FRAMEWORKS FOR SUCCESSFUL NON-PROFIT EVALUATION

- Internal non-profit evaluation is increasingly expected, and often challenging (e.g. Thayer & Fine, 2001)

- Researcher-Practitioner partnerships are critical
  - Working across sectors is often difficult but important (Jansson et al., 2010; McArdle & Murray, 2021)

- Much of the literature provides overarching frameworks (e.g. Fine et al., 2000; Liket et al., 2014)
WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?
WHAT CAN WE DO?
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES OF OUR CHOICES?

THE 5 W’ & AN H OF DIGITAL EQUITY PRACTITIONER EVALUATION
*WHY*

Who

What

Where

When

How
Why (Did you collect the data)?

- What is the purpose of the project? What are you trying to learn?
  - Formulate specific and clear hypotheses/research questions.
    - H. Our new digital literacy program will improve client literacy and efficacy.
    - RQ. Should we add a weekly tech support walk-in service?
- Consider all of the stakeholders (e.g. clients, staff, funders, policymakers, the press, etc.)
- Write separate hypotheses/research questions for each stakeholder.
WHAT (KIND OF DATA WILL YOU COLLECT)?

- What method will you use?
    - True experiments require random assignment.
      - Natural experiment - some participants will receive the intervention and others will not.
        - Must identify the bias between the groups: how are they different?
  - Be clear about confidentiality with participants.
WHAT (KIND OF DATA WILL YOU COLLECT)?

- Surveys
  - One time (i.e. cross-sectional) or longitudinal?
    - Surveys cannot demonstrate causality, especially cross-sectional surveys.
  - Use Likert scales (e.g. 1-5, 1-7) v. dichotomous measures (e.g. yes/no).
    - Measure psychological concepts by averaging multiple items.
  - Only ask one idea per item.
  - Make answer options mutually exclusive and exhaustive (i.e. “other”).
  - Target survey length: 10-15min (depending on payment)
    - Longer surveys may require attention check questions.
WHAT (KIND OF DATA WILL YOU COLLECT)?

- Interviews
  - Individual or focus group interviews?
  - Use an hourglass approach to designing the interview
    - i.e. Start broad > get increasingly specific > end with “what else?”
  - Target length 45-60 minutes (depending on payment).
WHO (WILL YOU COLLECT DATA FROM)?

- Target population: Clients? Non-clients? Staff? All of the above?
  - Do you have money to pay them? Individual payment or raffle?
- Want to evaluate everyone or only a subgroup (i.e. a sample)?
  - If the latter, do you want your sample to represent everyone (i.e. statistically represent the target population of interest)?
    - YES: Must randomly sample from target population.
SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING

Random Number Generator

Use the Random Number Generator to create a list of random numbers, based on your specifications. The numbers you generate appear in the Random Number Table.

For help in using the Random Number Generator, read the Frequently-Asked Questions or review the Sample Problems.

- Enter a value in each of the first three text boxes.
- Indicate whether duplicate entries are allowed in the table.
- Click the Calculate button to create a table of random numbers.

Note: The seed value is optional. Leave it blank to generate a new set of numbers. Use it to repeat a previously-generated set of numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many random numbers?</th>
<th>1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum value</td>
<td>99999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow duplicate entries</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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  - If the latter, do you want your sample to represent everyone (i.e. statistically represent the target population of interest)?
    - YES: Must randomly sample from target population.
    - NO: Identify bias in the data and consider when using to inform decisions.
NON-REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING

- Convenience Sampling – Who is available?
- Purposive Sampling – Who meets certain criteria?
- Snowball Sampling – Using participants to find participants.
WHERE (WILL YOU COLLECT DATA)?

- Easy to underestimate the difficulty of recruiting participants.
- Don’t rely on technology (alone) for recruitment and data collection.
  - Partner with community orgs (e.g. churches, libraries, shelters, etc.)
  - Target participation rates
    - ~25-75% of sample, depending on sampling technique
    - ~20-40 interview participants
  - Reach saturation
WHEN (WILL YOU COLLECT THE DATA)?

- Create a target timeline to help manage project.
  - ~6-8 months to design, implement, and analyze evaluation data.
    - Then be willing to amend it....

- Collect baseline data if possible.
  - Informs intervention design.
  - Easier to demonstrate improvement in non-experiments.
HOW (WILL YOU ANALYZE AND PRESENT THE DATA)?

- Request funding for statistician.
- Basic in-house analysis.
  - Don’t underestimate a good scatterplot or histogram.
  - Surveys: Linear regression control for multiple variables at once.
  - Interviews: Iterative review of data using matrix.
NEXT STEPS FOR THIS PROJECT

- Partner with Digitunity to collect data and write full-length report.
  - Recruit from their 1,500 network members: Interviews & Surveys.
  - Case study: device distribution non-profits.
    - RQs: What is your experience with evaluation? What works? What doesn’t?
- Provide a list of common measures of digital equity predictors and outcomes.
- Publish research article informing researchers about practitioner needs and encouraging collaboration.
- What else?
THANK YOU!
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