Program Evaluation Essentials

For NGOs and their Evaluation Partners

Anita M. Baker, Ed.D.
Evaluation Services

Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Evaluation Capacity Building - Israel

From July through October, 2014, Bruner Foundation consultant Anita Baker worked together with evaluation consultant Gila Melech, Tel Aviv, to develop and share Evaluation Capacity Building strategies including:

- Translation of Bruner Foundation Evaluation Manuals and Training Session Materials Including Agendas, Powerpoint Slides and Activities (jointly supported by the Bruner Foundation and the Rothschild Caesarea Foundation).

- Development of a conference presentation and training materials for Israeli Evaluators, Funders and NGO professionals.

The planning work culminated in a week-long series of on-site meetings and training sessions (see following) and plans for ongoing follow-up and collaboration. This presentation highlights information presented to and feedback from NGO participants (see end).

Evaluation Capacity Building – Israel
On-site Agenda, 10/20 – 10/23/2014

	Monday 10.20	Tuesday 10.21	Wednesday 10.22	Thursday 10.23
Morning	Arrive – 7:00 AM	Behaaracha Raba Conference Presentation: Evaluative Thinking Center for Educational Technologies, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv	Enosh 9:00 – 1:00 12 people	Workshop for NGO's with Midot 9 – 12:30, 35 people
Afternoon	Meet with G. Melech, Israel Visit organizer final Planning, ECB – I	BREAK	Matan 3 – 6 5 people)	Reflections on ECB with professionals Kibbutzim Seminar, Tel Aviv 3:30 – 7:00
Evening		Meet with Forum of Foundations Reps	Dinner with Visit organizer, Enosh Exec. Director	** Depart

Following includes the agenda and presentation materials shared with NGO participants. Activities available on request.

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AGENDA: Evaluation Essentials

9:20 Introductions

9:30 Evaluation Definition, Usefulness, Strategy Clarifications
- Evaluation: Why Bother? - Discussion

10:00 Evaluation Overview
- Key Steps to Conducting Evaluation
- Evaluation Questions
- Evaluation Questions Activity (volunteers)
- Evaluation Design

10:30 Planning Logic, Evaluation Logic
Outcomes, Indicators and Targets
- Examples
- Outcomes Indicators and Targets Match Up (Activity)

11:00 BREAK

11:10 Data Collection
- Overview
- Survey Goof (Activity)
- Record Review (Activity)
- Findings Review Activity (to help answer the question: IS IT WORTH IT, WHAT CAN YOU KNOW?)

12:10 Beyond Data Collection
- What Happens After Data Collection
- Increasing Rigor
- Evaluation Reporting
- Final Advice
- Any Remaining Q/A

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What is Program Evaluation?

Thoughtful, systematic collection and analysis of information about activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, for use by specific people, to reduce uncertainties and inform decisions.

Evaluation Strategy Clarification

- All Evaluations Are:
  - ➔ Partly social
  - ➔ Partly political
  - ➔ Partly technical

- Both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected and used and both are valuable.
- There are multiple ways to address most evaluation needs.
- Different evaluation needs call for different designs, data and data collection strategies.

Evaluation Capacity is Important Because it Can Help Organizations . . .

	Somewhat True	Very True	TOTAL N=97
Build evaluation into the program planning process	7%	93%	100%
Improve their quality of service	7%	93%	100%
Revise programs based on real data	8%	92%	100%
Develop instruments that measure the types of outcomes valued by stakeholders	8%	92%	100%

Source: Reflections on Building Evaluative Capacity, Bruner Foundation Retrospective Study
http://www.evaluativethinking.org/docs/SurveyStudy_Part1.pdf

Why bother evaluating?

What do you need to do to conduct Evaluation?

- Specify key evaluation questions
  - Specify an approach (evaluation design)
    - Apply evaluation logic
      - Collect and analyze data
        - Summarize and share findings

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Evaluation Questions

- ✓ Focus and drive the evaluation.
- ✓ Should be carefully specified and agreed upon in advance of other evaluation work.
- ✓ Generally represent a critical subset of information that is desired.

Evaluation Questions: Advice

- **Limit the number of questions**
- **Between two and five is optimal**
- **Keep it manageable**

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What are staff and participant perceptions of the program?

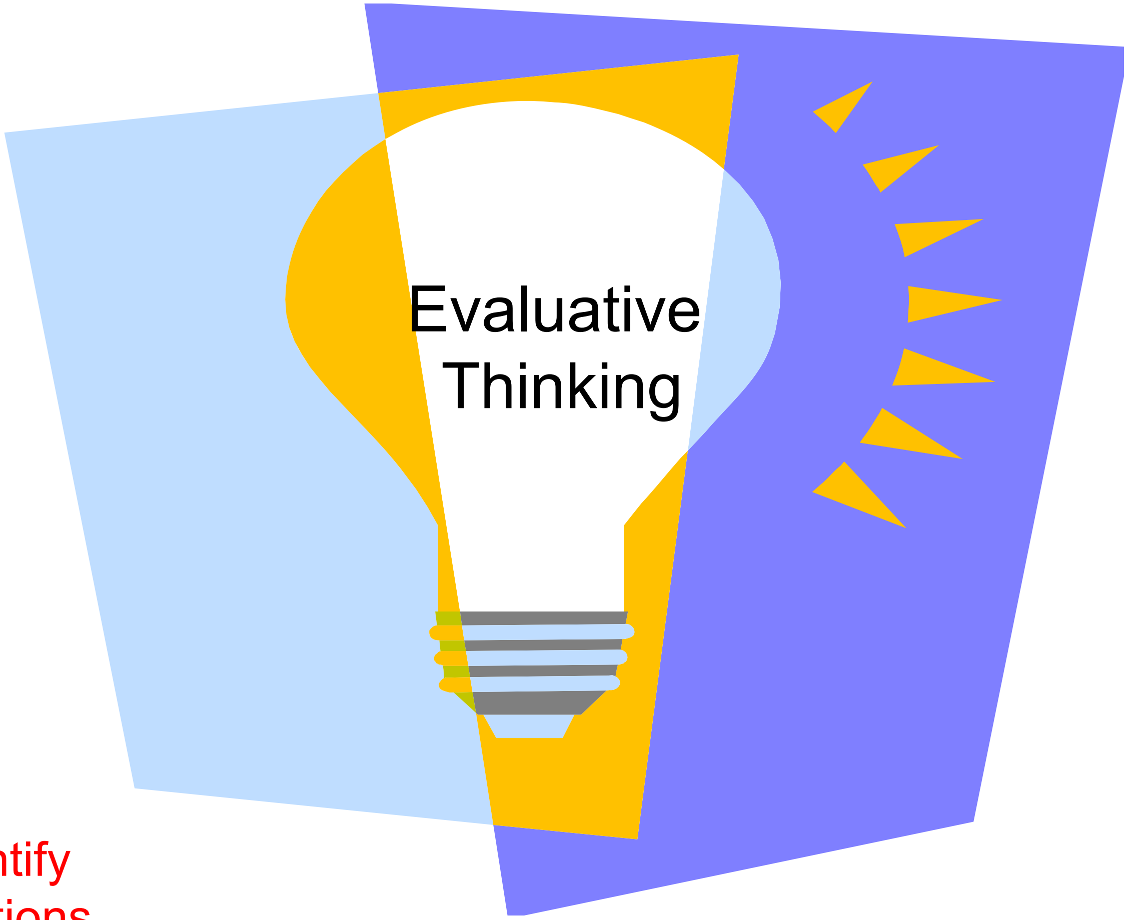
How and to what extent are participants progressing toward desired outcomes?

Evaluation Questions: EXAMPLE

1. How and to what extent does the YWCW enhance personal development among its participants?
2. How and to what extent does YWCW help participants plan for and prepare for health care careers?
3. How and to what extent does YWCW increase financial capability of participants?
4. Do participants
    a. continue in the program and meet academic goals?
    b. continue their courses of study?
    c. graduate?
    d. obtain necessary licenses?
    e. acquire positions in health care fields?

Evaluation Question Criteria

- It is possible to obtain data to address the questions.
- There is more than one possible “answer” to the question.
- The information to address the questions is wanted and needed.
- It is known how resulting information will be used internally (and externally).
- The questions are aimed at changeable aspects of activity.



Participants identify evaluation questions relevant for their programs. Volunteer sharing.

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Good Evaluation Designs Include the Following

- ✓ Summary information about the program
- ✓ The questions to be addressed by the evaluation
- ✓ The data collection strategies that will be used
- ✓ The individuals who will undertake the activities
- ✓ When the activities will be conducted
- ✓ The products of the evaluation (who will receive them and how they should be used)
- ✓ Projected costs to do the evaluation

Increasing Rigor in Program Evaluation

- ➔ Mixed methodologies
- ➔ Multiple sources of data
- ➔ Multiple points in time

Evaluation Design Excerpt

- Annual interviews with key partners
- Annual electronic mid-year surveys with participants
  - Progress reporting
  - Satisfaction
- Quarterly interviews with key program staff
  - Verify participant progress
  - Implementation
- Graduate surveys
- Semi-annual record review of participant characteristics

Evaluation Design Excerpt

Proposed Evaluation Design for: Career Women - A Workforce Development Program					
YEAR 1 (May 2013 - June 2014) all units are days			Proj Dir.	Evaluator	
TASK		TIMELINE	AB	JB	YWCA
Evaluation Initiation					
Initial meeting with YWCA/stakeholders	a	May 2013	0.25	0.25	
Review data sources, develop record review protocol	b	June - July 2013	0.25	0.50	
Develop finalized evaluation design		June 2013	0.25		✓
Data Collection and Analysis					
Conduct initiation interviews with key YWCA staff + partners		August 2013	1.00		✓
Administer participant surveys (academic year 2013-14)	e	Q2		1.00	
Analyze participant survey data		see above	0.50	2.00	✓
Interview key project staff at YWCA, and partner organization reps	f	Dec.13, May 14	0.50	1.00	
Collect participant data from individualized plans (n=20)	h	Dec.13, May 14		0.25	
Analyze participant plan data at mid-year and end of year 1		see above	0.50	0.75	✓
Administer exit-only surveys for graduating participants	i	At exit		0.25	
Analyze graduating participant survey data		Mid and End of Year		0.50	✓
Deliverables					
Initiation summary report		by Sept. 15, 2013	1.00		
Draft evaluation design submitted for review		July 2013	0.25		✓
Mid-year participant findings summary memos	j	Q1, Q2, Q3	0.25	0.75	
Quarterly check-in mtgs via phone (with summary memos)		Aug, Oct, Jan, Apr.	0.50	0.75	✓
Year 1 Report draft		May 2014	1.50	2.00	✓
Year 1 Report final		by June30, 2014	0.50	0.75	

What do you need to do to conduct Evaluation?

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Logical Considerations

1. Think about the results you want.
2. Decide what strategies will help you achieve those results?
3. Think about what inputs you need to conduct the desired strategies.

4. Specify outcomes, identify indicators and targets.**

DECIDE IN ADVANCE,
HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH

5. Document how services are delivered.

6. Evaluate actual results (outcomes).

Outcomes

Changes in attitudes, behavior, skills, knowledge, condition or status.

Must be:

- Realistic and attainable
- Related to core business
- Within program's sphere of influence

Outcomes: Reminders

- Time-sensitive
- Programs have more influence on more immediate outcomes
- Usually more than one way to get an outcome
- Closely related to program design; program changes usually = outcome changes
- Positive outcomes are not always improvements (maintenance, prevention)

Indicators

Specific, measurable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of an outcome.

Indicators are:

- Directly related to the outcome, help define it
- Specific, measurable, observable, seen, heard, or read

Indicator: Reminders

- Most outcomes have more than one indicator
- Identify the set of indicators that accurately signal achievement of an outcome (get stakeholder input)
- When measuring prevention, identify meaningful segments of time, check indicators during that time
- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound (SMART)

Examples of Indicators with Time References

Outcomes	Indicators
Initial: Teens are knowledgeable of prenatal nutrition and health guidelines	Program participants are able to identify food items that are good sources of major dietary requirements
Intermediate: Teens follow proper nutrition and health guidelines	Participants are within proper ranges for prenatal weight gain Participants abstain from smoking Participants take prenatal vitamins
Longer Term: Teens deliver healthy babies	Newborns weigh at least 5.5 pounds and score 7 or above on the APGAR scale.

Targets

Specify the amount or level of outcome attainment expected, hoped for or required.

<u>Targets can be set:</u>

- Relative to external standards (when available)
- Past performance/similar programs
- Professional hunches

Target: Reminders

- Targets should be specified in advance, require buy in, and may be different for different subgroups.
- Carefully word targets so they are not over or under-ambitious, make sense, and are in sync with time frames.
- If target indicates change in magnitude – be sure to specify initial levels and what is positive.

Outcome, Indicator, Target - EXAMPLE

Outcome	Indicators
Participants will be actively involved in program activities	At least 500 participants will be enrolled each month.
	Participants will attend 70% or more of all available sessions.
	At least half of participants will participate in 100 or more hours per cycle.

Outcome, Indicator, Target - EXAMPLE

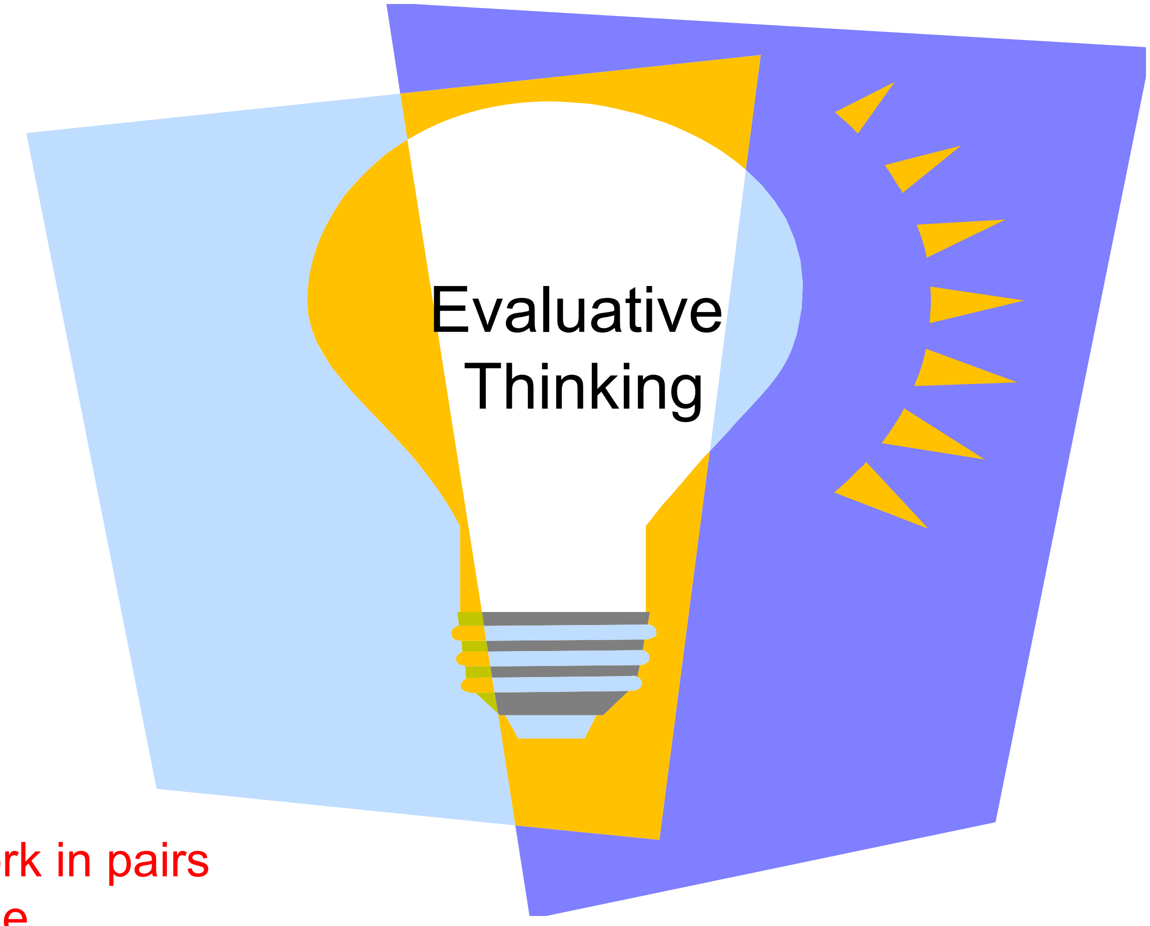
Outcome	Indicators
65% of clients show slowed or prevented disease progression at 6 and 12 months	Sustained CD4 counts within 50 cells
	Viral loads <5000
50% of clients with MH issues show improvement at 3 months, by 6 months or at program end.	Maintaining or decreasing mental health distress symptoms from baseline to follow-up using SDS

Outcome, Indicator, Target - EXAMPLE

Outcome	Indicators
College students in peer study groups will receive the support and assistance they need and will obtain post-secondary degrees.	At least 75% of participating students will report they get help from and feel supported by their peer study group.
	All participating freshman students who feel supported enroll for sophomore year
	More than 40% of eligible peer group participants graduate within 6 years.

YWCA Career Women's Program

Outcome	Indicators
YWCW participants will improve their educational, financial and employment status and advance their careers.	75% will continue their courses of study
	All retained students will achieve personal & career development goals and report learning how to manage their finances
	75% of eligible women will graduate within 2 years
	75% of graduates will obtain necessary licenses
	75% of graduates will acquire positions in health care fields within 1 year



Participants work in pairs to match sample activities, outcomes, indicators and targets from a scrambled version.

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How are evaluation data collected?

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations
- Record Reviews

- All have limitations and benefits
- All can be used to collect either quantitative or qualitative data
- Require preparation on the front end:
  - Instrument Development and testing
  - Administration plan development
  - Analysis plan development

Surveys

- Series of items with pre-determined response choices
- Can be completed by administrator or respondents
- Can be conducted
  - "paper/pencil"
  - phone, internet (e-survey)
  - using alternative strategies
- Instruments are called – surveys, "evaluations," questionnaires

USE SURVEYS TO:

Study attitudes and perceptions
Collect self-reported assessment of changes in response to program
Collect program assessments
Collect some behavioral reports
Test knowledge
Determine changes over time.

YWCW Participant Feedback

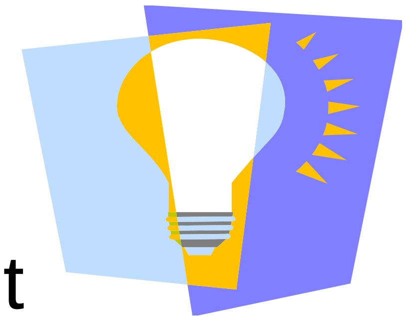
Table 7: Confidence in Major Career Goals, n=14

How confident are you that you will . . .	Very confident	Somewhat confident
Work in the health care field for at least two years following graduation	93%	7%
Graduate or finish your current program	79%	21%
Find a job in the health care field	64%	36%

Table 3: Ratings of Relationship with Program CPM, n = 14

Rating of relationship with CPM	% of Respondents
Excellent	79%
Very good	21%

Assessing Survey Instruments



- Are questions comprehensive without duplication, exhaustive without being exhausting?
- Do answer choices match question stem, provide coverage, avoid overlap?
- Are other data needs (e.g., characteristics of respondent) addressed?
- Do order and formatting facilitate response? Are directions clear?
- Does the survey have face validity?

Interviews:

- One-sided conversation with questions mostly pre-determined, but open-ended.

- Respondent answers in own terms.

- Can be conducted
  - in person
  - on phone
  - one-on-one, or groups

USE INTERVIEWS TO:

Study attitudes and perceptions
Collect self-reported assessment of changes in response to program
Collect program assessments
Document program implementation
Determine changes over time.

- Instruments are called – protocols, schedules or guides

Excerpts from CPM Interviews:

How has YWCW helped participants academically?

- *The biggest thing was support regarding preparing for exams. She could do the academic work – was totally motivated to do it. She had to study and set schedules for studying. She has a demanding job and a child.*

- *She is very self-sufficient and goal-oriented. She has many challenges though. I just helped her figure out how to make time to study and prepare for exams and when she could go to the library to use books (she could not afford to buy her own).*

Observations:

- Observations are conducted to view and hear actual program activities.

- Users of reports will know what and how events occur.

- Can be focused on
  - programs overall
  - participants
  - pre-selected features

USE OBSERVATIONS TO:

Document program implementation

Witness levels of skill/ability, program practices, behaviors

Determine changes over time.

- Instruments are called – protocols, guides, checklists

Record Reviews:

- Accessing existing internal information, or information collected for other purposes.

USE REC REVIEW TO:

Collect some behavioral reports
Conduct tests, collect test results
Verify self-reported data
Determine changes over time

- Can be focused on
  - own records
  - records of other orgs
  - adding questions to existing docs

- Instruments are called – protocols

What kinds of data can you collect through record reviews?

- **Background information about participants** (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, gender, location, family composition)
- **Status information about participants** (e.g., whether and how much they are working, what their income levels are, whether they have prior or multiple arrest records, whether they are owed child support)
- **Behavioral data** (e.g., program attendance, program service utilization)
- **Test results** (e.g., SAT or GRE scores, employment aptitude test scores, medical test results such as immunization status, TB test results)
- **Other outcome data** (e.g., report cards, health or psychological assessments, home visit results)

YWCW Record Review Excerpts

Table 1b: Participant Demographics, n=15

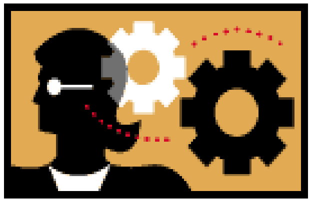
Household Income	
Below $15,000	36%
$15,000 – $29,999	15%
$30,000 or more	49%
Number of Children	
1 child	47%
More than 1 child	53%

YWCW Record Review Excerpts

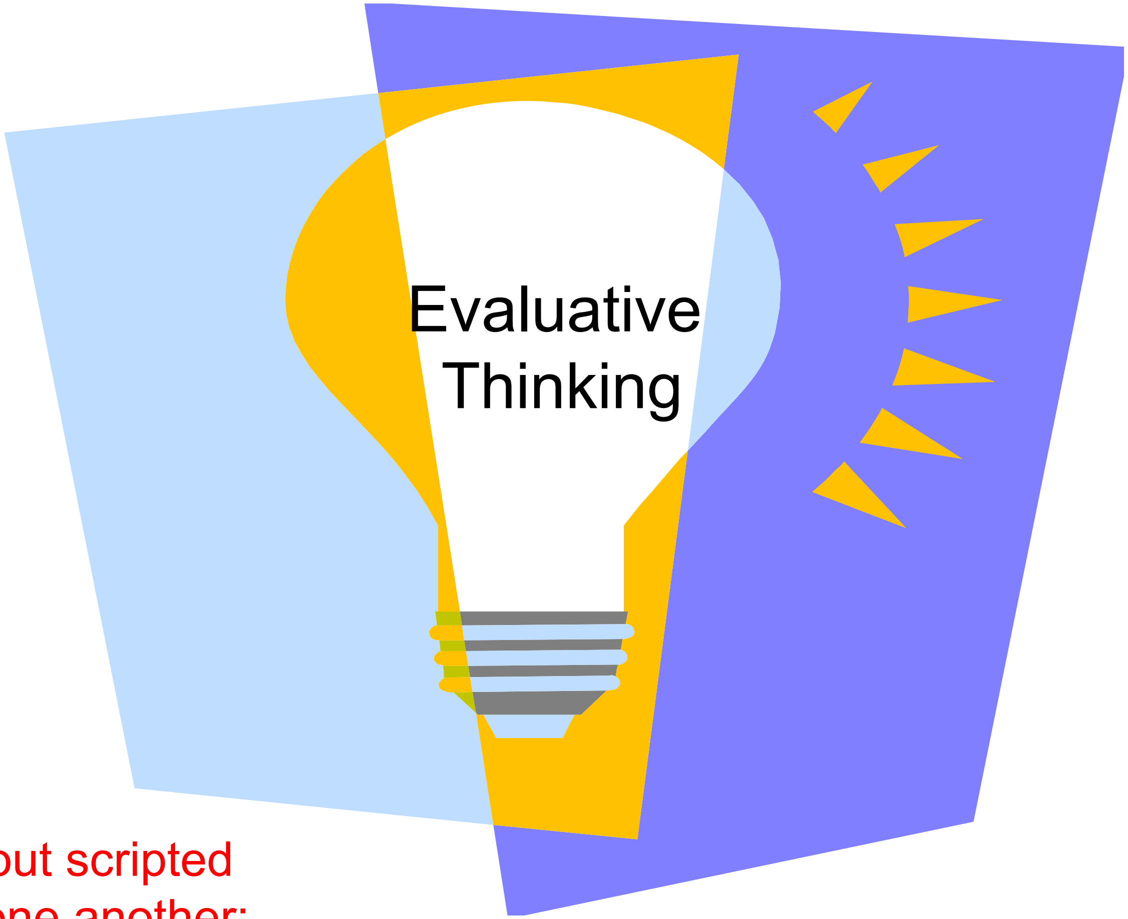
Table 2: Total Coaching Session Attendance Year 1, 2013-14, n=15

Number of Sessions Attended	# of Participants
< 10 Sessions	0
10 – 15 Sessions	5
16 – 21 Sessions	7
More than 21 Sessions	3

Things to Think about Before Collecting Data



- Target group: who, where, sampling?
- Respondent assistance, Is consent needed?
- Type of data collection, frequency of administration
- Anonymity vs. Confidentiality
- Specific strategies, incentives?
- Time needed for response (for surveys and interviews)
- Tracking data collection
- Data analysis plans
- Storing and maintaining confidentiality



Participants try out scripted interviews with one another; review surveys to find design errors, complete matrices of available record review data.

What happens after data are collected?

1. Data are analyzed according to plans. Results/findings are summarized.
2. Findings must be converted into a format that can be shared with others.
3. Action steps should be developed from findings.

"Now that we know _____ we will ______."

Increasing Rigor in Program Evaluation

- Mixed methodologies
- Multiple sources of data
- Multiple points in time

Evaluation Reporting: Initial Steps

1. Clearly identify your audience.

Staff? Funders? Board? Participants? Multiple

2. Determine what Presentation Strategies work best.

PowerPoint	Newsletter
Fact sheet	Oral presentation
Visual displays	Video
Storytelling	Press releases
Report	

Full report? Executive summary?

Stakeholder-specific report(s)?

Steps to Improve Evaluation

DO

1. Plan!
2. Set targets and see if you reach them.
3. Consider multiple perspectives.
4. Use appropriate data collection strategies.
5. Integrate evaluation into everyday activities.

Cautions

1. Don't shoot a mouse with a cannon!

   Keep it simple, stick to your plan

   Look for evidence and understanding not proof/causation

2. Don't make grand claims.

   Be careful with generalizations, only summarize to the actual group

3. Don't over-rely on surveys.

   Be sure to use observations, interviews and record reviews too

4. Don't over-collect and under-analyze.

   Only ask for information you know you want, need and will use.

5. Don't use evaluation strategies designed for others.

   Be careful with instruments, evaluation plans, report templates

כיצד אתה מתאר את הלמידה שלך מהסדנה היום, בהשוואה לידע שכבר היה לך עד עתה? 1

	לא ידעתי על זה, ולמדתי על זה הרבה	לא ידעתי על זה, ולמדתי על זה קצת	ידעתי על זה קצת, ולמדתי עוד קצת	ידעתי על זה, ולא למדתי משהו חדש	לא ידעתי על זה, אך גם לא למדתי משהו חדש
הגדרה של הערכת תכניות	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
שלבים בביצוע הערכה	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
למה כדאי לבצע הערכה	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
שאלות הערכה	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
Evaluation designs – מערכי הערכה	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
תוצאות	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
מדדים	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
יעדים	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
שאלונים	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
ראיונות	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
תצפיות	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
ניתוח רשומות record review	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
דוחות הערכה ושימוש בהערכה	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐

	לא בטוח	הרבה	קצת	בכלל לא
באיזו מידה הפעילויות תרמות לסדנה?	❐	❐	❐	❐
עד כמה הסדנה תתרום לך בעבודתך?	❐	❐	❐	❐

Feedback Summary

- At both Enosh and among organizations at the Midot-sponsored training, **participants indicated they learned from the training about all topics with which they were unfamiliar.**

- All participants indicated **the training will help them** *some* (46%) **or** *a lot (54%)* **with their regular work**. No one indicated the training was un-helpful.

- On a scale ranging from *Not So Good to Okay to Very Good to Excellent*, all participants rated the training as *Very Good* (65%) or *Excellent* (35%). A substantial proportion of participants (72%) indicated **the activities contributed** ***a lot*** **to the training.**

Selected comments from participants follow

Feedback Summary: Selected Comments

- *I liked that there were specific examples that we can use to show to other people when we plan evaluation process.*
- *I liked the fluency, expertise, and humor that was used.*
- *I liked the structure. It was very clear, but could emphasize even more the benefits of incorporating evaluation as a way to make your work more effective along the way.*
- *The examples were very helpful and the answer I got to specific questions will help me do my job better.*
- *It was done very professionally. Q's and A's were especially valuable.*
- *This was an excellent presentation. She had extensive experience that she was passionate to share.*
- *There were a lot great tips and tricks but also a good foundation.*
- *I liked the well-presented information. The examples were clear and helpful and the presenter was interesting and energetic.*
- *The training was fluent, focused and clear, plus there was humor.*

Responses to the question: What did you like about the training?

Feedback Summary: Selected Comments

- *The understanding that it is important to build a systematic program, to give time to plan and ask ourselves what is really important to us to evaluate.*
- *The advice to do or to avoid while you are in the process of evaluation.*
- *May have given me a new view of how I can use evaluation in my work. Gained a better understanding of the questions our donors ask. Making this a workshop – not a lecture – was definitely a good decision.*
- *I think overall, it gave me a framework, thinking about how to implement evaluation at my work- and the fact it should be thought of right now.*
- *The ability to get an organized view of the subject and having specific questions I had answered.*
- *To easily utilize the data that we already have available to us. Secondly, the organized and clear presentation focused and emphasized incorporating these values into our organization.*
- *It was a clear, concise and well though out presentation that I will refer to again and implement once sent the materials from the event.*
- *A good focus on evaluation questions and evaluation logic. I learned a lot about surveys.*
- *I learned professional terms especially the difference between indicators, outcomes and targets.*
- *The whole lecture was very helpful, interesting and encouraged thinking and being accurate about the process.*

Responses to the question: The one thing I found particularly helpful today . . .

Feedback Summary: Selected Comments

- *This helped to promote evaluative thinking in organizations. Good for people who do not have a lot of knowledge in this area. However, it's important to be more careful about use for collecting and analyzing data-that was over-simplified and there are many issues relating to validity and reliability which need to be discussed.*
- *Need more information on evaluation tools.*
- *I would appreciate learning more about data analysis.*
- *It seems it should be a longer day, because a lot of the materials is known and I think that we didn't have the opportunity to drill down.*
- *We need time to implement this.*
- *I need practice in this field with co-workers*
- *We need resources. We are a small staff, our time is limited.*
- *Tools translated into Hebrew.* (Note, this request has been fulfilled – translated materials are now available on the Bruner Foundation website.)

Responses to: What else do you need to incorporate evaluation into your daily work?

Feedback Summary: Selected Comments

- *More technical information about data collection and analysis.*
- *I now need to sit down and design an assessment model for the program we operate.*
- *Specific applications for our organization of course would have been wonderful. I understand the time constraints and the objectives of the meeting.*
- *We need to develop proper strategies, budget, time and staff to administer this.*
- *I wish there was a little more analysis, because I think this is where a lot of us get stuck.*
- *It would be helpful to work one-on-one with an expert on the specific details of my organization.*
- *Broadening methods and skills through additional workshop activity.*

Responses to: What else do you need to incorporate evaluation into your daily work?