

Module 3 Video 7

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| Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Methods |
| Let's take a look at other evaluation methods you're likely to use. |
| <p>Interviews, often called key informant interviews, are an important evaluation method. Interviews produce a conversational flow of ideas and information. Interviewers can both ask questions based on a pre-developed interview guide and invite additional information.</p> <p>Interviews produce qualitative data in the form of text or recordings. This form of in-depth information can be used to frame or interpret quantitative data, or numbers.</p> |
| Develop a structured guide to elicit essential data you need, based on your evaluation questions. |
| <p>Select key informants with care, to include people with the information you need. You may want to prepare different interview guides with questions tailored to your groups.</p> <p>You can interview in groups – for example – program administrators, community leaders, program partners, program staff.</p> <p>Interviews can be done by phone, in person or by video chat.</p> <p>Prepare your interviewer not to influence responses.</p> <p>The total number of key informants you interview depends on your evaluation needs and may be 10 or more.</p> <p>Plan for about 2.5 hours for each interview, including scheduling, preparing, conducting the interview, and cleaning up your notes.</p> |
| <p>Here are some of the pros and cons of interviews as an evaluation method.</p> <p>The advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews can help reveal the big picture • They help you explore questions or issues more deeply • They are more flexible than surveys in the kinds of information you can gather. • They result in rich data <p>Disadvantages of interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can produce so much qualitative data it becomes a challenge to analyze results • They are more time consuming than surveys and case studies. |
| <p>A focus group is a group discussion guided by a moderator to explore people's attitudes.</p> <p>Focus groups can be 6 to 12 participants – usually no more than 12 – with something in common. Maybe they all participated in the same program over the last 2 years.</p> |

Focus groups last 1 to 2 hours. They are typically held in person but can be done over group video chat.

The focus group moderator works from a prepared guide of 6 questions at most. The discussion begins with a broad question then moves towards more focused areas. The moderator can also guide the group with prompts and follow-up questions.

The moderator guides the discussion and manages group dynamics and can take notes or have a designated note-taker.

Some advantages of focus groups:

They are helpful when your topic is specific. They provide a lot of info in a short amount of time compared to interviews.

- Look for a cascade effect as participants share their views or experiences and expand on the views of others.

Some disadvantages of focus groups:

- They are not a good idea when you are dealing with polarizing issues.
- They can be dominated by one person with strong opinions.

The case study method contributes to the evaluation of a whole program by looking very closely at some cases or projects.

The case study method can get deep into the how and why, the “real life setting” of a project.

You can choose cases that represent regions or variety within the project. For a project running across sites throughout the Atlantic provinces, you could select a site from each geographic area, for example.

Alternatively, sometimes evaluators select “best cases” to explore what worked or why a certain site had so much success.

Set up a mix of methods to apply to each case you will study. The mix could include reviewing documents, conducting interviews with staff and focus groups with project participants. It can add observation, like a tour of a facility and sitting in on an activity. The combined data becomes your study, a picture of the project.

Advantages

- The main advantage of case studies is their depth and the insights they can provide. You can use case studies to explore how different factors interact or impact the project.
- Case studies can also focus on individuals’ stories and experiences to contribute to a larger picture.

Disadvantages:

- Case studies can be expensive, including elements like focus groups.
- They can be time-consuming. You may be at a project site for several days collecting data.
- Findings are not always generalizable to the greater sample.

New evaluation methods pop up all the time. One newer method is storytelling: gathering participants’ stories and their stories of change. Story data can point to opportunities for improvement based on someone’s experience with the program. They can also show the impact clients experience from a program.

Photovoice is a form of storytelling that involves participants creatively capturing and sharing their stories with digital images. It has been used successfully with marginalized people and in different countries.

Module 3 focused on the evaluation framework. It looked at headings and how to add key themes, as well as high level questions under each theme. In addition, we explored a range of methods you can use to gather feedback.