... YES........ NO
4. Analyzing and interpreting
   - a) Data analysis methods are included .... YES........ NO
5. Using the information
   - a) How the information will be shared and used is detailed............................... YES........ NO

B. Does the evaluation address the following practices/standards?

2. Evaluation management
   - a) Human Subjects Protection .... YES........ NO
   - b) Evaluation management chart .... YES........ NO
   - c) Evaluation timeline .... YES........ NO
   - d) Evaluation responsibilities .... YES........ NO
   - e) Evaluation budget .... YES........ NO
3. Evaluation standards (see handout *Checklist—Checking against the standards*)
   - a) Utility .... YES........ NO
   - b) Feasibility .... YES........ NO
   - c) Propriety .... YES........ NO
   - d) Accuracy .... YES........ NO
4. Guiding principles
   - a) Systematic inquiry .... YES........ NO
   - b) Competence .... YES........ NO
   - c) Integrity/honesty .... YES........ NO
   - d) Respect for people .... YES........ NO
   - e) Responsibilities for general and public welfare .... YES........ NO

Other comments or suggestions:

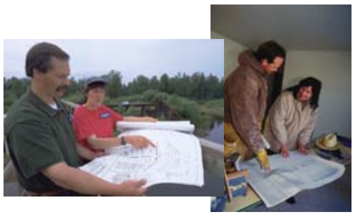
CHECKLIST – CHECKING AGAINST THE STANDARDS

EVALUATION STANDARD	Excellent	Okay	Needs improvement	Comments
UTILITY – How useful is your evaluation to you and your audiences?				
Purpose is clearly stated				
Users of the evaluation and their information needs are considered – the evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users				
There is a plan for sharing the evaluation				
The evaluation provides useful information that will be valued				
FEASIBILITY – How practical is your evaluation?				
The evaluation can be implemented given your resources, situation, and audience				
Nothing in the political climate is evident that will affect implementation or use of the evaluation results				
The value of the evaluation outweighs the costs of conducting it				
PROPRIETY – How appropriate is the evaluation for those who are involved?				
The evaluation demonstrates respect for people and their rights				
There is a plan to properly communicate findings to all involved or affected				

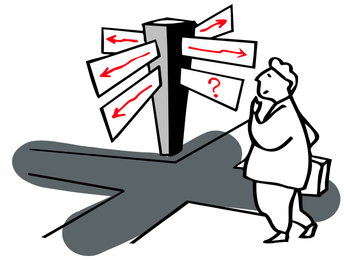
Both strengths and weaknesses are examined				
The evaluation is fair and ethical				
ACCURACY – How accurate is the evaluation and the information it conveys?				
The program is clearly described (logic model)				
The evaluation "fits" the program; your evaluation procedures are clear so that anyone who wants to copy your evaluation or determine its adequacy can do so				
The sources of information are clear and appropriate				
Data collection methods are culturally appropriate				
Data are collected in a consistent and quality manner				
Conclusions are justified				
Lessons learned are highlighted				
Findings are communicated accurately in all possible manners				

* This checklist is written in the present tense for use in evaluation planning. You can apply it at any point in the evaluation process – during planning, implementation, or after the evaluation is complete – to check the evaluation's credibility and thoroughness.

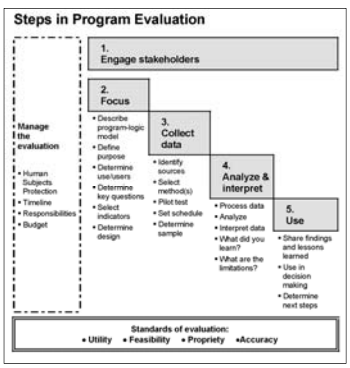
Unit 2:
Developing an evaluation plan



An evaluation plan is your roadmap



Core steps in program evaluation



Planning…

"The more attention you give to planning the evaluation, the more effective it will be."

−The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, 2003

Source: Administration on Children, Youth and Families. (2003). What is program evaluation? In *The program manager's guide to evaluation* (Chapter 2). Washington , D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. Retrieved on October 15, 2007, from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_2_pmguide.html

Regardless of the particular format, evaluation planning includes the following key steps:

STEP 1
Engaging stakeholders

Who should be involved in helping to define and implement the evaluation?

STEP 2
Focusing the evaluation

What do you want to know?

- What is the purpose of your evaluation?
- Who will use the information? How will they use it?
- What questions will the evaluation seek to answer?

STEP 3
Collecting information

How will you collect the information?

–From whom

–Methods of data collection

STEP 4
Analyzing and interpreting

What sense do you make of the information collected?

Step 5
Using the information

How will you report, use, and learn from the findings?

Management plan

- Human subjects protection
- Timeline
- Responsibilities
- Budget

Our plan for human subjects protection

- Actions we will take
- Who is responsible
- By when
- Resources needed

Culturally competent evaluation

What does it mean to be *culturally competent* when evaluating outcomes?

If you say that you are a culturally competent evaluator, what knowledge or skills should you possess?

Why should you care about culture?

Evaluation standards

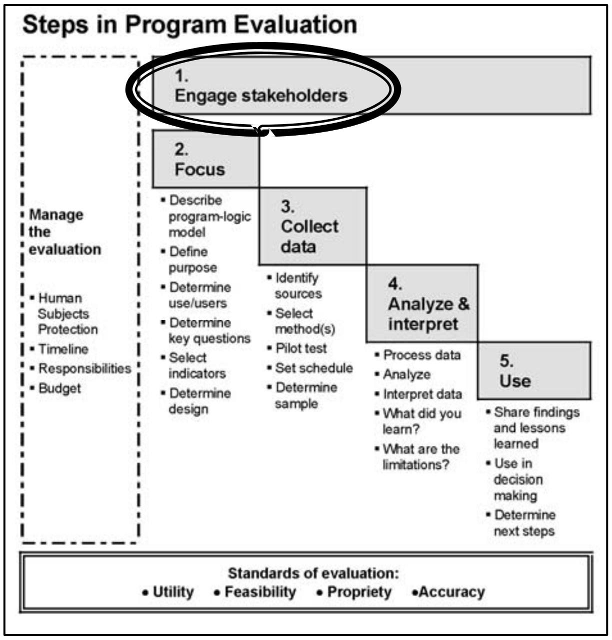
- Utility
  - Serves information needs of intended users
- Feasibility
  - Realistic, prudent, diplomatic, frugal
- Propriety
  - Legal, ethical, due regard to welfare
- Accuracy
  - Reveals and conveys technically accurate information

Guiding principles for evaluators

- Systematic inquiry
- Competence
- Integrity/honesty
- Respect for people
- Responsibilities for general and public welfare

Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders

Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders



Evaluation begins with involving stakeholders – that's Step 1. If stakeholders are not involved, evaluation findings may be inaccurate, ignored, criticized, or resisted. Engaging stakeholders shows respect for them and is more likely to lead to a culturally appropriate evaluation.

This chapter reviews the three main aspects of Step 1:

1. Who are the stakeholders in your outcome evaluation?
2. How might evaluation stakeholders by involved? What roles can they play?
3. How can you get them engaged in your evaluation?

Note: In program evaluation, *stakeholders* refers to *evaluation users*, not program stakeholders in general.

Evaluation stakeholders: Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation – individuals and organizations with an investment, interest, or influence (a stake) in the initiative and/or evaluation and evaluation findings. Often referred to as *evaluation users.*

Note to facilitator:

Use the handout *Worksheet: Engaging stakeholders* to focus on the three questions above that are covered in the three sections of this Unit. Engage people in completing the worksheet for a program they are evaluating as you work through the sections.

Section 3A: Who are the evaluation stakeholders – the *users*?

Engaging stakeholders is fundamental to building relevant and useful programs and evaluations. In fact, the first standard of the Program Evaluation Standards, Utility, concerns stakeholder involvement: "Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed." [The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) – see the handout *The Program Evaluation Standards* in Unit 2]

If stakeholders are identified and involved, they are more likely to promote and support the evaluation and use the results and recommendations.

Section 3B: How might evaluation stakeholders be involved in evaluation?

Stakeholders can play various roles and carry out various functions and activities as part of the evaluation. Individual stakeholders might help plan the evaluation, collect data, conduct analyses, interpret data, promote use of the findings, write news releases, provide feedback, serve on an advisory committee, or perform a variety of other tasks. It is important to involve stakeholders early and give them options about ways they can participate. Much depends upon the specific interests, availability, and abilities of the individual stakeholder. Experience suggests that it is better to have the deep involvement of a few key stakeholders than to have the minimal involvement of many.

Section 3C: How can you encourage stakeholder participation in evaluation?

It may take a little extra effort to get stakeholders to commit to carry a role, provide input, and be a part of the evaluation. For that reason, it's important to think about how to engage stakeholders as active participants in evaluation.

Resources

Evaluation and citizen engagement: Stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process [Canadian Department of Justice (2001)] http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/eval/rep-rap/01/ce-ec/p1.html

"Responding to sponsors and stakeholders in complex evaluation environments" in *New directions for evaluation* [Mohan, Bernstein, & Whitsett (Eds.) (2002)]

Steps in program evaluation [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Working Group (n.d.)] http://www.cdc.gov/eval/steps.htm#stakeholders

What is stakeholder involvement? [Betts, Polen, & Russell (n.d.)] http://cals-cf.calsnet.arizona.edu/fcs/bpy/content.cfm?content=stakeholder

Who wants to know: Tips for involving stakeholders in your program evaluation [Hosley (2005)] http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=1797

Section 3A:
Who are the evaluation stakeholders – the *users*?

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of why it is important to involve stakeholders.

⌘ Activity
Who are the evaluation stakeholders?

Purpose

To help people be able to identify the key stakeholders that they need to involve in their evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-1 *Who are your evaluation stakeholders?*

Handout-2 *Worksheet: Engaging stakeholders*

Slides 1-10

Poster paper, markers

Sticky notes

5-6 different hats

Process

- **Hats galore:** Display an array of hats. Invite 5-6 people to choose a hat and describe how the hat characterizes one of their key evaluation stakeholders. Encourage conversation and fun. If the group is more reserved, you may wish to put on each hat and explain how the hat typifies a particular stakeholder (or ask for volunteers to explain).
- Distribute the handout *Who are your evaluation stakeholders?*
- Discuss the meaning of "stakeholder" in program evaluation. Differentiate between the terms "evaluation stakeholder" and

"program stakeholder," though sometimes they may be the same individuals. Encourage everyone to think about likely evaluation stakeholders and add to the list on the handout.

- **Brainstorming:** As a group, brainstorm answers to this question:
- Why is it important to include stakeholders in evaluation?

  Possible answers might include:

  - Increases chance that evaluation will be useful, will collect useful information
  - Shows respect
  - Enhances credibility of the evaluation
  - Helps avoid potential conflicts or misunderstandings
  - Helps ensure cultural relevance
  - Spreads responsibilities and roles
  - Brings talent and expertise to the evaluation
  - Strengthens the evaluation through added perspectives
  - May create new or additional access to resources
  - Provides opportunity for stakeholders to learn about/gain better appreciation of your work
  - Enhances understanding and use of results
- **Share your own:** Invite individuals to share experiences of involving stakeholders. What worked well? What didn't work at all? What happened when key stakeholders weren't involved?
- **Affinity diagramming:** Invite each person to write possible stakeholders on sticky notes – one per note. Place a sheet of poster paper on the wall and ask people to post their notes on the large paper, clustering stakeholders that are the same or similar. Facilitate a discussion about the groupings:

  1. Who do the clusters represent?
  2. Are any stakeholder groups not listed?
  3. Which groups might be the most important?
  4. What differing interests does each stakeholder group/individual represent?
  5. Are less powerful groups included?

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to this question:

  How can you find out who your key evaluation stakeholders are?

  Possible answers might include:

  - Consult program participants, expected beneficiaries
  - Consult program staff
  - Consult influential people in the community
  - Consult funders
  - Use snowball technique

  Offer a word of caution: Excessive time and resources spent in stakeholder identification can prevent progress.

- Distribute the handout *Worksheet: Engaging stakeholders*. Ask people to spend three to five minutes quietly thinking about their own programs: Who is interested in the evaluation? Who "wants" the evaluation? Who may be affected by the evaluation? Individuals should fill in the first and second columns. The second column focuses on specific individuals. Remind everyone that stakeholders are often seen as relatively anonymous groups such as "the funders," the feds, state partners, clients, influential people in the community, county government, staff, etc.

  "People, not organizations, use evaluation information."
  [Patton (2008), p. 66]

  So it is important to specify individual stakeholder names.

- Invite each person to share her list with a partner. As necessary, individuals may need to briefly describe the purpose and primary beneficiaries of their programs. Did they put themselves on the list? *Remember, you care deeply about the program and the evaluation findings*.

- Finally, have people prioritize the importance of each stakeholder. Who are the top five key stakeholders? Star or number these individuals on the worksheets. It may not be wise or possible to involve everyone. Who *really* needs to be involved?

  Remind people that it may be important to be clear about what they can and cannot accomplish. Stakeholders come with different agendas. Now may be the time to clarify different agendas and specify what will be accomplished within the scope of the evaluation.

- **Buzz session:** Form small groups of 3 individuals (or have people pair-up with the person next to him or her). Write the following 4 questions on large poster paper and ask each group to discuss

  1. Who is a stakeholder that you hadn't thought of before?
  2. What interests does this stakeholder represent? How might the individual or group's input affect your evaluation?
  3. If there are conflicting interests and agendas among the key stakeholders, what might you do to address the situation?
  4. What might be some challenges when engaging stakeholders?

  Invite each group to share key points for each question.

Reflection questions

- What difference does including key stakeholders make in evaluation? How can stakeholders affect the usefulness of evaluation results?
- What did you learn about "engaging stakeholders' that you hadn't thought of before?

Section 3B:
How might evaluation stakeholders be involved?

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of ways they can involve stakeholders in outcome evaluation.
- increase their understanding of "meaningful" involvement.

⌘ Activity
Ways to involve stakeholders

Purpose

To help people identify specific roles that different stakeholders can play in evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-2 *Worksheet: Engaging stakeholders* (continue from previous activity)

Slides 11, 12

Poster paper, markers

A fun prize to give away

Process

- Form groups of 2-3 people and distribute poster paper and markers. Explain that the groups are going to compete against each other. Write this question on a sheet of poster paper and hang it for all to see:

  How might an evaluation stakeholder be involved in your evaluation?

- Explain that each team has five minutes to write down ways in which stakeholders could participate in their evaluations. Provide some examples such as collecting data, helping with designing the evaluation, being an advocate for evaluation, and raising funds. At the end of the five minutes, invite the groups to share their ideas with the whole group. The team with the most answers wins. Give a fun prize to the winner.

- Now ask the small-group members to help one another to complete the third column of the worksheet by writing a specific role next to each individual stakeholder's name. Remind them that while they are completing the column now for practice, in reality they would ask and get the individual stakeholder's input on how s/he wants to be involved.
- Continue with a group discussion. Pose this question to the group:

  What does meaningful involvement mean?

- Encourage discussion. Make the distinction between "real" involvement and token, or limited, involvement, such as asking stakeholders what they want to know and then conducting the evaluation based on their identified needs. In this case, the stakeholders are just sources of information and receivers of the report. In contrast, you might engage them in designing the evaluation and being equal members of an evaluation team that takes part in all aspects of the evaluation. Different stakeholders will have different interests and want to be engaged in different ways. Also, types and levels of participation can change over the course of the evaluation. "Meaningful" tends to imply significant involvement that involves working with stakeholders as partners.
- **Brainstorming:** As a whole group, brainstorm answers to this question:

  Are there times when stakeholder participation may not be appropriate?

- Discuss the fact that the type and degree of stakeholder involvement differs with the program and is also likely to vary depending on the evaluation purpose, timeline, and stakeholders.

Reflection questions

- What is one new way you learned to involve stakeholders?
- How can you encourage "real" involvement of stakeholders?
- What challenges do you anticipate? What might you do to address these challenges?

Section 3C:
How can you encourage stakeholder participation in evaluation?

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to get stakeholders involved in the evaluation.

⌘ Activity
Ways to encourage stakeholder participation

Purpose

To help people explore the various things they can do to encourage involvement of stakeholders who may be busy and overcommitted

Materials needed

Handout-2 *Worksheet: Engaging stakeholders* (continue from previous activity)

Poster paper, markers

Slides 13, 14

Process

- Invite individuals to continue with the worksheet, focusing now on the fourth column.
- **Brainstorming:** As a whole group, brainstorm answers to this question:

  What specifically can you do to get busy people to commit to being involved in your evaluation?
- List ideas on poster paper and post.
- Form pairs or small groups again, and encourage individuals to help each other complete the fourth column for each specific stakeholder.
- When finished, rejoin as a whole group and add any new ideas to the list of things people can do to encourage stakeholder participation (the list started during the brainstorming part of the activity).

Reflection questions

- How has your understanding of stakeholders changed? How has your understanding been reinforced?
- What is one thing you learned that you will apply in your own evaluation work?
- What are some potential challenges in getting stakeholders involved in your evaluation? What are some ways you might address these challenges?

WHO ARE YOUR EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS?

1. Those who are requesting the evaluation or are in a position to do or decide something with the result of the evaluation:

- Funders, funding agencies
- Staff
- Administrators, Board of Directors
- Managers
- Sponsors
- Community members
- Collaborators
- Partners
- Elected officials

2. Those who may be affected by the evaluation:

- Clients
- Family members
- Neighborhood organizations
- Educational institutions
- Elected officials
- Advocacy groups
- Community residents, community leaders
- Professional associations
- Skeptics
- Opponents
- Staff of related or competing organizations

3. Others?

-
-
-

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Working Group. (n.d.). Engaging stakeholders. In *Steps in program evaluation.* Retrieved February 8, 2006, from http://www.cdc.gov/eval/steps.htm#stakeholders

WORKSHEET: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

1. Who are the evaluation stakeholders?	2. Names of specific individuals	3. How might they be involved? What will they do?	4. How can we encourage stakeholder participation in our evaluation? What do we need to do to get them involved?

Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
1

Evaluation standard: Utility

"Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed."

–The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994)

Source: The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, Inc. (1994). Summary of the standards. In *The program evaluation standards* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
2

Core issues

- Who *are* the stakeholders in your outcome evaluation?
- How can they be involved? What roles can they play?
- How can you get them involved?

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
3

What are "evaluation stakeholders"?

Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation. Individuals and organizations with an investment, interest, or influence (a stake) in the initiative and/or evaluation and evaluation findings.

Often referred to as "evaluation users."

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
4

Who are your evaluation stakeholders?

- Those who request the evaluation or are in a position to do or decide something with the result of the evaluation
  - funder, manager, sponsor, partners, staff, community, policy makers
- Those who may be affected by the evaluation
  - program participants, community members, elected officials, potential participants
- Others?

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
5

Stakeholders' involvement can help you.

- Their perspectives can help strengthen your evaluation design.
- They might bring resources or influence to help carry out the evaluation and/or act upon the results of the evaluation.
- They are likely to gain a new appreciation and understanding of the program.
- They will better understand the results and will be more likely to use them.

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders
6

Whose interests are represented? Whose are not represented?

How do you find out who you should involve?

Why worry about stakeholders?

- Increases chances that evaluation will be useful
- Improves evaluation's credibility
- Clarifies roles and responsibilities
- Enhances cultural competence
- Helps protect human subjects
- Helps avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest
- Shares power

–CDC,

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Working Group. (n.d.). *Engaging stakeholders*. Retrieved August 6, 2008, from http://www.cdc.gov/eval/engaging%20stakeholders.PDF

"People, not organizations, use evaluation information."

–Patton, 2008, p. 66

Source: Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Roles a stakeholder can play:

- Member of advisory group
- Designing the evaluation
- Constructing the instrument
- Collecting data: conducting interviews, etc.
- Involvement in analysis and interpretation
- Advocate
- Raising funds
- Writing press releases….

What does "meaningful involvement" mean?

How can you get people to be involved?

- Use the personal touch.
- Match their interests to the evaluation's needs.
- Pay attention to cultural obstacles.
- Be sensitive to busy schedules and competing priorities.
- Provide options for individuals to consider and choose from.
- Express the value their involvement will bring to them, to you, to the program, and to the community.
- ??????

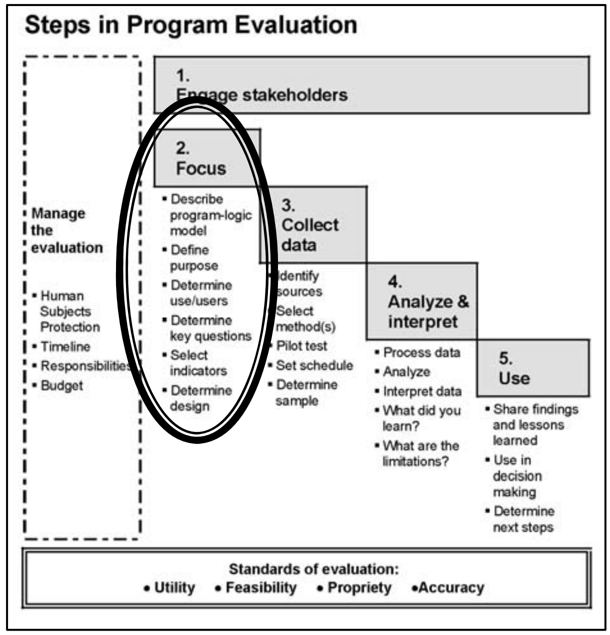
Tips for working with stakeholders

- Involve them early.
- Focus on a few key stakeholders.
- Provide options about how they might be involved.
- Don't assume that those in leadership or decision-making roles are the most important or the only ones you should include.
- Avoid giving the impression that the evaluation will answer all their questions.
- Make certain you are not excluding anyone due to gender, ethnicity, or language.
- Throughout the evaluation, continue to see if there are new stakeholders who should be involved.

Source: Hosley, C. (2005, April). *Who wants to know: Tips for involving stakeholders in your program evaluation*, Issue 2. Retrieved January 10, 2007, from http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=1797

Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation

Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation



Like focusing a camera before taking a picture, it is necessary to focus evaluations before collecting data. What do you and your stakeholders want to know? Focusing the evaluation helps make things clearer and better defined so that you do not waste valuable resources (or fail to get the picture you want).

This unit includes five sections that go together. While the sections are presented in order, the process of focusing an evaluation is iterative. Just like when you focus a camera, you may move back and forth among the sections until your evaluation is fully focused.

Note to facilitator

For guidance on focusing evaluations, see pages 2-10 in the publication *Planning a Program Evaluation* (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

Section 4A: Describing the program to be evaluated

What, exactly, will be evaluated? Will you evaluate an entire community initiative, or one part of it? A training? Materials or products? A newsletter? Teamwork? A policy intervention? The foundation of good evaluation is a clear description of what will be evaluated.

> **Program**
> *Program* is broadly defined as any organized actions intended to bring about purposeful change. Types of programs include educational initiatives, direct service interventions, research initiatives, communication campaigns, community mobilization efforts, policy development efforts, and administrative or organizational system initiatives.
> [adapted from CDC (1999)]

A *logic model* is a useful tool to summarize the program. In this unit, it is expected that individuals have experience with logic models and/or have a logic model of their own program. For assistance with logic models see *Enhancing program performance with logic models* (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse) or *Developing a logic model: Teaching and training guide* (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/lmguidecomplete.pdf).

Section 4B: Determining purpose

Why are you evaluating? Do you even *need* to evaluate? Evaluation professionals have identified four broad reasons for undertaking an evaluation [Mark, Henry, & Julnes (2000)]:

- **Accountability:** to assess merit or worth; to assess effects; to assess costs and benefits. The effort to make judgments about the value of a policy or program.
- **Improvement:** to improve the program; to enhance quality; to manage more effectively and efficiently. The effort to enhance programs.
- **Knowledge development:** to gain new insights. The effort to add to the knowledge base about effective practice or to add to policy debate.
- **Oversight and compliance:** to assess the extent to which a program follows rules, regulations, mandates, or other formal expectations. The effort to make sure the program adheres to requirements.

Stakeholders need to discuss and agree on why they are undertaking the evaluation and how they will use the information. Writing a purpose statement is helpful and may be required in grant proposals and as part of a written report of results.

Section 4C: Identifying key evaluation questions

Based on the evaluation's purpose, you can determine the questions that the evaluation will seek to answer. Evaluation is about asking questions – it is *purposeful inquiry*. These key evaluation questions – topics –guide your evaluation and determine what information will be collected and how. They are not the specific questions that you put in a questionnaire or interview protocol. Identifying key evaluation questions is possibly one of the most important parts of designing a useful evaluation, but it is often overlooked. Involving stakeholders in identifying the questions that the evaluation will answer helps ensure that the evaluation will be meaningful and will be used. What matters to the stakeholders? What do they want to know?

Section 4D: Identifying indicators

What information will answer your evaluation questions? How will you know that the outcome has been achieved? Remember that *indicator* refers to the information that you will collect. It is the evidence or information that signals what you want to know.

An indicator of fire = smoke.

An indicator of academic achievement = passing grade.

Section 4E: Choosing an evaluation design

How do you know what difference you are making? An *evaluation design* is the overall approach to collecting data. It describes the process of measurement – *when* and *how* data will be collected. Sometimes *evaluation design* is confused with *evaluation methods* – the data collection procedures themselves, such as interviews, surveys, observations, tests, and portfolio reviews. Evaluation designs are classified as *experimental, quasi-experimental,* or *non-experimental* designs.

Experimental design: Uses random assignment to groups or programs; e.g. randomized control trials.

Quasi-experimental design: Does not use random assignment but does include either more than one group or more than one wave of measurement; e.g., comparison group designs, before and after measurement, mixed-method designs, longitudinal designs.

Non-experimental design: Does not use random assignment or multiple measurements; e.g., case study design, single point in time design such as post-tornado interviews with residents, or a single survey.

Resources

Framework for program evaluation in public health. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999)] http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm

Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs: A self-study guide [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005)] http://www.cdc.gov/eval/evalguide.pdf

Planning a program evaluation (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

W. K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook [W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998)] http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=101&CID=281&CatID=281&ItemID=2810770&NID=20&LanguageID=0

Section 4A: Describing the program to be evaluated

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to clearly describe their program as a prerequisite for evaluating it.
- increase their understanding of how a logic model helps in focusing an evaluation.

Note to facilitator

In this section, you are describing the *program*, not the evaluation. Logic models are a popular tool for summarizing a program and helping to focus the evaluation. It is assumed that participants have used logic models. If they are unfamiliar with logic models or the role of logic models in evaluation, you may need to build their competence in logic models before engaging in this section. Suggested resources:

- Logic model on-line, self-study module: "Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models" http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse
- Developing a logic model: Teaching and training guide http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/lmguidecomplete.pdf
  slide file:
  http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/powerpt/lmguideslides.ppt

⌘ Activity

Describe your program

Purpose

To help people clearly describe the program to be evaluated

Accuracy standard: The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.
[The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994)]

Materials needed

Handout-1 *What's included in a program description?*

Handout-2 *Worksheet – Describe your program*

Handout-3 *Logic model worksheet*

Slides 6-8

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Form groups based on program focus or teams (if everyone is working on the same program). Explain that in order to design a useful evaluation, you first need to know exactly what the program is – what will be evaluated. So, you start by developing a program description.

- **Interview a partner:** Invite people to pair up and tell their partner about their program. Each individual should serve as a "quasi-interviewer," asking questions and seeking clarification to help the partner develop a clear program description. Each one might ask, for instance, "What's going on in your program? Who participates? How are people – the community – benefiting? What resources go into your program?" Encourage free-flowing, informal conversations; provide the opportunity for people to "tell" about their programs.
- Distribute the handout *What's included in a program description?* and explain that a complete program description usually includes these various aspects. Discuss
- You may with to distribute the *Worksheet – Describe your program* and invite the partners to work together again, using these questions to create more complete descriptions for their programs.
- Explain that a narrative program description can be turned into a visual depiction in a logic model format. A logic model helps summarize the program and show the connections between and among program components.
- Distribute poster paper, markers, and the handout *Logic model worksheet* and invite people to work alone or in pairs to transfer their narratives (from the *Describe your program* worksheet) to a logic model format. Encourage people to use lines and arrows to show the connections among program components. Ensure that they depict a "chain of outcomes" – a sequence of outcomes.
- If you have a group with an existing logic model, help the group critique it. Ask the members to check their logic model against their narrative descriptions and resolve any discrepancies.
- Invite people to post their logic models on the wall and describe their programs. Encourage everyone to ask questions and constructively critique the logic models:
    1. Does the logic model make sense?
    2. Does it adequately describe the program?
    3. Are the linkages as depicted by the arrows plausible?

Reflection questions

- How easy was it to "describe" your program?
- What did you learn by doing this activity?
- Who might you talk with/engage in order to complete this activity more easily/accurately?

Additional resource

For an illustrative example of a program description, see pages 20-23 in *Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health Programs: A Self-Study Guide* [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005)] http://www.cdc.gov/eval/evalguide.pdf.

Section 4B: Determining purpose

Desired outcomes

Individuals will …

- be able to articulate a clear purpose for their evaluation as the foundation for ensuring a useful evaluation.

⌘ Activity

So, why are you evaluating?

Purpose

To help people write a clear purpose statement for their evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-4 *What is your purpose for evaluating?*

Handout-5 *Evaluation purpose statements*

Slides 9-11

Card stock paper, markers

5-6 different hats

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to these questions: Why are you evaluating? Where did this evaluation stem from? What do you hope to gain?
- Distribute and discuss the handout *What is your purpose for evaluating?* Look at the more specific purposes at the bottom of the sheet. Which of these apply? Are there others to add?
- **Hats galore:** Put on the hats again to remind people of their key evaluation stakeholders (see Unit 3, Section 3A Activity "Who are the evaluation stakeholders?"). Suggest that sometimes people conduct an evaluation only for their own use (for example, to improve their teaching or to fulfill tenure requirements), but usually there are others who have requested or could use the evaluation information as well. Are the perspectives of those key stakeholders being reflected?

- Explain that a clear, well-written purpose statement helps clarify purpose and is often required in evaluation planning and grant writing.
- Distribute card stock paper and markers. Ask each person to fold the paper in half lengthwise and write a statement on the card using the recommended format shown below (you may want to write it on poster paper and hang it for all to see). Have them use their own program or provide a case scenario.

  We are conducting an evaluation of
  ___________________________ (name of program)
  because ________________________________
  in order to ______________________________.

Example: We are conducting an evaluation of the Money Quest Program **because** we want to know to what extent youth who participate learn and use recommended money management skills **in order to** report program outcomes to our funder.

- Ask everyone to find a partner. Invite people to share their purpose statements and to discuss and critique each other's statements. Provide additional card stock if people want to rewrite their purpose statements. Invite individuals to place their statements in front of them or take them home.
- To reinforce and wrap up this section, distribute the handout *Evaluation purpose statements.* Form groups of three people and encourage them to discuss and complete the handout.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn from this activity that you will apply in your own work?
- Why is it important to have a clear purpose for the evaluation?
- Who might (should) be involved in writing the purpose statement?
- Why is a purpose statement important?

Additional resource

Activity 17: Developing an evaluation's purpose statement [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 86-89]

Section 4C: Identifying key evaluation questions

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to guide the evaluation by identifying meaningful questions that are based on the evaluation purpose and the information users.
- increase their ability to prioritize questions to meet their resource constraints.

Note to facilitator:

For background information on identifying evaluation questions, see pages 5-8 of the publication *Planning a program evaluation* (G3658-1) [Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Douglah (1996)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

Ensure that learners understand the difference between key evaluation questions that guide and direct the whole evaluation (similar to research questions) and questions that go in a questionnaire or interview as a part of data collection (see Unit 5 for the latter).

⌘ Activity
Who wants to know what?

Purpose

To help people include the information needs of key "users" in their evaluation planning

Note to facilitator: You may want to review Unit 3: Engaging stakeholders.

Materials needed

Handout-6 *Who wants to know what?*

Handout-7 *Sample key evaluation questions*

Handout-8 *Sample outcome evaluation questions*

Handout-9 *Relevant participant and program characteristics affecting outcomes*

Slides 12-14

Note to facilitator: Handouts 8-9 are related to Handouts 8-15 in Unit 6, Section 6C: Key outcome analyses.

Process

- **Case scenario:** Ask people to imagine this scenario:

> We are a group of five people who have come together to evaluate our after-school program. We've decided to develop a questionnaire and distribute it to the youth at the end of the program to see what benefit the program is having for the students.
>
> As we try to write the questionnaire, it becomes apparent that we each have different ideas about what we want to find out – the questions we want to ask. Mark, the school administrator, wants to know if the students who have attended have done better academically. Marg, Dick and I, as the program staff, want to find out what the kids liked and disliked so we can plan better for the next program. Gloria, our funder, is interested in knowing how many youth attended regularly, which youth they were, and whether the program served those in need.

- Facilitate a discussion of these questions:
    1. Have you ever found yourself in this situation or a similar situation?
    2. Why is it important to work out the key evaluation questions before you start creating a questionnaire or other type of data collection instrument?
    3. How do each of the "users" in the scenario want to be able to use the evaluation information?
- Distribute the handout *Who wants to know what?* Invite individuals to read, discuss, and make additions to the list of **who** will use the evaluation (column 1) based on their own organizations and experiences. Check for cultural inclusion. Are all voices considered?
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Invite all group members to think about their own programs, figure out **who** will use the evaluation, and complete the first column on the handout. Encourage them to be as specific as possible when identifying individuals. They should write the individual's name in the second column. Ask everyone to complete the chart with **what** the individual wants to know and **how** that person will use the information. What decisions will the individual want to be able to make based on the evaluation? If people are uncertain about what their stakeholders want to know, have them work with their group members to brainstorm and discuss possibilities for collecting such information from their stakeholders.
- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to this question: What other sources can be used to identify relevant questions?

Possible answers:
Project documents/plan of work/proposal
Relevant literature and research
Expert consultants
Similar programs/evaluations – What outcomes/questions are they measuring?
Standardized surveys, data banks

- Distribute the handouts *Sample key evaluation questions, Sample outcome evaluation questions* and *Relevant participant and program characteristics affecting outcomes*. Explain that these handouts provide some suggestions about questions that might be relevant to their evaluations. While their focus is measuring outcomes, often program and participant data are needed in order to be able to answer the outcome questions we have. Remind people that identifying their evaluation questions is one of the most important tasks they will undertake. It will determine what data they collect, what they will be able to analyze, and what they will be able to report. Be thoughtful about cultural inclusion.
- Post the Covey saying: "Keep the end in mind" to remind people to think about what they want their end report to include – what they want to be able to say.

Reflection questions

- What challenges/barriers might you face in identifying your key evaluation questions?
- Do the information needs of certain users matter more than the needs of others?
- What do you do if the questions people have don't match the program (the logic model)?

Additional resources

Activity 18: Identifying stakeholders and developing key evaluation questions [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 90-97]

"Evaluation design for the hypothetical project" in *The user-friendly handbook for mixed method evaluations* (Chapter 6) [Frechtling & Sharp (Eds.) (1997)] http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/chap_6.htm

⌘ Activity

Using a logic model to identify evaluation questions

Purpose

To help people understand how to use a logic model to identify key evaluation questions

Note to facilitator

One of the main benefits of using logic models is to help focus on the key questions that an evaluation will answer. Too often evaluations are designed without paying attention to what the program actually is or its stage of development. Stakeholders may want data on long-term outcomes but the program may not yet be fully established. Or, someone may want outcome data for all youth but your program served only a certain group of youth. Also, while the focus is outcomes, there may be other questions and data that are important. Linking evaluation questions to the program description (logic model) and the program's stage of development helps avoid these problems.

Materials needed

Handout-10 *Example: A parent education program logic model*

Handout-11 *Example: Questions for a parent education program*

Large sticky notes, markers

Poster paper

Slides 15-18

Process

- Write *Input, Outputs, Outcomes* along the top of a sheet of poster paper. Write *External Context* on another sheet and *Assumptions* on a third sheet. Hang the three sheets on the wall.
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Distribute sticky notes, markers, and the handout *Example: A parent education program*.

- **Case scenario:** Ask people to imagine this scenario:

> You are the program staff of a parent education program that includes a spring and fall series of classes and currently four active support groups. You, your staff, and the collaborating agencies want to document the difference this program is actually making for the parent participants. You will use the information in your annual report to the funder, to improve the program, and to promote the program and attract participants.

- Invite each group to identify evaluation questions it would like to have answered by the evaluation. Groups should write each question on a separate sticky note and then place their notes on the poster paper on the wall under the appropriate heading. Emphasize that each item should be written as a *complete question* and in large enough print so that everyone can read it when it is posted on the paper. One question to a note.
- Invite everyone to observe and review the questions that have been posted. Encourage conversation and further reflection.
    1. Are all the questions correctly positioned to reflect inputs, outputs, outcomes?
    2. Which are similar? (Cluster like questions together.)
    3. Have we missed anything?
    4. Which questions are likely to be the most important to different stakeholders?
- Distribute the handout *Example: Questions for a parent education program*. Compare the handout examples to their work on the poster papers. What is the same? What is different?
- Focus again on just the questions about outcomes. Are all the key outcome questions listed? Can all of the "outcome" questions be answered given the nature and stage of development of the program? When can the different questions best be answered?

> What is the program's **stage of development**? Is it appropriate to measure outcomes?

- Discuss stages of program development (i.e., just getting started, been in operation for one year, fully mature) and the types of questions that are appropriate given the program's stage of development. *If this program were just getting started, what questions might you have? Would questions that measure outcomes or long-term impacts be appropriate?* Remind everyone that the stage of the program's development affects what is appropriate to ask and measure. Sometimes a program is not ready for measuring outcomes. Perhaps there is no consensus on what the outcomes are or might be. Perhaps the program has gotten off to a slow start and needs more time for the outcomes to be observed. Perhaps the program is at an early stage of development and a formative evaluation is more appropriate.

⌘ Activity

Prioritizing questions

Purpose

To help people increase their ability to prioritize and limit the number of questions that their evaluations will seek to answer

Materials needed

Handout-12 *Prioritize evaluation questions*

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Often you have more questions than can be answered by one evaluation. Invite people to brainstorm: How will you prioritize and select your evaluation questions? Record comments on poster paper and post.
- Distribute the handout: *Prioritize evaluation questions*. Review and discuss the information and compare it to the comments individuals made while brainstorming.
- Suggest that people list all the questions and choose the criteria that they will use to prioritize their list. Use the handout as appropriate.
- Remind them to check their questions against their program logic model. Are the questions appropriate for what the program is actually doing and given its stage of development?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about prioritizing questions to focus an evaluation?
- What was hard/easy about doing this?
- How might you prioritize questions in the future?

Section 4D: Identifying indicators

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge about indicators and their use in outcome evaluation.
- be more confident in their ability to select appropriate indicators.
- be able to identify indicators for their own program evaluation.

Note to facilitator

For guidance on identifying indicators, see *"Using logic models in evaluation-Indicators and measures"* in *Enhancing program performance with logic models* (Module 1, Section 7) [Taylor-Powell, Jones, & Henert (2002), pp. 11-12] `http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/`

⌘ Activity
What are indicators?

Purpose

To help people understand indicators and their use in evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-13 *Examples of indicators*

Handout-14 *Frequently asked questions about indicators*

Slides 19-31

Poster paper, markers

Articles from a local newspaper that include examples of indicators

Process

The following activities and facilitated discussion focus on several key concepts: what is an indicator, individual- vs. community-level indicators, quantitative vs. qualitative indicators, and cultural appropriateness.

- Use slides as appropriate.

- On a sheet of poster paper, write the following three questions, post the paper for all to see.

> INDICATOR:
>
> - What would it look like?
> - How would I know it?
> - If I were a visitor, what would I see, hear, read, and/or smell that would tell me this "thing" exists?

- On another sheet of poster paper, list everyday examples of common items and situations. For example:
    - High blood pressure
    - Street in need of paving
    - Popular book
    - Vegetable garden stress due to lack of water
    - Quality high school
- Ask people to work in pairs and identify one or two indicators for each of the items listed. Encourage people to refer to the three questions as necessary.
- Rejoin as a whole group and invite individuals to share their indicators for each item.
- **Buzz session:** Form groups of 3 people. Distribute and discuss the handout *Examples of indicators*. Encourage individuals to add indicators they think might be relevant or better than those listed. Remind people that indicators link to the key evaluation questions they are asking. Invite individuals to share any observations or comments from their work groups.
- **Brainstorming:** As a full group, brainstorm answers to the following questions:
    1. Which, if any, of the indicators represent individual- vs. community-level indicators? Remind everyone that increasingly people are being asked to work towards community-level change, and thus, community-level indicators are necessary.
    2. Which of the indicators on the handout represent quantitative indicators?
    3. Which ones represent qualitative indicators?
    4. Why would you want to include both quantitative and qualitative indicators?
    5. Who might be best positioned to help identify indicators for your outcome questions?

- Reform groups of 3-4 people. Distribute poster paper and markers to each group. Ask them to draw a vertical line down the middle and write "Question" on the left side and "Indicator" on the right side. Explain that each person is to come up with and write one evaluation question on the paper. Then, group members should work together to brainstorm possible indicators for each question. Ask the groups to post their filled in papers. Share their key points and challenges they faced in writing these indicators.
- Distribute the handout *Frequently asked questions about indicators* to highlight aspects of indicators. If desired, turn this into a game. Invite individuals to ask (and answer) their own questions.
- Distribute the newspaper articles.
- Ask individuals to work with a partner to find indicators in the articles.
- Then ask volunteers to share the indicators they found and facilitate a discussion about the type and appropriateness of the indicators.

Reflection questions

- What is hard about identifying indicators?
- Who should be involved in identifying and selecting indicators?
- What have you learned about indicators?

⌘ Activity
More indicator practice – link to key questions

Purpose

To help people improve their understanding of indicators and link them to their program evaluation questions

Materials needed

Handout-15 *Indicator practice*

Handout-16 *Indicators for a parent education program*

Process

- Distribute the handout *Indicator practice.*

- **Buzz session:** Invite people to turn to a partner and identify two or three indicators for each question and list them in the right-hand column. Individuals can add their own questions to work on, as appropriate.

  Write each question on a sheet of poster paper and hang them on the wall.

  Ask each pair to write their indicators on the respective sheet.

  Invite people to talk and discuss as they write their indicators. Then facilitate a discussion in which the whole group arrives at a consensus on the two or three final indicators for each question.

  Distribute the example handout *Indicators for parent education program*. Discuss.

Mini lecture

- Indicators link to the questions we have of our programs.
- We can have indicators for each level of program performance: Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes.
- Indicators can be identified for any question along the course of the program's life: process and outcome indicators.
- Indicators are the information that we need; thus, they are necessary for focused, useful evaluation.

⌘ Activity

Indicators for your own program

Purpose

To help people select appropriate and culturally relevant indicators for their own evaluations

Materials needed

Handout-17 *Indicator criteria*

Handout-18 *Indicator review worksheet*

Also see Unit 5 Handouts 7, 8, 9

Process

- Post the following outcome question for everyone to see:

  To what extent have middle school youth improved their leadership skills as a result of participating in the six-week series on leadership development?

- **Role play:** Form four groups and assign each group one of these roles: program staff member, the funder, a youth, and a county administrator. Explain that each group is to identify 3-5 indicators based on its role/perspective. In your role what would you want to see to indicate that the youth had improved their leadership skills?

  Ask the members of each role group to share their indicators and perspectives with the whole group. Discuss differences and similarities in the various perspectives.

  Repeat the process with the following outcome question:

  > To what extent have Hmong middle school youth improved their leadership skills as a result of participating in the six-week series on leadership development?

  Discuss differences and similarities in the perspectives for the two outcomes.

- **Brainstorming:** Brainstorm answers to the following questions:

  1. Who else might have been included to identify indicators?
  2. What might their perspectives have been?
  3. Why is it important to hear from different perspectives?
  4. Where else can you find examples of indicators that might be appropriate for your evaluations? Are there "standard" indicators you should be using?

- Invite people to work on their own programs as a group or individually. Individuals should refer to the logic model of their own program to help identify indicators for the program.

  Ask:

  1. Who might best be involved to identify the indicators?
  2. What do you need to consider?

- Invite individuals to identify and write down several indicators that they think might be "right" for their outcomes.
- Distribute the handout *Indicator criteria*.
- **Teach each other:** Break into small groups of two or three people and assign each group one of the criteria: Direct, Specific, Useful, Practical, Culturally appropriate, and Adequate. Ask each group to prepare a short "lesson" about the criterion, using examples or experiences from their own work.

  Have each group "teach" its indicator criterion. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarification.

- Distribute the handout *Indicator review worksheet*.
- Invite individuals to fill in the first two columns on this worksheet to check their own indicators.
- **Peer critique:** When finished, invite individuals to find another person (a "reviewer") and exchange worksheets. Each reviewer should provide a rating for each indicator and then the two partners should discuss their ratings and work together to improve the indicators.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about indicators that you didn't know before?
- Why is it important to consider different perspectives when identifying indicators? How might cultural differences be included?
- How might you incorporate these ideas into your own work?
- How might you use the criteria list and review worksheet in your evaluation work?

Additional resources

"Example outcomes and outcome indicators for various programs" in *Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach* [United Way of America (1996)] http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/resources/mpo/examples.cfm

"Preparing your program: List community indicators" in *Setting the stage, Part 1 of the Power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/setting_stage/preparing_program/5-3.html

Section 4E: Choosing an evaluation design

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of evaluation design.
- increase their knowledge of different types of evaluation designs: experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental.
- increase their ability to choose a design appropriate for their program, purpose, and context.

Note to facilitator

Evaluation design refers to the approach to collecting data that allows you to have confidence in your findings. Sometimes, *evaluation design* is confused with *evaluation methods*. Evaluation design is concerned with the overall scheme that describes the process of measurement – when and how data will be collected. Evaluation designs are classified as *experimental*, *quasi-experimental*, or *non-experimental*. *Evaluation methods* refers to data collection procedures, such as interviews, surveys, observations, tests, and portfolio reviews.

Experimental design: Uses random assignment to groups or programs; e.g., randomized control trials.

Quasi-experimental design: Does not use random assignment but does include either more than one group or more than one wave of measurement; e.g., comparison group designs, before and after measurement, mixed-method designs, longitudinal designs.

Non-experimental design: Does not use random assignment or multiple measurements; e.g., case study design, single point in time designs, such as post-tornado interviews with residents or a single survey.

⌘ Activity
What is "evaluation design"?

Purpose

To help people increase their understanding of evaluation design and its role in having confidence to claim credit for outcomes

Materials needed

Handout-19 *Evaluation designs*

Slides 32, 33

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

Note to facilitator: This activity covers the common designs commonly used in community-based program evaluation. See other resources for more information related to experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to this question:

  What is "evaluation design"?

  Record comments on poster paper.

- **Round-robin table conversations:** Break into small groups of 3-6 people per table. Place the following questions on the tables – one question per table. Ask one person at each table to serve as the "host" – to stay at the table and record key points from the conversations. Explain that each group will have 10 minutes to discuss the question on the table. When the whistle blows, individuals are to move to another table that has a different question.

  1. How can you have confidence that the outcomes you observe are the result of your program and not something else?
  2. What would make it possible for you to feel strongly that it was your program – that you can legitimately take some credit for the results?
  3. What would your key stakeholders need for them to believe your findings?

  Invite the recorders to share key points from the conversations for each question. Encourage additional comments and questions. Make sure the following information and ideas are covered:

  - Use comparison as much as possible.
  - Use multiple sources of information and methods to provide a more accurate picture.
  - Know the audience who will be judging the conclusions and the type of information they will find credible and then provide the audience with that information.

- Show your work – how you collected the information, the methods you used, and who you collected the information from. If people see what you did, then they can assess for themselves and feel more confident in your conclusions.
- Include information about what the program does; provide a picture of what the program is, its activities, how individuals participate, etc. This information helps others assess whether the conclusions you draw make sense and are likely to be accurate.
- Use your program theory – show how activities link to results in a sensible, logical fashion.
- Match your conclusions to your methods.
- Use the research base; specifically, use results from similar programs.
- Explain the difference between contribution and attribution.

- Wrap up the activity by referring back to the original question – "What is evaluation design?" Discuss the following points:
  - *When, how,* and *from whom* you collect data determines to what extent you can claim credit.
  - Evaluation design is the "way" you will organize the evaluation to be able to have confidence in knowing what difference your program is making.
  - Many people talk about "proving" that their program "caused" positive outcomes. In fact, you seldom can "prove"; rather, you want to make sure your evaluation is as credible as possible. There are no perfect designs.
  - Couch your findings in accurate terms. Use terms such as "indicates," "suggests," and "appears" as appropriate.
- Distribute the handout *Evaluation designs.* Invite individuals to share their experiences with the different types of designs.
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Distribute poster paper and markers. Encourage the groups to list the following for each design type:
  1. One example when they might use the design in their own work
  2. As many strengths and weaknesses as possible for each of the designs (minimum one strength and one weakness for each type of design)
  3. One way they could amend the weakness
- Give the groups 20 minutes to create their lists. Then invite each team to present its strengths/weaknesses and remedy for each design. All teams will serve as the judge and determine which team "wins" for each design.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about evaluation design?
- How might you apply this new knowledge in your own evaluation work?
- What seems to be the most difficult aspect of evaluation design?

Additional resources

Choosing appropriate research methods to evaluate educational programs (FS943) [Diem (2003)] http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=fs943

"Evaluation models, approaches, and designs" in *Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training* (Chapter 5) [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 101-180]

The power of proof: An evaluation primer. [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/index.html

The Research Methods Knowledge Base [Trochim, William M (2006)] http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/

Types of evaluation designs [Duvall (2007)] http://meera.snre.umich.edu/plan-an-evaluation/plonearticlemultipage.2007-10-30.3630902539/types-of-evaluation-designs/?searchterm=%22evaluation%20designs%22

What's Included in a Program Description?

A program description clarifies "what a program is and intends to achieve." It includes the following components and describes how the program components relate and contribute to the desired outcomes.

SITUATION: What is the situation — the problem or opportunity — that the program is addressing? What has given rise to this program?

OUTCOMES: What changes or improvements are the program trying to achieve? What are the expected benefits for individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and/or systems? Outcomes often occur along a path from shorter- to longer-term changes.

PARTICIPANTS: Who, or which groups or organizations, are expected to change? Who is the target of the program?

ACTIVITIES: What will the program and its staff do to reach these people and help them take action? What services are provided? What products and deliverables are produced?

RESOURCES (INPUTS): What is needed for the program to be able to conduct its activities? To function effectively?

Three other aspects are often included:

Assumptions: What beliefs do we have about the program, the participants, the context, and the way we think the program will work?

Environment: What factors and trends in the larger context may influence the success of the program?

Stage of the program's development: Is it just getting started, being implemented, or has it been underway for a while? The focus of the evaluation depends upon the program's stage of development.

Program descriptions are best developed as a program team in order to develop understanding and consensus among staff and key stakeholders.

WORKSHEET — DESCRIBE YOUR PROGRAM

What is the program name? ____

Where is it located/where does it operate? _______________________________________

Is it a new program? In progress? Well-established? ______________________________

SITUATION: What is the situation that you are addressing? What is the need or problem that gave rise to the program?

OUTCOMES: What will be different as a result of the program? Who (or what) will change? In what way? What might be some unintended and/or unexpected outcomes?

PARTICIPANTS: Who participates in the program? Who is targeted? (ages, numbers, key demographic characteristics)

ACTIVITIES: What goes on in the program? What is the program doing? What are the activities?

RESOURCES (INPUTS): What is going into the program in terms of human, material, and financial resources?

LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET

Inputs	Outputs: Activities	Outputs: Participation	Outcomes – Impact: Short Term	Outcomes – Impact: Medium Term	Outcomes – Impact: Long Term
What we invest	What we do	Who we reach	What the short-term changes are	What the medium-term changes are	What the ultimate impact(s) is

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE FOR EVALUATING?

In the field of evaluation, four reasons for undertaking an evaluation have been identified:

Purpose	Examples
1. Accountability: to judge the merit or worth of a program; to assess effects; to assess costs and benefits	Assess the benefits youth gain from participating to report value to funder. Determine which participants gain the most to target future efforts more effectively.
2. Improvement: to improve the program; to enhance quality; to manage more effectively and efficiently	Monitor implementation of the financial management program to improve delivery. Assess whether outcomes are being achieved and use information to improve content and delivery.
3. Knowledge development: to gain new insights	Assess community interest and needs and use information to plan program. Examine different ways program is implemented to determine most effective practice.
4. Oversight and compliance: to assess program compliance with formal expectations	Assess extent to which program is using funds as mandated. Assess program compliance with equal-opportunity rules and regulations.

Source: Mark, M. M., Henry, G. T., & Julnes, G. (2000). *Evaluation: An integrated framework for understanding, guiding and improving policies and programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Our purposes often are more specific. Think about your own program. Are you conducting the evaluation in order to…

- See if goals and objectives were met?
- Determine outcomes for participants? For families? For groups/organizations? For systems? For the community?
- Assess ultimate impact on the community in terms of changes in human, economic, civic, and/or environmental conditions?
- Assess whether the program is worth the resources invested? To demonstrate accountability for resources invested? To determine resource allocations? To justify need for funding? To make sure resources aren't wasted on ineffective programs?
- Learn about what works/doesn't work and for whom? Which activities lead to which outcomes?
- Assess access and/or disparities in reach, participation, and outcomes?
- Improve your service delivery or teaching? To help inform what you will do the next time?
- Promote the program?
- Meet the funder's requirement?
- Other……….

Evaluation Purpose Statements

Critique the purpose statements below by answering the following questions:

- Is the name of the program — what is to be evaluated — included?
- Does it clearly state what will be measured?
- Does it include how the results will be used?
- Is the wording clear so that it will be understood by the reader?

1. The purpose of the evaluation of the Bacon County Coalition for a Healthy Community is to determine what outcomes it has achieved since start-up in 1998 in order to seek funding and to celebrate achievements.
2. The purpose of the outcome evaluation is to determine the extent to which disadvantaged youth participants complete the job-readiness program and are prepared to enter the work force. The results will be used to modify the program as necessary and report to the funder.
3. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the after-school youth program should be continued or terminated.
4. The purpose of the outcome evaluation is to determine the extent to which the multi-year strategic planning process in Wick County was perceived as democratic, open, and transparent by county residents. Results will be used by the County Board in future strategic planning initiatives.

Additional discussion:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each statement?
- Choose one statement and rewrite it to improve it.

WHO WANTS TO KNOW WHAT?

Who will use the evaluation?	**Name** of individual	**What** do they want to know?	**How** will they use the information? To do what? To make what decisions?
Me			
Program staff			
Project director			
Volunteers			
Board of directors			
Partners/ collaborators			
Funders			
Participants/ clientele			
Public officials			
Community residents			
Similar programs/ providers			

SAMPLE KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

ABOUT OUTCOMES/IMPACTS

- What do people do differently as a result of the program?
- Who benefits and how?
- Are participants satisfied with what they gain from the program?
- Are the program's accomplishments worth the resources invested?
- What do people learn, gain, accomplish?
- What are the social, economic, environmental impacts (positive and negative) on people, communities, the environment?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- Which activities contribute most? Least?
- What, if any, are unintended secondary or negative effects?
- How well does the program respond to the initiating need?
- How efficiently are clientele and agency resources being used?

ABOUT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- What does the program consist of – activities, events?
- What delivery methods are used?
- Who actually carries out the program and how well do they do so?
- Who participates in which activities? Does everyone have equal access?
- What is Extension's role; the contributions of others?
- What resources and inputs are invested?
- How many volunteers are involved and what roles do they play?
- Are the financial and staff resources adequate?

ABOUT PROGRAM CONTEXT

- How well does the program fit in the local setting? With educational needs and learning styles of target audiences?
- What in the socio-economic-political environment inhibits or contributes to program success?
- What in the setting are givens and what can be changed?
- Who else works on similar concerns? Is there duplication?
- Who are cooperators and competitors?

ABOUT PROGRAM NEED

- What needs are appropriately addressed through Extension education?
- What are the characteristics of the target population?
- What assets in the local context and among target groups can be built upon?
- What are current practices?
- What changes do people see as possible or important?
- Is a pilot effort appropriate?

Source: Taylor-Powell, E., Steele, S., & Douglah, M. (1996). *Planning a program evaluation* (G3658-1). Page 5. http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1.PDF

SAMPLE OUTCOME EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluations focused on measuring outcomes include questions that ask about changes and levels of performance for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. These changes may be related to knowledge, attitudes, skills, motivations, plans, decision making, behaviors, practices, policies, and social, economic, civic, and environmental conditions.

The following chart provides a list of potential outcome-focused questions. No single evaluation would try to answer all of these questions. They are provided here to spark conversation and exploration. Add to the list based on what is relevant for your own program evaluation.

Sample questions about outcomes (results, achievements)	**Additional related questions (sub-questions)**
What changes occur? What is different as a result of the program?	For whom? How? To what extent are changes apparent for different individuals?
What is the overall impact on the community? On the target group?	What is the extent of the impact? On individuals within the target group?
What do people/groups/communities learn or gain? What are they able to accomplish?	To what extent are changes evident? How sustainable are the changes?
Who actually makes these changes/gains? Who doesn't?	What are the differences by gender, social-economic status, lifestyle, religion, education, ethnicity, previous experience, situation, etc.?
Who does not attend/participate?	Are particular demographic groupings missed?
To what extent have we reached our goals? Our performance targets?	
How do results change over time? Over different time periods?	
Are the results different for different locations?	How? To what extent? What contributes to these differences?
Are results worth the time and money we put in?	How efficiently are resources used? Do the costs differ for different types of participants, locations, types of activities provided? What does it cost to produce a certain result?
Which program characteristics contribute to which results? Which program factor relates to better outcomes?	Is there a difference related to the type of activity, location of the program, who provides the program, or the level and intensity of the program?
Which activities seem to help participants the most? The least? Which participants?	
What factors contribute to the outcomes we observe?	
What are unanticipated or unintended outcomes? Positive and negative outcomes?	
How does the program compare to other, similar programs?	
How do the outcomes of our program compare to those of other, similar programs?	
What works and what doesn't?	What specifically works and what doesn't work? To what extent? For whom? Under what conditions?

RELEVANT PARTICIPANT AND PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING OUTCOMES

Add to the following lists based on your own program.

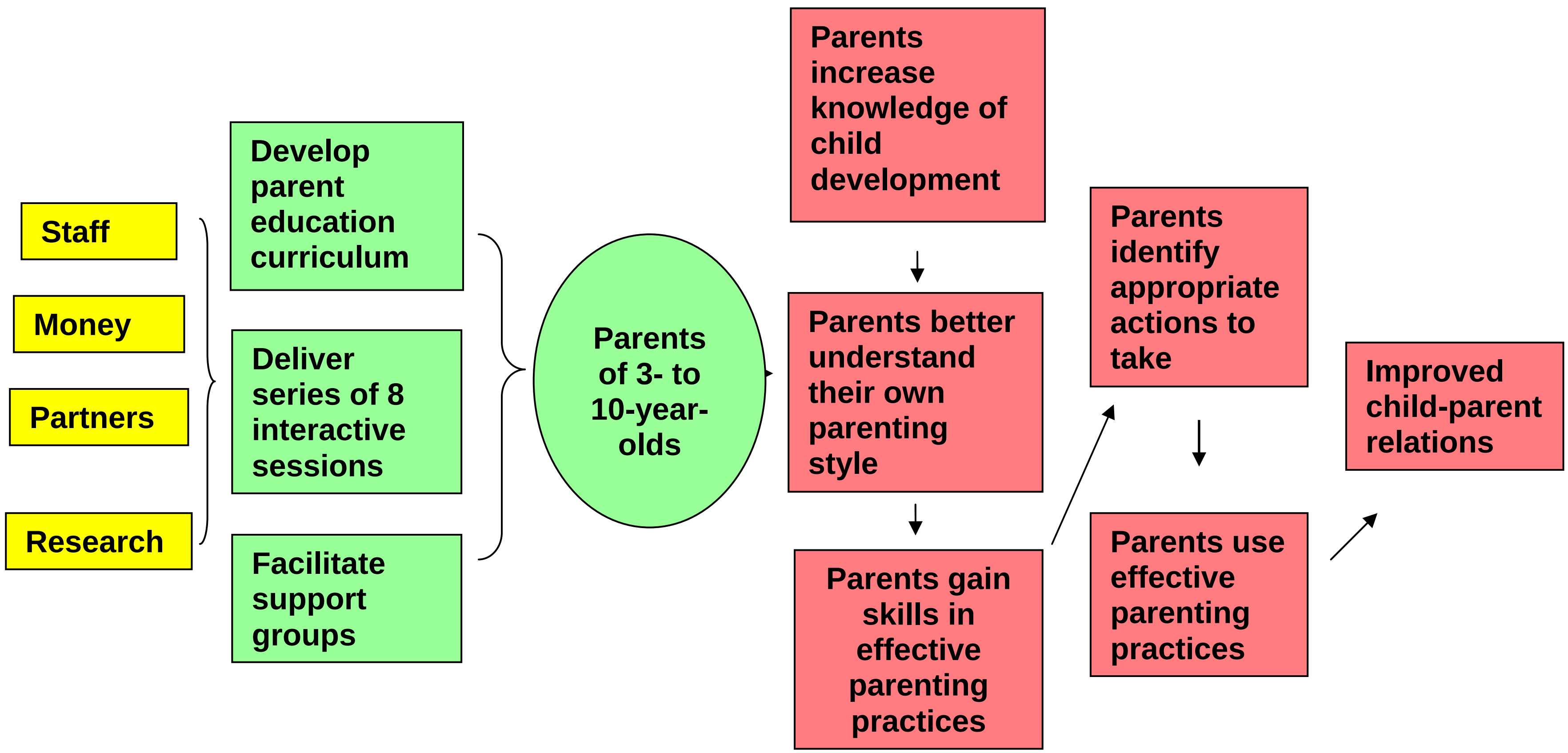
Participant characteristics.

Gender	Male, female
Age	Relevant age range
Race/ethnicity	White/Caucasian, Black or African American, Asian, Latino, other…
Ability/disability	Various types of abilities
Educational level	Current grade, level of educational attainment, type of education
Household	Size, generations, number of children
Income	Current annual household income, highest income, current monthly income, income levels
Previous experience	
Repeat participant	

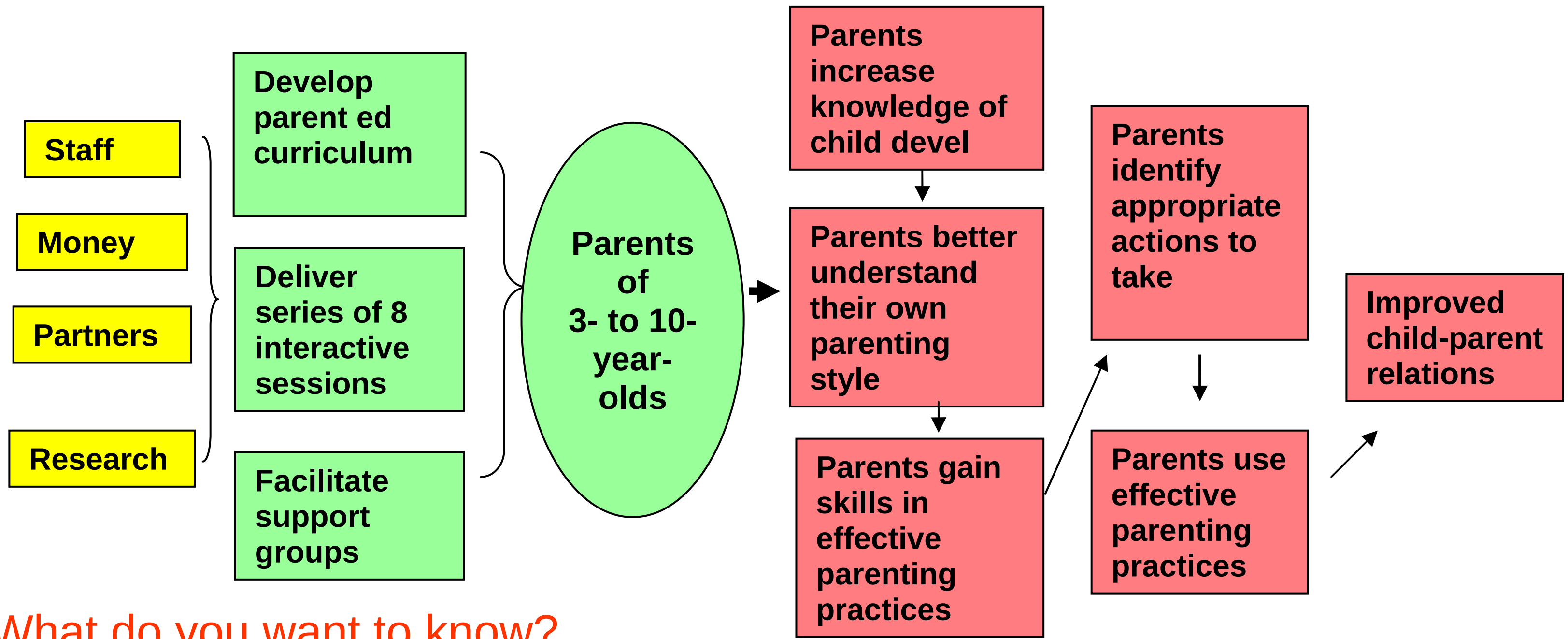
Program characteristics

Program activities	Examine outcomes by type of activities provided. For example, a parenting education program might involve workshops, in-home visits, and parent support groups. A tobacco control program might include youth prevention, cessation and treatment, and policy change.
Location	Examine outcomes by individual facility, school, business, town, or county where program is delivered.
Accessibility and convenience	Location, hours of service, staff availability
Provider	Examine outcomes by who provides the program: volunteer, teacher, Extension agent, etc. Or examine them by individual instructor characteristics: age, gender, courteousness, etc.
Amount of service	Number of sessions attended, number of contact hours for the participant, length of program
Timeliness of service	

EXAMPLE: A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL



EXAMPLE: QUESTIONS FOR A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM



What do you want to know?

What amount of $ and time were invested?	What is quality of curriculum? How many sessions were held? What is quality of delivery? # and quality of support groups?	Who/how many attended/did not attend? Did they attend all sessions/support activities? Were they satisfied? Why/why not?	To what extent did knowledge and skills increase? For whom? Why? What else happened?	To what extent did behaviors change? For whom? Why? What else happened?	To what extent are relations improved? What else happened?

What in the program context and/or the external environment affected operations and outcomes?

Which of our assumptions are correct? Incorrect?

PRIORITIZE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation question	Can this question be answered given the program?	Which stakeholder cares about this?	How important is this?	Does this involve new data collection?	Can it be answered given your time and resources?	Priority: High, Medium, Low, Eliminate
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Adapted from: Frechtling, J., & Sharp, L. (Eds.). Worksheet 5: Prioritize and eliminate questions. In *The user-friendly handbook for mixed method evaluations* (Chapter 5). The National Science Foundation, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication. Retrieved August 7, 2008, from http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/chap_5.htm

Examples of Indicators

Evaluation question	Outcome indicators
To what extent did the program increase youth-adult partnerships?	#, % of Boards with youth participating in meetings before and after #, % of Boards with youth on committees before and after #, % of Boards with youth in leadership positions before and after Change in the quality of the youth-adult interactions
Have producers reduced nitrogen application rates?	#, % producers using less nitrogen after program compared to before # acres managed according to “best moment practice” guidelines
Did the apprenticeship program result in more youth staying in the area?	#, % of youth who complete the apprenticeship program #, % of youth who take jobs and stay in the community as a result of the program
Has the quality of life of senior citizens improved?	#, % of seniors reporting specific ways in which their lives have improved # of key family members who say that their seniors are more positive and/or pleased with life
To what extent does the mentoring program lead to improved school performance?	#, % of participants whose grades improve #, % of participants who have improved school attendance #, % of participants with decreased # of behavioral reports
Are more services available and accessible in our community?	#, type of programs and social services before and after Location and hours of programs and services Availability of culturally appropriate services #s, demographics of people using the programs and services # of services that are prevention- vs. remediation-oriented Availability of family support services (transport, child care)
To what extent do members actively participate in the coalition?	#, % who attend meetings #, % who serve on committees #, % who implement activities Level of participation in discussions, decision making
To what extent have local government officials increased their knowledge and skills in elections and financial administration?	#, % local government officials attending #, % reporting change in knowledge on budgeting, accounting, record keeping, and election management #, % reporting increased ability to follow parliamentary procedures and manage elections

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT INDICATORS

Why do you include number *and* percent?

A number in itself does not indicate the magnitude or rate of the result (e.g., 5 of 10 or 5 of 200?). The percent by itself does not indicate the size of the result (e.g., 30 percent of what?) It is usually best to include both the number and percent.

Why do you include multiple indicators?

Several indicators are usually necessary to better measure the item. There is no standard for the number of indicators to use. Several are usually necessary; more than three or four may mean that the item is too complex and should be better defined.

Why are some indicators quantitative and some qualitative?

"Not everything that counts can be counted." Sometimes you need narrative or qualitative information as evidence. In fact, a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators is often preferred.

Examples of quantitative indicators: #, % of departments that submit action plans; #, % of youth who engage in community service activities.

Examples of qualitative indicators: quality of action plans; quality of youth's community service involvement.

Is the indicator culturally appropriate?

Be attentive to the cultural relevance of the indicator.

Why do you include the specific knowledge that is expected to improve?

The more specific the indicator is, the more specific your results will be, making aggregation and comparisons possible.

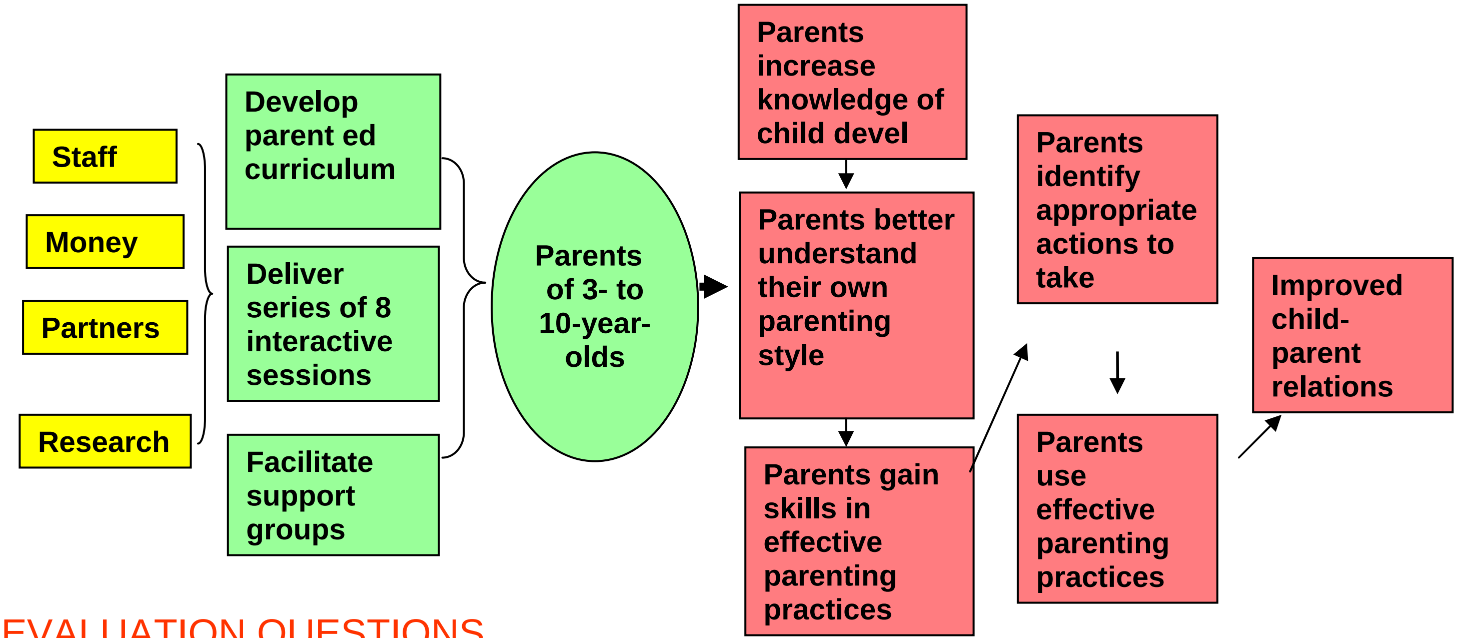
Why do some of the indicators seem to be "extras"?

It is important to cover all aspects of the item being measured. Sometimes doing so means including additional indicators. Also, think about possible negative or unintended consequences and include those indicators as well.

INDICATOR PRACTICE

Outcome question	Indicator — Evidence
Are clientele better able to manage credit and debit as a result of participating in the program?	
Have middle school students decreased their use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs?	
Do parents of children who are 0–3 years old use positive parenting behaviors when interacting with their children as a result of participating in the program?	
Did organizational departments increase their level of collaboration by the end of 2008?	
Are the water resources better protected and preserved?	

INDICATORS FOR A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

What amount of $ and time were invested?	How many sessions were held? Quality of implementation? # and quality of support groups?	Who/how many attended/did not attend? Did they attend all sessions? Support groups? Were they satisfied — why or why not?	To what extent did knowledge and skills increase? For whom? Why? What else happened?	To what extent did behaviors change? For whom? Why? What else happened?	To what extent are relations improved?

INDICATORS

# staff $ used # partners	# sessions held Quality criteria	#,% attended per session Certificate of completion	#,% demonstrating increased knowledge/skills Additional outcomes	#,% demonstrating changes Types of changes	#,% demonstrating improvements Types of improvements

INDICATOR CRITERIA

Direct An indicator should measure as directly as possible what it is intended to measure. For example, if the outcome being measured is a reduction in teen smoking, then the best indicator is the number and percent of teens smoking. The number and percent of teens that receive cessation counseling does not directly measure the outcome of interest. However, sometimes there may not be direct measures or there may be time and resource constraints. In those cases, you may have to use proxy, or less direct, measures.

Specific Indicators need to be stated in a specific and explicit manner so that anyone can understand exactly what is meant and exactly how the data are to be collected. Example indicator: number and percent of farmers who adopted risk management practices in the past year. In this example, you do not know which risk management practices are to be measured, which farmers will be included, or what time period constitutes "the past year."

Useful Indicators need to help you understand what you are measuring! The indicator should provide useful information that helps you understand and improve your programs.

Practical Costs and time involved in data collection are important considerations. Though difficult to estimate, the cost of collecting data for an indicator should not exceed the utility of the information collected. Reasonable costs, however, are to be expected.

Culturally appropriate Indicators must be relevant to the cultural context. What makes sense or is appropriate in one culture may not be in another. Test your assumptions.

Adequate There is no correct number or type of indicators. The number of indicators you choose depends on what you are measuring, the level of information you need, and the resources available. Often more than one indicator is necessary. More than five, however, may mean that your outcome question is too broad, complex, or confusing. Indicators need to express all possible aspects of what you are measuring: possible negative or detrimental aspects as well as the positive.

INDICATOR REVIEW WORKSHEET

Reviewer: Please rate each indicator using this scale: 1 = Good 2 = Needs Improvement 3 = Unacceptable

Program Name:

Question	Indicator(s)	Direct	Specific	Useful	Practical	Culturally appropriate	Adequate
1.	**a.**						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						
2.	**a.**						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						
3.	**a.**						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						

Comments:

EVALUATION DESIGNS

Think about the research design that will help you to eliminate plausible rival explanations.

1. AFTER ONLY (post program)
   In this design, evaluation is done after the program is completed; for example, a post-program survey or end-of-session questionnaire. It is a common design but is the least reliable because you do not know what things looked like before the program.
2. RETROSPECTIVE (post program)
   In this design, participants are asked to recall or reflect on their situation, knowledge, attitude, behavior, etc. prior to the program. It is commonly used in education and outreach programs but memory can be faulty.
3. BEFORE-AFTER (before and after program)
   Program recipients or situations are looked at before the program and then again after the program. For example, program participants may take both pre- and post-tests or have their behaviors observed before and after the program. This design is commonly used in educational program evaluation, and differences between Time 1 and Time 2 are often attributed to the program. However, many other things can happen over the course of a program that may affect the observed change.
4. DURING (additional data "during" the program)
   Collecting information at multiple times during the course of a program is a way to identify the association between program events and outcomes. Data can be collected on program activities and services as well as on participant progress. This design appears to be uncommon in community-based evaluation, probably because of the time and resources needed for data collection.
5. TIME SERIES (multiple points before and after the program)
   The time series design involves a series of measurements at intervals before the program begins and after it ends. It strengthens the simple before-after design by documenting pre and post patterns and stability of the change.
6. CASE STUDY
   A case study design uses multiple sources of information and multiple methods to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the program. Its strength lies in its comprehensiveness and exploration of reasons for observed effects.

TO STRENGTHEN YOUR EVALUATION DESIGN:

- **Add points in time**
- **Use multiple methods of data collection: survey + observation + …**
- **Use comparisons (people, groups, sites)**

Adding a comparison of one or more groups, individuals, or sites can strengthen all of the above one-group designs. Comparison groups refer to groups that are not selected at random but are from the same population. (When they are selected at random, they are called *control groups*.) The purpose of a comparison group is to add assurance that the program (the intervention), not something else, caused the observed effects. It is essential that the comparison be *very similar* to the program group.

Consider the following possibilities as comparisons:

- o Between program participants (individuals, groups, organizations) and nonparticipants
- o Between different groups of individuals or participants experiencing different levels of program intensity
- o Between sites where the program operates and sites without program intervention (e.g., streambed restoration, community revitalization)

Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation

1

2

Evaluation = purposeful inquiry

"Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers."
–Voltaire

"Pay attention to the questions you need to ask, not the answers you want to hear."
–Leonard Hirsch, American consultant

3

"You can tell whether an individual is clever by his answers.
You can tell whether an individual is wise by his questions."

–Naguib Mahfouz,
Nobel Prize winner

4

"What we see depends mainly on what we look for "
–Sir John Lubbock

"The important thing is not to stop questioning."
–Albert Einstein

5

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where…" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"…so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

–Lewis Carroll, Chapter 6
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

6

Describe the program to be evaluated

Accuracy standard: The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

−The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994)

Source: The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, Inc. (1994). Summary of the standards. In *The program evaluation standards* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc

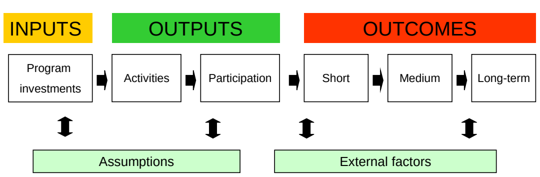
Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
7

Components of a program

- Situation
- Resources (Inputs)
- Outputs
  - Activities
  - Participants
- Outcomes
  - Chain of outcomes from short- to long-term
- External factors
- Assumptions

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
8

Use a logic model to describe your program



Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
9

4 main purposes of evaluation

- **Accountability:** to assess merit or worth; to assess effects; to assess costs and benefits. The effort to make judgments about the value of a policy or program.
- **Improvement:** to improve the program; to enhance quality; to manage more effectively and efficiently. The effort to enhance programs.
- **Knowledge development:** to gain new insights. The effort to add to the knowledge base about effective practice or to add to policy debate.
- **Oversight and compliance:** to assess the extent to which a program follows rules, regulations, mandates or other formal expectations.

−Mark, Henry & Julnes (2000)

Source: Mark, M. M., Henry, G. T., & Julnes, G. (2000). *Evaluation: An integrated framework for understanding, guiding and improving policies and programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
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What is your purpose for evaluating??

We are conducting an evaluation of _______ (name of program) because ______________ in order to ____________.

Example: We are conducting an evaluation of the Money Quest Program **because** we want to know to what extent youth who participate learn and use recommended money management skills **in order to** report program outcomes to our funder.

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
11

Underlying purpose =

LEARNING

We engage in evaluation in order to learn. If the evaluation does not promote learning, think about whether it is a wise use of resources.

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
12

Identify key questions the evaluation will answer

Who wants to know what about this program?

13

Who wants to know what about your program?

WHO?	WHAT do you/they want to know?	HOW will they use the info?
You – staff		
Participants		
Funder		
Other stakeholders ??		

14

Evaluation questions

- Clarify your evaluation questions
- Make them specific
- What do you *need* to know vs. what you would *like* to know
- Prioritize
- Check: Will answers to these questions provide important and useful information?

15

Is your program ready to measure outcomes? Which outcomes?

Which outcomes you measure and when you measure them depends upon:

- Stage of program's development
- Level of implementation of the program
- Level of intensity of the program
- Resources available

16

Need vs. want to know

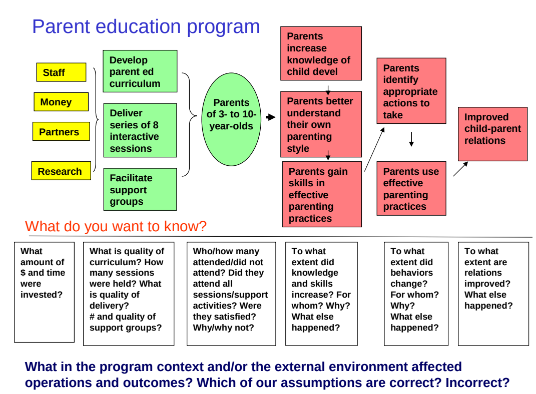
Distinguish between what stakeholders need to know and what you would like to know.

What we *need* to know

vs.

What we'd *like* to know

17



How good are your questions?

- Can the questions be answered given the program?
- Are the questions truly important?
- Will the questions provide new insights?
- Can the questions be answered given your resources and timeline?
- Have the concerns of key users been included?

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
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Indicators

- What would it look like?
- How would I know it?
- If I were a visitor, what would I see, hear, read, and/or smell that would tell me this "thing" exists?

If the outcome is achieved, how will you know it? What will it look like? What is the evidence?

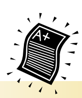
Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
20

What is an indicator?

An indicator is the specific information, or evidence, that represents the phenomenon you are asking about.

Indicator of fire = smoke

Indicator of academic achievement = passing grades



Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
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Indicators – Evidence

The information needed to answer your evaluation questions

Example: Did participants increase their knowledge of child development?

Indicator: # participants self-reporting change in understanding about children's developmental milestones

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
22

Have the pets been fed today?

How would you know that the animals have been fed? *What are the indicators?*

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
23

Let's practice….

What is an indicator of…
- High blood pressure?
- A clean neighborhood?
- A popular movie?
- A good carpenter?
- Learning at the workshop?

Would the indicators be different for young people vs. seniors, high- vs. low-income neighborhoods, rural vs. urban residents, or by ethnicity?

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 4: Focusing the evaluation
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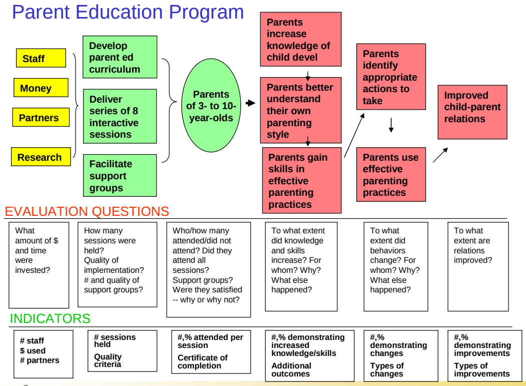
Indicators – Practice

Outcome	Indicators
Youth are active in community life	
Women have expanded economic opportunities	
Lake water quality is safe for swimming	

General tips

- Often multiple indicators are necessary.
- Indicators may be quantitative or qualitative.
- Indicators need to be culturally appropriate.
- Participants and key stakeholders often know indicators.

Parent Education Program



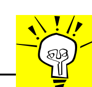
Indicators: How would I know it?

Outcome	Indicators
Reduction in diabetes	
Land owners or managers in Ace County improved their land management practices	#,% acres managed according to guidelines Quality of conservation plan implementation
Participating families improve their family financial management	#,% with savings goal set #,% with debt reduction goal set #,% using spending plan #,% maintaining emergency fund

Indicators – Examples

Outcome	Indicators
Program participants increase ability to achieve financial self-sufficiency as a result of the 10-week program in Ark County	#,% who reduce debt #,% who increase financial knowledge #,% who establish emergency fund
Communities improve food security by 2010	#,% that adopt feasible written plan to address challenges and barriers #,% showing evidence of concrete actions to implement plan #,% with increased quantity and quality of nutritional food in their emergency food programs

What do you think?



Outcome	Indicators
Seniors improved their lifestyles through increased physical activity by the end of the program	

5 (Quantity) Happy (Quality) Kids

Indicators are often expressed as numbers or percentages (number of…, percent of…, ratio of…, incidence of…, proportion of…).

However, not all indicators are numbers; qualitative indicators may be important.

Remember, "Not everything that counts can be counted."

How good is the indicator?

Tangible – be able to "touch/know" the information in some way

- see (observable)
- read (in newspaper, survey, client record)
- hear (from individual, others)

- Direct
- Specific and clearly defined
- Useful
- Practical
- Culturally appropriate
- Adequate

Choose an evaluation design

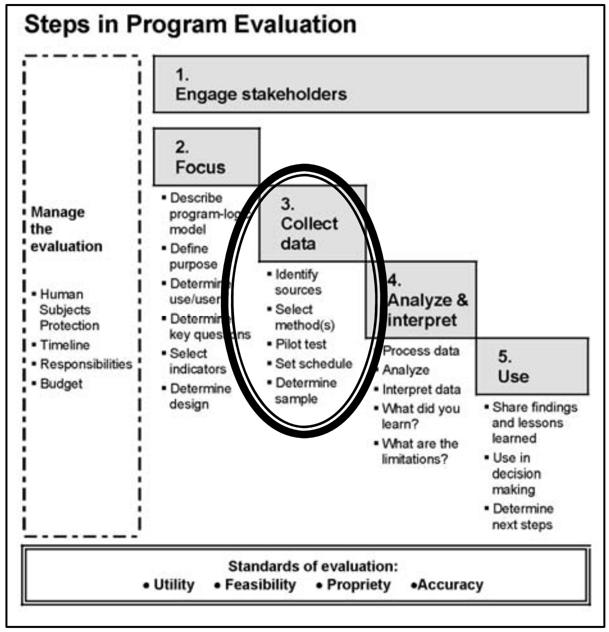
- **Experimental design:** Uses random assignment to groups or programs; e.g., randomized control trials.
- **Quasi-experimental design:** Does not use random assignment but does include either more than one group or more than one wave of measurement; e.g., comparison group designs, before and after measurement, mixed-method designs, longitudinal designs.
- **Non-experimental design:** Does not use random assignment or multiple measurements; e.g., case study design, single point in time designs, such as post-tornado interviews with residents or a post program survey.

Evaluation design considerations

- Use of comparison
- Multiple sources of information
- Information that is seen as credible
- Show your work
- Match your conclusions to your methods
- Describe what the program did – use program theory to link activities to results
- Use the research base, results from similar programs
- Accountable for "contribution" vs. "attribution"

Unit 5: Collecting data

Unit 5: Collecting data



Data collection is a major part of any evaluation. But, which data collection method you choose depends on your purpose and the questions you want to have answered. *Methods follow purpose!!* Don't fall into thinking, "Let's do a survey," or "Let's conduct some focus groups," before you determine what you want to know (covered in Unit 4) and where you will get the information (sources of information). This unit covers the basic concepts and choices involved in collecting data, as well as activities to build skills in specific data collection methods. You will also find resources and activities to help you create better questionnaires and build your skills in sampling.

Section 5A: Sources of evaluation information

Often, people go to participants/clientele/customers to collect evaluation information. However, a variety of sources exist, including existing information (documents, records), people, pictorial records and observations. Using more than one source helps avoid bias in evaluation.

Section 5B: Quantitative and qualitative methods

Evaluation methods are typically classified as *quantitative* or *qualitative*. *Quantitative* methods provide for structured responses that can be standardized and more easily aggregated. They typically include surveys, tests, and checklists. *Qualitative* methods provide for greater detail and generation of new ideas. They typically include interviews, observations, and case studies. Which method type is appropriate for your evaluation depends on what you want to know, the type of data you need, and resources. Sometimes both types of methods are appropriate. Using both often provides a more complete understanding of the program and its impact.

Section 5C: Choosing methods

There are many data collection methods. Which method or methods should you use? Collecting data is about making choices. The goal of choosing a method is to obtain trustworthy, authentic, and credible evidence. What do you need to consider when choosing a method or methods? Often a mix of methods provides more useful findings. However, most evaluations operate under resource constraints, so practical considerations are often necessary as well.

Section 5D: Culturally appropriate methods

Data collection must be culturally responsive and appropriate. Issues of language and communication styles, religion and culture, and technology access and availability all affect whether the method is appropriate for a particular population.

Section 5E: Focus groups

Focus group interviews have been defined as a "carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." [Krueger, R. A. (1988), p. 18]

Section 5F: Surveys

The most widely used data collection method is the survey. It uses structured questionnaires to generate quantitative data. Surveys may be mailed (through the postal system or e-mail), completed on-site, or administered through interviews conducted face-to-face, by telephone, or through the internet or telephone.

Section 5G: Document review

Document review relies on pre-existing materials such as agency records, statistical databases, meeting minutes, reports, and budgets.

Section 5H: Observation

Collecting evaluation information by "seeing" and "listening" is a less common but still useful method of data collection.

Section 5I: Interviews

The interview method of data collection involves the collection of information by talking with and listening to people. Interviews range on a continuum from those that are tightly structured to those that are free-flowing and conversational.

Section 5J: End-of-session questionnaires, including retrospective post-then-pre method

A popular data collection technique in educational programs is the end-of-session questionnaire. It is used to collect immediate feedback from participants. One type of an end-of-session questionnaire is the *retrospective post-then-pre method*, which allows a person or group to collect comparative information of perceptions without having to administer two questionnaires.

Section 5K: Other methods for collecting data

There are a variety of other methods, such as creative expression using drawing and drama, expert reviews, diaries and journaling, and case studies. Or, rather than collecting data from individuals, it is also possible to collect data using group processes that yield a collective understanding or assessment, such as nominal group technique or the Delphi process. Such innovative techniques may provide richer qualitative information for greater understanding.

Section 5L: Questionnaire design

Constructing a questionnaire and writing strong questions takes time and attention. This section is organized by seven key considerations of questionnaire design and construction:

- Kinds of information
- Types of questions
- Wording questions
- Wording answers
- Formatting the questionnaire
- Pre-testing the questionnaire
- Cover letters

Section 5M: Timing of data collection

Data may be collected at a single point in time, through repeated measurements, or at various times, depending on your purpose and information needs. These decisions relate to the evaluation design that you have selected (see Section 4E).

Section 5N: Cover letters

Most data collection requires an introduction – often times a cover letter or preface – to explain the evaluation's purpose, use, human subjects protection, and other critical information. The content and format of this introductory message can affect response rate and findings, so take time to craft it well.

Section 5O: Sampling

A *sample* is a portion or a subgroup of a larger group called a *population.* The two standard ways to draw a sample are by probability and nonprobability sampling. Sampling is not always necessary. When a population is small, you may choose to include all its members. Decisions about sampling depend on population size, your purpose, what you want to know, available resources, and the context.

Resources

The art of asking questions [Payne (1980)]

Collecting evaluation data: An overview of sources and methods (G3568-4) [Taylor-Powell & Steele (1996)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-4.pdf

Data collection, Part 4 of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/index.html

Online evaluation resource library [National Science Foundation (n.d.)]
http://oerl.sri.com/

Resources for methods in evaluation and social research [Shackman (n.d.)]
http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/

Section 5A: Sources of evaluation information

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- be able to list several key information sources for a program of choice.
- understand why multiple sources are preferred.

⌘ Activity

Where can you get the information you need?

Purpose

To help people be aware of different information sources, and consider options when making a choice

Materials needed

Handout-1 *Sources of evaluation information* (Quick Tip #11)

Slide 3

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the handout *Sources of Evaluation Information* (Quick Tip #11) and review the variety of sources of information.
- Invite people to their share experiences collecting data from different sources.
- Ask individuals to form pairs and think about an evaluation they are currently conducting or planning. Ask the pairs to identify one or two specific sources within each category listed on the handout: existing information, people, and pictorial records and observations. List these questions on poster paper and ask the pairs to discuss them relative to the information sources they identified:
    1. Which source is likely to provide the most valid and trustworthy information? Why?
    2. How easy/difficult will it be to collect information from this source?

- Ask for volunteers to share highlights of their discussions with the whole group.
- As a whole group, discuss these questions:
    1. Why is it better to use more than one source of information?
    2. What issues and problems might arise when using more than one source of information? How would you deal with them?
    3. What might restrict you from collecting evaluative information from more than one source?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about sources of information?
- How will you apply your learning to your own evaluation practice?

Section 5B: Quantitative and qualitative methods

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of quantitative and qualitative methods and the relative merits of each.
- increase their understanding of mixed methods as a way to minimize the weaknesses of a single method.
- increase their understanding of the terms *reliability* and *validity* relative to quantitative and qualitative methods.

⌘ Activity
Differences between quantitative and qualitative methods

Purpose

To help people better understand the two broad categories of data collection methods – quantitative and qualitative – and when to use them

Materials needed

Handout-2 *Quantitative and qualitative scenarios*

Handout-3 *Methods for collecting information* (Quick Tip #8)

Slides 4-6

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm responses to the questions below. Ask for volunteers to record individuals' responses on poster paper.

  1. What comes to mind when you hear the term *quantitative methods*?
  2. What comes to mind when you hear the term *qualitative methods*?

Invite individuals to review the lists generated and summarize the major characteristics of each type of method and the major differences between the two.

- Ask individuals to form pairs and distribute poster paper and markers. Invite people to discuss the advantages and limitations of quantitative and qualitative methods and to list their ideas in a chart like the one below.

	Advantages	Limitations
Quantitative		
Qualitative		

- **Case scenario:** Distribute the handout *Quantitative and qualitative scenario*s. Ask the pairs to read and follow the instructions at the top and be prepared to share their answers with the whole group.
- Invite individuals to share their answers and highlights from their discussions. Note that the final scenario illustrates the use of "mixed methods." Discuss the benefits and challenges of using a mixed-methods approach (see pages 46-48 in *The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* [Frechtling (2002)]). Ask for volunteers to share their examples and experiences of using mixed methods in their own data collection efforts.
- Distribute the handout *Methods for Collecting Information* (Quick Tip #8). Run down the list of methods described on the handout and have individuals classify each method as either quantitative or qualitative.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about quantitative and qualitative methods?
- What is one thing you will now start to practice in your own evaluation work?

Additional resources

"An overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods" in *The 2002 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation* (Section III) [Frechtling (2002)]
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057.pdf

Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd ed.) [Patton (2001)]

⌘ Activity

Using “mixed methods”

Purpose

To help people increase their ability to use mixed methods by recognizing the advantages and challenges

Materials needed

Copies of pages 46-48 of “*An overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods*” in *The 2002 user-friendly evaluation guide* (Section III) [Frechtling (2002)]
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057.pdf

Slide 7

Poster paper, marker

Process

- Write “Mixed Methods” on a sheet of poster paper and hang it for all to see.
- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm what comes to mind when they see the words “Mixed Methods.” Record responses on poster paper. Highlight and discuss key points, adding content as necessary.
- Distribute the copies of pages from “An Overview of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Methods.” Provide time for people to read the pages, and then invite them to discuss the reading with a partner for 10 minutes. Post these questions to help facilitate their conversations.
    1. What was new and/or interesting?
    2. What does triangulation mean? How can you use it in your own work?
- Ask for volunteers to share key points from their discussions.

Reflection questions

- What is one new thing you learned about data collection methods?
- What challenges do you foresee in applying a mixed-method strategy?

⌘ Activity

Reliability and validity

Purpose

To help people better understand the meaning of *reliability* and *validity* in evaluation

Materials needed

Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 101-200]

Slides 8, 9

Process

- For discussion of reliability and validity in quantitative and qualitative data, see pages 181-183 in *Building Evaluation Capacity.*
- Use one or more of the activities provided in *Building Evaluation Capacity* [Preskill and Russ-Eft (2005)]:

  Activity 31: Reliability and Validity 101, pp. 186-189

  Activity 32: Understanding Validity, pp. 190-191

  Activity 33: Detecting Threats to Validity, pp. 192-196

  Activity 34: Ensuring the Quality of Qualitative Data, pp. 197-200

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about reliability and validity?
- What is one step you will take to ensure your evaluation practice is more credible and reliable?

Section 5C: Choosing methods

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the range of data collection methods.
- better match data collection methods with evaluation questions to be answered.
- increase their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different methods.

⌘ Activity

Which method or methods should you use?

Purpose

To help people be able to make informed decisions about the most appropriate data collection method to use

Materials needed

Handout-3 *Methods for collecting information* (Quick Tip #8)

Handout-4 *Advantages and challenges of data collection methods*

Handout-5 *Case scenarios – Choosing data collection methods*

Slides 10-17

Process

- Distribute the handout *Methods for Collecting Information* (Quick Tip #8).
- Briefly review each method and invite individuals to share their experiences using the different types. You might turn this into a game "What method am I?"

- **Teach each other:** Distribute the handout *Advantages and challenges of data collection methods*. Break into small groups of two or three people and assign each group one of the methods. Ask each group to prepare a three-minute "lesson" about the advantages and challenges associated with the method. Have each group "teach" its method. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarification.
- **Case scenario:** Distribute the handout *Case scenarios – Choosing data collection methods.* Form groups of 3-4 people. Ask each group to follow the instructions and be prepared to share their ideas with the whole group. Ask for volunteers from the small groups to share their data collection ideas for the scenarios.
- **Share your own:** Invite individuals from each group to describe evaluations they are planning and the evaluation questions they want answered. Provide time for members in each group to understand the cultural context and the evaluation questions to be answered and ask for clarification as needed. Then, discuss different data collection options. Each person should gain ideas for his/her own data collection plan, including things to consider and next steps to take.
- Wrap up with a whole-group discussion of these questions:
  1. Who ought to be involved in deciding which method(s) to use?
  2. Why is it often preferred to include more than one method?
  3. What might be some challenges in using a mix of methods?
  4. What are the resources – time, skills, money, helpers – that need to be considered when choosing a data collection method(s)?

Reflection questions

- Is there anything new you learned about a data collection method or an aspect of data collection?
- What, if anything new, will you apply to your own evaluation practice?
- What additional learning needs do you have?

Additional resource

Activity 39: Choosing data collection methods [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 221-227]

⌘ Activity

Using a data collection plan

Purpose

To help people match data collection to their evaluation questions

Materials needed

Handout-6 *Worksheet – Data collection plan*

Handout-7 *Example – Parent education data collection plan*

Handout-8 *Example – Smoke-free worksite data collection plan* (2 pages)

Process

- Distribute the three handouts: the worksheet and the two sample data collection plans. Explain that this type of data collection plan can help ensure a careful and systematic process – one where data collection really matches the questions you want answered. It focuses only on Step 3 of the overall evaluation process: Collect data.
- Invite everyone to review the examples and discuss in small groups:

  What stands out? What questions do you have?
- Ask everyone to use the worksheet and identify one evaluation question for his/her own evaluation. Write the question in the left column. Then, fill in the other columns on the worksheet for that evaluation question. Invite individuals to team up with another person and share their work for critique and to get ideas.
- Discuss these questions as a whole group:
  1. What aspects of creating a data collection plan were difficult? What aspects were easy?
  2. Will this type of data collection chart help you with your own evaluation?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn by working together to develop your data collection plan?
- What will you need to think about as you actually select your data collection method?

Section 5D: Culturally appropriate methods

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of cultural aspects to consider when selecting data collection methods.
- increase their ability to select culturally responsive and appropriate methods.

Note to facilitator

Refer to Unit 2, Section 2C: Cultural competence in evaluation

⌘ Activity

Being culturally sensitive

Purpose

To help people be able to select culturally appropriate methods

Materials needed:

Handout-10 *Case scenario – Cross-cultural data collection*

Slides 18-24

Poster paper, marker

Bright colored card stock (1 sheet per person)

Process

- Invite people to discuss cultures represented in their programs:
  1. Who are the different participants? What are the different settings…?
  2. What aspects of these settings might influence our data collection decisions? (e.g., language, age, gender, technology access, cultural norms, religious beliefs, mental/physical capabilities, trust, relationships)
  3. Why bring up culture when talking about data collection methods?

- Form small groups and ask the members of each group to share their own experiences collecting data in different cultural situations. Post these questions on a sheet of poster paper to help focus their discussions:
    1. Have you been in a situation when you have been trying to collect data from people from a different culture from you?
    2. If so, what did you do? How did it go? What lessons did you learn?
- Invite members to share highlights of their small group discussions.
- **Case scenario:** Distribute the handout *Case scenario – Cross-cultural data collection*. Break into small groups again and invite each group to follow the instructions at the top of the handout and be prepared to share discussion highlights with the whole group. If you have time or need, use any of these additional scenarios to facilitate discussion, sharing, and reflection:
    - You are holding focus group interviews with third grade students from the local elementary school. What steps will you take to establish rapport, keep the conversation focused, and engage the youth in a useful discussion?
    - To be polite, respondents may tell you what they think you want to hear or may not openly disagree with others in a group discussion. How might you frame your questions or what steps might you take to collect accurate and useful information?
    - Some cultures find direct questioning confrontational, impolite, or threatening. How might you frame your questions or engage in a conversational-type interview to be more culturally sensitive?
    - Modesty is a virtue among many cultures, so one does not speak about one's accomplishments or successes. In the American culture, success is associated with individual initiative, but in other cultures, it may be linked to fate, luck, the intervention of a deity, or the result of family, clan, or community support. How might you frame your survey or interview questions in order to be able to document personal successes and accomplishments?
    - What can you do to reduce participants' anxiety or fear…
        1. in advance of an interview or focus group?
        2. when beginning the interview or focus group?
        3. during the interview or focus group?

- **Brainstorming:** As a whole group, brainstorm steps and actions that individuals can take to ensure their data collection is culturally responsive. Record all of the ideas on poster paper.
- Once the brainstorming is finished, distribute a sheet of colored card stock to each person and invite everyone to make a list of "things to do"/"things to remember" as a reminder of ways to help ensure their data collection is culturally responsive. Encourage people to use the markers and write their own list on the card stock so that they can take it with them and keep it for future reference.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about culture and data collection?
- What is one thing you will do differently in your own evaluation practice?
- What is an area in which you'd like to learn more?

Additional resources

Activity 12: Cultural sensitivity in evaluation [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 63-66]

Activity 14: Exploring the role of assumptions in evaluation practice [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 71-73]

The importance of culture in evaluation: A practical guide for evaluators [Lee (2007)] http://www.thecoloradotrust.org/repository/publications/pdfs/EVALUATION/CrossCulturalGuide.r3.pdf

Overview of multicultural and culturally competent program evaluation: Issues, challenges and opportunities [Hopson (2003)] http://www.calendow.org/Collection_Publications.aspx?coll_id=74&ItemID=416

Section 5E: Focus groups

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of focus groups as a data collection method.
- increase their understanding of the steps and processes involved in conducting a focus group.

⌘ Activity

Focus group basics

Purpose

To help people increase their knowledge about focus groups and when to use them

Materials needed

Handout-11 *Focus group interviews* (Quick Tip #5) (2 pages)

Slides 25, 26

Poster paper, markers

Ball

Process

- Invite individuals to share their experiences either conducting or being a part of a focus group interview.
- As a whole group, discuss these questions:
    1. Is the act of gathering people together to discuss an issue considered a focus group?
    2. What is and is not a focus group?
- Distribute the handout *Focus Group Interviews* (Quick Tip #5). Read and discuss the first two paragraphs: what a focus group is, the purpose of a focus group, and when focus groups might be used.

- **Teach each other:** Break into small groups of three and assign each group one of the next sections on the handout: Preparation, Procedure, Focus group summary.
- Ask each group to read that section of the handout and prepare a a five-minute "lesson" about the section. Suggest that they include questions or issues they would need to resolve if they were actually doing their own focus group.
- Have each group "teach" its section to the others. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarification.
- Distribute a sheet of poster paper to each group. Ask each group to write down steps they would take to plan and conduct focus groups. On another sheet, post these questions for the groups to consider in their discussions:
    1. Who will be invited to the focus group?
    2. How many focus groups will you conduct?
    3. How many individuals will be in each focus group?
    4. What do they need to do to prepare for the focus groups?
    5. Who will facilitate the focus group? Will there be a moderator? What training or preparation is needed?
    6. How will the focus group interview be recorded?
    7. How will analysis be handled?
- Ask the groups to post their papers on the wall and share their key steps and highlights from their discussions. Invite all to make a list for their own future regerence.
- **Game:** As a fun wrap-up, toss a ball around the room. When a person catches the ball, he or she calls out one response to either, "*A focus group is…*" or *"A focus group is not…."* Individuals can *"Pass"* if desired.

Reflection questions:

- What is one thing you learned about focus groups?
- If and when you use focus groups, what is the first step you will take?

Additional resources

Activity 48: Mock focus group interviews [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 255-256]

Basics of conducting focus groups [McNamara (1997-2006)] http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm

Can you call it a focus group? (PM 1969a) [Larson, Grudens-Schuck, & Lundy Allen (2004)] http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1969A.pdf

Focus group fundamentals (PM 1969b) [Larson, Grudens-Schuck, & Lundy Allen (2004)] http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1969B.pdf

Focus group interviewing [Krueger (n.d.)] http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rkrueger/focus.html

Focus group kit (Volumes 1-6) [Krueger & Morgan (1997)]

Focus group moderator critique (Tipsheet #73) [Kiernan (2005)] http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS73.pdf

"Focus groups" in *Data collection, Part 4* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/focus_groups/index.html

Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research [Krueger (1988)]

Section 5F: Surveys

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of when to use a survey.
- increase their skills in conducting a high-quality survey.
- increase their understanding of response rate and ways to increase survey response rate.

Note to facilitator

Creating the questionnaire and sampling are covered in later sections.

⌘ Activity
Implementing a survey

Purpose

To help people plan and be able to carry out a high-quality survey

Materials needed

Publication *Collecting evaluation data: Surveys* (G3658-10) [Taylor-Powell & Hermann (2000)] http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-10.pdf

Slides 27-29

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the booklet *Collecting evaluation data: Surveys*. Use the slides as needed.
- Write the word "Survey" on a sheet of poster paper and hang for all to see. As a group, brainstorm to clarify the meaning of the term: add definitions and examples to the poster paper and ensure everyone is using the term "survey" in like manner.

- Invite individuals to share their experiences in participating in and/or conducting a survey:
    1. What problems did they encounter?
    2. What did they learn from those experiences?
- **Brainstorming:** Brainstorm as a full group:
    1. Is a survey always appropriate?
    2. When is/isn't a survey appropriate?
- List points on poster paper and post. Ensure key points are covered.
- Form groups of 4-5 people. Distribute a piece of poster paper to each group. Ask each group to write "Survey" at the top, draw a line down the middle of the paper, and label one column "Strengths" and the other "Weaknesses." Ask individuals to discuss the relative merits and limitations of survey as a data collection method and note their ideas on the paper. Ask each group to post its sheet of poster paper on the wall. Review and summarize all of the ideas. Add content and clarification as needed.
- Direct individuals' attention to pages 7-9 in the publication (G3658-10). Review and discuss the nine steps involved in planning a survey.
- Invite people to look through the rest of the booklet. Ask each person to identify one thing that he or she finds new or interesting. Encourage people to share their observations with the full group.
- Invite a volunteer from the group to provide a program example, preferably an example of an evaluation that is being planned where a survey is to be used. Explain that the group will plan a survey to implement. There will not be time to actually write the questionnaire, but the group should be able to create a management plan, such as the one found on page 10, that details tasks, timelines, and responsibilities. Form small groups of 4-5 people each. Distribute poster paper and markers to each group. Instruct each group to create a management plan for the survey. Once the groups have developed a survey plan, ask each group to post and explain its plan. Then, working together as a large group, consolidate the individual plans and create one plan for the volunteer to take home.

- Review the survey plan as a whole group. Debrief, asking these questions to the volunteer:
    1. How feasible do you think it will be to carry out this plan?
    2. Does your program have the resources required to carry out this survey, or will external help be required? If help is required, what type of help will you need?
    3. What next steps do you envision?
- Review the sample materials in the Appendix of the publication: the advance notice letter, sample cover letter, and sample follow-up card. Facilitate a discussion around these questions:
    1. What do these materials need to include?
    2. How can you design these materials to motivate people to respond?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about planning a survey?
- What part of a survey do you think requires the most time? What part is the hardest to do?

Additional resources

Choosing a data collection method for survey research (FS996) [Diem (2002)]
http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS996

Designing surveys and questionnaires [StatPac, Inc. (1997-2008)]
http://www.statpac.com/surveys/

Guidelines for planning effective surveys [Statistical Services Center, University of Reading (2000)]
http://www.ssc.rdg.ac.uk/publications/guides/toppes.html?file=%2F2%2Fmodules%2Fmodule10%2Eswf

Internet, mail and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method (3rd ed.). [Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. &Christian, L. (2009)]

The survey kit (2nd ed) (Volumes 1-10) [Fink. A. (2003)]

Survey procedures (Quick Tip #7) [Taylor-Powell (2002)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet7.pdf

⌘ Activity

What about response rate?

Purpose

To help people be more aware of the significance of response rate and improve their ability to increase the response rate of their surveys

Materials needed

Handout-13 *Calculating response rate*

Handout-14 *How to get a respectable response rate* (Quick Tip #1)

Handout-15 *What you should do if you haven't gotten a respectable response rate* (Quick Tip #2)

Slides 30-35

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- Pose these questions to the group and discuss:
  1. What is *response rate* and why is it important?
  2. What is an acceptable response rate for your work?

     Answer: *Response rate* refers to the number of individuals completing the survey in relationship to the number receiving the survey. The response rate affects the validity of the results in that unless respondents are representative of the entire group being surveyed, the results may be skewed. The higher the response rate, the more likely the response is representative. A response of 60% is considered an acceptable return rate for survey research.
- Distribute the handout *Calculating response rate*. Invite individuals to pair up with another and complete the handout. Then share answers and discuss in the large group.

- **Around the room:** Write each of these questions at the top of a sheet of poster paper and post them around the room:
[This activity is adapted from Activity 43 in Preskill and Russ-Eft (2005)]
    1. Why might people not respond to a survey?
    2. What can you do to increase the response rate?
    3. How can you follow up with respondents to try to increase the response rate?
    4. How might a low response rate affect the findings?
    5. Do you report data when the response rate is low? How?
    6. What incentives, if any, may be appropriate to use?

  Form six groups. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper on the wall and explain that they have five minutes to write answers to the question on that sheet of paper. When they hear the whistle, they should move in clockwise fashion to the next paper, adding to what the previous group wrote.

  When the groups have completed the rotation, ask them to review the information on each sheet of poster paper.

  Go to each poster paper and ask for examples, additions, and clarifications. Add content that may have been overlooked.

  Ask for volunteers to share the steps they expect to take to increase response rate in the future.

- Distribute the additional two handouts on response rate as resources for people to take home.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about response rate?
- What, if anything, will you do differently the next time you conduct a survey?

Additional resources

Activity 42: Using incentives to increase survey response rates [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 237-239]

Activity 43: Following up on survey nonrespondents [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 240-242]

Designing a survey to increase response and reliability (Tipsheet #53) [Kiernan (2001)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS53.pdf

Increasing response to surveys (Tipsheet #34) [Kiernan (2001)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS34.pdf

Maximizing response rate and controlling non-response error in survey research (FS997) [Diem (2002)]
http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS997

Section 5G: Document review

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of how documents and existing records can be used in data collection.

⌘ Activity

Using document review in data collection

Purpose

To help people appreciate the number and variety of documents and records that might be used in an evaluation and understand the issues that need to be considered in their use

Materials needed

Slides 36-39

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Write "Document Review" on a sheet of poster paper and post the paper for everyone to see.
- **Brainstorming:** As a group, brainstorm ideas about the meaning of "document." What types of documents (records, papers, logs, grades, data bases, annual reports, budgets, correspondence, media releases, diaries, etc.) might provide data for use in their evaluations?

  Document is defined as "any written or recorded material" not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation. They are often classified as public (historical accounts, minutes of meetings, policy guidelines, records, official correspondence) and personal documents (journals, portfolios, letters, photographs).

- Ask individuals to think about and share what documents exist
    1. in their own programs
    2. in their organizations
    3. in other places that they could access
- List individuals' responses on poster paper.
- Make a three-column chart on poster paper:

Document	Where found	Issues

- Solicit a program example from the group or use one (or more) of these examples:
    - Program staff have asked: To what extent are children who attend the after-school program misbehaving less in school and doing better academically?
    - A funder has asked: To what extent are people saving more as a result of the financial education program?
    - A Board committee asked: To what extent are members participating more actively in the Board?
- Using the example, complete the chart as a group. In the "Issues" column, write down any potential problems or issues with using the document, such as "hard to get," "confidential data," "uncertain accuracy," "great source," "incomplete," etc.
- Wrap up the activity by asking: What have you learned about using documents in your evaluation work?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about using documents in evaluation?
- How might you use existing documents in your own evaluation?

Additional resources

Activity 51: Collecting documents and records (Archival data) [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 263-265]

"Document studies" in *An overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, Section III of The 2002 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation* [Frechtling (2002), pp. 57-58] http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057.pdf

Using existing records in evaluation [Peterson (n.d.)] http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Exisrec5.htm

"Valuable resources" in *Data collection, Part 4* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/resources.html

Section 5H: Observation

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of when and how to use observation as a data collection method.
- increase their ability to collect observational data.

⌘ Activity

Ins and outs of observation

Purpose

To help people by increasing their understanding of observation as a data collection method

Materials needed

Publication *Collecting evaluation data: Direct observation* (G3658-5)
[Taylor-Powell & Steele (1996)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-5.PDF

Slides 40-58

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- Place several items on a table in front of the group: a loaf of bread, head of lettuce, bag of candy, clock, etc. Ask individuals to move around and look at each item and record on a piece of paper what they see. Once everyone has had a chance to record their observations, invite them to share what they saw. You may wish to ask individuals to "observe the room" as a simple way to begin this session.

  Reinforce that observations can be about quantity (number of pieces of candy in the bag) and quality (color, freshness, spoilage, etc). Observations include all five senses. It is not just "seeing."

- Pose the following questions to the group:
    1. For our workshop today, what might you be able to observe that could tell you…
        a. whether learning is occurring?
        b. the characteristics of attendees?
        c. whether the setting is conducive to learning?
        d. whether the materials are easy to use?
    2. What other questions could we address by observing?
- Continue with another example: Brainstorm and list individuals' responses to this question on poster paper:

    Imagine that you are sitting in a room where ten youth are participating in a computer demonstration. If you are looking for indicators of student interest and learning from the demonstration, what would you look for?

- Invite people to share their experiences with using observation for collecting evaluation data.

    What problems did they encounter? What did they learn from those experiences?

- Distribute the booklet, *Collecting evaluation data: Direct observation*. Review the examples on page 1 of the publication.
- **Around the room:** Write each of these questions on the top of a piece of poster paper and post them around the room:
    1. When might observation be appropriate? Not appropriate?
    2. What might be some advantages and limitations of using observation?
    3. What aspects of a program could you observe?
    4. How do you record your observations?
- Form four groups. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper on the wall and explain that they have five minutes to write answers to the question on that sheet of paper. When they hear the whistle, they should move in clockwise fashion to the next paper, adding to what the previous group wrote.
- When the groups have completed the rotation, ask them to review the information on each sheet of poster paper.
- Go to each poster paper and ask for examples, additions, and clarifications. Add content that may have been overlooked.

- Review the sample recording forms on pages 6-8 in the booklet. Facilitate a discussion around these questions:
    1. How are the recording forms different?
    2. Which forms might be more appropriate for which situations?
    3. Which forms, if any, might you use?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn today about using observation for collecting evaluation data?
- What is one thing you will do if you use observational data in evaluation?

Additional resources

"How to evaluate a conference informally with 'listening posts'" in *Journal of extension* [Kiernan (1999)]
http://www.joe.org/joe/1999december/iw1.html

"Observation" in *Data collection, Part 4* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/observation/index.html

Trained observer ratings [Cowan, Hatry, Mark, & Nyyar-Stone (n.d.)]
http://www.urbaninstitute.org/toolkit/data-methods/ratings.cfm

⌘ Activity
Practice using observation

Purpose

To help people by improving their skills in observation as a data collection method

Materials needed

Publication *Collecting evaluation data: Direct observation* (G3658-5) [Taylor-Powell & Steele (1996)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-5.PDF

Handout-16 *Observation scenarios*

Handout-17 *Instructional skills observation checklist*

Poster paper, markers

Process

The different options below are suggestions for practicing observation skills. Choose one or more, or adapt and create your own example.

Option 1: Observe lunch interactions

- Post this evaluation question on poster paper:
  Is the lunch setup conducive to interaction and networking?
- Ask individuals to practice observation by observing what goes on during lunch. Suggest that as part of their evaluation of the evaluation workshop, they are interested in knowing whether the lunch setup is conducive to interaction and networking. During the lunch break, each person is to take paper and pencil and observe the setting (see, hear, smell, taste, touch) to answer the evaluation question.
- Individuals should be prepared to share their observations and insights about collecting observational data after lunch.
- When the whole group reunites, have individuals form pairs. Ask each pair to discuss these questions:
  1. What did you observe? What did you focus on?
  2. Did you record numbers? Did you record what you heard others say? Did you record your own reflections and ideas?
  3. What was easy about collecting these observations? What was difficult?
  4. How did you feel – comfortable, uncomfortable?
- Ask the pairs to share their findings with the whole group. Record each pair's findings and cluster the observations that are similar. Identify and verify unique observations. Facilitate discussion about the process of observing, including issues and challenges they encountered. Add content as necessary.

Option 2: Observation scenarios

- Invite individuals to work in groups of 4-5 people.
- Distribute the handout *Observation scenarios*. Assign one scenario to each group. Explain that they will have 20 minutes to discuss and answer the questions for the scenario. They should be prepared to share their ideas and plans with the whole group.
- Provide paper and markers for ease of sharing.
- Reconvene as a full group. Ask each small group to share key points from its discussion and answers to the questions. Encourage interaction, questions, and sharing of ideas.

Option 3: Observe instructional skills

- Ask everyone to imagine that you, the instructor, are being reviewed for promotion. They are the observers. Distribute the handout *Instructional skills observation checklist*. The checklist lists the aspects on which you are being evaluated. They are to observe and record their observations on the observational checklist over a course of 30 minutes. Ask for questions and clarification.
- Start the 30-minute time period. Continue the workshop.
- At the end of 30 minutes, ask people to stop their observations.
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Ask each group to share:
  - their observations
  - their personal experiences: What was easy about collecting these observations? What was challenging?
- Ask the small groups to share with the whole group. Record each group's findings and cluster the observations that are similar. Identify and verify unique observations. Facilitate discussion about the process of observing – issues and challenges they encountered. Add content as necessary to ensure the basics of observing are covered.

Option 4: Observe an actual program

First meeting: Create a plan

- Invite individuals to work in program teams (people working on the same or like programs). Explain that they will create an observation protocol, establish the process for collecting the data, and actually collect the observational data for that program within the month ahead. Then, they will come back together to share their work and learn from the experience to further hone their observational skills.
- Ask each group to create a plan for their observational data collection. Suggest that they use the publication *Collecting Evaluation Data: Direct Observation* as a guide.
- Observational data collection plan:
  1. What is/are the evaluation question(s) you will answer using observation for data collection?
  2. What specifically will you observe? When? Where? Who (sample)?
- Create the recording form. Determine *how* you will observe – when, length of time, rules to follow. Set dates for data collection.
- Second meeting: Discuss and reflect on results

- Facilitate an open discussion about these topics:
    1. Their findings – what they observed
    2. Their process – How did they do? What challenges did they encounter? How did their plan work?
    3. What worked? What problems/issues did they encounter?
- If appropriate, move to analysis of observational data; see Unit 6.

Additional activities:

Activity 49: Conducting observations [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 257-258]

Activity 50: Collecting unobtrusive measures data [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 259-262]

Section 5I: Interviews

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of interviewing as an evaluation data collection method and get tips for effective interviewing.
- increase their ability to conduct effective interviews.

⌘ Activity
Ins and outs of interviewing

Purpose

To help people understand what to consider when planning and conducting interviews

Materials needed

Slides 59-69

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- Invite individuals to share their experiences conducting interviews or being interviewed for a job, credit application, or evaluation.
- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to these questions:
    1. What is an interview?
    2. When is interviewing useful? When is it not useful?
    3. Are their cultural considerations you need to be aware of when thinking about using interviews in data collection?

- **Around the room:** Write each of these statements on a sheet of poster paper and post them around the room:
    - o Things to do to get ready for conducting interviews
    - o Tips for conducting an effective interview
    - o Things I want to guard against
    - o How might I record the interview data

  Form four groups. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper and explain that they have five minutes to list ideas for that category.When they hear the whistle, they should move in clockwise fashion to the next poster paper, adding to what the previous group wrote.

  After all groups have visited each paper, ask them to go around again and review all the responses.

  Go to each poster paper and ask for examples, additions, and clarifications. Add content that may have been overlooked. At the poster for "How might I record the interview data," ask for advantages and disadvantages for each technique listed.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about interviewing?
- What might you do in your own practice when you use interviews as a data collection method?
- What is an area that you want to work on?

Additional resources

Activity 45: Tips for conducting effective interviews [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 245-248]

Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input [Boyce & Neale (2006)] http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf?docID=6301

General guidelines for conducting interviews [McNamara (1997-2008)] http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/intrview.htm

"Individual interviews" in *Data collection, Part 4* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/interviews/index.html

Interviewing: How to conduct individual interviews [Krueger (n.d.)] http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rkrueger/evaluation_interviewing.html

Probing questions in interviews (Quick Tip #34) [Taylor-Powell & Camino (2006)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet34.pdf

Tips for designing a telephone interview [Krueger (n.d.)]
http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rkrueger/evaluation_tfdati.html

The use of qualitative interviews in evaluation [Sewell (n.d.)]
http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Intervu5.htm?file=%2F2%2Fmodules%2Fmodule16%2Eswf

Using standard phrases in qualitative interviews (Tipsheet #69) [Kiernan, Kiernan, & Goldberg (2003)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS69.pdf

⌘ Activity

Practice interviewing

Purpose

To help people improve their interviewing skills

Materials needed

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

The different options below are suggestions for practicing interviewing skills. Choose one or more, or adapt and create your own practice example.

Option 1: Interview a partner

- Write these questions on a sheet of poster paper:
    1. What is the most important thing you've learned so far during this workshop?
    2. What suggestions do you have for improvement?
    3. Is there anything that has been covered that you might use in your own work? If so, please explain.
- Invite individuals to form teams of two. Have one person be the interviewer and the other be the interviewee. (There will be two rounds, so each person will have the chance to try both roles.) Explain that they have five minutes to conduct an interview to

answer the three evaluation questions that are posted. Each interviewer should have paper on which to record notes as necessary. When they hear the whistle, the partners should exchange roles and conduct the interview again.

- At the end of the activity, debrief with these questions:
    1. As the interviewer: What did you learn? What was easy and what was difficult about conducting the interview? Do you think that you got useful/valid information from the interviewee? What probing questions did you use to solicit deeper, richer information?
    2. As the interviewee: How did you feel about the interview? Were you comfortable? Satisfied? What, if any suggestions, do you have for the interviewer?

Note to facilitator: Rather than interview-a-partner, you might set this up as a fish-bowl, with one interviewer and one interviewee in the center and the rest of the group observing and making notes for later discussion.

Option 2: Role-playing individual interviews

- Use *Activity 46: Role-Playing Individual Interviews*, pages 249-251 in Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005).

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about interviewing?
- What might you do in your own practice when you use interviews as a data collection method?
- What is an area of interviewing that you want to work on?

Section 5J: End-of-session questionnaires, including the retrospective post-then-pre method

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of information that can be collected at the end of a session.
- increase their ability to create useful end-of-session questionnaires.
- increase their ability to use the retrospective post-then-pre method appropriately.

⌘ Activity
Ins and outs of end-of-session questionnaires

Purpose

To help people better implement the popular end-of-session questionnaire

Materials needed

Publication *Collecting evaluation data: End-of-session questionnaires* (G3658-11) [Taylor-Powell & Renner (2000)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-11.PDF

Poster paper, markers, colored pencils

Process

- Invite individuals to share their experiences with using end-of-session questionnaires. What other names do they use for forms used at the end of a program to collect evaluative information?
- **Around the room:** Write each of these questions at the top of a sheet of poster paper and post them around the room:
  1. What information can you collect at end-of-session?
  2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of collecting data with an end-of-session questionnaire?
  3. What do you need to think about when planning for this form of data collection?
  4. When is an end-of-session questionnaire appropriate? When is it not appropriate?
  5. What problems/challenges arise?

- Form five groups. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper on the wall and explain that they have five minutes to write and answers to the question on that sheet of paper. When they hear the whistle, they should move in clockwise fashion to the next paper, adding to what the previous group wrote.
- After all groups have visited each paper, ask them to go around again and review all the responses.
- Go to each poster paper and ask for examples, additions, and clarifications. Add content as appropriate (see content in publication G3658-11).
- **Teach each other:** Distribute publication G3658-11. Invite individuals to leaf through it and become familiar with its content. Divide the participants into five groups and assign each group one of the types of information listed on page 10 of the publication. Ask each group to review the appropriate section of the publication and prepare a five-minute "lesson" to help everyone understand the type of information. Distribute poster paper, markers, and colored pencils for people to use as they wish. Encourage each group to include games and examples to help explain the type of information.

  Invite each group to "teach" its section to the rest of the group. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarifications.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about using end-of-session questionnaires?
- What is one thing you will do the next time you plan to use an end-of-session questionnaire?

⌘ Activity
Ins and outs of retrospective post-then-pre method

Purpose

To help people better understand when and how to use this method of collecting data

Materials needed

Handout-18 *Using the retrospective post-then-pre design* (Quick Tip #27) (2 pages)Handout-20 *Designing a retrospective post-then-pre question* (Quick Tip #28) (2 pages)

Handout-22 *When to use the retrospective post-then-pre design* (Quick Tip #29)

Handout-23 *Analysis of retrospective post-then-pre data* (Quick Tip #30) (2 pages)

Poster paper, markers, colored pencils

Process

- Invite individuals to share their experiences using the retrospective post-then-pre method.
- Distribute the four *Quick Tips*. Invite individuals to read *Quick Tips #27* and *#29*. Write these discussion topics on a sheet of poster paper, hang it for all to see, and then facilitate a discussion:
    1. Why is a retrospective post-then-pre method used?
    2. What are some strengths of this method?
    3. What are some limitations?
- Form groups of 3-4 people. Ask them to read *Quick Tips #28* and *#30*. Distribute paper with these three questions written for them to discuss in their groups:
    1. What did you learn?
    2. What were some key points from the reading?
    3. What is one thing you will not forget?
- Facilitate a large group discussion about if, when, and how individuals might use the retrospective post-then-pre questionnaire.

  What do you see as challenges you may encounter?

Reflection questions

- How appropriate do you think the retrospective post-then-pre questionnaire may be in your different program contexts?
- What is one key point you will remember about the retrospective post-then-pre method?

Section 5K: Other methods for collecting data

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- be more familiar with a variety of ways to collect evaluative data.
- increase their knowledge about how and when to use alternative methods.

⌘ Activity

Using creative expression, stories, journals, case study, and other data collection methods

Purpose

To help people increase their knowledge about a variety of innovative ways to collect data

Materials needed

Handout-25 *Other ways to collect evaluation data* (3 pages)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Teach each other:** Distribute the handout *Other ways to collect evaluation data.* Form seven groups and assign each group one of the data collection methods discussed on the handout. Ask each group to read and discuss their assigned method and to prepare a brief "lesson" to help everyone understand the method. Distribute poster paper and markers for people to use. Encourage each group to use innovative teaching techniques and examples to "teach" the method. The lessons should cover these points:
  1. What is involved in this method?
  2. When would you use this method?
  3. What might be its strengths/limitations?

  Ask each group to "teach" its data collection method. Invite questions, examples, and additional input.

  Solicit examples of "other" ways people have collected data.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about these types of data collection techniques?
- Do you see a way that you might use one or more in your own work? If yes, please explain.

⌘ Activity

Using group methods in data collection

Purpose

To help people increase their knowledge about the use of three types of group processes for collecting evaluative data

Materials needed

Handout-28 *Group assessment techniques for collecting data* (2 pages)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Stage a "group session" that will serve as an example of using a group method to collect evaluation data. Begin with an open brainstorming session. Ask individuals to generate as many ideas as possible that answer this question:

  > What would you like to learn or be able to do as a result of our time together today?

  Encourage everyone to be spontaneous and open – ALL ideas about what they *hope* are welcome. Use poster paper to record ideas as they are called out. Be sure all ideas are jotted down quickly and then later verified for accuracy. Continue until everyone has finished.

- Reflect on what was done. Pose the following questions:

  1. What did we just do?
  2. What type of group process was this?
     Answer: brainstorming session
  3. What type of information did we collect?
     Answer: narrative, outcome information, "group think," immediate, etc.

4. How was this experience different than if I had…
    a. interviewed you each individually?
    b. given you a questionnaire with an open-ended question to complete?
    c. divided you into groups and run a focus group interview?
5. Why might you want to use a "group technique" for data collection?
6. When is and when isn't a "group technique" appropriate? Answer: depends upon type of data needed, cultural appropriateness, group dynamics/power and control issues, facilitator ability, ability to record and analyze ideas, formative vs. summative information, etc.
7. Thinking about our group brainstorming session just now:
    a. What went well?
    b. What could have been improved?
    c. How might we use these data (the responses recorded on the poster paper)?

- Form groups of 3-4 people each. Distribute the handout *Group assessment techniques for collecting data.*
- Ask individuals to read the handout and then discuss the following questions as a group:
    1. When might this group method be appropriate for collecting evaluation data? When might it be inappropriate? (Think about audience and type of information.)
    2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of this method for collecting evaluation data?
- Distribute poster paper for group members to record their discussions. Ask them to be prepared to share their ideas with the full group.
- Reconvene as a full group. Invite each sub-group to share its discussion. Encourage questions and discussion.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about group data collection techniques?
- Do you see a way that you might use group data collection in your own work? If yes, please explain.

Additional resources

Collecting group data: Affinity diagram (Quick Tip #6) [Taylor-Powell (2002)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet6.pdf

Collecting group data: Delphi technique (Quick Tip #4) [Taylor-Powell (2002)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet4.pdf

Collecting group data: Nominal group technique (Quick Tip #3) [Taylor-Powell (2002)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet3.pdf

Section 5L: Questionnaire design

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to develop a useful questionnaire.
- increase their ability to word questions to capture the information they want.
- understand the pros and cons of using different types of questions.
- increase their ability to word responses appropriately.
- identify ways to improve the format/design of a questionnaire.

⌘ Activity

Getting ready to create a questionnaire

Purpose

To help people determine whether a questionnaire should be used and, if so, to think about the purpose and all that is involved in creating a useful questionnaire

Materials needed

Handout-30 *Steps to creating a good questionnaire*

Slides 70-90

Process

- **Case scenario:** Ask people to imagine this situation:

  Yikes! I almost forgot. My workshop is tonight and I need to evaluate it. I'll just quickly put together a questionnaire and pass it out at the end of the workshop.

- Invite individuals to share their experiences in creating questionnaires: “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” You might use these questions to facilitate the discussion:
    1. When did a questionnaire work well? What about the situation made it work well?
    2. When did a questionnaire not work well? For what reasons?
    3. What lessons have you learned in developing questionnaires?
- **Brainstorming:** As a whole group, brainstorm answers to this question:

  When is a questionnaire justified?

  Ensure that these three conditions are mentioned during the discussion:
    - Respondents can provide useful information about the topic.
    - You know what it is you want to know and are reasonably sure that you can write questions to get the information.
    - Respondents can be relied upon to provide the information you need (perhaps with incentives). This means they can comprehend the questions and respond properly; they are truthful; they can fill in a questionnaire; and they are motivated enough to respond carefully.
- Distribute the handout *Steps to creating a good questionnaire.*
- Walk through the six steps. Ask individuals to team up with one other person to discuss the handout. Post these questions to guide the pairs’ discussions about good questionnaires:
    1. What needs to be considered?
    2. Who should be involved?
    3. What, if any, additional information do you need?
- Invite the pairs to share key points from their discussions. Encourage people to ask questions and seek clarification.

Reflection questions

- When might a questionnaire not be appropriate?
- What is one thing you learned about designing a questionnaire?
- What is one thing that you will do differently the next time you develop a questionnaire?

⌘ Activity

Types of questions: Comparing open and close-ended questions

Purpose

To help people be aware of the different ways to ask a question, to know when to use which type, and to be able to match question to type of information they want

Materials Needed

Publication *Questionnaire design: Asking questions with a purpose* (G3658-2) [Taylor-Powell (1998)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-2.PDF

4” x 6” index cards, colored markers (fine point)

Slides 91-99

Process

- Distribute the publication *Questionnaire Design* or make copies of pages 6-11. Individuals will explore different ways to write questions as either open-ended or close-ended.
- Direct individuals to form pairs. Ask them to read and discuss pages 6-11, reviewing each type of question in turn. Post these questions for the pairs to consider as they review the material:
    1. How is the question different?
    2. What type of information is it trying to collect?
- Review the boxed text on page 6 of the booklet *Questionnaire Design.* Clarify the type of information that each question collects.
- **Affinity diagramming:** Write this question on poster paper and hang for all to see:

    Which of these skills did you improve as a result of your experience as a 4-H Ambassador?

    - Public speaking
    - Leading a group
    - Team work
    - Planning skills
    - Organizational skills
    - Communication skills

Distribute index cards and markers (8-10 cards per pair). Ask each pair to rephrase the question in as many ways as possible and write each question on a separate card.

After a few minutes, ask the pairs to place their cards on a table, next to others that are similar. Cluster "like" questions into groupings (piles). Don't force cards into a pile. Look at the groupings as a whole group and discuss:

1. What is different about the different questions?
2. Even within clusters, what different wording do you see? Point out the many ways a person can pose a question.
3. What is different about the information that the different questions might yield?
4. Why might you choose one way of wording a question over another?
5. Wrap up with a discussion of the difference between the quantitative and qualitative data that different questions provide. What does each mean for analysis?

Reflection questions

- What have you learned about the difference between open and close-ended questions?
- When are you likely to use an open-ended question? A close-ended question?

Additional resource

Activity 40: Comparing and contrasting open-ended and closed-ended survey formats [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 228-232]

⌘ Activity

Wording the question

Purpose

To help people be able to write clear questions to obtain more accurate information from questionnaires

Materials needed

Publication *Questionnaire design: Asking questions with a purpose* (G3658-2) [Taylor-Powell (1998)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-2.PDF

Handout-31 *What's wrong with these questions?* (4 pages)

Handout-35 *Checklist: Avoiding common problems in question wording*

Colored card stock, pens, markers

Slides 100-116

Process

- **Share your own:** Invite individuals to share their experiences with writing questions/questionnaires:
    1. Do your questions always yield the information you are looking for?
    2. When were you really satisfied with your questions? When not?
- Invite individuals to form pairs. Distribute the handout *What's wrong with these questions*? Assign 3-4 questions to each pair. Ask each pair to identify problems with their questions. Have them re-write the questions to eliminate the problems and be prepared to share with the full group.
- As a full group, discuss and review each question and revised wording. Add content as needed.
- Distribute colored card stock, one sheet to each person. Keep everyone in pairs, and ask them to work together to write down as many of the "question errors" as they can remember on their card stock. In round-robin fashion, ask each person to name one error, until all of the errors are covered. Suggest that individuals keep their card stock handy to remind themselves of things "not to do." You may also wish to distribute the handout *Checklist: Avoiding common problems in question wording.*
- **Brainstorming:** Write the questions below on poster paper and hang for all to see. As a whole group, brainstorm answers:
    1. How can poorly-worded questions affect your evaluation?
    2. What can you do to avoid poorly-worded questions?
    3. What do you do if you find a question was poorly worded and not understood by your respondents?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn today about writing questions?
- What is one thing you will do the next time you write a questionnaire?

Additional resources

Crafting behavior questions (Tipsheet #36) [Kiernan (2001)] http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS36.pdf

Developing written questionnaires – Writing questionnaires [Zalles (n.d.)] http://oerl.sri.com/module/mod2

Multiple intelligences (MI) real-world scenario readability scores [Morris (2007)] http://www.igs.net/~cmorris/srs.html

"Questionnaires" in *Data collection, Part 4* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/data_coll/surveys/index.html

A step-by-step guide to developing effective questionnaires and survey procedures for program evaluation & research (FS995) [Diem (2002)] http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS995

⌘ Activity

Wording the answer

Purpose

To help people be able to word answer choices so that they match the question and are easy to understand

Materials needed

Handout-36 *Response options – Primer*

Handout-37 *Rating scales* (2 pages)

Slides 117-124

Process

- Distribute the handout *Response options – Primer*. Ask individuals to work as pairs to read through the handouts and discuss the content.

- Pose these questions to the full group for discussion:
    1. What are the three main types of response options?
    2. How does each response option differ?
    3. When would each be used?
- Distribute the handout *Rating scales*. Ask individuals to review the handout; then facilitate a full group discussion of key points.
- Invite people to share experiences in wording responses and using scales.

Reflection questions

- What is one “Aha!” you had when reading these handouts?
- What is one thing you will remember to do the next time you write a questionnaire?

Additional resources

A compilation of survey response options [Harris (n.d.)]
http://www.dataguru.org/ref/survey/responseoptions.asp

Types of response scales [Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, University of Texas (n.d.]
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey/responseScale.pdf

⌘ Activity

Formatting the questionnaire

Purpose

To help people be able to design a questionnaire so that it flows smoothly and is readable and user-friendly

Materials needed

2-4 sample questionnaires provided by you or other individuals

Slides 125-131

Process

- **Brainstorming:** As a full group, brainstorm responses to these questions:
    1. What makes a questionnaire attractive – something you want to complete?
    2. What makes a questionnaire readable? What makes it easy to follow and complete?
    3. What respondent characteristics do you need to consider?
    4. Do these answers differ depending upon who is completing the questionnaire, i.e., teens, seniors, people of different ethnic origins?
- **Peer critique:** Form groups of 3-4 people. Distribute the sample questionnaires. Invite each group to critique the samples, focusing on readability and design and making notes about how the samples could be improved.
- Ask for volunteers to share their notes and suggestions for improvements with the full group. Add content as appropriate.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about formatting a questionnaire?
- What is one thing you will do the next time you format a questionnaire?

⌘ Activity
Questionnaire design – Practice

Purpose

To help people by practice their skills in question wording and formatting by critiquing an actual questionnaire

Materials needed

2-4 sample questionnaires provided by you or other individuals

Note to facilitator

In advance of the session, invite individuals to bring their own questions/questionnaire to the group for peer review. Provide for photocopying so that each person has a copy. This is a powerful way to learn from each other and the "volunteer" goes away with a much better questionnaire!

In the event that no one volunteers, bring 2-4 sample questionnaires to work on. Ask each group to critique the questionnaire and provide ideas for improvement.

Process

- **Peer critique:** Invite the volunteers (one by one) to share his/her example. Encourage individuals to help each other by carefully reviewing the questionnaires and offering constructive feedback. Form groups of 2-3 people and ask each small group to review each questionnaire, making notes, revising wording, and suggesting specific ways to improve it.
- Facilitate a full group session when the smaller groups can share their ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned by critiquing these questionnaires?
- What is one thing you will do differently as you develop your own questionnaire?

⌘ Activity

Pre-testing the questionnaire

Purpose

To help people by reinforcing the importance of pre-testing questionnaires and sharing techniques for conducting pretests

Materials needed

Handout-39 *Pilot test your questionnaire*

Slides 133-137

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to these questions:

  Why do we need to pilot test our questionnaires?

- Record all responses on poster paper. Note that the terms “pre-test” and “pilot test” are used synonymously.

- **Teach each other:** Distribute copies of the handout *Pilot test your questionnaire*. Form small groups and assign each group a section of the handout. Ask each group to review the section and prepare a brief “lesson” to present the information to the others. Distribute poster paper and markers. Encourage the groups to add their own examples and use creative methods of instruction.

  Invite each group to “teach” its section. Invite questions, examples, and additional input. Add content and clarification as appropriate.

  Ask for volunteers who are in the process of creating a questionnaire or have a questionnaire they need pilot tested. Form small groups with one “volunteer” in each group.

  Explain that the group is to help the “volunteer” create a plan to pilot test her questionnaire. They may use the handout to help develop the plan. Explain that the “volunteer” will have the opportunity to share her plan with the whole group and seek additional input.

PLAN FOR PILOT TESTING A QUESTIONNAIRE	
Who will participate in the pilot?	
When will the pilot be carried out?	
What preparations are needed, if any?	
What resources are needed?	

  Regroup as a full group. Invite each volunteer to share the plan that she will implement. Encourage the others to add to the plan, make suggestions, and seek clarification as necessary.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about pre-testing a questionnaire?
- What is one thing you will do from now on before implementing a questionnaire?

Section 5M: Timing of data collection

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the different times that data can be collected, not just "after" a program.
- increase their ability to plan and schedule data collection consistent with the evaluation questions they want answered.
- increase their understanding of the relationship between timing of data collection and ability to answer their evaluation questions.

⌘ Activity

When do we collect the data?

Purpose

To help people be able to intentionally schedule data collection relevant to their evaluation

Note to facilitator

Since the actual timing of data collection relates to evaluation design, you may wish to review Unit 4, Section 4E: "Choosing an evaluation design" and the Unit 4 handout *Evaluation designs.*

Materials needed

Slide 143

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Write the following words and phrases on a sheet of poster paper and hang it for all to see:
  - After a program
  - Retrospective post-then-pre
  - Before and after
  - Continuously
  - Time series (multiple times before and after the program)
  - Repeated (multiple times)

- Explain that each item represents a time when data can be collected. Briefly review the meaning of each to ensure that everyone has the same understanding. Encourage questions and clarification.
- Form six groups. Assign one item to each group. Explain that they have 20 minutes to discuss and identify when they might use that timing for data collection. Distribute poster paper and markers so they can write down their examples to share with the full group.
- Ask each group to share its examples. Encourage others to add ideas, ask questions, and seek clarification, as needed.
- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm answers to these questions:
    1. What are the advantages/disadvantages of collecting data at each of those times?
    2. If you want comparative information, when do you need to collect information?
    3. What is baseline information? Why do people collect it?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about scheduling and timing of data collection?
- What is one thing you will now do in your own evaluation practice?

Section 5N: Cover letters

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of the critical information that needs to be included in a cover letter.
- increase their ability to write a quality cover message for any type of data collection effort.

⌘ Activity

Writing a cover letter

Purpose

To help people be able to write quality cover letters

Materials needed

2-4 sample cover letters provided by you or other individuals

Handout-40 *Cover letter exercise*

Slides 139-142

Note to facilitator

In advance of the session, invite people to bring their own cover letters to the group for peer review. Provide for photocopying so that each participant has a copy. In the event that no one volunteers, provide 2-4 sample cover letters.

Process

- **Peer critique:** Form groups of 3-5 people. Distribute the handout *Cover letter exercise* and one sample cover letter to each group. Ask the group to complete the exercise using the sample cover letter, revising or rewriting the cover letter to reflect the points on the handout.

- Invite each group to share its cover letter and key points and issues that were discussed during their group work.
- **Brainstorming:** Using the points listed on the handout, ask individuals to brainstorm ways an introduction would be made for the following methods of data collection and what information would be included in those introductions:
    - a telephone interview
    - a focus group interview
    - an electronic survey
- Wrap up with a discussion of different ways to convey "What's in it for me" in the introduction to an evaluation data collection effort.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned today about cover letters?
- What is one thing you will do in your own evaluation work?

Additional resource

Cover letter for a survey (Tipsheet #22) [Kiernan (2005)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS22.pdf

Section 5O: Sampling

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of the difference between probability and nonprobability sampling.
- increase their knowledge of how sampling decisions can affect their evaluation.
- be able to determine the appropriate sampling method given an evaluation's purpose and key questions.

⌘ Activity

The basics of sampling

Purpose

To help people understand the meaning of sampling and the difference between probability and nonprobability sampling

Materials needed

Publication *Sampling* (G3658-3) [Taylor-Powell (1998)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-3.PDF

Handout-41 *Choosing a sample – Scenarios*

Slides 143-146

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Post these questions for the group to see:
  1. What is a sample?
  2. Does a sample always refer to people?
  3. Why do people use a sample?
  4. What makes a "good" sample?
  5. Is a sample always necessary? If not, when/why not?

- Form groups of 3 people and invite the groups to discuss the questions. Then, taking each question in turn, invite individuals to share key points from their small-group conversations. Summarize and reinforce key points; add content as appropriate.
- Distribute copies of publication G3658-3, *Sampling*.
- Define probability and nonprobability sampling. Invite individuals to provide examples of each.
- **Teach each other:** Form groups of 5-6 people. Have each group count off, as either #1 or #2. Assign *probability sampling* to the #1s and *nonprobability sampling* to the #2s.

  Ask each group to read the relevant section in the publication and prepare a 10- to 15-minute "lesson" to help the others understand the concept. Distribute poster paper and markers for people to use. Encourage the groups to use their own experiences, examples, and creative teaching techniques.

  Invite each group to "teach" the others. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarification.
- **Case scenario:** Regroup individuals into groups of 3-4, mixing up the previous groupings. Distribute the handout *Choosing a sample – Scenarios*. Ask people to imagine themselves in each situation and work as a group to complete the activities. Ask each group to be prepared to share its choices with the whole group.
- Invite the groups to share their work and any issues or key points from their discussions.
- **Share your own:** Ask if anyone has a sampling issue that they need help with. If there is such a request, facilitate a peer learning process to provide guidance for the individual.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about sampling?
- What problems or issues have you experienced or noticed in sample selection? What might you do to correct those problems, or what additional steps might you take to address those situations?

Additional resources

Activity 37: Choosing an appropriate sample [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 208-210]

Sampling a diverse audience (Tipsheet #58) [Kiernan (2001)] http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS58.pdf

⌘ Activity
Random samples

Purpose

To help people better understand random sampling – strengths and challenges

Materials needed

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- Write these questions on a sheet of poster paper and post for the group to see:
    1. What is a "random sample"?
    2. Why is it used?
    3. Is it the most appropriate sampling strategy for evaluation?
- Form groups of 4-6 people and invite them to discuss the questions. Then, taking each question in turn, invite individuals to share key points from their conversations. Summarize and reinforce key points; add content as appropriate.
- Ask for examples of random samples in everyday life.

    Examples: lotto, bingo, a drawing. A lotto draw is a good example of simple random sampling. A sample of numbers is randomly generated from a population, with each number having an equal chance of being selected.

- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm answers to this question:

    What are ways to draw a random sample?

- Record ideas on a sheet of poster paper, clarifying appropriateness depending upon sample size.
- **Around the room:** Distribute poster paper to each small group. Ask each group to write "Random Sampling" across the top and draw a line down the middle of the paper. Label the left column "Strengths" and on the right column "Limitations – Issues." Ask each group to find a place at the wall, attach its poster paper, and write as many ideas as possible under each heading in three minutes. When the whistle blows, individuals should move clockwise to another sheet and read and add to the ideas written there.

When the groups have run out of ideas, invite all to move around and review what has been written. Encourage discussion and clarification.

- **Brainstorming:** Wrap up by working as a large group to brainstorm ways to complete these statements:
    - Random sampling is…
    - Random sampling is not…
- Hang two sheets of poster paper and invite two volunteers to record the fast-generated responses.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about random sampling?
- What will you apply in your own evaluation practice?

Additional resource

Activity 36: Making the case for using a random sample [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 205-207]

⌘ Activity

Sample size – How many do I need in my sample?

Purpose

To help people better understand sample size – when it matters, what to consider, and how to calculate it

Note to facilitator

Differentiate between sample size and response rate. (See the activity "What about response rate?" in Section 5F: "Surveys.")

Materials needed

Handout-42 *Sample size* (2 pages)

5" x 7" index cards

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Pose this question to the group:

  How do you determine your sample size?

- Encourage discussion about what factors individuals consider when they set their sample size.
- Distribute the handout *Sample size*.
- Invite everyone to read the first paragraph. Facilitate discussion and clarification. Ensure that everyone understands the concept of greater variability in smaller populations.
- Continue reviewing the handout. Ask people to read the next section on "Sampling error" and write down one thing that they learned or had reinforced from this reading. Invite volunteers to share their "new learning."
- Continue by raising the question:

  What do you think "subgroup sample" means?

- Encourage discussion and then ask everyone to read the paragraph on subgroup sample. Invite questions and points of clarification.
- To finish the handout, ask individuals to find a partner, finish reading the handout, and discuss what they learned or had reinforced from the reading.
- Distribute the index cards – one card to each person. Ask individuals to write down 1-2 of these "new learnings" on their cards. Then invite people to turn to another individual and share their "learnings." Ask them to continue moving around the group, until each person has shared his/her "learnings" with every other person in the room.
- Regroup as a full group. Facilitate a wrap-up, using these questions:
  1. To what extent did you have the same "new learnings"?
  2. What did you learn from interacting with the others?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about sample size?
- How does "sampling for representativeness" vs. "sampling for purpose" differ?
- What is something you will now do in your own evaluation practice when you need to sample?

Additional resources

Determining sample size (PEOD6) [Israel (2003)]
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PD006

How to determine a sample size (Tipsheet #60) [Watson (2001)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS60.pdf

Sample size calculator [Creative Research Systems (2007-2008)]
http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Sample sizes for various levels of risk and accuracy [Mindel (n.d.)]
http://www2.uta.edu/sswmindel/S6324/Class%20Materials/Sampling/Sampling%20charts.html

⌘ Activity

Bias in sampling

Purpose

To help people better understand the concept of bias in sampling and implications for their evaluations

Materials needed

Handout-44 *What is sampling bias?*

Handout *Problem samples* from *Activity 38: Sampling with bias* [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 211-214]

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Write the following on poster paper and post for all to see:

  The local library wants to know what impact its services are having on the community. It creates a survey, announces the purpose and process of the survey in the local newspaper, places the questionnaires and locked boxes in strategic places around the community for people to complete and securely submit the survey, and posts visible notices at each location to bring attention to the survey.

- Invite individuals to react to this example:
  1. What do you think?
  2. Who is the population?
  3. What, if any problems, might the survey encounter?
  4. Who is likely to be the sample that completes the questionnaire?
  5. How else might you do this?
- Distribute the handout *What is sampling bias?*

- Form groups of 4-5 people. Ask each group to read and discuss the handout. Invite each group to think of at least one example of a situation of sampling bias. Distribute poster paper and have each group write its example on the paper and post the paper around the room for all to see.
- Invite the groups to share key points from their discussions and present their examples of sample bias.
- **Teach each other:** Explain to people that they are working with the library advisory committee and they need to teach the committee about sampling bias. Ask each group to prepare a short "lesson" that would help the library advisory committee understand the nature and importance of sample bias.
- After 10-15 minutes, invite each group to present its "lesson" – with the others playing the role of the library advisory group. Invite questions, examples, and additional input.
- Copy and distribute the handout *Problem samples* [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 211-214].
- Invite each group to discuss each scenario and determine which sampling problem occurred and what they could do to improve it. Ask them to write their responses on a sheet of poster paper.
- Invite groups to share their findings with the larger group.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about sample bias?
- How can bias in your sample affect your evaluation?
- What is something you will now do in your own evaluation practice when you are sampling?

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Quick Tips

Sources of Evaluation Information

Existing information

- Program documents: newsletters, workplans, accomplishment reports, statistical reports, receipts, logs, minutes of meetings, enrollment records, personnel records, proposals, project and grant records
- Existing data bases: census, housing, industry, school census data
- Research reports, published literature
- Histories: county, program, life histories
- Media records
- Public service and business records, for example, farm records; fertilizer sales at local dealers; employment statistics; justice, social and health agency data; DNR and SCS data; local government plans; student performance records
- Other evaluations of the same or similar programs

People

- Beneficiaries: those people who benefit directly or indirectly from the program
- Nonparticipants, proponents, critics, victims
- Key informants: anyone who has particular knowledge about the program or program benefits
- Participants, for example, teachers, parents, religious leaders, previous participants
- People with special expertise, for example, judges, faculty from a nearby college
- County residents, local leaders, influentials
- Program staff, administrators, volunteers
- Collaborators, competitors
- Funders
- Policy makers, legislators, federal or state agency staff

Pictorial records and observations

- Before and after pictures such as photos of streets before and after a cleanup effort, photos of the garage before and after it became a youth center or the empty lot before and after the garden project
- Art done by children which illustrate perceptions of or responses to their environment, for example, violence, drugs
- Videotape of a group meeting which illustrates order of business, leadership and collective decision making skills
- Slide series of overtime changes, for example, lake front development, downtown restoration, grazing management systems or changes in participant skills, for example, training a pet or speaking before a public audience
- Videotape excerpts which demonstrate participant reactions and learning taking place
- Video or photos of program activities showing the diversity of participants
- Observations of events and activities to record numbers and characteristics of participants, practices or behaviors in action, interaction patterns and skill development
- Observations of practices such as manure management practices, erosion control, lawn care practices
- Observations of verbal and nonverbal behavior such as people reacting to a nutrition display, working together in a team process, attending a cross-cultural experience

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QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE SCENARIOS

Instructions: Read the following scenarios and determine whether the data collection methods used are quantitative or qualitative. Discuss any perceived strengths or weaknesses in the proposed data collection method.

SCENARIO 1.

A community coalition introduces an energy conservation campaign by sponsoring various media events; engaging with local religious, community, and youth groups to design and conduct activities; and sponsoring a competition to honor energy-efficient homes. Energy consumption records are studied for 12 months preceding and following the campaign.

SCENARIO 2.

You design a workshop followed up with on-site visits to help local dairy producers understand and be able to meet the new state regulations on manure management. You ask each participant to complete a questionnaire (pretest) at the first meeting to assess current levels of knowledge and practice. You administer the same questionnaire at the end of your on-farm site visits with each producer and compare the pre- and post- results as a measure of the program's success.

SCENARIO 3.

A program team has designed and developed a new online, self-instructional module on conflict management skills. Over 20 staff members have expressed interest in increasing their skills in conflict management. The program team decides to divide the interested staff members into two groups. One group will take the computer-based course. The other group will receive the same training but in a classroom setting. At the end of the instructional period, all participants will be videotaped as they practice and demonstrate their conflict management skills. Program team members will review and compare the videotapes to determine the relative effectiveness of the online module.

SCENARIO 4.

Nearly 20,000 youth across the state participate in a 4-H Animal Science Project each year. A sample survey of youth who participate in the projects is proposed to yield representative and generalizable information about the benefits of participating, the type and number of projects that youth participate in, and proportions by age, gender, and ethnicity. But the program leaders also want to know more about gender differences in the choice of projects and the extent to which particular project activities contribute to more sustained participation and benefits. So, they decide to conduct a series of focus groups with small groups of boys and girls of different ages, involved in different projects.

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Quick Tips
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Quick Tips

Methods for Collecting Information

- **Survey:** collecting standardized information through structured questionnaires to generate quantitative data. Surveys may be mailed (surface and electronic), completed on site or through interviews, either face-to-face or telephone. Sample surveys use probability or purposive sampling.
- **Case Study:** in-depth examination of a particular case (program, group of participants, single individual, site/location). Case studies use multiple sources of information and methods to provide as complete a picture as possible.
- **Interviews:** information collected by talking with and listening to people, either face-to-face or over the telephone. Interviews range on a continuum from those which are tightly structured (as in a survey) to free flowing, conversational interviews.
- **Observation:** collecting information through "seeing" and "listening." Observations may be structured or unstructured.
- **Group assessment:** use of group processes to collect evaluation information such as nominal group technique, focus group, Delphi, brainstorming and community forums.
- **Expert or peer review:** examination by a review committee, panel of experts or peers.
- **Portfolio reviews:** collection of materials, including samples of work, that encompass the breadth and scope of the program activity being evaluated.
- **Testimonials:** individual statements by people indicating personal responses and reactions.
- **Tests:** use of established standards to assess knowledge, skill, performance such as in pen-and-pencil tests or skills tests.
- **Photographs, slides, videos:** use of photography to capture visual images.
- **Diaries, journals:** recording of events over time revealing the personal perspective of the writer/recorder.
- **Logs:** recording of chronological entries which are usually brief and factual.
- **Document analysis:** use of content analysis and other techniques to analyze and summarize printed material and existing information.
- **Other:**

  Action cards: use of index cards on which participants record what they did – the "action" – and when they reach their goal; primarily used in self-assessment.
  Simulations: use of models or mock-ups to solicit perceptions and reactions.
  Problem stories: narrative accounts of past, present or future situations as a means of identifying perceptions using fictional characters to externalize the problem situation.
  Creative expression: use of art forms to represent people's ideas and feeling as through stories, drama, dance, music, art.
  Unobtrusive measures: the gathering of information without the knowledge of the people in the setting such as the wear and tear on a "planted" mat in front of a display.

References:

Bickman, L., & Rog, D. (Eds). (1998). *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pretty, J., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., & Scoones, I. (1995). *Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide.* London: International Institute for Environment & Development.

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ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Method	Overall purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, surveys, checklists	when need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non-threatening way	-can complete anonymously -inexpensive to administer -easy to compare and analyze -administer to many people -can get lots of data -many sample questionnaires already exist	-might not get careful feedback -wording can bias client's responses -are impersonal -in surveys, may need sampling expert - doesn't get full story
Interviews	when want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	-get full range and depth of information -develops relationship with client -can be flexible with client	-can take much time -can be hard to analyze and compare -can be costly -interviewer can bias client's responses
Documentation review	when want impression of how program operates without interrupting the program; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	-get comprehensive and historical information -doesn't interrupt program or client's routine in program -information already exists -few biases about information	-often takes much time -info may be incomplete -need to be quite clear about what looking for -not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Observation	to gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	-view operations of a program as they are actually occurring -can adapt to events as they occur	-can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors -can be complex to categorize observations -can influence behaviors of program participants -can be expensive
Focus groups	explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	-quickly and reliably get common impressions -can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time -can convey key information about programs	-can be hard to analyze responses -need good facilitator for safety and closure -difficult to schedule 6-8 people together
Case studies	to fully understand or depict client's experiences in a program, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases	-fully depicts client's experience in program input, process, and results -powerful means to portray program to outsiders	-usually quite time consuming to collect, organize, and describe -represents depth of information, rather than breadth

Source: McNamara, C. (1997-2008). Overview of methods to collect information. In *Basic guide to program evaluation*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Management Library. Retrieved February 12, 2007, from http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1585345

Case Scenarios — Choosing Data Collection Methods

Instructions: Read the following scenarios and determine which method(s) you would use to collect data for the proposed evaluation. List and discuss perceived strengths or limitations in what you propose.

Scenario 1

The Patchett Children's Coalition aspires to ensure high-quality early childhood care and education for all children. It provides caregiver training and education through classes and events, works with local businesses, and educates parents and the community on issues of early childhood development and care. Part of its evaluation plan is to assess the effectiveness of its caregiver training. A sub-committee of the coalition met and identified three principal questions that it wants to answer through an evaluation:

1) Have participants actually increased their knowledge of child development? Which participants?

2) If they have, how has that knowledge led to changes in their caregiving practices?

3) What changes would people who have attended the training suggest that the coalition could implement to improve the training?

Scenario 2

Efforts to facilitate a watershed natural resources and land use planning management plan for the Topper Creek Watershed have stalled. After a year of roundtable discussions, the planning effort had begun with high hopes. Local government officials, agency representatives, environment interest groups, developers, and citizens had all agreed to convene in a forum to attempt to negotiate a set of guidelines for watershed planning. After months of discussion, the groups had agreed to a set of protocols. The agreements were presented to authorizing bodies, and several of the authorizing bodies passed resolutions endorsing the plan.

However, two town boards, the regional planning commission, and the developers association all refused to approve the plan. Three months of negotiations with these bodies proved fruitless. In the meantime, several town boards and one city council began reviewing and changing ordinances in accordance with the plan. The association that sponsored the planning effort decided to conduct an evaluation to document the changes that occurred as well as the resistances that were encountered. It had three main questions it wanted answered:

1) What changes have occurred? Why did these changes occur in these situations?

2) What resistances were encountered? Why?

3) What lessons can we learn that we can apply to future efforts?

WORKSHEET — DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Key questions	Indicators	Data sources	Data collection methods	Schedule
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

EXAMPLE — PARENT EDUCATION DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Key questions	Indicators	Data sources	Data collection methods	Schedule
1. Were all 8 training sessions provided?	# sessions held	Program records	Record review	Each session
2. To what extent did all 30 targeted parents attend all 6 sessions?	Attendance at sessions	Attendance logs	Record review	Each session
3. Were participants satisfied with the training? What didn't they like?	#, % participants reporting positive/negative reactions; comments	Participants	Brief group discussion at end of each session asking for specific feedback	End of each session
4. Did the trainings go as planned? What didn't go as intended?	Implementation criteria	Program staff	Observation checklist	Each session
5. To what extent did participants increase their knowledge of child development?	#, % participants that report changes in knowledge of child devel., devel. milestones, etc.	Participants	Retrospective post survey	At final session
6. To what extent did they learn new ways to discipline?	#, % participants that report changes in knowledge of ways to discipline (specify behavior)	Participants	Retrospective post survey	At final session
7. To what extent are they using the skills they learned in the program?	#, % participants that report using parenting skills covered in curriculum (specify skills)	Participants	Retrospective post survey; telephone interview	At final session; 3-month follow-up
8. To what extent did child-parent interactions improve? What else happened?	#, % participants that report changes in interactions	Participants	Retrospective post survey; telephone interview	At final session; 3-month follow-up
9. What else did participants gain from these sessions?	Expression of other benefits	Participants; key informants	Group discussion at end of final session; key informant interview	At final session; within 2 weeks
10. Where there any negative outcomes, for anyone?	Expression of negative consequences	Participants; key informants	Group discussion at end of final session; include in telephone interview	At final session; 3-month follow-up

EXAMPLE — SMOKE-FREE WORKSITE DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Based on the description of the smoke-free (SF) worksite policy change initiative as depicted in the program logic model, the following data collection plan lays out key evaluation questions and possible data collection strategies.

KEY QUESTIONS WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?	**INDICATORS (EVIDENCE)** HOW WILL YOU KNOW IT?	**SOURCES (SAMPLES)** WHO WILL HAVE THIS INFORMATION?	**METHODS** HOW WILL YOU GATHER THE INFORMATION?	**SCHEDULE** WHEN WILL THE INFORMATION BE COLLECTED?
INPUTS				
1. Were resources sufficient and provided in timely fashion as needed to implement the policy campaign?	a) amount of campaign budget; staff b) # of council members who are supportive c) position of media towards SF-policy	Coalition coordinator Partners Contacts	Log that tracks resource investments: who provides what and when	Ongoing
OUTPUTS				
2. To what extent has a SF worksite campaign been planned and conducted?	a) #, type activities conducted b) field organizer hired; plan of work c) positive assessment by experts	Coalition coordinator Smoke-Free WI, American Cancer Soc., field org'izer Coalition coordinator Youth participants	• Document review • Interview • Interviews	Within first quarter of campaign and one month after close of campaign
3. To what extent have youth been involved in the campaign?	a) # youth participating in campaign activities b) type of activities youth engaged in	Coalition coordinator, field reps	• Log that tracks participation	Ongoing
4. To what extent does the campaign integrate the promotion of cessation resources?	a) Number of activities completed that promote cessation	Coalition coordinator	• Tracking log	

KEY QUESTIONS WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?	**INDICATORS (EVIDENCE)** HOW WILL YOU KNOW IT?	**SOURCES (SAMPLES)** WHO WILL HAVE THIS INFORMATION?	**METHODS** HOW WILL YOU GATHER THE INFORMATION?	**SCHEDULE** WHEN WILL THE INFORMATION BE COLLECTED?
OUTCOMES				
5. To what extent have community member activists increased their skills in SF public policy change?	a) #, % of individuals (activists) who have been involved in one or more campaign activities and who report increased skill	Community members involved in [title of campaign]	Community activist survey	Within 14 days after close of campaign
6. To what extent are there demonstrations of public support for SF worksite public policies?	a) #,% organizations/individuals publicly endorsing policy change b) # articles/editorials supporting campaign c) #,% doctors signing on to Doctor's campaign d) # homes with yard signs e) % homes displaying window stickers	Community organizations Newspapers/ publications Doctors	Logs Observations	One week before vote
7. Was a SF worksite public policy passed? What else happened instead of — or in addition to — the SF Worksite public policy?	a) Copy of policy document b) Reports of process; other change	Key informants Transcripts of council meetings Press Municipal clerks	Document review Key informant interviews Survey to municipal clerks	Three months after vote on the policy
8. To what extent has the worksite SF public policy been implemented by worksites?	a) #,% worksites that adhere to policy as written	Key informants at worksites	Phone interview	6 months after policy was enacted; yearly thereafter

CASE SCENARIO — CROSS-CULTURAL DATA COLLECTION

Instructions: Read the following scenario, discuss it, and answer the questions below.

SCENARIO

You are evaluating the outcomes of a youth leadership development program. The program has operated in two communities over the past year for youth in grades 9, 10, and 11. The program involves a monthly meeting, readings, visits with community leaders, and a series of skill-building activities. In one community, the 15 youth participants are white, middle-class youth. In the other community, the 8 participants are Hmong. A small group of youth and parents (one Hmong parent) has worked with you to design and implement the program. They are also interested in evaluating it. They are sure that the program has been valuable, but they understand that documented evidence is important. You will need to apply for funding to keep the program going.

You've worked with the group to identify the following questions that the evaluation will address:

1) What specific leadership skills have youth gained or improved as a result of participating in the program? Are these different by age or gender, or cultural background?

2) To what extent has participating in the program helped youth take on other leadership roles? How? Why? What other leadership roles have participating youth taken on?

3) What value does this program add? Are there other opportunities where youth could gain these same skills/have these same experiences?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. What/who will be your information sources?
2. What data collection method(s) might you use to answer these questions?
3. How might you proceed? What will you do?

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Quick Tips

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups are structured small group interviews. They are "focused" in two ways. First, the persons being interviewed are similar in some way (e.g., limited resource family members as a group, family service providers as a group, local officials as a group). Second, the purpose of the interview is to gather information about a particular topic guided by a set of focused questions. Participants hear and interact with each other and the leader, which yields different information than if people were interviewed individually.

The purpose of focus groups is to develop a broad and deep understanding rather than a quantitative summary. Focus groups are a highly effective method for "listening" to clientele and non-users of Extension programs. The emphasis is on insights, responses and opinions. Usually, there are eight to 12 participants. Multiple groups are recommended since each discussion is highly influenced by who is involved and the comments that surface. Focus groups typically run one to two hours.

Focus groups are used:

- To solicit perceptions, views and a range of opinions, not consensus
- When you wish to probe an issue or theme in depth

Preparation

- A skillful facilitator (leader) is important. You may want to use an agent from another county because participants may feel more free with their comments when they do not know the facilitator.
- Craft the set of questions and their order to flow as a natural conversation might.
- Limit the number of questions (six or less); sequence the questions from very broad or general to narrow or specific.
- Consider tape recording the interview. For formal studies, tapes are transcribed.
- For informal studies, tapes serve as an audit trail, but only the most pertinent quotations are captured verbatim.
- Prepare an assistant moderator to take notes. The assistant moderator describes the sense of what each person says, provides an identifier of who said what (e.g., single mother comment) and identifies how the comments were made (e.g., specific phrases, nonverbal cues, etc.).

Procedure

The interview itself has three parts: the opening, the interview questions and the wrap-up.

The opening

- Welcome, make introductions and thank participants.
- Review the purpose of the focus group interview.
- Review the ground rules: everyone's ideas are important and everyone has an opportunity to speak. There are no right or wrong answers; even negative comments are useful in gaining insight about the topic under discussion. All comments are confidential and only summarized information will be communicated.

continued

Quick Tips 5 - Focus Group Interviews continued

The interview

Guide participants into the questioning, beginning with a general question first. As participants begin to share ideas, cycle through the group, ensuring that each participant has a chance to be heard. When comments related to one question are finished, summarize them, making sure there is agreement with the summary. Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Probe and move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic but be careful about unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.

The wrap-up

You may wish to include a "cooling down" exercise. For example, ask group members to say "one thing that you heard here that was really important." Thank participants and remind them how the information will be used. Participants often like to receive a follow-up (perhaps abbreviated) summary of the discussion.

Focus group summary

Various techniques are possible for analyzing the data. An abbreviated process may be sufficient. At the end of the focus group, the facilitator and assistant moderator debrief, review notes and write down the themes and main points that emerged and were discussed under each question and in general. Within the next few days, the facilitator and assistant moderator review their own notes independently and then reconcile any differences in their interpretations.

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Prepared by Ellen Taylor-Powell, Evaluation Specialist. Citation: Program Development and Evaluation, *Focus Group Interviews, Quick Tips #5,* University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI. © 2002 Available in PDF format at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html or contact: pdande.webmaster@ces.uwex.edu Last updated November 6, 2002

Calculating Response Rate

Instructions: Read each example and answer the questions that follow.

Example 1.

You included a survey in the conference packet that all 150 attendees received. At the close of the conference, when you asked everyone to complete and turn in their surveys, you collected only 59.

What is your response rate?

Is it good enough?

If not, what should you do differently to improve the response rate at your next conference?

Example 2.

Your group mailed a survey to 235 participants. You received a total of 155 responses after contacting the participants several times. When you entered the data, you realized that 5 people had not completed the questionnaire at all and 7 people answered only the questions on the first page (it was a four-page questionnaire).

What is your response rate?

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How to Get a Respectable Response Rate

$$\frac{\#\text{ that answered}}{\#\text{ you contacted}} = \text{Response Rate}$$

It can get more complicated than this, but let's start with this basic assumption. The higher the response rate, the better the data describes the people in the sample or census.

If you get a low response rate to your survey, your survey could suffer from "nonresponse error."[1] In other words, your results will be biased towards describing your respondents and ignoring those who did not respond.

There is no "magic number" response rate that guarantees that you have completed an evaluation study of high quality. On a practical level, you may want information from as many people as you have asked for information from.

Use a combination of the following techniques to increase response rates to mail, e-mail and telephone surveys :

1 See Dillman, D. (2000). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method,* 2nd Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons for more information on improving response rates.

- Send an advance notice letter or e-mail or make an advance phone call asking them to participate.
- Explain why their response to the survey is important.
- Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope so respondents don't have to use their own postage.
- Send a reminder postcard 7 to 10 days after the first mailing to thank them for their response and encourage them to respond if they have not yet done so.
- Send a second questionnaire (with cover letter and stamped return envelope)
- 7 days or so after the reminder postcard.
- Telephone respondents if they have not responded to the second survey.
- Give respondents the option to fax a response or give answers by telephone.
- Hand-address the envelope instead of using computerized labels and use a first-class stamp.
- Offer to send a brief summary of the results, so they know their information will be used.
- Include a token incentive in the mailing for their completed questionnaire – a voucher for a publication; a few dollars, if your budget allows; an opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a prize.

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Quick Tips

What You Should Do If You Haven't Gotten a Respectable Response Rate

If you got a poor response to your mail, e-mail or telephone survey:

Use follow-up methods for improving response.

Most surveys will take more than one follow-up method to reach a respectable response rate. See Quick Tips #1 for techniques to improve response rate.

Use other methods to get the information you need.

For example, if you get a low response rate from a mail survey, call people on the phone. If you used a telephone survey, try a visit or an appointment.

Compare those who responded to those who did not.

Describe the characteristics of people who did not respond. Are they different from those who did? This can help you address "non-response error."[1] You might already have information from a mailing list, administrative data base or another source that would tell you their age, gender, work status or other information that is important to the utcomes you are measuring.

Ask for information less often or ask other people.

Perhaps you recently asked for information from them about this or a different program. Maybe you are asking too many questions or questions that they have answered for other evaluations. Try other sources of information who may be able to answer your questions.

Ask questions that are important or relevant to your respondents.

Perhaps the evaluation questions do not interest them. If this is the case, maybe the program did not interest them. Try to find out why.

Demonstrate how you will use the information.

Share past, if any, results and/or how the information will be used to make improvements to the program.

If what information you have gives a skewed picture of your program, don't use it.

If you have a poor response rate, consider not using the results to report successes or to make decisions about program improvement . Your best decision might be to use a different method or methods to evaluate your program. Fewer high quality evaluations are better than many poor quality evaluations.

[1] See Dillman, D. (2000). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method,* 2nd Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons for more information.

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OBSERVATION SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1.

You are helping the staff at the local museum determine which exhibit is most popular.

What might you observe? When? How?

SCENARIO 2.

You are designing a science education program for eighth-grade students. The purpose of the program is for students to increase their understanding of and ability to use "scientific thinking." At the end of the program, you will want to know to what extent students have increased their skills as a result of participating in the program. You decide to design an activity in which each of the desired skills that you hope students will be able to do can be observed. You will ask students to engage in this activity at the beginning of the program (a "pretest") and also at the end (a "posttest") in order to have comparative data.

What will the activity be designed to include and what will you observe to indicate an increase in science literacy?

SCENARIO 3.

Your organization holds an annual staff conference. The evaluation team has developed a series of questions that key stakeholders want answered through the evaluation. Besides the standard post-conference electronic survey and interviews with conference planners, you would also like to try a new approach and include *observations* as part of the data collection.

What would you want to observe during the conference and how might you collect the data?

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Instructor's name ______________________________

Location __________________________________

Date _____________________________________

Time (start) ___________________(end) __________________

Does the instructor…	Yes	No	Uncertain	Notes/Comments heard
Speak clearly and distinctly				
Encourage participant input				
Demonstrate thorough knowledge of the content				
Ask thought-provoking questions				
Answer questions thoroughly				
Use resources/handouts effectively				
Use appropriate activities that engage participants				
Try to make the content meaningful and interesting				

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Quick Tips

Using the Retrospective Post-then-Pre Design

What is the retrospective post-then-pre design?

The retrospective post-then-pre design is a popular way to assess learners' self-reported changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, confidence, attitudes or behaviors. It takes less time, is less intrusive and, for self-reported change, avoids pretest sensitivity and response shift bias that result from pretest overestimation or underestimation (Howard, 1980; Rockwell & Kohn, 1989; Pratt et al, 2000; Lam & Bengo, 2003). In the traditional pre-post design, learners answer questions before an educational program, engage in the lesson, activity or course, then answer the same questions again after finishing the program. In the retrospective post-then-pre design, both before and after information is collected at the same time. After the educational program, learners are asked:

1. To rate their current knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior ***Now*** or ***After*** as a result of the program.
2. Then, to reflect back and rate that same knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior ***Before*** participating in the program.

Why use the retrospective post-then-pre design?

The post-then-pre was proposed in the late 1970's as a way to control response shift bias in the traditional pre-post design (Howard, 1980). Response shift occurs when a participant uses a different frame of understanding about a question between the pre and post periods. It can create a problem when assessing self-reported change (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989). Participants may not accurately assess their pre-program knowledge or behaviors. Then, at the end of the program, their new understanding of the program content may affect their response on the post self-assessment. They are actually responding based on two different frames of reference.

<u>An Example.</u> A community educator teaching communication skills to young couples, wants to evaluate the results and administers a pretest to each person enrolled in the program. One question reads "I share my interests with my spouse" and the respondents are to answer on a four-point scale (Always, Often, Seldom, Never). One respondent indicates he "Often" shares his interests with his spouse. During the course, he realizes that sharing interests involves more than he realized and that he actually does not share his interests very often. Thus, on the course posttest, he responds to the same item with "Seldom". It appears that the program had a negative effect on behavior whereas the participant's frame of reference on the pretest and posttest had changed. This difference is called response shift and can cause misleading or inaccurate results.

continued

Strengths of the Post-then-Pre Design

- **Response shift bias**. Extensive research has shown that response shift can mask program effectiveness; the retrospective design reduces or eliminates response shift bias (Howard et al, 1979; Howard, 1980).
- **Validity**. Compared with results from the traditional pre- and post design, results from the retrospective design are more congruent with interview data collected from program participants and leaders (Howard at al, 1981).
- **Versatility.** The retrospective method has been used to evaluate many types of programs for different audiences in varied settings and appears to reduce response shift bias across contexts.
- **Convenience**. Responding to both measures at the same time is less burdensome and intrusive for learners. Collecting responses for both measures at the same time gives you before and after data for each learner. Data will only be missing if a learner skips questions or fails to complete the questionnaire.

Limitations of the Post-Then-Pre Design

- **Recall period.** How accurately learners remember over time can vary by audience. Some researchers argue that memories and ability to label them may be biased even within short time frames, and that accuracy continues to decrease with time (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).
- **Self-reports.** Self-reporting is vulnerable to bias. As a self-report method, the retrospective post-then-pre design is susceptible to (1**)** Social desirability – learners answer as they think the evaluator wants; and (2) Accuracy - everyone's self-assessments can fluctuate greatly and may not provide a reliable measure of knowledge, skill, attitudes, or behavior.
- **Cultural context**. Answering retrospective post-then-pre questions may be difficult or inappropriate for certain learners. Methods and administration may vary to accommodate the individual audience's culture, language skills, literacy level, age or stage of life.
- **Need for best practice.** More research is needed on effective practice. Little is known about the best way to design a retrospective post-then-pre question considering audience and educational setting.

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Designing a Retrospective Post-then-Pre Question

The retrospective post-then-pre design has a few important features: clear instructions, reflective order, and presentation style.

- **Clear instructions** — Provide concise instructions that clearly tell the respondent what to do. Remind the respondent to provide two answers for each question: one assessing **current** knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior, etc. and one assessing **past** knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior. See the example below. If possible, verbal instructions are helpful.

- **Reflective order** — Place the post-program response first. The retrospective post-then-pre question is designed to have the participants use the same frame of reference for both their pre and post-program responses. The base frame of reference should be their post program perceptions. Notice, in the example below, the respondents answer the "Now", or post program section, first. This makes it the base frame of reference (Howard, 1980).

- **Presentation style** — Design the question in a way that helps the participants understand what they are being asked to do. For example, you can use shading, font styles, question layouts, or other design elements appropriate for your audience. See the examples below for different ways to present your question.

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Example 1: Please read the statement in the center section below. On the left, place a checkmark in the box to describe how you communicate with your child now ***after*** attending this course. In the section on the right, place a checkmark in the box that describes how you communicated with your child ***before*** taking this course.

After the Course				**Before the Course**		
Rarely	Some-times	Often		Rarely	Some-times	Often
			1. I try to see things from my child's point of view			
			2. I tell my child when I am upset without blaming or criticizing			

Notice that the format of this question separates the two response sections. The bold type helps the participant recognize the timeframe for each response. (This example comes from Gail Peavey, Polk County, and the Iowa State Extension's Strengthening Families Program.)

continued

Example 2: Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the column labeled "Now, at end of workshop" circle the answer that describes your viewpoint ***NOW*** *that we have finished* the workshop. Then, in the shaded section labeled "Before, the workshop" circle the answer that describes your opinion ***BEFORE*** *this workshop*.

	NOW, at end of workshop				**BEFORE, the workshop**			
1. Our coalition has a strong vision of success	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. We have a plan that will allow us to achieve our goal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

The shaded column distinguishes the two responses that are requested. The bold type highlights the timeframes for each response.

Another option for Example 1 and 2 is to fold back the paper vertically so that only the NOW section of the question is seen. Then, ask the respondent to open up the page and complete the BEFORE section.

Example 3: Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the line labeled "After the program", circle one number that describes your shopping habits *now that you have finished* the program. In the section labeled "Before the program" circle the number that described your shopping habits *prior to the program*.

	Never	Seldom	Often	Always
1. I buy foods that are healthy for my children				
a) ***After*** *the program*	1	2	3	4
b) ***Before*** *the program*	1	2	3	4

In this example, the post- and pre-program response scales are positioned under the statement to set them apart. Bold and italic type help the participant see the two scales.

Each of the above examples is slightly different. You can select from these ideas to help your participants understand what they are being asked to do and where they should mark their response. Clear instructions, reflective order, and presentation style will help increase the accuracy of results from your post-then-pre questions. Pilot test your question with several similar participants to make sure it is understandable.

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When to Use the Retrospective Post-then-Pre Design

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The retrospective post-then-pre design has become a popular way to measure change. To be effective, we need to know when it is appropriate to use this design. The retrospective post-then-pre design is appropriate when you need to do one or more of the following:

- **Reduce response-shift bias.** Response shift bias refers to a change in the way a respondent understands a question between the pre and post program evaluation. It occurs when a participant answers a question from a different mindset on the post-program question than he or she used on the pre-program question. This creates a *response shift.* Response-shift bias is likely to be present in educational programs because they are designed to improve learners' knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior. (Howard, 1980). The retrospective post-then-pre design has been shown to reduce response shift (Howard, 1980).
- **Measure learners' *perceptions of* change .** The retrospective post-then-pre design measures learners' perceptions of their knowledge, skill, attitudes, and/or behavior. It does not measure *actual* knowledge, skill, or behavior.
- **Compare pre and post data from each learner.** The retrospective post-then-pre design provides information from two points in time to make comparisons possible. If you do not have and cannot obtain information from participants about their pre-program knowledge, skill, attitude, behavior, the retrospective post-then-pre design may fit your needs.

The retrospective post-then-pre question may not always be appropriate. Sometimes a simple post-program only question that clearly asks respondents to indicate whether they have changed as a result of the program may be more appropriate. For example, "As a result of this program, to what extent have you increased your knowledge about how to avoid cross-contamination when shopping, preparing and storing foods? "

Remember that using multiple data collection methods and/or information sources to assess change provide a more accurate assessment of your program's results. If possible, combine your questionnaire with another method, such as observation or interview, or collect information from other people.

Good evaluation requires choosing a design that is appropriate for your particular circumstances. When used appropriately, the retrospective post-then-pre design can be an important evaluation tool.

Reference:
Howard, G. S. (1980). Response-shift bias a problem in evaluating interventions with pre / post self-reports. *Evaluation Review* 4(1), 93-106.

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Analysis of Retrospective Post-then-Pre Data

Situation
Jane Schaaf, family living educator in Crawford County, teaches an eight-hour *Parenting after Divorce* class. After completing the class, participants fill out an end-of-session questionnaire. Jane wanted additional information to see if the class is helpful in the long run, so she developed and sent a mail survey and now has the results. She asks, what do I do with the data from the following question?

Question: Please circle the phrase that best describes the relationship between you and your child(ren)'s other parent.

	After participating in the course				Before participating in the course			
Relationship	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always
a) I accept the other parent's parenting style.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
b) I say nice things about the other parent to my children.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
c) We co-parent cooperatively.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
d) We argue in front of our children.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Note: Not all items are included in this example of the original question.

Quick Tips 30

For a retrospective question like the one above, here are some considerations:

Determine level of change. Decide what you consider a worthwhile level of change for program participants and why you think that. Write down any results you would particularly like to see. Ideally, you should do this before distributing the questionnaire, but if you did not, spend a few minutes thinking about the amount of change you would consider meaningful.

Check your data. The number of individuals responding to each after-and-before item should be the same. If someone answered one section of the instrument, but not the other, then drop that person from your analysis.

Enter your data. With a limited number of respondents (in this case Jane has 16 usable questionnaires), you could simply hand-tally the number of responses to each item as follows:

	After participating in the course				Before participating in the course			
Relationship	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always
a) I accept the other parent's parenting style.	1	4	3	8	1	6	4	5
b) I say nice things about the other parent to my children.	6	4	5	1	8	6	1	1
c) We co-parent cooperatively.	12	4	0	0	10	4	1	1
d) We argue in front of our children.	14	2	0	0	13	2	1	0

continued

Make sense of the data. (1) One way to look at the information is to compare specific values at "after" and "before". For example, determine the percentage of people who answer almost always for "after" and compare it to the percentage of those who answer almost always for "before." In other words, compare the highest values for each relationship item. Or, compare the percentage who answer almost never for "after" and compare it to the percentage who answer almost never for "before."

> Note: You might change the numbers to percentages. Remember that the denominator for both the "before" and "after" responses should be the same. Use the number of individuals who actually responded as the denominator. You may have 16 returned surveys, but not all 16 individuals may answer every item.

(2) In some cases, you might want to combine categories if that is justifiable. For example, you could combine "sometimes" and "often" and compare after-and-before responses for this combined category. Or, you might combine the lowest two categories and the highest two categories and compare their after-and-before responses. Make sure you share what you did and why.

(3) Another way to evaluate the data is to look at individual change. With this approach, you match each individual's after-and-before responses to show individual gain. Rather than combining responses that may mask individual variation, look at each individual's responses to each item. For example, if a participant answered "sometimes" for "after" and "almost never" for "before," the participant progressed one level. If she answered "often" for "after," she progressed two levels and so on. If the participant answered "almost never" for "after," she progressed zero levels. This analysis is sensitive to movement and individual change. You can summarize by reporting the number of participants who progressed in each level.

Interpretation. How do results compare? Do they support the level of change you hoped would occur? Are the results higher or lower than expected? You may wish to discuss the results with a colleague or program participants in order to understand better their meaning.

Jane found that the results were lower than she expected. When she looked closer, she realized that for some items, the wording was difficult to understand, sensitive, or asked about issues outside the participant's control. The order of the scale changed and might have been confusing. Also, she realized that clearer instructions might have helped the respondent better understand the post-then-pre question and how to answer (refer to Quick Tip #28).The questionnaire included several open-ended questions that provided additional insights and indicated positive changes. Jane also has data from the end-of-session questionnaire that she will use to explain more completely the results of her parenting series.

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OTHER WAYS TO COLLECT EVALUATION DATA

Creative expression, Personal stories or testimonials, Video taping or photography, Expert review, Diaries and journals, Logs, Case study

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Various forms of creative expression can be used in evaluation as a means for individuals and groups to represent their ideas and/or feelings. They can generate rich data containing many subtleties that may not be uncovered in other ways. These methods do pose interpretation challenges, but getting a group to work through interpretation can provide yet more useful insights. Creative expression forms include: drawing, stories, drama, role-playing, music, found objects, and collages. When considering creative expression, be careful to choose an art form that feels comfortable to participants. Creative expression is not always appropriate or culturally sensitive. Check references for help about how to structure and implement the following:

1) Drawings. Asking participants to draw may provide deeper insights into their perspective on processes and outcomes than verbal discussion alone can. Individuals could be asked to draw pictures, charts, maps, timelines, abstract shapes, social interaction networks, or diagrams or make collages. Discussing and interpreting the pictures provides another way to collect meaningful data. The key to any drawing exercise is the process of discussing the ideas expressed and learning from them.

2) Drama. Like drawings, drama may be used in many ways. People can act out before and after stories, provide different perspectives on the same issue through different characters, or depict a critical incident or outcome. Drama can be used to recall and describe what happened during the program, what resulted, who benefited, and why. It also becomes a convincing communication strategy for sharing program results with funders and key stakeholders.

3) Role-playing. Role-playing is a creative way to help people see an issue or problem from someone else's perspective. It is also a way to clarify potential and actual outcomes for different participants or in different situations. Assigning individuals to play different roles than they hold themselves may help everyone learn.

PERSONAL STORIES OR TESTIMONIALS

Personal stories may be either written or oral. They can be a fun and relaxed way to reveal the impressions people have of certain events, processes, and outcomes. For example, you might ask participants to write a story about their personal experience in the program, what they gained by participating, or how the program has helped them. Rather than individual questions on a questionnaire, the participant is asked to "write a story." A set of questions may be used to help stimulate the thinking and story writing, but the focus is the "story," not answers to questions. Or, rather than soliciting stories or testimonials, collect people's stories and testimonials about your program as you hear them. Record the date, place, and context of the story/testimonial to provide documentation of the narrative.

See *Storytelling* [Krueger (n.d.)] http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rkrueger/story.html

Video taping or photography

Using a video recorder or camera is another way to collect data. Before and after photos can provide powerful data. Taking photos over a course of a program's life can provide longitudinal data for assessing process and outcomes. Someone may be selected as the "documentarian," or participants themselves may be given a camera or asked to photograph program processes, program life, or outcomes. Reviewing, discussing, and interpreting the resulting video or photos as a group broadens and deepens understanding.

Expert review

There may be people who hold special knowledge about your program and its activities. Inviting these "experts" to review the performance of your program can provide useful answers to many evaluation questions. Such experts could be key stakeholders, people involved in similar programs or from a similar community, or educators from a local school or university.

Adequate preparation for an expert review is paramount. As you plan for an expert review, consider:

- *Who* is best qualified to evaluate the program? Who will be seen as credible? How many will be included?
- *When* will the "experts" conduct the review? How long will the review take? What dates are most appropriate?
- *What* will the "experts" be expected to look at? What questions might they answer?

Diaries and journals

Diaries and journals are records of events and processes that occur over time. Not only do they record events and processes, they are also useful for recording problems that arise along with peoples' feelings and thoughts about what transpired.

Diaries and journals provide a personal perspective on a program and/or its results and sometimes can show how results came about. Diaries and journals can be kept by participants, volunteers, program staff, or others involved in the program. The written record reveals the personal perspective of the person doing the writing. The writer controls what data is recorded and shared.

Each individual may keep a diary or journal. Or, you may start a "program diary" to monitor activities, outcomes, and people's perspectives over time. In the case of one collaborative working together, the collaborative rotated the diary monthly — each month a different member wrote the entry. Annually, the entries were analyzed and used to facilitate discussion on the collaborative's performance. Among other things, diary material may be useful for:

- Recording and examining involvement, reactions, likes and dislikes, and tracking program activities and reactions to them
- Identifying major turning points or problem areas
- Identifying changes and accomplishments

Logs

Logs also are records of events and/or processes. They include chronological entries, but they are briefer and more factual than diaries and journals and usually do not include reactions and thoughts. Logs record times, dates, and brief narrative comments related to programs. Keeping logs and then using the information to supplement your evaluation is easy and practical. Some examples of logs include: telephone logs, attendance logs, activity logs, resource logs, and media logs, which record dates, length, and content of media work.

Case study

An evaluation method that provides comprehensive information about a single case is called a *case study*. You may want to use this method to obtain a complete picture of your program; one facet of the program; or the experience of one person, family, business, or community that is participating. A case study can help determine what happened and why by extending over a period of time and focusing on in-depth data collection and analysis.

> "A case study is a method for learning about a complex instance based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context."
> [United States General Accounting Office (1990)]

Case studies use multiple information sources and multiple methods. A case study involves keeping and building a complete file about the "case." For example, in a case study of a community collaborative to assess what it has achieved, how, and why; a case study might include the following: an on-going log of the collaborative's work and collection and analysis of media releases, minutes, committee reports, periodic reviews, etc. You might interview and conduct a survey of collaborative members, community members, and/or other stakeholders to assess outcomes. Finally, you would be able to supplement all these types of evaluative information with your own personal observation. The result is an in-depth description of the collaborative and its performance. Data collection and analysis often occur simultaneously so that as you learn more about the case, you can refine and add to the data collection.

Additional resource

United States General Accounting Office (GAO), Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. (1990). *Case study evaluations* (Transfer paper 10.1.9). Washington, D.C.: United States General Accounting Office. Retrieved March 13, 2008, from http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/10_1_9.pdf

Group Assessment Techniques for Collecting Data

Group assessment techniques may be used at any phase of a program's development to identify evaluation needs and questions, prioritize them, share evaluation information, document outcomes, and monitor and/or process feelings among participants, program staff, or others. Following are a few types of group techniques that can be used to collect evaluation data. Refer to additional resources for more detailed descriptions of these techniques and instructions for carrying them out.

1. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a common tool for groups to creatively generate ideas. Participants are instructed to let ideas flow freely and share as many ideas as possible with the group. Four rules tend to govern brainstorming sessions:

- Generate as many ideas as possible (quantity over quality).
- Avoid criticizing ideas as they are shared.
- Do not self-censor ideas — wild and exaggerated ideas are good.
- Build on the ideas of others.

Such a creative thinking session can be used to generate a list of outcomes of the program, create a list of questions to focus an evaluation, and/or think about a future vision of success for the program against which performance can be measured.

2. Nominal Group

The nominal group technique is a popular problem-solving or idea-generating strategy for achieving consensus. Group members are asked to write their ideas down instead of expressing them verbally. This helps ensure that everyone in the group is heard. While the nominal group process can vary, a common approach is for participants to write their ideas down on a piece of paper (silent generation of ideas) and then, in round-robin fashion, participants list their ideas in full view. Ideas are discussed as needed for clarification or explanation but the value or merit of ideas is not discussed. Participants then rate each idea and the ratings are tallied to reveal the group results. (See *Collecting Group Data: Nominal Group* (Quick Tip #3) [Taylor-Powell (2002)].)

3. Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique is an iterative process that involves repeated rounds to a select group of respondents. Answers to each round are analyzed and form the basis for the next round. It is a way to select expert opinion on a particular subject and, if one uses a mail process, avoids the need for a face-to-face meeting or direct confrontation of people with potentially opposing views. (See *Collecting Group Data: Delphi Technique* (Quick Tip #4) [Taylor-Powell (2002)].)

4. Affinity Diagramming

Affinity diagrammiong is used to create consensus or understanding about complicated issues. Each participant is given the opportunity to write his/her ideas on sticky notes or index cards (one item per card) that are then sorted and clustered into groups or themes to describe the ideas. This process of data collection has been used to identify and label outcomes of programs, to develop an outcome chain as part of a logic model process, and to generate and categorize ideas to focus an evaluation. (See *Collecting Group Data: Affinity Diagram* (Quick Tip #6) [Taylor-Powell (2002)].)

5. Buzz Session

Buzz sessions simply break down a large group into smaller units (3-4 people) for focused discussion. Some people have trouble participating in large group discussions or meetings. This technique can facilitate participation from everyone when groups are large, or when some are uncomfortable sharing in front of a whole group. A leader and recorder are selected for each sub group and items discussed are recorded. These can be shared together as a group or read later by the leader or meeting facilitator. It is a useful technique for collecting evaluation data related to emotional or confrontational issues. Buzz sessions can help individuals share their ideas and feelings about the program, including its strengths and weaknesses, in a safe environment.

Additional Resources:

Chang, R. Y., & Niedzwiecki, M. E. (1993). *Continuous improvement tools: A practical guide to achieve quality results* (Volumes 1 & 2). Irvine, CA: Richard Chang Associates, Inc.

Delbecq, A. H., Van de Ven, A. H., & Gustafson, D. H. (1975). *Group techniques for program planning: A guide to nominal group and Delphi processes.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Kayser, T. A. (1995). *Mining group gold: How to cash in on the collaborative brain power of a group.* Chicago, IL: Irwin Professional Publishers.

Rohs, F. R. (1994). *Group methods and techniques*. Athens, GA: Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia.

Seevers, B., Graham, D., Gamon, J., & Conklin, N. (1997). *Education through Cooperative Extension.* Albany, N.Y.: Delmar Publishers.

Tagliere, D. A. (1992). *How to meet, think, and work to consensus.* San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company.

Tague, N. R. (1995). *The quality toolbox*. Milwaukee, WI: ASQC Quality Press.

STEPS TO CREATING A GOOD QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Decide what information you need. (What do you and/or others want to know?)

Outcomes/impact	What changes occurred — knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, confidence, behavior, practice, decision making, policies? To what extent? Were there unintended consequences (positive and negative)? Perceptions vs. actual? Before-after differences? Intentions? Commitment to action? Overall benefits/value?
Satisfaction – reactions	Satisfaction with the experience? Reactions to content, materials, facilities, administration, the experience in general?
Participation Reach	Who participates/participated? Who doesn't? Are we reaching the people we want to reach? Background characteristics?
Activities	What do/did we do? Type/number/quality of activities? Process? How did it go? Strengths and weaknesses? Resources mobilized?
Inputs	Resources contributed/expended?
Planning – needs assessment	What are the needs/interests/assets to build on? Future topics/activities? Preferences?
Teaching effectiveness	Quality and effectiveness of teaching/facilitation? Strengths? Areas needing improvement?

2. Determine sample — respondents.
3. Is a questionnaire culturally appropriate? Is it likely to yield the information you want?
4. Develop an accurate, user-friendly questionnaire. Consider these components:
   a. Question wording
   b. Response wording
   c. Clear instructions
   d. Question order
   e. Design/format
   f. Cover/preface
5. Revise-revise-revise.
6. Pilot test.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE QUESTIONS?

Review these examples. Identify what is wrong with each question. Then, rephrase the question to improve it.

1. When you go out to eat, which type of food do you most prefer?

American
Italian
Chinese
Other

2. Did today's workshop provide you with information to review and if necessary improve your ability to evaluation your program?

❑ YES ❑ NO

3. Are you married or single?

4. How many times in the past month have you eaten dairy products? _________

5. Do you agree or disagree with the county's new policy on alcohol sales?

❑ Agree ❑ Disagree

6. Isn't the new CFY center an asset to the community?

❑ YES ❑ NO

7. How did you first hear about the parenting education program?

From a friend or relative
From a neighbor
From my spouse
At work
From television, radio, or newspaper

8. Your city or town ________________

9. How may hours did you contribute to community service last year? ________

10. More Americans exercise regularly now than they did 10 years ago. Do you exercise regularly?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 A lot

11. Are you better off now than you were four years ago?

12. Do you believe that the government should stop wasting money on road construction?

13. How satisfied are you with the local hospital services?

Delighted
Mostly satisfied
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
Mostly dissatisfied
Terrible

14. How often did you attend a University of Wisconsin sponsored workshop, program, or course in the past year?

Never
Rarely
Occasionally
Regularly

15. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Our community is a safe place to live"?

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
No opinion
Strongly disagree

16. What is your age?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE QUESTIONS? (ANSWER KEY)

These questions (and suggested revisions) are for illustration to facilitate discussion only. They are written in the abstract, rather than for a particular population, purpose, and relative to placement within the questionnaire.

<table>
<tr><td>Q1. When you go out to eat, which type of food do you most prefer?
• A respondent that never goes out to eat cannot answer
• Answer categories must be relevant for the respondent</td><td><u>A revision</u>: When you go out to eat, which type of food do you most prefer? (check one)
☐ American
☐ Italian
☐ Chinese
☐ Other: ________________________
☐ I do not go out to eat.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q2. Did today's workshop provide you with information to review and if necessary improve your ability to evaluation your program?
• Double-barreled question: 2 questions in one
• Misspelling – "evaluation" should be "evaluate"
• The YES-NO format limits the answer</td><td><u>A revision</u>: To what extent did today's workshop provide useful information to help you improve your ability to evaluate your program? (check one)
☐ Not at all
☐ Somewhat
☐ Quite a bit
☐ A great deal</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q3. Are you married or single?
• A respondent who is neither married nor single cannot respond</td><td><u>A revision:</u> What is your current marital status?
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Separated
☐ Divorced
☐ Living with a significant other
☐ Widowed</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Q4. How many times in the past month have you eaten dairy products?
• A respondent may not know what "dairy products" are/include
• Difficult to accurately recall and report; requires too much precision
• Time period is unspecified: What is the "past month": September; or Sept 16 to Oct 16?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the county's new policy on alcohol sales?
• A respondent may not know what the new policy is; include a preface that describes the county policy
• A respondent who neither agrees or disagrees but is neutral, cannot respond
• A respondent who is undecided or has no opinion cannot respond. If an undecided option is included, separate it from the directional scale and place it in the last position.</td><td><u>A revision:</u> [Brief explanation of the county's new policy on alcohol sales] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the county's new policy on alcohol sales?
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Undecided
<u>Another revision</u>: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the county's new policy on alcohol sales?
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ No opinion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q6. Isn't the new CFY center an asset to the community?
• A respondent may not know what CFY means; avoid acronyms or abbreviations
• Avoid negative wording; avoid contractions
• This is a leading question; avoid bias</td><td><u>A revision:</u> Do you think the new Child Family Youth Center is an asset to the community?
☐ YES
☐ NO
☐ Undecided
☐ Do not know what the Child Family Youth Center is</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>**Q7.** How did you first hear about the parenting education program?
• The answer categories are not mutually exclusive: there is a mix of locations and people (e.g., one could have heard at work from a friend)
• A respondent may not know which parenting education program is being referred to</td><td>A revision: From which one of the following sources did you first hear about the NewStart Parenting Education Program sponsored by the Case County Extension Office?
☐ Television
☐ Radio
☐ Newspaper
☐ Poster
☐ Another person</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Q8**. Your city or town
• Write questions as complete sentences</td><td>A revision: In what city or town do you live?___________ City or town</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Q9**. How may hours did you contribute to community service last year?
• Misspelling: “may” should be “many”
• Requires too much precision that is difficult to recall, exceeding the potential for a ready, accurate answer; switching from asking for a precise count to asking for an estimate helps
• A respondent may have different understanding/meaning of “community service”; provide enough definition/clarification so that terms can be interpreted similarly</td><td>A revision: In 2005, about how many hours did you contribute to community service (such as helping the elderly, environmental improvement, serving children and families, animal care)?
☐ None
☐ Less than 10 hours
☐ 11-25 hours
☐ 26-50 hours
☐ 51-75 hours
☐ 76-100 hours
☐ More than 100 hours
Note: This level of recall and precision is prone to inaccuracy; consider another way to obtain the desired data.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Q10.** More Americans exercise regularly now then they did 10 years ago. Do you exercise regularly?
• Leading question
• “Regularly” is a vague quantifier; for some it may mean once a day whereas for others it may imply once per week or several times a month
• Changing the answer categories to numerical amounts may eliminate varied interpretations
• “Do you exercise regularly” suggests a YES-NO response, not a scale; inconsistent question and answer construction
• Label each scale item. The practice of using numbers along a scale without descriptive labels removes any sense of meaning that a label gives to each point on a scale
• Will people have a common understanding of “exercise”?</td><td>A revision: About how often have you exercised during the month of June 2007?
☐ Not at all
☐ A few times
☐ About once a week
☐ Two to four times a week
☐ More than four times a week</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**Q11.** Are you better off now than you were four years ago?
• Respondent may have different interpretations of “better off”; be more specific — better off in terms of what?
• Time frame is not specified; long recall period reduces potential for accuracy</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**Q12.** Do you believe that the government should stop wasting money on road construction?
• Leading, biased question</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr>
<td>Q13. How satisfied are you with the local hospital services?
• State both sides of an attitude scale in the stem of the question
• Keep the wording in the scale consistent</td>
<td><u>A revision</u>: To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the local hospital services?
☐ Completely satisfied
☐ Somewhat satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
☐ Completely dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Q14. How often did you attend a University of Wisconsin sponsored workshop, program, or course in the past year?
• Difficult to answer; avoid questions that require specificity beyond what can be readily remembered
• Unspecified time period
• Respondent may not associate program attended with University of Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Q15. To what extent do you agree with this statement: “Our community is a safe place to live”?
• State both sides of an attitude scale in the stem of the question
• Ensure that responses are balanced, equal on both sides of neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16. What is your age?
• A respondent may be unwilling to reveal personal information; providing categories may be less objectionable</td>
<td><u>A revision</u>: Which of the following age categories describes you?
☐ 35 or younger
☐ 36-45
☐ 46-55
☐ 56-65
☐ 66 or older
Note: Make the age categories appropriate for the respondents and purpose of the question</td>
</tr>
</table>

Helpful resource: Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.) (Chapter 2). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

CHECKLIST: AVOIDING COMMON PROBLEMS IN QUESTION WORDING

	COMMON PROBLEM
	Vague questions
	No possibility to respond
	Ambiguous words or phrases
	Use of acronyms
	Specificity that exceeds potential to respond
	Leading questions
	Double-barreled questions
	Too many words, unnecessary words
	Vague quantifiers
	Incomplete questions (sentences)
	Unequal numbers of positive and negative options in scales
	Misplacement of undecided and neutral in scale
	Bias expressed
	Response options that are not mutually exclusive
	Inappropriate time frames
	Technical inaccuracy in questions
	Double negatives
	Mismatch between question and response

RESPONSE OPTIONS — PRIMER

Closed-ended questions include response options or response choices from which respondents select their answer. There are three main types of response options:

1. Categorical or nominal. These response options involve categories that have no numerical or preferential values. Ex: male or female; YES or NO; race/ethnicity

Categorical response options must be

- mutually exclusive
- inclusive and exhaustive

The categories you use must depend upon the purpose of the question, how you want to be able to report the results, and the particular respondents. Check other surveys or studies (e.g., census) for meaningful categories and adapt or adopt accordingly.

2. Ordinal. The question asks respondents to order or rate items in a list. Ex: Rate the publication from not useful to very useful. The most familiar ordinal data come from scales, usually one of the following types:

<u>Endorsement scales</u> — examples:

- strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree
- definitely, maybe, maybe not, definitely not

<u>Frequency scales</u> — examples:

- always, very often, fairly often, sometimes, almost never, never
- often, sometimes, seldom, never

<u>Influence scales</u> — examples:

- big problem, moderate problem, small problem, very small problem, no problem
- very important, important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant, very unimportant

<u>Intensity scales</u> — examples:

- none, very mild, mild, moderate, severe
- very low, low, medium, high, very high

<u>Comparison scales</u> — examples:

- excellent, good, fair, poor
- completely satisfied, very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, completely dissatisfied

Ordinal response options must be

- Meaningful: makes sense given the question and purpose
- Balanced: two endpoints mean the opposite of each other and the intervals between are about equal
- Easy to understand and complete
- Easy to distinguish from the question and response directions

Considerations:

- Use a neutral response category only if it is makes sense; distinguish undecided (or no opinion) from neutral by placing undecided (or no opinion) at end of scale.
- Think about the number of points on the scale: 4- to 5-point scales most common; depends whether the question is in a self-administered questionnaire, phone interview, or in-person. There is no conclusive evidence about whether an odd- or even-numbered scale is better — depends upon the question and your needs.
- Consider placing the negative end of the scale first in potentially embarrassing or socially sensitive questions.
- Cluster response options. If several questions use the same response options, place the items together in one question (example).

3. Numerical. The question asks respondents for a number such as age, height or the number of times you went to the movies last month.

Helpful resource: Fink, A. (2003). Responses: Choices and measurements. In *How to ask survey questions* (2nd ed.) (Chapter 3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

RATING SCALES

We often ask participants to evaluate a session by selecting from among different choices, such as “excellent,” “good,” or “disappointing.” When we order these options to express differences of opinion, we are using a “scale.”

When developing a scale, think about the kind of information you need. Provide clear instructions and keep the order of choices (e.g., from low to high or negative to positive) the same throughout the form (except with semantic differentials). Also, consider your respondents’ age, literacy level, and cultural background.

An odd number of options allows people to select a middle option and an even number forces respondents to take sides. An even number is appropriate when you want to know what direction the people in the middle are leaning. Forcing people to choose a side may frustrate some respondents. As a general rule for creating scales, simpler is better. Ensure that the wording in the scale makes sense for the question.

The wording of your scale depends on what you want to know, the level of differentiation you desire, and your respondents. For example:

____ poor	____ poor
____ fair	____ good
____ average	____ excellent
____ good	
____ excellent	

Whether you use three, four, or five categories in your scale depends on the amount of differentiation that you want or that is inherent in the question. Category scales with more than six options are hard to create and even harder to read and understand.

A common mistake when creating a rating scale is including “no opinion” or “uncertain” as a middle response. These options are not actually a part of the scale. A middle category in a scale between “agree” and “disagree” would be “neither agree nor disagree.” Options such as: “no opinion,” “neutral,” “not applicable,” and “don’t know” are placed off the scale, in a separate space.

Make sure that the scale is balanced. When you give both positive and negative options, your scale should contain equal numbers of each. A poor set of responses would be: “decreased, stayed the same, increased a little, increased somewhat, increased a lot” (options include only one negative choice and three positive ones).

Finally, when using words in your scale, it is important that the words all refer to the same thing. For example:

What was your reaction to the session? (Please check your response.)

POOR	____ not worth my time	BETTER	____ not at all interested
	____ slightly interested		____ slightly interested
	____ moderately interested		____ moderately interested
	____ very interested		____ very interested

The choices in the left column include two concepts — “worth” and “interest level.” The right column includes only “interest level,” making better response options.

Sample rating scales

strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree	disagree neither agree nor disagree agree	completely disagree mostly disagree slightly disagree slightly agree mostly agree completely agree
very rarely rarely occasionally frequently very frequently	never seldom about half the time usually always	not at all little occasionally often all the time
not really somewhat quite a bit	never rarely sometimes often always	never seldom sometimes often
not much some a great deal	a little some a lot	not much little somewhat much a great deal
not important moderately important very important	unimportant of little importance important very important	unimportant of little importance moderately important important very important
poor fair average good excellent	very poor not good all right good excellent	extremely poor below average average above average excellent
too elementary okay too technical	too fast just right too slow	poor not good good excellent
did not understand understood a little understood most of it understood very well	no help at all slightly helpful fairly helpful very helpful	quite unsuccessful somewhat unsuccessful somewhat successful quite successful
definitely will not probably will not probably will definitely will	absolutely no mostly no neither yes nor no mostly yes absolutely yes	never true sometimes true often true
not at all very little somewhat to a great extent	not at all true slightly true true about half the time mostly true completely true	probably not maybe quite likely definitely

very dissatisfied somewhat dissatisfied neither satisfied nor dissatisfied somewhat satisfied very satisfied	not at all satisfied slightly satisfied somewhat satisfied very much satisfied
didn’t get what I wanted got a little of what I wanted got a lot of what I wanted got everything I wanted	very uncomfortable uncomfortable comfortable very comfortable

PILOT TEST YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Points to check

1. Does each question measure what it is supposed to measure?
2. Are all the words understood?
3. Do all respondents interpret the question in the same way?
4. Are all response choices appropriate?
5. Is the range of response choices actually used?
6. Do respondents correctly follow directions?
7. Does it create a positive impression that motivates people to respond?
8. If a telephone survey, do the questions flow in a conversational manner?
9. How long does it take to complete?
10. Does it collect the information you want?

II. Who will participate?

Prepare a “mock-up” questionnaire and cover letter/advance letter and submit it for review to:

1. Professional colleagues
2. Potential users of the data
3. A small cross section of the population to be surveyed

III. Ways to conduct a pilot test

1. Watch people complete the questionnaire. Give people the cover letter and questionnaire and ask them to fill it out in your presence. Watch for hesitation, erasures, or skipped questions. Seek verbal feedback.
2. Ask a small number to complete the questionnaire; seek individual feedback or a joint “debriefing.”
3. Have individuals read the question and then “parrot back” the question using different words.
4. Read the questions to your “testing” participants and observe their reaction. Questions should read smoothly and be easily understood. If the respondent appears confused or hesitant to answer, find out why.

IV. Core steps

1. Who will participate in the “test”?
2. How will the “test” be carried out? When? Where?
3. How will you collect/record the feedback?
4. What preparations are needed, if any?
5. What resources might be needed?

Cover Letter Exercise

Review the sample cover letter, looking for the following information.

Add to or rewrite the cover letter as necessary.

Purpose and importance of survey

Survey sponsor — use letterhead

Why the respondent was selected to participate

Benefit(s) of completing survey — WIIFM (*what's in it for me?)*

Assurance of anonymity and/or confidentiality

How results will be used

Instruction for returning the survey

When to respond

How to obtain survey results

Contact information

Choosing a Sample — Scenarios

Scenario 1.

Your son is doing a science experiment for school and needs to determine the population of dandelions in your yard. The yard is large and there are too many dandelions to count them all. So, he will need to sample the yard. Describe what you might advise him to do.

Possible ideas:

1) Determine whether the dandelions are distributed evenly across the yard.

2) Use a sampling grid or transect; what adjustments will be needed if the dandelions are not evenly distributed across the yard.

Scenario 2.

In a forest that measures 5 miles by 5 miles, a sample was taken to count the number of silver maple trees in the forest. A grid was constructed consisting of sampling areas of equal size. Five of the areas were randomly selected. The five sample areas and number of trees counted in each are shown below. (1) Calculate what proportion of the forest the sample represents. (2) What is the estimate of the total number of silver maple trees in this forest based on this sample? (3) What, if any, bias or problems might there be?

	7			
				3
			5	
11		9		

Answer: (1) 20%;
(2) 35 x 5 = 175 trees

Scenario 3.

The youth development program is conducting a statewide survey of all volunteers to determine the degree to which the volunteers are following the newly revised policy guidelines for working with youth. All volunteers were notified via email of the web-based survey and were encouraged to complete it. 70% of the female and 30% of the male volunteers completed the survey. What, if any problem, is there with the sample? What might you do?

SAMPLE SIZE

"How large does the sample need to be?" is a common question. As with many things, the answer is "it all depends." Often, a proportion of the population is used to determine the sample size. For example, you might sample 10% of all producers in the county, or 20% of all program participants. Whether you use a proportion depends on the size of the total population. In a program with 200 participants, a 20% sample would produce a sample of 40 people — under-representing the population since there is a large chance for respondent variability. On the other hand, a 20% sample of 50,000 county inhabitants produces a sample of 10,000, an unnecessary over-sample. You do not gain much more precision than you would using a sample of 400. Usually, the larger your target population, the smaller a percentage of that population your sample needs to be and vice versa. This is because smaller populations exhibit greater variability.

Sampling error exists within any sample. The larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error. But no sample will yield exactly the same information as if all people in the population had been included. Information collected from a sample is used to make estimates about the population. The intent is to produce as close an approximation of the population as possible within the constraints of time and money.

To estimate how closely the sample approximates the population, two parameters are set — the ***margin of error*** and the ***confidence level***. The margin of error indicates the range of values that can result when you use a sample to estimate the population. For example, a 5% margin of error means that if 50% of the sample adopted a recommendation, you can be fairly certain that 47.5% to 52.5% of the whole population adopted it. If results show that 95% of the sample improved in parenting skills, you can feel comfortable saying that 93.5% to 97.5% of all participants improved in those skills.

The risk of being wrong within the margin of error is known as the confidence level. That is, a 95% confidence level (C = .95) means that there is a 5% chance that the results will not fall within the specified margin of error. Using the previous example, there is a 5% chance that this interpretation is not correct — that 93.5% to 97.5% of all participants did not improve their skills. We can say that we are "95% sure" that our conclusions accurately reflect the total population.

A 5-10% margin of error with a confidence level of 95% is standard for community-based program evaluation. When greater accuracy is needed, it is advised that all individuals be included when the population is 100 or less. In this manner, the problem in sampling small populations is alleviated.

Various web resources exist to help you quickly and easily compute sample size for different population sizes at different levels of confidence. For example,

> *Sample size calculator* [Creative Research Systems (2007-2008)]
> http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Subgroup sample. You may want to compare subgroups within a sample. For example, you may want to compare female to males or older to younger teens. Subgroup analyses make your sample size needs grow considerably; again, because of the variability connected with smaller population sizes. You may be advised to ensure at least 30 are in each subgroup.

General Rule. Make your sample as large as possible considering time and resources. A large sample is more likely to better represent the whole group. The smaller the sample, the less likely it will accurately reflect the whole. However, a small, truly random sample provides more accurate information than a large sample that is nonrandomly selected because of the possibility of sampling bias.

Anticipating nonresponse. Generally, a certain number of people will not respond for one reason or another. The sample size needs to be large enough to compensate for this nonresponse. A way to do this is to estimate the rate of nonresponse (30% nonresponse may be realistic) and increase the sample size accordingly. For example, if the total group of program participants is 150 and you set a margin of error at 10%, you need a sample size of 61 participants. If we think that 70% of the individuals will respond, we actually need to begin with a sample of 87 (61/.70) to ensure that we end up with 61 people.

Purposeful sampling. Sometimes, rather than representative sampling, we are interested in purposeful sampling. When your purpose is to examine selected cases in greater depth, the previous recommendations for sample size do not apply. In purposeful sampling, the sample size may be very small — possibly even just one case study (n=1). For example, you may wish to conduct a single case study of a low-income participant and the difference a program made in his or her life. Or, your purpose may require an in-depth analysis of successful community collaborations, highlighting the factors affecting success. You might ask knowledgeable people to identify such collaborations and then select a certain number to include in your sample. If the purpose of the evaluation is to document diversity or variation, a larger number of cases may be necessary to capture the variety. What is the recommended sample size? There are no rules. It depends upon what you want to know, what will be useful, what will be credible, and what can be accomplished within the time and resources you have available. Explain and justify your sampling procedures and decisions so that information users and decision makers understand your logic. Be careful not to generalize but to focus on the intention and strengths of a purposeful sample.

Adapted from Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). *Sampling* (G3658-3). Available at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-3.PDF Ordering information at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Sampling-P1029C237.aspx

WHAT IS SAMPLING BIAS?

Bias is a systematic error that can prejudice your evaluation findings in some way. So, *sampling bias* is consistent error that arises due to the sample selection. For example, a survey of high school students to measure teenage use of illegal drugs will be a biased sample because it does not include home schooled students or dropouts. A sample is also biased if certain members are underrepresented or overrepresented relative to others in the population. For example, distributing a questionnaire at the end of a 3-day conference is likely to include more people who are committed to the conference so their views would be overrepresented. Interviews with people who walk by a certain location is going to over-represent healthy individuals or those who live near the location. Selecting a sample using a telephone book will underrepresent people who cannot afford a telephone, do not have a telephone, or do not list their telephone numbers.

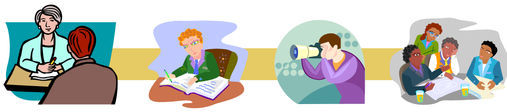
Sampling bias can occur any time your sample is not a random sample. If it is not random, some individuals are more likely than others to be chosen. Always think very carefully about which individuals are being favored and how they differ.

Why does it matter?
Sampling bias means that the data you collect may not be accurate or represent the group.

How can we know if the sample is biased? Sometimes you can identify sampling bias just by being very thoughtful and comparing the characteristics of respondents in your sample to what you know about the population in general. Think about the demographic characteristics that might have an important relationship to their answers. For example, if you know that gender is an important variable, and you know that the population includes 50% males and 50% females, then the sample needs to include the same proportions. If the sample includes 20% males, your results are likely to be biased because you don't have enough responses from men.

What can we do about it? If you do identify differences between respondents in your sample and in the target population, report the results separately for the group(s) that is under- or over-represented.

Unit 5: Collecting data



Collect data

Who
What

↓

Evaluation questions

↓

Indicators: Evidence that answers your questions → Sources of information: program records, individuals, public → METHODS

Source of evaluation information

- Existing information
- People
- Pictorial records and observations

5 (Quantity) **Happy** (Quality) **Kids**

Quantitative: numbers breadth generalizability
Qualitative: words depth specific

Remember, **"Not everything that counts can be counted."**

Paradigm dimensions

Qualitative
- Naturalistic inquiry
- Holistic, system-wide perspective
- Uniqueness and diversity
- Inductive reasoning
- Qualitative data (words)
- Qualitative methods – unstructured, open-ended
- Purposeful sampling
- Emergent, flexible design
- Content analysis
- Extrapolations

Quantitative
- Scientific/experimental design
- Independent, dependent variables
- Standardized, uniform
- Deductive reasoning
- Quantitative data (numbers)
- Quantitative methods – structured, standardized
- Probabilistic, random sampling
- Fixed, controlled design
- Statistical analysis
- Generalizations

Quantitative methods – Qualitative methods

Quantitative	Qualitative
Surveys Questionnaires	Focus groups
Tests	Unstructured interviews
Existing databases	Unstructured observations

Often, it is better to use more than one method….

Mixed methods for one program

- Log of activities and participation
- Self-administered questionnaires completed after each workshop
- In-depth interviews with key informants
- Observation of workshops
- Survey of participants

Are the data reliable and valid?

- Validity: Are you measuring what you think you are measuring?
  - Example:
- Reliability: if something was measured again using the same instrument, would it produce the same (or nearly the same) results?
  - Example:

"Trustworthy" and "credible" data

What do these words mean relative to your evaluation information?

How can you help ensure that your evaluation data are trustworthy and credible?

Common data collection methods

- Survey
- Case study
- Interview
- Observation
- Group assessment
- Expert or peer reviews
- Portfolio reviews
- Testimonials
- Tests
- Photographs, videotapes, slides
- Diaries, journals, logs
- Document review and analysis

When choosing methods, consider…

•The purpose of your evaluation − Will the method allow you to gather information that can be analyzed and presented in a way that will be credible and useful to you and others?

•The respondents − What is the most appropriate method, considering how the respondents can best be reached, how they might best respond, literacy, cultural considerations, etc.?

Consider…

- Resources available. Time, money, and staff to design, implement, and analyze the information. What can you afford?
- Type of information you need. Numbers, percents, comparisons, stories, examples, etc.
- Interruptions to program or participants. Which method is likely to be least intrusive?
- Advantages and disadvantages of each method.
- The need for credible and authentic evidence.
- The value of using multiple methods.
- The importance of ensuring cultural appropriateness.

Quality criteria for methods

UTILITY

Will the data sources and collection methods serve the information needs of your primary users?

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Quality criteria…

FEASIBILITY

Are your sources and methods practical and efficient?

Do you have the capacity, time, and resources?

Are your methods non-intrusive and non-disruptive?

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Quality criteria…

PROPRIETY

Are your methods respectful, legal, ethical, and appropriate?

Does your approach protect and respect the welfare of all those involved or affected?

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Quality criteria…

ACCURACY

Are your methods technically adequate to:

- answer your questions?
- measure what you intend to measure?
- reveal credible and trustworthy information?
- convey important information?

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There is no one right method of collecting data.

Each has a purpose, advantages, and challenges.

The goal is to obtain trustworthy, authentic, and credible evidence.

Often, a mix of methods is preferable.

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Culturally appropriate evaluation methods

- How appropriate is the method given the culture of the respondent/the setting?
- Culture differences: nationality, ethnicity, religion, region, gender, age, abilities, class, economic status, language, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, organizational affiliation

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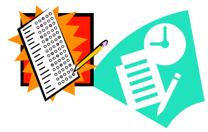
Is a written questionnaire culturally appropriate?



Things to consider:
- Literacy level
- Tradition of reading, writing
- Setting
- Not best choice for people with oral tradition
- Translation (more than just literal translation)
- How cultural traits affect response – response sets
- How to sequence the questions
- Pretest questionnaire may be viewed as intrusive

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
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Are interviews culturally appropriate?

Things to consider:
- Preferred by people with an oral culture
- Language level proficiency; verbal skill proficiency
- Politeness – responding to authority (thinking it's unacceptable to say "no"), nodding, smiling, agreeing
- Need to have someone present
- Relationship/position of interviewer
- May be seen as interrogation
- Direct questioning may be seen as impolite, threatening, or confrontational

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Are focus groups culturally appropriate?

Things to consider:
- Issues of gender, age, class, clan differences
- Issues of pride, privacy, self-sufficiency, and traditions
- Relationship to facilitator as prerequisite to rapport
- Same considerations as for interview

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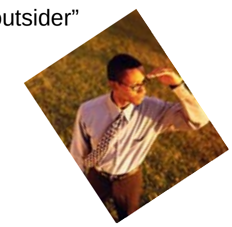
Is observation culturally appropriate?

Things to consider:
- Discomfort, threat of being observed
- Issue of being an "outsider"
- Observer effect
- Possibilities for misinterpretations



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Cultural issues related to use of existing data/records

- Need careful translation of documents in another language
- May have been written/compiled using unknown standards or levels of aggregation
- May be difficult to get authorization to use
- Difficult to correct document errors if low literacy level

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Culturally appropriate informed consent

How can we be culturally sensitive and respectful and ensure the protection of those involved in our evaluations?
- Children
- Marginalized, "less powerful" participants

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Focus groups

Structured small group interviews

"Focused" in two ways:

- Persons being interviewed are similar in some way (e.g. limited resource families, family services professionals, or elected officials).
- Information on a particular topic is guided by a set of focused questions.

Focus groups

Focus groups are used...

- To solicit perceptions, views, and a range of opinions (not consensus)
- When you wish to probe an issue or theme in depth

Survey

A structured way to collect information using questionnaires. Surveys are typically conducted through the mail (electronic or surface), phone, or internet.

Survey

Surveys are used…

- To collect standardized information from large numbers of individuals
- When face-to-face meetings are inadvisable
- When privacy is important or independent opinions and responses are needed

Steps in planning a survey

1. Decide who should be involved in the process.
2. Define survey content.
3. Identify your respondents.
4. Decide on the survey method.
5. Develop the questionnaire.
6. Pilot test the questionnaire and other materials.
7. Think about analysis.
8. Communicate about your survey and its results.
9. Develop a budget, timeline, and management process.

Response rate

The proportion of people who respond: divide the number of returned surveys by the total number of surveys distributed.

Example: If you distribute 50 questionnaires and you get 25 questionnaires back, your response rate is 50%.

Response rate

$$\frac{\text{\# that answered}}{\text{\# you contacted}} = \text{response rate}$$

Response rate

- High response rate promotes confidence in results.
- Lower response rate increases the likelihood of biased results.

Response rate

- There is no standard response rate. “The higher, the better.” Anything under 60% is a warning.
- Why is high return important? It’s the only way to know if results are representative.
- Address low response. How are people who didn’t respond different from those who did? Only describe your results in terms of who did respond.

How to increase response rate

- Generate positive publicity for your survey.
- Over sample.
- Ensure that respondents see the value of participating.
- Use a combination of methods.
- Make (multiple) follow-up contacts.
- Provide incentives.
- Provide 1st class postage/return postage.
- Set return deadlines.
- Make the survey easy to complete.

If response rate is low…

Use language that is suggestive rather than decisive.

Examples: “The data suggests” vs. “These data show”; “It appears” vs. “We can conclude”

- Don’t generalize findings to the entire group.
- Clearly describe who the data represents.

Document review

Using information that already exists in records, receipts, meeting minutes, reports, budgets…rather than collecting new data

There is a wealth of information available on the web.

CHECK – What information is already available?

Document review – Sources

National Center for Education Statistics
http://nces.ed.gov
Census Bureau http://www.census.gov
Bureau of Labor Statistics http://stats.bls.gov
National Center for Health Statistics
http://cdc.gov/nchs/
Children's Defense Fund
http://www.childrensdefense.org
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Local school districts
ERIC searches http://www.eric.ed.gov/
County government

Document review – Advantages of using existing data

- Available – don't have to collect data
- Low cost
- Minimum staff required
- Comparative or longitudinal data may be available

Document review – Issues in using existing data

- Missing or incomplete data
- Confidentiality issues
- Unknown, different, or changing definitions of data make comparison difficult
- May not match what you need in terms of geographic location, same time period, or population – may be too aggregated

Observation…

- Is watching people, programs, events, communities, etc.
- Involves all 5 senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste
  - observation includes more than just "seeing"

Observation is used…

- To provide information about real-life situations and circumstances
- To assess what is happening
- Because you cannot rely on participants' willingness and ability to furnish information

When is observation useful?

- When you want direct information
- When you are trying to understand an ongoing behavior, process, unfolding situation, or event
- When there is physical evidence, products, or outcomes that can be readily seen
- When written or other data collection methods seem inappropriate

Observations

- Advantages
  - Most direct measure of behavior
  - Provides direct information
  - Easy to complete, saves time
  - Can be used in natural or experimental settings
- Disadvantages
  - May require training
  - Observer's presence may create artificial situation
  - Potential for bias
  - Potential to overlook meaningful aspects
  - Potential for misinterpretation
  - Difficult to analyze

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Observation – Purpose, benefits

- Unobtrusive
- Can see things in their natural context
- Can see things that may escape conscious awareness, things that are not seen by others
- Can discover things no else has ever really paid attention to, things that are taken for granted
- Can learn about things people may be unwilling to talk about
- Inconspicuous – least potential for generating observer effects
- Least intrusive of all methods
- Can be totally creative – has flexibility to yield insight into new realities or new ways of looking at old realities

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Observation – Limitations

1. Potential for bias
   - Effect of culture on what you observe and interpret
2. Reliability
   - Ease of categorization

Usually you do not rely on observation alone; combine your observations with another method to provide a more thorough account of your program.

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Unit 5: Collecting data

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Observation – Ethical issues

- Unobtrusiveness is its greatest strength; also potential for abuse in invasion of privacy
- Can venture into places and gather data almost anywhere
- Covert – overt
  - Always consider ethics and human subjects protection.

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 5: Collecting data

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Types of observation

Structured		Unstructured
Looking for	→	**Looking at**

Observing what does not happen may be as important as observing what does happen.

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Steps in planning for observation

- Determine who/what will be observed.
- Determine aspects that will be observed (characteristics, attributes, behaviors, etc.).
- Determine where and when observations will be made.
- Develop the observation record sheet.
- Pilot test the observation record sheet.
- Train the observers and have them practice.
- Collect the information.
- Analyze and interpret the collected information.
- Write up and use your findings.

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Who/what to observe

- People (individuals, groups, communities)
  - Characteristics
  - Interactions
  - Behaviors
  - Reactions
- Physical settings
- Environmental features
- Products/physical artifacts

Observation – Example

If you want information about…	*You would record…*
Who uses a particular service	Total number of users broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, etc.
Interactions between youth and adults	# and types of questions asked by each
Neighborhood safety	???

What to observe – Example

Exhibit on tobacco use at a county fair

Information needed:

Number of youth who visit the exhibit: age, gender, cultural background

Can the information be observed accurately?
E.g., gender may be more obvious than age or cultural background.

Will the observer affect the situation?

Example – Plans for observing participation in an after school program

- Who: youth attending the program
- What:
  - approximate age
  - gender, cultural background
  - length of time student stays in the program
- When: all hours the program is open for one week each month during 2007

Recording your observations

Observations need to be recorded to be credible. You might use:

- Observation guide
- Recording sheet
- Checklist
- Field note
- Picture
- Combination of the above

Observational rating scales

- Written descriptions – written explanations of each gradation to observe
- Photographs – series of photos that demonstrate each of the grades on the rating scale
- Drawings, sketches, etc. – other visual representations of conditions to be observed

Who are the observers?

- You – program staff
- Participants
- Stakeholders
- Colleagues
- Volunteers
- College students

Training observers

Training is often necessary:

- To learn what to look for
- To learn how to record observations
- To practice
- When want standardized observations across sites: important that all observers use same methods, rate same observation in same way

Practice

For our workshop today, what observational data could we collect that would tell us …

- whether learning is occurring
- the characteristics of attendees
- whether the setting is conducive to learning
- whether the materials are easy to use

Practice

Imagine you are sitting in a room where ten youth are participating in a computer demonstration. If you were looking for indicators of student interest and learning from the demonstration, what would you look for?

(Remember to include verbal and nonverbal indicators.)

Interviewing is…

- Talking and listening to people
- Verbally asking program participants the program evaluation questions and hearing the participant's point of view in his or her own words. Interviews can be either structured or unstructured, in person or over the telephone.
- Done face-to-face or over the phone
- Individual; group

Interviews are useful…

- When the subject is sensitive
- When people are likely to be inhibited in speaking about the topic in front of others
- When people have a low reading ability
- When bringing a group of people together is difficult (e.g., in rural areas)

Interviews

Verbally asking program participants the program evaluation questions and hearing the participant's point of view in his or her own words.

Interviews can be either structured or unstructured, in person or over the telephone.

Interviews

- Advantages
  - deep and free response
  - flexible, adaptable
  - glimpse into respondent's tone, gestures
  - ability to probe, follow-up
- Disadvantages
  - costly in time and personnel
  - requires skill
  - may be difficult to summarize responses
  - possible biases: interviewer, respondent, situation

Types of interviewing

Structured → Conversational

Type: Structured interview

- Uses script and questionnaire
- No flexibility in wording or order of questions
- Closed response option
- Open response option

Type: Guided interview

- Outline of topics or issues to cover
- May vary wording or order of questions
- Fairly conversational and informal

Type: Conversational interview

- May not know that an interview is taking place
- Spontaneous
- Questions emerge from the situation and what is said
- Topics or questions are not predetermined
- Individualized and relevant to situation

Probing

Interview question:
"What did you like best about this program?"
Response: "I liked everything."
Probe 1: "What one thing stood out?"
R: "Being with my friends."
Probe 2: "What about the program activities?"
R: "I liked it when we worked as a team."
Probe 3: "How come?"
R: "It was neat to hear each other's perspectives. I heard some things I hadn't considered before."
Probe 4: "What is one thing that you learned?"

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Interviewing tips

- Keep language pitched to that of respondent
- Avoid long questions
- Create comfort
- Establish time frame for interview
- Avoid leading questions
- Sequence topics
- Be respectful
- Listen carefully

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Recording responses

- Write down response
- Tape record
- Key in on computer
- Work in pairs
- Complete notes after interview

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Questionnaires are…

- Data collection instruments used to collect standardized information that can be expressed numerically or through short answers
- Basic instruments of surveys and structured interviews
- Appropriate when…
  - you want information from many people
  - you have some understanding of the situation and can ask meaningful questions
  - information is sensitive or private − anonymous questionnaires may reduce bias

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Questionnaires

- Advantages
  - can reach large numbers
  - provide for anonymity
  - relatively inexpensive
  - easy to analyze
- Disadvantages
  - might not get careful feedback
  - wording can bias client's response
  - response rate is often low
  - literacy demands

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When should a questionnaire be used?

- Respondents can provide useful information about the topic.
- You know what it is you want to know and are reasonably sure that you can ask standardized questions to get the information.
- Respondents can be relied upon to provide the information you need (perhaps with incentives). This means they can comprehend the questions and respond properly, they are truthful, and they are motivated enough to respond carefully.

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Good questionnaires are NOT EASY!

- Developing a good questionnaire, takes time, time, and more time.
- Multiple (even a dozen!) drafts may be involved before the questionnaire is ready.
- It's important to involve others in writing the questionnaire.

Questionnaire design – Considerations

- Kind of information: What do you want to know? Is the information already available?
- Wording of questions and responses
- Formatting the questionnaire
- Pre-testing
- Cover letters and introductions
- When/where will the questionnaire be distributed?
- How will returns be managed? How will the data be analyzed?
- Who is responsible for each task?

Questionnaire design

- Is the information already available?
- Don't ask a question unless it has a use.
  - Eliminate the "nice to know."
- What will you do with each piece of information gathered?

Questionnaire design

- Write questions through your respondent's eyes.
  - Will the question be seen as reasonable?
  - Will it infringe on the respondent's privacy?
  - Will the respondent be able and willing to answer the question?
- Be **selective** and **realistic** when writing questions.

6 STEPS IN DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Decide what information you need.
2. Determine sample – respondents.
3. Develop accurate, user-friendly questionnaire.
4. Develop plan for distribution, return, and follow-up.
5. Provide clear instructions and a good cover letter.
6. Pilot test.

Step 1: What information is needed?

- Be specific
- Need to know vs. would like to know
- Check to see if information exists elsewhere
- What do you want to be able to say: counts, percentages, relationships, narratives

Step 2: Sample

- Who will complete the questionnaire?
- What do you know about their preferences, abilities, and cultural characteristics that may affect the way they respond?

Step 3: Develop questionnaire

- Make sure questions cover information needed.
- Word questions carefully.
- Consider cultural nuances.
- Sequence questions appropriately.
- Attend to formatting.

Step 3 continued

- Write clear, complete directions.
- Review to see if it is user-friendly; consider the respondent.
- Make the questionnaire attractive.
- Work as a team.
- Plan on writing several draft questionnaires.

Step 4: Plan distribution, return, follow-up

Distribution: when, where
- At meetings, sites, through mail, email, internet

Return: when, where
- Return to individual, collection box
- Return envelope addressed/stamped
- Return envelope addressed only

Follow-up

Step 5: Cover Letter − Explanation

- Purpose of questionnaire – how information will be used
- Why they are being asked to fill it out
- Importance of their response
- How and when to respond
- Whether response will be anonymous or confidential
- Your appreciation
- Promise results, if appropriate
- Signature − sponsorship

Step 6: Pilot test

- Always
- With people as similar to respondents as possible
  - Do they understand the questions? The instructions?
  - Do questions mean same thing to all?
  - Do questions elicit the information you want?
  - How long does it take?
- Revise as necessary

Kinds of information – What do you want to know?

- Knowledge − what people know, how well they understand something
- Beliefs − attitudes, opinions
- Behaviors − what people do
- Attributes/Demographics − what people are and what people have

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Change in knowledge

Impact of divorce on children

As a result of this program, to what extent do you understand the following about children and divorce:

	Not well	Somewhat	Very well	Already knew
a. Stages of grief	1	2	3	4
b. Self-blame or guilt	1	2	3	4
c. The desire for parents to reunite	1	2	3	4

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Change in skills

Communication skills

List three communications techniques you learned in this course that you have used with your children:

1.________________________________
2.________________________________
3.________________________________

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Change in attitude

As a result of this course, to what extent do you feel that your attitude has changed about:

a. Discussing your children with your ex

not at all   somewhat   a great deal

b. Allowing your former in-laws to see your children

not at all   somewhat   a great deal

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Change in behavior

How visitation disputes are handled

1. Describe how you and your ex-spouse handled visitation disagreements ***before*** the course.

2. Describe how you and your ex-spouse have handled visitation disagreements ***since*** the workshop.

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Attributes – What people are, what people have

Demographic characteristics − age, education, occupation, or income

– Where do you currently live?
– How many children do you have?
– What is your age?
– How many years have you been employed at your current job?

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Types of questions

- Open-ended questions – allow respondents to provide their own answers
- Closed-ended questions – list answers and respondents select either one or multiple responses

Open-ended questions

- Do not provide any specific responses from which the participant would choose.
- Allow respondents to express their own ideas and opinions.

Open-ended questions

Pros:

- Can get unintended or unanticipated results
- Wide variety of answers
- Answers in participants' "voices"

Cons:

- More difficult to answer
- May be harder to categorize for interpretation
- More difficult for people who don't write much

Open-ended questions

Examples:

What communication skills did you learn in this workshop that you will use with your children?

What benefits do you receive from this organization?

Closed-ended questions

- Provide specific answers from which the participant must choose.
- Sometimes called *"forced choice."*
- Response possibilities include: one best answer, multiple responses, rating, or ranking scale.

Closed-ended questions

Pros:

- Easy to analyze responses
- Stimulates recall

Cons:

- Chance of none of the choices being appropriate
- Biases response to what you're looking for
- Misses unintended outcomes

Closed-ended questions

Example – one best answer:

What does the word "nutrition" mean to you? (Circle one number.)

1 Getting enough vitamins
2 The food you eat and how your body uses it
3 Having to eat foods I don't like
4 Having good health

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Closed-ended questions

Example – multiple responses:
Of the communication skills taught in this workshop, which will you use with your children? (Check all that apply.)

___active listening
___acknowledge feelings
___ask more open-ended questions
___provide one-on-one time for discussion
___negotiation
___other______________________

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Closed-ended questions

Example – rating scale

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the new zoning code? (Circle one.)

1 Strongly disagree
2 Mildly disagree
3 Neither agree or disagree
4 Mildly agree
5 Strongly agree

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When wording the questions, consider…

- The particular people for whom the questionnaire is being designed
- The particular purpose of the questionnaire
- How questions will be placed in relation to each other in the questionnaire

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Use clear, specific, simple wording.

- Match vocabulary and reading skills of your respondents.
- Are any words confusing? Do any words have a double meaning?
- Avoid the use of abbreviations and jargon.

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Example: Use clear, specific, simple wording.

- Avoid jargon or technical language.

Jargon:
What kind of post-litigation concerns have you and your ex-spouse had?

Better:
Since having your visitation rights set by a judge, what other concerns have you and your ex-spouse had about visitation?

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Include all necessary information.

- Avoid vague questions and answers.
- Avoid ambiguous words or phrases.
- Avoid questions that may be too specific.
- Avoid making assumptions.

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Example: Vague questions

Vague:

How will this seminar help you?

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Example: Vague questions

Better:

What skills did you learn in this seminar that will help you follow the child custody arrangements set by the court?

____how to negotiate changes or with my ex-spouse
____how to explain visitation arrangements to my children
____steps to requesting a change in arrangements from the court
____how to separate child support from visitation disputes

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Example: Avoid ambiguous words or phrases.

Ambiguous:

How has your child demonstrated improved communication skills since participating in “Let’s Communicate”?

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Example: Avoid specificity that limits the potential for reliable responses.

Too specific:

How many meals have you eaten as a family during the past year?

____________ number of meals

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Example: Avoid making assumptions.

Question for teachers that makes assumptions:

What practices have you used to get more parents to read to their children?

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Avoid leading questions.

- Biased questions
  - Influence people to respond in a certain way
  - Make assumptions about the respondent
  - Use language that has strong positive or negative appeal

Example: Leading questions

Leading:

Do you think this seminar will help you stop fighting with your spouse about the children?

Better:

How do you think this seminar will help you work with your spouse to address your children's concerns?

Avoid double-barreled questions.

- Ask one question at a time.
- Avoid ambiguity − questions that have multiple responses.

Example: Double-barreled question

Double:

How will this seminar help you communicate better with your children and their grandparents about your divorce?

Better:

How will this seminar help you communicate with your children about your divorce?

How will this seminar help you communicate with your children's grandparents about their relationship with their grandchildren?

Make the response categories clear, logical, and mutually exclusive.

- Only one possible answer
- Similar-sized categories
- Responses in a logical order

Example: Clear, logical, and mutually exclusive responses

Poor spacing and logic:	**Better spacing, logic, and mutually exclusive:**
Children's Ages	Children's Ages
0−1	under 1 year of age
1−3	1−3 years of age
3−6	4−6 years of age
7−12	7−9 years of age
13−18	10−12 years of age
	13−15 years of age
	16−18 years of age

Example: Vague quantifier

Vague:

How often did you attend an Extension-sponsored workshop during the past year?

a. Never
b. Rarely
c. Several times
d. Many times

Example: Vague quantifier

Better:

How often did you attend an Extension-sponsored workshop during the past year?

a. Not at all
b. One to two times
c. Three to five times
d. More than five times

Rating scales

- Ordered options to gauge difference of opinion.
- Keep the order of choices the same throughout the form.
- Odd number of options allows people to select a middle option.
- Even number forces respondents to take sides.
- Simpler is better.

Types of rating scales

Category scales
Numeric scales
Semantic differentials

Category/Rating scales

- Use words or phrases to express a range of choices.
- The number of categories depends on the amount of differentiation.
- Three, four, or five categories are most common.

Category/Rating scales

- Balance the scale with an equal number of positive and negative options.
- “No opinion” or “uncertain” are not part of a scale. They are usually placed off to the side or in a separate column.
- All choices should refer to the same thing/concept.

Category/Rating scales – Example

Poor:
- __Not worth my time
- __Slightly interested
- __Moderately interested
- __Very interested

Better:
- __Not at all interested
- __Slightly interested
- __Moderately interested
- __Very interested

Left column includes two concepts – "worth" and "interest level."

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Rating scales – Words

Not much	A little	Not much
Some	Some	Little
A great deal	A lot	Somewhat
		Much
		A great deal

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Rating scales – Words

Never	Extremely poor
Seldom	Below average
Often	Average
Always	Above average
	Excellent

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Rating scales – Words

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Completely disagree
Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree
Agree	Agree	Slightly disagree
Strongly agree		Slightly agree
Uncertain		Mostly agree
		Completely agree

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Formatting considerations

- Overall appearance
- Length of the questionnaire
- Order of questions
- Demographic data collection

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Formatting – Overall appearance

- Use an easy-to-read typeface.
- Leave plenty of white space.
- Separate different components of a questionnaire by using different type styles.
- Use arrows to show respondents where to go.

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Formatting – Length of the questionnaire

- Shorter questionnaires usually generate higher return.
- Include enough items to be thorough but don't over-burden the respondent.
- Length is not usually as important as other formatting characteristics.

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Formatting – Order of questions

- Introduction – Include questionnaire's sponsor, purpose, use, confidentiality, etc.
- Include instructions for how to answer the questions (e.g., Circle one; Check all that apply).
- Arrange questions so they flow naturally.
- Place demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire.
- Be consistent with numbers, format, and scales.

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Formatting – Order of questions

- Start with the easiest questions – avoid controversial topics.
- Address important topics early.
- Move from specific questions to general questions.
- Move from closed-ended to open-ended questions.

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Formatting – Demographic data collection

- Only include questions about demographic data that you will use.
- You may want to preface demographic questions with the purpose for collecting the information.
- You may need to state that providing this information is optional and/or explain how it affects program eligibility.

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Formatting – Demographic data collection

Age
Gender
Ethnicity
Marital status
Family size
Occupation
Education
Employment status

Residence
Previous contact with organization
Prior knowledge of topic
First-time participant vs. repeats
How you learned about the program

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Pre-test the questionnaire

ALWAYS

ALWAYS

ALWAYS

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What you want to find out in a pretest:

- Does each question measure what it is supposed to measure?
- Are all the words understood?
- Are questions interpreted in the same way by all respondents?
- Are all response options appropriate?
- Is there an answer that applies to each respondent?

- Salant and Dillman (1994)

Source: Salant, P., & Dillman, D. A. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Pre-testing questions

- Are the answers respondents can choose from correct? Are some responses missing?
- Does the questionnaire create a positive impression – does it motivate people to answer it?
- Does any aspect of the questionnaire suggest bias?
- Do respondents follow the directions?
- Is the cover letter clear?

-Salant and Dillman (1994)

Source: Salant, P., & Dillman, D. A. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Pre-testing steps

1. Select reviewers who are similar to the respondents and who will be critical. (Also ask your colleagues to review it.)
2. Ask them to complete the questionnaire as if it were "for real."
3. Obtain feedback on the form and content of the questionnaire and the cover letter. Was anything confusing, difficult to answer, de-motivating?

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Pre-testing steps, continued

4. Assess whether the questions produce the information you need.
5. Try the tabulation and analysis procedures.
6. Revise.
7. If necessary, repeat these steps to pre-test the revised version.

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Revise and revise…

- A quality questionnaire is almost never written in one sitting.
- A quality questionnaire goes through multiple revisions (maybe a dozen!) before it is ready.
- Remember – a list of questions is just the starting point. There are many factors that affect response.

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Choices: **Timing of data collection**

When will data be collected?
- Before and after the program
- At one time
- At various times during the course of the program
- Continuously through the program
- Over time – longitudinally

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A good cover letter will include information about…

- Purpose and importance of the survey
- Survey sponsor − use letterhead
- Why the respondent was selected to participate
- Benefit(s) of completing survey
- Assurance of anonymity or confidentiality

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A good cover letter will include information about…

- How results will be used
- Instruction for returning the survey
- When to respond
- How to obtain survey results
- Contact information

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Cover letters − Tips

- Personalize the letter in salutation or signature
- Hand-sign the letter
- Express appreciation for their participation
- Include pre-addressed, stamped return envelope

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Cover letters – Pre-test

- Remember to pre-test your cover letter just as you pre-test your questionnaire!

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Sampling – The basics

- Why sample?
- What are options for sampling design?
- What determines sample size?
- What should you consider when conducting the sample?

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Why a sample?

- Save money.
- Save time.
- Minimize error and maximize representation.

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Types of sampling strategies:

Probability:

- Why? Generalize to population.

  Some examples:
  - Simple random sample
  - Stratified sample
  - Cluster sample
  - Systematic sample

Nonprobability:

- Why? Generalizability not as important. Want to focus on "right cases."

  Some examples:
  - Quota sample
  - "Purposeful" sample
  - "Convenience" or "opportunity" sample

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Things to remember

- The smaller the sample size, the greater the variability.
- Goal of sampling: to reduce variability enough to say it represents the population without increasing costs.
- Sampling bias: Sampling is not "really" random, but ion a good sample:
  1. Each unit should have an equal chance of being chosen.
  2. Choosing one unit should not affect whether another is chosen.
- Response bias: Respondents with particular characteristics tend to respond in particular ways.

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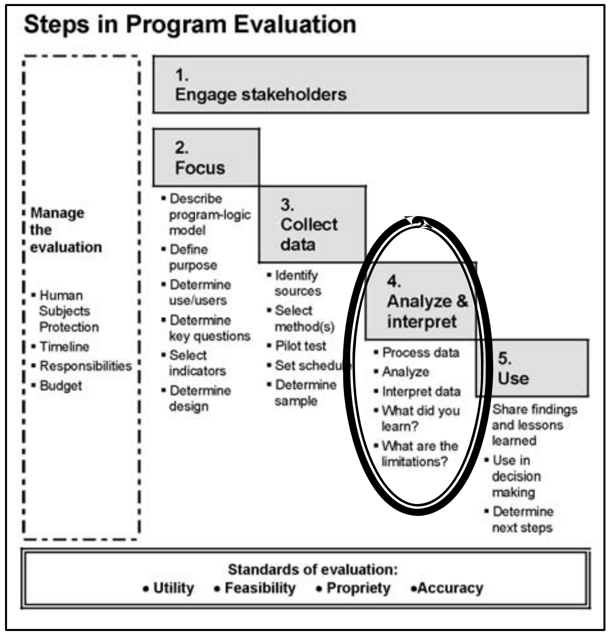
Unit 6: Analyzing and interpreting data

Unit 6: Analyzing and interpreting data

Data analysis is the process of converting numbers and words into usable information to permit meaningful interpretation. Data do not speak for themselves. Analysis and interpretation involve human judgment that brings meaning to your data.

This process often takes more time than expected, so plan accordingly. Think about who should be involved and who can help.



This unit covers basic analysis techniques appropriate for community-based self-evaluation. For information about more sophisticated analytical procedures, other resources may better serve you.

Note to facilitator:

A brief and simple *Community activist survey* is used throughout this unit to facilitate practice and application of analysis techniques. The survey includes two open-ended questions, four closed-ended questions, and data from 10 respondents. Use individuals' own evaluation projects and data if possible.

An individual's or group's resources and purpose determine who is involved in data analysis. For some guidelines, see "Who Should Perform the Analysis" on page *xi* of the Introduction to *Analyzing Outcome Information: Getting the Most from Your Data* [Hatry, Cowan, & Hendricks (2004) http://www.urban.org/publications/310973.html].

Section 6A: Demystifying data analysis

Data analysis is often associated with mathematics, statistics, and tasks that may cause anxiety or discomfort. People may think data analysis is too hard or better done by someone else. In fact, many data analysis techniques are plain common sense. We analyze data every day in various ways. This section starts with some icebreakers and ways to relieve any discomfort. You will also find a glossary of common data analysis terminology.

Section 6B: Planning for data analysis

While the actual analysis comes once you have data, planning for analysis should start when you are constructing your evaluation instruments, such as questionnaires or checklists. What do you want to be able to say? Do you need numbers, percentages, quotations, or comparisons of groups or individuals? Thinking about data analysis and planning early will help ensure that you have the data you need.

Section 6C: Analyzing quantitative data

Analyzing quantitative data involves adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and performing other calculations. There are basic steps to help facilitate analysis. This section covers basic descriptive statistics (the type of statistics most commonly used in community program evaluation) and several practice activities.

Section 6D: Analyzing qualitative data

Qualitative data come from interviews, open-ended survey questions, focus groups, journals and diaries, documents, and reports. A common approach to qualitative data analysis is **content analysis.** This type of analysis involves a systematic process of organizing respondents' comments into coherent categories in order to summarize and make sense of all the words.

Section 6E: Interpreting the data

Interpretation is the process of attaching meaning to the analyzed data. Numbers and words do not speak for themselves. For example, what does it mean that 45% of the respondents reported that they had their wells tested? Is this percentage greater or less than last year? High or low for the county? What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn? Involving key stakeholders in interpreting the data provides perspectives, adds to understanding, and helps bring meaning to your data.

Section 6F: Using Excel in data analysis

Many organizations use Microsoft Windows and the suite of software programs provided by Microsoft Corporation. This section is not intended to endorse Excel over other products but rather to help those who use Excel to use it in their data analysis work.

Definitions

Review the handout *Data analysis glossary* to familiarize yourself with common terms that are used in data analysis.

Resources

"Analysis: What to do with all these data?" in *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guide book* (Part III) [SRI International (2000), pp. 106-185] http://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/files/other_pubs/WDIO-Evaluation-Guide-Book.pdf

Analyzing outcome information: Getting the most from data [Hatry, Cowan, & Hendricks (2004)] http://www.urban.org/publications/310973.html

Guide to evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for preventing work injuries: How to show whether a safety intervention really works [Robson, Shannon, Goldenhar, & Hale (2001)] http://www.iwh.on.ca/archive/pdfs/eval_gde.pdf

How to manage and analyze data for outcome-based evaluation [Bolan, Francis, & Reisman (2000)] http://www.evaluationforum.com/publications/analyzing_for_outcomes.html

"Identify who needs to be involved" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/identify/index.html

Wading through the data swamp: Program evaluation 201 [Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (2003)] http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/eval201/eval201_1_pg1.htm

Section 6A: Demystifying data analysis

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- release anxieties about data analysis.
- be ready to increase their understanding of data analysis.

⌘ Activity

Getting comfortable with data analysis

Purpose

To help people see data analysis as something they do every day

Materials needed

Slides 2, 3

Poster paper, markers

A toolbox containing common household tools and items

A newspaper or magazine article that contains or reports data (preferably from a local source)

Process

- Start with an icebreaker such as one of the following:
  - Let it all out: Invite people to shout out anything that comes to mind when they hear the term "data analysis."
  - Toolbox metaphor: Invite people to take one item from the toolbox and use it to describe what data analysis means to them.
  - Share experiences: Invite volunteers to share their "good, bad, and ugly" data analysis experiences.
  - Elephant metaphor: Use the popular Indian fable to remind everyone that things aren't always what they seem (see slide 3).

- Invite people to work at their tables or in small groups. Ask the groups to do the following:

  > Today, we are interested in foot sizes. We want to know everything there is to know about the sizes of feet in our group. Discuss together and be prepared to report as much detail as possible about the feet sizes in your group. Use the poster paper to record your findings to share.

- Come together as a whole group. Ask each group to share its data on the sizes of group members' feet. Facilitate a discussion focusing on (1) the different information each group provided, (2) the different quantitative and qualitative analyses, and (3) the ease and naturalness that was apparent (i.e., we use quantitative and qualitative data analysis all the time).
- Distribute the newspaper or magazine article. Invite individuals to read it and discuss it in groups of 2-3. Post the following questions for them to consider as part of their discussions:
  1. What "data" does the article report?
  2. How reliable/accurate do you think the data is? Why?
  3. What, if anything, would make this article stronger?

Reflection questions

- What, if anything, have you learned today about data analysis?
- Are you feeling more comfortable with data analysis? Why or why not?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Section 6B: Planning for data analysis

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- understand the importance of planning for data analysis before collecting data.
- know what to consider in planning for analysis.

⌘ Activity

Developing a data analysis plan

Purpose

"Keep the end in mind"

To help people understand the importance of thinking about data analysis at the time of data collection

Materials needed

Handout-3 *Common data analysis techniques*

Handout-4 *Community activist survey* (or invite people to bring their own questionnaires and work on their own evaluations)

Handout-5 *Data analysis plan worksheet*

Handout-6 *Data analysis plan worksheet – Completed sample.*

Poster paper, markers

Slides 4-7

Process

- **Case scenario:** Form groups of 3-5 people and distribute copies of the handouts *Common data analysis techniques, Community activist survey questionnaire,* and *Data analysis plan worksheet.*

- Provide the following background information:

> **Scenario**
>
> The Westend Tobacco Free Coalition Coordinator and health department staff believe that working on a smoke-free policy campaign not only helps bring about change in tobacco use but also increases skills and builds community capacity for other public policy work. They decide to undertake an evaluation to see if their belief is justified. Over the past few weeks, they have defined their purpose, decided to conduct a survey of all members involved in the policy change initiative, and developed the "Community Activist Survey Questionnaire."
>
> **Purpose of survey**: To determine if being involved in a smoke-free policy campaign results in skills that (1) help create the desired smoke-free policy change, (2) enhance community activists' personal growth, and (3) build community capacity by carrying over to other public policy work.
>
> **Key Question**: To what extent have community activists increased their skills in effecting public policy change?
>
> **Sample**: All community members involved in the policy change initiative, including individuals who helped prepare and distribute information packets, conducted presentations, communicated or advocated with policy makers, and wrote press releases.

- Invite the groups to use the handout *Data analysis plan worksheet* to develop a data analysis plan for the *Community activist survey*. Distribute the poster paper and ask the groups to transpose the chart from the worksheet to the poster paper and fill it in together on the large paper. Refer them to the handout *Common data analysis techniques* to use as needed.
- When finished, invite each group to post its data analysis plan on the wall. Ask groups to share their work.
- Distribute the handout *Data analysis plan worksheet – Completed sample.* Ask each group to compare its work to this handout: What are the similarities? Differences? Encourage discussion and clarification.
- Wrap up with a discussion of questions such as these:
    1. Why is it important to plan for data analysis before you collect data?
    2. What might be overlooked if you don't plan for data analysis?
    3. When and how might you do this type of data analysis planning with your next evaluation project?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about developing a data analysis plan?
- What is one thing that you may do differently as you think about or engage in data analysis?

Additional resources

Activity 52: Planning for data analysis [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 270-272]

"Create an analysis plan" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/create/index.html

Section 6C: Analyzing quantitative data

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of basic quantitative analysis as applied to evaluation data.
- increase their ability to use basic analysis techniques.

⌘ Activity
Understanding basic quantitative analysis techniques

Purpose

To help people increase their understanding of when and how to calculate descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, mode, median, and range

Materials needed

Publication *Analyzing quantitative data* (G3658-6) [Taylor-Powell (1996)]
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-6.pdf

Handout-7 *Tips for quantitative data analysis*

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- **Teach each other:** Distribute the publication *Analyzing quantitative data.* Invite everyone to leaf through the booklet and become familiar with it.
- Print each of the section titles on a sheet of poster paper: **Numerical counts – frequencies, Percentages, Measures of central tendency, Measures of variability,** and **Creating ranks.**
- Review together the first section in the publication and note key points on the **Numerical counts – frequencies** sheet of poster paper. Invite individuals to give examples of using counts/frequencies in their own data analysis work.
- Break into small groups and assign each group one of the remaining sections. Ask each group to review the appropriate

section of the publication and prepare a five-minute "lesson" about the content. Distribute the labeled sheets of poster paper and markers for groups to use in creating their lessons. Encourage each group to include games and examples to illustrate the analysis technique.

- Have each group "teach" its section to the rest of the group. Invite questions, examples, and additional clarification.
- Reorganize individuals into groups of 8-10 people. Distribute poster paper and markers and ask that all calculations be written on the paper to be shared. Provide the following instructions.
  [Adapted from Preskill and Russ-Eft (2005), Activity 56, p. 291]
  - Line up according to height within your group.
  - Create a frequency distribution of your heights (in inches), using the following categories:
    - Less than 60"
    - 60-62"
    - 63-65"
    - 66-68"
    - 69-71"
    - 72-74"
  - Calculate the following:
    - average height
    - range
    - mode
    - median
  - Create a simple bar chart showing your heights.
  - Post your poster papers on wall; share and discuss.
  - Pose the question:

    How would you aggregate all the results from the various subgroups into one composite analysis for the group as a whole?
- **Partners:** Distribute the handout *Tips for quantitative data analysis.* Ask individuals to pair off and discuss the tips together. Rejoin as a full group and clarify any questions.
- **Round-robin table conversations:** Break into small groups of 3-6 people per table. Place the questions below (or others that are relevant for your group and purpose) on the tables – one question on each table. Ask one person at each table to serve as recorder.

Explain that each table group will have 10 minutes to discuss the question on the table. When the whistle blows, individuals are to move to another table that has a different question. The "recorder" stays at the table and records key points from the conversations.

1. Is there a difference between mean and average?
2. What is a mode? A median? When would you use each?
3. When people include a standard deviation, what does that mean?
4. What does statistical significance mean? Do you need to use it?

- Invite the recorders to share key points from the conversations for each question. Encourage additional comments and questions.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned today about quantitative data analysis?
- Is there one type of analysis that you plan to use in the future that you haven't used before? If so, which one and why?

Additional resources

Activity 56: Understanding descriptive statistics [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 291]

"Analyze the data: Quantitative data analysis" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] `http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/analyze/quantitative.html`

Basic statistics [Stat Soft Inc. (2003)] `http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stbasic.html`

Descriptive statistics [Trochim (2004)] `http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/statprep.htm`

⌘ Activity
Key outcome analyses

Purpose

To help people focus on key information useful in reporting outcomes

Materials needed

Handout-8 *Key outcome data analyses* (6 pages)

Handout-14 *Relevant participant characteristics affecting outcomes*

Handout-15 *Relevant program characteristics affecting outcomes*

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the handouts, and post the following questions for all to see:
    1. What are outcomes?
    2. What outcome information is of interest to your key stakeholders?
- As a group, briefly review the four types of analyses discussed in the handout *Key outcome data analyses*. When reviewing the third and fourth types of analyses, refer to the handouts *Relevant participant characteristics affecting outcomes* and *Relevant program characteristics affecting outcomes*. Ask individuals to add to the lists of characteristics with items relevant to their own programs.
- Form small groups of 3-4 individuals. Distribute poster paper and markers to each group. Provide the following instructions:
    - Discuss each type of analysis and look at the tables that illustrate each type from the handout.
    - For each type of analysis, create a table on the poster paper, like the illustration, using hypothetical data or data from your own program.
    - Post your examples and be prepared to explain your data tables with the group.
- Invite each group to share its work. Encourage clarification, additions, and questions.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What is one thing you will do differently in your own data analysis work?

Additional resource

Analyzing outcome information: Getting the most from data [Hatry, Cowan, & Hendricks (2004)] http://www.urban.org/publications/310973.html

⌘ Activity

Preparing for data analysis

Purpose

To help people think more systematically about data collection by using a series of key steps

Materials needed

Handout-16 *Steps for analyzing data*

Handout-17 *Organizing data FAQs*

Handout-18 *Record the decisions you make with your data* (Quick Tip #21)

Handout-19 *Make certain your electronic data are accurate* (Quick Tip #22) (2 pages)

Publication *Using Excel for analyzing survey questionnaires* (G3658-14) [Leahy (2004)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html

Slides 8-12

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- **Brainstorming:** As a group, brainstorm answers to these questions and record people's comments on poster paper:

  You have questionnaires for the end-of-program evaluation from 55 participants.

  1. What do you do now?
  2. What specific activities/steps do you take to organize and analyze your questionnaires?

- **Around the room:** Suggest that data analysis can be systematized into four main steps. Refer to the handout *Steps for analyzing data*, write each step at the top of a sheet of poster paper, and post the sheets around the room.

- Form groups of 3-5 people. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper. Explain that they have five minutes to write what is involved in the step – the tasks and activities they would do in order to complete the step. When the whistle sounds, they are to move in clockwise fashion to the next poster paper, adding to what has been written there.

- After all groups have visited each paper, ask them to go around again and review all the responses. Encourage discussion and additions. What is missing? Who might be involved in each activity?
- Distribute the handout *Steps for analyzing data*. Invite each person to make notes and add to the handout based on the group work.
- **Partners:** Distribute the handout *Organizing data FAQs*. Ask participants to pair off and discuss the FAQs. Rejoin as a full group and clarify any questions.
- Use *Quick Tips #21 and #22* as appropriate. Also, see pages 6-8 in the *Using Excel for Analyzing Survey Questionnaires* for information about coding, entering, and cleaning data.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What is one thing you will do differently in your own data analysis work?

Additional resources

"Organize and focus the analysis" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/organize/index.html

⌘ Activity
Practice: Analyzing survey questionnaires

Purpose

To help people practice quantitative data analysis using sample data

Materials needed

Handout-4 *Community activist survey* (from activity in Section 6B)

Handout-21 *Set of completed community activist surveys* (10 pages)

Handout-31 *Sample data tables – Community activist survey*

Handout-32 *Sample analysis – Community activist survey* (3 pages)

Handout-35 *Limitations*

Slides 13-15

Poster paper, markers

Process

Note to facilitator: This activity covers the following techniques: frequency distribution, percentages, cross tabulation, and collapsing response categories. Use individuals' own survey data, if available.

- Form groups of 3-4 people and distribute one blank copy of the community activist survey to each person.
- Post a sheet of paper with the four data analysis steps highlighted (see previous activity handout *Steps for analyzing data*.) Review the four key steps.
- Distribute a set of the 10 returned questionnaires from the case study to each group. Distribute poster paper and markers for their use. Provide the following instructions:

    1. ORGANIZE DATA
        - Review all the questionnaires and check to see if they are complete and usable; become familiar with the data. [**Note to facilitator:** Several respondents did not fully complete Question 2.]
        - Give each questionnaire a unique identification number.
        - Calculate the response rate.
        - Create a recording form (sample spreadsheet) and record the data for Questions 1-4. Note that the narrative data for Q1i and j, Q5, and Q6 are handled in the activity "Practice: Analyzing data from open-ended questions" later in this section. Note that not everyone answered (filled in) every item.
    2. ANALYZE DATA
        - Calculate frequency and percentages for Questions 1-4 and display the results in a frequency table for each question.
        - Conduct a cross tabulation to determine if participation in particular activities (Q1) resulted in people feeling better equipped to work on other public policy initiatives in the community (Q4).
    3. INTERPRET DATA
        - Determine what the data mean and what you will highlight for each question.
        - Write a statement or short paragraph reporting the data for each question. [**Note to facilitator:** Assign one question to each group to save time.]

4. IDENTIFY LIMITATIONS

    - Identify any limitations that might have affected the results. List them on the poster paper.

- Distribute the final three handouts: *Sample data tables – Community activist survey, Sample analysis – Community activist survey*, and *Limitations.* Ask each group to read and discuss how its work compares with the samples. Each group should compile its comments and questions on a sheet of poster paper and be prepared to share.

- Invite groups to share their key points from their discussions. Ensure that all concepts on the handouts are covered and understood.

- Wrap up with a full-group discussion of this question:

  What additional help/learning is needed?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about quantitative data analysis?
- What is one thing you will do differently in your own data analysis work?

Additional resources

Activity 57: Understanding quantitative data analysis [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 294]

Activity 58: Analyzing and interpreting quantitative data [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 297]

Wading through the data swamp: Program evaluation 201 [Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (2003)] http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/eval201/eval201_1_pg1.htm

Workbook I: Analyzing quantitative data [Wallace Foundation (n.d.)] http://www.wallacefoundation.org/wallace/wb/workbookiquan.pdf

"Working with survey and interview data" in *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guide book* (Chapter 14) [SRI International (2000), pp. 120-136] http://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/files/other_pubs/WDIO-Evaluation-Guide-Book.pdf

⌘ Activity

Practice: Analyzing retrospective post-then-pre questions

Purpose

To help people practice analyzing data from retrospective post-then-pre question format

Materials needed

Handout-36 *Analysis of retrospective post-then-pre data* (Quick Tip #30) (2 pages)

Process

- Distribute the handout *Analysis of retrospective post-then-pre data* (Quick Tip #30).
- As a group, review the purpose and use of the retrospective post-then-pre design (see *Designing a Retrospective Post-then-Pre Question* (Quick Tip #28) [Taylor-Powell & Klatt (2005)]). Remind participants that data analysis of the post-then-pre design would be similar to analyzing a traditional pre-post question.
- Invite everyone to look at the question at top of *Quick Tip #30*. Ask them to look at the second table, with data from 16 usable questionnaires. Have them team up with one other person and address the two questions:
    1. What will you do with these data?
    2. We need to report the results to our county funder. What will you say?
- Regroup and share discussions.
- Cover information on page 2 of *Quick Tip #30*.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about analyzing post-then-pre that you didn't realize before?
- What, if anything, might you do differently in your own practice?

Additional resources

Designing a retrospective post-then-pre question (Quick Tip #28) [Taylor-Powell & Klatt (2005)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet28.pdf

Section 6D: Analyzing qualitative data

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- understand the basics of content analysis.
- better understand how to develop themes and categories for qualitative data.
- increase their confidence in being able to handle qualitative data.

⌘ Activity

Understanding basic qualitative data analysis

Purpose

To help people understand the fundamentals of qualitative analysis

Materials needed

Publication *Analyzing qualitative data* (G3658-12) [Taylor-Powell (2003)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html

Handout-38 *Tips for qualitative data analysis*

Slides 16-19

Poster paper, markers

Learning peripherals using terms and concepts from the publication

Process

Note to facilitator: This activity could be broken into two to three shorter sessions, with each session focusing on one step.

- Invite volunteers to share their experiences with analyzing narrative data.
- Distribute the publication *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Ask participants to leaf through and become familiar with the booklet.
- Review the first page of the booklet together. Ask for additional examples of where you find qualitative data.
- Break into smaller groups and ask each group to review the steps for qualitative data analysis, pages 2-5. Distribute poster paper to each group and have everyone write down questions or comments

they have. Post their sheets and discuss the questions and comments as a whole group.

- Differentiate between “pre-set” and “emergent” categories (page 3). Use *Activity 53: Developing Qualitative Data Analysis Categories and Themes* and *Activity 55: Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data* from the “Additional resources” list. This activity uses a “candy sort” process to help people understand how to develop categories and themes when analyzing qualitative data.
- Form small groups and ask them to review the aspects of managing qualitative data as discussed on pages 6-9 of *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Invite people to share their own experiences with using word processing, Excel, or other software to manage their qualitative data. Ask them to jot down key points from their discussions to share with the full group.
- Rejoin as a full group and share key points from the small-group discussions.
- Distribute the handout *Tips for qualitative data analysis*. Ask individuals to pair off and discuss together the TIPS. Rejoin as a full group and clarify any questions.
- **Round-robin table conversations:** To wrap up, break into small groups of 3-6 people per table. Place the following questions (or others that are relevant for your group and purpose) on the tables – one question per table. Ask one person at each table to serve as recorder. Explain that each table group will have 10 minutes to discuss the question on the table. When the whistle blows, individuals are to move to another table that has a different question. The “recorder” stays at the table, facilitates conversation, and records key points from the conversations.
    1. When would you use pre-set categories for categorizing qualitative data?
    2. When would you use emergent categories for categorizing data?
    3. Who might be involved in analyzing your qualitative data?
    4. What can you do to avoid bias when analyzing qualitative data?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned today about qualitative data analysis?
- What is one thing that you will do differently the next time you have qualitative data to analyze?

Additional resources

Activity 53: Developing qualitative data analysis categories and themes [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 274]

Activity 54: Using comics to understand qualitative data analysis processes [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 276]

Activity 55: Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 282]

"Analyze the data: Qualitative data analysis" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] `http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/analyze/qualitative.html`

10 steps to make sense of answers to open-ended questions (Quick Tip #20) [Boyd (2002)]

⌘ Activity
Practice: Analyzing data from open-ended questions

Purpose

To help people practice analyzing answers to open-ended questions

Materials needed

Publication *Analyzing qualitative data* (G3658-12) [Taylor-Powell (2003)] `http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html`

Handout-39 *Sample data from open-ended questions, #1* or *#2* (3 pages) (Choose one handout, or, if possible, use data from individuals' own program evaluations.)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the publication *Analyzing qualitative data* and one of the handouts *Sample data from open-ended questions, #1* or *#2*.
- Form groups of 3-5 people and distribute the poster paper and markers. Provide the following instructions:
  - o Read through and become familiar with the data.
  - o Identify themes or key ideas, and give each category a name/label.
  - o Group the comments into the categories and label them.
  - o Prepare a brief summary that you might use to report results to your funder. What will you highlight? What is

important? Write your summary on the poster paper and post. Include any limitations that might have affected the results.

- Ask the people in each group to share (1) how they went about identifying the categories; (2) the category labels they created; and (3) the summary report they wrote. Discuss similarities and differences in groups' approaches and summaries. Facilitate a discussion of this question:

  What is the difference if you use emergent categories or pre-set categories?

- Post the following frequently asked questions and discuss:

  1. Who should do this qualitative analysis?
  2. How do I handle quotes so that the individual isn't identifiable?
  3. I've seen people use numbers to report narrative comments. How do they do that?
  4. Can I (and should I) count the number of people who say the same thing in their comments?

Reflection questions

- What insights did you gain from doing this activity that you can apply the next time you analyze qualitative data?
- What is one thing you learned that surprised you?

Additional resource

Activity 55: Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data [Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), p. 282]

⌘ Activity
Practice: Analyzing data from interviews

Purpose

To provide practice in analyzing qualitative data from interviews

Materials needed

Publication *Analyzing qualitative data* (G3658-12) [Taylor-Powell (2003)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html

Handout-42 *Sample interview data* (4 pages)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Form groups of 4-5 people and distribute poster paper and markers.
- Distribute the handout *Sample interview data*. Explain that the data come from five group telephone interviews with people involved in Alzheimer's disease and dementia programs. The data are for Question 1 of the interview with responses from each of the five groups. Provide the following instructions:
    - o Read through the data and identify themes and patterns.
    - o Develop categories based on the themes and patterns, and give each category a descriptive label.
    - o Group the comments into the categories, developing additional categories (sub-categories) as necessary.
    - o Develop a set of summary statements – key points – that you will include in your report to the funder. (Review Steps 4 and 5, page 6 in *Analyzing Qualitative Data.*
    - o Write your summary statements on the poster paper and be prepared to give a brief report on these topics:
        - ▪ The process you used to organize and sort through the data
        - ▪ The categories that emerged and your descriptive labels for each
        - ▪ Your summary statements
        - ▪ Issues/questions that came up: What was easy? Challenging?
- Rejoin as a full group and ask each group to share its report covering the above three items.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about analyzing qualitative data?
- What, if anything, will you do differently the next time you have interview data to analyze?

⌘ Activity

Practice: Analyzing qualitative data from existing sources and audio-visual materials

Purpose

To help people explore ways to use and analyze narrative information from sources of data they already have

Materials needed

Handout-46 *Content analysis of existing sources and audio-visual materials* (2 pages)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the handout *Content analysis of existing sources and audio-visual materials.* Explain that the same steps of content analysis apply to the analysis of data from such existing sources as reports and meeting minutes, as well as photographs, tapes, and other forms of program documents.
- Form groups of 3-5 people to read the handout and discuss it amongst themselves. Distribute poster paper and ask each group to complete a chart like the one below using at least two types of program documentation and then post their papers.

What existing program documentation do you have that could be a source of evaluation information?	How have you or how might you analyze this information? What steps would you take?
1	
2	

- Invite each group to share key points from its discussion and its chart. Encourage add-ons and suggestions.
- Wrap up with a discussion of these questions:

  Which of these ideas seem feasible? What might be some of the strengths and limitations?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about qualitative data analysis?
- What is something you might try in your own program evaluation practice?

Section 6E: Interpreting the data

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding that in data analysis, interpretation is necessary in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations.
- increase their ability to meaningfully interpret program evaluation data.

⌘ Activity
What do the data mean?

Purpose

To help people be able to interpret and draw conclusions from their evaluation data

Materials needed

Handout-48 *What do the numbers mean?* (3 pages)

Handout-51 *Linking findings to actions*

Handout-35 *Limitations* (from the Activity "Practice: Analyzing survey questionnaires" in Section 6C)

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the handout *What do the numbers mean?* Explain that everyone will be interpreting data collected from a survey (use one or both of the examples that include 3 data tables).
- Form groups of 4-5 people.
- Divide the data tables among the groups. Ask each group to review the data table and complete the form by writing 3 summary statements and additional comments.
- Invite groups to share their statements and comments about the data with the whole group. Facilitate discussion.
- Distribute the handout *Linking findings to actions.* Explain that evaluation also includes making recommendations and identifying

next steps – linking findings to actions. Ask the groups to take the statements they just wrote and identify plausible conclusions and recommendations for each and then share with the large group.

- Explain that data do not mean much without interpretation. People who are engaged in evaluation may need to think about such questions as these:
    1. Why are the numbers high or low?
    2. What *explains* the results you see?
- Review the content found on pages 25-28 in *Analyzing Outcome Information: Getting the Most from Data* [Hatry, Cowan, & Hendricks (2004)]
- As a group, discuss the factors that might influence evaluation results (pages 27-28 on handout).
- Invite individuals to think about their own program evaluation and identify two or three internal factors and two or three external factors that might influence evaluation results.
- Distribute the handout *Limitations* from the Activity "Practice: Analyzing survey questionnaires" in Section 6C.
- Invite individuals to read the handout and then discuss it in groups of 2-3 people. Ask each group to identify two or three limitations for evaluations the group members are working on, list them on poster paper, and post the paper on the wall.
- Ask for volunteers to share their lists of limitations. Facilitate discussion and understanding.

Reflection questions

- What is the one most important thing you have learned about interpreting data?
- What, if anything, will you do differently the next time you have data to interpret?

Additional resources

"Interpret the data" in *Interpreting the data, Part 6* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/interp_data/interpret/index.html

"Make sense of the numbers" in *Analyzing outcome information: Getting the most from data* (Section 3) [Hatry, Cowan, & Hendricks (2004), pp. 25-29] http://www.urban.org/publications/310973.html

⌘ Activity

Who should be involved in interpreting the data?

Purpose

To help people consider others who may provide helpful insights for interpreting the data

Materials needed

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm answers to these questions:
  1. Who should be involved in interpreting the data?
  2. Why would you involve others in the interpretation?
- **Partners:** Ask people to find a partner and work together to identify key individuals to involve in interpretation for their own evaluations. Distribute poster paper and have them complete a grid like this:

Name of individual	What insights/expertise might this individual bring?	What, if any, cautions or implications need to be considered?
1		
2		
3		
4		

- Invite pairs to share their work.
- **Brainstorming:** Wrap up by brainstorming answers to these questions as a large group:

  How might these individuals be engaged? How do we best solicit and facilitate their input?

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about involving others in interpretation?
- Is there anything you might do differently the next time you are analyzing and interpreting data?

Section 6F: Using Excel in data analysis

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to use Excel for analyzing evaluation data.

⌘ Activity
Overview of using Excel

Purpose

To help people feel more comfortable using Excel and discover some resources to use as they develop their skills

Materials needed

Publication *Using Excel for analyzing survey questionnaires* (G3658-14) [Leahy (2004)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html

Publication *Analyzing knowledge gain using Excel* (Tipsheet #51) [Kiernan (2001)] http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS51.pdf

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Share your own:** Invite individuals to share their experiences with using Excel in analyzing evaluation data.
- **Teach each other:** Distribute the publication *Using Excel for Analyzing Survey Questionnaires.* Form groups of 3-4 people and ask each group to leaf through the booklet, covering every section. Assign each group one section from the following list (only one group per topic):
  1. Creating a spreadsheet (pages 2-6)
  2. Steps 2-5
  3. Creating a frequency table
  4. Percents
  5. PivotTables
  6. Measures of central tendency
  7. Using the function key
  8. Measures of variability
  9. Cross tabulations

- Ask each group to review the appropriate section of the booklet and prepare a five-minute “lesson” about the content. Distribute sheets of poster paper and markers for people to use. Encourage each group to use creativity and examples in their “teaching.”
- Invite each group to deliver its “teaching.” Encourage questions, examples, and clarification.
- Distribute the handout *Analyzing Knowledge Gain Using Excel* (Tipsheet #51).
- Ask everyone to read and discuss the Tipsheet with the same small groups and record their comments to the following questions on a sheet of poster paper:
    1. What is one thing you learned from reviewing this example?
    2. Will this type of analysis work for your program? Why or Why not?
- Rejoin as a whole group and share comments and learning from the small-group discussions.
- Create co-learning/peer-learning circles for continued help and support in using Excel.

Note to facilitator:
If possible and appropriate, work at computers with an actual data set to practice setting up a spreadsheet and using different functions. Practice specific functions such as creating a frequency table, using the pivot table, etc.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned today about using Excel in data analysis?
- What additional help/learning do you need?

Additional resources

Analyzing data with Microsoft Excel 2002 [Microsoft Corporation (2004)]
http://www.microsoft.com/education/Excel2002Tutorial.mspx

DATA ANALYSIS GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Analysis	The process of taking something apart in order to better understand it
Cleaning data	The process of checking all data and excluding from analysis any forms or individual responses that are incomplete or do not make sense
Code	A number, symbol, or label given to a piece of data in order to abbreviate it
Codebook	A record of terms and decisions that provides instruction for data entry
Coding	The process of giving a “code” to each response or piece of information to enable analysis
Content analysis	A process for organizing and analyzing open-ended, unstructured information (qualitative data)
Cross tabulation (often abbreviated as cross tab)	Shows the distribution of two or more variables simultaneously; usually presented in a contingency table
Data	Information that may be quantitative or qualitative in nature
Database	A comprehensive collection of related data organized for convenient access, generally in a computer program
Dependent variable	Aspects, such as knowledge, attitude, and behavior, that are expected to change as a result of the program (intervention)
Descriptive statistics	A branch of statistics in which the analyses “describe” the raw data, such as counts, percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability (e.g., range, standard deviation, and variance)
Frequency	Count of a particular response occur; number of times something occurs
Independent variable	Aspects, such as the program or activities, that you deliver/control
Instrument	The questionnaire, form, checklist, or device that captures or collects information
Interpretation	The process of making sense of or bringing meaning to the analyzed data
Mean	Average; obtained by adding all the answers or scores and dividing by the total number

Term	Definition
Measure	verb: To ascertain the quantity or quality of something noun: The instrument used to estimate or appraise something
Measures of central tendency	Analyses that characterize what is typical for the group, including means, modes, and medians
Median	The middle value or midpoint of responses
Mode	The most commonly occurring value or answer
Percent distribution	The proportion of respondents selecting each response
Percentage	A part of a whole expressed in hundredths; a commonly used statistic that expresses information as a proportion of a whole
Population	The total group of interest (people, businesses, locations, etc.), from which a sample is drawn or about which a conclusion is stated. In survey research, the “population” refers to any group of people or organizations you are studying. You can have a “population” of worksites, restaurants, associations, churches, or schools. But you can also have a “population” of older adults, teens, or pregnant women.
Pre-post tests	An instrument administered before and after the intervention as a means for documenting change over that period of time
Qualitative data	Data that consist of words and observations, not numbers
Quantitative data	Data in the form of numbers, or numeric data
Raw data	Data as collected before they are processed and analyzed
Response	The individual answer to a given question
Response rate	The number of responses returned divided by the total number solicited
Sample	The subgroup or subset of the larger group, or population
Sampling	The process of selecting members from the larger population to meet the purpose of the study
Spreadsheet	Computer software that allows data to be arranged in a grid for easy entry and basic analysis
Statistics	A branch of mathematics that involves organizing and interpreting numerical information
Unique identifier	A number assigned to individuals or questionnaires to identify and track each one
Variable	A characteristic that is measurable

COMMON DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH THE DATA?

As you look at the questions on your evaluation instrument, ask yourself:	**Possible analysis technique**
Do you want to report how many individuals checked each answer?	Count of answers for each question/item
Do you want to report the proportion of people who answered in a certain way?	Percentage
Do you want to report the number of times respondents answered a, b, or c?	A frequency
Do you want to report the average number or score?	Mean
Do you want to report the middle value in a range of values or scores?	Median
Do you want to show the range in scores?	Range
Do you want to compare one group to another?	Cross tab
Do you want to synthesize all comments from the open-ended questions?	Content analysis
Do you want to report changes from pre- to post-intervention?	Change score
Do you want to report how many people reached a certain level?	Compare to standard

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: __________

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.

   a. __ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign

   b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy

   c. __ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign

   d. __ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations

   e. __ Participating in a petition drive

   f. __ Communicating with policy makers

   g. __ Working with the media

   h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials

   i. __ Other. Please list ______________________________

   j. __ Other. Please list ______________________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	Same amount of skill	Somewhat greater skill	Much greater skill	Not applicable
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.				
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign				
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations				
e) Participating in a petition drive				
f) Communicating with policy makers				
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				

3. To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?

   a. _____ Not at all

   b. _____ Some

   c. _____ Quite a bit

   d. _____ A great deal

4. To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)

   a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before

   b. _____ Some

   c. _____ Quite a bit

   d. _____ A great deal

5. What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?

6. Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.

Your name (optional): ________________________

Thank you so much for your input!

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN WORKSHEET

Question or item number	What did you hope to learn from this question?	What analysis technique* might you use for this question?	How might you present** the data from this question?

* frequency, percentage, mean, mode, median, range, change score, content analysis, cross tabulation
** table, bar graph, pie chart, key quotes, lists, text

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN WORKSHEET – COMPLETED SAMPLE

Question or item number	What did you hope to learn from this question?	What analysis technique* might you use for this question?	How might you present** the data from this question?
#1	How many members participate in activities? which are more/less popular?	frequency	table
	Is there a relationship between participation & skills gained?	cross tabulation	table
#2	OUTCOMES! What, if any, skills were gained? What area showed greatest change?	frequency percentage	table
#3	OUTCOME! whether members think they understand what it takes	frequency percentage	pie chart
#4	Outcome - whether members think their involvement is transferable -	frequency percentage	pie chart
	motivated to work on other policy efforts		
#5	what they personally think is the biggest benefit	Content analysis	summary list 1-2 direct quotes
#6	their personal needs	Content analysis	Summary list 1-2 direct quotes

* frequency, percentage, mean, mode, median, range, change score, content analysis, cross tabulation
** table, bar graph, pie chart, key quotes, lists, text

Tips for Quantitative Data Analysis

Provide both number and percentage.

If only the percentage is reported, it is impossible to know whether the percentage is based on a small or large number of participants. Take, for example, this sentence: "75% of participants reported increased daily exercise." Is that reporting about 10 or 200 participants? On the other hand, if only the number is presented, as in "20 people reported increased daily exercise," it is difficult to know if the data represents a small or large percentage of the participants.

Use the correct base, or denominator.

While you may have 100 returned questionnaires, not every respondent may answer every question. In fact, the actual number of respondents may vary with each question and even by items within a question. When calculating the percentage, use the actual number of responses for the individual item.

Avoid averaging percentages.

Do not add up percentages and then calculate an average of the summed percentages. Go back to the original numbers, add all the individual totals, and then calculate the percentage of the total.

Don't average words. See Quick Tip 15.

Do not substitute averages for more complete information.

Sometimes you may calculate an average to summarize outcome data into one number. While this step simplifies data reporting and makes it easier, a few very high or low scores can radically affect the average. There is no information on how the scores are distributed. Reporting the number and percentage of participants for each outcome provides considerably more information on the extent of achievement. Use averages to supplement and summarize the data, but do not use them as a substitute for actual numbers and percentages.

Be careful when collapsing response categories.

When there are multiple response options, it can be helpful to combine them to highlight results. For example, you might combine four levels of agreement (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree) and report results for only two levels (disagree and agree). This process may help the reader, but it can also obscure rich information. Collapsing categories simplifies the reporting but loses the detail.

Don't be afraid to discuss limitations.

Always present and discuss limitations of the data and the data analysis. Revealing the limitations of the information and the process strengthens the analysis.

Key Outcome Data Analyses

Outcome information describes changes and levels of performance for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. These changes may relate to changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, motivations, plans, decision making, behaviors, practices, policies, and social, economic, civic, and environmental conditions. Following are some key ways to analyze your outcome information. See the accompanying example data tables.

1. Participant Outcomes

A common first step is to summarize all outcomes for all participants. This is usually reported in a frequency table that includes numbers and percentages. If the number of respondents is small, hand tabulation is natural; otherwise, standard spreadsheet software, such as Excel, can save time.

2. Comparison of Participant Outcomes

Comparison is the name of the game. Comparisons help you interpret data and make reasonable judgments. Various types of comparisons are common:

<u>Time period.</u> For example, you can compare your current overall outcomes with a previous time period, compare one year with another year, or compare one time period with the same period in a previous year. Once a program has outcome data for more than one year, you can examine trends and patterns over time. Any major changes in data collection, however, may make such comparisons inappropriate.

<u>Targets.</u> Programs may have overall outcome targets they are trying to reach (e.g., 70% of participants will increase their levels of savings within two months of program completion; 90% of children will be immunized on schedule). Comparison to targets indicates the extent to which the program is meeting, exceeding, or missing expectations.

<u>Baseline.</u> If baseline data exist, compare outcomes to the pre-program baseline data.

<u>Similar programs.</u> Comparisons to similar programs collecting similar outcome data can be useful. Care is needed, however, to ensure that the programs are similar, outcomes are defined in the same way, data collection procedures are similar, the time frame is the same, and the available data are of reasonable quality.

<u>Outside standards.</u> Where there is available national or state data, comparisons can be made to these data. The same care is needed as noted above.

3. Comparison of outcomes for different participants (demographic groups)

One of the most useful analyses is to look at differences for different segments within your participant group. There may be important differences by age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location, or other participant characteristics. For example,

- "Do people who speak different languages report different outcomes?"
- "Do girls do better than boys?"
- "How does position or length of service affect outcomes?"

A list of participant characteristics is found in the handout *Relevant participant characteristics affecting outcomes,* but use characteristics that are relevant for your program and those that are likely to have an effect on outcomes. By breaking out the data by relevant characteristic, you can see which participants benefit more from the program and where modifications may be needed. To be able to do this, the program must make sure the relevant participant information is collected (and available) so that it can be linked to the outcome data for each participant. Sometimes this information is available as part of a registration or intake process. Other times, it needs to be collected and the necessary questions must be included on the data collection instrument.

The analysis is called cross tabulation (cross tab) and involves using two pieces of information: the participant characteristic and the outcome data. Cross tab is best done using computer software. Instructions for doing cross tab using Excel can be found on pages 23–26 of *Using Excel for Analyzing Survey Questionnaires* (G3658-14) [Leahy (2004)] or various resources on the web that can be found through a Google search.

4. Comparison of outcomes by program characteristic

Another useful analysis is to examine the effect of a program characteristic on participant outcomes. In this analysis, segments of participants are grouped by program characteristic, such as by type of program (e.g., workshops, classes, or simulations), provider (different instructors), location, or number of contact hours. A list of program characteristics is found in the handout *Relevant program characteristics affecting outcomes.* This analysis is particularly useful if the program involves different characteristics. It can help you determine which program factor relates to better outcomes. Use cross tabulation as described above.

Adapted from: Hatry, Cowan and Hendricks (2004). Analyzing outcome information: Getting the most from data. The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

1. TABLES: OVERALL PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES
(ALL DATA ARE FICTITIOUS)

SAMPLE FREQUENCY TABLES

Example 1.
Number and percent of 11th graders reporting increased financial abilities
(n=225 11th graders)

Financial practice	*Increased my skills*	*I already could do this*
Use a checking account	57 (25%)	168 (75%)
Track spending	145 (64%)	80 (35%)
Create a spending plan	160 (71%)	65 (29%)
Plan for unexpected expenses	173 (77%)	52 (23%)

Example 2.
Percent of youth reporting changes in independence outcomes resulting from program participation (n=682 youth)

To what extent has participation helped you…	n	Not at all	Some-what	Quite a bit	A great deal	Don't know
Self-determination						
To develop your motivation to do your best	676	2%	19%	35%	41%	3%
To be able to solve problems on your own	678	4%	23%	37%	32%	3%
Self-esteem						
To feel good about yourself	678	2%	21%	35%	39%	2%
To like the way others see you	675	6%	25%	36%	29%	4%
Confidence						
To be comfortable performing in front of others	682	10%	24%	29%	36%	1%
To feel strong enough to handle difficult situations	678	5%	24%	37%	31%	3%

Example 3.
Percent of youth reporting 'quite a bit to a great deal'

Independence outcomes	*Quite a bit to a great deal*
Self-determination	72%
Self-esteem	69%
Confidence	66%

2. TABLES: COMPARISON OF OVERALL OUTCOMES (ALL DATA ARE FICTITIOUS)

Example 1.
Comparison of outcomes for the river cleanup program, 2004-2006

	Jan-Dec 2004	*Jan-Dec 2005*	*Jan-Dec 2006*
# of volunteers	25	80	200
# miles of riverbank cleaned up	50	100	500
# bags of garbage collected	375	1,000	3,000
# pounds of trash collected	15,000	52,000	130,000

Example 2.
Comparison of actual to target outcomes for youth tutoring program (150 youth)

Outcome indicators	*Target*	*Actual*
Percent of youth who complete homework successfully	70%	75%
Percent of youth who demonstrate improved attitude toward reading	70%	70%
Percent of youth who demonstrate improved fluency in reading	70%	68%
Percent of parents who report that they engage in literacy activities with children at home	70%	60%
% of volunteers demonstrate "very good to excellent" tutoring skills	70%	90%

Example 3.
Number of producers making recommended dairy nutrient improvements (25 farmers)

Recommended practice	*Pre-program*	*Post program*
Balance ration	10	20
Incorporate manure into soil	5	10
Apply blended fertilizer	15	25

3. Tables: Comparison of Outcomes for Different Participants (Demographic Groups)

Example 1.
Campers' rating of 2007 summer camp

Type of camper	*n*	*Super*	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Ave. rating*
First time campers	200	130	65	5	0	3.6
Repeat campers	101	52	34	13	2	3.3
Camp leaders	30	28	2	0	0	3.9

Example 2.
Percent participants who reported improvements after completing the leadership development program

Participants	*n*	*Improved skills*	*Applied skills in community*	*Increased civic engagement*
Gender				
Male	65	70%	55%	60%
Female	35	75%	65%	70%
Age group				
20-29	30	83%	66%	73%
30-39	35	77%	71%	70%
40-49	30	50%	33%	54%
50-59	5	60%	100%	100%
Race/ethnicity				
African-American	30	70%	66%	75%
Asian	5	60%	60%	68%
Hispanic	25	68%	60%	64%
Caucasian	40	70%	60%	76%

4. TABLES: COMPARISON OF OUTCOMES BY PROGRAM CHARACTERISTIC

Example 1.
Participant confidence levels in being able to conduct a useful evaluation by type of program attended

Type of program	*n*	*Very confident*	*Somewhat satisfied*	*Neither satisfied not dissatisfied*	*Somewhat dissatisfied*	*Very dissatisfied*
Face-to-face workshop	35	29 (83%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)		
Online learning	40	24 (60%)	10 (25%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	
Community of practice	30	28 (93%)	2 (7%)			

Example 2:
Percent of gardeners reporting benefits of community gardening program by location of garden

Outcomes	*Neighborhood A (35 gardeners)*	*Neighborhood B (30 gardeners)*	*Neighborhood C (31 gardeners)*
Increased knowledge of gardening	92%	58%	89%
Increased access to fresh, nutritious food	100%	60%	86%
Increased exercise	68%	40%	62%
Increased sense of community	98%	48%	78%
Improved natural environment	100%	82%	92%
Improved relations among neighbors	80%	49%	78%
Saved money	65%	38%	59%
Enjoyment and personal satisfaction	90%	52%	88%

RELEVANT PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING OUTCOMES

Add to this list with characteristics that are relevant for your own study and program.

Gender	Male, female; boy, girl
Age	Relevant age range
Race/ethnicity	White/Caucasian, African American, Asian, Latino, other
Ability/disability	Various types of abilities
Educational level	Current grade; level of educational attainment; type of education
Household	Size, generations, numbers of children
Income	Current annual household income; highest income; current monthly income; income levels
Previous experience	
Repeat participant	

RELEVANT PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING OUTCOMES

Add to this list with characteristics that are relevant for your own program.

Program activities	Examine outcomes by type of activities provided. For example, a parenting education program might involve a workshop, in-home visits, and parent support groups. A tobacco control program might include youth prevention, cessation and treatment, and policy change.
Location	Examine outcomes by individual facility, school, business, town, or county where the program is delivered.
Provider	Examine outcomes by who provides the program: volunteers, teachers, Extension agents, or an individual instructor.
Amount of service	e.g., number of sessions attended, number of contact hours for the participant, or the length of the program

STEPS FOR ANALYZING DATA

Step 1. Organize the data

- Assign identification numbers (ID) to each questionnaire. Check each questionnaire for completeness. Remove questionnaires that are substantially incomplete or do not make sense.
- Calculate the response rate. How many questionnaires did you send out? How many were returned? How many of the returned surveys are complete and usable?

Response rate = Number of surveys mailed / number of usable surveys returned

- Record the data from each question, keeping track of any decisions you make about the data. Keep the questionnaires organized (numbered) and enter the data systematically. Resources: PDE Quick Tips #21 and #22

Step 2. Analyze

- Determine frequency, percentages, and/or other analyses.
- Create tables, charts, and/or other data displays to show the data.
- Delve deeper to see findings across participants and program characteristics.

Step 3. Interpret — Make sense of the information

- Look at data for patterns, high numbers, low numbers, and expected/unexpected results.
- Bring meaning to the numbers, percentages, words, and comments. What information needs attention?
- Highlight key points and lessons learned.

Step 4. Identify Limitations

- Seek explanations for any external and internal factors that may have affected the results.
- Identify any limitations such as useful information that was not collected, biases in the respondents' answers, or low return rates. Think about how these limitations might affect your results and what you may be able to do about them in the future.

ORGANIZING DATA FAQS

What number do I give each questionnaire as the unique identifier?

It doesn't matter as long as each ID is unique, the number of characters is the same, and it cannot be confused with another number or part of the questionnaire. Numbers should be sequential. A standard convention is to use such numbers as 001, 002, 003.

What code number should I assign to responses? For instance, how should I code *Yes* and *No* responses? Responses on a scale of 1–10?

It doesn't matter as long as you are consistent throughout. The value of a code book is to record which code numbers correspond to which responses. A standard convention is to code *Yes* as "1" and *No* as "2."

I see both *N* and *n* in some reporting of results. What is the difference?

N refers to the total number in the overall population — the total number of potential respondents. *n* refers to the subgroup — the number of people who actually respond to each item.

What do I do when there are missing answers or data?

When there are missing data or the instrument is designed to allow respondents to skip certain questions, the standard conventions are as follows:

9 or 999 = missing data
8 or 888 = not applicable

Just make sure that the value you choose is not a possible valid response and that it won't lead to inaccurate calculations.

Using a blank value may work. Excel, for instance, is designed to ignore blank responses. Using 0 is not a good idea because it is sometimes a valid response option may be mistakenly included in the calculations. It is best to provide a value for any missing data.

Record the decisions you've made. Make note of the value (number) you give to missing data and to the "not applicable" response choice.

What do I do when someone circles two answers and only one is permitted?

Eliminate that response. You cannot be sure which *one* the person intended to circle.

What it if seems like the answers don't make sense or someone gives an answer that is not a choice?

Delete that response or questionnaire.

What do I do when someone makes a check between two choices, such as in the space between *Very good* and *Excellent*?

Eliminate that response. Don't guess at someone's meaning.

Keep track of the decisions you make and make the same decisions throughout.

Where can I get help with data analysis?

Try your local college. A professor and/or students who can use the community service time toward their degrees may be interested in helping. Your local health department may also have other statistical software packages (such as SPSS), which they could use to analyze your data (if you can get them to volunteer their services or you are able to pay something for their help). Are there community residents who can volunteer some time to help with data analysis? Sometimes, particularly with data analysis, finding and paying an "expert" is the best idea.

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http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/

Quick Tips 21

Quick Tips

Record the Decisions You Make with Your Data

Keep track of the decisions you make during data entry about how you handled the coded information. Refer to this information when you analyze data and interpret results. There are several reasons why you should keep a journal or a "code book." These reasons include:

- Some respondents give answers that do not readily fall within the categories provided to them. Once you have made a decision about how to treat the information, you should to treat all of your data for that question according to those decisions.
- Others interested in your study may want to work with your data at a later date. Having a written record of decisions you and others make can save a great deal of time and confusion for everyone. Furthermore, if your support staff and others who have helped you move on to other projects, those who assume their tasks need to know what decisions were made.
- Other groups and agencies may have an interest in your data. If you allow others to use your data, they need to understand what coding decisions affect the data entry and its interpretation.
- If you are interested in measuring change over time, the coding decisions you make need to be consistent in order to properly compare your target group before and after your program, campaign or intervention.

EXAMPLE

A respondent gives the value "2.5" on a scale of 1 to 5, even though only whole integers are offered as response options. If you coded "2.5" as "2" (rounding down) for your baseline survey, but coded it as "3" for your post-program survey (rounding up), you might falsely inflate that amount of change that is associated with your program.

- You may want to repeat this evaluation approach with other programs and/or groups. Having a record of your decisions saves time.

Further reading:

Rose, D., & Sullivan, O. (1993). *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Prepared by Heather H. Boyd, Evaluation Specialist Citation: Program Development and Evaluation, *Record the Decisions You Make with Your Data*, *Quick Tips #21*, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI. © 2002 Available in PDF format at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html or contact: pdande.webmaster@ces.uwex.edu Last updated November 6, 2002

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Quick Tips
22

Quick Tips

Make Certain Your Electronic Data Are Accurate

When you enter your data into Excel, Access or another software program, make certain that what is entered accurately reflects the data you collected and the coding decisions that you and your support staff made.

The dangers of not double-checking your data files can include:

- Getting results that do not make sense
- Getting results that you cannot support with the data you collected
- Wasting time and energy on analyzing information that may lead you to draw inaccurate conclusions

To make certain you have entered electronic data accurately, use one of the following methods or combine methods. Your goals are to make certain that the information is accurate as entered from the original questionnaires or interviews and treated consistently across all questionnaires or interviews.

- **At a minimum, scan the data for values that do not belong.**

  For example, Does a "6" appear where the maximum value available is a "5"? If there are values that lie outside the realm of what is possible given a particular range of responses, return to the original questionnaire. What did the respondent say or write? Does this "impossible" value seem to appear several times in the data? If so, check several of the original questionnaires. Does an "impossible" value seem to arise often in relation to a specific individual doing the data entry? If so, check with that individual to see if he or she made a judgment call on a response category, such as adding a category that did not exist on the questionnaire.

- **If it is appropriate to the level of accuracy you desire, double-check each entry.**

  One easy way to speed this up is to have one person read the values aloud and another person check the screen as each number is read. You could choose to examine the answers for each of the questionnaires or a smaller group of them. If a smaller group is examined, say five or ten percent of the total, then you also accept a certain level of error in the finished product. If more than one person has done data entry and they have not used consistent decision rules, you may have to fix any mistakes.

- **Be aware of trouble spots in data files, which can include areas where some respondents are asked to skip specific questions and did not do so.**

  When a respondent answers a question that exempts him or her from one or more questions that follow, the questionnaire is using what is called a "skip pattern."

  It is important to look for inconsistencies, such as respondents who ignored the intended skip pattern and answered a question that did not apply to them. Decide how to handle the data that results from respondents ignoring directions on skip patterns. Be consistent across all the questionnaires. Usually you will want to consider their inappropriate answers as "missing" data.

continued

Quick Tips 22 - Make Certain Your Electronic Data Are Accurate continued

Watch for places where respondents do not provide an answer, also known as "missing" data. Decide how you will code "missing" data and code it consistently for each variable. In Excel, it makes sense to leave missing values as blanks. In SPSS, it makes sense to assign a number to the missing value and later define that value in the program.

- **Be familiar with the conventions of the data entry program you are using.**

  Some may set a default to define the information as "string" data (i.e. words, text, language, etc.). Unless you tell the program the information is a set of numbers, it will not treat it as numeric. This causes a problem when you ask a mathematical function or when the data is input into a statistics package. The computer will not be able to do the analysis. Be sure to define the values as numeric if that meets the needs of the software you are using. Each software has its own conventions so read the manual and use the "help" features.

- **Keep track of the decisions you make by writing them down.**

  Over time, you could forget the decisions you made and why. Your written record is a reminder and helps you answer the questions of others.

Further reading:

Rose, D., & Sullivan, O. (1993). *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Prepared by Heather H. Boyd, Evaluation Specialist Citation: Program Development and Evaluation. *Make Certain Your Electronic Data Are Accurate, Quick Tips #22*. University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI. © 2002 Available in PDF format at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html or contact: pdande.webmaster@ces.uwex.edu Last updated November 6, 2002

SET OF COMPLETED COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEYS

001

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10/10/07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. ✓ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. __ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. ✓ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. ✓ Other. Please list DEVELOPED PUBLICITY
   - j. __ Other. Please list ______

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.			✓	
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy		✓		
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign		✓		
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations		✓		
e) Participating in a petition drive				✓
f) Communicating with policy makers		✓		
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. ____ Not at all
   - b. ____ Some
   - c. ____ Quite a bit
   - d. ✓ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. ____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. ____ Some
   - c. ____ Quite a bit
   - d. ✓ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   LEARNING HOW TO INTERACT WITH AND INFLUENCE LOCAL LEADERS

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

   IF I HAD MORE TIME

Your name (optional): ______

Thank you so much for your input!

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. ✓ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. __ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. ✓ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. __ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. __ Other. Please list ______________________________
   - j. __ Other. Please list ______________________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.	✓			
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy		✓		
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign		✓		
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations				✓
e) Participating in a petition drive	✓			
f) Communicating with policy makers				✓
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. _____ Not at all
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. _____ Quite a bit
   - d. ✓ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. _____ Quite a bit
   - d. ✓ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**
   Working with other people who take tobacco control seriously and want our community to be healthy + safe.

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**
   More information about how policy is actually created + changed.

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

003

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. ✓ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. ✓ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. ✓ Other. Please list organized social events for coalition
   - j. __ Other. Please list members to meet each other.

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.		✓		
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign		✓		
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations		✓		
e) Participating in a petition drive		✓		
f) Communicating with policy makers		✓		
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. ____ Not at all
   - b. ____ Some
   - c. ✓ Quite a bit
   - d. ____ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. ____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. ____ Some
   - c. ____ Quite a bit
   - d. ✓ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

Understanding how our local politicians operate.

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

I could use help with public speaking and presentations.

Your name (optional): ____________________

Thank you so much for your input!

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-16-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. __ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. ✓ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. __ Other. Please list ____________________
   - j. __ Other. Please list ____________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had <u>prior</u> to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have <u>now</u>. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.		✓		
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign	✓			
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations			✓	
e) Participating in a petition drive				✓
f) Communicating with policy makers			✓	
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. _____ Not at all
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. ✓ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. ✓ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   All the steps & activities involved in Policy Change.

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

   Hearing how other places are being successful.

Your name (optional): ____________________

Thank you so much for your input!

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. __ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. __ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. ✓ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. __ Other. Please list ______________________________
   - j. __ Other. Please list ______________________________

2. **Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have *the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill* compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.**

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.		✓		
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign				✓
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations			✓	
e) Participating in a petition drive				✓
f) Communicating with policy makers			✓	
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. _____ Not at all
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. __✓__ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. _____ Some
   - c. __✓__ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   I feel I Know how to do this better next time.

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

006

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   e. ✓ Participating in a petition drive
   f. ✓ Communicating with policy makers
   g. __ Working with the media
   h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   i. __ Other. Please list ______________________
   j. __ Other. Please list ______________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had <u>prior</u> to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have <u>now</u>. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.			✓	
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign	✓			
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations			✓	
e) Participating in a petition drive		✓		
f) Communicating with policy makers			✓	
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   a. _____ Not at all
   b. _____ Some
   c. _____ Quite a bit
   d. ✓ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   b. _____ Some
   c. ✓ Quite a bit
   d. _____ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**
   I worked on a meaningful project with wonderful people

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**
   I need more computer skills - especially how to make publicity

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

007

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10/10/07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. __ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. ✓ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. ✓ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. __ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. __ Working with the media
   - h. __ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. ✓ Other. Please list organized & coordinated presentations
   - j. __ Other. Please list ______

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.		✓		
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign				✓
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations			✓	
e) Participating in a petition drive		✓		
f) Communicating with policy makers				✓
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				✓
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				✓

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. ______ Not at all
   - b. ______ Some
   - c. ✓ Quite a bit
   - d. ______ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. ______ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. ______ Some
   - c. ✓ Quite a bit
   - d. ______ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   Learning more about the research & evidence around tobacco so I can be an even better advocate

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

008

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. ✓ **Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign**
   - b. __ **Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy**
   - c. __ **Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign**
   - d. ✓ **Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations**
   - e. __ **Participating in a petition drive**
   - f. __ **Communicating with policy makers**
   - g. __ **Working with the media**
   - h. __ **Writing/submitting news releases/editorials**
   - i. __ **Other. Please list** ______________________________
   - j. __ **Other. Please list** ______________________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had <u>prior</u> to **being involved** in the campaign and the skills you have <u>now</u>. **Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate** if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the **campaign. Check one box in each row.** If you were not involved in a particular activity, **please check Not applicable.**

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.		✓		
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign				✓
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations			✓	
e) Participating in a petition drive				✓
f) Communicating with policy makers				✓
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign				
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials				

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. _____ **Not at all**
   - b. _____ **Some**
   - c. X **Quite a bit**
   - d. _____ **A great deal**

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. _____ **Not at all – I could do these things before**
   - b. X **Some**
   - c. _____ **Quite a bit**
   - d. _____ **A great deal**

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   An appreciation for the amount of work involved in public policy change

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

   More TIME!

Your name (optional): ____________________

Thank you so much for your input!

009

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 12-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**
   - a. __ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   - b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   - c. ✓ Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   - d. __ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   - e. __ Participating in a petition drive
   - f. __ Communicating with policy makers
   - g. ✓ Working with the media
   - h. ✓ Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   - i. __ Other. Please list ______________________
   - j. __ Other. Please list ______________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had <u>prior</u> to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have <u>now</u>. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.				✓
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				✓
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign			✓	
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations				✓
e) Participating in a petition drive				
f) Communicating with policy makers				✓
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign		✓		
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials		✓		

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**
   - a. _____ Not at all
   - b. ✓ Some
   - c. _____ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**
   - a. _____ Not at all – I could do these things before
   - b. ✓ Some
   - c. _____ Quite a bit
   - d. _____ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   How to work with the media on this type of effort

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

   Training on writing press releases.

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

010

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

Date: 10-10-07

The following questions concern your involvement in the [title of the campaign]. Your responses will help us understand what impact this involvement has had on you. Thanks for answering these questions.

1. **Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign.**

   a. __ Preparing/disseminating information packets in support of the campaign
   b. __ Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy
   c. X Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign
   d. __ Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations
   e. __ Participating in a petition drive
   f. __ Communicating with policy makers
   g. X Working with the media
   h. X Writing/submitting news releases/editorials
   i. __ Other. Please list ______________________
   j. __ Other. Please list ______________________

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have ***the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill*** compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
a) Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of the campaign.				
b) Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy				
c) Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign		X		
d) Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations				X
e) Participating in a petition drive				X
f) Communicating with policy makers				X
g) Working with the media in support of the campaign			X	
h) Writing and submitting news releases and editorials			X	

3. **To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?**

   a. _____ Not at all
   b. X Some
   c. _____ Quite a bit
   d. _____ A great deal

4. **To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (Check one.)**

   a. X Not at all – I could do these things before
   b. _____ Some
   c. _____ Quite a bit
   d. _____ A great deal

5. **What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?**

   Feeling like I am helping my community

6. **Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.**

Your name (optional): ______________________

Thank you so much for your input!

SAMPLE DATA TABLES — COMMUNITY ACTIVIST SURVEY

1. Please place a check mark next to each public policy-related activity in which you have been involved during the campaign. n = 10

Activity	#	%
a. Preparing and disseminating information	8	80%
b. Conducting presentations	2	20%
c. Recruiting other individuals to volunteer	7	70%
d. Obtaining endorsements	7	70%
e. Participating in a petition drive	4	40%
f. Communicating with policy makers	5	50%
g. Working with the media	2	20%
h. Writing and submitting news	2	20%

2. Now, think about the skills you had prior to being involved in the campaign and the skills you have now. Then, in the table below, please check one box for each item to indicate if you have the same amount of skill, somewhat greater skill or much greater skill compared to before you started work on the campaign. Check one box in each row. If you were not involved in a particular activity, please check Not applicable.

ITEMS	n =	SAME AMOUNT OF SKILL	SOMEWHAT GREATER SKILL	MUCH GREATER SKILL	NOT APPLI-CABLE
a. Preparing and disseminating information packets in support of [title of your campaign].	9	1	5	2	1
b. Conducting presentations on SF worksite public policy at local meetings	9		2		7
c. Recruiting other individuals to volunteer their time/resources to the campaign	10	2	4	1	3
d. Obtaining endorsements for SF worksite public policy from community organizations	10		2	5	3
e. Participating in a petition drive	8	1	3		4
f. Communicating with policy makers	9		2	3	4
g. Working with the media in support of [title of your campaign].	9		1	1	7
h. Writing and submitting news releases and editorials	9		1	1	7
		4; 11%	20; 55%	13; 36%	

3. To what extent do you think that you better understand what is involved to achieve public policy change?
(n = 10)

	#	%
a. Not at all	0	0%
b. Some	2	20%
c. Quite a bit	5	50%
d. A great deal	3	30%

4. To what extent do you think that working on the campaign has equipped you to be able to work on other public policy initiatives in the community? (n = 10)

	#	%
a. Not at all — I could do these things before	1	10%
b. Some	2	20%
c. Quite a bit	4	40%
d. A great deal	3	30%

Sample Analysis — Community Activist Survey

Question 1

Question 1 reports the number of people who participated in the various activities of the campaign. It reports extent of participation. Looking at participation in the various activities helps the coalition see where improvements, if any, are needed if another campaign or policy initiative is undertaken. It will help explain what level of participation is necessary for desired skill changes to be achieved.

You can look at the data in various ways:

1) You might simply report how many people participated in each activity.
2) You might order the activities by number of participants to show which activities had the most and least participation.
3) You might report that the majority of participants participated in three of the eight activities and list these activities.
4) You might collapse the categories.
5) You might select particular activities that are important for one reason or another and highlight those activities. For example, the Tobacco Free Coalition was encouraged to see that 70% of the participants were involved in recruitment. Recruiting members to work on a campaign is very important and something that the coalition has been working on. On the other hand, only two individuals did public presentations and only two were involved in working with the media or writing and submitting news releases. These might be areas to work on.
6) You will want to make note of the additional activities that people engaged in that they considered a part of the campaign. These indicate additional time and effort spent and potential benefit.

How else might you report these data?
What is the purpose of each type of report? What are the implications of each type?

NOTE:
- In Question 1, avoid equating a low percentage of participation in a particular activity with a negative interpretation. It is possible that the coalition did not need many people working on a particular task. Interpretation depends on the unique situation of the coalition.
- When you report a number, always include it along with the total number of responses for that question. Saying that “8 people participated in disseminating information packets” doesn’t mean much unless you know that it is 8 of 10 participants.

Question 2

Question 2 addresses the coalition’s main interest: To what extent have community member activists increased their skill in public policy change as a result of working on this campaign? What skills changed the most? The least? There are at least two ways to analyze these data:

1) You can assess the self-reported skill levels for each item by **row** (i.e., a. preparing and disseminating information, b. conducting presentations, c. recruiting, etc.). Just looking at the number of responses in each row may provide the information you need. For example, you can see that for Question 2a, two of the eight people who participated in this activity reported Much greater skill, five reported Somewhat greater skill, and one reported Same amount of skill. Similarly, for Question 2d, of the seven people who participated in obtaining endorsements, two increased their skill somewhat and five reported Much greater skill. You may want to calculate the percentage for each box in order to see the results more clearly. Usually, however, if the total *n* is under 30, it is better to report the frequencies.

If you use percentages, be sure to calculate the percentage based on the number of individuals who participated in that item/activity. For example, for Question 2a, the percentages for Same amount of skill, Somewhat greater skill, and Much greater skill would be 1 ÷ 9, 5 ÷ 9, and 2 ÷ 9 because there were 9 individuals who participated in this activity.

2) You can assess the self-reported skill levels by **column** across all the items (skills). Rather than looking by row (a specific skill), you can look by column across all the skills, relative to a particular level of skill development (same amount, somewhat greater, much greater). Calculate the frequency and/or percentages. For the example above, these numbers are displayed across the bottom of the table. In this case, the percentages are calculated using 37 as the denominator because there were 37 total number of responses for all the skill areas. The column totals will allow you to report how many people felt they improved their skills as a result of their being involved in the campaign, regardless of what activity they were involved in.

Consider whether you want to "collapse" the data in the response choices. When you collapse data, you combine two or more categories of information. In the example above, you may want to combine data in the "Somewhat greater skill" and "Much greater skill" categories. This allows you to calculate the percentage of people whose skill improved regardless of the amount it improved. If you do this, add the number of responses (frequencies) for the two categories and then calculate the percentage; do not calculate a percentage by adding percentages and then dividing. The result for the above data is 33 ÷ 36 = 92%.

You can see that 55% of the participants self-reported that they increased their skill "somewhat" and 36% increased "much." When these two categories are combined, you see that 92% of participants experienced skill improvement. Is this what you expected? Greater or less than you expected? You also see that individuals felt they gained the greatest skill in "obtaining endorsements." For the question regarding recruitment that was of particular interest to the Tobacco Free Coalition, the results are mixed. Although seven people participated in this activity, only one developed "Much greater skill." Again, as you look at each activity, are the reports of skill development what you had hoped for? Greater or less than expected?

Take care in interpretation. Your numbers are fairly small — there are only a few individuals responding to any question. The results apply to these individuals and reflect their particular characteristics. You may find that a particular skill area had unexpectedly low improvement. If that skill area also had low participation, you may determine that there is not enough information to accurately evaluate skill development in that particular area. Interpretation depends on the unique situation of the coalition and the coalition's particular goals and expectations. Also, remember that these are self-reports of what people believe to be their improvements. They are not measures of actual change.

These results suggest some areas that the Tobacco Free Coalition might consider for additional training so that members could develop these skills and share experiences.

How else might you report these data?
What is the purpose of type of report? What are the implications of each report?

QUESTION 3

Question 3 assesses understanding about what is involved in public policy change. What do the results indicate? You might report the data in several ways:

1) Report the number and/or percentage for each response to fully report all the results.
2) Collapse all the categories and report that everyone reported increased understanding.
3) Collapse two categories (c and d) and report that 8 of the 10 participants reported considerably greater understanding.

Are these results what you expected? Higher or lower than expected? It appears that some felt that they learned more than others. You might be interested in understanding why.

How else might you report these data?
What is the purpose of type of report? What are the implications of each report?

QUESTION 4

Besides the frequencies and percentages that have been reported in all the examples above, sometimes it is useful to look at how two questions or two characteristics relate. For example, the Tobacco Free Coalition was interested in knowing if participation in particular activities (Q1) resulted in people feeling better equipped to work on other public policy initiatives in the community (Q4). *When you look to see how two characteristics relate to each other, it is called a cross tabulation or cross tab.*

> *Cross tabulation can be defined as a combination of two (or more) frequency tables arranged so that each box in the new table represents a unique combination of values (http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html).*

To conduct this analysis, construct a table like the one below. In this example, Q1a is the information placed in the rows on the left side of the table. There needs to be the option of *Yes* (participated in the activity) and *No* (did not participate in the activity). Q4 goes across the top with each response option (not at all, some, quite a bit, a great deal) as a different column.

	Q4			
Q1a	Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal
YES	/		/ / / /	/ / /
NO		/ /		

Then, look at each individual questionnaire. You need to look at the responses for Q1a and Q4 simultaneously. Place a tick mark in the appropriate box. For example, if the respondent checked that she participated in the activity (preparing and disseminating information packets) and checked Quite a bit to Q4, then you'd place a tick across from *Yes* in the box under Quite a bit. Continue this process until you have recorded all the data.

Convert the tick marks to frequencies and percentages in each box, as in the table below.

	Q4			
Q1a	Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal
YES	1, 10%	0	4, 40%	3, 30%
NO	0	2, 20%	0	0

Question 4 allows you to see whether participants think their work in this campaign will help them work on other policy change initiatives. This question was particularly important for the Tobacco Free Coalition because it expects its work will transfer to other community work in building a strong, healthy community. The coalition had hoped that at least 50% of the participants would respond with "Quite a bit" or "A great deal." The data show that the coalition met its goal.

From the cross tab, the coalition sees how participation in each policy activity relates to the respondents' perceptions regarding how prepared they are to work on other public policy initiatives in the community. For example, the table shows that of the eight people who participated in preparing and disseminating information, four felt "Quite a bit" prepared and three felt "A great deal" prepared. In contrast, of the two respondents who did not prepare and disseminate information, neither felt "Quite a bit" or "A great deal" prepared for other public policy initiatives.

NOTE: For larger data sets, cross tabulations are better handled using Excel. See pages 23–26 in *Using Excel for Analyzing Survey Questionnaires* (G3658-14) [Leahy (2004)]; Also, see http://www.schooldatatutorials.org

Limitations

Sample — Community Activist Survey

It is always important to list limitations in your evaluation work. Scarce resources make it impossible to collect all of the information you might want. Furthermore, data collection is not perfect. Thus, it is helpful to identify limitations and how they might affect the results. Following are several common limitations to keep in mind as you report the results of your evaluation:

> **Response rate**
> If the response rate is low and/or unrepresentative, the data may be unreliable. You want to collect data from as many participants as possible. Usually a higher response rate (70% and above) means a lower chance for bias; however, it is always a good thing to look at who did not respond to check the representativeness of the response, particularly with small numbers. In this example, three people did not respond. Can you tell who they are and what difference their responses might make?
>
> **Survey depth**
> Another limitation could be that the survey, as provided, leaves out important information for your coalition or the questions aren't well understood. Before mailing the survey, be sure that questions important to your coalition are included. Also, pilot test the questionnaire with 2–3 individuals who are similar to the intended respondents.
>
> **Accuracy of responses**
> A third limitation could be that respondents did not answer honestly; maybe they provided the answers they thought you wanted or wanted to make the coalition look good. Respondents sometimes answer in a socially desirable manner. Using several methods of data collection and combining data from several sources is one way to minimize this problem.

Limitations are unavoidable, but it is important to identify possible limitations and think about what they may mean for your interpretation.

What limitations might be affecting your results?

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Quick Tips
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Quick Tips

Analysis of Retrospective Post-then-Pre Data

Situation
Jane Schaaf, family living educator in Crawford County, teaches an eight-hour *Parenting after Divorce* class. After completing the class, participants fill out an end-of-session questionnaire. Jane wanted additional information to see if the class is helpful in the long run, so she developed and sent a mail survey and now has the results. She asks, what do I do with the data from the following question?

Question: Please circle the phrase that best describes the relationship between you and your child(ren)'s other parent.

	After participating in the course				Before participating in the course			
Relationship	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always
a) I accept the other parent's parenting style.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
b) I say nice things about the other parent to my children.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
c) We co-parent cooperatively.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
d) We argue in front of our children.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Note: Not all items are included in this example of the original question.

For a retrospective question like the one above, here are some considerations:

Determine level of change. Decide what you consider a worthwhile level of change for program participants and why you think that. Write down any results you would particularly like to see. Ideally, you should do this before distributing the questionnaire, but if you did not, spend a few minutes thinking about the amount of change you would consider meaningful.

Check your data. The number of individuals responding to each after-and-before item should be the same. If someone answered one section of the instrument, but not the other, then drop that person from your analysis.

Enter your data. With a limited number of respondents (in this case Jane has 16 usable questionnaires), you could simply hand-tally the number of responses to each item as follows:

	After participating in the course				Before participating in the course			
Relationship	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always	Almost Never	Some times	Often	Almost Always
a) I accept the other parent's parenting style.	1	4	3	8	1	6	4	5
b) I say nice things about the other parent to my children.	6	4	5	1	8	6	1	1
c) We co-parent cooperatively.	12	4	0	0	10	4	1	1
d) We argue in front of our children.	14	2	0	0	13	2	1	0

continued

Make sense of the data. (1) One way to look at the information is to compare specific values at "after" and "before". For example, determine the percentage of people who answer almost always for "after" and compare it to the percentage of those who answer almost always for "before." In other words, compare the highest values for each relationship item. Or, compare the percentage who answer almost never for "after" and compare it to the percentage who answer almost never for "before."

> Note: You might change the numbers to percentages. Remember that the denominator for both the "before" and "after" responses should be the same. Use the number of individuals who actually responded as the denominator. You may have 16 returned surveys, but not all 16 individuals may answer every item.

(2) In some cases, you might want to combine categories if that is justifiable. For example, you could combine "sometimes" and "often" and compare after-and-before responses for this combined category. Or, you might combine the lowest two categories and the highest two categories and compare their after-and-before responses. Make sure you share what you did and why.

(3) Another way to evaluate the data is to look at individual change. With this approach, you match each individual's after-and-before responses to show individual gain. Rather than combining responses that may mask individual variation, look at each individual's responses to each item. For example, if a participant answered "sometimes" for "after" and "almost never" for "before," the participant progressed one level. If she answered "often" for "after," she progressed two levels and so on. If the participant answered "almost never" for "after," she progressed zero levels. This analysis is sensitive to movement and individual change. You can summarize by reporting the number of participants who progressed in each level.

Interpretation. How do results compare? Do they support the level of change you hoped would occur? Are the results higher or lower than expected? You may wish to discuss the results with a colleague or program participants in order to understand better their meaning.

Jane found that the results were lower than she expected. When she looked closer, she realized that for some items, the wording was difficult to understand, sensitive, or asked about issues outside the participant's control. The order of the scale changed and might have been confusing. Also, she realized that clearer instructions might have helped the respondent better understand the post-then-pre question and how to answer (refer to Quick Tip #28).The questionnaire included several open-ended questions that provided additional insights and indicated positive changes. Jane also has data from the end-of-session questionnaire that she will use to explain more completely the results of her parenting series.

Prepared by Jane Schaaf, John Klatt, Heather Boyd, Ellen Taylor-Powell. Citation: Program Development and Evaluation. *Analysis of Retrospective Post-then-Pre Data*, Quick Tips #30. University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI. © 2005 Available in PDF format at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html or contact pdande.webmaster@ces.uwex. Updated July 25, 2005

TIPS FOR QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Organize all your narrative data in one place.

Sometimes you may have narrative data from different interviews done at different times, various observations, or different open-ended questions on a survey questionnaire.

Read through and get to know your data.

Spend time reading through the data and thinking about the data.

Decide whether you will use preset categories or emergent categories.

There is no single correct way to categorize qualitative data, but consider the alternative approaches and pick the way that best suits your purpose and data.

Make the analysis suit the use.

Sometimes it is easy to become so immersed in your data that it is hard to see the forest for the trees. There is so much that is interesting and insightful. You may want to include everything. You may want to share it all. However, remember the end user. Seldom do others want to read pages of "rich" description. What will that user really want to learn from these data? Think about a 3-minute summary of your 90-minute focus group interview.

Interpretation is more than description.

Once you've categorized and summarized the data, think about the meaning. Keep the interpretation rooted in the raw data, but move beyond just presenting and summarizing the data. Think about the significance of the findings.

Allow adequate time.

Thoughtful and useful analysis takes time. Allocate time for doing the analysis. Often qualitative data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, so consider the time that is needed during data collection for reading and thinking about your data. Analysis doesn't just happen at the end.

SAMPLE DATA FROM OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS, #1

The following comments were written on the Community Activist Questionnaire (see handout *Set of completed community activist surveys*) and typed into a MS Word file for analysis.

Question 1i and j — Other. (n = 3)

- Developed publicity
- Organized social events for coalition members to meet each other
- Organized and coordinated presentations

Question 5. What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign? (n = 10)

- Learning how to interact with and influence local leaders
- Working with other people who take tobacco control seriously and want our community to be healthy and safe
- How to work with the media on this type of effort
- Understanding how our local politicians operate
- All the steps and activities involved in policy change
- I feel that I know how to do this better the next time
- I worked on a meaningful project with wonderful people
- Learning more about the research and evidence around tobacco so I can be an even better advocate
- An appreciation for the amount of work involved in public policy change
- Feeling like I am helping my community

Question 6. Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites. (n = 7)

- If I had more time
- More information about how policy is actually created and changed
- Hearing how other places are being successful
- I need more computer skills especially how to make publicity
- More time
- I could use help with public speaking and presentations
- Training on writing press releases

SAMPLE CATEGORIZATION SCHEME FOR OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS #1

5. What is the greatest benefit that you have gained as a result of working on the campaign?

n = 10

CATEGORY	RESPONSE
Work with media	How to work with the media on this type of effort
Knowledge gained	Learning more about the research and evidence around tobacco so I can be an even better advocate
	Understanding how our local politicians operate
	Learning how to interact with and influence local leaders
	All the steps and activities involved in policy change
	An appreciation for the amount of work involved in public policy change
	I feel that I know how to do this better the next time
Sense of satisfaction	Working with other people who take tobacco control seriously and want our community to be healthy and safe
	I worked on a meaningful project with wonderful people
	Feeling like I am helping my community

6. Please list below anything you can think of that would help you to become a more effective community activist in the area of smoke-free worksites.

n = 7

CATEGORY	RESPONSE
Time	More time
	If I had more time
Media work	I could use help with public speaking and presentations
	I need more computer skills especially how to make publicity
	Training on writing press releases
Policy change	More information about how policy is actually created and changed
	Hearing how other places are being successful

Questions 5 and 6 allow respondents to provide their own input and answer questions in their own words. Responses have been categorized and labeled. You might report:
1) the number of people who provided comments
2) the most frequently cited benefit
3) any unexpected findings

How might you report these data?

SAMPLE DATA FROM OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS, #2

The following data come from open-ended questions on an end-of-session feedback form from an evaluation workshop. (n = 18 participants)

Question 3. What is one thing that you intend to do as a result of today's workshop? (n=18)

I need to fully read the manual and look at the website resources

Document outcomes and how I contributed to them

Check the website; look into the tools on the website

Think more about guiding principles and how I can apply

Read materials and implement actions to promote shared leadership

Start using logs and evaluation forms on a consistent basis

Read book — when it comes

Use some of the tools with more informal groups to help strengthen their skills

Emphasize progressive steps in attending to setting up and evaluating collaborative process; Educate group about importance of process decisions

Evaluate current coalitions of which I am a member

Better focus on work with coalitions to assist them in identifying factors to make coalition more effective

We are looking at our program priorities

Use many of these ideas and tools as resources for coalitions in everyday work

How do I evaluate a collaboration?

Implement annual collaborative review using questions and other ideas on p. 99

Use the meeting minutes form

Evaluate process (internally)

Use techniques such as 1,000-mile journey with my staff; Use minutes form or adapt it for collaboration

Question 4. How could the facilitator improve the evaluation workshop? (n=17)

Take one example and follow through from A to Z

Like to see more about specific methods

A room number on the email would have been helpful

Maybe a 2-day session; lots of information crammed into not quite a full day; nice presentation style and awareness of group needs — light, activity, sugar

Nothing at this time

N/A

Lots of good interaction, plenty of time to share and learn from one another — appreciate the experience and wealth of knowledge you bring to this difficult topic

Longer, to attend to individual issues

It is a valuable, professional development; Great job! No changes suggested

Interested in different types of collaboratives and how that affects coalition effectiveness and realistic expectations, but really great material for the time allowed

Notebook of handouts very helpful; Very well done; Good to learn, no one way to do it

I just need to take time to review further

N/A

N/A

Bring extras of materials

Chocolate!! (instead of cookies)

N/A

Sample Interview Data

The following data come from five telephone group interviews with grantees who receive funding in the area of Alzheimer's disease and dementia programming. Each group represents a different type of program: interfaith volunteers, diagnostic clinics, adult day care, rural respite, and Alzheimer's disease chapters. The number of participants in the group interviews ranged from three to nine individuals.

The purpose of the evaluation, the interest of the funder, was to answer these questions: How well is the funder performing? What value does the funder add to Alzheimer's disease and dementia programming? The design included a mail survey, key informant interviews, and the telephone group interviews.

There is a brief description of each group followed by an abbreviated transcript for the first question that opened the group interview. Responses are in italics and indented. Double spacing indicates a different respondent. The introductory question is in bold type.

Group 1: Interfaith Volunteer Programs. These grantees provide community-based Alzheimer's disease services based on the needs of the community. Five persons participated in this group discussion:

Please introduce yourself and tell the group what kind of work you do. Then, give us an example of something that, were it to happen, would count as a "success" in your organization.

When we can help someone out and make something positive happen — volunteer matching, resource referral, or in some way making a person's life easier.

Sometimes matching isn't possible, and numbers are not the measure, but even one person, or one volunteer is a measure of success. Volunteer recruitment.

Getting the word out in the community that Interfaith exists will be a success, since many have never heard of us as yet.

Collaboration with Dept. of Aging and other social services.

Sometimes Board members want statistics — their measurement of success is very different. Volunteer numbers are spotty and some successes don't make good statistics. A story of something that works is a great thing to present to Boards. A success is communicating well with the Board.

Group 2: Diagnostic Clinics. Diagnostic clinics tend to be very small, with a physician gerontologist, nurse, and/or social worker on staff. They usually operate on a part-time basis and see patients one or two days per week. Four persons participated in this group discussion; no physicians were available.

Please introduce yourself and tell the group what kind of work you do. Then, give us an example of something that, were it to happen, would count as a "success" in your organization.

> *A success is to meet the needs in the community — this is not a financial success, but more the amount of time put into the clinic. We do a satisfaction survey and the services seem to satisfy the community, but we have had a lot of people not follow up in the clinic and we are trying to find out why.*
>
> *Success is to be able to give the service to the county, and the fact that we are going to expand to another site — so same team at two clinics — if we pull that off, we'll cover a lot of people in the county. We will be serving more people, so that is a success. I would really like to do a satisfaction survey too. [Discussion among participants re: sharing survey.]*
>
> *We are the second largest clinic in the state — 3 days a week. We have been somewhat successful in reaching out to the community — a lot through word of mouth, since marketing dollars are few. If we could get physicians to promote the early detection of Alzheimer's disease, and get them to refer to us. And then, remaining financially viable. We have a satisfaction survey as well, and it seems they are pleased. We do it three times a year because we have a high volume of patients — sometimes 9 a week — I do the survey every four months to cover that. But, each patient only gets it once.*
>
> *I work primarily with family members while the patient is in the clinic. A success is when the family is coming through the clinic and gets an increased level of awareness — 'us and them' as to what the family needs for support, and getting educated about the disease itself. In particular, getting a better idea of where that person (the patient) is in the stage of their disease, and where the family is in terms of their coping skills. Many people appear socially very okay, but they are managing a deficit — a socially skillful person can hide their level of deficit, but they have capacity difficulties that need to be revealed through testing. Primary care is not the place this can be assessed with great success.*
>
> *I agree with that. We see all different levels as well and once they are in the clinic door, they can be connected to the services they need, whereas primary care doctors don't have the time for in-depth perception of needs and detection. We need follow-up and referral back to the physician as a team and partner, and they have the relationship with the patient — so a success would also be that "turf" issues would not be an issue — because we are not taking the patient away from their primary care doctor.*
>
> *I agree with that as well.*
>
> *So do I.*
>
> *I do too!*

Group 3: Adult Day Care Programs. Participants in this group receive funding to provide community-level adult day care to persons with Alzheimer's disease. Most programs are small and are located in non-urban areas. Three persons participated in this group discussion.

Please introduce yourself and tell the group what kind of work you do. Then, give us an example of something that, were it to happen, would count as a "success" in your organization.

> *For my company, success is defined in two ways — fulfilling a need in the community, and when need is filled, to develop a program that becomes self-sufficient.*
>
> *Able to keep people living in the community and not institutionalized, and to maintain good health.*
>
> *Develop programs that meet the needs of the community of older adults we serve. If request for need comes from this group and is fulfilled — and if we are able to meet the specialized need of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Also to meet the needs of people who couldn't afford [name of institution], or don't want to.*

Group 4: Alzheimer's Chapters. Participants in this group maintain a statewide network for Alzheimer's disease service organizations. The Chapters provided training, information, resources, and networking. Nine persons participated in this telephone group interview.

Please introduce yourself and tell the group what kind of work you do. Then, give us an example of something that, were it to happen, would count as a "success" in your organization.

> *Developing a new strategic relationship that results in a collaborative effort.*
>
> *Getting people together that are outside Alzheimer's but in Aging studies — a step further to leave them on their own to succeed.*
>
> *Opening doors to medical community.*
>
> *Anyone diagnosed to be referred to an Alzheimer's association.*
>
> *Impacting systems so that there is long-lasting change.*
>
> *Leverage — using existing resources to get more resources.*
>
> *Making it through the budget walk.*

Group 5: Rural Respite Programs. Participants in this group received funding to provide community-based Alzheimer's disease respite services. Programs tended to be small, and located in rural areas. Six persons participated in this group discussion via telephone.

Please introduce yourself and tell the group what kind of work you do. Then, give us an example of something that, were it to happen, would count as a "success" in your organization.

> *Talking with family caregiver and they understand dementia, getting over denial, etc., can be a real turning point.*
>
> *When an inquiry into our program turns into a complementary visit.*
>
> *Working with families in community to get over stigma of 'adult baby sitting.'*
>
> *That family, club feeling that evolved from shared work. Eight to ten clients becoming a family, a club.*
>
> *Just keeping the program viable.*
>
> *When we can link someone with a service that is really meaningful (e.g., A daughter caring for mother at home was resistant to help. We heard she was having trouble getting meals prepared. We arranged to get meals for the daughter, to give her support in some way.) This specialized link felt like a success.*
>
> *Still having volunteers from seven years ago. Excellent volunteers who are rotating and avoiding burnout, who have varied talents and provide exciting activity programs — and one-on-one connections that formed.*
>
> *Public has a positive view of program and wants to give support to program.*

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SOURCES AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Content analysis can be very useful for analyzing existing documentation such as meeting minutes, agendas, and summaries; visual materials; activity/program registration forms; and program reports, proposals, and publications, if they exist. Likewise, the same steps of content analysis can be used to analyze audio-visual materials.

Meeting minutes

Minutes of meetings can be used to describe both process and outcomes of a group or initiative. You might identify topics discussed, tasks assigned and/or completed by members, and decisions made.

Your content analysis can range from a formal and elaborate set of data codes and analysis to an informal review of minutes to pick out major highlights. If you have minutes from many meetings that span several years, you may want to code categories and use them in a database or spreadsheet analysis to document progress and decision making over time.

Aspects of meetings that might be analyzed through content analysis of the minutes include:

- Inputs
- Decisions
- Activities
- People involved
- Reactions
- Organization changes
- Policy changes
- Consequences of decisions

Adapted from Taylor-Powell, E., Rossing, B., & Geran, J. (1998). *Evaluating collaboratives: Reaching the potential* (G3658-08). Available at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-8.PDF Ordering information at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Evaluating-Collaboratives-Reaching-the-Potential-P1032C238.aspx

Meeting agenda summaries

Forms like the ones below can be used to keep track of decisions, actions, and achievements. You can use the standard content analysis techniques of identifying themes and categorizing and sorting data, and then interpret the results.

Summary of decisions made/actions to be taken

This summarizes the previous meeting and may accompany the agenda for the next meeting.

Decision made/ Action to be taken	***Responsibility***	***Deadline***

Summary of achievements to date

This is a log of all achievements. It may be used for a one-time content analysis of past minutes or updated regularly as a log of achievements.

Achievements	***Responsibility***	***Deadline***

Activity forms/registration

You may have registration forms or various types of activity forms that provide records of who was involved in a particular activity. Use content analysis to summarize such information as

- degree of representation among stakeholders
- demographic characteristics of participants
- level of participation in various activities

Audio-visual materials: Photos, videos, tapes

Content analysis also applies to the analysis of visual materials such as photos or videos. You might employ the use of "pre-set categories" and look for specific information to answer your evaluation questions. Or, you might review the materials and let the themes and patterns emerge from the materials. Consider which process is likely to best serve your purpose.

What Do the Numbers Mean?

Sample Survey Data Tables

Survey 1

Survey results for project participants (n=705 youth) and state team members (n=38) participating in the 4-H Youth Development Arts and Communication program.

Table: Decision-making skills reported by project participants (n=705)

To what extent has participating helped you…	**Not at all**	**Somewhat**	**Quite a bit**	**A great deal**	**Don't know**
To take responsibility for your decisions	3%	24%	36%	33%	3%
To discuss decisions you make with others	5%	33%	39%	20%	3%
To think about choices before making a decision	3%	28%	36%	28%	3%
To think about what might happen because of the choices you make	5%	34%	33%	25%	3%

As a result of participating…	**Almost never**	**Sometimes**	**Usually**	**Almost always**	**Don't know**
I am confident that I can make good decisions about my arts or communication activities	2%	13%	42%	40%	4%

Table: Decision-making skills reported by state team members (n=38)

To what extent has participating helped you…	**Not at all**	**Some-what**	**Quite a bit**	**A great deal**	**Don't know**
To take responsibility for your decisions	3%	6%	43%	46%	3%
To discuss decisions you make with others	0%	6%	51%	40%	3%
To think about choices before making a decision	0%	18%	38%	44%	0%
To think about what might happen because of the choices you make	3%	20%	40%	34%	3%

As a result of participating…	**Almost never**	**Sometimes**	**Usually**	**Almost always**	**Don't know**
I am confident that I can make good decisions about my art or communication activities	0%	0%	36%	58%	6%

SURVEY 2

From a survey of 35 employees

Question 8. As a result of participating in your organization's evaluation activities and processes, how confident are you in your ability to *do* the following? (n = 21)	Not or Slightly Confident n (%)	Moderately Confident n (%)	Very or Extremely Confident n (%)	Did not learn n (%)	Mean	SD
a. Initiate evaluation studies	5 (24%)	11 (52%)	5 (24%)	0 (0%)	3.0	1.0
b. Develop a program logic model	1 (5%)	8 (38%)	12 (57%)	0 (0%)	3.7	0.8
c. Develop key evaluation questions	3 (14%)	11 (52%)	7 (33%)	0 (0%)	3.2	0.8
d. Design data collection instruments	3 (14%)	12 (57%)	5 (24%)	1 (5%)	3.1	0.6
e. Develop an evaluation budget	10 (48%)	7 (33%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	2.3	0.9
f. Develop an evaluation plan	4 (19%)	10 (48%)	6 (29%)	1 (5%)	3.1	0.7
g. Collect data	2 (10%)	8 (38%)	11 (52%)	0 (0%)	3.5	0.8
h. Analyze quantitative data	9 (43%)	6 (29%)	6 (29%)	0 (0%)	2.8	1.0
i. Analyze qualitative data	11 (52%)	5 (24%)	3 (14%)	2 (10%)	2.5	0.9
j. Identify strengths and limitations of an evaluation's design, implementation, and results	9 (43%)	4 (19%)	7 (33%)	1 (5%)	2.9	1.0
k. Communicate and report evaluation processes and findings using a variety of strategies	7 (33%)	5 (24%)	8 (38%)	1 (5%)	3.0	1.1
n. Train/coach others about evaluation	10 (48%)	6 (29%)	4 (19%)	1 (5%)	2.6	1.1

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Review the findings for the survey question in the data table and write three statements or brief paragraphs to summarize the results and highlight key findings.

What are the key findings? Write three statements to summarize the results.	What do you find interesting about these data? What are possible limitations or questions you have?
1.	
2.	
3.	

Adapted from Preskill, H., & Russ-Eft, D. (2005). Activity 58: Analyzing and interpreting quantitative data. In *Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training* (p. 306). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

LINKING FINDINGS TO ACTIONS

Write some feasible conclusions and recommendations for each of your findings.
An example is provided.

Finding	Conclusion	Recommendation
77% of the youth reported that they knew how to write a check correctly before the program.	A sizeable number of the youth already know how to write checks.	Further analyze the data to determine who needs help in this area and target them for assistance rather than including check writing as part of the program for all.
Your statement:		
Your statement:		
Your statement:		

Adapted from SRI International. (2000). *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guide book* (p. 174). Sacramento, CA: The Sierra Health Foundation. Retrieved June 19, 2008, from http://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/files/other_pubs/WDIO-Evaluation-Guide-Book.pdf

Unit 6: Analyzing and interpreting data

"There's a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure the truth."

- Maya Angelou

Myths

- Complex analysis and **big words** impress people.
- Analysis comes at the end when there is data to analyze.
- Qualitative analysis is easier than quantitative analysis
- Data have their own meaning
- Stating **limitations** weakens the evaluation
- Computer analysis is always easier and better

Blind men and an elephant

- Indian fable

Things aren't always what we think!

Six blind men go to observe an elephant. One feels the side and thinks the elephant is like a wall. One feels the tusk and thinks the elephant is a like a spear. One touches the squirming trunk and thinks the elephant is like a snake. One feels the knee and thinks the elephant is like a tree. One touches the ear, and thinks the elephant is like a fan. One grasps the tail and thinks it is like a rope. They argue long and loud and though each was partly in the right, all were in the wrong.

For a detailed version of this fable see: http://www.wordinfo.info/words/index/info/view_unit/1/?letter=B&page=3

Data analysis and interpretation

- Think about analysis EARLY
- Start with a plan
- Code, enter, clean
- Analyze
- Interpret
- Reflect
  - What did we learn?
  - What conclusions can we draw?
  - What are our recommendations?
  - What are the limitations of our analysis?

Why do I need an analysis plan?

- To make sure the questions and your data collection instrument will get the information you want
- Think about your "report" when you are designing your data collection instruments

Do you want to report…

- the number of people who answered each question?
- how many people answered a, b, c, d?
- the percentage of respondents who answered a, b, c, d?
- the average number or score?
- the mid-point among a range of answers?
- a change in score between two points in time?
- how people compared?
- quotes and people's own words

Common descriptive statistics

- Count (frequencies)
- Percentage
- Mean
- Mode
- Median
- Range
- Standard deviation
- Variance
- Ranking

Key components of a data analysis plan

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Questions
- What you hope to learn from the question
- Analysis technique
- How data will be presented

Getting your data ready

- Assign a unique identifier
- Organize and keep all forms (questionnaires, interviews, testimonials)
- Check for completeness and accuracy
- Remove those that are incomplete or do not make sense

Data entry

- You can enter your data
  - By hand
  - By computer

Hand coding

Question 1 : Do you smoke? (circle 1)

YES	NO	No answer
//	/////	/

Data entry by computer

- By Computer
  - Excel (spreadsheet)
  - Microsoft Access (database mngt)
  - Quantitative analysis: SPSS (statistical software)
  - Qualitative analysis: Epi info (CDC data management and analysis program: www.cdc.gov/epiinfo); In ViVo, etc.

Data entry computer screen

Smoking: 1 (YES) 2 (NO)

Survey ID	Q1 Do you smoke	Q2 Age
001	1	24
002	1	18
003	2	36
004	2	48
005	1	26

Dig deeper

- Did different groups show different results?
- Were there findings that surprised you?
- Are there things you don't understand very well – further study needed?

	Supports restaurant ordinance	Opposes restaurant ordinance	Undecided/ declined to comment
Current smokers (n=55)	8 (15% of smokers)	33 (60% of smokers)	14 (25% of smokers)
Non-smokers (n=200)	170 (86% of non-smokers)	16 (8% of non-smokers)	12 (6% of non-smokers)
Total (N=255)	178 (70% of all respondents)	49 (19% of all respondents)	26 (11% of all respondents)

Discussing limitations

Written reports:
- Be explicit about your limitations

Oral reports:
- Be prepared to discuss limitations
- Be honest about limitations
- Know the claims you cannot make
  - Do not claim causation without a true experimental design
  - Do not generalize to the population without random sample and quality administration (e.g., <60% response rate on a survey)

Analyzing qualitative data

"Content analysis" steps:
1. Transcribe data (if audio taped)
2. Read transcripts
3. Highlight quotes and note why important
4. Code quotes according to margin notes
5. Sort quotes into coded groups (themes)
6. Interpret patterns in quotes
7. Describe these patterns

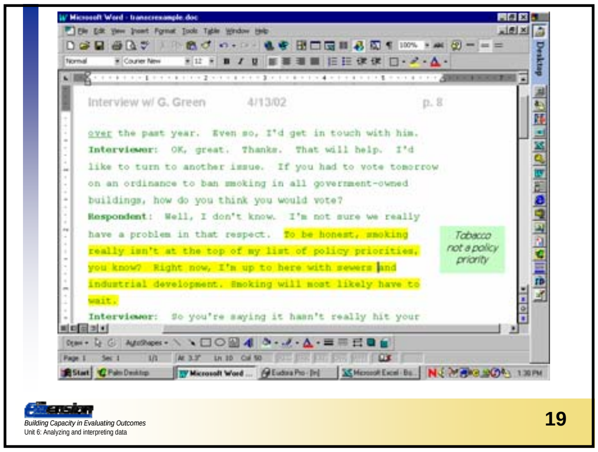
Hand coding qualitative data

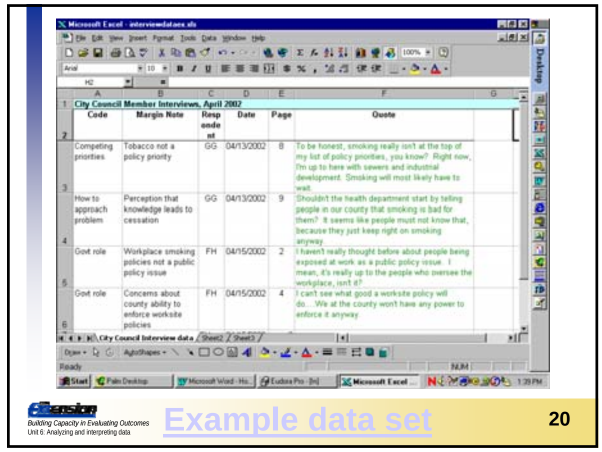

3-13-02 Evaluation Workshop, Madison

Q 5. What do you need next to continue your learning about evaluation?

Line 7 is left uncoded because "Yes" is not usable data.

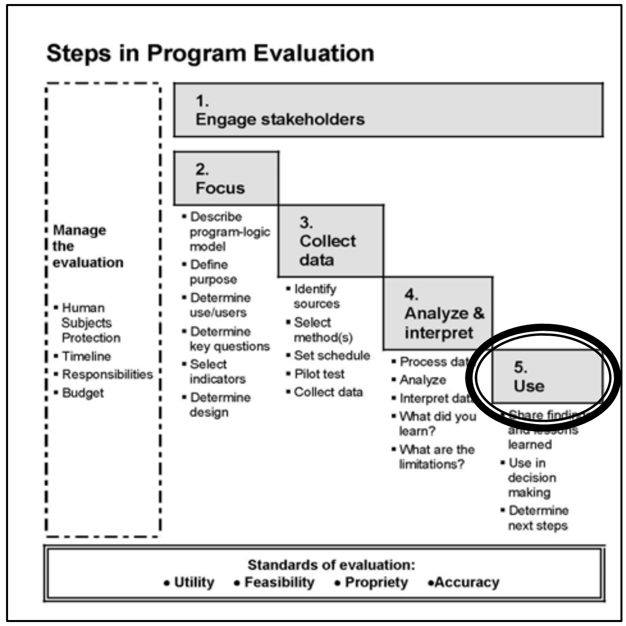
Trg 1 More advanced data analysis
T,R 2 More time/information on all the same concept
P 3 Just start doing them
Trg 4 Another workshop
Fdbk 5 Assessment feedback on how beneficial (or how well I did) the evaluation of my project was for USDA
Trg 6 How to measure long range planning outcomes
7 Yes
P 8 Do it!
Trg 9 Need additional training and review
P 10 Practice makes perfect
T 11 Time to do actual reports
T,Fdbk 12 Time to complete an actual project report using this framework. Constructive feedback on strengthening that report.
Trg 13 More on how to decide evaluation reporting at the beginning of the grant or as you write the grant
P,A 14 Practice what I learned with assistance of a mentor
U 15 Unsure until I use the new ideas I've learned here.
P 16 Apply what I have learned
Trg 17 I need more training on analyzing data (need very basic hands on exercises) – maybe more exercises on indicators
Trg 18 Would have liked to go to observation interview training too!
R 19 More specific examples, i.e. completed logic models for different topics
U 20 Not sure yet. I'll know when I sit down to writing report.
R,P 21 Research suggested resources — develop more surveys – trial and error till I become perfect


Tobacco not a policy priority
Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 6: Analyzing and interpreting data
19


City Council Member Interviews, April 2002
Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 6: Analyzing and interpreting data
Example data set
20

Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving



The whole point of evaluation is to have credible, useful information to *use* to make decisions and program improvements. People tend to think useful information comes at the end of the evaluation, as a reporting function. However, communication and use of information happens throughout an evaluation.

You might want to keep your funders or other key stakeholders informed about the progress of the evaluation. You might be learning things during the evaluation that you can use to make improvements as you go. And/or, you might want to report final results to demonstrate accountability. Whatever the purpose, there are many ways to use and share information both during and after the evaluation.

Section 7A: Purpose of communicating

Think again about your original purpose for evaluating. What did you want to know? What did you want to be able to do with your evaluation results? As you engage in the evaluation, other purposes and communication needs may emerge.

Section 7B: Ways to communicate

The traditional evaluation report is only one of many ways to communicate. Depending on your purpose and audience, a variety of communication formats may be appropriate – from email messages to a news release to a poster in a window on Main Street.

Section 7C: Planning for communicating and reporting

Who will receive *what* information, *how*, and *when*? Planning for communications helps ensure optimal use of the evaluation.

Section 7D: Effective communications

Tailor the message to the audience in simple, concise, appropriate language. Consider using quotations, pictures, and graphics. Writing and communicating effectively is as much art as it is science. Sometimes working with a communications specialist, an editor, or a reporter can make your communications more effective.

Section 7E: Using graphics to report results

Presenting your analyses in a clear and concise way is crucial. Graphic displays – charts, illustrations, and photographs – can simplify complex information, emphasize key points, and create a picture of the data. As you know, "a picture is worth a thousand words."

Section 7F: Challenges in communicating and reporting

Communicating is not without its challenges. How to deal with negative results, communicating with difficult audiences, and misuse of communications are just a few of the challenges you may face.

Resources

Basics of good evaluation reporting (Quick Tip #14) [Boyd (2002)]
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet14.pdf

Evaluation strategies for communicating and reporting [Torres, R., Preskill, H., & Piontek, M. (2004)]

How to communicate evaluation findings [Morris, Fitz-Gibbon, & Freeman (1987)]

Impact and value: Telling your program's story. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007)]
http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf

Reporting results, Part 7 of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/report_results/index.html

Using evaluation data: Analyzing, interpreting, and communicating the results (Module 3) [University of Wisconsin Extension (2008)]
http://www.uwex.edu/impacts/evaluation-modules/

Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative, Chapter 39 of *The Community Tool Box* [Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas (2007)]
http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1047.htm

Section 7A: Purpose of communicating

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the importance of communicating about evaluation both during the process and at the end.
- check their own efforts in using their evaluation findings.

⌘ Activity
Why communicate?

Purpose

To help people realize that there are many important reasons and times to feed evaluation information into decision-making processes

Note to facilitator: This activity sets the stage for the following activities in this unit. It is especially important if people are stuck on seeing communication as only a reporting function or if evaluations are not being optimally used.

Materials needed

Handout-1 *Why communicate about evaluation?*

Handout-2 *Checklist: How well are you "using" your evaluation findings?*

Slides 1-3

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm as a group:
  1. Have you ever finished an evaluation and wondered, "Now what?"
  2. Have you ever been disappointed because you spent time on an evaluation and it seemed like no one cared or used the findings?
  3. Why did this happen?
  4. How did you feel?
  5. What could you do to prevent it from happening in the future?

- Post the phrase "Using Evaluation" in front of the group; invite individuals to share what it means to them.
- Distribute the handout *Why communicate about evaluation?* Suggest that there are many reasons to communicate evaluation findings. Remind people that (1) the more you get evaluation results into people's hands, the more likely it is that the results will be used; (2) communications can happen at any time; and (3) communicating is not just reporting to the funder at the end of an evaluation.
- Ask people to find a partner. Assign each pair two purposes from the handout. Ask the pairs to discuss and decide when those purposes would be important (fill in the right column), drawing on their own experiences as much as possible. Invite people to share their answers. Encourage additions and conversation.
- Finish this activity by asking this question:

  > What purposes do you have for communicating that are not identified on this list?

  Invite people to write these in the blank spaces on the handout.
- Distribute the handout *Checklist: How well are you "using" your evaluation findings?*
- Invite people to complete the handout, either as a program/agency group, or as an individual member of their program/agency. Suggest that this might be a checklist they could use "back home." Encourage individuals to add other items to the list and use it as a checklist within their own agencies. They may want to post it in a visible spot in their offices to remind everyone that "use of evaluation findings" is key.
- Wrap up with a discussion of this question:

  > How can you better use the information you collect through your evaluations?

Reflection questions

- How have your ideas about "using evaluation" changed or been reinforced?
- How might you apply these ideas in your own evaluation practice?
- Do you see areas in which you can do more to ensure that your evaluation results are used?

Additional resources

"Providing feedback to improve the initiative" (Section 2) in *Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative, Chapter 39* of *The Community Tool Box* [Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas (2007)] http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1374.htm

Section 7B: Ways to communicate

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge of ways to communicate and use their evaluation findings.
- increase their knowledge about which type of communication is most appropriate based on the audience and purpose.

⌘ Activity

Types of communications and reports

Purpose

To help people realize that there are many ways in which they can communicate evaluation findings

Materials needed

Handout-3 *Types of communications and reports*

Slide 4

Poster paper, markers

Index cards

Process

- Before starting the activity, copy each type of communication and its corresponding description onto an index card. Make enough cards so that 3 people each receive the same card.
- Invite individuals to share the ways in which they have communicated/shared/reported their evaluations.
- Explain that there are many ways to communicate. Each person will receive a card with one type of communication strategy.
- Distribute one card to each person. Provide the following instructions: [Adapted from Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), Activity 59, pp. 313-318]
    - Walk around the room and find others with matching cards. (You may want to list the types of communications for all to see.)

- Together, discuss the information on the card.
- Identify 2-3 situations or times when this type of communication would be effective, drawing on your own program experience as much as possible.
- Write your ideas on poster paper; be prepared to share your ideas.

- Invite each group to share its communication type and when it would be appropriate to use. Encourage addition of ideas and suggestions.

Reflection questions

- What is one way to communicate about evaluation that you hadn't considered before?
- What is one type that you might try in your own evaluation practice?
- How can different formats best be used to facilitate learning?

Additional resources

Activity 59: Communicating and reporting evaluation formats
[Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 313-318]

"Types of reports" in *Reporting results, Part 7* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/report_results/types.html

⌘ Activity
Practice communicating!

Purpose

To help people practice communicating by having them write an elevator story, an impact statement, and an email message

Materials needed

Handout-4 *Case scenario*

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Case scenario:** Ask people to find a partner. Distribute the handout. Ask each pair to read the case scenario and then develop (1) an elevator story, (2) an impact statement, and (3) an email message to communicate about the evaluation, per the instructions on the handout. Distribute poster paper for the teams to write down their communications.
- Reconvene as pairs in a large group and have the teams count off by threes. Ask all #1s to share their elevator stories, all #2s to read their impact statements, and all #3s to share their email communications. Facilitate critique and comments. Encourage rewrites and revisions as appropriate.
- **Brainstorming:** Wrap up by inviting everyone to brainstorm answers to these questions:
    1. What makes a strong elevator story? Impact statement? Email communication?
    2. When might you use an elevator story? An impact statement? An email communication?

Reflection questions

- What have you learned today that will help you in your own communications?
- What do you see as strengths that you have or challenges you may face when communicating about your evaluations?

⌘ Activity
Analyzing samples of communications and reports

Purpose

To help people recognize strengths and weaknesses of written communications

Materials needed

Handout-5 *Sample communications/reports (Press release, Impact brief, and Grant request)* (3 pages) (As an alternative, select other samples that are relevant for the people you are working with and their learning needs.) Staple all samples together as a single handout.

Handout-8 *Grading exercise – Impact statements*

Poster paper, markers

Individuals' own samples of communications and reports

Process

- **Peer critique:** Prior to the session, invite people to bring samples of both effective and ineffective communications and reports that they have created and/or seen. (There may be some people who would like to bring a sample for the group to critique and help improve in a peer learning process).

  Invite everyone to lay out the samples on a table and look over the collection.

  Ask those who brought samples to comment on what they brought:

  1. What was the purpose of the report?
  2. Did it work well in achieving its purpose?
  3. What would you improve/change?

  Probe for innovative and creative ways people have reported their evaluations.

- Form groups of 3-4 people. Distribute the handout *Sample communications/reports* to each person. Note that two of the samples have insets that highlight important information to include. Ask each group to review the samples and discuss the insets. As they review the documents, invite them to respond to the questions below for *each* sample. They should write their comments on poster paper for sharing with the whole group.

  1. What information in these samples seems really important?
  2. If you were to use this type of communication/report for your own evaluation reporting, what aspects might you keep?
  3. What aspects might you change?

- Invite the small groups to share key points from their discussions about each of the samples. Facilitate discussion and additions.

- Distribute the handout *Grading exercise: Impact statements.* Ask each person to read and grade the examples. When finished, form small groups and encourage people to discuss their answers. Ask each group to identify and write down ways to improve the statements that need it.

- Share key points from the discussions and suggested rewrites of the statements.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing that you learned about what to include in a communication or report that you had not thought about before?
- What is one thing that you might apply to your own evaluation practice?

Additional resources

Impact reports [University of Wisconsin Extension (2005)] http://www.uwex.edu/impacts/search/?action=list

National impacts [Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (n.d.)] http://www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/impacts.html

Success story guidelines [University of Wisconsin Extension (2003)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/prs/docs/successstory.pdf

Section 7C: Planning for communicating and reporting

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding that use of evaluation findings doesn't just happen; people must plan for communicating and disseminating evaluation information.
- increase their ability to plan strategically to ensure that evaluation findings get used.

Note to facilitator

All the activities in this section go together as key steps in helping to ensure evaluation results are used optimally. The "Steps" are based on the handout *Evaluation communication plan* as the organizing framework.

⌘ Activity
Developing an evaluation communication plan

Purpose

To help people identify *who* needs to be targeted for communications and which strategy is most appropriate for that audience

Materials needed

Handout-9 *Evaluation communication plan*

Handout-10 *Who is your target audience?*

Handout-11 *Matching communication type to audience*

Handout-12 *Types of reports for different audiences*

Slides 5-11

Poster paper, markers

5-6 different hats

Process

- Distribute the handout *Evaluation communication plan*. Invite people to fill in each column for their own program as the group covers each step.

STEP ONE: *Who* is the audience for your communication?

- **Hats galore:** Remind everyone that effective communication always starts with knowing the audience for your communication. Use the variety of hats to demonstrate different perspectives: put on each hat and role play the character briefly to illustrate and reinforce the notion that audiences are different – they see, use, and understand information differently.
- Distribute the handout *Who is your target audience?* As a group, brainstorm additional target audiences and add them to the list.
- Break into pairs. Ask the pairs to identify 2-3 audiences from the list that are particularly relevant to their own programs. Encourage each pair to talk about these audiences: their characteristics, their interests in the program, and why they are targeted for communication about evaluation.
- Then ask each person to write in the names of these people in the first column of their *Evaluation communication plan* chart.

STEP TWO: *What* information will be communicated?

- Move to the second column on the *Evaluation communication plan* chart.
- Remind everyone that different people may need or want different information. Some audiences may only want information about outcomes; others may want to know how many people are served. Some audiences want numbers; others want quotations and testimonials. Most audiences prefer a mix of information. The greater the extent to which we can customize our communication to the audience, the more likely it is that the information will be understood and valued.
- Invite people to discuss these questions with their partners:
    1. What information do you want the audience to have?
    2. What type of information resonates with the audience: numbers, statistics, quotes, testimonials, stories…?
- Have people fill in the second column on their *Evaluation communication plan* charts.

STEP THREE: *How* will the communication be delivered?

- Move to the third column on the *Evaluation communication plan* chart.
- Remind everyone that different audiences prefer different ways of receiving information. Consequently, different formats (Section 7B) are appropriate for different audiences.

- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm ways information can be delivered (report, email message, video presentation, personal discussion, etc.; see also Section 7B). Use poster paper to gather ideas. Invite innovative ways in which people have shared their evaluation results. Collect and save the ideas for distribution to the entire group. Here are some examples:
    - We played jeopardy as our annual report.
    - We formatted our annual report as a newspaper.
    - We used a school report card format.
    - Several youth told their own stories with photos and commentaries.
- Ask the group to consider the following:
    1. Which format will be most appropriate for the particular audience? How does the particular audience like to receive/view/hear information?
    2. What do you have the resources (and abilities) to do? What will be most cost-effective?
- Distribute the handout *Matching communication type to audience.*
- Keeping the same pairs, invite people to talk with their partners about which format might be most appropriate for the various audiences listed on the handout.
- Finish this step by having people fill in the third column on their *Evaluation communication plan* charts.

STEP FOUR: *When* will the communication be delivered?

- Remind everyone that communication timing is important. There may be designated dates when a report, press release, or communication is needed. There may also be unplanned opportunities for communicating evaluation findings. Evaluation communication is not just "reporting at the end of the program."
- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm *when* information is needed/might be provided: on the required reporting date, at budget time, at a quarterly meeting, during annual planning, during informal meetings, or during an elevator opportunity.
- Invite people to fill in the fourth, and final, column on their *Evaluation communication plan* charts.
- Wrap up with this question:

    What, if any, obstacles or barriers do you anticipate in communicating your evaluation?

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about communicating and reporting your evaluation?
- What is one thing you will do now and incorporate into your evaluation practice?
- Do you think planning for communicating and reporting is something you will do henceforth? Why or why not?

Additional resources

Activity 61: Developing a communicating and reporting plan
[Preskill & Russ-Eft (2005), pp. 323-326]

"Communicating information to funders for support and accountability" (Section 4) in *Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative, Chapter 39* of *The Community Tool Box* [Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas (2007)]
http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/section_1376.htm

"Report recipients" in *Reporting results, Part 7* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/report_results/report-recipients.html

"Types of reports" in *Reporting results, Part 7* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)]
http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/report_results/types.html

Section 7D: Effective communications

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their ability to effectively communicate their evaluation findings.

⌘ Activity

Basic report outline

Purpose

To help people recognize the components of a basic report

Materials needed

Handout-13 *Evaluation report outline* (2 pages)

Slides 12, 13

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- **Around the room:** Print each of the following words at the top of a sheet of poster paper and post around the room: “Situation,” “Response,” “Results,” and “Evidence.” Explain that the logic model provides the framework for reporting results. It provides the outline for the content that should be included in a basic evaluation report. Each section (Situation, Response, Results, and Evidence) is one section of the evaluation report. Clarify the meaning of each section.

  Form groups of 3-5 people. Direct each group to one of the sheets of poster paper. Explain that the groups have five minutes to write down information that could be included in that section of the evaluation report. When the whistle sounds, they are to move clockwise to the next poster paper and add to what has been written there.

  After all groups have visited each paper, ask them to go around again and review all the responses. Encourage discussion and additions.

- As a whole group, wrap up by discussing the following:
  1. What information should be included on the cover? [e.g., program title, location, date, sponsor, contact person]
  2. What items haven't been covered that might also be included in a report? [e.g., reference list, appendices]

Reflection questions

- What do you think will be easy about writing an evaluation report? What might be difficult?
- What is one thing you learned about writing a report?
- What is one thing that you are likely to include in your own evaluation practice?

Additional resources

"Communicating information to funders for support and accountability" (Section 4) in *Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative, Chapter 39* of *The Community Tool Box* [Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas (2007)] http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/section_1376.htm

"Parts of a report" in *Reporting results, Part 7* of *The power of proof: An evaluation primer* [Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (n.d.)] http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/report_results/parts.html

Success story guidelines [University of Wisconsin Extension (2003)] http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/prs/docs/successstory.pdf

Using evaluation data: Analyzing, interpreting, and communicating the results (Module 3) [University of Wisconsin Extension (2008)] http://www.uwex.edu/impacts/evaluation-modules/

⌘ Activity
Tips for communicating your evaluation results

Purpose

To help people become familiar with some common ways to improve their communications

Materials needed

Handouts-15 *Tips for communicating your evaluation results*

Slides 14-20

Poster paper, markers

Process

- **Share your own:** Invite individuals to share examples/stories of
  - o an effective communication;
  - o an ineffective communication;
  - o a miscommunication.

  Discuss:

  1. What made it so?
  2. What are some tips you have for others?

- Distribute the handout *Tips for communicating your evaluation results*
- Discuss the items and invite people to add to the list.
- Distinguish between writing/speaking clearly and having something meaningful to say. Note that many of the "tips" on the handout relate to "how" one presents information. The other aspect is having "impactful" information to present (the first bullet on the list).
- **Tabletop conversations:** Break into small groups of 4-5 per table. Place the following question on poster paper for all to see/or on placards at each table. Ask each table group to discuss the questions and be prepared to share the key points of their discussions.

> QUESTION: What are some TIPS for communicating with an audience that is…
>
> 1. over the age of 65?
> 2. non-English speaking?
> 3. under age 10? aged 16-18?
> 4. critical of your program?
> 5. a Governor's panel?
> 6. your county Board?

- Invite volunteers to share key points from their discussions for each of the questions. Facilitate conversation and additions.

Additional resources

Active and passive voice [Purdue University Online Writing Lab (1995-2004)] http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_actpass.html

Writing user-friendly documents: Use active voice [Plain Language Action & Info Network (n.d.)] http://www.blm.gov/nhp/NPR/hdbk_11.html

Section 7E: Using graphics to report findings

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- better understand different types of graphical displays and when they are most appropriate to use.

⌘ Activity
Common graphics and when to use them

Purpose

To help people look at graphics critically and increase their ability to use graphics effectively in their communications

Materials needed

Example charts; graphs; data displays from local papers, project reports, articles or journals

Publication *Using graphics to report evaluation results* (G3658-13) [Minter & Michaud (2003)] `http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-13.PDF`

Handout-16 *Tips for using common graphics*

Handout-17 *Characteristics of an effective graphic*

Poster paper, markers

Slides 21-35

Process

- Prior to the session, look through newspapers, news magazines, and program reports and find 4-5 examples of graphs, charts, illustrations, figures, pictograms, or photographs used to display information (data displays). Make copies for everyone.
- Form groups of 3-4 people and distribute the copies of the data displays to each group.
- Ask groups to answer the following questions for each example:
    1. What is the display saying?
    2. Is it easy or difficult to understand?
    3. What changes would improve it?
    4. Is this graphic more appropriate for certain audiences? Who? Why?

- Distribute the publication *Using graphics to report evaluation results*.
- Review pages 8-12 that provide descriptions and examples of five displays: bar charts, pie charts, line graphs, illustrations, and photographs.
- Form five groups. Assign one type of graphic to each group. Ask the groups to use poster paper to create an example of a graphical display using hypothetical data they make up.
- Review the displays created by the groups and discuss when each type of display might be used.
- Distribute the handouts *Tips for using common graphics* and *Characteristics of an effective graphic*. Discuss.
- **Brainstorming:** Wrap up with a discussion of common problems/issues in using graphic displays. As a group, brainstorm problems/issues that individuals have seen/observed. Discuss and resolve.

Possible problems/issues:

- Pie chart used when data are not a percentage of the whole
- Graphics too cluttered and difficult to read

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about using graphics to display your evaluation data?
- What is one thing you will apply in your own evaluation work?

Additional resources

Charting in Microsoft Excel [Peltier Technical Services, Inc. (2008)]
http://peltiertech.com/Excel/Charts/

Creating charts [Microsoft Office Online (2008)]
http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/CH010003731033.aspx

How can I make a pie chart in Excel to report data? (Tipsheet #64) [Kiernan (2001)]
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS64.pdf

Creating effective graphs: Solutions for a variety of evaluation data [Henry, G. T. (Ed.). (1997, Spring)]

Section 7F: Challenges in communicating and reporting

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of ways to handle potentially challenging situations when communicating and reporting evaluation findings.

⌘ Activity

Handling difficult situations

Purpose

To help people address challenges they might encounter when communicating and reporting evaluation results

Materials needed

Handout-18 *Dealing with difficult audiences when communicating evaluation findings*

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to the following questions:
  1. What, if any, challenging experiences have you had in reporting your evaluation results?
  2. Have you ever had a reporter misinterpret you during an interview and report incorrect evaluation results in a press release?
  3. Have you had an advocate misrepresent the findings by augmenting and overstating the facts?
  4. Have you had people disregard the evaluation results and proceed as they want?
- **Round-robin table conversations:** Break into groups of 4-5 people per table. From the whole group, solicit "challenging topics" that they would like to discuss, or use the following

discussion topics. Write each topic on a sheet of poster paper and place one topic on each table. Ask one person at each table to serve as recorder. Explain that each table group will have 20 minutes to discuss the topic on the table. When people hear the whistle, they should move to another table that has a different topic. The "recorder" stays at the table and records key points from the conversations.

> Possible topics:
>
> - How can you handle negative results?
> - How do you deal with skeptical or critical audiences when reporting your evaluation findings?
> - How can you ensure anonymity when reporting people's stories and testimonials?
> - How can you get busy people to want and use more than just a few key bullets? Or, should you?

Invite the recorders to share key points from the conversations for each topic. Encourage additional comments and questions.

- Distribute the handout *Dealing with difficult audiences when communicating evaluation findings*. Read and discuss.

Reflection questions

- What is one challenging situation that you hadn't thought about before?
- What tips and techniques will you take home to apply in your own practice?
- What additional help do you think you need to be able to handle any of these situations?

WHY COMMUNICATE ABOUT EVALUATION?

PURPOSE	DESCRIBE A SITUATION WHEN THIS MIGHT BE YOUR PURPOSE.
1. To educate decision makers, funders, and/or key stakeholders	
2. To demonstrate accountability; satisfy public inquiries	
3. To guide budget and resource allocations; gain/retain resources	
4. To show progress when planned outcomes aren't expected until a distant future	
5. To make people aware of the program, achievements, and/or needs	
6. To provide direction; encourage action, including improvements program	
7. To stir interest; build visibility; gain recognition; enhance public image	
8. To build support; maintain commitment	
9. To recruit volunteers, participants, and/or partners	
10. To share lessons learned	
11. To celebrate accomplishments	
12. To identify training/professional development needs	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	

Checklist: How well are you "using" your evaluation findings?

Evaluation findings are used to…	Always	Sometimes	Not often	Never	N.A.
1. educate decision makers, funders, and/or key stakeholders					
2. demonstrate accountability; satisfy public inquiries					
3. guide budget and resource allocations; gain resources					
4. show progress when planned outcomes aren't expected until a distant future					
5. make people aware of the program, achievements, and/or needs (program visibility)					
6. guide program improvements					
7. promote the program, maintain commitment					
8. enhance public image					
9. recruit volunteers, participants, and/or partners					
10. identify effective practices					
11. share lessons learned					
12. celebrate accomplishments					
13.					
14.					
15.					

TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Technical report	A detailed report of an evaluation's methods and findings.
Executive summary	A few pages, usually located at the beginning of a longer report, that outline a study's major findings and recommendations.
Annual report	A focused report that compiles major achievements for all programs, either written or presented orally.
Success story	A one- or two-page description of a program's successes (progress and/or achievements) used to promote a program and tell its story.
Impact statement; paragraph spotlight	A short paragraph that highlights impact — the difference the program has made.
Elevator story	A quick, concise message that clearly communicates your story and can be relayed in the time the elevator travels between the first and sixth floors!
News release; press conference	A brief, newsworthy piece or interaction to release specific information.
Media appearance	A release of newsworthy information that usually includes a staged event, such as a local sports star leading a walk-a-thon to raise awareness about a study on exercise and health.
Public meeting	A gathering that is open to the public where evaluation findings are presented in a clear, simple manner, usually with time set aside for open discussion.
Action planning; working session; staff workshop	An interactive discussion of findings, usually with the intention of in-depth learning and setting next steps.
Memo; email; fax; postcard	A short message circulated among staff or a group, usually focused on one specific point.
Personal discussion	A face-to-face interaction to discuss evaluation findings with an individual or small group.
Brochure; newsletter; bulletin	A brief, simply-worded publication that can be distributed or mailed to various outlets.
Published article	An article written for a particular journal with a target audience in mind.
Display/exhibit: photographs, 3-ring binder, poster, chart	A visual presentation of specific information, with minimal use of written words.
Audio/Video presentation; slide presentation	Electronic visual presentation that may include audio and personal comments.

Adapted from:
Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas. (2007). Communicating information to funders for support and accountability (Section 4). In *The Community Tool Box: Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative* (Chapter 39). Retrieved July 15, 2008, from http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1376.htm and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007). *Impact and value: Telling your program's story.* Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Oral Health. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf

CASE SCENARIO

SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE

Despite significant gains in minority undergraduate and graduate enrollments at the nation's colleges and universities, the rate at which students of color enroll in college continues to trail that of white students. Likewise, there is a gap between students from high- and low-income families in college enrollment rates.

In 2002, a team of concerned high school staff and administrators and faculty from the local college and extension office initiated the *College is for me!* Program. The team secured start-up funding of $10,000 from the college's innovative grant program. The program provides workshops, mentoring, financial aid assistance, ACT preparation, and tutoring to the area's high school students of color and/or of low economic means. Over 30 volunteers are involved in various aspects of the program. To date, 213 students have completed the program:

- 100% of the seniors have graduated from high school and applied to institutions of higher learning.
- 92% enrolled in a post-secondary institutions; all were successful in receiving scholarships and other sources of financial aid.
- Significant improvements have been reported on ACT test scores.
- Participants report increased motivation to attend and succeed in college, greater sense of confidence and self-worth, and increased reading and communication skills.
- Volunteers report various benefits including feeling like they are helping, getting to know the youth, and a greater sense of purpose.

1) Elevator story: Your administrator expects everyone to be able to clearly and succinctly communicate the value of his work in the time that the elevator travels from his office on the sixth floor to the lobby on the first floor. You are planning ahead for that fateful day! Prepare an "elevator story" to capture the value of the program described in the above scenario. Add information needed to create your story; or identify additional information you need.

2) Impact statement: Write an impact statement (no more than 500 words) to include in the annual report to the funder that communicates the "impact" of this program.

3) Email message: You like to share evaluation results with the volunteers that help deliver the program and make it a success. Write an email message to send to the community volunteers.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION/REPORT: PRESS RELEASE

Fruit County group finds strength in collaboration

August 1, 1998

Together we can make a difference. That's what a group of Fruit County citizens has discovered.

Two years ago, five individuals came together with a common goal: make life better for Fruit County families. They decided to address major problems — such as alcohol and drug abuse, divorce, health care, child care, and disengaged youth — that one person alone couldn't handle. They called their group "Healthier Partnership."

Today, Healthier Partnership has 15 members from 10 community sectors including law enforcement, day care, health care, business, social services, UW-Extension, and the nonprofit sector. One member is an elected official.

"We felt that by working together we could make a difference in the community," says Andrea Apple, UW-Extension family living educator and a founding member of Healthier Partnership.

In a short time, the group has come a long way toward meeting that goal, creating a new family resource center, more community activities for young people, and a committee to help low-income families find affordable housing.

But group accomplishments go well beyond serving the community. Within the group, members have gained a greater understanding of community needs and assets, other member's viewpoints, community-planning processes, and the importance of networking. There is a sense of personal growth and empowerment.

"This group helped me realize the impact of various community entities meeting together to identify problems and develop goals," says one group member.

"In the process of working on community problems, we've learned more about each other and about the partnerships needed to get things done," adds Apple.

For more information on Healthier Partnership, contact Andrea Apple, family living educator, Fruit County UW-Extension office

Phone, FAX, EMAIL

Date

Lead: There is strength in working together.

Describe makeup and characteristics of your collaborative.

Quotation from collaborative leader or other member of your collaborative.

Summarize your collaborative's accomplishments.

Add details on how your collaborative benefits members.

Statement from member of collaborative.

Contact information: Name, address, phone, fax, e-mail.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION/REPORT: IMPACT BRIEF

"The group has made me more aware of community issues and the need to compromise even though decisions affect a lot of people."

"I feel I can help the families in my work program because I have a better knowledge of community resources."

"The group has helped me learn to work with others of diverse views."

"The group is showing me that the people of a community can take care of each other if they want to."

"We're actually putting into motion plans for improvements that really need to be done."

"I'm much more aware of the status of such issues as housing, child care, adolescent programs, and a growing cooperation to meet the needs."

For more information on Healthier Partnership, contact:
Andrea Apple,
Family Living Educator,
Fruit County
UW-Extension office,
PHONE
FAX
E-MAIL

'Healthier Partnership' survey results

Healthier Partnership was formed two years ago by a group of Fruit County citizens to address youth and family problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, child care, health care, and disengaged youth.

Accomplishments include new family resource center

A recent survey done to document group achievements and assess group dynamics showed that the group has helped create:

- a new family resource center,
- YMCA programs tailored to the needs of local teens,
- more community activities for young people, and
- a committee to help families find affordable housing.

Group members have also gained a greater understanding of:

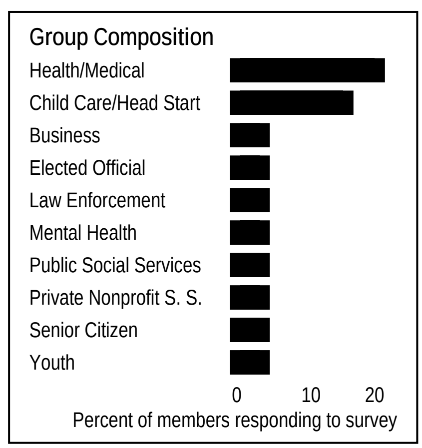
- community needs and assets,
- other members' viewpoints,
- community-planning processes, and
- the importance of networking.

Community benefits

- Community benefits due to the group's activities include better communication between agencies, less duplication of services, and improved networking between agencies and individuals.

About the members

- Members represent ten community sectors, with three members from the health care sector. They spend from two to 72 hours a month on group activities, for an average of 20 hours a month. Average length of participation in the group is 16 months. More than half the members are volunteers.



Sample Communication/Report: Grant Request

Building stronger families through partnerships

"The biggest impact is the new family resource center."

"We're actually putting into motion plans for improvements that really ...done."

...helped ...pact of ...munity ...gether ...ns and ...goals."

... made ...are of community issues and the need to compromise even though decisions affect a lot of people."

"I feel I can help the families in my work program because I have a better knowledge of community resources."

"The group helped me learn to work with others of diverse views."

"This group is showing me that the people of a community can take care of each other if they want to."

Testimonials from influential people in the community such as the mayor, police chief or sheriff, county executive, and business people, as well as group members.

A collaborative working group called Healthier Partnership was formed two years ago by a group of Fruit County citizens to address youth and family problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, divorce, child care, health care, and diseng... youth.

Background on Healthier Partnership: How and why it began, with facts about members.

Members represent 10 community sectors... halth care, child care, law enforcement, bu... social services, UW-Extension and the no... sector. One member is an elected official.

Members spend from two to 72 hours a month on group activities, and an average 20 hours a month. Average length of participation in the group is about 16 months. More than half the members are volunteers.

Community, members gain from group activity

A recent UW-Extension survey showed that our group helped create a new family resource center, YMCA programs tailored to teen needs, m... activities for young people, and a committ... low-income families find affordable housi...

List external and community accomplishments.

What's more, individual group members have gained a greater awareness of community issues such as housing, child care, and adolescent programs. Community benefits include better communication between agencies, less duplication of services, and improved networking between agencies and individuals.

Healthier Partnerships has made giant steps toward addressing some of the issues affecting Frui... County families. However, much remains to... done. Staffing needs looms at the new family resource center, and the housing committee needs a full-time coordinator. Our group is also anxious to implement a drug prevention program. A detailed budget proposal is available from the Fruit County UW-Extension office.

Explain reason for grant request.

GRADING EXERCISE: IMPACT STATEMENTS

The following are impact statements of varying quality. Read through them and assign a grade to each according to the scale:

A = Excellent – indicates strong impacts

B = Above average

C = Average

D = Below average –indicates no obvious impact or makes you think, “So what?”

Then, in a small group, discuss the grades you gave and why. Work as a group to rewrite the statements that need improvement.

_____ 1. A University of Flux agronomist’s studies revealed that by applying gypsum on the field before planting alfalfa, the yields double after the second year. Gypsum is found to neutralize the subsoil in the field as well as the toxic levels of aluminum. That, in turn, allows the roots of the plants to flourish and reach deep into the soil to find water even in severe drought. As a result, hay farmers can now grow alfalfa at a profit. The state’s cattle benefit, too, with a growing supply of quality alfalfa hay.

_____ 2. The Nutrition Education Program uses a lesson-based program to teach good meal management, sound food safety practices, and food shopping strategies to reduce costs. In 2002 the program reached nearly 535 families which was an increase from 250 families in 2001.

_____ 3. Efforts to help farmers increase their profitability are vital to the continued health of agriculture in Hope, and these efforts are paying off. One of the participating farm families reported to Extension that two months after the seminar, the family had made a profit of $10,000 in the futures market as a direct result of the knowledge gained at the seminar.

_____ 4. A web site developed by Extension specialists to communicate current research and information is now available for use by industry personnel. Presentations and articles about the site have resulted in strong interest by industry for use in education and referrals.

_____ 5. XYZ Extension started a week-long training program to increase the amount of organic waste being recycled. Less that 3 percent of the nation’s 200 million tons of organic waste is currently turned into compost and returned to the soil. The compost course also attracted people from other regions. Training has increased awareness of composting.

_____ 6. UTE Wellness Project is a six-week education curriculum provided through the Ute Tribal Council and Extension to reach youth members of the Ute tribe. Twenty-three Ute Tribe youth increased nutrition knowledge during the first two years of the program; 23 youth increased physical activity during those same two years.

_____ 7. Since 1991, more than 720,000 tons of sediment and 1,300 pounds of DDT isomers have been saved from off-site impacts. Implementation of management practices to reduce the sediment flow into the river has taken place on about 68% of the farmland in the hydrologic unit area, 91,000 acres.

EVALUATION COMMUNICATION PLAN

Who? (audience)	What? (information)	How? (format)	When?

WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

Audience category	Name – Who in specific do you need to reach?	Why? What is your purpose for communicating with them?
Funder: local, state, federal		
Program committee		
Participants		
Participants' family members		
Community		
Team/Staff		
Volunteers		
Administrators		
Collaborating agency; partners		
Businesses; business groups		
Police – law enforcement		
Schools: school board, administrators, teachers		
Church organizations		
Elected officials: legislators; policy makers		
Professional community		

MATCHING COMMUNICATION TYPE TO AUDIENCE

Users/stakeholders	Report	Success story	Impact statement	Media release	Memo	Personal discussion	Display	Elevator story
County board/city council (elected and appointed officials)								
Funders								
Program committee								
Participants								
Team/staff								
Volunteers								
Collaborating agencies; partners								
Businesses; business groups								
Police – law enforcement								
Schools boards; parent-teacher organizations								
Community								
Church organizations								
State legislators								
Professional organizations								
You								

TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS/REPORTS FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

Report type	Best for:
Technical reports This is a detailed report on a single issue, such as a small study on one or two sample groups. It can be given at a staff meeting or as part of a larger report.	Funding agencies, program administrators, advisory committees
Executive summary A few pages, usually at the beginning or end of a longer report, which outlines a study's major findings and recommendations.	Funding agencies, program administrators, board members and trustees, program staff, advisory committees, political bodies, program service providers (technicians, teachers, etc.)
Technical professional paper A detailed article that summarizes information for a scientific, or other technical, audience. It usually contains information about what is done, how to do it, what worked and what did not work, and why.	Program administrators, advisory committees, organizations interested in program content
Popular article An article written with the target audience of the medium in mind. Some magazines and papers target specific populations. It normally contains more information than a press release but focuses on two or three quick points.	Program administrators, board members and trustees, program staff, political bodies, community groups, current clients, potential clients, program service providers, organizations interested in program content
News release and/or press conference A gathering with the media done for the purpose of releasing specific information.	Program administrators, the media, wide distribution of simplified information
Public meeting A gathering that's open to the general public where more general evaluation findings are released in a clear, simple manner, usually with some time set aside for open discussion.	Community groups, current clients, the media
Media appearance Different from a press release in that this incorporates some sort of staged event--for example, a local author doing a public reading to highlight awareness about a study on adult literacy.	Current clients, the media
Staff workshop A more interactive, working presentation for your group or coalition's staff and volunteers.	Program administrators, program staff, program service providers
Brochures/posters Brief, simply-worded printed materials that can be distributed and mailed to various outlets in the community. Needs to focus on one quick point.	Potential clients
Memo A short letter circulated internally among program staff.	Program administrators, program staff, program service providers
Personal discussion Sitting down face-to-face to discuss evaluation findings with an individual or small group.	Funding agencies, program administrators, program staff, program service providers

Source: The Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas. (2007). Communicating information to funders for support and accountability (Section 4). In *The Community Tool Box: Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative* (Chapter 39). Retrieved July 15, 2008, from http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1376.htm

EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE

Situation: **What prompted the program?**

Response: **How did you/the organization respond?** (inputs and outputs)

Results: **Who benefited? What resulted?** (outcomes)

Evidence: **What's the evidence**? (evaluation)

Situation: Why was the program initiated? What problem, issue, or concern needed addressing? Who cares?

Include facts, data, and evidence of the problem/originating situation.

Be specific, clear, and hard-hitting.

Response: What did you do? How did you respond?

Briefly describe the response, including inputs, activities, outputs, and people reached.

Describe partnerships and external funding sources.

Be sure to describe your role/your organization's role in the response.

Include program costs, as appropriate and possible.

Results: What changes and benefits were achieved as a result of the program response? Who benefited and how?

Use quantitative and qualitative data.

Interpret the data to help the reader understand the meaning behind the data.

Link to existing research, if possible.

Include conclusions and lessons learned.

Evidence: What evaluation design and methods did you use to document the results?

Include the data collection method(s), sampling strategy, and response rate.

Remember, a good report depends on credible information.

TECHNICAL EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE:

Sections of report

- Abstract/executive summary
- Introduction
    - Purpose of the evaluation, key questions
    - Program background, description
    - Relevant research/literature review
- Methods/procedures
    - Data sources
    - Data collection procedures
    - Sampling
    - Limitations of the methods
- Results
    - Data, tables, analysis
    - Process and outcomes
- Discussion
    - Extent to which program succeeded
    - Key insights
    - Unintended outcomes
    - Critical incidents/constraining and supporting factors
    - Lessons learned
- Conclusions/recommendations
    - For the program, for the evaluation
    - Action items, as appropriate
- References
- Appendices
    - Questionnaires/tools used
    - Other resources used

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR EVALUATION RESULTS

- Tailor the report/message to address the issue(s) that are most interesting to the user.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- Be clear and concise. Avoid long sentences
- Use the active voice.
- Eliminate unnecessary words; check for “wordiness.”
- Check writing and grammar.
- Be accurate, balanced, and impartial.
- Be timely.
- Use graphics, photos, quotations, and real stories.
- Consult a communications specialist.
- Write-rewrite-rewrite. Practice-practice-practice.
- Allow sufficient time.

Add three items to the list above.

1.

2.

3.

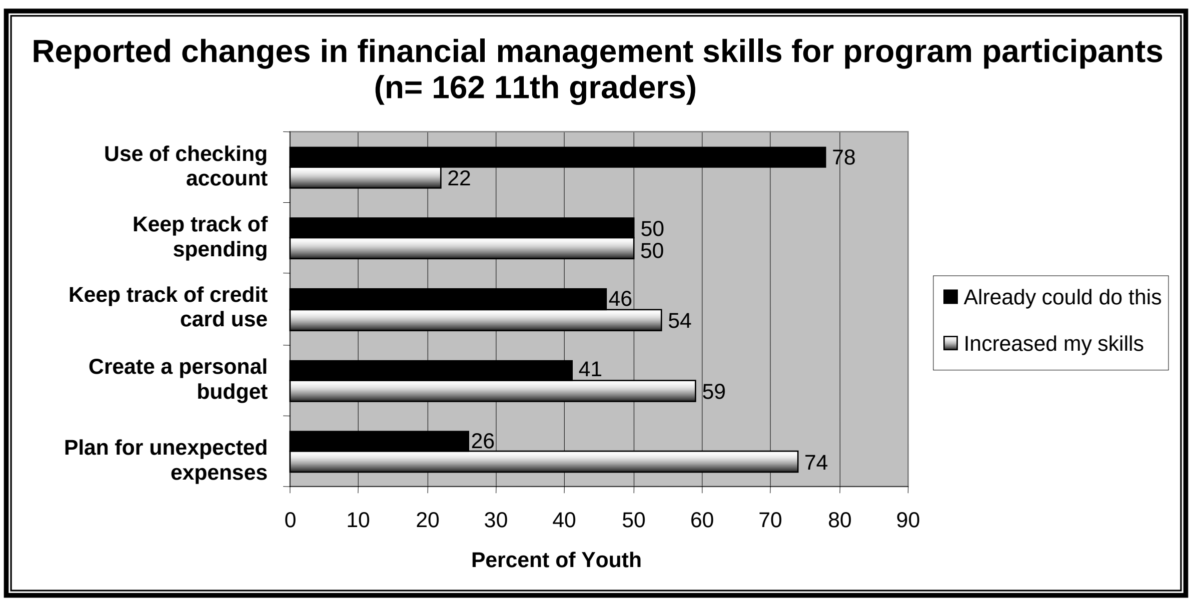
TIPS FOR USING COMMON GRAPHICS

	Advantages	Trade-offs	Tips
Bar chart	Versatile and good for comparisons. Relatively easy to construct.	Units on Y axis (vertical axis) can sometimes be too small to show meaningful differences.	• Label the horizontal (X) and vertical (Y) axes. • Use as few bars or lines as possible (max. 6 bars or 3 lines). • Emphasize one aspect of the data by changing a bar's color or texture. • To clarify values, add value labels at the top of the bar. • Label lines on line graphs and, if possible, use different colors. • Include horizontal lines across the chart, beginning at each unit interval on the vertical axis.
Line graph	Useful for showing trends and differences between groups.	Too many data lines can confuse readers.	
Pie chart	Shows proportions (percentages) of a whole.	Too many categories can mislead. Not ideal for showing trends.	• Use six or fewer slices. • Use contrasting colors, shades of gray, or simple patterns to increase readability. • Label the slices. • Emphasize a certain piece of data by moving its slice out from the circle.
Illustration *Examples: Diagrams, maps, drawings*	Conveys lots of information in a small space. Shows technical and geographic data.	May take up a lot of space. Complex illustrations may not photocopy well.	• Position the title above the illustration. • Keep illustrations simple. If the illustration needs a lot of explanation, it is probably too complicated for an illustration. • Provide ample white space around and within the illustration.
Photograph	Adds a "human face" to data. Captures "before" and "after" pictures of a program or intervention.	May be costly. Sometimes difficult to take high quality photos. Can take up a lot of space in a report. May not photocopy well.	• Get written permission to take the picture as well as permission to use the photo in a publication. • Figure out ahead of time what you want to photograph and how the photos will be used. • Use several photographers to capture multiple perspectives.

Source: Minter, E., & Michaud, M. (2003). *Using graphics to report evaluation results.* Retrieved May 1, 2007, from http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-13.PDF

Characteristics of an Effective Graphic

- Keep it simple – only **essential** information
- **Title** – clear and succinct
- Clear **units of measure**
- Shows data **clearly** without distortion
- **Simple,** straightforward design without "clutter"
- **Legible** – font size 10 point or larger
- Include **sample size**
- Acknowledge **sources**, if applicable



Dealing with Difficult Audiences When Communicating Evaluation Findings

Not all people are going to be thrilled to hear what you have to say, especially if your findings are critical of their group. Even receptive audiences may be skeptical or slow to comprehend what you're telling them. Here are a few suggestions for dealing with difficult audiences:

Anticipate their questions, concerns, and objections. Try to think ahead of time about what this particular audience won't like about what you have to say, and come up with calm, measured, logical, and thorough responses for them. If possible, sit down with someone who knows your audience well to get their feedback on what questions or concerns they may raise and how they might react to your answers. During the presentation, this will help you keep from getting flustered and defensive.

Have a primary figure in your initiative present the findings. A director or higher-up in your program staff can deliver the data with a greater amount of authority (even if that authority is mainly in the minds of the audience!) than someone lower on the initiative's totem pole.

Have someone else give out the information. With a particularly hostile or uninformed audience, or an audience that you don't normally have access to, you may wish to let someone outside your group or initiative relay the evaluation findings-- a member of that group, for example.

Reinforce the data repeatedly. If what you're saying to the audience doesn't seem to be sinking in, repeat it! Hearing it more than once may be the only thing they need in order to properly understand the information being given to them.

Keep your cool. At all times, no matter how hostile or annoying or clueless your audience may seem, do your best to remain calm, professional, and cordial.

Source: The Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas. (2007). Communicating information to funders for support and accountability (Section 4). In *The Community Tool Box: Using evaluation to understand and improve the initiative* (Chapter 39). Retrieved July 15, 2008, from http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1376.htm

Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

1. Who
2. What (Content)
3. How (Format)
4. When

"Think like a wise man, but communicate in the language of the people."
– William Butler Yeats

Why communicate?

The proper function of evaluation is to speed up the learning process by communicating what might otherwise be overlooked or wrongly perceived…

Success is to be judged by… success in communication…

Payoff comes from the insight that the evaluator's work generates in others.

- L. J. Cronbach

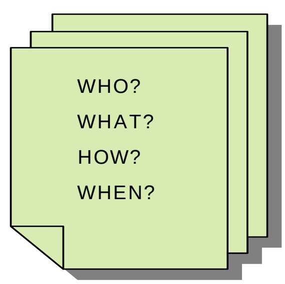
Cronbach, L.J. (1982). Designing evaluations of educational and social programs. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 8.

Plan with the end in mind.

Types of communications - reports

- Written report - long, short, summary
- Success story
- Impact statement; spotlight
- Elevator story
- Press release
- Media appearance
- Public meeting
- Memo, email, fax, postcard
- Newsletter
- Personal discussion
- Bulletin, brochure
- Display/exhibit
- Audio/video presentation

Communication plan



WHO - Potential Users

- County board/City council (elected and appointed officials)
- Funders
- Program Committee
- Participants
- Team / Staff
- Volunteers
- Collaborating agencies; partners
- Businesses; business groups
- Police – law enforcement
- Schools boards, parent-teacher organizations
- Community
- Church organizations
- State legislators
- Professional organizations
- You

WHO is the Audience?

INTERNAL

1.
2.
3.
4.

EXTERNAL

1.
2.
3.
4.

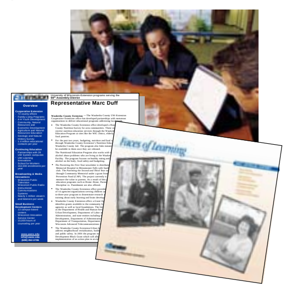
Primary audience or secondary audience??

WHAT – will you say, report, communicate??

- What does the audience care about?
- What do you want the audience to have?
- What type of information resonates with the audience: numbers, quotes, stories?

HOW will you communicate – what formats will you use?

- Report
- Impact statement
- Executive summary
- Personal discussion
- Oral presentation
- Photo display
- Press release
- Newsletter, bulletin
- Poster
- ??????



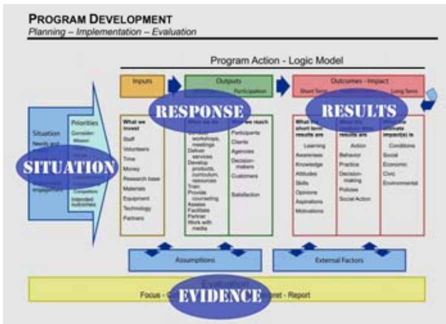
HOW – what format, style will you use??

- Format depends on purpose and audience
- Written, oral
- Short, long
- How does the audience prefer receiving information? How does the audience best learn?
- What do you have the resources to do?

When will you communicate?

- Quarterly?
- Opportunistically?
- When requested?
- ???

Reporting outline follows your logic model



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Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

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Formal evaluation reports typically include…

- Abstract/executive summary
- Introduction
  - Purpose of the evaluation; key questions
  - Program background, description
- Methods/procedures
  - Data sources
  - Data collection procedures
  - Sampling
  - Limitations
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions/recommendations
- References
- Appendices

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Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

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Effective communications

- Tailor message to issue and audience
- Avoid jargon and technical terms
- Be clear, concise
- Use active voice
- Eliminate wordiness
- Check writing, grammar
- Be accurate, balanced, impartial
- Be timely
- Use graphics, quotes, photos, real stories
- Consult a communications specialist
- Write-rewrite-rewrite

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

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Myths

- **One report** is enough.
- People **read** written reports.
- Complex analysis and **big words** impress people.
- **Oral reports** have the same effect as written reports.
- Describing **limitations** weakens report.
- **Everything** should be reported.
- The audience knows **why** they are getting the report.

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Ingredients of a Good Success Story

- Involves human interest: catches your attention
- Demonstrates behavior change; action taken
  - change in practice that results in benefits to individual, community, environment...
- Uses words of/meaning for people involved
- Indicates profit to the individual, if appropriate
- Based on reliable, credible information
- Includes numbers and narrative
- Presents balanced, fair assessment

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Make sure the evaluation isn't ignored

- Engage stakeholders in doing the evaluation: in the design, data collection, in analysis, interpretation of results…
- Get the information to the right people
- Address issues that people think are important
- Keep it in front of people
- Present it in time to be useful

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
Unit 7: Using your evaluation – Communicating, reporting, improving

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Discuss limitations

Written reports:
- Be explicit about your limitations

Oral reports:
- Be prepared to discuss limitations
- Be honest about limitations
- Know the claims you cannot make
  - Do not claim causation without a true experimental design
  - Do not generalize to the population without random sample and quality administration (e.g., <60% response rate on a survey)

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Reporting results to the media

All Media:
- Avoid using too many statistics.
- Focus on the key points.
- For quotes, speak more globally about the issue.
- Always give the source and timeliness of your stats. It's the "news peg."

Steve Busalacchi
Director, News & Information
Wisconsin Medical Society

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes
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Reporting results to the media

Radio and TV:
- Do not offer exact statistics – ear cannot track.
  "73.6% of respondents"
  vs.
  "Nearly three quarters of those surveyed"
- Don't go into great detail. Have backup info ready.

Steve Busalacchi
Director, News & Information
Wisconsin Medical Society

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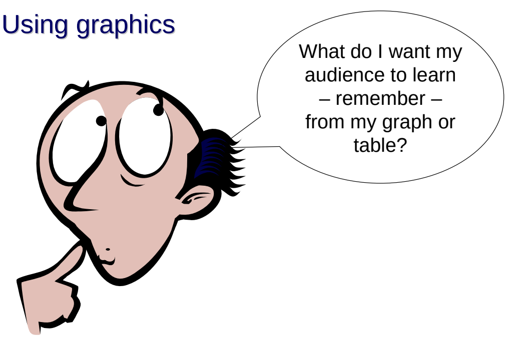
Using graphics



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Using graphics

- **Title**
- Clear **units of measure**
- **Date(s)** data collected
- **Simple**, straightforward design without "clutter"
- Font size **10 point or larger**
- Explicit **data source(s)**
- **Sample size**, if applicable for the audience

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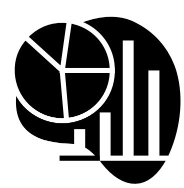
Graphs



- Bar graphs:
  show comparisons
  - Stacked bar
  - Multiple bars
  - Vertical, horizontal bars
- Pie charts:
  show parts of a whole
- Line graphs:
  show progress over time

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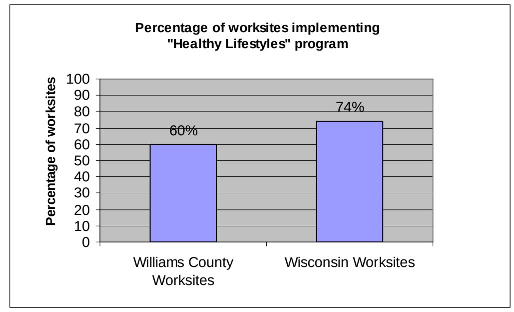
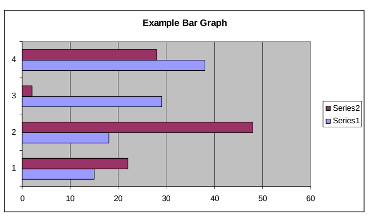
Bar graph

- Compare groups of client outcomes
- Compare points in time

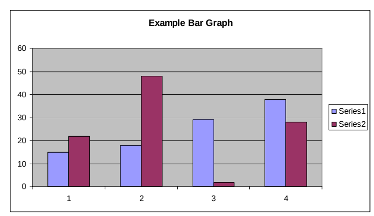
Each group you compare gets a "bar"



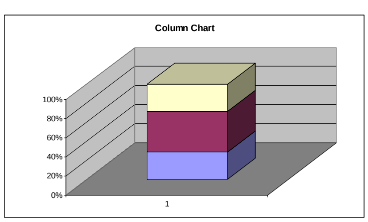
Horizontal Graph



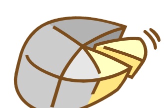
Vertical Graph



Column Chart

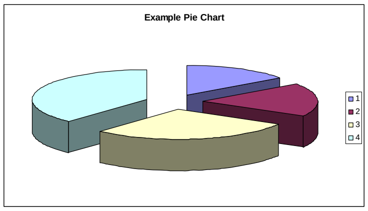


Pie charts: parts of a whole



- Useful for displaying proportions
  - Percentage of clients achieving the outcome
  - Percentage of participants who are boys
  - Percentage of sites that are rural
- Ensure individual parts add to 100%

Pie Chart



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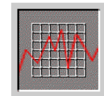
Line graphs: time lines



- X axis conveys the time
- Y axis is the variable of interest
- Multiple lines or multiple line graphs show performance of different groups

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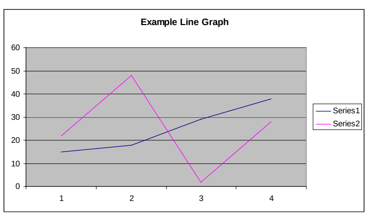
Line Graph



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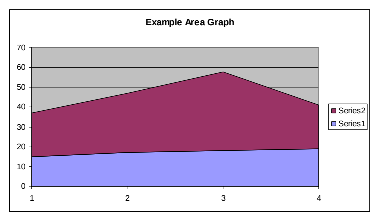
Area Graph



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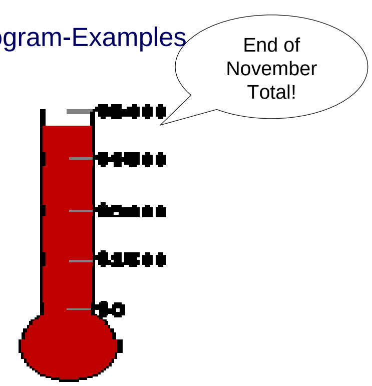
Pictogram-Examples



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Graphing using Microsoft Excel

- Click on graph icon on toolbar, or select "insert" and "chart"
- Proceed through chart wizard
  - Select the type of graph you want
  - Highlight the range of data to include
  - Set up titles, axis labels, scales, legend
  - Finish
- Edit the chart using drop down menu for charts
  - Click on chart to highlight it
  - Use the top toolbar selection "chart" to edit parts of the chart

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Unit 8: Managing evaluation

Unit 8: Managing evaluation

This chapter includes common aspects related to managing evaluation: roles and responsibilities, including those of the evaluation advisory group; selecting an external evaluator; budgets; and scheduling.

Section 8A: Who does the evaluation?

In organizational settings, valuing and taking responsibility for evaluation is everyone's responsibility. There may also be an internal group, person, or unit that provides leadership for evaluation or is responsible for outcome evaluation. Or, an external evaluator may be hired. Regardless of who does the evaluation, it's important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities and to establish an evaluation advisory group.

Section 8B: Selecting an evaluator

Hiring an external evaluator involves finding the right person for your purpose. There may be a series of negotiations and a contract. A variety of considerations come into play when hiring an external evaluator.

Section 8C: Budgeting for evaluation

Evaluation takes time and money—even if you conduct evaluation in-house. Many organizations suggest the evaluation budget should be 10% of the program budget. Being thoughtful and explicit about costs will help you better define the scope of your evaluation effort and meet expectations.

Section 8D: Managing evaluation

Simple management charts and timelines can help you identify necessary tasks, monitor progress, and stay on schedule.

Resources

"Who should conduct your evaluation?" in *A guide to evaluating crime control of programs in public housing* (Chapter 3) [KRA Corporation (1997)]
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/guide/documents/documentz.html

W. K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook [W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998), pp. 54-68]
http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=101&CID=281&CatID=281&ItemID=2810770&NID=20&LandgaugeID=0

Section 8A: Who does the evaluation?

Desired outcomes

Individuals will...

- understand the options available for getting evaluation done within their organization.
- understand the difference between external and internal evaluators and the merits of each.

⌘ Activity

How will you get the evaluation done?

Purpose

To help people consider alternatives and possibilities for conducting evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-1 *Organizational options for engaging in evaluation*

Poster paper, markers

Whistle or other noisemaker

Note to facilitator

For background material, see the items listed under “Additional resources,” particularly the chart on page 3 of *Five Steps for Selecting an Evaluator: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners* [Bronte-Tinkew, Joyner, & Allen (2007)].

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm as a group:
    1. Who is responsible for evaluation in your organization?
    2. Who is involved in *doing* evaluation?
- Distribute the handout *Organizational options for engaging in evaluation*.

- Form groups of 4-5 people. Ask each group to consider and discuss the options listed on the handout. For each option, people should discuss/answer:
  1. Have you seen this option in practice? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
  2. When/where/under what conditions would this option make sense/be appropriate?
- Invite each group to share key comments from its discussion. Add other options to the list.
- Ask individuals to share their experiences with internal and external evaluators:

  External evaluator(s) – a person or team from outside the organization that takes on the role of evaluator

  Internal evaluator(s) – a person or team from within the organization that leads the evaluation process and/or conducts evaluations

  Internal evaluator(s) with external consultant(s) – a person or team from inside the organization working in concert with a person or team from outside
- **Around the room:** Print each of these terms at the top of a sheet of poster paper: **External Evaluator**, **Internal Evaluator**, and **Combination**. Draw a line dividing each paper into two columns with **Pluses** at the top of one column and **Minuses** at the top of the other column. Place the three sheets of paper around the room.

  Divide people into groups of 3-5. Direct each group to one of the poster papers. Explain that they have five minutes to write down Pluses (advantages) and Minuses (disadvantages) for engaging that type of evaluator. When the whistle sounds, they are to move in clockwise fashion to the next poster paper, adding to what has been written there.

  After all groups have visited each paper, ask them to go around again and review all the responses. Encourage discussion and additions.
- Wrap up with a discussion about the particular roles each individual plays or will play in evaluation. Encourage people to be explicit about their roles and responsibilities in planning and implementing evaluation in their organizations.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn today about how you might organize the evaluation function within your own agency?
- What are the challenges/opportunities you see in working with an external evaluator?
- What are the challenges/opportunities you see in having evaluation be internal?
- What additional help/assistance/learning do you think you need in order to fulfill your evaluation role in your organization?

Additional resources

Five steps for selecting an evaluator: A guide for out-of-school time practitioners [Bronte-Tinkew, Joyner, & Allen (2007)] http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2007_10_01_RB_SelectingEvaluator.pdf

"Who should conduct your evaluation?" in *The program manager's guide to evaluation* (Chapter 3) [Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2003)] http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_3_pmguide.html

⌘ Activity
What good is an evaluation advisory group?

Purpose

To help people understand the importance and role of advisory groups in evaluation

Materials needed

Poster paper, markers

Colored cardstock paper

Note to facilitator

See "Additional resources" for additional background information to help you facilitate the session.

Process

- **Brainstorming:** Invite people to brainstorm answers to these questions:
    1. What is an evaluation advisory group?
    2. Why is one important?
    3. What is its role?
    4. Who might be on the evaluation advisory group?
    5. How many people should be on the advisory group?
- **Partners:** Ask individuals to work in pairs and create a plan for establishing an evaluation advisory group for their own evaluation work. Partners should write their plan on poster paper, include concrete steps, and be prepared to share it with the whole group.
- Come together as a whole group. Invite individuals to share their plans. Look for similarities and differences in the proposed plans. Encourage additions to their individual plans.
- Distribute colored cardstock paper for individuals to write down their own plans to take home.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about evaluation advisory groups that you hadn't considered before?
- What is one thing you will apply in your own evaluation work?

Additional resource

"Additional information on the purpose, selection, and roles of the evaluation advisory group" in *Introduction to process evaluation in tobacco use prevention and control* (Appendix C) [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008), pp.53-56] http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco_control_programs/surveillance_evaluation/process_evaluation/00_pdfs/TobaccoUseManual_Updated04182008.pdf

Section 8B: Selecting an evaluator

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their knowledge about what to consider when hiring an external evaluator.
- increase their ability to negotiate agreements and contracts with external evaluators.

⌘ Activity

Finding the right evaluator

Purpose

To help people identify the qualities, skills, and perspectives of evaluators who will meet the needs of their evaluation

Materials needed

Handout from the *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*:

Checklist for selecting an evaluator [W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998)]
http://www.wkkf.org/DesktopModules/WKF.00_DmaSupport/ViewDoc.aspx?LanguageID=0&CID=281&ListID=28&ItemID=2813717&fld=PDFFile

Handout-2 *Where have all the evaluators gone?*

Poster paper, markers

Note to facilitator

See items listed under "Additional resources," particularly Step 4 on page 4 of *Five steps for selecting an evaluator: A guide for out-of-school time practitioners.*

Process

- Invite people to share experiences with evaluators they have worked with:

  What were some professional and personal characteristics that either facilitated or hindered the evaluation?

- Sum up with a review of key elements to consider when selecting an evaluator:
    1. Formal training
    2. Previous experience
    3. Professional orientation
    4. Feeling of a good match
    5. Availability
    6. Costs
    7. Knowledge of the program/similar programs
    8. Knowledge of the culture
    9. Previous performance reviews
    10. Personal styles and characteristics:
        a. Honesty
        b. Character
        c. Interpersonal communication
        d. Personal mannerisms
        e. Ability to resolve conflict
- **Share your own:** Invite a volunteer to present a program case — an evaluation for which an external evaluator will be hired. The case should include (1) a description of the program, including goals, activities, and participants; (2) a description of the proposed evaluation; and (3) the reason for wanting to hire an external evaluator. Encourage people to ask questions of the volunteer so that they have enough information to be able to make some recommendations about the right type of evaluator to hire.

    Form groups of 4-5 people. Distribute poster paper and markers. Ask each group to create a list of criteria that the volunteer can use to select an evaluator for her program.

    Rejoin as a full group. Ask each group to share its criteria. Once all the criteria are discussed, invite the volunteer to identify items that seem most relevant from her perspective. Facilitate conversation and discussion. Wrap up with a discussion of these questions:

    1. Which criteria are likely to be most relevant for this evaluation?
    2. Who should be involved in setting the criteria?

- Distribute the handout *Checklist for selecting an evaluator.* Recognize that this comes from the *W. K. Kellogg Evaluation Handbook* and might be useful as they develop their own ways for selecting an evaluator.
- **Brainstorming:** As a large group, brainstorm answers to this question:

  Where can you find an evaluator?

- Distribute the handout *Where have all the evaluators gone?* as a take-home.

Reflection questions

- What have you learned about selecting an evaluator?
- What do you see as the challenges/opportunities in selecting an external evaluator?

Additional resources

Finding and working with an evaluator [Higgs, Wolske, & Zint (2007)]
http://meera.snre.umich.edu/plan-an-evaluation/plonearticlemultipage.2007-10-30.3630902539/finding-working-with-an-evaluator

Five steps for selecting an evaluator: A guide for out-of-school time practitioners [Bronte-Tinkew, Joyner, & Allen (2007)]
http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2007_10_01_RB_SelectingEvaluator.pdf

"General tips for hiring an evaluator" in *Evaluation toolkit* [W. K. Kellogg Foundation (n.d.)]
http://www.wkkf.org/Default.aspx?tabid=90&CID=281&ItemID=2810032&NID=2820032&LanguageID=0

⌘ Activity
Creating an evaluation contract

Purpose

To help people be able to develop an evaluation contract for an external evaluator

Materials needed

Handouts from The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University:

Evaluation contracts checklist [Stufflebeam (1999)]
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/contracts.pdf

Checklist for negotiating an agreement to evaluate an educational programme [Stake (n.d.)]
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/negotiating.pdf

Handout-3 *Evaluation contract*

Poster paper, markers

Process

- Distribute the *Checklists* (use one or both) and invite individuals to review and discuss.
- Break into groups of 4-5 people. Distribute poster paper and markers.
- **Case scenario:** Ask people to imagine this scenario:

  Your organization has decided to hire an evaluator to develop and implement an evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to document the extent to which your organization is "known" across your rural county of 25,000 people and to document the value that county citizens attribute to its services. The organization is coming under fire, and you need credible information about its value. You want the evaluator to handle the whole process, including the design, implementation, and preparation of a full report. You have found an evaluator that you think can do a good job, and you want to extend a contract so that everyone has the same expectations and agrees on the conduct of the evaluation.

- Ask the groups to use the *Evaluation contracts checklist* and their own experience to make a list of items that will be included in the contract. Provide adequate time for people to create their lists. Invite the groups to share and discuss their contract items.
- Distribute the handout *Evaluation contract* and discuss any details that weren't covered in the previous discussions.

  Summary points:

  - Hire evaluators sooner rather than later. An evaluator could be involved at the proposal-writing stage. Try to hire before you offer the services. Hiring in the first few months of the project is important.
  - Contracts will vary, depending on the type of consultant and the scope of the evaluation.
  - RFPs (requests for proposals) may be one way to execute the process of hiring an evaluator.
  - Evaluation is everyone's responsibility. Be careful not to delegate all evaluation decision making to the evaluator. Stay involved and encourage teamwork.

Reflection questions

- What did you learn about developing an evaluation contract?
- What is one thing that you are likely to apply in your own evaluation work?

Section 8C: Budgeting for evaluation

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- increase their understanding of the costs that are involved in evaluation work.
- increase their ability to develop an evaluation budget.

⌘ Activity

What are the costs?

Purpose

To help people recognize the costs involved in evaluation

Materials needed

Handout from The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University:

A checklist for developing and evaluating evaluation budgets [Horn (2001)]
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/evaluationbudgets.pdf

Handout-4 *Costs of different data collection methods*

Handout-5 *Worksheet — Estimating costs for data collection*

Poster paper, marker

Clothesline or masking tape

Process

- **Opinion line:** Invite people to form an opinion line. Place the clothesline or masking tape on the wall or floor, and designate the Agree and Disagree areas. Create your own statements or use the following and have everyone make their "vote" on the line. As you ask each question, take time to facilitate conversation about why individuals took the positions they did.

Sample statements

As you increase your budget for an evaluation, you gain a corresponding increase in quantity and quality of information.

High cost evaluations are beyond the scope of most agencies' financial resources.

The type of evaluation design you choose will have an impact on your evaluation budget.

It is unethical to use program or agency financial resources for an evaluation.

Focus groups are low cost.

Tapping volunteers to conduct evaluations can be a money saver.

- Invite everyone to share their experiences in preparing evaluation budgets.
- Distribute *A checklist for developing and evaluating evaluation budgets*. Ask people to review the checklist. Facilitate discussion and questions.
    1. Which items seem particularly relevant for your evaluation work?
    2. How might you use this checklist in your work?
- Distribute the handouts *Costs of different data collection methods* and *Worksheet — Estimating costs for data collection*
- Create six groups and assign one method to each group.
- Ask each group to review the list for its assigned method on the *Costs of different data collection methods* handout and add any additional items to the list. Then ask them to complete the worksheet. Each group should have one volunteer provide an example of an evaluation from his/her own work that the group can use to complete the worksheet.
- Ask the groups to share their work/worksheets with the whole group. Facilitate discussion and observations.

    What can you conclude from our discussion?
    Sample conclusion: One reason we may rely so much on end-of-session evaluations is that they are the lowest cost.

- Write out the 10% guideline on a sheet of poster paper: **Program evaluation allocation = 10% of program budget**. Focus everyone's attention to the paper and facilitate a discussion:
    1. Have you seen or used this guideline?
       Many state and federal agencies use this as a suggested evaluation budget guideline.
    2. Does it make sense?
    3. How might you use it in your own organization/work? How can you reinforce the message that evaluation requires time and money?

Reflection questions

- What have you learned about evaluation costs?
- What is one "a-ha" that you are taking away?

Additional resources

The evaluation part of a proposal budget [Economic Opportunity Studies (n.d.)]
`http://www.opportunitystudies.org/repository/File/evaluation/evaluation_budgeting.pdf`

Time required for evaluation [Social Policy Research Associates (2005)]
`http://www.evaluationtools.org/tools_main.asp#planning`

⌘ Activity

Creating a budget

Purpose

To help people be able to prepare an evaluation budget

Materials needed

Handout-6 *Budget scenarios*

Handout-7 *Evaluation budget worksheet*

Handout-8 *Evaluation budget tips*

Poster paper, markers

Process

Note to facilitator: It is assumed that everyone has completed the previous section or is familiar with all the costs involved in evaluation. Use the handouts from the previous section as background materials. Invite people to bring in budgets they've developed, used, or seen.

- Form groups of 4-5 people and distribute the handouts *Budget scenarios* and *Evaluation budget worksheet.*
- **Case scenario:** Assign each group a scenario from the handout and ask them to develop a budget for each statewide survey. Explain that they can use the worksheet as a guide or create their own way to present their budget. (Use the other budget-planning-tool handouts as desired.) Distribute poster paper for people to write down their budgets so they can share them with the full group.

  Have the groups share their results.
- Distribute the handout *Evaluation budget tips.* Discuss and add to the list of tips.

Reflection questions

- What is one thing you learned about evaluation budgets?
- What are some challenges you would anticipate when preparing an evaluation budget?
- What additional help/resources do you think you need?

Section 8D: Managing evaluation

Desired outcomes

Individuals will…

- better understand the value of having a management plan.
- be able to develop a simple management plan for an evaluation.

⌘ Activity

Developing a management plan

Purpose

To help people be able to create their own management plan for their evaluation

Materials needed

Handout-9 *Time required for evaluation*

Handout-10 *Evaluation management plan*

Handout-11 *Sample evaluation timeline*

Poster paper, marker

Process

- Invite people to share the *good, bad, and ugly* of doing/being involved in an evaluation — keeping on schedule, getting everything done, completing tasks, including people as intended, etc. Write each item on poster paper. Identify those that stand out as *problems* — aspects that could be done better/differently — and write them on a separate sheet.
- Distribute the handout *Time required for evaluation* and facilitate a large-group conversation focusing on these aspects:
    1. The phases of an evaluation
    2. The type of activities/tasks involved in each phase
    3. Time requirements that are needed to accomplish the tasks

    [Note that the items listed as evaluation activities are illustrations, not inclusive or complete]

- Take the list of *problems* that were identified earlier. Form groups of 3 people each and assign a problem to each group. Ask them to decide whether their problem fits into one of the main phases of evaluation. Then, they should discuss the problem and identify three to five ways to resolve or lessen the problem.
- Invite the groups to share key points from their discussions.
- Distribute the two handouts *Evaluation management plan* and *Sample evaluation timeline*.
- **Brainstorming:** As a group, brainstorm answers to these questions:
    1. Would this type of plan be helpful?
    2. When might you use it?
    3. How might you use it?
    4. Who might be involved in developing these plans?

Reflection questions

- What is one "take-home" you have concerning evaluation management?
- Why is it important to have a concrete management plan?

ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS FOR ENGAGING IN EVALUATION

- A person or a team of people provides leadership for evaluation. There is regular communication with the organizational leadership and members to maintain joint ownership of evaluation, but the internal evaluator or team sets direction and coordinates the evaluation function for the organization. An evaluation advisory group may provide guidance and support for the evaluator or team.

- In small organizations, all members may actively participate in setting goals and procedures for evaluation. Certain members may take on specific evaluation tasks, such as an annual survey of members, monthly committee reports, or scheduled interviews with beneficiaries. Often one member is designated the evaluation leader to ensure tasks are completed and communicated, but the organization as a whole makes decisions and controls the evaluation process.

- The organization hires a consultant (an external evaluator) to provide primary leadership for evaluation — to help the organization develop its evaluation process, provide advice and assistance on particular methodological issues, and conduct particular evaluation studies. The extent of the evaluator's responsibilities may vary, as may the roles of the organizational members.

- The funding agency contracts with an external evaluator, often as part of a large, multi-site initiative. Organizational members may have little input in or control over evaluation.

- Individual members/staff conduct evaluation, depending upon interest and resources. There is no coordinated organizational effort.

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS DO ORGANIZATIONS ORGANIZE THEMSELVES TO DO EVALUATION?

WHERE HAVE ALL THE EVALUATORS GONE?

There are a number of places you can look to find an evaluator. Here are some ideas:

Referrals from others

Colleagues, partners, other community organizations, health departments, schools, or businesses that have done evaluation and used evaluators. Ask them about their experience and recommendations.

Local universities or colleges

Local and regional academic institutions may have centers or departments that assist with data collection and analysis, recommend methods, and/or have staff and students available for evaluation work. Try contacting departments such as education, sociology, psychology, social work, and economics.

Evaluation departments of local or state agencies

Many government agencies now have planning and evaluation departments. You may be able to access individuals from these units to work with you or refer you to others.

Public libraries

Reference librarians may be able to assist you in ways such as identifying local research firms or locating conference records with listings of program evaluators.

The Internet

Professional organizations

Many professional organizations keep membership lists and have journals where evaluators may be identified. Turn to those professional organizations most in line with your program.

The phone book

Check the yellow pages for research and consulting firms.

American Evaluation Association

Visit http://www.eval.org and click on "Find an evaluator."

EVALUATION CONTRACT

When creating a contract, it's important to determine the following:

- Who owns the evaluation information?
- Who releases the information?
- What are the plans for publishing the results?
- What are the requirements for using the data and releasing the report?
- Who will perform evaluation tasks?
- How much contact will there be between the evaluator and the program?

Determine whom you will be working with, how often, and who is accountable for the project.

Some key points to remember:

- Hire evaluators sooner rather than later. An evaluator could be involved at the proposal-writing stage. Try to hire before you offer the services. Hiring in the first few months of the project is important.
- Contracts will vary, depending on the type of consultants. Contracts free you from benefits and income taxes, but you might have less control.
- RFPs (requests for proposals) may be one way to execute the process of hiring an evaluator.
- Negotiate the payment at the start. Sometimes one lump sum is paid at the end or when the final report is written. Larger contracts are often paid in monthly installments as a detailed time log is submitted.

The bottom line:

Evaluation is everyone's responsibility. Be careful not to delegate all evaluation decision making to your evaluator. Stay involved and encourage teamwork.

COSTS OF DIFFERENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. Focus group:
- Facilitator (volunteer or paid)
- Recorder (volunteer or paid)
- Tape recorder
- Tapes
- Incentive gifts
- Invitations
- Question development
- Compiling summaries
- Analysis of information gathered
- Food
- Mileage
- Other:

2. Mailed survey/evaluations:
- Create/Purchase the sample list
- Questionnaire development
- Graphic design
- Print questionnaires
- Envelopes
- Return Envelopes
- Postage
- Letterhead for cover letter
- First Mailing
  - Print cover letter
  - Address envelopes
  - Sign letters, stamp envelopes
  - Postage for mailing
  - Postage for return envelopes
  - Assemble packets
- Second Mailing
  - Print cover letter
  - Address envelopes
  - Sign letters, stamp envelopes
  - Postage for mailing
  - Postage for return envelopes
  - Assemble packets
- Third Mailing…(repeat)
- Fourth Mailing… (repeat)
- Items to consider:
  - Clerical total time no. hr. @ ___per hour
  - Professional time no. hr. @ ___per hour
  - Include fringe rate. You may have to consider the cost of office space, electricity, equipment needed, coding, data entry, analysis, report writing, etc.
- Other:

3. Phone interviews:
- Prepare questionnaire
- Random sampling of phone numbers
- Interviewer manual written, printed
- Print questionnaires
- Train interviewers
- Office supplies
- Interview time
- Telephone charges
- Data entry
- Analysis
- Report Writing
- Other:

4. In-home surveys:
- Preparation of survey
- Map(s) for area frame covered
- Interviewer manual
- Develop questionnaires
- Train interviewers
- Supplies
- Conduct survey
- Analysis
- Travel expenses
- Office edits
- General clerical
- Professional time
- Other:

5. Six-month follow up evaluation:
(mailed to past participants of a program)
- Mailing list
- Generate questions
- Print
- Mail
- Follow-up
- Compile
- Analysis
- Write report
- Other:

6. End-of-session evaluation:
- Prepare tool
- Copy
- Collate
- Analysis
- Prepare report
- Other:

WORKSHEET —
ESTIMATING COSTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection method: ____

Number of participants (survey respondents, focus group participants, etc.) in data collection: _____________

Tasks to be completed	Estimated time involved	Estimated cost

BUDGET SCENARIOS

SITUATION 1:

You are charged with conducting a statewide mail survey in your state to provide baseline information for your water quality/arsenic initiative. It has been agreed that you will obtain a stratified random sample of 2,000 households for a mail survey. You are going to use a six-page survey questionnaire that consists of primarily quantitative questions. There are a few short-answer, open-ended items. Plan the budget you will need to conduct, analyze, and report the survey.

SITUATION 2:

You are the person responsible for implementing a statewide plan for diversity training workshops. You have developed a one-page questionnaire to collect data at the completion of workshops being conducted in six counties. You plan to duplicate the questionnaire and have 6 of the 25 workshop leaders collect data from about 400 participants at the conclusion of their workshops. The leaders will mail the completed questionnaires to you after each training workshop. Before any of the workshops start, you will conduct a two-day training session for all of the workshop leaders. At the training session, you can orient the 6 leaders who will collect evaluation data for you. Plan the budget you will need to conduct, analyze, and report the evaluation.

SITUATION 3:

You are working on a program to help farmers learn conservation tillage practices to conserve soil and moisture on the primary crop grown in the area. You will evaluate a pilot project you are conducting in nine counties within one region of the state. One indicator you will use to judge success will be the percentage of ground cover on the field prior to planting in the spring. Therefore, you plan to randomly select 100 fields to measure ground cover before you implement the program and then measure again four years later. You will need to hire an assistant to travel to your data collection sites to measure the ground cover. Plan the budget you will need to conduct, analyze, and report the evaluation.

EVALUATION BUDGET WORKSHEET

Costs	Year 1 ($)	Year 2 ($)	Year 3($)
Personnel Salary Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies and materials Office supplies Specialized materials			
Communication Phone Postage Internet			
Copying/Printing Data collection Materials Reports Documentation			
Equipment			
Other: Consultant Fee/Salary			
In-kind or cost sharing			
Indirect/overhead			
Total:	$	$	$

Adapted from W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Evaluation Handbook (1998)

Evaluation Budget Tips

- Build in review and revision opportunities so adjustments can be made.
- Analysis and interpretation are key elements; think about these elements up front.
- Qualitative evaluation is more costly to implement since it takes more time. Think about ways to utilize project staff, volunteers, and residents and incorporate qualitative collection and analysis techniques into day-to-day operations of the project.
- Consider creating an evaluation timeline budget as well as a cost/resources budget. It is important to think through timing issues to ensure that your evaluation is feasible and that it provides you with accurate, reliable, and useful information.
- Budget enough time! Many projects fail to budget enough time for an evaluation and at the end find that the evaluation was not as helpful or useful as originally expected.
- Money spent on evaluation can be seen as an investment in your program and your participants.

What additional tips you do you have?

TIME REQUIRED FOR EVALUATION

Phase of work	Evaluation activities	Time requirements (Examples, not actual times.)
Engage stakeholders	• Meeting with staff and stakeholders • Form the advisory committee	• 3 hours (3 x 1-hour meetings) • 10 hours
Focus – Design	• Three meetings • Brief review of literature • Clarify program/logic model • Consensus on purpose, questions, and design • Drafting and redrafting of design, with procedures	• 60 hours • Assistant: 10 hours • Staff/Stakeholder time for feedback and review
Data Collection	• Pilot tests • Administering surveys • Tracking survey respondents • Conducting interviews • Editing and coding completed interviews • Storing data in database	• Evaluation leader: 40 hours • Interviewers: 80–100 hours • Tech support: 8 hours • Staff/Stakeholder time to participate in interviews
Analysis	• Statistical processing of information • Drafting of written report	• Evaluation leader: 100 hours • Assistant: 10 hours • Time for stakeholder feedback
Reporting	• Issuing final report • Presentation to board of directors • Extra presentation requested by funders	• Evaluation supervisor: 16 hours • Assistant: 8 hours • Tech support: 5 hours

Phase of work	Evaluation activities	Time requirements
Engage stakeholders		
Focus - Design		
Data collection		
Analysis		
Reporting		

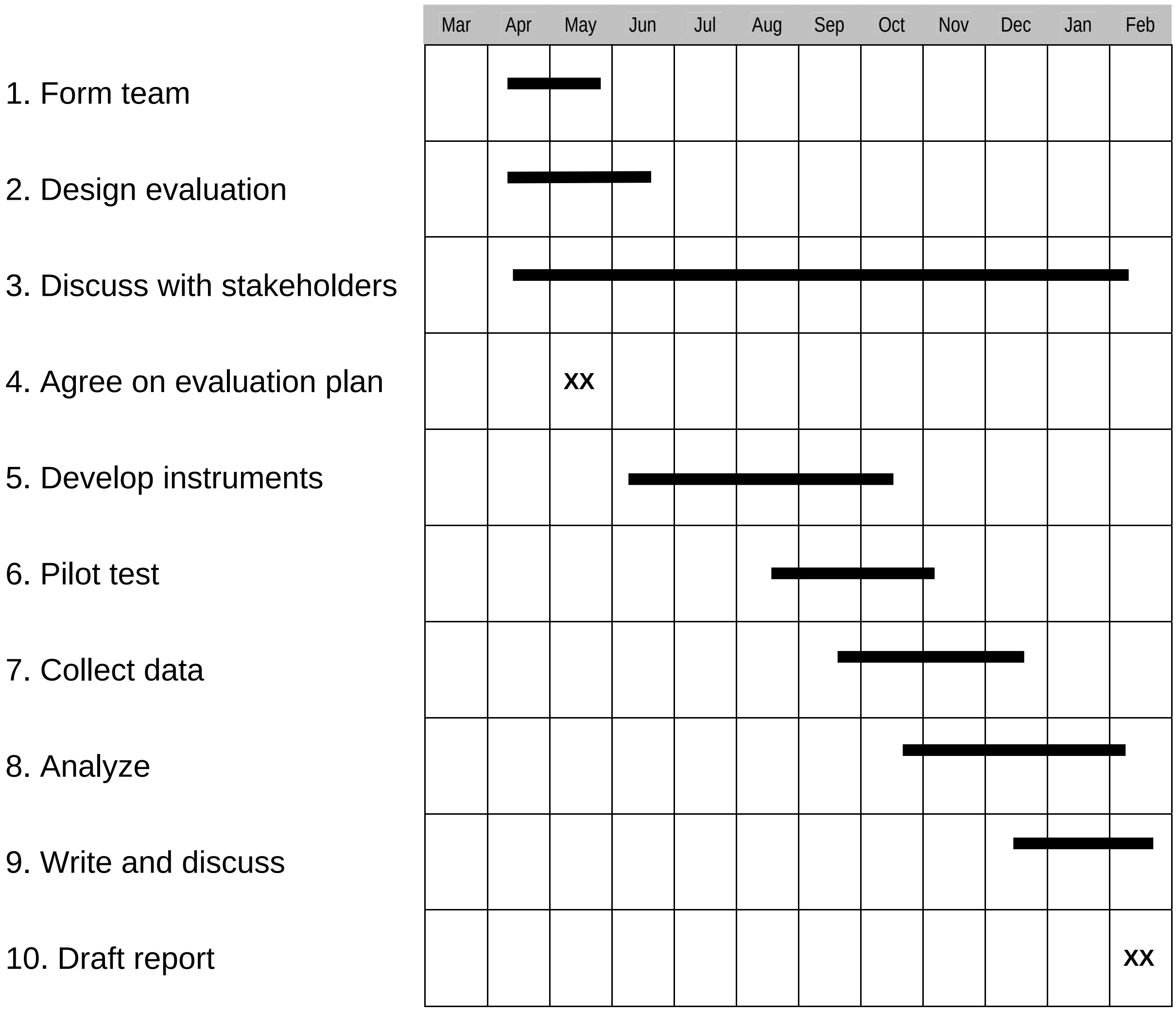
Source: Social Policy Research Associates. (2005). *Time required for evaluation*. Planning and Evaluation Resource Center, The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. Retrieved November 15, 2005, from http://www.evaluationtools.org/tools_main.asp#planning

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Phase of work	Activity/Task	Person responsible	Dates Start – Finish	Inputs needed to accomplish task
Engage stakeholders				
Focus – Design				
Data collection				
Analysis				
Reporting				

SAMPLE EVALUATION TIMELINE

Best used in combination with the *Evaluation management plan*



Evaluation
Glossary

Evaluation glossary

Accountability: Responsibility for effective and efficient performance of programs. Measures of accountability focus on (1) benefits accruing from the program as valued by customers and supporters (2) how resources are invested and the results attained.

Anonymity: An attempt to keep the participants unknown to the people who use the evaluation and, if possible, to the investigators themselves.

Assets: Strengths, opportunities, valuable quality or thing.

Assumptions: The beliefs we have about the program, the participants, and the way we expect the program to operate; the principles that guide our work. Faulty assumptions may be the reason we don't achieve the expected outcomes.

Baseline: Information about the situation or condition prior to a program or intervention.

Benchmarks: Performance data used either as a baseline against which to compare future performance or as a marker of progress toward a goal.

Cluster evaluation: A type of evaluation that seeks to determine the impacts of a collection of related projects on society as a whole. Cluster evaluation looks across a group of projects to identify issues and problems that affect an entire area of a program. Designed and used by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to determine the effectiveness of its grant making.

Confidentiality: An attempt to remove any elements that might indicate the subject's identity.

Content analysis: standard social science method for analyzing text or narrative data

Context evaluation: A type of evaluation that examines how the project functions within the economic, social, and political environment of its community and project setting.

Cost-benefit analysis: Process to estimate the overall cost and benefit of a program or components within a program. Seeks to answer the question "Is this program or product worth its costs?" Or "Which of the options has the highest benefit/cost ratio?" This is only possible when all values can be converted into money terms.

Data: information – either words or numbers

Data analysis plan: A data analysis plan connects the evaluation questions with the data collected, and spells out the analysis that will be conducted with the data

Descriptive statistics: A branch of statistics in which the analyses "describe" the raw data, such as counts, percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability (e.g., range, standard deviation, and variance).

Developmental evaluation: Evaluation in which the evaluator is part of a collaborative team that monitors what is happening in a program, both processes and outcomes, in an evolving, changing environment of constant feedback and change.

Effectiveness: Degree to which the program yields desired/desirable results.

Efficiency: Comparison of outcomes to costs.

Empowerment evaluation: Use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination. Program participants maintain control of the evaluation process; outside evaluators work to build the evaluation capacity of participants and help them use evaluation findings to advocate for their program.

Environment (external factors): The surrounding environment in which the program exists and which influences the implementation and success of the initiative, including politics, climate, socio-economic factors, market forces, etc.

Ethics: "principles of morality, particularly those dealing with the right or wrong of an action" (Newman and Brown, 1996:20)

Ethical behavior: conforming to moral and professional standards of conduct

Evaluability assessment: "Evaluability assessment is a process for clarifying program designs, exploring program reality, and – if necessary – helping redesign programs to ensure that it can be meaningfully evaluated and if evaluation is likely to contribute to improved program performance" (Wholey, 1994, p 16).

Evaluation: Systematic inquiry to inform decision making and improve programs.

Evaluation Management plan: part of the overall evaluation plan that details specifies of responsibilities, timelines, activities/tasks, and resources needed.

Evaluation plan: a written document that clarifies involvement, purpose, process and management of the intended evaluation.

Evaluation stakeholder: Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation. Individuals and organizations with an investment, interest or influence (a stake) in the initiative and/or evaluation and evaluation findings. Often referred to as evaluation "USERS."

External Evaluation: evaluation conducted by outsiders.

External Evaluator: a person from outside the organization that takes on the role of evaluator.

Formal evaluation: structured, systematic, disciplined injury

Formative evaluation: Conducted during the development and implementation of a program, this evaluation has as its primary purpose the providing of information for program improvement.

Human subjects protection: ethical principles and guidelines that protect the rights, privacy and well-being of human beings involved in research

Impact: The social, economic, and/or environmental effects or consequences of the program. Impacts tend to be long-term achievements. They may be positive, negative, or neutral; intended or unintended.

Impact evaluation: A type of evaluation that determines the net causal effects of the program beyond its immediate results. Impact evaluation often involves a comparison of what appeared after the program with what would have appeared without the program.

Impact indicator: Expression or indication of impact. Evidence that the impact has/is being achieved.

Implementation evaluation: Evaluation activities that document the evolution of a project and provide indications of what happens within a project and why. Project directors use information to adjust current activities. Implementation evaluation requires close monitoring of program delivery.

Indicator: Expression of what is/will be measured or described; evidence that signals achievement. Answers the question "How will I know it?"

Informal evaluation: nonsystematic, informal appraisal

Inputs: Resources that go into a program including staff time, materials, money, equipment, facilities, volunteer time.

Institutional Review Board (IRB): institutional governing body that ensures participants' right as human subjects are protected.

Internal Evaluation: evaluation conducted by program employees and persons internal to the organization or program.

Internal Evaluator: staff from within the organization who lead the evaluation process and/or conduct evaluations.

Internal Evaluator with External Consultant: an internal evaluator working in concert with a person from outside the organization.

Measure/measurement: Representation of quantity or capacity. In the past, these terms carried a quantitative implication of precision and, in the field of education, were synonymous with testing and instrumentation. Today, the term "measure" is used broadly to include quantitative and qualitative information to understand the phenomena under investigation.

Mixed methods: The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to study phenomena. These two sets of methods can be used simultaneously or at different stages of the same study.

Monitoring: Ongoing assessment of the extent to which a program is operating consistent with its design. Often means site visits by experts for compliance-focused reviews of program operations.

Outcome evaluation: A type of evaluation to determine what results from a program and its consequences for people.

Outcome monitoring: The regular or periodic reporting of program outcomes in ways that stakeholders can use to understand and judge results. Outcome monitoring exists as part of program design and provides frequent and public feedback on performance.

Outcomes: Results or changes of the program. Outcomes answer the questions "So what?" and "What difference does the program make in people's lives?" Outcomes may be intended and unintended; positive and negative. Outcomes fall along a continuum from short-term (immediate/initial/proximal), to medium-term (intermediate), to long-term (final/distal). Often, long-term outcome is synonymous with impact.

Outcome statement: A brief explicit statement of the intended change.

Outputs: Activities, services, events, products, participation generated by a program.

Participatory evaluation: Evaluation in which the evaluator's perspective carries no more weight than that of other stakeholders, including participants, and the evaluation process and its results are relevant and useful to stakeholders for future actions. Participatory approaches attempt to be practical, useful, and empowering to multiple stakeholders and actively engage all stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Performance measure: A particular value or characteristic used to measure/examine a result or performance criteria; may be expressed in a qualitative or quantitative way.

Performance measurement: The regular measurement of results and efficiency of services or programs.

Performance targets: The expected result or level of achievement; often set as numeric levels of performance.

Personnel evaluation: Involves an assessment of job-related skills and performance.

Policy evaluation: Evaluation of policies, plans, and proposals for use by policy makers and/or communities trying to effect policy change.

Privacy: a person's interest in controlling the access of others to themselves.

Probability: The likelihood of an event or relationship occurring, the value of which will range from 0 (never) to 1 (always).

Process evaluation: A type of evaluation that examines what goes on while a program is in progress. It assesses what the program **is.**

Professional standard: A standard is a principle mutually agreed by people engaged in a professional practice, that, if met, will enhance the quality and fairness of that professional practice, for example, evaluation.

Product evaluation: The evaluation of functional artifacts.

Program: An organized action involving activities and resources aimed to improve existing conditions. Program may include direct service interventions, educational initiatives, community development or mobilization efforts, policy development activities, communication and social marketing campaigns, public health interventions, etc.

Program evaluation: The systematic process of asking critical questions, collecting appropriate information, analyzing, interpreting, and using the information in order to improve programs and be accountable for positive, equitable results and resources invested.

Propriety: conformity with acceptable standards of behavior

Reporting: Presentation, formal or informal, of evaluation data or other information to communicate processes, roles, and results.

Research: the application of the scientific method to generate knowledge.

Qualitative analysis: The use of systematic techniques to understand, reduce, organize, and draw conclusions from qualitative data.

Qualitative data: Data that is thick in detail and description; usually in a textbook or narrative format.

Qualitative methodology: Methods that examine phenomena in depth and detail without predetermined categories or hypotheses. Emphasis is on understanding the phenomena as they exist. Often connoted with naturalistic inquiry, inductive, social anthropological world view. Qualitative methods usually consist of three kinds of data collection: observation, open-ended interviewing, and document review.

Quantitative analysis: The use of statistical techniques to understand quantitative data and to identify relationships between and among variables.

Quantitative data: Data in a numerical format.

Quantitative methodology: Methods that seek the **facts** or **causes** of phenomena that can be expressed numerically and analyzed statistically. Interest is in generalizability. Often connoted with a positivist, deductive, natural science world view. Quantitative methods consist of standardized, structured data collection including surveys, closed-ended interviews, tests.

Random number: A number whose value is not dependent upon the value of any other number; can result from a random number generator program and/or a random numbers table.

Reliability: The consistency of a measure over repeated use. A measure is said to be reliable if repeated measurements produce the same result.

Reporting: Presentation, formal or informal, of evaluation data or other information to communicate processes, roles, and results.

Response rate: The percentage of respondents who provide information.

Statistics: mathematical science pertaining to collection, analysis and interpretation of data

Self-evaluation: Self-assessment of program processes and/or outcomes by those conducting or involved in the program.

Situation: The context and need that give rise to a program or initiative; logic models are built in response to an existing situation.

Situational analysis: A systematic process for assessing needs (discrepancy or gap between what exists and a desired state) and assets (qualities or strengths) as a foundation for program priority setting.

Stakeholder: Person or group of people with a vested interest--a stake--in a program or evaluation, including clients, customers, beneficiaries, elected officials, support groups, program staff, funders, collaborators.

Stakeholder evaluation: Evaluation in which stakeholders participate in the design, conduct, analysis, and/or interpretation of the evaluation.

Statistical significance: Provides for the probability that a result is not due to chance alone. Level of significance determines degree of certainty or confidence with which we can rule out chance. Statistical significance does not equate to value.

Statistics: Numbers or values that help to describe the characteristics of a selected group; technically, statistics describe a sample of a population.

Summative evaluation: Evaluation conducted after completion of a program (or a phase of the program) to determine program effectiveness and worth.

Systematic implies that the evaluation is a thoughtful process of asking critical questions, collecting appropriate information, and then analyzing and interpreting the information for a specific use and purpose.

Theory-based evaluation: Evaluation that begins with identifying the underlying theory about how a program works and uses this theory to build in points for data collection to explain why and how effects occur.

Utilization-focused evaluation: A type of evaluation that focuses its design and implementation on use by the intended audience. The evaluator, rather than acting as an independent judge, becomes a facilitator of evaluative decision making by intended users.

Validity: The extent to which a measure actually captures the concept of interest.

Key Resource List

Key resource list

University of Wisconsin-Extension
Program Development and Evaluation
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande

Evaluation Publications:
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html

Evaluation Quick Tips:
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html

Online logic model course:
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse

American Evaluation Association
Electronic Resources: http://www.eval.org

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Electronic Resources: http://www.wilder.org/15.0.html

Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training.
Preskill, H., & Russ-Eft, D. (2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
http://www.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book225871&

Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention Pathways
Online Courses: http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/index.htm

Penn State Cooperative Extension, Program Evaluation
Evaluation Tipsheets: http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/titles.html

Iowa State University, University Extension
Publications: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/

Internet, Mail and Mixed-mode Surveys: The tailored design method (3rd ed.).
Dillman, D., Smyth, J. & Christian, L. (2009). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471698687.html

Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium
Electronic Resources: http://www.ttac.org/power-of-proof/index.html

United Way Outcome Measurement Resource Network
Electronic Resources: http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/

University of Kansas, Community Tool Box
Electronic Resources: http://ctb.ku.edu

The Urban Institute Toolkit
Electronic Resources: http://www.urbaninstitute.org

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