Surveys

UNM Evaluation Lab Summer Institute
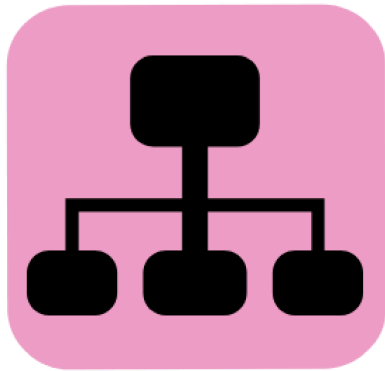
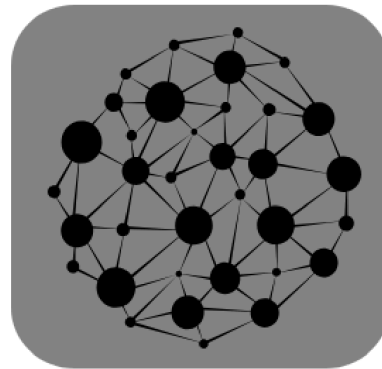Claudia Díaz Fuentes, Ph.D

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Summer 2019

Your Evaluation Plan

Logic Model

Theory of Change

Data Collection

Learning Objectives and Suggested Readings

Learning objectives:

- Identify whether a survey is the right tool.

- Understand the pros and cons of survey data and potential solutions.

- Apply strategies to obtain meaningful data from surveys.
  - Link evaluation goals to survey questions.
  - Identify type of question.

Readings:

- Russ-Eft, Darlene, and Hallie Preskill. *Evaluation in Organizations: A Systematic Approach to Enhancing Learning, Performance, and Change*. Basic Books, 2009. **Chapter 10**.

Is a survey right for you?

A survey is right for you when…

- You need information from many different people (external validity)
  - Surveys are particularly helpful when your population is in various locations.
- You need answers to closed-ended questions or open-ended questions that require short answers.
  - You can collect qualitative and quantitative data.
- You need to report results of your evaluation in a concise manner
  - Examples: Graphs, percentages, group comparisons
- (Depending on the aim) You want to compare results over time
  - That means designing the survey for the program/project with a data collection timeframe in mind

Pros of Using Surveys

- Fairly inexpensive (once developed).
- Surveys are familiar to most people.
- Likely to collect a representative sample.
- Surveys provide anonymity to participants who may be more comfortable sharing in writing.
- You ask the same question to everyone. That means there's no risk of interviewers rephrasing/changing the question (evaluator/ interviewer bias).
- Once you get a hold of creating tables/graphs out of your data, you can replicate this process easily for other surveys.

Cons of Using Surveys		**Solution**

- Risk of low response rates (either few people answer and/or do not complete the survey). → • Call ahead of time and/or send reminders. Consider surveying a larger population. Survey on site.

- Surveys assume respondent can read or write. → • Consider interviewer-administered surveys.

- If survey is mailed or answered online outside the organization, you can't be sure who answered or if someone helped. → • Call ahead of time to confirm the phone number/address are correct. Let them know the survey/link will arrive soon.

- It takes time and several iterations to write a good survey. → • Run a test survey with 2 or 3 clients of your first *polished* draft.

- No immediate chance for follow up. → • Consider adjusting future surveys.

Steps for developing a survey

Steps

1. Start with what it is you want to learn.
2. Think about your timeline, resources and overall logistics.
3. Write questions (or get them from verified sources).
4. Create the survey and Pilot.

For best results, make sure to talk to key people in each step!

Step 1. Start with what it is you want to learn

- With your team, explicitly and succinctly define your evaluation goal. This will help you stay focused (avoid data greediness!).

- Translate your question into specific things you want to learn that will help address your evaluation goal.

Example:

Evaluation goal: understand why clients may not adhere to their treatment goals.

Specific things need to meet this goal:

- *Understand barriers to showing up: geography (lives far), childcare/caregiving responsibilities, transportation (has a car, gas cost), economic (not employed)*

- *Experience with services: wait time per session, waitlist to receive services, language of preference, sense of safety)*

- *Clients are target population: uninsured families, low income individuals, children, etc.*

A little table might help

Information needed to answer evaluation question	Specific
Barriers: Geographic constraints	Distance from home Transportation (has a car, cost of gasoline)
Barriers: Socioeconomic	Currently employed Caregiving responsibilities
Experience with services	Perception of cost of services Satisfaction with: • Program/services • Wait time • Facilities
Demographic characteristics	Age Gender Hispanic origin…

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Step 2. Think about your timeline, resources and overall logistics

- Talk to your staff!
- Key *initial* resources to consider as you design your survey:
  - <u>Staff time </u>to design
  - <u>Staff time </u>to collect
  - <u>Staff time </u>to analyze and write down results
  - Software for analysis (more from Charla on how to use Excel for this)
  - Physical space issues (is a private room needed?, where will paper surveys go?, pens and pencils, etc.)
- Logistics: talk to staff administering the survey
  - During design stage, and as you collect data to catch anything that needs fixing.

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Step 3: Write questions, or <u>get them from verified sources</u>.

Look for validated instruments that get at the outcome you want to measure

- North Carolina Family Assessment Scales
- Protective Factors Survey (Click here for other tools regarding child welfare)
- Trauma Informed Practice Scales
- National Health Interview Survey (a <u>very</u> comprehensive survey, available in Spanish)

Look for questions used in validated instruments, national surveys, research studies

- More likely to have a baseline for comparison
- Self-rated health: "Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?" NM IBIS, and NM IBIS questionnaires

Step 3: <u>Write questions</u>, or get them from verified sources

Most common types of questions: Open ended.

- Use when:
  - You don't know range of answers.
  - You want to capture insights on experiences, beliefs, or values.

- Use sparingly
  - Take more time to analyze (resource intensive).

- Use questions that engage respondents to think through the answer
  - Too generic a question might result in people skipping or giving quick answers
    Example: what did you like the most about the program? A: Everything!
  - If not carefully written, might be misinterpreted (not unique to open-ended).
    Example: How did our services compare to your previous provider? (what aspect of services? Check-in, wait time?)

Example – Open ended

Evaluation aim: Assess clients' satisfaction with the program

- Option 1:   What did you like the most about the program?, or

    What would you change about the program?

- Option 2:   What would you say if you were to recommend this program to a friend?

- The open ended question should compel the respondent to think through the answer

On your own!

Scenario:

You finished a training program that applied several strategies to help participants engage and learn.

Activity:

Write an open ended question to learn what worked for participants.

Multiple choice questions (close-ended)

- Use when:
  - You are clear about the range of answers

- Type of answers:
  - Check one vs. check all that apply.
  - Likert Scales: Rating scales that go from low to high, with low ones representing negative and highest the positive response.

Example – Multiple choice (2 choices?)

Evaluation aim: Assess cost of care as a barrier to access and utilization of services

(From BRFSS, 2018)

Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost?

❑Yes

❑No

❑Not sure

❑Refuse

Example – Multiple choice: Likert Scales

- If you want to "quantify" your clients' beliefs or opinions, Likert scales can be helpful.

Would you say the program was:

5	4	3	2	1
Very effective	Effective	Neither effective or ineffective	Ineffective	Very ineffective

Or,

4	3	2	1
Very effective	Effective	Ineffective	Very ineffective

Add Likert scale answer options in the question or in the instructions

- In the past 2 weeks, how much of the time have you felt optimistic about your future? Would you say Always, Most of the time, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never?

- Instructions: The following are statements about safety in the workplace. Please tell us if you **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with them**.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Employees are responsible for bringing their own safety equipment to work	◯	◯	◯	◯

- Answer options do not need to be included in the question every time.

For new hires there should be:
❑More sales training
❑Less sales training
❑No training
❑Current frequency of sales training

This info focuses on the answer options!

- Next, dos and don'ts on how to write the questions

Keep an eye out for:

Double-barrel questions

BAD:

Are the program's duration and content what you expected?

BETTER:

Split into two questions, one for duration and one for content

Keep an eye out for:

Leading questions

BAD:

Do you think your clinician is doing a good job?

BETTER:

Keep your tone neutral:

How would you rate your satisfaction with the clinical services you receive here?

Keep an eye out for:

Making assumptions

BAD:

How difficult is it for you to show up to appointments? (assumes it is difficult)

BETTER :

Some clients find it difficult to show up to appointments.

> Have you had any difficulty showing up to appointments with your provider in the past 30 days?
>
> ◯Yes ◯No
>
> If Yes, what was the main reason?

Try for questions that:

Are clear and specific about the subject.
- How did you learn about our services? vrs How did you learn about our community garden?

Consider timeframe if you want them to recall something they might do/feel regularly
- How many hours a week did you work in the past 3 months?
- If a person has not been employed but has in the past you can ask: How many hours a week did you usually work when you were employed?

Focus on positive/action statements.
- Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statement:
  - I never take off my safety gear vrs
  - I always wear my safety gear

Are relevant to your research aims (beware of data greediness)
- If in doubt about whether to include a question that sounds *interesting*, go back to your aim and weigh *how* the question would contribute to address it

If multiple-choice question, make sure answer options do not overlap!!

Feel free to mix Close-ended and Open-ended questions

- When asking participants to report on behavior, **ask for an example**. That will help you assess whether behavior really changed.

- Use open-ended questions sparingly. They provide lots of great material, but are labor-intensive to review

Artworks survey of classroom teachers

15. Has your participation in ArtWorks increased your integration of the arts into other classroom lessons?

○ Yes

○ No

16. Briefly explain your answer above:

Artworks survey of classroom teachers

88% said that they had increased arts integration,

but only 61% gave examples

Artworks survey of classroom teachers, continued

17. What do you consider to be the most effective aspect of the TA's work with your class?

18. Can you share a story about how a student(s) was changed by their experience with the arts? A quote?

Table 3. Open-Ended Responses Related to ArtWorks Desired Student Outcomes

Using encounters with the arts, students . . .	Teacher response to open-ended questions about Teaching Artist effectiveness, Common Core Standards and student reactions
. . . gain confidence.	I have a student this year who really doesn't speak much. He has a speech impediment and is not comfortable speaking, but now that he has discovered visual art, he loves to come up front and share his work. He still doesn't talk much, but he expresses himself through his drawings and has great pride in his finished work. –Kindergarten Teacher
	I saw the self-confidence of a (lower achieving in literacy) student increase when she was chosen to be in the student Art Show. –1st Grade Teacher
	Every year, I see someone who in the past hardly spoke become animated. It always feels me with joy to see one of my students reveal another part of themselves. –3rd Grade Teacher

On your own!

You want to assess how commuting is a key barrier for clients to adhere to your program. Write 1 close-ended, multiple-choice question to help with your evaluation.

Before you write:
- What aspects of commuting are important for your evaluation?
- Which one(s) will your question address?

After you write your question, consider:
- Is it clearly written?, are answer options not-overlapping? (see dos and don'ts)
- Does it help address your aim?

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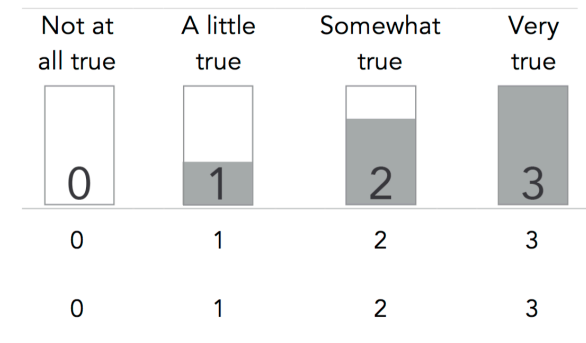For best results, make sure to talk to key people in each step!

Step 4: Create the Survey and pilot

- Paper or electronic form
- Interview or self administered
- Less is more
  - Don't be data-greedy.
  - Make sure every question helps you learn what you want to know (Step 1)
- Help with scales
  - Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) Scales ➜

How Do You Feel About This Program?

We would like to ask you some questions about how it feels to participate in this program. We are especially interested in the extent to which staff at this program recognize your challenges and difficulties, as well as your strengths and coping strategies.

(A) Please let us know how true the following statements are **as you think about your interactions with staff in this program** on a scale from 0 to 3. You may feel different ways about different staff members. Please respond with your overall impression of the staff. This picture will help you think about that:

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Very true
	0	1	2	3
1. Staff respect my privacy.	0	1	2	3
2. Staff are supportive when I'm feeling stressed out or overwhelmed.	0	1	2	3

Step 4: Create the Survey and pilot

Pilot questions with 5 or more program participants
- Time how long survey takes
- Find out:
    - Were questions clear?
    - Can you think of any questions that others might have a hard time answering?
    - How can we make them better?
    - Was anything missing?