Evaluation Basics
Q & A
Webinar Follow-Up

- **You talk about eval as if it was after fact; it should be ongoing and considered at beginning of program. Please speak to this.**
    - As mentioned during the webinar, evaluation should be considered from the beginning of your needs assessment and planning processes. Stephen Covey notes in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* – you want to "Begin with the end in mind". The same is true for evaluation. As you are working through your needs assessment and identifying your goals and outcomes based you will be using this data to guide your evaluation. Evaluation should also be kept in mind while planning (i.e. will your strategies make an impact on your outcomes?) and during implementation (i.e. determining when to collect data; using process evaluation data to make mid-course corrections if need be, etc.).

- **Why aren't pre-posttests enough? We are trying to switch the paradigm from pre-posttests to actual behavioral change measures.**
    - Pre-posttests are one piece of a comprehensive evaluation picture. When determining evaluation methods, it's important to consider what you are actually trying to measure *and then* identify appropriate methods that align with your evaluation questions. Sometimes a pre-posttest is an appropriate method (i.e. classroom evidence-based curricula accompanied by a pre-post to track program outcomes). In other instances, a different method may provide more appropriate evaluation information to understand your impact. For example:
        - If your outcome is to increase awareness of an issue, you may consider using Community Readiness surveys to gauge stakeholder awareness after implementing a variety of education events (i.e. distributing brochures, Take-Back Rx day with newspaper coverage, social marketing campaign). Community Readiness surveys are interviews with key stakeholders in your community to gauge readiness for change.
        - If your outcome is to decrease retail access to alcohol for minors, tracking retail violations through Alcoholic Beverage Control Compliance Data can help you understand the impact of a strategy like merchant education.
        - If your outcome is to decrease tobacco use on the school campus and your strategy is to strengthen the Tobacco Free School laws; then looking at school discipline incidents related to tobacco use could help you understand your impact. You could also use interviews of students, teachers and administrators to complement the incident data or you could observe different areas of the campus to track if less students are using on campus.

- **Please speak to complications around evaluations involving adolescents; they are hormonal causing changes as to how they respond to questions; duration of questions impact them; setting of evaluation impacts answers etc...**
    - This is an important point to consider when identifying evaluation methods. Adolescents are dynamic people and why cultural competency should play a role in your evaluation efforts. I would recommend discussing this with your OMNI TA Consultant re: how to incorporate this consideration into your evaluation plan.

- **Where do you place archival data; trends; historical context?**
    - I would have archival as secondary based on what you said, and the historical as maybe qualitative. But what about a person's lived experience??? (Participant response)
    - Secondary to show impact over time (Participant response)
    - Archival data, trends, and historical context are secondary data. They are existing data in the community that an organization can find without having to develop the data collection process. Some places to find this type of data are online, through local organizations (i.e. county agencies, nonprofits, schools), newspapers, and in past needs assessment reports.

- **Additional concern: Getting approval to implement evaluation instruments in school settings from our school partners is cumbersome and sometimes results in not only the evaluation, but also the program, not being allowed.**
    - This is a valid concern. Schools have both internal and external pressures to manage on a daily basis and balancing partnerships with them can take some finesse. Having an evaluation plan in place <u>before</u> implementation can help you communicate the full range of program expectations; including evaluation instruments you will be using and the permissions that go along with those. I would recommend discussing this with your OMNI TA Consultant re: how to incorporate this consideration into your evaluation plan.

- **SAMHSA CAPT - Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training (Updated 2012) – Participant handouts pages 11-16.**
    - Info Sheet 4.5 – Overview of Evaluation
    - Info Sheet 4.7 – Reporting Evaluation Results

*One correction to *Evaluation Basics* presentation – Data collection interval (slide #49) <u>is</u> included in the OMNI Evaluation Plan Template.

*The following data collection methods information sheet is taken from the 2008 version of the SAMHSA CAPT Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training.

## PROS AND CONS OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS INFORMATION SHEET

| Method | Pros | Cons | Costs | Time to Complete |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Archival research** | Can provide detailed information about a program | May be difficult to organize | Inexpensive | Time consuming |
| **Archival trend data** | Fast, cheap, a lot of data available | Difficult to compare; may not show changes | Inexpensive | Quick |
| **Focus groups** | Can quickly get information about needs, community attitudes, and norms; information can be used to generate survey questions | Can be difficult to run (requires a good facilitator) and analyze; may be difficult to gather groups together | Cheap if done in-house; can be expensive to hire facilitator | Groups last about 1.5 hours each |
| **Observation** | Can see a program in operation | Requires much training; can influence participants | Inexpensive, requires only staff time | Quick, but depends on the number of observations |
| **Open-ended questions on a written survey** | Can add more in-depth information to a structured survey | May not be answered; may be difficult to interpret | Inexpensive | Only adds a few more minutes to a written survey; quick analysis time |
| **Participant observation** | Can provide detailed information and an "insider" view | Observer can be biased; can be a lengthy process | Inexpensive | Time consuming |
| **Record review** | Objective, quick, does not require program staff or participants; records are preexisting | Records can be difficult to interpret; records are often incomplete | Inexpensive | Takes much time |
| **Self-administered surveys** | Anonymous, cheap, easy to analyze; standardized, making them easy to compare with other data | Results are easily biased; surveys miss information; attrition is a problem for analysis | Moderate | Moderate to high |
| **Face-to-face structured surveys** | Same as written surveys but allows responses to be clarified | Same as written surveys but requires more staff and time | More than self-administered | Moderate to high |
| **Telephone surveys** | Same as written surveys but allows you to target a wider area and clarify responses | Same as written surveys but misses people without phones (low-income) | More than self-administered | Moderate to high |
| **Unstructured interviews** | Gather in-depth information that can be used to generate survey questions | Require much time and expertise to conduct and analyze; potential interview bias possible | Inexpensive if done in-house; can be expensive to hire interviewers | Quick, but depends on the number of observations and/or transcribers |
| **Case study** | Gather in-depth information about a specific phenomenon or population | Takes much time (often years); limited validity and potential of bias | Can be expensive due to time required | Time consuming |

* Based largely on the National Center for Advancement of Prevention's "NCAPTion Training Guide," Spring 2000.