Make it count:
How to share your evaluation results in a meaningful way

Congratulations! Your program has completed its evaluation. *Now what?* It's time to take everything you've learned from the evaluation and share it with the **key stakeholders** of your program. How you share your evaluation findings requires careful consideration of **who, what, where, when, why** and most importantly, **how**. Ask yourselves the following question to help decide the best way to communicate to each of your potential stakeholder audiences:

1. WHY should we share our evaluation results?

This question is in many ways the most important, because communicating the results of the evaluation can help strengthen and sustain the program. Sharing results can show:

- How the program is **important**
- That program staff are **aware** of changes that need to be made
- How the program is **worthwhile to funders**
- How the program is working to **examine** and **improve** itself
- How **similar projects** at your agency are worthy of support!

Think about which of these reasons is important to your program. Once you've decided *why* you'd like to share your results, it's time to move to step 2…

2. WHO should we share results with?

Evaluation results can and should be shared with anyone who is a key stakeholder in your program. A key stakeholder is a person or group that is affected by a program's success or failure. This can include:

- **Clients, consumers** or **participants** of the program
- **Staff** who work for the program
- **Funders** who provide financial support for the program
- **Board members** who oversee the program
- **Community members** who live near the program

It is important to find a way to communicate the results of your evaluation to *all* stakeholders so they can understand how the program is affecting their **lives, health, jobs,** and **environment**. *What* you specifically communicate to each of these groups will differ. Which leads us to step 3…

3. WHAT should be shared?

Don't share everything you learned from the evaluation with everyone – this could result in information overload!

Determine what **key points** you'd like to make about your evaluation results, for example: *Is the program accomplishing what it set out to accomplish? What is going well? What needs improvement?* If mentioning gaps that were found, be sure to communicate plans to address these.

Be sure to **taper your key points to each audience** because what matters most to one group (e.g. clients) may be entirely different from what another group cares about (e.g. funders). Now you're ready for step 4…

CAPACITY FOR HEALTH

4. WHEN & WHERE should results be shared?

Results can be shared in a variety of settings, and will depend largely on the audience and their role. Think of when this group will *look* and *listen*. For example:

- A **lunch meeting** can be held during which staff discuss the findings
- A written report can be shared with the board at the next **board meeting**
- Results can be included in a **grant application** to funders
- A video presenting results can be shown in the client **waiting room**
- Posters with key findings can be placed in **restrooms** for clients to view
- Result highlights can be shared with the community via **email, text and social networking sites**

Use your imagination and creativity! Now you are ready for step 5…

5. HOW can we share results in a way that allows others to participate in the process?

It is important to gather stakeholder feedback *before* sharing the final results. This can help **clarify what is most important** in the findings. For example:

- Hold a **focus group** with clients of the program to share the preliminary findings. Ask them which of the findings are *most important* or *what they would do next*
- Ask program staff to do a **rating exercise**. Discuss the evaluation findings in a meeting, and ask staff to rate each issue on a scale from 1-10, with 10 being the most important
- Hold a **community meeting** to discuss preliminary findings. Ask community members *what, when* and *where* the results would best be shared with others in the community

Example #1

WHY: To help program improvement
WHO: Staff
WHAT: Which program objectives *are* being met, and which *aren't*
WHEN & WHERE: Special 2-hour staff meeting, lunch provided
HOW: Share preliminary results with staff. Gain staff participation by asking them to rate the objectives that aren't being met in terms of *importance to address*. Ask what *solutions* they envision.

Example #2

WHY: Show success of program
WHO: Funders
WHAT: The program is accomplishing most of its goals! However, also be sure to include *how you plan to address the parts that weren't successful*
WHY: The program was a pilot project, and you'd like to gain *long-term funding*
WHEN & WHERE: Results are incorporated into a pamphlet with visuals by a graphic designer and shared via email and traditional mail
HOW: Share preliminary results in a *focus group* with potential funders in your area. Ask them what elements of your program will be most eye-catching to funders at that point in time, and emphasize these in your final materials.