

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

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OUTLINE FOR TODAY

Grounding slides:

- Evaluation vs. Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE)
- ‘Culture’ in CRE

Content:

- CRE considerations at each evaluation phase

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about projects, policies and programs, particularly about their effectiveness and efficiency

What is CRE?

- A holistic framework for centering evaluation in culture
- Rejects culture-free evaluation and recognizes the culturally defined values and beliefs lie at the heart of any evaluation effort
- CRE recognizes demographic, socio-political, and contextual dimensions fundamentally matter in evaluation
- CRE is relational, prioritizes people, and their lived experience, along with the outcomes of the evaluation

EVALUATION VS. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

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Traditional Evaluation Question

What was the impact of the program?

CRE Version

In what ways were different participants impacted by the program in what different ways?

WHAT IS “CULTURE” IN CRE?

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Culture is our shared experiences

Includes:

- Language
- Ways of communicating
- Values and beliefs
- Customs
- Worldviews
- Ways of knowing

Significant factors to culture

Include but not limited to:

- Race/ethnicity
- Religion
- Socioeconomic class
- Disability/ability
- Age
- Gender
- Geography
- Sexual orientation
- Body size/shape

COMPLEXITIES OF CULTURE

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- Multiple, simultaneous identifications
- Culture is plural, not singular
- Culture intersects, do not stand alone
- Fluid, not fixed
- Learned, dynamic
- Shifts in context and time
- Not neutral: power attaches to culture
- Dominate cultural perspectives in all contexts hold power

WHY DOES CRE MATTER?

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- People are core to evaluation
 - Who requests
 - Who benefits
 - Who is hurt
 - Who conducts, (Evaluators have culture that influences the evaluation!)
 - Who participates
- Culture makes us who we are and we cannot be separated from it

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

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CRE is a framework rooted in:

- Social justice
- Advocacy
- Racial, decolonizing, Indigenous frameworks

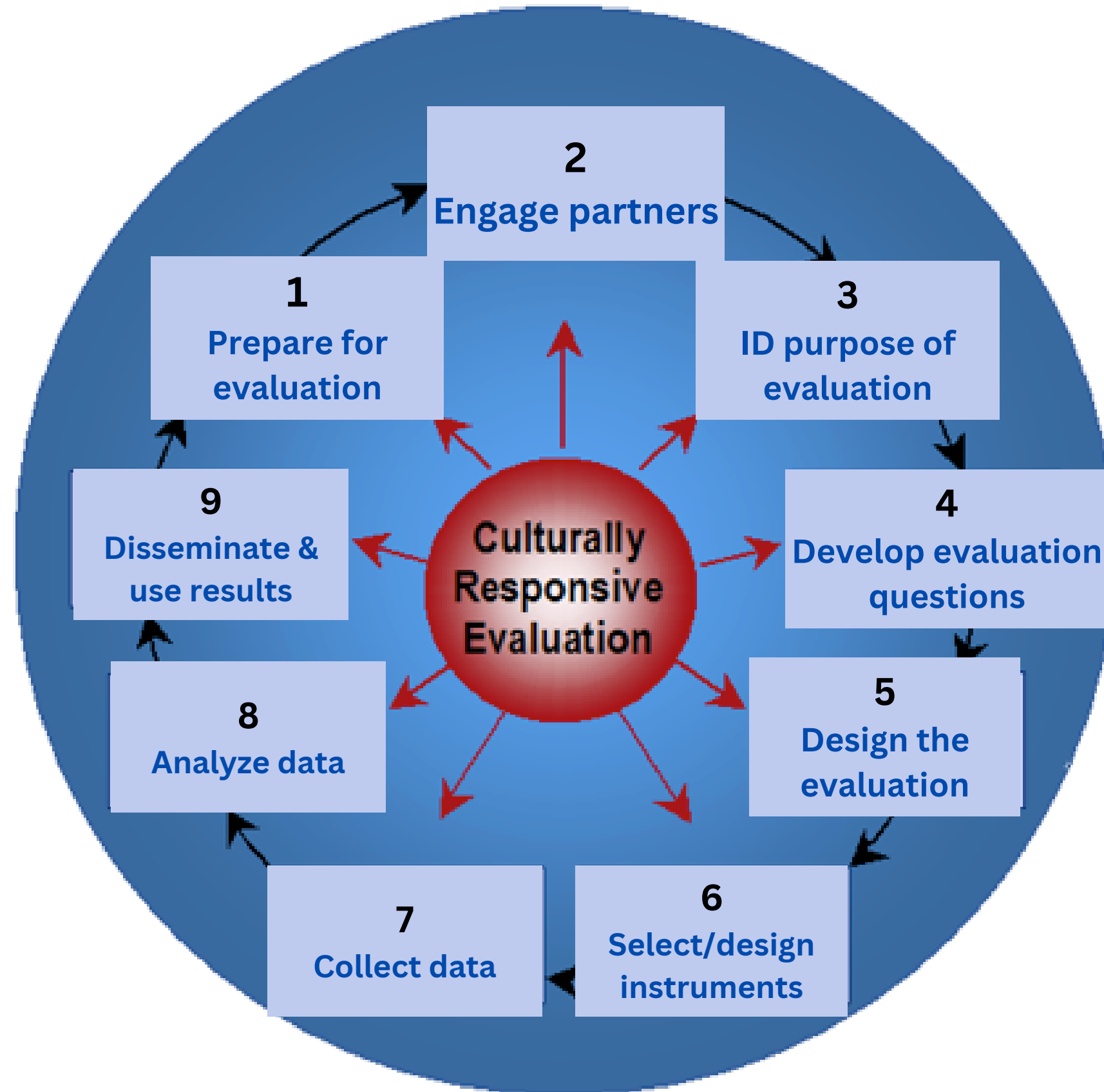
CRE has an agenda: pushes for equity, social justice, recognition and valuing of humans in evaluation

- Society formed and maintained on structural inequality
- Social division becoming more deeply entrenched along identity lines, intersectionality and recognition becomes more significant

QUESTIONS?

EVALUATION CYCLE

Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework



PHASE I: PREPARE FOR THE EVALUATION

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Prep phase requires attention to detail, listening, and gathering project info on:

- History
- Formal and informal power relationships (i.e., power and hidden power)
- Values
- Communication styles/language
- Evaluator is aware of their own cultural values, assumptions, biases etc.

Questions to ask

- History of the community, organization, program?
- What is the history of eval?
- What dimensions of culture are important to consider?
- How is power held and exercised? Whose values are elevated and whose are marginalized?

Practical considerations

- Will a cultural insider be needed to guide the evaluation? Would it make it easier/better?
- Do we have language fluency?
- Who has the technical expertise to carry out the evaluation?

Take time to map out all partners and interested parties

- Issues of:
 - Trust
 - Power
 - Impact of the evaluation

Questions to ask

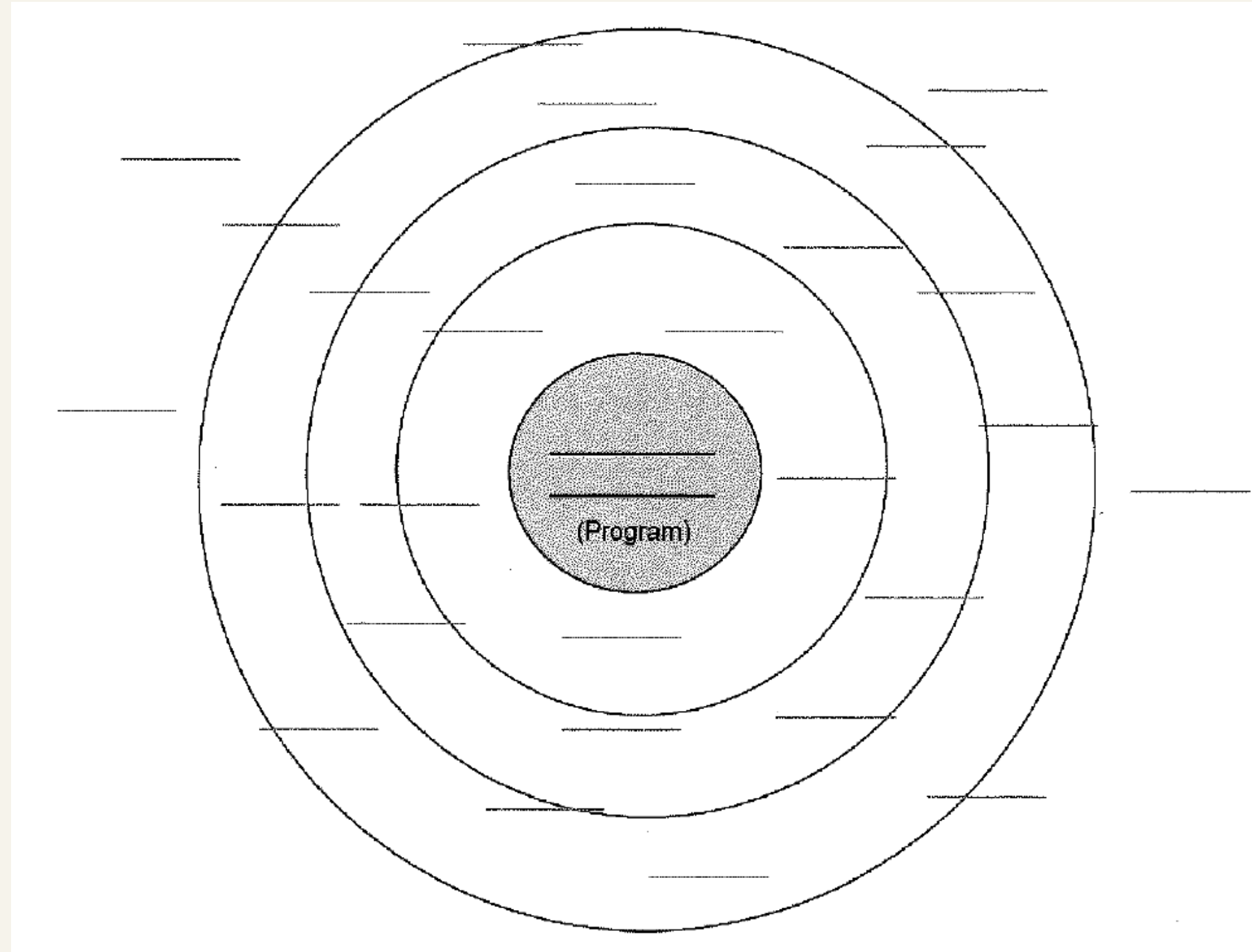
- Who are the partners and what is their relationship to the evaluation? (Beneficiary, funder, participant, interested party)
- How can/should participants be involved in the process?
- Missing perspectives?

Practical considerations

- Protocols to enter a community or context?
- Best ways to communicate?
- Order to engage partners (reflects formal and informal hierarchies)
- How is respect communicated?
- How is trust established?

PARTNER MAPPING

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PHASE 3: IDENTIFY THE EVAL PURPOSE(S)

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The evaluation design is shaped by the intended purpose and use of results

Practical considerations

- **Why is the eval needed at this time?**
 - **Is the eval a condition of funding?**
 - **To gain knowledge about program planning and development?**
 - **Inform future restructuring or downsizing programs?**
 - **Driven by concerns about a program?**
 - **Part of ongoing program reflection and improvement**

Questions to ask

- **Who benefits and who is burdened?**
- **Who is requesting the evaluation?**
- **Is there a political context behind the request?**

PHASE 1-3 RECAP

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After phases 1-3 you should understand:

1

What cultural considerations will be important, context history, and power relations

2

Who should be involved, why, to what extent? Who is missing?

3

Why an eval now and what purpose will it serve?

PHASE 4: FRAME THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

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Evaluation questions set the parameters of what will be examined and what will remain outside the scope

These are not data collection questions, but what we want to understand with data collection

Questions to ask

- Whose values and interests are represented in the proposed questions?
- Will the eval focus on unintended consequences of program process and outcomes?
- How are questions limiting what can be learned?
- How would different questions/expanded questions change our understanding of the program?
- Are we operating in a 'deficit framework?'

PHASE 5: DESIGN THE EVALUATION

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Eval design specifies what information is needed to answer questions and how we will get that info

Practical considerations

- How will participants be protected during data collection (i.e., power relations)
- Will we consider/use non-traditional sources of information? Are these respected?
- What methods are most appropriate for the question, analysis, AND cultural context?
- What is the pace/timing of collecting info? Do we need to build trust first?

**Tools (original or validated)
should be culturally responsive**

Practical considerations

- Literacy level, language proficiency, and common language/understanding of participants
- Oral or written communication more culturally appropriate?
- Is non-verbal communication important?

Existing tool or new

- History and evidence supporting existing tool
- Who was involved in creating or validating?
- Forward translation of a tool may not be adequate for cultural context

Data is political, how we collect it is too

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Data is political, how we collect it is too

What is your race?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

Which best describes your racial/ethnic identity? Select all that apply to you

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

PHASE 4-6 RECAP

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After phases 4-6 you should understand:

1

Do our evaluation

- Questions
- Design
- Methods
- Data collection tools

Balance our needs and requirements with the cultural context of program/participants while respecting participants and the impacts of the evaluation on their safety and future?

PHASE 7: COLLECT DATA

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Data collection under CRE emphasizes relationships

Those collecting data need understanding of cultural context, not just technical procedures

The cultural orientation of the eval team influences what they can hear, see, and experience

Practical considerations

- Do partners see participation as voluntary?
- Has the purpose of the eval and potential benefit been communicated?
- Have you allowed enough time for introductions and grounding?
- Do you have a plan if data collection is harmful in the moment?

PHASE 8: ANALYZE DATA

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Understanding cultural context is imperative for accurate data interpretation

Remember data are given voice and meaning by those who interpret them: all data is political

Practical considerations

- **Is a cultural interpreter or partner review panel needed?**
- **Have you examined outliers and unexpected findings carefully?**
- **Have you examined program operations and outcomes in relation to subgroups?**
 - **Program may not be received by everyone in the same way**
- **Have you reflected on how evaluator culture shapes conclusions?**
 - **Especially what info is given most and least weight**

PHASE 9: USE AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

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CRE increases truthfulness and utility of eval results

CRE prioritizes social betterment, results should be used to promote equity

Moving from evidence to advocacy and action

Practical considerations

- Who owns findings/data? Who has final say of what's reported?
- Who benefits from results, who is harmed?
- How can we reduce harm?
- What can be elevated to create change? For whom? What should be held back?
- What is the best way to communicate results with different partners?

PHASE 7-9 RECAP

After phases 7-9 you should understand:

1

Are participants aware of their rights in data collection? Is the eval team responding to cultural considerations and power?

2

Do you have cultural understanding or representatives to help you analyze data? Are you analyzing for different impacts on different groups, especially outliers?

3

Have you considered ownership, inclusion, impact, and how to create meaningful change in disseminating results?

FINAL THOUGHTS

1

CRE centers people, culture, and lived experience in evaluation along with our own needs and goals

2

CRE's goal is social justice, increasing equity, and changing society

3

CRE is integrated at every phase of the evaluation process

4

CRE isn't an add-on to evaluation, it is a change in how we think and do evaluation

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THANK YOU

Let's be friends!
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SOURCES

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