Doing More With
Program Evaluation

A Toolkit for Conducting Program Evaluation

> *"We believe that to have the greatest impact we need to generate new partnerships, new knowledge, and new ways of doing things in the child and youth mental health sector in Ontario."*

Improving the Child and Youth Mental Health System in Ontario

At the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO (the Centre) our focus is on the needs of children, youth, families and caregivers. Following consultations across the province, we furthered our commitment to building research capacity in the child and youth mental health sector. We start with the shared understanding that children, youth and their families and caregivers should receive evidence-based, consistent, quality care in the context that is most appropriate for them.

An integrated child and youth mental health system has to be built from the commitment of all stakeholders. To this end, the Centre promotes partnerships and networks, funds new research, promotes knowledge exchange and offers supports through consultation and education. We have developed a series of toolkits based on the best available evidence and in keeping with our broad focus on child and youth mental health.

Doing More With What You Know

Supports the planning of knowledge exchange activities beyond publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at conferences. The toolkit offers concrete tools including a checklist, emerging concepts, scenarios, vehicles, a glossary and suggested readings for further ideas and information.
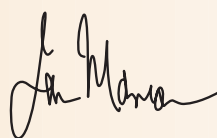
Doing More in Partnership

Supports the development of authentic partnerships between community-based and university- or academic health science Centre-based researchers. This toolkit supports the development of collaborative projects by providing a roadmap, information on emerging concepts and models, a glossary of terms and suggested readings for further ideas and information.
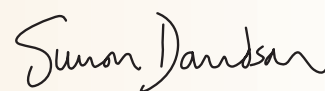
Doing More with Program Evaluation

Supports the planning and development of program evaluation within organizations. This toolkit provides an easy to use reference guide outlining the various steps in conducting program evaluation. As a resource, the toolkit provides a 'roadmap' for developing a program logic model, and includes an appendix of suggested readings for additional information.

The evidence base continues to need further development by researchers and service providers like you across the province. The lives of children, youth and their families and caregivers depend on it.

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Doing More With Program Evaluation

Introduction

Program evaluation may be simply defined as the process of systematically gathering information about a program in order to measure and understand the results. More specifically, this involves attributing program activities to outcomes and measuring progress towards those outcomes.

The process of knowing what program or aspects of a program to evaluate, however, can be less than simple. Evaluation research requires a commitment of time and resources from all identified stakeholders not only to conduct the evaluation, but also to share findings and implement any recommendations for improvement. An evaluation needs to be situated within those particular constraints.

In terms of the theoretical approaches to evaluation research, these can be broadly divided into positivist, constructivist and realist approaches. Essentially, the positivist approach advocates developing a hypothesis, collecting primarily quantitative data, and using this information to test the hypothesis and evolve a theory. The constructivist approach, on the other hand, focuses on the need to explore the way that people make sense of their experiences, and therefore primarily uses qualitative data, with theory evolving as data is collected. The realist approach assumes that the evaluator already has a theory, and will use this – and other theoretical perspectives – to design the research. Realist evaluators collect data from a range of sources, including quantitative, qualitative and documentary data, and theory develops as the evaluation progresses.

The following toolkit has been developed as a guide and resource to assist groups in conducting their program evaluation. It is important to keep in mind, however, that each organization is unique with distinct evaluation plans. For example, while a detailed program logic model, such as the one described on page 11, may be an appropriate place to start for some, a first step may be as simple as answering the questions, 'what is it that we do, for whom do we do it, where do we expect to see changes, and why?'

The Difference Between Process Evaluation and Outcome Evaluation

There are generally two types of program evaluations – process and outcome. An evaluation need not be one or the other, but can be a combination of the two.

PROCESS EVALUATION focuses on the internal dynamics and actual operations of a program to understand its strengths and weaknesses. This type of evaluation examines the changes that occur as a result of the program with the focus on how it is operating. According to Scheirer (1994), process evaluation "verifies what the program is, and whether or not it is delivered as intended to the target recipients and in the intended dosage".

OUTCOME EVALUATION assesses the impact or success a program in achieving its goals. This is used to examine change as a result of the program, and whether or not it had the desired effect.

The following outline provides a number of detailed steps for developing and conducting a program evaluation, commencing with ensuring stakeholder involvement – a crucial step in establishing credibility and enthusiasm for an evaluation. These steps will be further developed throughout this toolkit.

Conducting a Program Evaluation

Phase 1: - Focus the Evaluation - Meetings with Program Stakeholders	• Define evaluation goals and objectives • Identify evaluation team members (*or steering committee*)	• Identify all stakeholders and their vested interests in conducting an evaluation
Phase 2: - Plan the Evaluation	• Review existing evaluation methods • Develop a visual framework (*program logic model*) of the project in consultation with evaluation team	• Share logic model with stakeholders for input/feedback • Define evaluation questions • Identify data collection sources and techniques • Develop data collection instruments
Phase 3: - Prepare Fieldwork - Collect and Analyze Data	• Prepare fieldwork teams in terms of data collection techniques and logistics	• Conduct interviews and observations • Analyze information collected • Summarize fieldwork findings
Phase 4: - Share Interim Findings	• Formulate lessons learned for each evaluation question • Assess the evaluation process • Write interim report – summarize findings	• Develop an action plan for knowledge exchange based on evaluation findings with key program stakeholders
Phase 5: - Finalize, Disseminate and Discuss Findings in Evaluation Report	• Write final evaluation report • Distribute report and discuss evaluation results with program stakeholders	• Discuss the implementation of change based on key findings with stakeholders

Phase 1: Preliminary Meetings

Stakeholder involvement is essential in conducting a program evaluation from the beginning and throughout the project. Plans for ensuring this involvement should be addressed in detail in the evaluation plan.

Stakeholders are people who have an interest in the evaluation findings, and can be internal or external to the organization. They might include program staff, clients, funding representatives, board members, community representatives and volunteers. This involvement is particularly useful from a knowledge exchange point of view and is important in terms of using the findings for program decision-making and improvement.

See ▶ *www.onthepoint.ca/kec/documents/KEtoolkit.pdf*

Stakeholder Checklist

Individuals, Groups or Agencies	Reason for Involvement			
	Policy makers	Operational decision makers	To provide input to the evaluation	To be informed (interest only)
Funding agents				
Administrators				
Staff members				
Clients				
Volunteers				
Affiliated agencies				
Others				

Getting Started

1. Clarify why this evaluation needs to be done.
2. Decide who should be involved and who are the key stakeholders.
3. Determine information needs – what is to be examined, and why.
4. Determine resource implications and availability of resources to complete the evaluation as intended.
5. Form steering committee or working group for the evaluation, and involve individuals and groups affected by results of the evaluation.
6. Set up a common and systematic way of keeping track of all information.

In a series of meetings, discuss the background information on the program as well as key elements of the evaluation process. The evaluation coordinator should have a clear description of the program to be evaluated, review available documentation and files, and interview staff, managers, administrators and funding sources.

Elements of Program Description

- Need or problem to be addressed by the program
- Purpose and rationale for the program
- Origin and history of the program
- Program's organizational structure
- Program's stated objectives
- Major service activities & program components
- Clients
- Service providers
- Funding sources
- Budget

The evaluation coordinator works closely with the evaluation team whose members are individuals involved at different levels of program implementation such as program managers, program field staff, and representatives from government. The evaluation coordinator will clarify roles and responsibilities, identify why the evaluation is being done, identify who the end users will be, and develop an agreement on what is to be evaluated.

Select an evaluation research design – pre and post design or a pre and post design with comparison groups. A pre and post design is appropriate where the focus is on evaluating or improving program performance, and not comparing various programs or program variations; and/or the evaluation will begin before the program has started. Where the focus is comparing various programs or program variations; and/or comparison groups are available, a pre and post design with comparison group(s) provides greater experimental control.

Should a group decide to hire an evaluation consultant to coordinate the project, he/she should have experience in conducting evaluations and employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis. In addition, he/she must be committed to involving program staff in the evaluation process and have skills in ensuring stakeholder involvement at every stage in the process. The consultant may be responsible for:

- coordinating all of the methodological aspects of the study,
- participating in the data collection process,
- supervising any other members of the evaluation team,
- analyzing or facilitating the analysis of data, and
- preparing the final report.

Phase 2: Evaluation Planning

In this phase of the evaluation, the evaluation coordinator develops the description or visual framework of the program's intended activities and how they lead to intended results or outcomes.

This is done in close conjunction with all project stakeholders and program managers. Stakeholders might include program staff, clients, funding representatives, board members, community representatives and volunteers. One of the objectives of this involvement is to develop a common understanding or description of all of the elements of the program to be evaluated.

The main objective of the evaluation should be clearly and concisely worded. Objectives are formulated to establish main expectations of the evaluation. This is best achieved using a program logic model that defines the scope of the evaluation. Each of the components is linked in order to demonstrate logically how one aspect contributes to another. This model is a crucial part of the evaluation process, providing a common understanding of how a program works: the resources, what it is doing, what it hopes to achieve, and when it hopes to achieve it. As you develop the logic model, consider the if-then relationship between the various components. Implementing a model with text boxes and arrows helps to visually understand the linkages.

Once developed, the logic model is circulated to all stakeholders for any additional modifications.

Basic Elements of a Program Logic Model

- State the overall purpose of the program being evaluated. This is the program goal and frames all aspects of the logic model.

- List the components of the program (*groupings of closely-related activities*). Label each component to define that collection of activities.

- State the activities that pertain to each of the components of the program. These are program tasks that result in outputs – how program resources achieve project outcomes. Examples of activities are: teaching, counseling, providing individual or group therapy.

- Identify projected outcomes (*or objectives*):

  - **Short-term** – intended results at the end of the program. These are *Learning* based, e.g., gaining desired knowledge, attitudes and/or understanding due to intervention

  - **Intermediate** – intended results post program (e.g., six months or a year after the end of the program). These are *Action* based - actions (e.g., changed behaviours, attitudes) taken by the targeted group as a result of acquired knowledge or understanding

  - Outcomes are: specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time limited. In other words, outcomes **should**:

    - represent the results that occur due to program activities and services,

    - be attainable with some effort (*not too easily attainable or not so difficult that it sets the stage for failure*),

    - be within the scope of influence of the program,

    - be agreed upon by program stakeholders,

    - be phrased in terms that reflect change,

    - be attainable within a set timeframe (*setting an end point provides a clear target to work towards*),

    - be measurable through the use of particular methodologies.

- Identifying a time frame for the program logic model will assist in framing the evaluation in terms of short-term and intermediate outcomes. Long-term outcomes most often will occur outside the timeframe set in the logic model and will be identified as the ultimate goal(s) of the program.

Program Logic Model

Program Goal: The ultimate intended impact of the program – the conditions that will change as a result of the program over the long-term (e.g., five years post program)

Inputs

To accomplish the activities, we need:

Investments to the program

Example:
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Money
- Materials
- Equipment

Components
Groupings of related activities

Example: Intake, Counseling, Liaison with Partnering Agencies

Outputs

Activities

To address the problem, we need to accomplish these activities:

Specific activities the program does to work toward desired outcomes

Example:
- Workshops
- Specific Programs
- Assessment Activities

Target Group

These are the groups we focus on:

The group to which those services / activities are directed

Example:
- Children
- Caregivers
- Decision Makers

Outcomes

We expect, if accomplished, the activities will lead to the following changes:

Short-Term

Learning Focused

The short-term intended results *(e.g., at end of program)*:

Example:
- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Motivation

Intermediate

Action Focused

The intermediate term intended results *(e.g., 6 mos. – 1 yr. post program)*:

Example:
- Behavior
- Practice
- Decision-making
- Policies

For each outcome, list indicators – observable and measurable "milestones" toward an outcome target; what you see, hear, read, etc., that would indicate whether or not you're making any progress toward your outcome target. **Outcomes must be clearly stated and measurable.**

Program Logic Model

An Evaluation of a Parenting Program for High-Risk Teenage Mothers

Programs Goals: Improved mental health through enhanced parent/child relationships and effective parenting

Inputs

Fiscal Resources – Enhanced funding initiative of $150,000 over 2 years, ending 01/09

Material Resources – Written & audio-visual materials

Human Resources –
- Executive Director
- Caseworkers
- Intake staff
- Volunteers
- Guest speakers
- Outside agency support and services

Components

Outputs

Activities

Family support
- Provision of support and counseling to parents of teenage mothers

After school parent support group
- Provide parenting education and group counseling in weekly 1 hour sessions

Group parenting classes
- Education provided on child development and parenting skills, maternal & child health, and family planning

Intake and assessment
- Assessment of need and type of service
- Interim support arranged as needed
- Provide information for additional support services

Target Group

- Family caregivers
- Teenage mothers, 13-18 years old

- Teenage mothers, 13-18 years old
- Children of teenage mothers

- Teenage mothers, 13-18 years old
- Children of teenage mothers

- Self-referrals to program *(teenage mothers, 13-18 years old)*
- Referrals to program through Child Protection Services *(teenage mothers 13-18 years old)*

Outcomes

Short-Term

- Skills in using effective communication and listening skills are acquired

- Increased understanding of child development
- Increased problem-solving skills
- Increased knowledge on personal growth and development

- Increased knowledge and skills on effective parenting
- Increased knowledge on stimulating educational activities with children
- Increased awareness of systems of support
- Children experience improved stimulation through activities

- Referrals with immediate needs receive earlier access to support and counseling
- Increased awareness and improved access to support services

Intermediate

- Improved communication and understanding between teenage mothers and family caregivers
- Reduced stress and acting out behaviors

- Increased confidence as parents
- Increased access to systems of support
- Increased use of stimulating educational activities with children
- Children have fewer behavioral problems
- Children have fewer delays in reaching developmental and/or increasing psycho-social functioning
- Reduction in over-discipline
- Reduced involvement with Child Protection Services

- Reduced stress and symptoms at intake
- Appropriate referrals experience shorter wait times
- Increased access to additional and appropriate supports and services

Evaluation Plan

The following chart represents one possible format for planning and organizing information pertaining to outcomes.

- **Outcome indicators** – These are observable and measurable "milestones" toward an outcome target. These are what is seen, heard, read, etc., that would indicate whether or not any progress is made toward the outcome target.

Outcome	Indicator(s)	Source of data *(records, clients, caregivers, etc.)*	Method to Collect Data *(questionnaires, interviews, etc.)*	Who collects data	When collects data
EXAMPLE: Skill acquisition – self management, adaptive	Increase in scores on administered psychometric test, caregiver survey	Caregivers, psychometric measures	Pre and post administered tests, surveys	Evaluation researcher	At the beginning and end of program, and at six months post program

Phase 3: Fieldwork Preparation, Data Collection & Analysis

In this phase of the evaluation, the framework is implemented and data collection methods are developed. The following outline provides a brief overview of some of those methods.

Validity and Reliability

Outcome measures used in data collection must be both valid and reliable in order to be considered useful. Once outcomes have been identified, select the appropriate tools to support the data collection. **Where possible, it is useful to employ existing psychometric tools and measures that can be adapted to your particular evaluation, and have already been tested for reliability and validity.**

Validity

A measure is valid to the extent that it measures or captures the concept that it intended to measure; in other words, confidence and certainty regarding cause and effect, both internally (*within the program itself*) and externally (*within the greater population*). Concerns regarding validity can, to some extent, be overcome by ensuring the integrity and skills of the evaluator, the use of a limited set of defined variables, and the acceptance of measures as valid by key stakeholders.

Reliability

A measure is considered reliable in any given situation when it produces the same results repeatedly. Inconsistent data collection methods can affect the reliability of measures; for example, changing the wording of questions, or asking interview questions in a different sequence to different respondents.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are built on indicators of success. The indicators of success in your evaluation plan are identified in relation to the measurable program outcomes. Pick an outcome and ask how you will know when this has been achieved, what the evidence is, and how it will be measured. For example, if one of the expected outcomes were to increase participation in a program, an increased number of participants would indicate success.

Refer to your logic model in order to focus evaluation questions. Questions should be tied to each box in the logic model. Indicate whether the information that will be generated from each of these questions is high or low priority. Once accomplished, you can focus on the questions you are seeking to answer in the evaluation.

Types of Questions

1. **Open-ended:** No options are provided for the respondent to answer the question. They must think of their own response and describe it in their own words. If respondents can reflect on their answers, more meaningful information can be collected than from closed questions. At the same time, it is important to consider the fact that collecting and analyzing open-ended responses can be very time consuming.

2. **Closed:** The respondent is given a set of alternative choices from which he or she can choose to answer the question, i.e., "yes," "no," multiple choice, a rating, ranking, etc. Closed questions can usually be answered quickly, allowing for more information to be collected in a shorter time. However, respondents may rush through the questions and not take enough time to think about their answers. Your choices may not include the answer they might prefer.

Data Collection Methods

1. Questionnaires

Directions to Respondents *(preamble to questionnaire)***:**

1. Include a brief explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire.
2. Include clear explanation of how to complete the questionnaire.
3. Note conditions of confidentiality, e.g., identify who will have access to the information and how it will be used.

Content of Questions:

1. Ask only what is needed, i.e., to get information related to the goals of the evaluation.
2. Will the respondent be able to answer your question, i.e., do they know the answer?
3. Will respondents want to answer the question, i.e., is it too private?

Questionnaires *(continued)*

Wording of Questions:

1. Will the respondent understand the wording, i.e., are you using any cultural-specific or technical words, or language that is beyond their comprehension? **It is important to consider the reading level of your target audience; for example, reading level for youth may be different from that of parents, and parents' reading level may be different than that of service providers.**

2. Are any words so strong that they might influence the respondent to answer a certain way? Avoid use of strong adjectives with nouns in the questions, e.g., "highly effective government," "prompt and reliable," etc.

3. To ensure that you are asking one question at a time, avoid using the word "and" in your question.

4. Avoid using "not" in yes or no questions. Use of "not" can lead to double negatives, and could cause confusion.

5. If using multiple-choice questions, be sure choices are mutually exclusive and encompass the total range of answers. Respondents should not be confused about whether two or more alternatives appear to mean the same thing. Include a separate category, "other", to allow respondents to provide an alternative response.

Order of Questions:

1. Be careful not to include so many questions that respondents are dissuaded from responding.

2. Start with fact-based questions and then go on to opinion-based questions, e.g., ask people for demographic information and then go on to questions about their opinions and perspectives. This gets respondents engaged in the questionnaire before more challenging and reflective questions about their opinions.

3. Encourage respondents to provide commentary to explain their ranked responses.

4. Pilot or test your questionnaire on a small group of clients or fellow staff. Ask them if the form and questions seemed straightforward. Carefully review the answers on the questionnaires. Does the information answer the evaluation questions or provide what you want to know about the program or its specific services? What else would you like to know? Consider the burden of time for respondents to complete the questionnaire; you may want to consider adjusting the length of the questionnaire once you've assessed how long it takes to complete.

5. Finalize the questionnaire according to the results of the pilot. Date the form to track future versions.

2. Focus Groups:

Focus groups are a powerful means to evaluate services and a way to obtain a great deal of information during a single session.

Determine the overall purpose of the focus group. Identify a combination of five or six structured and unstructured key questions (*with stakeholder input*) that are to be asked. The optimum size of a focus group is 7-12 participants and the session should last about an hour.

Configure chairs so that all members can see each other, as it is critical that all members participate as much as possible. These sessions should be tape-recorded with notes taken by a note-taker.

Carefully word five to six questions. Allow the group a few minutes for each member to carefully consider his or her answer. Facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time. After each question is answered, carefully reflect back a summary of what is heard (*the note taker may do this*).

Close the session by thanking respondents.

3. Interviews:

One must be strategic in deciding whom to interview. An interview format is useful when you want to more fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or gain a greater depth of information; however, interviews take time and can therefore be costly; they can also be hard to analyze and compare.

1. Informal, conversational interview - no predetermined questions are asked; interviewer is open and adaptable to the respondent's direction of conversation.

2. General interview guide approach - this ensures the same general areas of information from each respondent, while allowing freedom and adaptability in obtaining that information.

3. Standardized, open-ended interview - here, the same open-ended questions are asked to all respondents, facilitating faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared.

4. Closed, fixed-response interview - where all interviewees are asked the same questions and asked to choose answers from among the same set of alternatives.

Preparation for Interview:

1. Choose a setting with little distraction.

2. Explain the purpose of the interview.

3. Address terms of confidentiality.

4. Explain the format of the interview.

5. Indicate likely duration of the interview.

6. Provide contact information for any later follow-up.

7. Ask if there are any questions before commencing the interview.

8. Ask for permission to record the interview or have someone take notes.

Analyze Information Collected

Statistical analysis has two purposes: 1) **descriptive** – presenting tabulations of quantitative or qualitative data in a concise format, and 2) **inference** – testing relationships among variables and generalizing findings to a larger population (based on the sample). The following outline describes these purposes in more detail:

1) **Descriptive analysis** is a basic tool for analyzing data. It may be as simple as summing or averaging results: What was the mean score of participating students on a knowledge item? What was the mean score of the comparison group?

In a process evaluation, statistics will likely be relatively straightforward: for example, the number of persons served with this program in place, the number of counselor contact hours or individual sessions, the number of staff trained, etc. Descriptive information should be presented objectively, in quantitative terms where possible.

Descriptive analysis also extends to characterizing the relationships between different measurable aspects of the program. Carrying out this type of descriptive analysis requires cross tabulations, correlations, and other statistical techniques designed to depict relationships between variables. These techniques cannot establish causality.

2) **Inferential analysis**: In an outcome or impact evaluation, there are a variety of questions about effects of a treatment on an observed result. A simple inferential analysis might seek to determine whether observed differences in outcomes between treatment and comparison groups are statistically significant, or whether it is likely that they could occur by chance. A more complex question might be whether differences between treatment and comparison groups are significant when the background of the two groups is taken into account (*i.e., "held constant"*). The help of a statistician or evaluation specialist may be needed to carry out this type of analysis.

Evaluators are also called upon to interpret data. For example, even if a statistically significant difference between groups is observed, is that difference meaningful in a practical sense? What does it tell program personnel that can help them to improve the program? Is the difference sufficient to continue the program in its present form, or should the staff make changes?

Evaluators should not be discouraged by findings indicating that a program demonstrated few effects on participant behavior. It is difficult to evaluate a program involving complex, sensitive issues because behavioral changes may occur for only small percentages of participants or changes may be difficult to measure. Programs that are new, or that are recently adopted, may not be sufficiently developed or implemented to show any behavioral effects. Make sure that the evaluation questions only address changes that could reasonably have been expected to occur in the time frame under examination.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

Analyzing qualitative data is labor-intensive and time-consuming. Initially the data is studied to identify themes and categories relating to particular phrases, incidents, or types of behavior. Analytical categories are established within the data, being as inclusive as possible; categories are added to reflect as many of the nuances in the data as possible. Some sections of the data will encompass multiple themes, so these sections must be cross-indexed. Informed by the analytical and theoretical ideas developed during the research, these categories are further refined and reduced in number by grouping together sections of data on like or related themes.

Quantitative Data Analysis:

The decision regarding whether to analyze quantitative data manually or electronically is largely dependent on the amount of data collected and the type of questions being asked.

Statistical analysis programs such as SPSS (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences – quantitative data analysis*) and QSR's NVivo (*qualitative data analysis*) enables the analysis of large volumes of data and can generate a complexity of analyses.

Once data has been analyzed look for meaning behind the findings. Establish whether outcomes have been met. Provide explanations as to why outcomes were met or not met. When considering such explanations, think about patterns of as well as discrepancies from the evidence.

Phase 4: Sharing Interim Findings with Stakeholders & Evaluation Team

Stakeholders who feel well informed and have opportunity to provide input throughout the evaluation process, will ultimately feel confident about the results and be more likely to support final recommendations.

Interim reports that include preliminary findings serve as important information tools that provide up to date information on the evaluation progress. These interim report(s) should summarize evaluation findings and discuss next steps in response to what has been learned so far from the evaluation process.

"If evaluation findings are to bring about improvements in the evaluated projects or in the planning of future projects, they must be made as widely accessible as possible. This applies inside the organizations concerned: findings should not remain within evaluation units but should be made available to the operational and planning units as well. But it also applies beyond the boundaries of those organizations: findings must be published so that everyone can learn from them. The importance of an evaluation lies in the learning processes it triggers" (*Task Force on Evaluating Development Policy of the German Society for Evaluation, 2001*).

Please see the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health web site for our Knowledge Exchange Toolkit:

▶ *http://www.onthepoint.ca/kec/documents/KEtoolkit.pdf*

Phase 5: Finalization, Dissemination & Discussion of Evaluation Report

Final Report

Once the findings are in, evaluators need to develop strategies to report the results. The form of the report depends on the audience. There may be several audiences for a program evaluation report, each requiring different messaging and/or formats. Most final reports will require: an explanation of why the evaluation was conducted; questions asked; a summary of the history of the program; methodology; data analysis approach; findings; interpretations; conclusions and; implications for the program, and recommendations for future directions. It is important to report findings objectively and have them seen as part of an evolving process. A draft report should be shared with colleagues and program staff before completing a final evaluation report.

Final Report – Template

Title Page:

    a) Project title is clear and concise

    b) Authors names and affiliations are clearly identified

    c) Date of preparation/submission is included

    d) Title identifies what was evaluated, including target population *(if and where applicable)*

Executive Summary: *(Must be in language that is understandable to the public at large)*

    a) Brief description of the program/project to be evaluated

    b) Evaluation questions and purpose for the evaluation

    c) Brief description of the methods used *(e.g., data collection using psychometric tools, surveys, interviews, etc.)*

    d) Summary of main findings

    e) Summary of implications of findings

    f) Summary of recommendations

Table of Contents:

    a) Purpose of evaluation and questions asked

    b) Description of the program/project to be evaluated

    c) Identification of the target population for the program/project and relevant stakeholders for the evaluation

    d) Review of related research

Methodology:

   a) Design of the evaluation, including sample size and timing of data collection

   b) Methods of data collection, including a description of data collection instruments *(e.g., copies of surveys used should be included as appendices)*

   c) Sources of information and data *(e.g., staff report, parent report, child and/or youth self reports, review of chart data)*

   d) Evaluation limitations *(e.g., related to methods, data sources, biases, etc.)*

Results:

   a) Evaluation findings are clearly described *(outcomes data needs to be shared with the Centre)*

   b) Charts and graphs are clearly labeled and depicted; they are identifiable and understandable

   c) Discussion of findings is objective

   d) All evaluation questions from the proposal have been addressed. For those questions not addressed, an explanation has been provided

Conclusion and Recommendations/Next Steps:

   a) Discussion and interpretation of findings

   b) Conclusions reflect the findings

   c) Recommendations are based on findings

   d) Lessons learned from evaluation activities

   e) Impact of having done this evaluation on clients served, staff and the organization as a whole

   f) Next steps

Knowledge Exchange Plan:

   a) Overview of knowledge exchange activities relating to this program/project

   b) Knowledge exchange activities accomplished to date

   c) Further plans regarding knowledge exchange activities

Final Remarks

Program evaluation is an extremely valuable and essential process. However, it can also be a challenging and sometimes costly investment to an organization. Good communication is key to a successful evaluation, not only throughout the evaluation, but also at the completion. Utilization and implementation of the findings can only be accomplished through continuous involvement and communication with key stakeholders. By doing so, it will ensure that collective knowledge and experience, generated from multiple stakeholders, will be used to make important changes to enhance program delivery.

For further information on program evaluation contact Susan Kasprzak at ▶ *skasprzak@cheo.on.ca*, (613) 373-7600 ext. 3320.

Your Role With the Centre

In this resource, the Centre presents the current thinking about effective program evaluation as it is evolving quickly. It is important for us to continue to learn from one another. Your successes and challenges can contribute to a better understanding of what works in the child and youth mental health sector in Ontario.

The Centre is the forum through which stakeholders share and discuss project experiences. Each recipient's background, research, community-university partnership and knowledge exchange experiences will be presented individually on the Centre's web site ▶ *www.onthepoint.ca*.

We welcome your feedback on any aspect of this and other resources by email ▶ *onthepoint@cheo.on.ca*

Bibliography

Porteous, N.L., Sheldrick, B.J., Stewart, P.J. (1997). Program evaluation tool kit: A blueprint for public health management. Ottawa, ON:Ottawa-Carleton Health Department. Available at ▶ *http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-psp/toolkit.html* (English) or ▶ *http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-psp/toolkit_fr.html* (French)

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▶ *http://www.surreyplace.on.ca*

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BJA - Bureau of Justice Assistance – Centre for Program Evaluation, U.S. Department of Justice. ▶ *http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/*

SPSS for Windows. Version 15.0. (2006). SPSS Inc. ▶ *http://www.spss.com/spss/*

QSR NVivo. Version 7.0. (2006). Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd., Australia. ▶ *http://www.qsrinternational.com/*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *www.evaluationcanada.ca*

- *http://www.eval.org/*

- *http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf*

- *http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/*

- *www.evaluationtools.org*

- *www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-psp/toolkit.html*

- *http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep01_e.asp*

- *http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm*

- *http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm*

- *http://nnlm.gov/evaluation/guides.html#A1*

- *http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/guide/index.htm*

- *http://www.npgoodpractice.org/Accountability/Training/#2*

- *http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/*

- *http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/sp/97-13_e.html*

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