Working Together

The Paloma-Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation

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To Download

The document, *Working Together: The Paloma-Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation*, can be downloaded from www.palomafoundation.ca or from www.wellesleyinstitute.com. If you have questions, suggestions or feedback about this Guide, e-mail us at info@palomafoundation.ca and write "Participatory Program Evaluation" in the subject line.

Foreword

The Paloma Foundation and Wellesley Institute partnered to produce this Guide on participatory program evaluation to support non-profit service organizations to independently evaluate program effectiveness.

Inside *Working Together: The Paloma–Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation*, you will find guidance on implementing a participatory program evaluation. The ongoing process is flexible, adaptable and evidence-based, yet easy to use and effective for ongoing use.

We believe participatory program evaluation is a rich and rigorous process that leads to a variety of positive outcomes.

By being proactive and working together, you can ensure that both the evaluation process and the results will meet your needs. This process encourages cohesion and commitment among all program stakeholders who have an investment in program improvement.

The prime focus of *Working Together: The Paloma–Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation* is on building program excellence — a key step in creating positive social impact.

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Introduction

Evaluation evolved to include the ability to generate learning and build capacity to improve, rather than just prove what was working and what was not.

Sheherazade Hirji, 2009

About this Guide

Evaluation and measurement are essential tools to respond to the growing demand for accountability and "proof of concept" in the non-profit sector. At the same time, non-profits are embracing the concept of evaluation as a tool that increases program effectiveness. In an effort to make evaluation tools more accessible, the Paloma Foundation and Wellesley Institute partnered to develop a participatory program evaluation guide for non-profit organizations that describes how to undertake a program evaluation using a participatory process.

Why We Wrote this Guide

As agencies strive to meet their clients'[1] needs by improving performance, accountability, and transparency, and to share their program knowledge, the need for agency-driven evaluations that result in targeted, compelling data grows. As the need for evaluation has grown, so too has the need for a resource which supports an agency's ability to control the process of identifying the important questions to be answered, collecting the data, analyzing the findings, discovering the solutions, and telling the stories.

Our extensive research into evaluation methods convinced the authors of two things:

» that having program staff members embark on a quest through the mass of program evaluation literature in order to find appropriate

methods is probably a poor use of limited program resources

» that a model of participatory program evaluation (PPE) provides an ideal opportunity to build an agency's capacity to incorporate evaluation into its daily activities, engage a diverse range of stakeholders in a meaningful and authentic manner, and ensure that it is providing the most effective services to its clients. It is this shared process that has the potential to create social change.

Goals of this Guide

This Guide provides all the necessary information to implement participatory program evaluation in a wide range of non-profit organizations. Understanding that most non-profits have heavy workloads focused first and foremost on meeting their clients' needs, this Guide has been produced with that reality in mind.

The goals of this Guide are to:

» provide a framework and process that support and guide a participatory program evaluation from beginning to end

» support an evaluation process that engages diverse stakeholders and works to improve services to clients

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[1] Non-profit programs call the people using their service by different titles, including clients, participants, and service users. Throughout this Guide, the words "clients" and "participants" are used interchangeably to refer to the people using the programs.

- » build a culture of evaluation that supports self-reflection
- » promote a culture of ongoing learning
- » support the evolution of the program.

Who this Guide is For

Whether the organization or program is large, small, or in-between, this Guide can be useful, as it is designed for non-profit organizations which work in diverse sectors such as health, education, and social service.

This Guide is geared specifically for all front-line staff and managers, whether they are new to or have extensive experience with evaluation.

If you are a beginner, the Guide will provide you with a comprehensive overview and understanding of the steps necessary to carry out a participatory program evaluation. For more experienced evaluators or researchers, the Guide can be used for:

- » training staff and stakeholders
- » sharing with program staff and stakeholders to provide a common framework for evaluation
- » supporting a case for the role of participatory program evaluation in your organization
- » stimulating inclusive discussions on evaluation.

What You Will Find in this Guide

Working Together: The Paloma–Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation has been designed to provide a straightforward, comprehensive introduction to participatory program evaluation, while at the same time ensuring that the steps implemented are evidence-based and appropriate for use with a wide range of non-profit programs. Each of the chapters provides the information and the tools needed to plan and implement a truly participatory process of evaluation.

Chapter 1: Understanding Evaluation

Chapter one provides you with a comprehensive understanding of evaluation, participatory program evaluation, and their unique concepts and benefits.

Chapter 2: Getting Started

Chapter two walks you through determining if your program and staff are in a position to embark on a participatory program evaluation and issues to reflect upon prior to starting. In addition, you will learn how to determine who the key stakeholders are and ensure their engagement in the process and commitment to the outcomes.

Chapter 3: Moving Ahead — The Resources and the Logic Model

Chapter three provides information on organizing the resources for an evaluation and on developing a program logic model.

Chapter 4: Collecting and Analyzing the Data

Chapter four describes how to design the questions, choose a data collection method, and collect and analyze data.

Chapter 5: Sharing the Findings: Dissemination

Chapter five outlines what to do with the findings and how to share them for the greatest impact.

Appendix: Resources

The Appendix provides a glossary of terms, and samples of key forms, as well as information on and links to resources for applying the evaluation model and exploring each topic in more detail.

The Benefits of this Guide

This Guide helps you to work collaboratively to gather and reflect on the information needed to improve your programs — resulting in better service to your clients.

Conducting a participatory program evaluation (PPE) may allow you, for the first time, to engage important stakeholders, including participants, in all aspects of your evaluation process. This involvement can include participating in defining the evaluation questions, gathering and analyzing data, and preparing recommendations and reports.

The steps were designed so that participants engage in a continuous learning process — recognizing that the value in evaluation is not restricted to the findings but includes the opportunity to reflect and learn. The steps also support the importance of recognizing that each program has the right and the responsibility to determine its own evaluation methods. The skills developed help evaluation teams learn how to pose and answer questions such as:

» Who should we engage in the process?

» What is the purpose of the program?

» What is the program doing?

» What do we want to know and evaluate about the program?

» What questions should we ask?

» How are the perspectives the same and different among the various stakeholders?

» What changed as a result of the program?

» How did the program affect clients? What was its impact?

» What else did we learn?

» How can we make adjustments, if necessary?

» Why do these results matter?

» What results will we share internally and externally?

» How will we share our results internally and externally?

» How do we effectively demonstrate and communicate the outcomes of our work to others?

Our hope is that through the use of this Guide, PPE will enable you to develop an evaluation on your own terms, with a process and results that improve your programs. In addition, we hope that participatory program evaluation becomes a relevant, useful, integrated, and ongoing process for all your programs.

How to Use this Guide

This Guide can be read straight through or you can turn directly to the relevant sections for the information and steps required to support a particular component of your PPE. The Guide is broken up into five chapters, as outlined above, and divided into sections that address specific tasks. Learning objectives are presented at the start of each section.

The following icons have been used to highlight some areas of particular interest:

Points to Ponder are ideas and items central to the values and assumptions behind the process

Quotes from the project sites who pilot-tested and reviewed this Guide and shared their thoughts and experiences with participatory evaluation

Quotes from educators, experts, authors, and those with particular experience in non-profits

Case Study of an actual participatory program evaluation of a staff training program at a women's shelter

The Pit Stop, a fictional drop-in centre, located downtown in a large urban centre that is used as an example of the application of participatory program evaluation

Engaging Stakeholders highlights key points at which to bring stakeholders into the process.

Working Together: The Paloma–Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation provides you with the information required, step-by-step, to conduct a participatory program evaluation. Sections of this Guide can also be adapted through the use of PowerPoint® or other teaching tools into training modules for diverse stakeholders including, staff, board members, and clients.

Understanding Evaluation

Evaluation is all about asking and answering questions that matter.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009

Understanding Evaluation

Defining Evaluation

Evaluation is a term familiar to almost everyone who works in a direct-service agency or program. Evaluation encompasses a range of tools and strategies to measure the effectiveness of health, education, and social service programs (Patton, 1986). It can provide tangible evidence that the resources invested into a program have brought a number of benefits to its participants. It can identify the ways in which a program's operations have produced desired results. It can also indicate ways in which a program can be improved (Green, 2006).

Program evaluation has traditionally included the following steps:

By the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ the definition and steps of evaluation

✓ the benefits of evaluation.

Figure 1: Steps in Conducting Program Evaluation

1	2	3	4
PLANNING THE EVALUATION DESIGN	GATHERING CREDIBLE DATA	ANALYZING & INTERPRETING DATA	CHANGING THE PROGRAM IN RESPONSE TO THESE FINDINGS
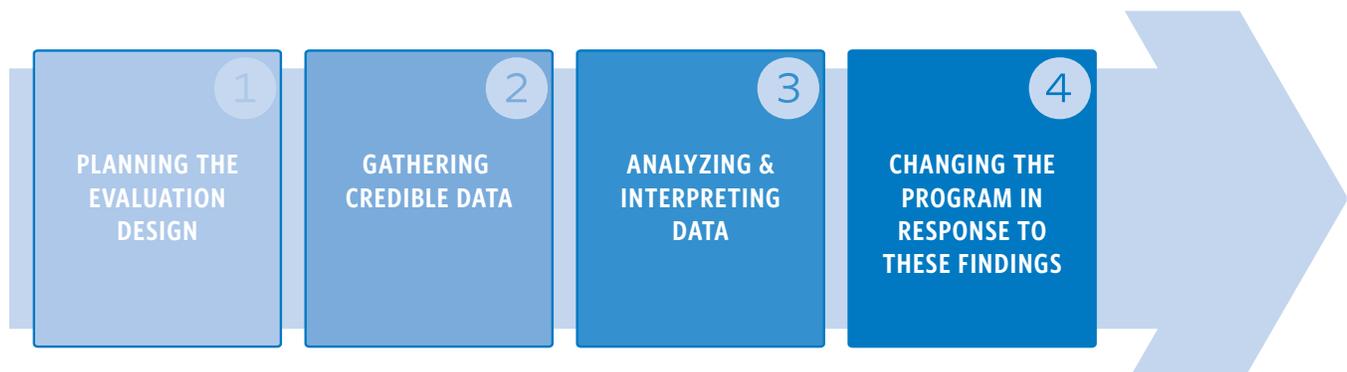
The diagram above indicates the sequential nature of these steps and also their cumulative nature — each builds on and complements the last.

The four steps in the above diagram have also been presented in four stages that highlight the purposes of these activities:

» define the markers of success

» *assess* their importance and how they can be measured

> » *reflect* upon and map out the implementation patterns of program delivery
>
> » *modify* and *identify* effective practices in the process.

These stages — define, assess, reflect, and modify — are the core elements of evaluation in health, education, and social service programs. The diagram below illustrates that program evaluation fits within a broader, continuous cycle of program planning and implementation and that the evaluation process is ongoing. Each evaluation fits into the next planning exercise.

Figure 2: Core Elements of Program Evaluation
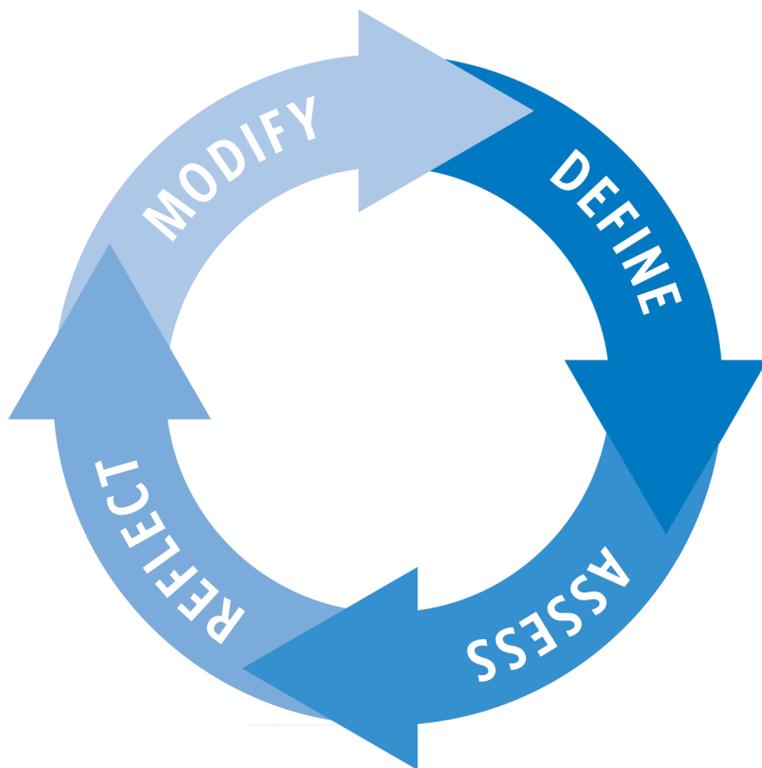
Process and Outcome Evaluations

Fundamentally, evaluation can assess two key elements of programs:

> » the process of program implementation
>
> » the outcomes of the program.

Point to Ponder

Effective program evaluation is continuous and ongoing. How can your organization ensure that the process of continuous evaluation is incorporated into your broader program planning and implementation cycle?

Process and outcome evaluations are important tools to meet an organization's identified evaluation needs. Evaluations that assess both elements ensure a comprehensive review of a program's contributions.

A process evaluation measures aspects of program implementation, that is, how a program operates in practice and the extent to which it is delivered as planned. It may describe or detail:

» the number of activities and training delivered, and whether these correspond to the projected numbers

» the nature of services delivered in terms of content

» the characteristics of the participants

» if a program reached intended numbers of people from targeted groups

» how connected participants feel to the program.

An outcome evaluation measures whether or not the program achieves its desired outcomes or impact on individuals, a community, or an organization. For instance, it can answer questions about whether or not a program produces enhanced knowledge, changes in attitudes and skills of participants, improves life conditions for participants, or enhances the well-being of communities or organizational capacity for delivering better results (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998).

Benefits of Evaluation

In terms of program delivery and development, evaluation can:

» determine what barriers exist to program implementation

» provide practice-based evidence of what did and did not work in service delivery

» identify practitioners' strengths and how they can be better applied to improve program operations, enhancing their work

» provide information that directs program improvement .

(W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998)

Evaluation helps to improve an organization's accountability, planning, and strategy by providing measurable and accurate

> *We have really tried to not just have reactive evaluation that is funder-based, but to have proactive evaluation that informs programs and can help us grow through program development, identification of staff training needs, and capturing trends in needs expressed by [our clients]. We might have really great solutions but we need to make sure it is the right problem we are addressing.*

Pilot Site Reflection

information about client and community needs. Program directors can make better decisions based on reliable systematic feedback from program staff and participants about refining program functions and objectives (Newcomer, 1997). Finally, evaluation can point to future directions by providing relevant information for planning and implementing new, improved, and/or additional services.

Understanding Participatory Evaluation

Challenges of Conventional Evaluation

Two of the many challenges of evaluation are:

» ensuring that diverse voices, perspectives, and insights are accounted for

» developing evaluation tools that measure the more qualitative or intangible aspects of the program.

Measuring the full social impact of a program has always been a challenging task in program evaluation. The capacity of most health, education, or social service front-line organizations to create change is well noted anecdotally, but in most cases, has only been partially captured by conventional evaluation measures of program performance.

Traditionally, evaluations of program implementation have relied on measures of the numerical aspects of program delivery, such as the number of clients served, but has seldom explored the less visible but critical elements of practice, such as the quality and effectiveness of the relationship between staff and clients.

Exclusively utilizing easily quantified indicators can fail to tell the whole story of the impact of the programs on clients and community members, missing the nuances, depth, and breadth of program implementation and the ways in which program staff have creatively responded to clients' needs. The intangible work of program delivery, such as participants' diverse experiences in the program and the participants' feeling of belonging, are not easily measured or documented through numbers.

Program stakeholders and staff members have critical experiences, insights, and expectations that traditional evaluations and those conducted by external consultants working alone can fail

By the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ the challenges of conventional evaluation

✓ the definition of participatory evaluation

✓ the differences between conventional and participatory evaluation

✓ the benefits of participatory evaluation.

Participatory evaluation is people-centred; project stakeholders and beneficiaries are the key actors of the evaluation process and not the mere objects of the evaluation.

United Nations Development Program

to value and include. Not only can this disempower and alienate stakeholders, it can lead to evaluation results that do not reflect the needs of the organization. This is one of the strongest arguments for using a participatory evaluation method, because program stakeholders have these critical experiences and insights that outside evaluators are not likely to consider and/or track.

Defining Participatory Evaluation

Participatory program evaluation (PPE) is described as an approach that involves all who have a stake in its outcomes, with a view to taking action and effecting change (Springett and Wallerstein, 2008).

Driven by the need to build a comprehensive picture that uses both qualitative and quantitative data, participatory evaluation engages a diverse group of stakeholders. Goals for participatory evaluation include:

» strengthening the inclusive nature of evaluation work and recognizing that different stakeholders have distinctive experiences and insight

» enhancing the quality and usefulness of the data collected, to reflect not only the number of participants being served by a program, but also provide insight into the nature of the services being delivered.

At the end of a PPE, those involved have a clearer idea of what is working effectively and what could be improved. As well, relationships are strengthened among different stakeholders.

Participatory approaches in evaluation, used extensively throughout the world, create great potential for transformative social change (Smits and Champagne, 2008; King, 2007; Cousins and Whitmore, 1998; Jackson and Kassam, 1998).

Comparing Conventional and Participatory Evaluation

One of the best ways of understanding participatory evaluation is to compare it with more conventional methods.

Table 1 - Comparing Conventional and Participatory Evaluation

	Conventional Evaluation	Participatory Evaluation
Who	By external experts	By some or all of program staff, clients, managers, board members, facilitator, community members
What	Predetermined indicators of success; primarily cost and health outcomes or gains	People identify their own indicators of success, which may include health, educational, and personal outcomes and gains
How	Focus on "scientific objectivity," distancing evaluators from other participants; uniform, complex procedures; delayed, limited access to results	Focus on self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation processes
When	Usually at program completion; sometimes also at program mid-term	Frequent collection and data analysis (small-scale evaluations) to serve monitoring and evaluation function
Why	Accountability, usually summative, to determine if funding continues	To empower staff and participants to initiate, control, and make changes to improve the program and increase the learning and capacity building among the diverse stakeholders

Source: Adapted from PROWWESS, 1990. Cited in Springett and Wallerstein, 2008

Benefits of Participatory Evaluation

As an approach, participatory evaluation can empower staff and participants, allowing for richer and more accurate data, while creating support for evidence-based decision-making through inclusive practices.

The benefits of doing participatory evaluation are numerous:

Proactive and Inclusive

Program stakeholders have influence and impact on the evaluation method, the questions asked, and the indicators of success.

The process provides the opportunity and space for connection, dialogue, and building shared understanding among the diverse stakeholders.

Moves from Fault Finding to Collective Learning

Participatory evaluation is about collective learning. When clients and staff understand this and are supported by a collective team process, they feel able to provide accurate information.

Changes the Invisible to Visible

The process highlights information that is often missed in traditional evaluation and recognizes the value of lived experience as a form of "local evidence."

Increases Relevance and Meaning

Diversifying the participants means that the questions asked and the data gathered are relevant and meaningful for all the different groups connected to the program, increasing the likelihood of commitment and the ability to take action on the findings.

Increases Credibility

By taking diverse perspectives into account, the credibility of the process and information gathered are enhanced.

Builds Evaluation Capacity

Opportunities are created for community program staff and clients to explore issues and priorities together, increasing diverse stakeholders' experience and skills.

Provides Comprehensive Information for Better Decision-Making

Through the involvement of diverse participants, there is a more comprehensive view of the program that incorporates local and program-specific knowledge. The resulting data provide new insights and strategies for tackling the social issues that programs are addressing and improving the lives of marginalized populations.

One of the project sites realized, through team discussion, that one of the benefits of conducting an evaluation was that it enabled them to document their unique model and more effectively share their story.

Pilot Site Reflection

Transparent and Accountable

Involving more stakeholders clearly demonstrates an organization's openness to hearing diverse ideas and perspectives. Everyone has a better sense of the purpose of the questions asked and the eventual usage of the data.

Participatory program evaluation (PPE) fosters the meaningful involvement of individuals and groups from a broad range of roles. This can build research capacities as participants become motivated to know about the activities in which they are involved (Estrella and Gaventa, 1999). PPE supports the collection of data that help to construct a meaningful narrative of the program that tells the story of the clients, the programs they are involved in, and the organization.

Finally, moving beyond the agency level, participatory methods can sharpen the understanding of an organization's role in a broader social or political context — ultimately helping to refine organizational goals and direction, ensuring that an agency speaks to the needs of the community around it. All these benefits are key ingredients to working toward meaningful social change.

Towards a New Culture of Evaluation

As measurement becomes an element of everyday life in the realm of service delivery and regularly required by funders and other stakeholders, entering a new phase of evaluation is critical. Traditionally, evaluation has been about the imposition on programs of assessment and measurement tools provided by others. **Participatory evaluation** is an approach that reconfigures the assessment process, **placing it more firmly in the hands of the stakeholders**.

This new culture of evaluation is guided less by templates and schematics and more by shared principles and a **re-framing of what counts and what should be counted**.

We hope that the following tools inspire you to take up this new culture of evaluation to build your organization's capacity to integrate participatory evaluation into your ongoing activities, engage stakeholders in a meaningful process of providing feedback, and most importantly, provide the best possible service to your clients.

Getting Started

> *No single approach to evaluation is best under all circumstances. Organizations need to understand the full range of choices available, the different purposes they serve, and the circumstances in which they are relevant, in order to choose the approach that best captures the information needed.*

Mark Kramer et al., 2007

First Steps in Planning

Choosing Participatory Program Evaluation

Participatory program evaluation (PPE), like any evaluation, takes commitment, time, and resources to implement. For most non-profit organizations, the number one priority is to serve their clients. Participatory program evaluation can help provide better service and does not have to be a drain on resources or a task which takes away from the provision of service to clients. With adequate planning, non-profits can embark on a PPE, even if it is "off the side of the desk."

Your program evaluation starts by reflecting on the reasons and readiness for a participatory program evaluation. It can be helpful to expand the discussion to include other staff members, but this consideration should be done prior to involving diverse stakeholders.

The first step is to identify and articulate the benefits of embarking on this process. You can do this by answering the questions below. Through identifying the benefits, it is easier to build commitment to the process.

This set of questions helps to think through whether this is the best evaluation method at this time.

» **Are you conducting an evaluation to meet a funder's requirement? Does a participatory program evaluation meet those requirements?** If you are conducting an evaluation to meet a funder's requirement or request for specific information, ensure that the evaluation meets those funder's needs. PPE could provide this information, but there is a possibility it might not.

» **Are you able to act upon the feedback gathered from a participatory program evaluation?** There are times, for various reasons, when you will not be able to act upon

By the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ whether participatory program evaluation meets your current evaluation needs

✓ the steps involved in participatory program evaluation.

I think the organization needs to be comfortable with the funders' goals to be able to go to the second step of a participatory evaluation. It was easy for our program to get involved because we exceeded our projected numbers, so we could do it.

Pilot Site Reflection

program feedback. For example, if a funder has strict requirements about how a program is delivered, there will be little flexibility in making changes. In this case, it would not be beneficial to use a PPE, as a situation could be created where evaluation participants are asked for feedback but it is not used.

» **Is the program in jeopardy?** If there is a push to prove a program's value rather than improve a program, it is not the time to embark on a participatory program evaluation.

» **Is there a demonstrated organizational commitment (from board, management, and staff) to engaging in a participatory program evaluation?** It is important that the organization agree that there is the need to reflect on practice, and to learn and grow from the information gathered during an evaluation process. If any members of the organization (board, management, staff members) see evaluation as a way to identify faults or lay blame, then there needs to be more discussion about the principles and values of PPE.

» **Is your organization willing to involve and hear from a broad range of stakeholders?** When participants and other stakeholders are invited to the table, there has to be a commitment to having their participation, with the necessary supports in place. The power differentials have to be addressed appropriately to enable the true engagement of all participants.

» **Do you have the necessary resources to support a participatory program evaluation?** Participatory program evaluation involving all the program stakeholders takes time and money to implement. For further information on the resources required, consult the section labelled Organizing Resources on page 47.

» **Are you looking for a mix of qualitative and quantitative information?** Participatory program evaluations offer the opportunity to gather a spectrum of information that reflects and highlights unique perspectives. It is important to consider whether qualitative or quantitative information, or both, would be most appropriate for application to specific programs.

> *Right now, we need to provide programs on very tight guidelines, which are funder-driven. Participatory evaluation is much more democratically driven and turns the power over to the people involved in a program, but it is hard in this environment.*

Pilot Site Reflection

> *There is a lot of compulsion to show we are successful. We worry that any indication of need for improvement will result in negative consequences. There is less of an opportunity and support to reflect on what didn't work and use that information to improve the program.*

Pilot Site Reflection

If the responses to these questions indicate that participatory evaluation is the best choice and the resources are there to ensure the success of the implementation of the PPE, it is time to embark on a participatory evaluation.

Steps in a Participatory Program Evaluation

The basic steps in participatory program evaluation which are presented in detail over the next chapters are:

» engage the stakeholders

» create a logic model

» define the evaluation questions

» select the methods of data collection

» conduct the research

» analyze the findings

» develop a report and/or an action plan based on the findings, including a dissemination strategy.

The power imbalances in the room in one consultation, a community visioning process, were part of the problem — but the key was that many of those with power did not even see the negative impact of their assumptions on the direct-service workers... They assumed that everyone in the room was an "us", and the folks who might access the services were "them" — negating the fact that for some direct-service workers living in poverty was in their recent history, or they were only just living above the poverty line.

People made comments about "these people who make x dollars," while the direct-services providers were only $100 or one pay cheque away from the clients. The direct- service providers told us their experience was so awful that they were embarrassed to bring people they work with to the table. "It was so shaming."

Pilot Site Reflection

Engaging the Stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders is a key component of a participatory program evaluation, requiring skill and commitment from organizational staff.

The Stakeholders

The dynamic part of participatory evaluation is the number and diversity of people who can participate! A stakeholder is any person who impacts or is impacted by a program, including:

» clients/participants (present or past)

» front-line staff

» other agency staff

» management

» volunteers

» members of the board of directors

» funders

» community members or agencies, for example, outside agencies completing similar work and/or community leaders.

All stakeholders bring unique perspectives and levels of experience to the process, for example:

» **Clients**, as recipients of the program, often know first-hand the many facets of the program, as well as what they expect to gain from participating

» **Program staff members** offer unique insights into the realities of program implementation and the challenges of service delivery

» **Board members and management** bring an organizational perspective, providing insight into what kinds of information administrators and/or funders want and need to know about a program and its anticipated effectiveness

By the end of this section, you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ who the stakeholders are

✓ reasons for involving stake-holders

✓ ways to engage stakeholders

✓ developing terms of reference

✓ the benefits and challenges of engaging stakeholders.

...people who participate in creating something tend to feel more ownership of what they have created, make more use of it, and take better care of it.

Michael Quinn Patton, 2008

» **Community members or agencies** can provide a broader understanding of the social and political realities in the community.

Figure 3: Examples of Stakeholders in Program Evaluation
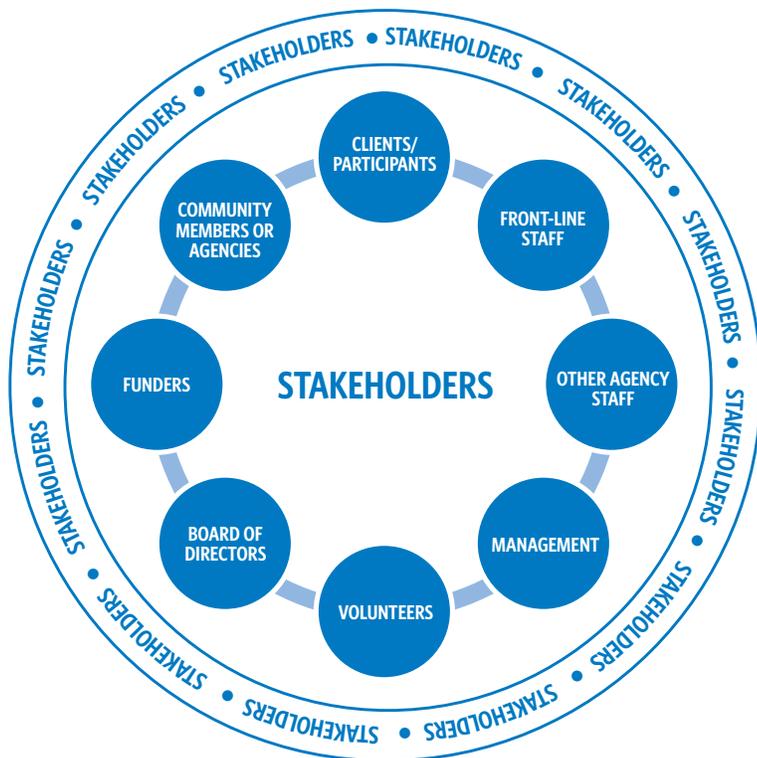
Different stakeholders require different supports to ensure participation. It is important to be aware that, for some programs, it might not be appropriate to involve current clients and so the program would decide to engage past clients who do not have the potential to use the service in the near future. The involvement of current clients may interfere with the counselling or other relationships.

The diversity of those involved in the agency and/or the program to be evaluated needs to be assessed and respected so that the stakeholders are a representative mix that reflects the demographic factors of the clients served in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc. This diversity needs to be represented throughout the process. Multiple voices from the different demographic groups ensure this voice is amplified rather than isolated or vulnerable.

Reasons for Involving Stakeholders

The key reasons for involving stakeholders in the process of participatory program evaluation include:

» more comprehensive information that incorporates the strengths and experiences of the diverse stakeholders

» more accurate and transparent

» more inclusive, resulting in a greater sense of belonging for all involved

» the opportunity to learn together, building organizational capacity

» building momentum, broad commitment, rationale, and capacity to act upon the findings.

Ways to Engage Stakeholders in the Process

Depending on resources such as time, funds, and community networks, the degree to which an evaluation is participatory can vary. The aim may be to make the evaluation as participatory as possible, but it is better to have some engagement rather than none at all.

The more participatory the evaluation, the greater the benefits from the unique aspects of this approach.

Stakeholders can be involved in all or some of these steps:

» creating a logic model

» developing the evaluation plan

» defining the evaluation questions

» collecting the information

» analyzing the information

» disseminating and sharing the findings

» implementing the solutions

Throughout this Guide, steps for engaging stakeholder are highlighted. The key stages and steps are outlined below.

Point to Ponder

As a project team you need to decide the level of participation you are seeking. There will be particular steps in the process when it makes more sense to engage certain stakeholders rather than others. In addition, you need to be sure you are transparent about the level of participation you are seeking and where the opportunities are being created.

1. Identify and engage the stakeholders

» determine who are the key players (board members, management, front-line staff, clients, volunteers, funders, organizational partners)

» determine who needs to hear about the findings

» discuss what will need to be in place to support stakeholder participation. This support depends on the stakeholders and what they need to ensure full participation in the process. This is where staff expertise on the clients can be important.

2. Involve stakeholders early

» share the reasons for embarking on a participatory program evaluation and why it is important for the agency and the program

» highlight the importance of their unique perspectives and input in the evaluation process.

3. Involve stakeholders throughout the process, using strategies such as:

» After identifying the key stakeholders, one of the first opportunities to engage them is to establish a working group or advisory committee with members from the identified stakeholders. The size of the working group varies depending on the size of the program. The working group meets as many times as deemed necessary to evaluate the program: this could be as few as two to three times or on a regular basis. This group would be established at the beginning and would be involved in developing an evaluation plan and providing guidance and advice on all aspects of the evaluation from design to implementation and dissemination.

» Holding a roundtable where stakeholders discuss what they would like to learn about the program and how they want to be involved in the evaluation.

» Training clients to conduct surveys, interviews, or focus group for the evaluation.

> » Holding a community forum where initial findings of the evaluation are presented and clients are asked if the findings reflect their experience and for their suggestions for disseminating the results.

Each stakeholder enters the process of evaluation with different priorities: some want to learn; some know when and how they want things to be done; others specifically want to be involved in the process. Given these differences and many other factors, there always are differences in the power dynamics among the stakeholders. It is important to acknowledge this, and to ensure the process is established as equitably as possible to avoid negative consequences for the diverse stakeholders and for the process of the evaluation.

Creating Terms of Reference

In order to address these differing priorities and power imbalances, the working group can draft **terms of reference that are used to set the parameters of the evaluation, including the work of the stakeholders**. Terms of reference are also referred to as a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

The terms of reference describe the key decisions of the evaluation, including the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. It functions as a type of "bonding," rather than "binding," document. Once the terms of reference are signed by each participating stakeholder, it should be treated as a "living document," which can be revisited as the program evaluation proceeds. The stakeholders can incorporate changes in the terms of reference that reflect changes in the process as it evolves. Some sections of the terms of reference can initially be left blank and completed during the process. The language of the terms of reference should be clear and accessible to all participants, with an avoidance of jargon and overly formal or legalistic language.

The following table outlines the types of information that can be incorporated into terms of reference.

Table 2 - Sections and Content of the Terms of Reference

Title of Section	Suggested Content
Purpose of the Program Evaluation	The purpose of the evaluation might include: » One or two sentences describing the purpose of the program evaluation, including why it is being conducted and how the results are to be used and by whom, e.g., "This evaluation is committed to identifying and/or understanding and/or measuring…for this reason…" » Description of the subject of the evaluation, such as the programs to be looked at, and the intended outcomes and outputs. » Evaluation objectives, scope, and questions, e.g., "Through completing this evaluation, we hope to learn… by answering the questions …"
Guiding Principles of Program Evaluation	The following are tenets that can be incorporated into program evaluation. This evaluation will: » engage a set of principles that will foster ownership and empowerment among all stakeholders, build capacity through mentoring and learning exchanges, and group participation in all appropriate phases of the evaluation » engage in an open and transparent process in which a collective vision of goals and objectives is shared, and where the roles and expectations of participating stakeholders are clearly defined » be a collaborative and equitable partnership in which members draw upon individual skill sets to meaningfully and mutually work toward the team's vision » honour the lived experiences and knowledge of the stakeholders involved » employ dissemination strategies that can benefit education, advocacy, the community, and social change » foster a supportive team approach for all stakeholders through reflection of the group process » articulate values about anti-racism, feminism, and other important issues.
Representation	This is an opportunity to clearly outline who will be involved in the process. The diversity of the stakeholders, whether in age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or other factor, is an important component of the effectiveness of the process. To ensure that the different voices are heard and respected, it may be advisable to have more than one client representative at the table.

Table 2 - Sections and Content of the Terms of Reference

Title of Section	Suggested Content
Roles and Responsibilities of Participating Stakeholders	It is extremely important that the Terms of Reference incorporate the role and responsibilities of each stakeholder. These roles may change over time and the Terms of Reference should be adapted to reflect the changes.
Content Expertise of the Members of the Working Group	The areas of content and practical expertise the diverse stakeholders bring to the table need to be articulated, with special attention to lived experience. The areas identified indicate both what is valued and what is seen as important to the success of the evaluation.
Decision-Making Process for Program Evaluation	The goals of making group decisions during your evaluation and the processes by which your stakeholder team makes decisions can both be articulated. An example is: Our decision-making process in this evaluation aims to: » encourage the participation and empowerment of all team members » have participants question, disagree with, and challenge each other's views respectfully » be transparent, open, and clear » provide opportunities for exchanges of learning that draw on the various skills and areas of knowledge of different team members. An example of a decision-making process for team meetings is: » Decision-making at team meetings will strive first for a consensus, and if not able to reach a consensus, will use a majority vote.
Sharing Findings	It is important for all stakeholders to agree on the purposes for sharing the findings. This is important not just for clients who are participating in the process, but also for front-line staff. For example, it can be stated that: » usage of the findings will be in accordance with the evaluation goals and will adhere to high ethical standards » findings will be used to highlight the successes of the program and enhance service delivery by identifying areas for improvement » the findings will not be used for individual interests that are not related to the goals of the evaluation.

Table 2 - Sections and Content of the Terms of Reference

Title of Section	Suggested Content
Confidentiality	It is important to have a section on confidentiality that notes: » this policy applies to every participant in the evaluation process » confidentiality is extremely important because we rely on the willingness of individuals to trust us with potentially private information and we need to respect every person's right to confidentiality » we will make every effort possible to protect privacy. Breaking confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter and dealt with appropriately » all persons will keep confidential all information that has been requested to be kept confidential or private. This information will not be communicated to other persons, even after the project has ended.
Accountabilities	It is important to determine how the evaluation team remains accountable to each other, to the agency, and to the process of evaluation. For example: » we will regularly chart our progress against our timeline for the evaluation process » we will keep clear records (e.g., meeting minutes) of all meetings that take place and document decisions made about the program evaluation and its process. It is also important in this section to touch upon how often evaluation activities will be conducted. In an ideal situation, data collection will become integrated into your ongoing provision of service. If this is the case, deciding how often, when, and where the evaluation team will meet to review data is extremely important.

Adapted from Ontario Women's Health Network, Inclusion Research Handbook

As mentioned earlier, the concept of involving stakeholders is a key tenet of participatory evaluation. Additional ways to involve stakeholders throughout the process are emphasized in each chapter of the Guide and in the Resources listed in the Appendix (page 120).

Benefits of Stakeholder Involvement

Involving stakeholders in planning, evaluating, and reflecting on the program is one of the unique aspects of participatory

program evaluation. Inviting stakeholders to participate can ensure more dynamic evaluation results due to listening to more program voices and evaluating the program from many different angles. The information gathered provides a more comprehensive, representative set of findings and responses that meet the various stakeholders' needs. Taking advantage of a broad range of perspectives and experiences allows for a more accurate, transparent process that incorporates the strengths and experience of different stakeholders and fosters an environment of mutual learning and sharing of information.

For the stakeholders, participating in the evaluation fosters a sense of being considered a valued contributor, which is an experience that can deepen their involvement in and commitment to the agency. This encourages their support for current initiatives and helps to build support for future program developments.

Most importantly, participatory evaluation is about learning. By involving a variety of stakeholders in the evaluation process, there is an opportunity to learn about and develop program evaluation skills. All involved can come to understand problem identification, data collection, data analysis, and ways to present findings to a variety of audiences. All gain experience in problem-solving while working within a group, and learn from the more in-depth perspective that is shared through the diverse participation and perspectives of the stakeholders.

Creating an environment of learning sends the message to all stakeholders that the evaluation process is not a judgmental exercise with potentially punitive consequences for staff or clients, but rather a motivational tool that allows stakeholders to be involved in raising the level of service for the staff and their clients.

Challenges of Stakeholder Involvement

It can be challenging to engage stakeholders because:

- » it takes extra resources such as time, human resources, and money to support diverse stakeholders' needs

- » there is a constant need to be vigilant that the engagement is meaningful and not just window dressing

It is important to develop processes that allow for a broad range of participation and ability. The idea of every person being "on the same page" requires different supports for different people. It really depends on how people can participate, because we have a range of folks with different cognitive abilities. We don't just try and have the peers do the work but also inform the work.

Pilot Site Reflection

» it is challenging to involve more people in a meaningful way and ensure everyone understands the terms of reference and how they help the evaluation move forward

» there are challenges to sharing power equitably between staff, clients, and other stakeholders

» there are challenges to maintaining engagement of diverse stakeholders over the course of the evaluation due to competing demands

» systemic barriers have historically denied clients a voice making the necessary trust difficult to build

» organizations sometimes lack the networks and relationships to engage diverse representation.

Case Study: A Participatory Program Evaluation of a Staff Training Program at a Women's Shelter

The following case study illustrates many of the key points made above about stakeholder involvement — the strategies, benefits, and challenges. In the case study, an external consultant was used, but these same steps can be adapted for use in-house.

What program or service were you evaluating?

The participatory program evaluation looked at a training program for staff at a women's shelter located in a small city in southern Ontario serving rural communities in that area. The organization that operated the shelter had received numerous complaints from shelter residents about the poor quality of service from staff. The organization had used a grant to provide extensive training to shelter staff in an effort to address these service issues.

What process or methods did you use to conduct a participatory program evaluation?

The most notable method we used to conduct a participatory evaluation was the development of a stakeholders' committee. This committee was made up mostly of community members who guided the evaluation. This was important to the organization because it historically had a tense and contentious relationship with shelter staff.

The process for choosing the stakeholders was systematic and was considered stage one of the evaluation. It involved working with a group of six staff to:

» brainstorm a thorough list of potential stakeholders based on their roles in relation to the shelter, e.g., ex-resident, community advocate

» assess the suitability of each person based on a list of criteria such as availability and interest in evaluation of the staff training

» narrow down the shortlist to twelve by assessing finalists' availability

» agree on who would contact the finalists, and how and what would be said.

Who was involved?

In the end, ten stakeholders made up the committee, including the shelter supervisor, an administrative assistant from the organization's head office, a community activist for people with disabilities, two counsellors from the shelter (one of whom was a union representative), a former member of the organization's board of directors who was a current community worker, a current member of the board of directors, an ex-resident of the shelter who is a current tenant in supportive housing, the student placement coordinator from the local college, and a support worker who worked out of the organization's head office.

How was it participatory?

The stakeholders' committee was instructed on how to design questions for the evaluation. Once again, using a systematic step-by-step process, the committee brainstormed all the questions they had and narrowed down the list to three key points for the evaluation that they all agreed were relevant. They were very basic:

» an assessment of staff needs, including the impact on staff of working with complex residents

» an analysis of the effectiveness of the training program in terms of meeting staff needs

» a description of current procedures for admitting and discharging residents.

The researcher also presented a design for the evaluation based on the budget, which the committee modified and approved.

How did you use the results of the participatory program evaluation?

The results for each research method used in the evaluation were summarized and presented to the committee. Stakeholders then engaged in an exercise to interpret the results based on their perspectives and develop their own actionable recommendations.

How did using participatory program evaluation give you results that you would not otherwise have achieved from other forms of evaluation?

Since the stakeholders' committee developed and decided on the questions based on their information needs, the results met their information needs.

What indicators were developed for evaluating the process of the evaluation?

After each face-to-face meeting, committee members were asked to rate the meeting on a ten-point scale along four different indicators:

» Goals and Topics: whether or not we had worked on and talked about what each stakeholder wanted to work on and talk about

» Approach or Method including Materials: whether or not the researcher's approach was a good fit for each stakeholder

» Relationships: whether or not each stakeholder felt heard, understood, and respected

» Overall: whether the meeting was right for each stakeholder or if there was something missing in the meeting for them.

There was also a section of the form where people could add comments. Results were tabulated and shared at the next meeting. Any identified issues were discussed at meetings with stakeholders and resolved prior to continuing.

What were the benefits to the organization/ the project/ the stakeholders involved in the evaluation of conducting a participatory program evaluation?

Benefits for the organization were:

» increased accountability to staff and the community by providing information about the shelter's service performance

» improved decision-making about the shelter's program direction by setting and reviewing the goals and priorities of its service

» improved relationship with shelter staff by supporting effective management practices

» increased knowledge of shelter staff needs and problems and their effective practices

» developed the capacity for effective program design and assessment by thinking more critically about the service and identifying factors that affected its effectiveness.

The participatory evaluation integrated the process within the organization's culture and invoked social change which was consistent with the organization's values. The process shaped stakeholders' opinions by exploring their diverse perspectives and supporting a democratic process for decision-making. Lastly, the participatory evaluation built energy and enthusiasm within the organization by building pride and confidence in the shelter's work and group cohesion among stakeholders.

The choice and engagement of stakeholders should be topics of the earliest discussions and considerations about undertaking a participatory program evaluation — as it is this involvement that makes the initiative participatory and so provides all the benefits outlined above. The engagement of stakeholders is a key theme in the following chapters as the implementation process is outlined.

Ethics

Defining Ethics

Ethics can be broadly defined as standards or principles that guide the conduct of a person in professional practice, or members of a particular profession.

When working with people using a participatory program evaluation, there are certain ethical considerations that need to be taken into account. All types of program evaluation examine the direct experiences of program staff and the clients who participate in those programs. Often participation in an evaluation may require individuals to share sensitive information. Staff may be asked to critically evaluate their colleagues and themselves. Clients may be asked quite intimate or personal questions. For example, in an evaluation of a harm-reduction program, a client may be asked to describe how many times they injected an illegal substance the previous week and whether or not a clean needle was used. Further ethical considerations are present when involving stakeholders, particularly clients, in the planning, implementation, analysis, and dissemination of the evaluation findings regarding imbalances of power dynamics among stakeholders.

Just as clients' rights are at the forefront of program planning and implementation, so too must their rights be upheld when they participate in a program evaluation.

Ethical Guidelines

Both nationally and internationally, evaluation associations have identified standards for the professional practice of evaluation. The Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) offers professional guidance on ethics. In Canada, the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans has become the

> At the end of this section you will have an understanding of:
> - ✔ the definition of ethics
> - ✔ the guiding principles of ethics
> - ✔ getting informed consent
> - ✔ unique ethical issues as a direct result of the participatory nature of the evaluation process.

Relativity applies to physics, not ethics.

Albert Einstein

primary source for guidance of research-related work, including evaluation (Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2005). These statements and many others on ethics can be found in the Appendix under the heading Ethics Resources (pg 123).

While evaluation is often viewed as a form of quality assurance and not subject to the same rules of ethical review as other research, these authors believe since participatory program evaluation involves people in diverse aspects of the process, it should be guided by the same core principles of ethical practice. While developing a process, it is important to abide by the six guiding principles listed below.

The Guiding Principles of Ethics

The six guiding principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement are very relevant to the practice of participatory evaluation:

» respect for free and informed consent

» respect for human dignity

» minimizing harms and maximizing benefits

» respect for justice and inclusiveness

» respect for vulnerable persons

» respect for privacy and confidentiality

These guiding principles and aspects that require additional consideration due to the participatory nature of the process are detailed below.

Point to Ponder

Free and informed consent can be tricky to obtain when working with vulnerable persons. Consent requires that clients understand what is being asked of them, and what the evaluation is about, and that their participation is voluntary. They also need to understand that they can choose not to participate at any time with no negative consequences.

Clients may choose to participate in an evaluation (as members of the evaluation team or as providers of feedback) because they feel pressured to participate For example, clients could be eager to please or worried or afraid that if they do not participate they will lose a program that is essential to them. Participants need to be very clear on the fact that they can decline to answer any questions or refuse to continue to participate, in any aspect, at any time. The necessary information to gain this understanding is usually provided through a document that outlines all the information and is either read by the client or is read to them. A signature on the document or recorded verbal consent is required.
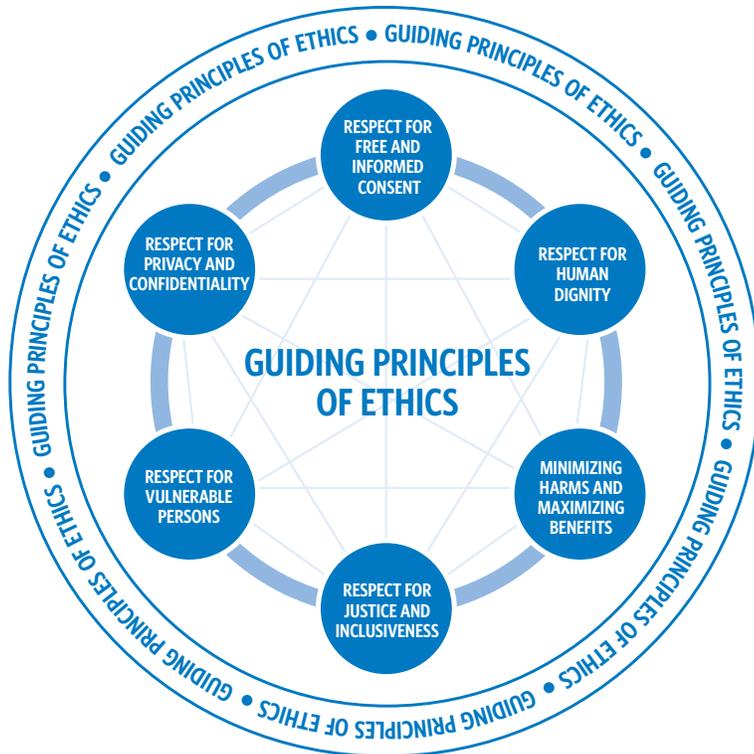
Respect for Free and Informed Consent

Free and informed consent is a critical component of any evaluation. It is important to get this consent from all stakeholders, including clients, regardless of the role they play in the participatory program evaluation. Informed consent is given by participants who have:

» received the necessary information about the evaluation and their involvement in the process

» adequately understood the information received

» after having considered the information, made the decision (free from coercion) to participate or not to participate in the survey, focus group, or other aspects of the evaluation process such as participation on a working group.

The following information should be provided to participants when seeking informed consent:

» a description of the purpose of conducting the program evaluation

» a description of what will be asked of them, when, and why

» an assurance of confidentiality (including how their information will be protected and who will have access to the information)

» an assurance that there will be no negative impact to the services they receive from the organization due to their participation in the evaluation process

» contact information in case they have any questions or want to discuss a matter regarding the program evaluation process either before, during, or after participating

» details on compensation (if any)

» an assurance that participation is voluntary and that they can stop or leave the evaluation process at any time.

After reviewing all of the essential information outlined above, a program evaluation participant can then sign a consent form or give oral consent. A number of web-site links to sample consent forms can be found under Resources (pg 120) in the Appendix at the end of this Guide. In addition, one sample template consent form (pg 115) has been provided in the Appendix.

Respect for Human Dignity

Participatory evaluation relies on the fact that stakeholders are involved throughout the different stages of the evaluation. This is a powerful way to demonstrate respect for diverse stakeholders, particularly participants' human dignity, and offers the opportunity to recognize and engage the diverse skills and wisdom at the table. It is important that staff and clients be encouraged to play primary roles in the evaluation process such as being a member of the evaluation team. Clients should be assured that when the findings of the evaluation are acted upon, they will be able to contribute to the process of finding solutions. Knowing that either they or other clients have the opportunity to be involved in the evaluation process helps assure clients that their interests are being respected, represented, and considered. This means ensuring that voices of stakeholders are heard but also that there is a process in place to ensure that ideas, experiences, and interpretations are incorporated in a way that respectfully accommodates differing and divergent perspectives.

There is a community that we work in without any grocery stores, and lots of folks with limited incomes. The nearest grocery stores are over an hour away by city bus. There are variety stores but they tend to be very expensive and have few fresh fruits and vegetables. The Community Centre said, "we know the answer. We will get a community bus which everyone can go on and take them to do their shopping." They got the bus — but no one showed up. Why? It took us a while to figure out that there is a lot of social stigma to arriving at a grocery store in a big yellow school bus.

Pilot Site Reflection

Minimizing Harms and Maximizing Benefits

In program evaluation, looking holistically at the physical, psychological, and social well-being of clients is essential to ensuring that harms are minimized and benefits are maximized. This means being alert to and prepared to address ethical issues as they arise. Decisions about harm and benefit should be considered from the perspective of the client group as a whole, as well as for each individual participant. In a participatory program evaluation, clients need to be involved right from the beginning. If a process does not build in the supports and training for the clients to ensure they have the skills and information necessary to participate successfully, then there is a risk of harm to their self-worth.

Respect for Justice and Inclusiveness

When working with diverse stakeholders, there is a need to be aware of the power differentials and ensure that the research process and methods do not discriminate or result in a negative burden of harm on those participating. At the same time, the process needs to ensure that stakeholders who will benefit from the research are able to participate where appropriate. PPE is a process that is grounded in inclusiveness, and a wide range of stakeholders ensures that the ethical guidelines are being respected.

Respect for Vulnerable Persons

There are many barriers to clients providing honest and open feedback. For some clients, the realities of their lives may mean that they are not in the position where they can take a step back and reflect on the services that they have received — they are in crisis mode. For other clients, it may be hard to provide negative feedback to their service providers, as they are so grateful for the services and supports they receive that the one way they can show appreciation is by providing all positive feedback. Another fear that may arise with some clients is that if they provide negative feedback, their relationship with staff may be jeopardized.

It is important to develop processes within the evaluation to address these issues. One of the ways to do this is to assure clients

> *The solutions could be the best ideas, but if they miss key issues for those living in that community, it turns out not to be a "best solution" to the problem. It took a while before the community was able to say to the Community Centre that they were really ashamed to go in the school bus provided, because the Community Centre provided a lot of services and good things.*

Pilot Site Reflection

that their open, honest feedback serves as a mechanism for program improvement and that there will be no negative implications for their relationships with staff. Another option is to only solicit feedback from past clients who have not used the services for at least a year or other duration of time considered sufficient.

If, as service providers, we are really well intentioned but totally miss the mark, it can be very uncomfortable for people to give true feedback.

In order to protect vulnerable persons, it is important for those embarking on a participatory program evaluation process to ensure:

» that timelines and processes developed are respectful and responsive to the realities of stakeholders, particularly clients' lives

» that the various power dynamics inherent in the process of engaging diverse stakeholders are addressed.

For example, it is not realistic or respectful of a client's economic reality to expect the client to incur the transportation costs to attend meetings for the project. Further, power differentials can be at play between clients and staff or between board and staff. Once these dynamics have been identified, the team must reflect on the possible impacts to the evaluation process. Then strategies and processes need to be created that mediate the potential negative impacts of these power dynamics and ensure a safe environment. Developing Terms of Reference as discussed in the section on Stakeholder Engagement on page 25 is one example of an effective strategy to address this issue.

Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

Program evaluation participants have a right to know who will have access to their information, and for what purpose. Every participant's personal information must be kept confidential and shared only with individuals or groups that have been identified to the participants prior to their involvement. It is best to consider all the ways in which the information collected may be useful to the agency and share that with the participants.

In regards to other aspects of confidentiality, when participants are involved in the planning and gathering data for the evaluation, considerations include:

Point to Ponder

Regarding participants' right to confidentiality and anonymity, one of the standard and effective ways of protecting anonymity is to assign individuals a number so that when data are entered into the computer system, they correspond to a number and not a name. The list of participants and their corresponding numbers is set up by one person administering the evaluation process and kept in a locked file. Moreover, any identifiable information should be left out of any reporting of results. Finally, it is important to restrict access to all confidential information.

- » the nature of the information they will learn about others in their community
- » the safeguards in place to ensure that participants maintain the confidentiality of the information that they have learned
- » the diverse perspectives that stakeholders have about the guiding principles of ethics to be applied throughout the project
- » any training necessary to increase their knowledge and ability to apply the guidelines.

Unique Ethical Issues

Throughout this section, ethical issues that are inherent in the participatory process have been highlighted. Some of the questions to quickly assess ethical issues of an evaluation project are:

- » Do clients understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality?
- » Are board members and staff willing and able to honestly share power equally with clients and with others on the evaluation team?
- » Does the process ensure, as much as possible, the equitable distribution of power?
- » Are clients in a position where it is safe for them to participate as members of the evaluation team?

If clients are involved in the data collection phase, the ethical considerations specific to the participatory nature of the process need to be addressed.

- » Does involving clients in the planning and data gathering phase of the evaluation compromise other clients' ability to participate?

Training clients to recruit and conduct focus groups and key informant interviews can provide tremendous benefits, such as access to networks professionals don't necessarily have or an increased level of trust as a result of talking to a member of their own community. However, there is also the potential that clients are not comfortable sharing with another client, due to fear of

Point to Ponder

The benefits of engaging diverse stakeholders far outweigh the potential concerns. At the same time, it is important that you reflect on program needs and realities to ensure that the benefits outweigh the concerns for the program and stakeholders.

loss of privacy or discomfort with sharing intimate details with a member of their community.

> » What are the ethical issues around providing an hono-rarium?

It is unethical to assume that clients can afford the time and provide skills without some financial acknowledgement and that clients should incur increased costs due to their extensive participation in the process. At the same time, it is important to reflect on whether there is a potential for an honorarium to be perceived as a form of coercion to get clients to participate. In addition, it is important to give some thought to the appropriate amount required, as it needs to adequately reflect a client's time, lived experience, and skills. Yet it is also important to recognize that setting it high can have implications for other non-profit agencies, as they face the challenge of matching honorarium expectations.

For clients who are engaged only in providing feedback, it still takes a considerable commitment of time to participate in a focus group or a key informant interview or complete a questionnaire. Some form of recognition, by serving a snack, giving a small stipend to cover expenses such as parking or transportation costs, or offering a food coupon or a gift certificate should be considered.

Moving Ahead — The Resources and the Logic Model

The only antidote, in my experience, to the preoccupation with success that suffuses our world is for the foundation [organization] to emphasize learning as well as success. But this is considerably easier to say than to accomplish. It means we must carve out time and space in busy schedule[s] — moments of creative confrontation when we can safely share significant failings that point to larger problems or possibilities. It means that we must find ways to reward people for acknowledging difficulties and learning from them.

Braverman, Constantine, and Slater, 2004

Organizing the Resources

Investing time and resources up front increases the likelihood of the successful implementation of the participatory program evaluation.

Two major steps can be taken towards planning an evaluation:

1. assessing available resources
2. drawing up an evaluation work plan and timeline.

Assessing Resources

Participatory program evaluations (PPE), as with all evaluation, require resources. It is hard to assess exactly what level of resources a participatory program evaluation takes, although it is generally higher than other evaluations. Involving diverse stakeholders in a process usually takes longer than assigning the task to a single person. Staff are extremely busy with normal day-to-day operations and their number one priority is serving their clients. It can be overwhelming even to think about conducting a program evaluation on top of regular duties. In addition, few funders provide dedicated financial resources for evaluations, and yet resources are required so that diverse stakeholders can participate.

Even with these constraints, it is better to embark on a participatory program evaluation with some limitations, i.e., not as much time or funding as you would like, than not to start at all. Ultimately conducting a PPE that is developed collaboratively and meets your objectives enables you to better serve your clients.

The essential resources for any participatory evaluation include:

1. stakeholder engagement
2. establishing commitment

By the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ resources required to conduct a participatory program evaluation

✓ considerations affecting the timeline of a program evaluation.

Point to Ponder

We can always delay getting started because we want to free up more time and/or more money on the evaluation but it is better to do something with what you do have rather than attempt nothing at all.

3. the right mix of people

4. the right mix of skills and interests

5. adequate time

6. adequate funding.

The key considerations in assessing the resources to be committed for each of these key points are outlined below.

1. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been discussed in detail; it is included here to underline the importance of bringing in the stakeholders and ensuring their commitment before moving ahead with the evaluation.

2. Establishing Commitment

One of the first steps is to assess the level of commitment to the process of conducting a participatory program evaluation. In answering the questions below, at least two of three responses should be "yes." This process only succeeds if the commitment is there.

» Has the board demonstrated commitment to evaluation and engaging diverse stakeholders?

This can be demonstrated through the board strategic priorities and/or organizational values and strategic planning.

» Have staff members demonstrated commitment to the value of conducting an evaluation and engaging diverse stakeholders?

This can be demonstrated through how the program is conducted currently with the engagement of diverse stakeholders. Staff can also show willingness to free up their time to take part in the process. Managers can make a commitment to reallocate work to enable staff to embark on this process.

» Have the board and/or funder committed to support the process and understand it as an opportunity to reflect, engage, learn and grow?

3. The Right Mix of People

The right mix of people is determined through stakeholder engagement planning. The willingness and availability of the desired group, and the diversity of participants needs to be ascertained:

» staff who have the skills and/or time to support and engage volunteers, clients, and other stakeholders

» whether there are any volunteers interested in participating in the evaluation

» clients or past clients who are interested and/or in a place in their lives that they can participate in a program evaluation

» others who have been identified as key stakeholders, such as members of the Board, community representatives, funders, people who work in similar organizations are willing and able to participate.

4. The Right Mix of Skills and Interests

The process of participatory evaluation demands a wide set of skills and expertise. As PPE is also a learning process, some of the skills may be acquired during the evaluation. Among the skills that may be necessary are:

» individuals (staff or clients) who not only want to be involved in the program evaluation, but also have particular skills or interests useful to conducting participatory program evaluations, such as experience in evaluation, data analysis, question design, or interviewing, skills in group dynamics or communications, and knowledge of the program, clients, and agency environment

» resources to provide the support and training potentially required throughout the participatory program evaluation

» training and dialogue about what it means to engage stakeholders and how to work equitably; processes developed can be drawn upon to support the stakeholder engagement process

» knowledge, lived experiences, connections, and understandings of the broader social context that can only be acquired by clients through their "lived experience."

It is also important to integrate and enhance other applicable skills that the clients might have in conducting an evaluation.

5. Adequate Time

Participatory program evaluations can take as much or as little time as allocated. It is important to establish the parameters of the amount of time available as that will help define the scope and depth of the evaluation and the level of participatory engagement.

There needs to be:

» an understanding of the time individuals have to partici-pate in the evaluation. Time can be expressed in hours per week or per month.

» an awareness of any days during the week that these indi-viduals absolutely cannot meet to work on the evaluation

Worksheet 1 (pg 111) is a template to assist in recording the name, stakeholder group, skills, interests, and time availability of those participating in your evaluation. It can be found in the Appendix.

6. Adequate Funding

Answers to the following questions help determine the funding that is necessary and available for the evaluation.

» How much money can the organization afford to put towards evaluation?

» When can this money be allocated?

» What costs can be associated with
   » staff salary and benefits
   » meeting rooms
   » communications
   » printing and copying
   » supplies and equipment
   » travel and transportation support
   » consultants
   » honoraria to clients or volunteers
   » child care/elder care
   » translation
   » food for meetings

- » Are there any resources that can be provided in-kind by the organization or any partner organizations?

- » Are there any funders that can be approached for evaluation funding?

Worksheet 2 (pg 112) provides a blank copy of the sample budget template. It is found in the Appendix.

Drawing Up a Work Plan

A work plan can be developed by the working group to manage the evaluation and to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of what needs to happen and when. The work plan brings together all the following elements:

- » the activities that need to happen — key tasks

- » when these activities should happen — timeline

- » the lead person for each task — accountabilities

- » key deadlines and results associated with the timeline — milestones

- » the budget estimates for each key task — projected budget

As noted previously, participatory program evaluations take more time than other evaluations as more stakeholders are involved. The work plan is an important tool for reflecting on how much time is required. In drawing up a work plan, decisions should be transparent and accountable to all stakeholders regarding time and resources available.

When developing the timeline, important points to consider are:

- » scheduling enough time to actively and meaningfully engage diverse stakeholders throughout the entire evaluation process

- » specifically, appropriately and equitably allocating sufficient time and resources for each stage of the process (planning, design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination)

- » ensuring that time has been scheduled for the work and training required prior to conducting the participatory program evaluation

Engaging Stakeholders

In the creation of the logic model there is an opportunity to engage diverse stakeholders. It is true that not all stakeholders will have certain information required to build some sections of the logic model, but their insights on particular aspects of the program are needed to ensure a comprehensive picture is developed.

» scheduling some flex time with the anticipation that "work happens" and other priorities will emerge that need to be addressed and impact the evaluation timeline

» ensuring that the timeline is respectful of the outside commitments and life circumstances that stakeholders, particularly clients, have.

Preparing a Program Logic Model

Defining a Logic Model

A logic model is a snapshot of a program that provides an overview of how your program operates. It itemizes every aspect of a program, from what the program does, to resources required for its operation, to the changes anticipated as a result of participation in the program. If a logic model is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, it functions as a tool to capture changes over the life of a program.

A logic model:

» provides a comprehensive overview of a program at a certain moment in time

» helps to ensure that all program stakeholders are "on the same page" about the essential aspects of a program

» helps to differentiate between what is being done, what you hope will happen as a result of the program, and what is happening as a result of the program

» provides a starting point for evaluation by providing a lens through which program stakeholders can identify complex processes they wish to examine.

By the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ the definition of a program logic model

✓ the steps to build a program logic model.

Developing a Logic Model

Logic models have many different formats and can range from the most basic facts to highly detailed information. The important thing is to use whichever approach you are most comfortable with and that makes sense for the organization and the stakeholders. Examples of process models can be found in the Appendix, under the heading Logic Model Resources (pg 123). They can be downloaded for adaptation to the particular circumstances of any organization.

All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination.

Earl Nightingale

A program logic model has seven essential components:

1. engage your stakeholders

2. document what you do (activities)

3. document the resources you use to do what you do (inputs)

4. know if you are doing what you say you do (outputs)

5. define the goals of the programs (outcomes)

6. identify assumptions and external factors

7. adapt the logic model as the program changes

The most effective way to understand the concept of a logic model is to see one built from beginning to end. Using a fictional organization, a logic model is constructed throughout this section to demonstrate the steps, decisions, and outcomes of this activity. This example is to advise, not limit, reflections on your own program.

The fictional example, The Pit Stop,[2] is a drop-in centre, located downtown in a large urban centre, that provides food, shelter, and recreation to a number of homeless clients during the day-time hours. Although the example deals with homelessness, PPE is applicable to a wide variety of non-profit programs that address diverse social issues and serve a wide range of community members. The Pit Stop is used as a reference point for the construction of a program logic model. The green boxes with the Pit Stop logo indicate Pit Stop input.

1. Engage Your Stakeholders

As discussed in the stakeholder engagement section (pg 25) in Chapter 2, stakeholders are individuals who are, or will be, most affected by the program. They can include staff, clients, and volunteers — as well as board members, funders, and members of the larger community. This information is used to build the stakeholder section in the logical model.

Bringing together diverse stakeholders ensures that all aspects of a program are captured and no pertinent information is missed. As a result of the logic model discussions, everyone can be "on

Point to Ponder

Don't get bogged down in the details, but capture as much of your program as possible. Because a logic model is a working document, you can add new information and information you forgot along the way. It is more effective to start by capturing some of your program on paper rather than doing nothing at all.

Background to Pit Stop's Evaluation

Five years ago, when a report was released about the link between homelessness and mental health issues, The Pit Stop received money to develop a program to provide mental health services to its clients. The Pit Stop has been operating its program for a number of years, but has not yet created a logic model.

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[2] All agency descriptions and names are fictional. Any resemblance to existing services is purely coincidental.

the same page" regarding the components of the program and the program goals. It can also be the first opportunity to note discrepancies in understanding, which will require further discussions among the stakeholders. Through the sharing of information and opinions, a new common understanding develops and additional information might be developed. Both the understanding and the new knowledge can inform the development of evaluation questions.

One benefit of a small group doing the work and sharing it with the larger group is that it is often easier for people to be engaged with something unfamiliar if there is information to respond to as opposed to trying to fill in a blank slate.

2. Document What You Do (Activities)

Building the logic model includes documenting program activities.

Program activities are what an agency does and, while agencies might use different language to identify these activities, for the purpose of the logic model they are known as "program activities." Activities may include but are not limited to:

- » education
- » counselling
- » health care
- » advocacy
- » connection to other community resources
- » provision of food, shelter, clothing, etc.

How the Pit Stop Created a Working Group

During The Pit Stop weekly staff meeting, the Executive Director asks staff members to brainstorm about whom it is important to involve in the creation of the program logic model. Staff concludes that two front-line staff members, a member of the management team, a board member, and two clients should participate in the creation of a program logic model. They also agree that the Executive Director will extend an invitation to the board members and that front-line staff will pursue inviting clients.

Point to Ponder

If it is difficult to coordinate meeting times for multiple stakeholders, form a smaller group of two or three people from diverse stakeholder groups, who can create the logic model and then share it with other stakeholders. Collectively developing a logic model takes considerable time, so plan accordingly.

The Pit Stop's Process Used to Document Program Activities

The Pit Stop's team of stakeholders begins to brainstorm about all of the program activities to address clients' mental health issues. These are written down on sticky notes and lined up on the wall under the heading of Activities.

They conclude that many of the activities of The Pit Stop contribute to the improvement of a client's mental health. The three main activities are one-on-one supportive counselling services, offered on a walk-in basis one day per week, mental health case management and referral services provided by case managers, and informal peer support.

Because The Pit Stop engages diverse stakeholders during the development of the logic model, clients identified an activity that other participants were not aware of — that the staff created an environment that was respectful and encouraged clients to talk to other clients. Because of this, clients were informally able to connect with other clients and share information about resources and services that complemented and enhanced the information received from the staff. The working group decided to document this activity as informal peer support.

At this point, The Pit Stop's logic model for its mental health program looks like this:

The Pit Stop's Mental Health Program					
			Outcomes		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
– staff – partnership – private office – wages – expertise – time – technology – materials – safe environment – client's wisdom and lived experience					

3. Document the Resources You Use To Do What You Do (Inputs)

Activities require resources that are documented as inputs in the logic model.

It takes many resources to operate a program. Resources are referred to as inputs: what is "put in" a program to make it operate. Inputs are categorized in two ways:

» They can be tangible, such as staff, volunteers, materials, money, equipment, technology, and a space to run the program.

» They can be intangible, such as expertise and partnerships. For example, front-line workers often use their judgment, developed through both their professional experiences and educational training, to work in the best interests of their clients.

The Pit Stop's Inputs

The Pit Stop's team of stakeholders begins to think about everything that it takes to complete the three program activities, and decides on the following:

One-on-one supportive counselling:
» staff provided by Critical Counselling Consortium (CCC)
» partnership between The Pit Stop and CCC
» private office
» wages
» staff expertise in assessment and supportive counselling
» staff time.

Mental health case management:
» staff
» private office
» wages
» staff expertise in assessment
» staff time
» technology (computers, phone, fax)
» materials to pass along to clients about these external services.

Informal Peer Support:

» the staff create a safe environment where clients can connect with other clients

» wisdom and lived experience of clients.

The Pit Stop's logic model now looks like this:

The Pit Stop's Mental Health Program					
			Outcomes		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
– staff – partnership – private office – wages – expertise – time – technology – materials – safe environment – client's wisdom and lived experience	– one-on-one supportive counselling offered on a walk-in basis, one day per week – mental health case management and referrals for clients to external mental health services – informal peer support				

4. Document How You Know You Are Doing What You Say You Do (Outputs)

After documenting activities and the inputs, outputs are the next to be documented.

Outputs are a way to measure whether or not activities are being carried out as planned.

There are a number of ways to measure outputs. At the most basic level, the act of client participation gives a sense of whether program activities are taking place. Another way to measure is to record the hours over which that activity takes place. Many agencies already collect this information on an ongoing basis.

These two simple types of outputs (service hours and participation) can tell you a lot about your program's process such as:

- » Is your program available during the planned hours?
- » Are clients attending?

It is important to consider that activities may occur as planned, but clients may not participate in the program to an extent that the client can benefit from the program the way the program has intended.

Alternately, clients may participate fully in a program and change does not occur due to some other factor, often external to the program. This will be addressed in step six: something to think about — assumptions and external environment.

Outputs do not show whether or not a service has been effective for a client. Outcomes are used to measure service effectiveness, which is the next step.

The Pit Stop's Outputs

The Pit Stop's stakeholders decide to track the number of clients who access supportive counselling during walk-in hours. They also decide to track how many hours per month the one-on-one supportive counsellor is available on a walk-in basis. In addition, knowing that they may not be able to expect change in a client's mental health with just one visit, they also decide to track the number of clients who meet with the walk-in counsellor three or more times.

For their second program activity, stakeholders decide to track the number of clients accessing mental health case management, as well as the number of hours staff spend providing mental health case management. They also decide to track the number of clients who follow up with their case management referrals.

For the third activity, The Pit Stop decides to survey clients about their connections and other questions related to peer support, such as:

- » Have you talked to other clients at the drop-in when you were facing a difficult situation in your life?
- » Have other members of the drop-in given you information you needed?

The Pit Stop's logic model for its mental health program now looks like this:

The Pit Stop's Mental Health Program					
			Outcomes		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
– staff – partnership – private office – wages – expertise – time – technology – materials – safe environment – client's wisdom and lived experience	– one-on-one supportive counselling offered on a walk-in basis, one day per week – mental health case management and referrals for clients to external mental health services – informal peer support	– # of clients who access mental health counselling during walk-in hours – # of clients who meet with walk-in counsellor 3+ times – # of hours counsellor available over period of a month – # of clients accessing mental health case management – # of clients who follow up with their referral appointments – # of staff hours dedicated to mental health case management over period of a month – client responses about their interactions with other clients and staff			

5. Define the Goals of the Program (Outcomes)

At this point, program activities, inputs, and outputs have been documented. The next step involves outcomes.

Outcomes are what can be expected to happen as a result of client participation in program activities. Outcomes can be further defined by what is achievable in the short, medium and long term. Tracking over time is an opportunity to assess changes in results and track any patterns.

In the short term, learning occurs. Learning means increased awareness, knowledge, skills and/or a change in attitudes, opinions, aspirations, and motivations on the part of the client.

Medium-term outcomes are action-oriented, for example, changing behaviours or practices on the part of the client, or modifying the process of decision-making or policies in the agency.

Long-term outcomes are the changes that occur in the larger system — a change that affects the lives of the clients. These include social, economic, civic, and environmental systems. Most organizations strive to have social impact, though long-term outcomes are usually not measured through participatory program evaluation. Generally, participatory program evaluations strive to measure short- and medium-term outcomes.

Outcomes are the starting point for discussions on what will be evaluated and how it will be measured.

The Pit Stop's Definition of Program Outcomes

The Pit Stop's team of stakeholders thinks about what outcomes can be expected to occur through participation of clients in the three program activities. The two clients on The Pit Stop's team of stakeholders provide insight into what they expected to occur through attending one-on-one counselling and mental health case management. They also provide insight into what kinds of personal changes are realistic given their current context (i.e., that they are homeless and experience many daily stressors). The result is a learning experience for all stakeholders. After much discussion, The Pit Stop concludes with a number of outcomes, listed below.

In the short term (three sessions or less), the outcome is that clients who attend one-on-one supportive counselling feel satisfied that their problems are listened to and validated and gain knowledge about coping skills. In the short term, clients who attend mental health case management learn about external services where they can seek help. In the short term, clients who come to use either one-on-one supportive counselling or mental health case management will feel that The Pit Stop is a safe place. Clients will feel that it is a place where they can share comfortably with other clients and staff.

In the medium term (more than three sessions), clients who attend one-on-one supportive counselling begin to use learned coping skills in their everyday lives. In the medium term, clients who attend mental health case management access external services to which they have been referred. In the medium term, through informal peer support, clients developed relationships where they felt comfortable to share challenges they are facing.

In the long term, The Pit Stop aims to improve clients' mental health, and to improve the access of a marginalized, vulnerable population (homeless clients) to mental health services in the city. As well, staff wish to improve clients' ability to develop and sustain other supportive relationships.

The Pit Stop's logic model now looks like the chart on the following page.

The Pit Stop's Mental Health Program					
			Outcomes		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
– staff – partnership – private office – wages – expertise – time – technology – materials – safe environment – client's wisdom and lived experience	– one-on-one supportive counselling offered on a walk-in basis, one day per week – mental health case management and referrals for clients to external mental health services – informal peer support	– # of clients who access mental health counselling during walk-in hours – # of clients who meet with walk-in counsellor 3+ times – # of hours counsellor available over period of a month – # of clients accessing mental health case management – # of clients who follow-up with their referral appointments – # of staff hours dedicated to mental health case management over period of a month – client responses about their interactions with other clients and staff	– clients feel that they are listened to – clients feel validated – clients gain knowledge about coping skills – clients learn about external mental health services – clients begin to feel safe in the drop-in	– clients incorporate coping skills into their everyday life – clients access outside services – clients begin to form connections	– clients identify as having improved mental health – increase access of a marginalized, vulnerable population (of homeless clients) to mental health services in the city – clients develop and sustain supportive relationships

A Moment to Review

Another way to look at a logic model is as a series of "if" and "then" statements.

If/Then for The Pit Stop

If The Pit Stop invests staff, time, money, technology, materials, partnerships, expertise, and a space to practice, **then** it will be able to carry out the activity of one-on-one supportive counselling.

If it provides one-on-one supportive counselling on a walk-in basis (and clients access this service), **then** it can expect that in the short term, clients will feel like they are listened to and validated and will gain knowledge about coping skills. **If** clients gain knowledge about coping skills, **then** they can expect that clients will incorporate coping skills into their everyday life.

If clients incorporate coping skills into their everyday life, **then** clients will experience improved mental health.

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6. Identify Assumptions and External Factors

The first five steps of the logic model document how a program is intended to operate. However, in application, programs are influenced by a number of factors. In the sixth step, these factors can be documented as "assumptions" and "external factors."

Assumptions refer to beliefs, which are usually not stated, about:

- » what the program is trying to address
- » the resources and staff
- » the way the program operates
- » what the program expects to achieve
- » the internal environment
- » the clients, including how they learn, their behaviour, and their motivations.

The Pit Stop's Assumptions

The Pit Stop's team of stakeholders thinks about all the assumptions that go along with its current programming. Staff members realize that one major assumption they have made is that their clients are in continual need of mental health services, and client participants confirm that this is the case. The case managers assume that external services are available to their clients. The Pit Stop also assumes that the Critical Counselling Consortium (CCC) counsellor would be available on a weekly basis and that the CCC counsellor would be trained in providing mental health care to the population served by The Pit Stop. The Pit Stop also assumed that clients would follow up on mental health referrals. Clients also raised a number of assumptions during the discussion. Clients assumed that the CCC counsellor would be available to them on a weekly basis and that when they were given a referral to an external service, they would have an appointment with this service in a timely manner.

External factors are factors that operate outside of the program but still impact the program. Examples include the societal values, financial aspects, demographic patterns, political environment, media influences, and changing government policies. External factors are often the elements that affect a program but are not within the direct control of those operating the program. These need to be discussed and noted but do not have to be documented on the logic model.

The Pit Stop's External Factors

Following an election, there is a change in government and social assistance is reduced. Ninety per cent of The Pit Stop's clients are affected by this change and experience increased depression and a decreased ability to cope. This leads to an unexpected increase in demand for services at The Pit Stop.

In the next chart is The Pit Stop's completed logic model. As you will see, the logic model lists assumptions but does not list external factors. Often logic models include the words "external factors" so that readers can keep in mind that the program operates within the larger environment. While it is important for a stakeholder team to reflect on the external factors that influence a program, it is not necessary to record these.

The Pit Stop's Mental Health Program					
			Outcomes		
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
- staff - partnership - private office - wages - expertise - time - technology - materials - safe environment - client's wisdom and lived experience	- one-on-one supportive counselling offered on a walk-in basis, one day per week - mental health case management and referrals for clients to external mental health services - informal peer support	- # of clients who access mental health counselling during walk-in hours - # of clients who meet with walk-in counsellor 3+ times - # of hours counsellor available over period of a month - # of clients accessing mental health case management - # of clients who follow-up with their referral appointments - # of staff hours dedicated to mental health case management over period of a month - client responses about their interactions with other clients and staff	- clients feel that they are listened to - clients feel validated - clients gain knowledge about coping skills - clients learn about external mental health services - clients begin to feel safe in the drop-in	- clients incorporate coping skills into their everyday life - clients access outside services - clients begin to form connections	- clients identify as having improved mental health - increase access of a marginalized, vulnerable population (of homeless clients) to mental health services in the city - clients develop and sustain supportive relationships

Assumptions/External Factors

1. clients of The Pit Stop require mental health services (staff)

2. external mental health services will be available to clients of The Pit Stop (staff)

3. CCC counsellor will be available on weekly basis (both staff and clients)

4. CCC counsellor will be trained in mental health care for population served by The Pit Stop (staff)

5. clients will follow up on mental health referrals (staff)

6. when referred to an external service, an appointment would be available quickly (clients)

7. Adapt the Logic Model as the Program Changes

Activities, inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and external factors change over time and therefore it is important to review your logic model.

Agencies adapt their programs on a continual basis in order to meet the needs of their clients more effectively. This is an expected and valued part of practice. As a program changes, the logic model should be revised so that it remains a current reflection of the program. Additionally, revising the logic model encourages the consideration of a new program component that may be producing great results for clients.

Moving to the Next Step

The purpose of having presented the logic model of The Pit Stop was to provide a concrete example of, and step-by-step directions for, how to create a logic model. Capturing program activities in a logic model sets the stage for the next step of the evaluation — designing and undertaking the research.

Keep the logic model close at hand as it is needed during the next steps of the participatory program evaluation.

CHAPTER 4

Collecting and Analyzing the Data

To ensure the relevance and usefulness of an evaluation is to develop a set of evaluation questions that reflect the perspectives, experiences, and insights of as many relevant individuals, groups, organizations, and communities [stakeholders] as possible. As potential users of the evaluation findings, their input is essential to establishing the focus and direction of the evaluation.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009

Designing the Questions

The evaluation team has now been through the process of creating a logic model. The information captured in the logic model is critical in the next steps. It is important to refer back to the logic model throughout the process. The next step is to develop the evaluation questions.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluations are focused on answering questions about the most important elements to explore in the program. The clearer the question, the better the results will be. Although there are many questions to ask, it is important to keep them to a minimum so that the results are useful and applicable.

The characteristics of good evaluation questions are that they:

» establish the boundary and scope of an evaluation and communicate to others what the evaluation does and does not address;

» are the broad, overarching questions that the evaluation will seek to answer;

» reflect diverse perspectives and experiences;

» are aligned with clearly articulated goals and objectives of the program;

» can be answered through data collection and analysis.

(Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009)

The five basic evaluation questions are:

What?   1. Did we do what we said we would do?

Why?   2. What did we learn about what worked and what didn't?

At the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ how to develop your evaluation questions

✓ the use of indicators

✓ the choice of data sources.

Engaging Stakeholders

Developing the evaluation questions is a critical opportunity to engage stakeholders, as the findings become more useful, relevant, and credible.

So what?	3. What difference did this project make? What changed for participants, for the organization, in the community?
Now what?	4. What could we do differently in the future?
Then what?	5. How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous learning?

(Denham and Gillespie, 1996)

These examples provide basic guidelines and intentions for evaluation questions, but each program must develop precise queries that reflect their programs and the goals of the evaluation. The working group can develop research questions through a collective discussion in which everyone shares their perspectives of what they think the evaluation questions are and why they think they are important to answer. The short- and medium-term outcomes documented in the logic model are an important starting point for the discussion as outcomes capture what the program wants to achieve.

Once there has been a broad and engaging discussion, then the questions need to be prioritized collectively, choosing the ones that will provide the most relevant and meaningful findings for all stakeholders. For more information about this process, consult *A Practical Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in Developing Evaluation Questions* listed under Developing Research Questions (page 120) in the list of resources and tools in the Appendix.

Indicators and Data Sources

Once the evaluation questions have been developed, the next step is determining the indicators of success.

An indicator demonstrates that an outcome has been achieved. The short- and medium-term outcomes in the logic model can guide the development of indicators that are reflective of program goals.

Indicators are a chance to break down goals and objectives into measurable units. For example, if the goal of a program is to "increase awareness or knowledge," the indicators might include factors such as:

- » clients report an increased understanding of a particular topic
- » clients demonstrate and report a higher level of engagement in a program activity, for example, speaking more during a session.

As with the development of the evaluation questions, the working group would have a robust discussion about what the indicators are, by asking how the program can be measured in terms of success. This discussion is critical as, potentially, diverse members define success differently. After the discussions, the key indicators that measure success for program activities must be chosen by the group.

Outcomes can be identified for the short term, medium term, and long term and therefore success can look different at each stage. It is also possible that the impact is cumulative with small changes at each step, building on each other, eventually accumulating into significant change.

Deciding what information to gather and who the respondents are can be challenging. The working group needs to ask who is best able to answer that questions they are posing. In participatory evaluation, it is important that indicators or points of measurement reflect the insights and experiences of several key people, most importantly, the clients and staff of the program, who become the primary source of data.

The next example illustrates the development of evaluation questions, indicators, and the data source, through a collective process that engaged diverse stakeholders. As detailed above, the fictional Pit Stop represents a drop-in centre housed downtown in a large, urban centre that provides food, shelter, and recreation to a number of homeless clients during the daytime hours.

The Pit Stop's Process for Defining the Evaluation Questions and Developing Indicators

The Pit Stop is looking at "So what?"

> » What difference does our program make?

> » What has changed for clients and for our community?

One of the program activities of The Pit Stop is to one-on-one supportive counselling offered on a walk-in basis one day per week. The outcomes associated with this program activity, as outlined in the logic model, are:

> » short term outcome: clients gain knowledge about coping skills

> » medium term outcome: clients incorporate coping skills into their everyday life.

How can The Pit Stop measure whether a client has gained knowledge about coping skills? One possible measure is that clients rate their knowledge level about coping skills as being higher than before.

How can The Pit Stop assess whether clients are incorporating coping skills into their everyday life? Two possible measures are that participants report that they are better able to cope with daily stresses or else they share a story of how they coped more effectively in a stressful situation than before the counselling. In both these cases, the clients are the best source of data.

Using Existing Data

Once it has been decided what it is be measured and what the indicators are, decisions have to be made about the collection of that information or data.

Much of the time, agencies already collect pieces of data on forms such as intake forms or discharge planning sheets. After determining what the critical question or questions are, the types of information that are already available can be investigated to see if any of this data can help answer the questions. If it is decided to incorporate evaluation as an ongoing process for program success, it is important to look at how these already-in-place mechanisms of data collection might be altered to provide continuing information for this process.

Point to Ponder

Never assume you are starting from scratch! Review the information being collected on a regular basis, as it is more than likely information gathered already can provide insight or answers to some questions.

Data Collection

After having decided what is to be evaluated, what the indicators of success are, and what existing information is applicable, the next step is to decide what method will be used to collect the additional data needed.

A number of principles of data collection have already been identified, including:

1. talk before you measure: make sure you collectively know what you are measuring.

2. simple data can provide important information, for example the age of participants, number of beds filled, number of participants in the program.

3. if the agency is already collecting data, for example on intake forms, always start by looking at that data.

4. "less is more" should apply; if the data are targeted and compelling, you are better able to tell the story of your program.

Keeping these principles in mind is helpful when considering data collection methodologies.

Two types of data are described here — quantitative data and qualitative data.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data can be counted. Quantitative data are collected using questionnaires, standardized tests, observation instruments, and program records. Typically, agencies gather a great deal of this information through regular program monitoring, for example number of participants, number of times they attend, or number of sessions missed. This type of data is reported in a variety of ways, including percentages, ratios, or averages.

At the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ types of data

✓ preliminary considerations about data collection methods.

Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.

Albert Einstein

Quantitative

In the case of The Pit Stop, a form of quantitative data would be that 95% of clients reported increased knowledge of coping skills after two one-on-one sessions.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data are words and pictures which:

- » provide a depth of knowledge about a program because they are descriptive about why or how an outcome has or has not occurred

- » are useful for documenting the more intangible aspects of a program that are not easily quantified

- » provide the context in which the program, the staff, and the clients operate

- » can also provide insight into unintended outcomes that may be reflected in the findings

- » may include detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviours, and people's own thoughts about their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs.

Considering Data Collection Methods

The best decisions are based on a deeper understanding than one source of data can provide; therefore, evaluations should be composed of both types of data. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Creswell, 1994), provides additional insight into both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

When considering which data collection methods to use, it is important to consider characteristics of both the agency and its clients. The next sections detail the major data collection methods of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Working through these sections helps determine which data collection method is most appropriate for application to a particular program. However, there are a number of considerations related to the organization and the clients that are also essential to this choice.

In terms of the agency, it is important to consider:

- » the amount of time available to develop or find tools and collect the data

- » which stakeholders participating in the evaluation team to involve in the creation of data collection tools, and who will do data collection

Qualitative

For example, clients from The Pit Stop share stories about how they coped differently than they did prior to attending the one-on-one counselling sessions at The Pit Stop.

Engaging Stakeholders

Clients can be trained and supported to develop the questions used in surveys, focus groups, and interviews, and to collect the data. Ontario Women's Health Network has recently released a handbook on inclusion research that provides information on how to train people from marginalized communities on conducting focus groups. Toronto Community Based Research Network completed an environmental scan that provides additional information on organizations working to train clients as peer researchers. In the Appendix on Resources, these tools can be found under Data Collection Resources (pg 120).

Access Alliance, Street Health, Women's Health in Women's Hands, and Planned Parenthood Toronto also have extensive experience with training and supporting clients in data collection. These organizations can be contacted for advice.

- » whether these stakeholders have prior experience with any particular collection methods, or if training is required

- » whether all stakeholders understand the ethical issues involved in the evaluation, or if training is required

- » which space is available for use while collecting data, and the level of privacy this space affords

- » what data are currently being collected by the agency, for what purposes, and whether or not that data can be used to answer questions the evaluation team has posed.

While all stakeholders should play a role in shaping the questions to be asked during the evaluation, it is important to consider who are the most appropriate people to collect the data, especially in face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

In terms of clients, it may be helpful to take into consideration:

- » accessibility (for example, literacy level and language of origin, which may mean ensuring that methods used are available in plain language)

- » cultural factors (for example, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, which imply methods that take social or cultural factors into consideration)

- » the level of clients' ability, related to skills or life context, to participate in an evaluation

- » the need for clients to be compensated for participating in the evaluation.

Availability of resources such as staff expertise and additional funds is important to ensure accessibility and to facilitate diverse clients' participation and meet their unique needs.

In the next sections, this Guide provides highlights of some of the common methods used by non-profit organizations:

- » surveys
- » interviews
- » focus groups

The descriptions of surveys, interviews, and focus groups present definitions, information on the type of data collected, and special considerations. A further section compares and contrasts surveys, interviews, and focus groups, as well as presents important information concerning all methods of data collection.

Point to Ponder

It is important to discuss thoroughly who will collect the data when engaged in a participatory program evaluation. What are the strength and weakness of using only staff, using only trained clients, involving other stakeholder or using a combination to collect data?

Point to Ponder

When deciding on the data collection method, remember that data collection requires clear and explicit consent. The section on Ethics in Chapter 2 (pg 38) and the tools under Ethics Resources (pg 122) in the Appendix can be useful.

When choosing a method, it is important to remember that more than one method can be used if that best suits the evaluation needs of the program.

In the Appendix, the section on Resources and Tools for Information and Application (pg 120) provides links to further information and examples concerning each factor of data collection.

Surveys

Surveys collect data by asking a series of questions to gather information directly from participants. Surveys can be a quick and inexpensive way to collect information anonymously from a large group of participants. Surveys can generate an accurate picture of the outcomes achieved, enabling conclusions to be made with confidence.

Participants can complete surveys by themselves or be interviewed by stakeholders, including clients supported to conduct this activity.

Surveys can be conducted in many ways:

- » in person
- » over the telephone
- » through the mail
- » electronically – on-line

Resources exist to help agencies create surveys and give guidance on the appropriate sample size. A list of these web–sites is presented in the Resources Section (pg 120) in the Appendix at the end of this Guide.

Survey Content and Timing

Surveys generate what is referred to as "self-report" data through responses to a standard set of questions — this means that every participant is given or asked the same questions. The evaluation team needs to decide how many questions it takes to capture the information required. It is necessary to balance the number of questions to be asked with the team's ability to handle the data. Before beginning a questionnaire, it is usual to let the respondent know how long it will take to complete. It is important to keep this within a reasonable time frame in order to ensure respondent participation.

Point to Ponder

Ask partner agencies and other sources for permission to view surveys they have done, and if appropriate to your needs, to utilize their questionnaires.

Data generated from surveys can be qualitative or quantitative, depending on the types of questions. Surveys can be used at different points in a program. Surveys are especially useful when you want "before" and "after" information. A participatory program evaluation can start before the actual program activity by asking participants to fill out a survey at the beginning of the first session. Then at the end of the program, the same survey can be administered. The analysis of the two surveys can track changes that could be attributed to the participation in the program.

Survey Respondents

If the program is small, that is has few program staff and clients, the survey may be given to every client. If this is the case, the results are an accurate reflection of the entire current client base.

However, if the program is large, surveying a smaller sample of participants from the client base may be a better choice. This must be done with caution, ensuring that the evaluation team members administering the survey do not choose certain participants to complete the survey for any specific reason, i.e., choosing the more verbal participants. It is highly preferable to choose who will complete the survey randomly, by picking names out of a hat, picking by client number, or some other "blind" process. It is also possible that a special mix of participants is necessary — a mix of ages, of gender, of time with the program, of reasons for attending the program. The resources in the Appendix under the heading of Calculating Sample Size (pg 121) can provide guidance on this.

Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions

Questions can be open-ended or closed-ended. There are numerous factors to consider when choosing the format of each question.

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions can provide rich data but take considerably more time to complete and analyze. They allow the clients

> ## Open-Ended
>
> **Some open-ended questions used by The Pit Stop include:**
>
> » How was one-on-one counselling helpful to you?
>
> » What do you like best about attending The Pit Stop?
>
> » What have you learned about coping with stress?

to write a response in their own words which can be analyzed qualitatively. The benefits of open-ended questions are that participants can write the response best suited to them. Ideas and concepts can emerge from the participants themselves, rather than choosing among the limited choices given to them. This can yield important insights that are unanticipated or unexpected.

It does, however, require that participants play a more active role in generating the data. Issues of literacy and an awareness of clients' first languages have to be considered and accommodated. In addition, responding to open-ended questions takes more time than closed-ended questions. Therefore the amount of time given to respond, and when to give the survey, should be strong considerations. The analysis is far more time-consuming. The best survey is not a useful instrument if the respondents do not have time to complete it.

Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions provide information that can take considerably less time to collect and analyze, but can also be limited in the type of information provided. Closed-ended questions have specific options that can be chosen as a response, and can be asked through surveys and interviews. They require less of the participants' time to complete. But they limit what answers the participants may provide. In order to avoid missing important information, it is helpful in a multiple choice closed-ended question to add "other" or "please specify" as a last choice.

There are different types of closed-ended questions including:

Closed-ended questions limited to yes or no responses:
- » Would you refer a friend to this program? yes/no
- » Knowing what you know now, would you take the program again? yes/no

Multiple choice closed-ended questions:

What is the most important thing you get out of attending one-on-one counselling sessions?

    a) feeling listened to by the counsellor

    b) learning about coping mechanisms

c) time to talk

d) feeling less alone

e) other — please specify:

Likert/rating scale question:

Learning some ways to cope with stress was helpful to me.

Strongly Agree • Agree • Neutral • Disagree • Strongly Disagree

The higher the number of options in the scale, the more opportunity there is for detailed variation in response.

Ranking question:

In a ranking question, the participant assigns a number to the experience or service.

» On a scale of one to five (with one being least helpful and five being the most helpful), how helpful was the one-on-one counselling?

It is important to ask only one question at a time. For example, with a question such as, "Did you learn about the signs and symptoms of stress and some ways to cope with stress?" the participants may feel that they learned about one but not the other and not be clear on how to reply. Therefore, it is more effective to ask two questions:

» Did you learn about the signs of stress? yes/no

» Did you learn some ways to cope with stress? yes/no

Table 3: Comparing Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions

	Pros	Cons
Open-ended questions	» can provide rich data » allow clients to write a response in their own words » allows ideas and concepts to emerge from participants themselves rather than thinking only about the choices they have been given » opportunity for unexpected insights.	» take considerable time to analyze as they are analyzed qualitatively » issues of literacy can be a barrier » take clients considerably more time to answer » can be daunting for clients.
Closed-ended questions	» provide information that takes considerably less time to analyze » specific options can be chosen as a response » question can be asked in a variety of ways » can be analyzed quantitatively » requires less of participants' time to complete.	» limit the type of information they yield » limit the response the participant can provide, therefore something important might be missed.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews

Interviews can be a very important tool to gather in-depth information from participants about their experiences of the program being evaluated or the agency as a whole. Interviews involve verbal questions and answers.

Interviews can be more useful than surveys when there are potential literacy challenges or if a client may feel intimidated by the process of putting pen to paper.

Interviews also allow an organization the opportunity to collect a lot of detailed information. However, one must consider that interviews can be time-consuming, and that the presence of an interviewer may affect participants' responses.

As with surveys, interviews can also be conducted by clients who are trained in face-to-face and telephone interview skills.

Interview questions can collect both qualitative and quantitative information. Interviews are particularly well suited to collecting qualitative data because the interviewer has a chance to ask follow-up questions that allow for richer, more detailed opinions, feelings, and descriptions to be documented. Interviews can also be used to collect survey data, especially when they are conducted over the phone.

> At the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:
> - ✓ what interviews and focus groups are
> - ✓ how to conduct them
> - ✓ the kind of data they collect

Structured and Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews can be structured or semi-structured.

Structured Interviews

In structured interviews, the interviewers have a script of questions from which they cannot deviate. The interviewers cannot

ask additional questions to either probe or clarify a participant's response. Structured interviews are useful when using a range of interviewers to ensure that the data collected are comparable and consistent across interviews.

Structured interviews can be closed-ended or open-ended.

A closed-ended, structured interview involves asking questions and providing a set of pre-set answers. An open-ended, structured interview involves asking questions to which participants can provide their own responses.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewers have a core set of questions, but have the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to probe and clarify responses.

In an open-ended, semi-structured interview, the exact wording and sequence of questions are decided in advance, for every interview. However, participants have the ability to provide any answers they wish and the interviewer has the ability to probe and clarify responses. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews are the most common type of interview used for evaluation.

Recording the Interviews

It is suggested that where and, whenever possible, and with permission from participants, agencies audio record interviews. This is to ensure that no information is missed. A sample consent form is provided in the Appendix, under the heading Sample Forms (pg 114).

It is necessary to explain to the participants before the interview starts that the recording device is to ensure that the interviewer is accurately documenting their responses. Even taking handwritten notes is considered recording. The more comfortable the interviewing environment the safer and more trusting the respondent will become, resulting in a better interview.

Point to Ponder

Remember when getting consent, it is important to include permission for the recording of the interviews and focus groups.

Focus Groups

Focus groups involve conducting one session with multiple participants at the same time. Focus groups are normally comprised of six to twelve people. Focus groups collect qualitative data.

Group participants are guided by a facilitator through a discussion about their experiences working or participating in the program. This can be an effective model for gathering their observations, thoughts, and ideas about what is and is not working in the program.

As with interviews, the best method for accurate documentation of focus groups is through recording. Explicit, informed consent by every member of the group is required before using this or any other method of documentation.

Focus groups are not ideal for collecting information of a personal, emotional, or sensitive nature because many participants may not be comfortable with discussing personal information within a group setting, especially if it is a group of peers.

A real strength of conducting focus groups is that participants respond to and build on each others' answers and ideas. For this reason, focus groups can often produce very rich information. Conversely, if there is one particularly opinionated voice in a group with others who have less experience or comfort speaking within a group, the one voice can skew the opinions of others. This is something that facilitators should be able to spot and manage throughout the session. For more information on conducting focus groups, refer to Ontario Women's Health Network focus group guide (pg 121) referenced in the References in the Appendix.

Conducting Focus Groups

Usually two members of the evaluation team, who could be two clients, two professionals, or a professional and a client, are involved in conducting the focus group: one who asks questions and facilitates the discussion, and one who records non-verbal responses to questions, and notes any other characteristics that would not be apparent from the audio tape.

Leading a focus group takes strong group facilitation skills. The

role of the facilitator involves keeping the group on the topic at hand and dealing with challenging behaviours. For example, if one person is dominating the conversation, a facilitator remains neutral but keeps the discussion flowing and ensures that all participants have an opportunity to express their opinions. Tools and resources for conducting focus groups are listed in the Appendix. A sample Focus Group Guide is provided in the Appendix under the heading Sample Forms (pg 118).

A Comparison of Data Collection Methods

Summarizing the Data Collection Methods

Table 4: Summary of Data Collection Methods

Method	Goal	Benefits	Challenges
Surveys	» to gather an abundance of information in a short amount of time.	» relatively quick to administer » can be completed anonymously » inexpensive.	» participants may not write detailed responses » participants may misinterpret questions » may only get "superficial information" » topics that are sensitive may not be appropriate » could be challenges due to literacy levels or if participants are responding in a language other than their first language.
Interviews	» to gather an in-depth perspective of a participant's experiences.	» can gather a lot of detailed information (especially when unstructured and able to probe for responses).	» can be time consuming to conduct and analyze » participant may tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear » participant may be reluctant to disclose or discuss personal or emotional information.
Focus Groups	» to gather in-depth perspectives of a participant's experiences in a group format (can learn common likes and dislikes).	» quicker than individual interviews » potentially rich information as participants build of the responses of others.	» requires a strong facilitator » difficult to schedule with numerous people » group dynamics can affect the quality of responses » participants may be hesitant to share personal experience or discuss sensitive topics in a group setting.

Sensitive Issues

Sometimes agencies may have to ask clients about sensitive issues, such as sexual practices, drug use, or violence. It is important to keep an open mind about what topics people may find sensitive or intrusive. For example, it may be helpful to know about other ways that clients are coping with stress, such as drug use.

1. The "everybody's doing it" approach: use words that suggest the behaviour is not uncommon. You may want to use phrasing such as:

   "As you may be aware, many people abuse alcohol (definition: drinking more than 5 drinks at a time, 5 out of 7 days a week) as a way to cope with their stress. Do you happen to use this coping mechanism?"

2. The assumption method: assume the behaviour and ask about frequencies and other details. You may want to use phrasing such as:

   "How many times have you had more than five alcoholic drinks at one time in the past week?"

Among the points to consider when developing or adapting questions for survey tools, interviews, and focus groups are:

» only ask for information that is clearly linked to the evaluation questions.

» ask about direct experiences only; avoid hypothetical questions or questions about causality such as, "Were you homeless because of the high cost of housing?"

» ask one question at a time; avoid asking two questions at the same time or two-part questions such as, "Would you like to be rich and famous?"

» do not ask questions that you would not answer, such as questions that are very personal

» keep values and assumptions out of questions; for example, "Although spanking is considered an inappropriate method for teaching children, do you use spanking with your children?"

- » questions should not be too demanding, for example, requiring a large amount of a participant's time or worded in a way that is confusing to the participant

- » use simple, straightforward language in order to avoid confusion

- » ask questions so respondents answer the same thing; therefore choose words so that all respondents understand their meaning and provide definitions or examples when necessary

- » the period of time referred to in the question should be very clear, for example, "How many drinks do you have each day?"

- » consider the background, such as cultural diversity, of clients to ensure that the questions are interpreted as you intend. It might be helpful to define terms. Remember that the most accurate findings result when interviewers do not have to reword or interpret the written questions for a participant and those responding to a questionnaire are clear on the meaning and intent of the questions

- » provide an introduction to the survey including a title, the purpose, and a note on confidentiality

- » introduce sensitive topics gradually

- » always create an opening for comments at the end

- » say thank you.

Reliability and Validity

In order for internal and external audiences to trust and believe the results, the data collection methods must be accurate and verifiable.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement, and its ability to be repeated consistently each time it is used.

Validity refers to whether or not you are measuring what you say you are measuring. For example, does your question reflect precisely the information to be gathered, or might it be interpreted in more than one way?

Normally, evaluation tools that have already been developed and published for use have been assessed for validity and reliability.

How The Pit Stop Altered its Survey

The Pit Stop asked the question, "Were there any barriers keeping you from attending our program?" The intention of the above questions was to collect information about tangible barriers, such as access to child care and/or travelling expenses. However, some participants were prompted to think of personal barriers such as, "It's embarrassing to use one-on-one counselling."

During the next distribution of the survey, The Pit Stop altered their question to: "Were there any barriers which impacted your ability to attend the counselling, such as access to child care and/or transportation?" The Pit Stop's survey respondents then provided feedback about tangible barriers, particularly transportation.

More in-depth information pertaining to reliability and validity can be found in the Appendix under Data Collection Resources (pg 120).

Piloting or pre-testing is one way of examining the validity of the data collection methods. Pre-testing a research tool with a few participants indicates if a question is being consistently or occasionally misinterpreted by the participants. The clients who are part of the working group might be able to offer some insights on why there are different understandings of the question, based on their knowledge of the community and their lived experience, and how it might best be revised.

Analyzing Data

Once the data have been collected, the next step is analysis. This is the step of looking for answers to the evaluation question and potentially finding many more insights and learnings.

The data analysis procedures outlined here and referenced in the section entitled Resources are in keeping with the theme of this Guide — simple and easy to use. On-line tools such as Survey Monkey or Epi Info™ are programs that can assist you in analyzing quantitative data. For further information about these on-line tools, see the Data Collection Resources (pg 120) section of the Appendix.

Analyzing Quantitative Data

If a closed-ended survey or interview were used to capture information about program activities, these produce quantitative data. Quantitative data can be analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics — which are ways of describing numerical data, including:

Measurements characterize what is typical of all participants who provided data (also known as measures of central tendency)

The following table displays the data, collected during the evaluation of a women's drop-in centre, that record the length of time that each client spends at the drop-in during a week:

At the end of this section you will have a clear understanding of:

- ✓ how to analyze quantitative data
- ✓ how to analyze qualitative data

Table 6 - Illustrating Measurements

Participant	Time Spent (hours per week)
1	1
2	5
3	2
4	4
5	1
6	4
7	4
8	3
9	1
10	4
11	4

Mean (average): add up all the data and divide by the number of responses. The total of the hours spent is 33 and there are 11 participants, so the average time is 3 hours per client.

Median: the middle value of all the values in order.

Working with the above data, the middle value of all the values in order is:

1 1 1 2 3 **4** 4 4 4 4 5

The median number of hours per week that clients spend at the drop-in is 4 hours. The mean and the median do not always produce the same result.

Mode: the value which appears the most frequently, in this case, 4 hours. In most situations, the calculations of the mean, median, and the mode do not provide the same number. It is then necessary to decide between reporting the mean or the mode by considering the range of responses. For example, if one or two clients had reported that they spend 20 hours per week at the drop-in, while the majority of clients reported that they spend 1 to 4 hours per week at the drop-in, calculating the mean will make it appear as though the average number of hours spent per week is higher than it actually is. In this case, the mode will provide a more accurate representation.

Raw Numbers (numerical counts): reveal how many times something occurred or how many responses fit into a specific category. Percentages are a way of presenting raw numbers that make it easier for individuals to conceptualize the magnitude of

what is being presented. For example, rather than saying that 27 out of 48 clients who participated in the program were between the ages of 25 and 34, it is clearer to say that 56% of clients who participated in the program were between the ages of 25 and 34.

Analyzing Qualitative Data

Qualitative data are words and pictures — they are descriptive. Qualitative data are usually transcribed or summarized into text for review and coding. The ideal is to have verbatim transcripts of any qualitative data, but that may be too costly or time-consuming. A summary of data can be used in the analysis stage. In working with qualitative data, a primary aim is to identity patterns and trends. A secondary, but important, goal is to identify unexpected observations or anomalies in the data.

Analyzing data begins with coding, which is a process used to summarize key concepts. Coding is the process of assigning a word or a phrase to similar comments (that have either been written in a survey or transcribed or summarized from an interview or focus group) in order to determine themes that are commonly expressed in the data. Referring to the interview guide or survey can help to determine codes that reflect the questions asked and the information being sought. In reviewing data summaries or transcripts, key observations are discovered that have not been accounted for in the initial set of codes — the unanticipated findings. When themes not part of the initial codes are found, new codes should be added and the data reviewed again to ensure that all mentions of these new findings are noted.

The next step is to develop themes by grouping together codes that appear to be linked to a similar idea. The coded data are studied for themes that have emerged, making apparent the patterns in the data, which reveal what effects the program has had. Through this process of coding and analysis for themes and patterns, the findings of the participatory program evaluation will emerge.

A Response to an Open-Ended Survey Question

THE PIT STOP

The Pit Stop has read through the written responses to the survey question, "What parts of counselling were helpful to you?"

One of the answers was: "Finding out that I could handle the stress in my life. I always thought I had to pretend to be happy and stress-free 'cause other people wouldn't want to be around me if I was sad and super stressed. Now I know I don't have to hide how I am feeling and can actually do something to reduce my stress and make me happier. I also get to feel like I'm doing something really important with my day rather than just sitting around I'm learning something."

This answer can be coded under headings such as "stress reduction," "coping strategies" and "value of counselling, learning tool."

During the next distribution of the survey, The Pit Stop altered their question to: "Were there any barriers which impacted on your ability to attend the counselling, such as access to child care and/or transportation?" The Pit Stop's survey respondents then provided feedback about tangible barriers, particularly transportation.

A Model for Collective Analysis of Focus Group Results

Diverse stakeholders can come together to collectively analyze qualitative data. Stakeholders working on this part of the process could the working group, the entire evaluation team, or be expanded to include other community clients who are interested in collectively analyzing the results of the evaluation.

The steps below were detailed by Dr. Suzanne Jackson for collective analysis. For a detailed description of the process, including establishing a safe environment for the collective work, refer to Dr. Suzanne's Jackson article *A Participatory Group Process to Analyze Qualitative Data*, cited under References (pg 127) in the Appendix.

Phase 1: Preparing the Data (pre-analysis)

» In preparation for the collective analysis, the focus group notes are typed and printed out using a large font. Notes from each focus group are printed on a different colour of paper.

» The Inclusion Researchers review the notes and cut each of the respondents' statements into strips. These strips include the entire statement made by each person in response to the question. In general, these are full or partial sentences, and occasionally a longer story.

The responses to each focus group question are bundled together.

Phase 2: Grouping Data and Identifying Themes

The process can start by recalling the focus group encounters — the inputs, the atmospheres, and the experiences. This information can be shared as a way of setting the stage for the consideration of the input.

» The stakeholders are split into teams and each team is given bundles of all the comments for certain questions.

» The teams then put these comments into pairs of like comments, which are then reviewed and moved around to form common groupings. This is a quick way to sort strips of paper from all focus groups.

» The common groupings are given high-level category/group titles and data for which the grouping or title were not clear are discussed. After the initial sorting, each team is asked to reconsider the title for each category by reading through all of the statements and making sure that the main idea is captured in the title.

» These group titles are then reviewed to see if they can be combined to form higher level groups. Titles of the higher level groups are written on two different sticky notes.

> » One of the sticky notes with the titles of high-level clusters is put on a wall, arranged by focus group question, and the whole group reviews them.
>
> » Themes are identified that cut across all of the questions and the facilitator helps the group to discuss the key points raised in the focus groups in relation to the main questions of the research.
>
> » Quotes from the focus group participants that captured essence of these titles are identified. This phase of the process may have taken three or four hours.
>
> **Phase 3: Making Sense of the Whole Thing**
>
> » The higher level titles are then put on separate pieces of paper and the group arranges and rearranges them on the wall, looking for possible connections.
>
> » The use of images or pictures can be important for the group because the education and literacy levels in a group with diverse stakeholders can vary; an image can help to tell the story clearly to the focus group participants in a reporting session — and it can help to clearly identify the issue and solution for action and advocacy purposes.
>
> **Phase 4: Telling the Story (post-analysis)**
>
> » Once the connections are made and the storytelling is created, the data from this day are written up as notes; a small writing team of stakeholders writes the overall report of the research results.
>
> **The strength of this approach** is that it can include people with varying levels of education and experience in the research analysis process.
>
> (Adapted from Jackson, 2008)

Now that the findings are analyzed, it is time to collectively consider what they mean and what is to be done with them:

- » the working group reviews the preliminary findings, informing the discussion and development of an action plan and recommendations

- » the collective reflection on the findings may lead to additional questions and/or action steps required

- » as a result of the discussion, an action plan with recommendations that speak to program strengths and program improvements, as well as other action items, emerges.

Key components of participatory program evaluation are to build a collective understanding of what the findings mean, set priorities and recommendations based on those findings, and determine what will be done as a result of the PPE. These steps take

time and ongoing discussion with a variety of stakeholders, both within the evaluation team and with the larger community.

Some participatory program evaluations present initial findings and recommendations to the larger group for discussion, so that they receive feedback on and refinement of ideas before the final document is developed. This process helps ensure that the program recommendations reflect diverse stakeholder interests and understanding of the findings. It also develops momentum for the implementation of the recommendations.

It is critical that people share their findings with their broader group of stakeholders — complete with proposed action steps or recommendations. This process requires the development of a dissemination strategy that outlines how to share the findings, action plan, and recommendations. The variety of ways to do this discussed in the next chapter on dissemination.

Sharing the Findings: Dissemination

People need to have a common set of facts that they can debate. This in turn leads them to create a common understanding and language for the issues they are passionate about.

David Pecaut

Sharing the Findings: Dissemination

Through the participatory program evaluation, an understanding of a program is developed through a logic model, the most important aspects of the program to examine are identified, the appropriate data are collected, and the results are analyzed. Many stakeholders have contributed along the way.

Another critical juncture in the evaluation process is ensuring that the findings are utilized for the maximum benefit of the program. To ensure this, stakeholders must collectively decide on the key findings, the common set of facts, and how these will be communicated. Then the findings must be shared.

In the dissemination phase the goal is to share the evaluation findings in a compelling way with multiple audiences. It may also be a point of moving forward on areas that need improvement in order to enhance the effectiveness of the program delivery.

Deciding Which Findings to Share

Depending on how the organization has structured its evaluation process, the working group discusses which findings it would like to share. Having engaged in defining the evaluation questions provides guidance about which findings are most likely to interest diverse stakeholders.

Deciding on which findings to share requires a discussion in which everyone shares their perspectives on what they think is important to share and why. The objectives developed for the evaluation and the questions asked are the keys to focusing this discussion. Different stakeholders have different perspectives and there might be resistance to sharing some findings, particularly if they are seen as negative. This is an important opportunity to reaffirm that this evaluation is about program improvement, not laying blame and pointing fingers.

> At the end of this chapter you will have a clear understanding of:
> - ✓ how to decide which findings to share
> - ✓ which audience to share them with
> - ✓ how findings can be shared.

Engaging Stakeholders

Stakeholders such as clients, project partners, and board members are critical elements of an effective dissemination strategy. Project partners and community members have access to different networks of connections and might be able to open doors to diverse audiences.

Clients can be very effective in telling the story of the program findings, as they can personalize the results. There are some good examples of ways to draw upon stakeholders for dissemination. The Ontario Women's Health Network *Inclusion Resource Handbook* (pg 121), listed in the Resources in the Appendix, explains ways clients can be engaged in the dissemination phase.

Once there has been a broad and engaging discussion, the most important and meaningful findings can be determined — the ones which are critical to program improvement and telling the program's and clients' stories. As part of the discussion, findings to be shared internally only and those to be shared externally can be considered. Evaluations are a critical component for organizations' ongoing reflection and program refinement, which means there might be more emphasis on the internal sharing of findings. As with defining the questions, disseminating your findings is more successful if the focus is on a few clear and succinct messages.

This is the first step in developing a plan of action in terms of implementing change and sharing program strengths, which are key activities to providing the best service possible to clients. It is anticipated that changes will be needed to the program based on the evaluation. The stakeholders can discuss how to move those changes forward, and what each stakeholder can do to help support and make these changes.

Sharing the Findings

There are many people who can benefit from knowing the results of the program evaluation, some of whom, or their representatives, would have been involved throughout the process.

These stakeholders could include:

- » clients
- » program staff
- » other staff
- » management staff and board members
- » outside agencies conducting similar work
- » funders

Clients

As key participants in both the program, clients have an interest in and a right to know the results. Sharing the findings informs clients about whether or not the program is meeting or exceeding program outcomes and whether or not there may be some changes in order to improve services to all clients.

Sharing of information with clients is almost always positive, allowing an opportunity to build the client-staff relationships and demonstrating trust in and the importance of clients by sharing this information.

Sharing with clients also allows them to ask questions and make suggestions. Clients can play a significant role in developing solutions if areas for improvement have been identified.

Program Staff

Staff of the evaluated program are integral to the program itself and some may have participated in the program evaluation. Program staff members, like clients, have the right to know, first hand, whether or not the program is meeting or exceeding expectations. Acknowledging and celebrating successful aspects of the program with staff can be a validating and empowering experience.

Additionally, staff play a significant role in developing solutions if areas for improvement have been identified.

Other Staff

Participatory program evaluation is meant to be a learning experience. Other staff can benefit greatly both by hearing about the evaluation of a specific program within their agency, and also, by learning about the PPE process, including challenges and triumphs.

Management Staff and Board Members

Sharing the results with management and board members is an opportunity to educate them about the findings and a chance to gain their support for the adaptation of the program, if adaptation is the direction the evaluation findings indicates. It also sends a message to the board that they are a part of a learning organization that is valued, dynamic, and always striving for excellence in program service delivery.

Outside Agencies Conducting Similar Work

Sharing the findings with outside agencies may inspire them to conduct their own participatory program evaluations,

contributing to a culture of openness and inter-agency sharing and trust. All programs in the non-profit sector are working to find effective ways to bring about positive social change for their clients. No one service can do it alone.

In addition, through sharing findings with other outside agencies, local or regional trends might be identified based on shared experiences and insights. These could be shared with policy makers and planners in organizations and governments.

Funders

Funders are accountable to their donors, board members, and others and so require timely and accurate information that reports on their investment in programs. Utilizing participatory program evaluation is an effective way of reporting on the value of funder investment.

Formats for Dissemination

Written Formats

Written results can be shared in print, as an evaluation report, executive summary, annual report, press release, newsletter, letter of thanks, and on-line by posting findings on a web-site. An organization can use as many of these strategies as are useful or affordable. Different formats may be more effective with different audiences.

Samples of written formats of evaluation findings can be found in the Resources (pg 120) section in the Appendix.

When writing reports:

» keep writing clear and simple

» avoid the use of professional jargon

» use action-oriented phrases such as "Findings show…" rather than, "It was shown that…"

» where possible, use direct quotes from clients to enable their "voices" to be heard

» add photos to provide context, where appropriate and only with the explicit consent of any client or staff member in the photo; a sample waiver (pg 116) is provided in the Resources section.

Evaluation Report

An evaluation report is a document that details everything that was done, from beginning to end, during the participatory program evaluation. The components of an evaluation report are:

1. an executive summary

2. an introduction which contains:

» the program description and logic model

» purpose of the evaluation (the questions to be answered)

At the end of this section, you will have a clear understanding of:

✓ different written formats

✓ different verbal formats.

The way evaluation results are communicated is as important as the methodology used and the findings reported.

Mark Kramer et al., 2007

» how various stakeholders were involved.

3. methodology, which contains:

» an explanation of what data were collected and how

» an explanation of how the data were analyzed

» a description of the dissemination strategy

4. findings, which contain:

» details of all findings, for example, what the measurement of outcome indicators revealed and whether or not the program is running as planned.

5. conclusions and recommendations

6. appendices, containing

» instruments used during the evaluation, such as surveys, focus group questions, etc.

Executive Summary

An executive summary is a brief description summarizing the longer evaluation report. Several of the components of an executive summary are similar to the comprehensive report, but the sections have been reduced with an emphasis on conveying the findings and recommendations.

As a guideline, an executive summary should not be more than three pages, without losing any of the highlights. Often, the executive summary is the only part of the document that is read as it conveys the essence of the report. Therefore, it is important to highlight the findings and make them as accessible as possible in terms of language and length.

Components of an executive summary:

» a brief description of the program, the purpose of the evaluation, and the process of stakeholder engagement

» a succinct summary of methodologies — data collection and analysis techniques

» key findings, including quotes where possible

» conclusions and recommendations.

Other Written Formats

In addition to an evaluation report and executive summary, other written formats can highlight the findings and reach additional readers:

Annual Report

An annual report is a comprehensive report on an agency's activities throughout an entire year. Annual reports often include updates on specific programs. The results of a program evaluation can be placed with an update of that specific program or program evaluation activities can be a designated section of the annual report.

Press Release

A press release is a one-page summary of the results of a PPE. It does not need to include methods used to reach your conclusion, unless the press release is being prepared for an academic audience or journal. Press releases are written to bring insights and interest about a particular issue or problem into the public domain and often start out with a bold statement such as, "Ninety per cent of clients who spend between three and five days a week at The Pit Stop drop-in experienced improved mental health." Clients who were part of the evaluation team can also be provided with media training if they are to talk with the media directly.

Newsletter

If an agency regularly distributes a newsletter, it can be an excellent forum to talk about the program evaluation process and findings across a broad group of stakeholders.

Letter of Thanks

A letter of thanks to clients, staff, and all other stakeholders who participated in the participatory program evaluation provides a forum to show how much their input was appreciated and to share the findings with them. As the evaluation process becomes an integral part of the ongoing programs, this appreciation for their efforts will encourage further involvement.

Web Posting

Web posting is an inexpensive and fast dissemination method which can reach a broad audience.

Verbal Formats

Another effective way of sharing findings is through verbal communication in workshops, presentations, community forums, lunch and learns, and roundtable discussions. Diverse stakeholders, including clients, can be trained and supported to present or facilitate these sessions.

Workshops and Presentations

Presentations that convey how the PPE was conducted and the key findings can also be a quick and effective way to share information. Visual aids such as PowerPoint® or posters can be used to support the presentation. A workshop may be structured around topics such as leading others through the process so that they can adapt it for their own use or how the findings were applied to program change.

Community Forum

Community forums are for large-group communication, allowing the audience to listen to a presentation, potentially from a member of the evaluation team who is from their community. It is a time where a broader audience can comment and ask questions.

Lunch and Learn

Lunch and Learn refers to a presentation that takes place over the lunch hour to share program evaluation results with staff and other professionals. Lunch is often provided by the agency to encourage attendance.

Round Table Discussion

A round table discussion involves hosting a small group of specialized stakeholders (this can be a professional or client group) to discuss a specific topic or issue. For example, round table discussions may be used to share findings with key stakeholders from outside agencies, professional and/or special interest groups, and the broader community.

After Dissemination

Dissemination is not the end of participatory program evaluation; it is one step in a continuing process. It takes time and effort to implement the action plan and recommendations that emerged from the evaluation. Some ways to implement the recommendations include incorporating the actions into work plans, strategic plans, and funding proposal for support in the implementation of the recommendations.

Final Reflections

We hope that the information, examples, and resources in *Working Together: The Paloma-Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation* were helpful and that you were able to adapt them for use in your programs.

Developing a participatory program evaluation may have allowed you, for the first time, to engage diverse stakeholders in a collective process that examined the goals and outcomes of your program and then turned this information into the questions and data collection strategies that could guide program change and improvement. Participatory program evaluation is essentially a learning process for all involved.

The tools we presented were designed to help you take advantage of this learning process, rather than focus solely on the findings. The skills developed help evaluation teams pose and answer questions such as:

» Who should we engage in the process?

» What is the purpose of the program?

» What is the program doing?

» What do we want to know and evaluate about the program?

» What questions should we ask?

» How are the perspectives the same and/or different among the various stakeholders?

» What changed as a result of the program?

» How did the program affect clients? What was its impact?

» What else did we learn?

» How can we make adjustments, if necessary?

» Why do these results matter?

» What results will we share internally and externally?

» How will we share our results internally and externally?

» How do we effectively demonstrate and communicate the outcomes of our work to others?

Our goal was that the Guide would enable you to develop an evaluation on your own terms, with a process and results that improve your programs and can help lead to social change.

Of equal importance, we hope that participatory program evaluation becomes a relevant, useful, integrated, and ongoing process for all your programs. Participatory program evaluation is most effective when it is incorporated as a regular program activity. Participatory program evaluation is the opportunity to establish an ongoing learning culture and continue collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

Participatory program evaluation, integrated into the ongoing activities of an organization, is a critical tool in striving towards program excellence — **a key step in creating positive social impact.**

Appendix – Resources

Glossary of Terms

Activities: Activities are behaviours or actions. In implementing a program, activities include workshops, meetings, consultations, facilitation, and training.

Annual Report: An annual report is a comprehensive report on an agency's activities throughout an entire year.

Assumptions: Assumptions refer to the underlying or implicit beliefs that are held about a program, a problem or situation, resources and staff, the way a program operates, what a program expects to achieve, the internal environment, and participants (including how they learn, their behaviour, and their motivations).

Client: A client is a person who is receiving services from a service provider.

Closed-Ended Question: Closed-ended questions are questions that have specific responses from which participants can choose.

Community Forum: A community forum is a form of large group communication, whereby those in attendance have a chance to listen to a presentation, to make comments, and to ask questions on a specific topic.

Data: Data are the numbers, words, or pictures that are collected in order to describe whether or not program outputs and outcomes have been achieved.

Data Source: The data source is who or where information is collected.

Data Collection Method: The data collection method is a tool that is used to collect information to tell you about your program. There are many data collection methods. In the Guide we discuss surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Other methods include observations, case studies, and document reviews.

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics are the percentages or raw numbers that can be input to or outcomes of the research. The numbers may report on demographics factors such as ethnicity or gender, participation rates, client satisfaction rates, budget numbers, or any other point that can be expressed in numbers.

Dissemination Strategy: A dissemination strategy is a developed plan of the people with whom you will share your program evaluation, and which format you will use.

Ethics: Ethics are the moral standards governing the values, actions, and conduct of a person or members of a profession.

Evaluation Report: An evaluation report is a technical report detailing everything that was done, from beginning to end, during a program evaluation.

Executive Summary: An executive summary is a short description that summarizes the longer evaluation report; a stand alone description that can quickly display a program evaluation process, results, and recommendations.

External Factors: External factors operate outside of the program but can still impact the program, such as societal values and the political environment.

Focus Group: Focus groups are a way of doing research with multiple participants. The participants are guided through a discussion, led by a facilitator, about a program (its effects on their lives, what was best about it, worst about it, etc.) in order to gather the participants' thoughts and feelings.

Free and Informed Consent: Free and informed consent occurs when consent is given by a client who has received all necessary information regarding participation (including any potential risks as well as any perceived benefits), has understood the information, and has made the decision to participate free from influence or coercion.

Front-Line Staff: Front-line staff members are those who have direct contact with clients.

Indicator: An indicator is an evaluation term that refers to measures of whether or not an outcome has happened.

Interviews: Interviews are the verbal collection of information by an interviewer from staff, clients, and any other key individuals about their experiences within the program being evaluated. Interviews can be semi-structured or structured.

>> in a *semi-structured interview*, the interviewer has the same core set of questions for each interview, but has the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to probe and clarify responses.

>> in a *structured interview*, the interviewers have a script of pre-determined questions from which they cannot vary.

Inputs: Inputs are the resources that it takes to run a program, including staff and volunteers, time, money, materials, equipment, technology, and partners.

Logic Model: A logic model is a "map" of a program from beginning to end; a diagram that records and visualizes every aspect of a program, allowing all stakeholders to understand the resources necessary to conduct activities and produce change.

Open-Ended Question: Open-ended questions allow the participants to provide a response in their own words.

Outcome Evaluation: An outcome evaluation examines the direct experiences of clients participating in a program.

Outcomes: The outcomes express what is expected to happen as a result of participation by staff and clients in a program. Outcomes can be further defined by what is achievable in the short, medium, and long term.

>> *Short-term outcomes* include learning (increased awareness, knowledge, and/or skills) and/or a change in attitudes, opinions, aspirations and motivations.

>> *Medium-term outcomes* are defined as action-oriented outcomes, for example, changing behaviour, practice, decision-making, or policies.

>> *Long-term outcomes* refer to the change occurring in the larger system, such as an improvement in the living conditions of clients. These systems include social, economic, civic, and environmental change.

Outputs: Outputs are ways to measure whether or not activities are being carried out as planned. Outputs are often expressed in quantifiable data as they are activities or items that can be counted.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Program evaluation participants have a right to know who will have access to their information and for what purposes. A participant's personal information must be kept private and only be shared with individuals or groups that have been specified to the participants prior to their involvement in the program evaluation.

Process Evaluation: Process evaluation is a type of program evaluation that focuses on whether or not a program is running as planned.

Program: A program can be described as the amalgamation of one or more activities that work to achieve a desired outcome.

Program Staff: Program staff are who those who are directly involved with the program being evaluated.

Qualitative Data: Qualitative data are words or pictures. Qualitative data tell why or how an outcome has occurred and can help explain how and why a program is or is not leading to a specific desired outcome. Qualitative data can also provide insight into what a program means to someone. Qualitative data may include detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviours, and people's own thoughts about their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs.

Quantitative Data: Quantitative data are numbers. Quantitative data express whether or not a specific desired outcome has occurred. Quantitative data are collected using questionnaires, standardized tests, observation instruments, and program records.

Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency of the evaluation, and the likelihood of it producing the same results consistently each time it is used.

Sample: A sample is a smaller group of participants who are chosen to participate in an evaluation. Samples can be chosen either randomly or non-randomly. Random sampling occurs when every client has an equal chance of being selected to participate in the evaluation. Non-random sampling occurs when specific participants are selected to participate in the evaluation.

Self-Reported Data: Self-reported data are data collected about individual feelings, thoughts, or behaviours from the individuals themselves.

Service Provider: A service provider is an agency, program, or person involved in providing services to clients.

Stakeholder: Stakeholders include the people who care about what will be learned from the research or evaluation project and about what will be done with the knowledge gained. Key stakeholders include those individuals who will be most affected by a program, including both staff and clients.

Survey/Questionnaire: A survey is a way of collecting data that involves asking questions of participants. Surveys generate what is often referred to as "self-reported" data through written response to a standard set of questions. Questionnaires can also be developed to lead interviews or focus groups through a consistent set of questions.

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans: The Tri-Council statement comes from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) detailing principles of ethical conduct during research with human participants that should be followed when conducting program evaluation.

Validity: Validity refers to whether or not the evaluation tool and process have actually measured what they claim to have measured.

Vulnerable Clients: Vulnerable clients are clients to whom ethical standards should be carefully applied given their challenges that may increase their susceptibility to exploitation, such as people living in poverty or those with low literacy skills.

Worksheet 1: Sample Resource Assessment Template —Who, What, When

Name	Staff, Volunteer, Client	Skill-Set/Interested In	Time/Best Working Days
Joan Smith	Staff	Some experience with creating surveys and analyzing survey data	1 hour max per week Cannot meet on Fridays

Worksheet 2: Sample Program Evaluation Budget Template

Program Evaluation Budget	
Staff Salary and Benefits (amount of salaried staff time of x salary)	
Resources to Support Stakeholder Engagement Honoraria Transportation Child care Translation Refreshments Meeting rooms	
Communications (telephone, internet)	
Printing and Copying	
Supplies and Equipment (e.g. computers)	
Travel	
Other	
Total	

Adapted from W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998

Worksheet 3: Sample Participatory Program Evaluation Work Plan

Work Plan				
Timeline	**Key Tasks**	**Accountabilities**	**Milestones**	**Projected Budget**
February, March, April, 2010	➢ Pose invitations to stakeholders to be part of evaluation team ➢ Develop logic model for program			
May, June 2010	➢ Decide on key questions to be answered through evaluation ➢ Decide on the best ways to collect this information			
July, August, September 2010	➢ Collect and analyze data			
October, 2010 – December 2010	➢ Finish data analysis ➢ Put together key findings ➢ Share findings ➢ Decide what to do with findings			

Focus Group Participants of the Urban Arts Youth Project

Thank you for participating in today's focus group. This consent form provides you with information on the evaluation of the Urban Arts Youth Project (UAYP), as well as an overview of today's focus group. After you have read over the consent form, please sign and date the last page and give it to the Researcher from EVIDENCE.

Information about the Evaluation

EVIDENCE is conducting an evaluation of the UAYP. The main reasons for doing this are: to understand how it is meeting its goals, which parts of program are useful to youth and which parts could be made better. This means that your ideas and honest feedback can help to make the program better.

The purpose of this focus group today is to look at:
- What you did while you were at the UAYP
- What you got out of it, or how the UAYP has made a difference in your life
- What worked for you and what did not.

Procedures

The focus group will take about one and a half hours. The discussion will be recorded onto a digital recorder. The recording will then be transcribed into a Word document. After the recording has been transcribed, it will be erased. The information collected will be shared with the staff at the UAYP only after is has been analyzed and interpreted by staff at EVIDENCE.

Eligibility

To participate in this focus group, you must have participated in the UAYP.

Confidentiality

Your comments will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law. In addition, neither your name nor any other personal information that can identify you will be used in any reports or publications about this focus group. In addition, no one at the UAYP will hear the recording or see the transcript of today's session. Your comments will remain anonymous. As part of EVIDENCE's continuing quality assurance of the evaluation, all staff members accessing records must maintain your confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

Benefits

The results of the session will help staff at the UAYP better understand the impact that the program has had from the perspective of program participants. The results of this session will also help to develop recommendations about how to improve the program.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this focus group is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the session at any time. Your choice to not participate or your choice to withdraw will not affect any rights that you might have at the UAYP now or in the future.

Additional Information

If you have questions about the focus group or the evaluation that are not answered in this form, please ask them. In addition, if you have questions in the future, you may contact EVIDENCE staff using this contact information:

Lavinia Lamenza, Research Manager
EVIDENCE Research and Evaluation: A Unit of First Work
215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 350, Toronto, ON M5T 2C7
Tel: (416) 323-9557 x229
E-mail: llamenza@evidenceconsulting.org

Agreement to Participate

I, _____, have read the information on the evaluation of the Urban Arts Youth Project (UARP), as well as an overview of today's focus group. This focus group has been planned to look at the impact of the UARP.

My role in the focus group is as a participant to help EVIDENCE collect information about the UARP. If I had any questions, I am satisfied that they have been answered. By signing this consent form, I agree to attend the session, and to have it recorded. I understand that my name will not appear in any report, that my comments will remain anonymous, and that all information will be kept confidential. I know that I can contact Lavinia for further information.

I have read this consent form and I understand its contents. I agree to participate.

Participant

Signature: _____

Name: _____
Please Print

Date: _____

Person Obtaining Consent

Signature: _____

Name: _____
Please Print

Date: _____

[insert name of your organization and/or program]

Waiver Form

[photos | video | artwork | profiles | stories]

[insert name of your organization and/or program] has my permission to use my photograph, video and audio recordings, likeness, artwork, profile and/or story in this and future publications, web pages and other promotional materials produced, used by and representing [insert name of your organization and/or program]. I understand the circulation of the materials could be worldwide and that there will be no compensation to me for this use.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____   _____

Parent Signature (if under 18)   Date

_____   _____

Print Name   Telephone
                                                                                                       (optional)

Date: _____

Purpose: _____

                 _____

                 _____

                 _____

[insert name of organization and/or program]

Photo Release Form

The purpose of this form is to give permission for the use of photographs in [insert name of organization and/or program] publications – i.e. newspaper articles, brochures, promotional materials, annual reports, evaluation reports, workshop materials and on the [insert name of organization] website.

Client's Name: _____

Guardian/Parent's Name (if working with children): _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone: (Work) _____

(Home) _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

_____

(Client)

_____

(Parent/Guardian)

Guide for a Focus Group with the Participants from the Urban Arts Youth Project

Introduction

Hi, my name is _____ and I am a Researcher with EVIDENCE. I want to thank each of you for taking the time to come to today's focus group.

EVIDENCE provides community-based research and program evaluation to organizations like the Urban Arts Youth Project. We mostly focus on programs that serve youth. EVIDENCE is doing an evaluation of the Urban Arts Youth Project to better understand the program and how it benefits the youth who get involved here. This is the third evaluation we have done of the UAYP.

We are here today because we are very interested in the experiences youth have had in the program. The information that we collect during this evaluation will be used to help staff at the Urban Arts Youth Project understand how it is meeting its goals, which parts of program are useful to youth and which parts could be made better.

The purpose of this focus group today is to look at:

▪ What you did while you were at the Urban Arts Youth Project
▪ What you got out of it, or how the Urban Arts Youth Project has made a difference in your life
▪ What worked for you and what did not.

Confidentiality

Before we start, let's review the consent form. Your comments will be kept confidential (to the full extent provided by law). Also, we will not use your name or any personal information that could be used to identify you in any of the reports or publications that we write about this focus group. We will be recording the focus group, but no one at the Urban Arts Youth Project will hear the recording or see the transcript of today's session.

So, we encourage you to share your honest experiences and opinions about the program. Are there any questions so far? Please sign page 3 of the consent form and return it to me now.

Since this focus group is being recorded onto a digital recorder, we are asking that one person speak at a time and that you speak clearly, so we can capture everybody's comments. We also want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak, so for most questions we will try to go around the table.

Are there any questions before we get started?

Warm-Up Questions

1. Why do you think art is important to youth like yourselves?

Introductory Questions

2. How did you first get involved with Urban Arts Youth Project?
   • How did you hear about it?
   • What made you decide to apply in the first place?

3. What was it like for you when you first came to Urban Arts Youth Project?
   • What was it like meeting the Urban Arts Youth Project staff for the first time?

Transition Questions

4. How have the staff members made a difference to your experience at Urban Arts Youth Project?
   • How would you describe your relationship with your program leader?

5. How has your mentor made a difference to your experience at Urban Arts Youth Project?
   • How would you describe your relationship with your mentor?

6. Which parts of the program were most useful to you?
   - What is it about [name of aspect] that you liked?

7. Which parts of the program didn't work for you?
   - What didn't you like about it?
   - What was missing from the program for you?

Key Questions

8. How did you do in achieving the goals that you set at the beginning of the program?
   - Is there anything that prevented you from achieving your goals during your time at Urban Arts Youth Project (or participating in the program more)?

9. In what ways has Urban Arts Youth Project made a difference in your life?
   - What has changed in your life since you first got involved in Urban Arts Youth Project?
   - What has stayed the same?

10. Describe an experience you had at Urban Arts Youth Project that really affected you or made a lasting impression.

Last Questions

11. What kind of support do you need now to achieve your goals?

12. Is there anything else that you want to tell us about Urban Arts Youth Project that we haven't talked about already?

Thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions with us today!

July 30, 2009

Lavinia Lamenza, Research Manager
EVIDENCE Research and Evaluation: A Unit of First Work
215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 350, Toronto, ON M5T 2C7
Tel: (416) 323-9557 x229
E-mail: llamenza@evidenceconsulting.org

Resources and Tools for Information and Application

Data Collection Resources

General Research Resources

How to Guides for Community Research Based in New Zealand

http://www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/community-research/publications-resources/research-tools.htm

Our Common Ground Cultivating Women's Health Through Community-Based Research: A Primer

http://www.whrn.ca

Provides information about focus groups and interviews, transcribing, coding, data analysis, and moving from analysis to writing.

Webcentre for Social Research Methods

http://www.socialresearchmethods.net

Developing Research Questions

A Practical Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in Developing Evaluation Questions

http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=49951

Describes a five-step process for engaging stakeholders in developing evaluation questions and includes four worksheets to facilitate the planning and implementation of a stakeholder engagement process.

Sample Indicators and Outcomes

Indiana Fathers and Families: Sample Evaluation Tools for Fathers and Families Projects

http://basis.caliber.com/cwig/ws/library/docs/fatherhd/Record?k=56162

Harvard Family Research Project: Measurement Tools for Evaluating Out-of-School-Time Programs

http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/measurement-tools-for-evaluating-out-of-school-time-programs-an-evaluation-resource

FRIENDS: National Resource Centre for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/toolkit/outin.htm

Provides outcomes and indicators for child and family health, parenting skills, child development, family relationships, formal and informal sources of support, parental resilience, concrete supports for parents, social connections, nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting, and child and youth development.

Making Measures Work for You — Outcomes and Evaluation

http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=835

This guide looks at tensions that drive the debate about outcomes measurement, as well as common questions about its potential risks and rewards.

The Outcomes Star: Supporting Change in Homelessness and Related Services, 2nd Edition

http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk/resources/1/Outcomes%20Manuals%202nd%20Ed/OSS_user_guide_2ndEd.pdf

Proposes a model of outcomes and indicators for homeless participants.

Developing Surveys

EVIDENCE Research and Evaluation: A Unit of First Work

http://www.evidenceconsulting.org

EVIDENCE offers free survey consultation to all service and non-profit organizations in Ontario. They provide tips to create a survey for any purpose and to improve client satisfaction surveys, and advice to make sure you will get the data you are looking for.

Calculating Sample Size

RaoSoft Sample Size Calculator

http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html

Creative Research System — Sample Size Calculator

http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Sample Size Calculator is presented as a public service of Creative Research Systems. You can use it to determine how many people you need to interview in order to get results that reflect the target population as precisely as needed. You can also find the level of precision you have in an existing sample.

CustomInsight — Survey Random Sample Calculator

http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp

Conducting Focus Groups

Ontario Women's Health Network: Guide to Focus Groups

http://www.owhn.on.ca/focusgroupguide.htm

Based on OWHN's experiences, the Guide to Focus Groups is intended to support organizations and researchers coordinating focus groups in their communities. This resource outlines how to go about planning, implementing, and facilitating focus groups.

Morgan, D.L., and Krueger, R.A (1998). The Focus Group Kit, v. 1-6, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

This kit provides the reader with a systematic and readable approach to the design, implementation, and analysis of focus group data. The material is presented to help the novice learn how to actually conduct a focus group, while at the same time it enables those more experienced with focus groups to check their own performance against best practice.

Tips on Facilitating Focus Groups

http://emedia.rmit.edu.au/ed/Core/Design/documents/Facilitating_focus_groups.pdf

Training Clients/Participants

Ontario Women's Health Network: The Inclusion Research Handbook

http://www.owhn.on.ca/inclusionhandbook.htm

Developed by OWHN and our Count Us In! project partners, Inclusion Research is conducted by and for women who are marginalized to ensure their voices inform the development of health policy, programs, and research. At the centre of this methodology are Inclusion Researchers, marginalized women who are trained and employed to participate in all aspects of the research, including project design, data collection and analysis, and knowledge translation.

The Inclusion Research Handbook introduces this innovative community-based research method and provides a how-to guide on conducting Inclusion Research, including a comprehensive Inclusion Researcher Training Program manual.

Toronto Community-Based Research Network

http://torontocbr.ning.com

The Toronto Community-Based Research (CBR) Network brings together community practitioners, academics, funders, and community members from across the GTA who are or have been involved in CBR projects.

The mission of the Toronto CBR Network is to increase and sustain the capacity of local health and social service organizations and academic partners in the GTA to conduct effective CBR leading to evidence-based action and policy change.

The Toronto CBR Network is a vehicle to facilitate networking, collaboration, learning, and action.

Data Collection and Analysis

Epi Info™

http://www.cdc.gov/EpiInfo/

Provides free software from the Center for Disease Prevention and Control to rapidly develop a questionnaire or form, customize the data entry process, and enter and analyze data.

Survey Monkey

http://www.surveymonkey.com/

Provides an on-line survey software and questionnaire tool. Depending on the number of questions of the survey and the depth of analysis required, this service can be free.

Webcentre for Social Research Methods

http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/

This web-site is for people involved in applied social research and evaluation, featuring an on-line statistical advisor and resources and links to other locations on the Web that deal in applied social research methods.

Reliability and Validity

http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/measure.php

This link is for the Measurement section of a web-based

textbook entitled "Social Research Methods", written by William M.K. Trochim

Ethics Resources

About Ethics

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/

Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tutorial

http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial

North American Evaluation Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

Canadian Evaluation Society (2009). Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=5&ss=4&_lang=EN

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (2004). Evaluation Guidelines

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-32492-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

American Evaluation Association (2003). Guiding Principles for Evaluators

http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp

International Guidelines of Evaluation Conduct

United Nations Evaluation Group (2004). Standards for Evaluation in the UN System

http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2008). Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance

http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/12/2755284.pdf

European Evaluation Society (2006). Evaluation Standards

http://www.europeanevaluation.org/?page=756983

African Evaluation Association (2002). The African Evaluation Guidelines 2002

http://www.afrea.org/content/index.cfm?navID=5&itemID=204

Sample Consent Forms

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group: Process Evaluation of the Development of the Kansas City Youth Violence Prevention Coalition

http://www.park.edu/irb/Forms/SampleConsentFormFocusGroup.pdf

Generic Sample Consent Form, Produced by FRIENDS: National Resource Centre for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention

http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/outcomeresources/informed_consent.pdf

General Evaluation Resources

Tools for Implementation

The Community Tool Box

http://ctb.ku.edu/en

The Community Tool Box is a global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities.

Evaluating Health Promotion Programs

http://www.mdfilestorage.com/thcu/pubs/107465116.pdf

This workbook has been developed by The Health Communication Unit at the University of Toronto. Using a logical, ten-step model, the workbook provides an overview of key concepts and methods to assist health promotion practitioners in the development and implementation of program evaluations. It has examples of how to display data.

Evaluation Portal

http://www.evaluation.lars-balzer.name/links

W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Participatory Evaluation with Young People

http://ww2.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=1172&NID=&ItemID=5000022&LanguageID=0

Participatory Evaluation with Young People is a workbook with practical tools and learning activities to use in your community. It includes materials for you to discuss, think about, share with others, and, most of all, use for action and change.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Facilitator's Guide for Participatory Evaluation with Young People

http://ww2.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=1172&NID=&ItemID=5000021&LanguageID=0

This Facilitator's Guide is intended for use in conjunction with the workbook Participatory Evaluation with Young

People, cited above. It follows the same format and provides additional information, ideas, examples, and exercises to strengthen its facilitation.

FSG Social Impact Advisors — Strategic Learning and Evaluation Centre

http://www.fsg-impact.org/advice/Strategic_Evaluation/index.htm

FSG's Strategic Learning and Evaluation Center is led by Hallie Preskill and a team of experienced FSG consultants who provide strategic learning and evaluation services over a wide range of topic areas, including the arts, health system reform, sustainable agriculture, youth and education, and more.

Organizations That Fund Evaluation

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health

http://www.onthepoint.ca/funding/ecb.htm
http://www.onthepoint.ca/funding/eig.htm

Evaluation Capacity Building Grants provide up to $10,000 per project and Evaluation Implementation Grants of up to $30,000 per project.

Strategies for Addressing Resistance to Change in Organizations

How to Manage Change Resistance in Not for Profit

http://www.ehow.com/how_5948883_manage-change-resistance-not-profit.html

While managing change in any business environment (either for-profit or non-profit) requires very similar strategies, there are differences within the non-profit environment that make emphasis on specific tactics necessary for effectively managing the inevitable resistance to the change effort.

Logic Model Resources

Logic Model Examples

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO. Doing More with Program Evaluation. Logic Model of a Parenting Program for High-Risk Teenage Mothers, pg. 11.

http://www.onthepoint.ca/resources/toolkits/PEtoolkit.pdf.

The Health Communication Unit at the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto. Logic Models Workbook

Appendix A, pg. iv Logic Model of a Counselling Service; Appendix A, pg. ix Logic Model of a Health Promotion Program; Appendix A, pg. xii Logic Model of a Parenting Program; Appendix A, pg. xiii Logic Model of a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

http://www.thcu.ca/infoandresources/publications/logicmodel.wkbk.v6.1.full.aug27.pdf

University of Wisconsin-Extension: Program Development and Evaluation

http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/Evaluation/evallogicmodelexamples.html

Relevant samples include: a community nutrition education program, reducing and preventing youth tobacco use, treating tobacco addiction, and a parenting education program

Harvard Family Research Project: A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning, Advocacy Evaluation Planning Worksheet

http://www.hfrp.org/UserGuide

Information about Logic Models

W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Logic Model Development Guide

http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf

Innovation Network: Logic Model Workbook

http://www.innonet.org/participant_docs/File/logic_model_workbook.pdf

Dissemination Resources

Sample Dissemination Tools

CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement of Yale Center for Clinical Investigation. Beyond Scientific Publication: Strategies for Disseminating Research Findings

http://www.yale.edu/bioethics/contribute_documents/CARE_Dissemination_Strategies_FINAL_eversion.pdf

Sample Evaluation Reports and Executive Summaries

Evaluation of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program

http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/linc/index.asp

Ever Active Schools Program Evaluation Final Report

http://www.everactive.org/uploads/files/Documents/
easEvaluation.pdf

**Dairy Council of California: Healthy Eating Made Easier,
Classroom Program Evaluation**

http://www.dairycouncilofca.org/Educators/
ProgramEvaluation/EvaluationNP.aspx

Sample Annual Reports

Woodgreen Community Services Annual Report 2007-2008

http://www.woodgreen.org/about/WG_AR_0708.pdf

YOUTHLINK Annual Report 2007-2008

http://www.youthlink.ca/
YOUTHLINKAnnualReport07-08.pdf

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