

CREATING A PLAN WITH STAFF FOR COLLECTING OUTCOME EVALUATION DATA

1. Meet with key staff to explain the need for the evaluation and how it can be useful to the organization.
2. Decide with staff who will collect the data, how often, and from whom.
3. The importance of *sampling* clients.
 - a. Do not collect data when clients are in crisis.
 - b. Collect data often enough that you don't miss those clients who receive short-term services, BUT not so often it's a burden to clients.
 - c. Sampling shelter residents:
 - Ideally, try to ask every shelter resident to participate as they get closer to shelter exit (other than those in crisis).
 - d. Sampling support group participants:
 - Ideally, every 3-4 weeks pass out forms to all group members at the end of a meeting, and invite them to stay an extra 5 minutes to complete the form. Pens or pencils should be provided, a locked box or sealed envelope should be provided, and the facilitator should leave the room.
 - e. Sampling advocacy program participants:
 - Ideally, after 2 contacts with the advocate unless the advocate believes they'll see the client again. You want to allow enough time for change to occur, but not miss those clients receiving short-term advocacy.
 - f. Sampling counseling clients:
 - This depends on how long counseling generally lasts. Allow enough time for change to occur but don't wait so long that you'll miss clients who end counseling earlier than expected.
4. The key to sampling is that you must make sure that the people you include are as much like ("representative of") the whole group of people who receive your services as possible.
 - a. Clients from all ages, races and cultural groups, sexual orientations, religious preferences, and abilities must be included.
 - b. Dissatisfied as well as satisfied clients need to be included.
5. Copy enough blank forms that they are readily available to staff; they should be in a visible area that will remind staff to use them.
6. Design a way that clients can return completed forms anonymously. You can make or buy a locked box with a hole in the top, or can provide envelopes that clients can seal themselves and place in a safe place. Consider:
 - a. Clients need to feel that no one will look at their form in the near future.
 - b. Clients need to feel that they will not be identified by their survey.
 - c. Before you begin, you could ask some clients what place or approach would feel best to them.
 - d. You might need to figure this out through trial and error.
7. Decide with staff how often to discuss how the data collection is going; this should be quite often in the beginning while staff are getting used to the new procedures and to decide together what strategy works well and what doesn't.
8. All staff who might invite clients to participate in completing a survey should have a copy of the "*Directions for inviting clients to participate in outcome evaluation.*"