A Practical Guide

Outcome Evaluation Strategies for Domestic Violence Programs

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Domestic Violence (PCADV)

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About the Author

Cris Sullivan, Ph.D.

Cris Sullivan is an Associate Professor of Ecological Psychology at Michigan State University and an independent research consultant. She has been active in the Battered Women's Movement since 1982 as both an advocate and a researcher.

Her community involvement has included facilitating support groups for women with abusive partners, providing direct advocacy for shelter residents, grant writing, serving on the board of directors of a domestic violence shelter program, and serving on the advisory board of Michigan State University's on-campus domestic violence shelter program.

Dr. Sullivan is a member of the Capital Area Family Violence Coordinating Council, the Michigan Violence Against Women Project Advisory Council, and Michigan State University's Violence Against Women Research and Outreach Initiative.

In the area of research, she has received numerous grants to study the long-term effects of community-based interventions for battered women and their children. Other areas of expertise include evaluating victim services and developing and evaluating coordinated community responses for survivors of domestic violence.

Dr. Sullivan is available to provide one and two-day workshops on developing outcome evaluation strategies. She can be reached by calling (517) 353-8867.

Preface

From PCADV's Executive Director

Preface

Unlike some service programs with obvious and tangible outcomes — such as those designed to prevent teenage pregnancy or to teach parenting skills — domestic violence victim service programs provide multiple services with intangible or hard-to-measure outcomes.

In some cases, services are extremely short-term (such as providing information over the phone) and/or are provided to anonymous individuals (as is often the case with crisis calls). It is also difficult to evaluate programs designed to prevent a negative event from occurring. In the case of battering, the survivor is not responsible for preventing the abuse and is often unable to stop it from occurring regardless of her actions.

In response to these complicated and daunting challenges, PCADV enlisted the services of domestic violence researcher and advocate Cris Sullivan, Ph.D., to help programs design appropriate evaluation outcomes. Dr. Sullivan worked with many PCADV staff as well as numerous Pennsylvania domestic violence programs to determine, implement, and refine outcome measures and procedures.

The result of this year-long collaboration is now in your hands. *Outcome Evaluation Strategies for Domestic Violence Programs: A Practical Guide* was written specifically for domestic violence service staff interested in beginning or enhancing program outcome evaluation. The guide was designed not to discuss evaluation in global terms and in the abstract but to provide practical assistance and examples in designing and carrying out effective strategies.

Outcome Evaluation Strategies for Domestic Violence Programs was developed as a resource to assist domestic violence service providers in examining the effectiveness of their programs in a straight-forward manner. Although many programs are feeling external pressure from funding sources to conduct outcome evaluation, it is our sincere hope and expectation that the information gained through the methods in this guide will be useful, not just for convincing external sources of our importance but also in enhancing program effectiveness.

Our ultimate goal in evaluating our programs should continue to be providing the most effective services possible to battered women and their children.

— *Susan Kelly-Dreiss*
PCADV Executive Director

▲ TERMINOLOGY NOTE

When talking about battered women, this guide uses "survivor" rather than victim. A conscious decision was made to use the term "survivor", which focuses on women's strengths and courage rather than their victimization.

▲ GENDER SPECIFICATION NOTE

Throughout this guide, survivors are assumed to be female and the abusers male — as reflected in the body of domestic violence research. This is not meant to detract from those instances where the survivor and abuser may be intimate partners of the same sex or the survivor may be male and the abuser female.

▲ EDITORIAL NOTE

While many PCADV staff provided critical support and editorial comments at all stages, the final product reflects the opinions and views of the author.

Chapter 1

Why We Want To Evaluate Our Work

Why We Want to Evaluate Our Work

Although the thought of "evaluation" can be daunting, if not downright intimidating, there are some good reasons why we want to evaluate the job we are doing. The most important reason, of course, is that we want to understand the impact of what we are doing on women's lives. We want to build upon those efforts that are helpful to women with abusive partners and we don't want to continue putting time and resources into efforts that are not helpful or important.

Evaluation is also important because it provides us with "hard evidence" to present to funders, which encourages them to continue increasing our funding. Most of us would agree that these are good reasons to examine the kind of job we're doing — BUT we are still hesitant to evaluate our programs for a number of reasons.

Why Domestic Violence Programs May Resist Evaluation – and Why They Should Reconsider

Research has been used against women with abusive partners.

It is true that research data can be manipulated or misinterpreted. However, this is actually a reason why we need to understand and conduct our own evaluations. To effectively argue against the misinterpretation of other research, we must at least have a general understanding of how data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

I don't trust researchers.

Too many programs have had bad experiences with researchers who come into their settings, collect data, and are either never heard from again or interpret their findings without a basic understanding of domestic violence issues.

In the academic arena we refer to this as "drive-by data collection," and programs should turn such researchers away at the door. For more suggestions regarding building a relationship with a researcher, see Chapter 8. But also remember, working with a researcher to do program evaluation is optional. This guidebook is designed to give

you the basic information you will need to conduct your own outcome evaluation.

Funders (or the public) will use our findings against us.

A common concern of program staff is that our own evaluations could be used against us because they might not "prove" we are effective in protecting women from intimate violence. This fear usually comes from people who think that the funders (or the public) expect us, on our own, to end intimate violence against women. It is unrealistic to expect victim service programs to end victimization; that is the role of the entire community. We do, however, need to know if we are effectively meeting realistic goals.

"I have no training in evaluation!"

That's how this resource can help. There is a scary mystique around evaluation — the idea that it is something only highly trained specialists can (or would want to) understand. The truth is, this guide will provide you with most, if not all, the information you need to conduct a program evaluation.

We don't have the resources to do evaluation.

It is true that evaluating our programs takes staff time and money. One of the ways we need to more effectively advocate for ourselves is in educating our funding sources that evaluation demands must come with dollars attached.

However, this guide was created to prevent every program from having to "reinvent the wheel." Hopefully the logic models in Chapter 5, the outcome questions in Appendix B, and the strategies outlined in the following chapters will assist you in conducting evaluation without having to devote more time and money than is necessary to this endeavor.

Everyone knows you can make data say anything you want to anyway.

This actually isn't true. Although data are open to interpretation, there are limits. For example, if you ask survivors, out of context, how often they slapped their assailants in the last year and 78% reported they did so at least once, you could try to make the argument that women are abusive toward men — which is why it is so important

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to word questions accurately. On the other hand, if you collected this same information and then claimed women never slapped their assailants under any circumstances, you would not have the data to back you up.

Data can be manipulated, but only so far. And the more you understand research and evaluation, the more easily you will be able to point out when and how data are misinterpreted.

We've already done an evaluation;
we don't need to do one again.

Things change, programs change, and staff change. We should continually strive to evaluate ourselves and improve our work.

Knowledge is power, and the more service providers and advocates know about designing and conducting evaluation efforts the better those efforts will be. Evaluating our work can provide us with valuable information we need to continually improve our programs.

The following chapters were designed to break down the evaluation process into manageable and understandable pieces to facilitate this process.

Chapter 2

Important Considerations Before Designing an Evaluation

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Important Considerations in Designing an Evaluation

Before even beginning any evaluation efforts, all programs should consider how to:

(1) protect the confidentiality and safety of the women providing information

(2) be respectful to women when gathering and using information

(3) address issues of diversity in your evaluation plan

Confidentiality and Safety of Survivors

The safety of the women with whom we work must always be our top priority. The need to collect information to help us evaluate our programs must always be considered in conjunction with the confidentiality and safety of the women and children receiving our services.

It is not ethical to gather information just for the sake of gathering information. If we are going to ask women very personal questions about their lives, there should always be an important reason to do so — and their safety must not be compromised. The safety and confidentiality of women must be kept in mind at every step:

(1) deciding what questions to ask

(2) collecting the information

(3) storing the data

(4) presenting the information to others

> ◀ **PLEASE NOTE**
>
> *The terms "anonymous" and "confidential" do NOT mean the same thing. The distinction is important.*
>
> <u>ANONYMOUS</u> – You do **not** know who the responses came from (e.g., questionnaires left in locked boxes).
>
> <u>CONFIDENTIAL</u> – You **do** know, or can find out, who the responses came from but are committed to keeping this information to yourself. For example, a woman participating in a focus group is not anonymous, but she expects her responses to be kept confidential.

Respecting Survivors Throughout the Process

When creating or choosing questions to ask women who use our services, we must always ask:

- whether we really need the information
- how we will use it
- whether it is respectful or disrespectful to ask
- who else might be interested in the answers

As an example, let's assume we are considering asking women a series of questions about their use of alcohol or drugs. The questions to ask ourselves include:

(1) **How will this information be used?**

- To ensure women are receiving adequate services?
- To prevent women from receiving services?
- Both?

If this information is not directly relevant to our outcome evaluation efforts, do we really need to ask?

(2) **How can we ask these questions in a respectful way?**

First and foremost, women should always be told why we are asking the questions. And, **whenever possible, an advisory group of women who have used our services should assist** in supervising the development of evaluation questions.

(2) Who else might be interested in obtaining this information?

- Assailants' defense attorneys?
- Child Protective Services?

Women should always know what might happen to the information they provide. If you have procedures to protect this information from others, women should know that. If you might share this information with others, women need to know that as well. Respect and honesty are key.

Addressing Issues of Diversity

Domestic violence programs must be **culturally competent** as well as flexible to meet the needs of a diverse population of survivors. This involves understanding not

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only the societal oppressions faced by various groups of people, but also respecting the strengths and assets inherent in different communities. This understanding must then be reflected in program services, staffing, and philosophies.

> ◄ **PLEASE NOTE**
>
> *The terms "cultural competence" and "cultural sensitivity" do* NOT *mean the same thing. The distinction is important.*
>
> CULTURAL SENSITIVITY – expressing sensitivity or concern for individuals from all cultures
>
> CULTURAL COMPETENCE – effectively meeting the needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

In addition to diversity in culture, there is a great deal of other variability among the individuals seeking domestic violence program services, including diversity across:

- age
- citizenship status
- gender identity
- health (physical, emotional, and mental)
- language(s) spoken
- literacy
- physical ability and disability
- religious and spiritual beliefs
- sexual orientation
- socioeconomic status

Although process evaluation is commonly thought of as the best way to understand the degree to which our programs meet the needs of women from diverse experiences and cultures (See Chapter 3), outcome evaluation should also address issues of diversity.

This guidebook takes the position that outcome evaluation must be designed to answer the question of whether or not women attained outcomes they identified as important to them. So, for example, before asking a woman if she obtained a protection orders, first ask if wanted a

protection order. Before asking if your support group decreased a woman's isolation, you would want to know if she felt isolated before attending your group.

Not all women seek our services for the same reasons, and our services must be flexible to meet those diverse needs. Outcome evaluation can inform you about the different needs and experiences of women and their children, and this information can be used to inform your program as well as community efforts.

Addressing issues of diversity in your outcome evaluation strategies involves:

(1) including the views and opinions of women and their children from diverse backgrounds and experiences in all phases of your evaluation

(2) including "demographic" questions in your measures (e.g., ethnicity, age, primary language, number of children, sexual orientation) that will give you important information about respondents' background and situations

(3) pilot testing your outcome measures with individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences

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Chapter 3

Process Evaluation:
How Are We Doing?

Process Evaluation: How Are We Doing?

Even though this guide focuses on outcome and not process evaluation, there is enough confusion about the difference to warrant a brief discussion of process evaluation.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation assesses the degree to which your program is operating as intended. It answers the questions:

- What (exactly) are we doing?
- How are we doing it?
- Who is receiving our services?
- Who **isn't** receiving our services?
- How satisfied are service recipients?
- How satisfied are staff? volunteers?
- How are we changing?
- How can we improve?

These are all important questions to answer, and process evaluation serves an important and necessary function for program development.

Examining how a program is operating requires some creative strategies and methods including interviews with staff, volunteers, service recipients, focus groups, behavioral observations, and looking at program records. Some of these techniques are also used in outcome evaluation, which are described later in this guidebook.

When designing outcome measures, it is common to include a number of "process-oriented" questions as well. This helps us determine the connection between program services received and outcomes achieved.

For example, you might find that women who received three or more hours of face-to-face contact with your legal advocate were more likely to report understanding their legal rights than were women who only talked with your legal advocate once over the phone. Or you might discover that residents of your shelter were more likely to find housing when a volunteer was available to provide them with transportation.

Process evaluation is also important because we want to assess not just whether a woman received what she needed (outcome), but whether she felt "comfortable" with the staff and volunteers, as well as with the services she received.

For example, it is not enough that a woman received the help she needed to obtain housing (outcome) if the advocate helping her was condescending or insensitive (process). It is also unacceptable if a woman felt "safe" while in the shelter (outcome) but found the facility so dirty (process) she would never come back.

Process evaluation helps us assess what we are doing, how we are doing it, why we are doing it, who is receiving the services, how much recipients are receiving, the degree to which staff, volunteers, and recipients are satisfied, and how we might improve our programs.

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Chapter 4

Outcome Evaluation: What Impact Are We Having?

Outcome Evaluation: What Impact Are We Having?

It is extremely common for people to confuse process evaluation with outcome evaluation. Although process evaluation is important — and discussed in the previous chapter — it is **not** the same as outcome evaluation.

▲ | PLEASE NOTE

Outcome Evaluation assesses program impact: *What occurred as a result of the program? Outcomes must be measurable, realistic, and philosophically tied to program activities.*

One of the first places many people get "stuck" in the evaluation process is with all of the terminology involved:

- objectives
- goals
- outcomes
- inputs
- outputs
- activities
- logic models

These terms have struck fear in the hearts of many, and are often the cause of abandoning the idea of evaluation altogether. One reason for this is that the terms are not used consistently by everyone. Some people see goals and objectives as interchangeable, for example, while others view objectives and outcomes as the same.

What is more important than memorizing terminology is understanding the meaning behind the labels. This guide will describe the concepts behind the terms so even if a specific funder or evaluator uses different terminology than you do, you will still be able to talk with each other!

The Difference Between Objectives and Outcomes

Effective evaluation begins by first defining our overarching goals (sometimes also referred to as objectives). Goals or objectives (I'm using these terms interchangeably; not everyone does.) are what we ultimately hope to accomplish through the work we do. **Program goals**, usually described in our mission statements, **are long-term aims that are difficult to measure objectively**.

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Most of us would agree that the OVERALL GOAL OR OBJECTIVE of domestic violence programs is to enhance safety and justice for battered women and their children. While it is not important that you agree with this overall objective, it is important that you choose goals and objectives that make sense for your agency.

After the program's overall objective has been established, it is important to consider what we expect to see happen as a result of our program that is measurable and would tell us we are meeting our objective(s). These are ***program outcomes***.

The critical distinction between goals and outcomes is that **outcomes are statements reflecting measurable change due to your programs' efforts**.

Depending on the individual program, program outcomes might include:

- survivor's immediate safety
- immediate safety of her children
- survivor's increased knowledge about domestic violence
- survivor's increased awareness of options
- survivor's decreased isolation
- community's improved response to battered women and their children
- public's increased knowledge about domestic violence
- perpetrator's cessation of violence (only for programs that focus specifically on the abuser)

There are two types of outcome we can evaluate: long-term outcomes and short-term outcomes. ***Long-term outcomes* involve measuring what we would expect to ultimately occur**, such as:

- increased survivor safety over time
- reduced incidence of abuse in the community
- reduced homicide in the community
- improved quality of life of survivors

Measuring long-term outcomes is very labor intensive, time intensive, and costly. Research dollars are generally needed to adequately examine these types of outcomes.

More realistically, you will be measuring ***short-term outcomes***, which **measure proximal change. *Proximal changes* are those more immediate and/or incremental**

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outcomes one would expect to see that will eventually lead to the desired long-term outcomes. For example, a hospital-based medical advocacy project for battered women might be expected to result in more women being correctly identified by the hospital, more women receiving support and information about their options, and increased sensitivity being displayed by hospital personnel in contact with abused women. These changes might then be expected to result in more women accessing whatever community resources they might need to maximize their safety (e.g., shelter, protection orders), which ultimately — long-term — would be expected to lead to reduced violence and increased well-being.

Without research dollars, you are unlikely to have the resources to measure the long-term changes that result from your project. Rather, programs should measure the short-term outcomes they expect the program to impact. In this example, that might include

(1) the number of women correctly identified in the hospital as survivors of domestic violence

(2) survivors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention in meeting their needs

(3) hospital personnel's attitudes toward survivors

Measures of Proximal Change

Measuring proximal or short-term outcomes requires obtaining the answers to questions such as:

■ How effective did survivors feel this program was in meeting their needs?

■ How satisfied were survivors with the program and how it met their needs?

■ If this program was designed to result in immediate, measurable change in survivors' lives, did change occur?

▲ PLEASE NOTE

*"**Satisfaction with services**" is typically considered to be part of process evaluation as opposed to outcome evaluation. However, most if not all domestic violence programs strive to provide services unique to each woman's situation and view each woman's "satisfaction with the degree to which the program met her needs" as a desired short-term outcome.*

Problematic Outcome Statements to Avoid

A common mistake made by many people designing project outcomes is developing statements that are either:

(1) not linked to the overall program's objectives

(2) unrealistic, given what the program can reasonably accomplish

Following are five common problematic outcome statements with explanations for why they should be avoided.

Problematic Outcome Statement #1

"50% of the women who use this service will leave their abusive partners."

The expectation that all battered women should leave their abusive partners is problematic for a number of reasons, including:

■ It wrongly assumes that leaving the relationship always ends the violence.

■ It ignores and disregards the woman's role in making her own decision.

This type of "outcome" should either be avoided altogether or modified to read, "xx% of the women using this service who want to leave their abusive partners will be effective in doing so."

Problematic Outcome Statement #2

"The women who use this program will remain free of abuse."

Victim-based direct service programs can provide support, information, assistance, and/or immediate safety for women, but they are generally not designed to decrease the perpetrator's abuse.

Suggesting that victim-focused programs can decrease abuse implies the survivor is at least somewhat responsible for the violence perpetrated against her.

Problematic Outcome Statement #3

"The women who work with legal advocates will be more likely to press charges."

Survivors do not press charges; prosecutors press charges. It should also not be assumed that participating in pressing charges is always in the woman's best interest. Legal

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advocates should provide women with comprehensive information to help women make the best-informed decisions for themselves.

Problematic Outcome Statement #4

"The women who work with legal advocates will be more likely to cooperate with the criminal justice system."

Again, women should be viewed as competent adults making the best decision(s) they can for themselves. Women who choose not to participate in pressing charges should not be viewed as "non-compliant" or "uncooperative."

Until the criminal justice system provides women with more protection and eliminates gender and racial bias and other barriers to justice, it should not be surprising when women choose not to participate in the criminal justice process.

Problematic Outcome Statement #5

"An outcome of this program will be that the number of calls to the police will decrease."

First, if this is not a research study, you probably will not have the resources to find out if calls to the police decrease. But, more importantly, a decrease in the number of calls to the police does not necessarily mean violence has decreased. It could mean women are more hesitant to contact the police or that perpetrators are more effective in preventing women from calling the police.

It is understandable that some programs feel compelled by funders to create outcome statements such as these. However, the cost is too high to succumb to this urge. One of our goals is to educate the public about domestic violence, and that includes our funders. If they have money to spend to eradicate domestic violence, we must educate them about the appropriate ways to spend that money. We cannot do that effectively unless they understand why abuse occurs in relationships and that survivors are not responsible for ending the abuse.

Chapter 5

Developing a
Logic Model

Notes

Developing a Logic Model

A whole chapter is devoted in this handbook to designing a logic model because:

(1) It is the most common means by which domestic violence programs are expected by funding agencies to evaluate their programs.

(2) It is an effective way to ensure that your outcomes are linked to your overall objective(s).

The Logic Model

A logic model generally has five components:

■ inputs

■ activities

■ outputs

■ short-term outcomes

■ long-term outcomes

INPUTS are simply a detailed account of the amount of time, energy, and staff devoted to each program. In other words, what you are putting IN to the program to make it work.

ACTIVITIES are the specific services being provided.

OUTPUTS are the end product of those activities (e.g., number of educational materials distributed, number of counseling sessions offered).

SHORT- AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES are the benefits you expect your clients to obtain based on your program.

While this may sound relatively straightforward, those of you who have created logic models in the past can attest to the amount of thought and time that must go into them.

While this process can indeed be tedious, difficult, and frustrating, it really is an excellent way to clarify for yourself why you are doing what you are doing, and what you can reasonably hope to accomplish.

The Hard-to-Measure Outcomes of Domestic Violence Programs

Why is it so difficult to evaluate domestic violence programs? In addition to the obvious answer of "too little time and money," many domestic violence programs' goals involve outcomes that are difficult to measure.

An excellent resource for designing outcomes within non-profit agencies is *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*, distributed by the United Way of America (See *Additional Readings* in Appendix C for more information). In an especially applicable section, *Special Problems with Hard-to-Measure Outcomes* (p. 74), the United Way manual lists nine situations that present special challenges to outcome measurement. They are included below, as most are evident in one or more domestic violence programs.

Where applicable, the statement is followed by the type of domestic violence program service that is especially susceptible to this problem:

(1) Participants are anonymous, so the program cannot later follow up on the outcomes for those participants. (24-hour crisis line)

(2) The assistance is very short-term. (24-hour crisis line; sometimes support groups, counseling, shelter services)

(3) The outcomes sought may appear to be too intangible to measure in any systematic way. (24-hour crisis line, counseling, support groups, some shelter services)

(4) Activities are aimed at influencing community leaders to take action on the part of a particular issue or group, such as advocacy or community action programs. (systems advocacy programs)

(5) Activities are aimed at the whole community, rather than at a particular, limited set of participants. (public education campaigns)

(6) Programs are trying to prevent a negative event from ever occurring.

(7) One or more major outcomes of the program cannot be expected for many years, so that tracking and follow-up of those participants is not feasible.

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(8) Participants may not give reliable responses because they are involved in substance abuse or are physically unable to answer for themselves.

(9) Activities provide support to other agencies rather than direct assistance to individuals.

On the one hand, it is heartening to know that:

■ The United Way of America recognizes the challenges inherent in some organizations' efforts.

■ It is not [simply] our lack of understanding contributing to our difficulty in creating logic models for some of our programs.

On the other hand, just because some of our efforts are difficult to measure does not preclude us from the task of evaluating them. It just means we have to try harder!

In an effort to make the task of creating logic models for your various programs simpler, some examples are provided on the following pages. They are based on the fictional Safe Place USA domestic violence program. Safe Place USA has a 24-hour hotline/crisis line, a shelter with 20 beds, a counseling program, support groups, and a legal advocacy program.

Example Logic Models for Five Components of a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(1) residential services
(2) legal advocacy
(3) individual counseling
(4) 24-Hour hotlines/crisis lines
(5) support groups

Example Logic Models for Five Components within a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(1) Residential Services

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Longer-Term Outcomes
■ Agency provides four full-time and five part-time staff within the 20 bed shelter to meet residents' needs. ■ Security and surveillance equipment are in place. ■ Rules and regulations are written, distributed, and posted regarding house and safety rules. ■ Program provides necessary facility, furnishings, and food.	■ Staff monitor the security of the shelter program, and educate residents about safety and security while in the shelter. ■ Staff discuss causes and consequences of domestic Violence with residents as needed, and stress they are not to blame for the violence. ■ Staff provide referrals and information regarding any community resources needed by residents. ■ Food and clothing are provided to residents, as well as access to laundry and telephone.	■ Up to 20 women and their children are housed at any one time.	■ Residents are safe from emotional and physical abuse while in shelter. ■ Residents gain knowledge of domestic violence and its effects. ■ Residents gain knowledge about resources and how to obtain them. ■ Residents' safety needs are met by linking them with appropriate services external to the shelter which the women indicate needing.	■ Decreased social isolation. ■ Women are able to obtain the resources they need to minimize risk of further abuse.

Example Logic Models for Five Components within a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(2) Legal Advocacy

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Longer-Term Outcomes
■ Program provides two part-time legal advocates with training in current domestic violence laws and policies. ■ Legal advocacy office within the shelter has up-to-date law books as well as paperwork needed to file for divorce, obtain a protection order, and to file for custody or visitation of minor children. ■ A volunteer attorney is on hand 5 hours per week to answer questions and to assist with legal matters.	■ Program provides legal information regarding protection orders, divorce, custody, and child visitation. ■ Program staff assist women in completing necessary paperwork. ■ Program staff discuss the process involved if assailant has been arrested. Women are informed of their rights, responsibilities, and options, and are told what to expect from the criminal justice system, based on prior similar situations.	■ Women are informed about their legal options.	■ Women gain the legal knowledge needed to make informed choices. ■ Women obtain the legal recourse they desire.	■ Women receive justice and protection from the criminal justice system.

Example Logic Models for Five Components within a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(3) Individual Counseling Services

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Longer-Term Outcomes
■ Program provides eight part-time counselors with experience working with survivors of domestic violence. ■ Program provides on-site private office space for counseling sessions.	■ Within weekly 50 minute sessions, counselors provide emotional support, practical information, and referrals to women. ■ Counselors discuss individualized safety planning with women. ■ Counselors discuss the causes and consequences of domestic violence, stressing the survivor is not to blame for the abuse.	■ Women attend weekly individual counseling sessions.	■ Women feel supported and understood. ■ Women do not blame selves for the abuse. ■ Women feel more positive about life. ■ Women feel less isolated. ■ Women are aware of the many effects of domestic violence. ■ Women feel better able to handle everyday situations. ■ Women know how to create "safety plans" for reducing risk of further abuse.	■ Shoirt-term outcomes persist.

Example Logic Models for Five Components within a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(4) 24-Hour Hotline/Crisis Line

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Longer-Term Outcomes
■ Program provides trained volunteers to answer phones 24 hours a day. ■ Referral information and numbers are available by the phone.	■ Volunteers provide emotional support, practical information, and referrals to callers 24 hours a day.	■ Individuals needing practical or emotional assistance call the hotline/crisis line.	■ Callers requesting or implying a need for domestic violence crisis support receive crisis support. ■ Callers requesting information about services and options for survivors of domestic violence receive that information. ■ Callers requesting information about programs for batterers receive that information. ■ Callers requesting assistance in finding a safe place to go receive such assistance.	■ Callers know crisis support is available. ■ Callers are more aware of services and options that may decrease risk of further abuse. ■ Callers are more aware of programs for batterers. ■ Callers receive reprieve from violence.

Example Logic Models for Five Components within a Fictional Domestic Violence Program

(5) Support Groups for Survivors

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Longer-Term Outcomes
▪ Program provides two trained individuals to facilitate weekly two-hour support groups on-site. ▪ Program provides a private room with comfortable chairs and refreshments for group.	▪ Facilitators lead group discussion based on the needs presented by each group. Topics include but are not limited to: who's to blame for domestic violence, going on from here, coping with a stalker, helping children cope, how to get ongoing support, creating safety plans, and breaking the silence.	▪ Up to 12 women at a time attend weekly groups as needed.	▪ Members feel supported and understood. ▪ Members do not blame selves for the abuse. ▪ Members feel more positive about life. ▪ Members feel less isolated. ▪ Members are aware of the many effects of domestic violence. ▪ Members feel able to handle everyday situations. ▪ Members know how to create safety plans for reducing risk of further abuse.	▪ Short-term outcomes persist.

Chapter 6

Collecting the Information

Collecting the Information

There are pros and cons to every method of data collection. Every program must ultimately decide for itself how to collect evaluation information, based on a number of factors. These factors should include:

(1) What are we trying to find out?

(2) What is the best way to obtain this information?

(3) What can we afford (in terms of time, money) to do?

What Are We Trying to Find Out?

Often when you are trying to evaluate what kind of impact your program is having, you are interested in answering fairly straightforward questions:

■ Did the survivor receive the assistance she was seeking?

■ Did the desired short-term outcome occur?

You are generally interested in whether something occurred and/or the degree to which it occurred. You can generally use closed-ended questions to obtain this information. **A *closed-ended question* is one that offers a set number of responses.** For example:

■ Was the survivor safe from the assailant's abuse while she was in the shelter? — (yes/no)

■ Did the woman feel less isolated after attending the support group for three weeks? (less/more/the same)

The answers to these types of questions are in the form of quantitative data.

Quantitative **data are data that can be explained in terms of numbers (i.e., quantified)**. There are many advantages to gathering quantitative information:

■ It is generally quicker and easier to obtain.

■ It is easier to analyze and interpret than qualitative data.

Qualitative **data generally come from open-ended questions that do not have pre-determined response options**, such as:

■ "Tell me what happened after the police arrived."

■ "In what ways was the support group helpful to you?"

While you often get richer, more detailed information from open-ended questions, it is more time-consuming and complicated to synthesize this information and to use it for program development. Some people argue that quantitative data are superior to qualitative data; others argue that qualitative data are better than quantitative data; and still others believe we need both to obtain the richest information possible.

These arguments are beyond the scope of this guide, and you should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each method before deciding what will work best for your particular needs.

Obtaining the Information

The remainder of this chapter describes some of the pros and cons of some of the more common data gathering approaches: face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, written questionnaires, focus groups, and staff accounts.

Face-to-face interviews

This is certainly one of the more common approaches to gathering information from clients, and for good reason. It has a number of advantages, including the ability to:

(1) fully explain the purpose of the questions to the respondents

(2) clarify anything that might be unclear in the interview

(3) gain additional information that might not have been covered in the interview but that arises during spontaneous conversation

(4) maintain some control over when and how the interview is completed

There are disadvantages to this approach as well, including:

(1) lack of privacy for the respondent

(2) potential for women responding more positively than they might actually feel because it can be difficult to complain to a person's face

(3) the time it can take to complete interviews with talkative women

(4) interviewer bias

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Although the first three disadvantages are self-explanatory, let me explain interviewer bias. It is likely that more than one staff member would be conducting these interviews over time, and responses might differ depending on who is actually asking the questions.

One staff member might be well-liked and could encourage women to discuss their answers in detail, for example, while another staff member might resent even having to gather the information, and her/his impatience could come through to the respondent and impact the interview process.

Interviewers, intentionally or unintentionally, can affect the quality of the information being obtained.

Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews are sometimes the method of choice when staff want to interview a woman after services have already been received.

After a woman has left the shelter, stopped coming to support groups, discontinue counseling, ended her involvement with the legal advocates, etc., you might still want to talk with her about her perceptions.

▲ **PLEASE NOTE**

Never call a survivor unless you have discussed this possibility ahead of time and worked out certain codes through which she can tell you if it's unsafe to talk.

Advantages to telephone interviews include:

(1) Such interviews can be squeezed in during "down" times for staff.

(2) Women might feel cared about because staff took the time to call, and this might enhance the likelihood of their willingness to answer some questions.

(3) Important information can be obtained that otherwise would have been lost .

(4) You may end up being helpful to the woman you call. Should the respondent need some information or a referral, you can provide that during your telephone call.

> ⚠ **CAUTION**
>
> *Telephone interviews have the potential of putting women in danger. <u>NEVER</u> call a woman if you don't know her current situation and she has not given permission for you to do so.*
>
> *It is NEVER worth jeopardizing a woman's safety to gather evaluation information!*

A major drawback of the telephone interview approach is that you are likely to only talk with a select group of women, who may not be representative of your clientele.

One of the author's research studies of women with abusive partners provides an excellent example of how we can't assume our follow-up samples are necessarily representative. The study involved interviewing women every six months over two years, and the project was able to locate and interview over 95% of the sample at any given time point.

We compared the women who were easy to find with the women who were more difficult to track, and discovered that the "easy to find" women were more likely:

■ to be white

■ to be more highly educated

■ to have access to cars

■ to be less depressed

    and

■ had experienced less psychological and physical abuse compared to those who were more difficult to find

The moral of the story is: If you do follow-up interviews with clients, be careful in your interpretation of findings. The clients you talk to are probably not representative of all the people using your services.

Written questionnaires

The greatest advantages of written questionnaires as a method of data collection include:

(1) They are easily administered. Generally clients can fill them out and return them at their convenience.

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(2) They tend to be more confidential. Clients can fill them out privately and return them to a locked box.

(3) They may be less threatening or embarrassing for the client if very personal questions are involved.

Disadvantages include:

(1) Written questionnaires require respondents to be functionally literate.

(2) If a woman misunderstands a question or interprets it differently than staff intended, you can't catch this problem as it occurs.

(3) The method may seem less personal, so women may not feel it is important to answer the questions accurately and thoughtfully, if at all.

Focus groups

The focus group has gained popularity in recent years as an effective data collection method. Focus groups allow for informal and (hopefully) frank discussion among individuals who share something in common.

For example, you may want to facilitate a focus group of women who recently used your services as a way of learning what is working well and what needs to be improved.

You might also want to facilitate a focus group of "under-served" women in your area — perhaps women over 60, lesbians, women who live in a rural area, or Latinas (depending on your specific geographic area, your specific services, and who in your area appears to be under-served or poorly served by traditional services).

Focus groups generally are comprised of no more than eight to 10 people, last no more than two to three hours, and are guided by some open-ended but "focused" questions. An ***open-ended question* is one that requires more than a yes or no answer**, and this is important to consider when constructing your questions.

For example, instead of asking women who have used your services, "Did you think our services were helpful?" (which is a closed-ended, yes/no question), you might ask open-ended questions such as:

■ "What were the most helpful parts of our program?"

■ "What were the least helpful?"

■ "What are some things that we need to change?"

Before conducting a focus group, consider these issues:

- Will you provide transportation to and from the group?
- Will you provide childcare?
- Will you provide refreshments?
- Will you provide a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere?
- How will you ensure confidentiality?
- Who do you want as group members, and why?
- Do you have a facilitator who can guide without "leading" the group?
- Will you tape record the group? If not, who will take notes and how will these notes be used?

When facilitating a focus group, you want to create enough structure to "focus" the discussion while at the same time not establishing a rigid structure that precludes free-flowing ideas. This can be a real balancing act, so give careful consideration to your choice of who will facilitate.

After you've decided what kind of information you want to obtain and who you want to have in the group, design three to five questions ahead of time to help guide the discussion. Try to phrase the questions in a positive light, as this will facilitate your generating solutions to problems.

For example, instead of asking, "Why don't more Latina women in our community use our services?", you might ask "What would our services need to look like to be more helpful to Latinas?"

(For more specific information about facilitating focus groups, please see *Additional Readings* in Appendix C.)

Staff records and opinions

While obtaining information from staff is one of the easiest ways to gather data for evaluation purposes, it has a number of drawbacks.

The greatest drawback, of course, is that the public (and probably even the program) may question the accuracy of the information obtained if it pertains to client satisfaction or program effectiveness. The staff of a program could certainly be viewed as being motivated to "prove" their program's effectiveness.

It is also only human nature to want to view one's work as

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important; we would not be doing this if we did not think we were making a difference. It is best to use staff records in addition to, but not instead of, data from less biased sources.

A Caution about Mail Surveys

The use of mail surveys is NOT RECOMMENDED when trying to obtain information from women with abusive partners and ex-partners.

Mail surveys are notorious for their low return rate, but more importantly, there are too many risks involved for the potential respondents. If you absolutely have to send something to a survivor through the mail, assume her abuser, sister, children, and neighbor will open it and read it. Keep all correspondence, therefore, both general and vague.

Given that we know little if anything about a woman's living situation after (and sometimes during) her participation with our program, it is not worth putting her at risk by sending things to her through the mail — especially outcome measures!

Deciding When to Evaluate Effectiveness

Timing is an important consideration when planning an evaluation. The time at which you gather the information could distort your findings, especially if your evaluation involves interviewing women who are using or who have used your services.

If you want to evaluate whether women find your support group helpful, would you ask them after their first meeting? Their third? After two months? There is no set answer to this question, but bear in mind that you are gathering different information depending on the timing, and be specific about this when discussing your findings. For example, if you decided to interview only women who had attended weekly support group meetings for two months or more, you would want to specify that this is your "sample" of respondents.

Consideration for the feelings of your clientele must also be part of the decision-making process. Therefore, programs that serve women who are in crisis would want to minimize the number and types of questions they ask. This is one reason programs find it difficult to imagine how they might evaluate their 24-hour crisis line. However, some questions

can be asked that can be used to evaluate 24-hour hotlines/crisis lines (See Appendix B); these questions must be asked only when appropriate, and should be asked in a conversational way.

You also need to consider programmatic realities when deciding when and for how long you will gather outcome data. Do you want to interview everyone who uses your service? Everyone across a three-month period? Every fifth person?

Again, only you can answer this question after taking into account staffing issues as well as your ability to handle the data you collect (See Chapter 7). Just be clear about your rationale and be able to justify your decision.

Protecting Women's Information

(1) If women fill out evaluation forms on their own, stress that they do not have to sign their names. Have a box available for women to turn in their forms. If a woman hands a form to a staff member, her responses are no longer anonymous. If a woman verbally answers questions for a staff member, that staff member must assure her of the confidentiality of her responses.

(2) Whenever you have written records of women's responses, separate each woman's data from any identifying information about her. Since her information is to be used only in an aggregate form (in others words, combined with other data and not presented individually), it is not necessary to know who said what. No one should be able to match women's responses to their identities.

(3) Have a protocol in place should someone request information about a woman in your program. You are most likely to protect yourselves and the women receiving your services if you do not keep any records with identifying information attached.

EXAMPLE: A Counseling Program Wants to Evaluate Its Effectiveness

In this example, a counseling program decides to evaluate its effectiveness. Staff decide they are primarily concerned with whether clients:

(1) consider the program effective in helping them cope with having been abused

(2) understand they are not to blame for the violence

The next step is to determine what is the best way to obtain this information. Staff decide the information should come from the clients themselves (although this could be supplemented by counselors' notes and opinions).

Would it be best to have the women answer face-to-face questions, answer questions over the phone, complete a short, written questionnaire, or participate in a focus group? The pros and cons of each of these approaches would need to be considered, based on the particular population.

Let's assume staff immediately rule out the idea of the focus group because of issues of confidentiality. After more discussion, they rule out written questionnaires because of language and literacy issues that are known to exist with the population. Given how few of the women have telephones, and because privacy and safety might be an issue if phone interviews were conducted, staff decide that face-to-face interviews would be the best way to obtain the information.

The next question is: Is this affordable, in staff time and dollars? In this hypothetical situation we will assume the program has an intern who would be happy to conduct the interviews. And the situation is resolved. (Note: You would never want a woman's counselor to conduct these interviews because the woman might feel uncomfortable giving negative feedback to her counselor.)

Chapter 7

Analyzing and Interpreting Your Findings

Analyzing and Interpreting Your Findings

A critical component of evaluation is to correctly interpret our findings. Although it is not true that "you can make data say anything you want," as some critics of evaluation would suggest, data are open to interpretation. This chapter presents some basics for analyzing and interpreting findings, as well as some common mistakes to avoid.

Storing the Data

The first question, before deciding how to analyze your data, is: ***How and where will you store your data?*** You may want to invest in some type of **computerized database**, or computer program designed for storing and organizing data. This does not have to be anything extremely elaborate that only a computer whiz can understand. As a matter of fact, that is exactly the kind of database you don't want — but it should be capable of organizing data in a simple, manageable way.

▲ **PLEASE NOTE**

Regardless of whether you will be entering the data into a computerized database, or calculating your findings by hand, determine how and where you will store your data to maximize confidentiality of participants and to minimize the opportunity for someone to mistakenly delete or misplace your files.

Analyzing the Data

Analyzing the data is not as daunting as it might seem because the types of evaluation discussed in this guide are generally not amenable to rigorous data analysis.

Analyzing Quantitative Data

Most of the evaluation information you will gather for funders will be in the form of "quantitative" as opposed to "qualitative" data. These type of data generally tell you how many, how much, whether, why, how, and how often. For example, quantitative data allow you to explain how many

of the women who wanted to get protection orders were able to do so after receiving legal advocacy last year, or how many women felt safe while in your shelter.

This is accomplished by looking at frequencies, which is simply a statistical way of saying you look at the percentages within a given category (how frequently a response was chosen). In addition to examining frequencies, it sometimes makes sense to look at the mean, median, or mode of responses.

The following pages explain in more detail how to calculate frequencies, means, medians, and modes, and provide suggestions for when to choose one over another when interpreting data.

A Number of Ways to Interpret the Same Data

Example A

Eighty women respond to the following:

Overall, I would rate the help I received from the advocate as:

(1) very helpful   (3) a little helpful

(2) somewhat helpful   (4) not helpful at all

Let's assume your data looked like this:

■ Out of the 80 women who responded to this question, 65 circled "1," nine circled "2," four circled "3," and two circled "4."

So what you have is:

Number of women:	*Chose Response:*
65	1
9	2
4	3
2	4

The first step you would take would be to turn these numbers into **percents, or frequencies**, which give you:

Percent of women:	Chose Response:
(65/80) 81%	1
(9/80) 11%	2
(4/80) 5%	3
(2/80) 3%	4

Now that you have both the number of women in each category as well as the percentage of women in each category, you must decide how to present the data for public consumption. A common mistake many people make in reporting is to present numbers instead of percentages. For example, look at the following description of the results:

Eighty women were asked, on a scale of 1-4 [with 1 = very helpful to 4 = not helpful at all], to tell how helpful they found our program. Sixty five circled "1," nine circled "2," four circled "3," and two circled "4."

What would you, as a reader, understand from this statement? Odds are your eyes blurred over pretty quickly and you skimmed the sentence. Now look at the same data presented in a little different way:

Eighty women were asked, on a scale of very helpful to not helpful at all, to describe how helpful they found our program. 92% of the women reported finding our program to be at least somewhat helpful to them (81% reported it was very helpful). 5% of the women found the program to be a little helpful, and 3% indicated it was not helpful at all.

One other way to present information like this is to report the **average response** or the **typical response** by reporting the mean, median, or mode. The ***mean response is the mathematical average of the responses.***

Finding the mean involves the following four steps.

(1) Look again at the raw data in *Example A*:

Number of women:	Chose Response:
65	1
9	2
4	3
2	4

(2) Multiply the number of women in each response
     category by that response:

Number of women:	Response:	Multiply:
65	1	65x1 = 65
9	2	9x2 = 18
4	3	4x3 = 12
2	4	2x4 = 8

(3) Add all of the individual sums together (65 + 18 +
     12 + 8 = 103).

(4) Divide this number by the number of respondents
     (103 ÷ 80 = 1.2875).

 Your **mean** then, or **mathematical average**, is 1.29.

Sometimes the mathematical average can be misleading,
in which case you might want to present the median or the
mode. Following is an example of how the mean of a
sample can be misleading.

Example B

Ten people are asked the following question:

How happy are you today?

(1) = miserable   (4) = happy

(2) = unhappy   (5) = ecstatic

(3) = so-so

Five of the people report they are miserable (5 x 1 = 5)
and five people are ecstatic (5 x 5 = 25). Add 5 plus 25,
and then divide by 10, and your **mean** is 3. If you reported
only that the mean of this item was 3, the reader would
assume that these 10 people felt pretty "so-so," which was
completely untrue for all of the 10. This is why sometimes
people want to look at the median or mode as well.

The **median** *is the middle number out of all the
responses*. When you look at this number, you know that
half the respondents chose a number higher than this and

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half the respondents chose a number lower. Looking again at the raw data from Example A, what is the **median**?

Number of women:	*Chose Response:*
65	1
9	2
4	3
2	4

This is a bit tough because the distribution of responses is skewed due to so many women choosing 1. It's a good example, though, because we see this type of distribution a lot in evaluating our services. The **median** in this example is 1 because, if you were to write down all 80 responses, the first 40 (the top half of the sample) would be 1. This, then, is the middle number of the distribution.

The **mode** is the most commonly chosen response, which in the case of Example A is also 1 (since 65 out of 80 chose it). So now you know the median and mode are both 1, the mean is 1.29, and 81% of the women chose 1 as their response. No matter how you look at it, women reported finding your program helpful.

So how do you decide whether to report the mean, median, or mode when describing your data? You have to look at the range of answers you received to the question and decide which statistic (the mean, median, mode) most accurately summarizes the responses. In the case of Example B, where half the respondents were on one end of the continuum and half were on the other end, the mean and median would be misleading. The best way to describe the responses to this item would be to use the mode and simply state:

"Half the women reported being miserable, while half reported being ecstatic."

Analyzing Qualitative Data

Analyzing qualitative, or more **narrative data** involves looking for themes, similarities, and discrepancies across verbatim responses.

For example, you might have an open-ended question that reads: What was the most helpful part of our program

for you? You would want to read all of the different women's responses to this question while asking yourself:

- What are the commonalities across these responses?

- What are the differences?

- Did a majority of the women mention receiving practical assistance as the most helpful, or emotional assistance, or something else entirely?

Sometimes you might want to use qualitative responses to supplement quantitative responses. For example, if you stated (based on your data, of course) that 89% of the women who participated in your support group reported feeling less isolated as a result, you might supplement this information by adding a quote or two from individual women to that effect.

> **!** **CAUTION**
>
> **Be sure to remember the importance of confidentiality, and NEVER use a quote that could reveal a woman's identity.**

The Importance of Language in Reporting Findings

Choose wording carefully when reporting findings. For example, if 75% of your sample answered "yes" to the question "Did he force you to have sex when you did not want to?" look at the difference between the following two interpretations of the data:

- 75% of the women were forced to have sex when they did not want to.

- 75% of the women reported being forced to have sex when they did not want to.

The correct way to present these findings is the second sentence, not because we don't believe what women tell us, but because we must recognize there could be multiple reasons why some women might be reluctant to respond fully to any item we are using.

Staying with this example, one woman might have answered yes to this item because she was recalling the time her husband wanted to have sex when she didn't and she

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knew if she refused he would make her life miserable for days. Another woman, facing the exact same situation, might have answered no to the question because actual physical force was not used immediately before the act. Yet another woman might have answered no even though she had been forced to have sex because she was too humiliated to answer affirmatively.

Another common mistake many program staff make when interpreting their findings is to over-generalize. Let's say you wanted to follow-up up with the women who used your residential services to see how they were doing six months after using your program. Out of 100 possible women to contact, you are able to reach and talk to only 20. Of those 20 women, 15 are employed and 18 tell you they would use your shelter program again if needed. You can not honestly report either of the following:

- "75% of the women who used our services were employed six months later."
- "90% of the residents reported six months later that they would use our services again if needed."

To be accurate in your description you would first have to include that you only reached 20% of the women who received your services and that they might not be representative of all ex-residents. You would then want to re-word the above statements more like:

- "75% of the women we talked to were employed six months later."
- "We were able to contact 20% of the women who had stayed at the shelter within the last year. 90% percent of them reported that they would use our services again if needed."

Accurately understanding and reporting the data we collect for outcome evaluation is critical to properly using this information to improve our programs. We do not want to under-estimate or over-estimate our successes and we want to accurately portray women's experiences to ourselves and others.

Chapter 8

Your (Optional) Relationship with a Researcher

Your (Optional) Relationship with a Researcher

There may be times when you want to work with a professional researcher to evaluate one or more of your programs. Establishing a positive relationship with an evaluator can be beneficial in a number of ways.

First, the evaluator may bring some resources (money, time, expertise) to contribute to the evaluation, which could free up staff time and energy. Second, the evaluator could be helpful in disseminating positive information about your program to others. Bringing different types of expertise to a task generally lightens the load for all involved.

> ⚠ **CAUTION**
>
> *There are researchers who would be more than happy to work with your organization, but for all the wrong reasons.*
>
> *Some researchers are looking for opportunities to publish articles or obtain research grants simply to enhance their own careers, some are not willing to collaborate with you in an equal partnership, and some are unaware of the dynamics of domestic violence, which could put women's safety in jeopardy.*

What to Look for in an Evaluator

A relationship between you and an evaluator should be mutually beneficial. An evaluator should not be seen as doing you such a big favor that you are in her or his debt. You each bring a different expertise to the table, and you should each gain something valuable from the endeavor. Find out from the start what the evaluator expects to get out of this relationship. If the evaluator works with a university, she or he is probably expected to write grants and/or publish articles and/or contribute back to the community. Such activities result in promotions and pay increases, so you are as important to the researcher as the researcher is to you.

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When You are Approached by an Evaluator

If you are contacted by a researcher (or graduate student researcher-in-training), have a list of questions prepared to ask that person about their motivation, expertise, and experience. Do they share your beliefs about the causes of intimate male violence against women? Are they willing to go through your training to learn more? Are they coming to you with a research question already in mind, or do they want your input?

One of the most important things you are looking to determine from your conversations with the person is:

> *Is the researcher simply "intellectually curious" about the issue, or does she or he understand and care that women's lives are at stake?*

Before agreeing to work with an evaluator you don't know, check out her or his track record with other community-based organizations. You want to know that the evaluator is not going to "take your data and run," which often happens. Find out:

- Has she or he worked with other community-based organizations? If so, ask someone from that organization for a reference.
- Did the evaluator collaborate with the organization?
- What happened with the results of the research?
- Were they shared in appropriate and helpful ways?
- Most importantly, would the organization work with this person again? Why or why not?

When You Approach an Evaluator

At one time or another you might find yourself in a position of wanting to work with an evaluator. When this is the case, how do you find an evaluator with whom you would feel comfortable working? Unless money is not a constraint, you will probably have to look "close to home" for such a person.

Most researchers work either at research institutes, in academic settings, or are self-employed consultants. If you have a college or university nearby, you might want to contact someone in a department such as Women's Studies, Criminal Justice, Social Work, Urban Affairs, Psychology, or

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Sociology. You might also contact other community-based organizations and ask if they have had positive experiences with a researcher in the past. If you have read a research article by someone you think sounds reasonable you can even call or e-mail that person and ask for references for someone in your area.

Once you have decided upon a researcher to approach, consider all of the cautions highlighted in this chapter. Have a list of questions ready for your first meeting. Remember, the only successful relationship with a researcher will be a collaborative, mutually respectful one. A bad relationship is worse than no relationship at all and could result in many headaches down the road.

Chapter 9

Making Your Findings Work for You

Making Your Findings Work for You

As discussed in *Chapter 1*, outcome findings can be used internally to improve your program and externally to encourage others to support your efforts.

Using Your Findings Internally

If you are not already doing so, set aside specific times as a staff to review the outcome information you've gathered. This sends a message that these outcomes are important and gives you an opportunity to discuss, as a group, what is working and what needs improvement. It would also be helpful to invite volunteers and survivors to share in these discussions and brainstorming sessions.

As improvements are made in response to the data you've gathered, broadcast these changes through posters on walls, announcements, and word-of-mouth. As staff, volunteers, and survivors see that your agency is responsive to feedback, they will be more likely to feel invested in and respected by your organization.

Using Your Findings Externally

Give careful thought to how you want to present outcome findings to the public and to funders. Some words of advice: Keep it positive and keep it simple.

Keep it Positive

Just as a glass is half empty when it is also half full, outcome findings can be presented in both negative and positive lights. So keep it honest, but keep it positive!

First, don't hesitate to let others know about the great work you are doing. Contact media sources (television, radio, newspapers) when you develop new projects, help pass legislation, and, in the case of outcome evaluation, when you have numbers to back up your successes.

Keep It Simple

When presenting your findings for public consumption, it's very important to keep it simple. If you are talking to the television or radio media, you will be lucky to get 30

seconds of air time — so learn to talk in sound bites. Remember, people are not likely to remember specific numbers but are likely to remember phrases like "most of," "the majority," "all," and "none." So instead of reporting::

> *"87% of the women using our legal services were able to get their needs addressed."*

You could say:

> *"The vast majority of the women using our legal services were able to get their needs addressed."*

Simple Phrases to Use with Media and the Public

Some phrases you may want to use include:

- "The overwhelming majority of people using our services…."
- "A sizeable minority reported…"
- "Over half of the children…"
- "Most police officers agreed…"

Another way to keep it simple when presenting your findings is to pick and choose what to share with others. You will be gathering quite a bit of information about your program and you certainly can't present it all.

Decide on the top two or three findings that would be of most interest — and that would present you in a positive light — and focus on those.

How to Share the Information with Others

There are a number of different ways to visually present your data to others. You can create fact sheets and informational brochures that include some of your evaluation findings and you can use line graphs, tables, bar charts, and pie charts to display your data more graphically.

Consider the data you are presenting as well as the audience when deciding how to present your findings.

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Bar graphs *can be useful in showing before and after differences*, as illustrated here:

Children's Adjustment
After Completion of "Kids' Kamp"

| Pre-Post Differences |
| BEFORE "Kamp" |
| AFTER "Kamp" |
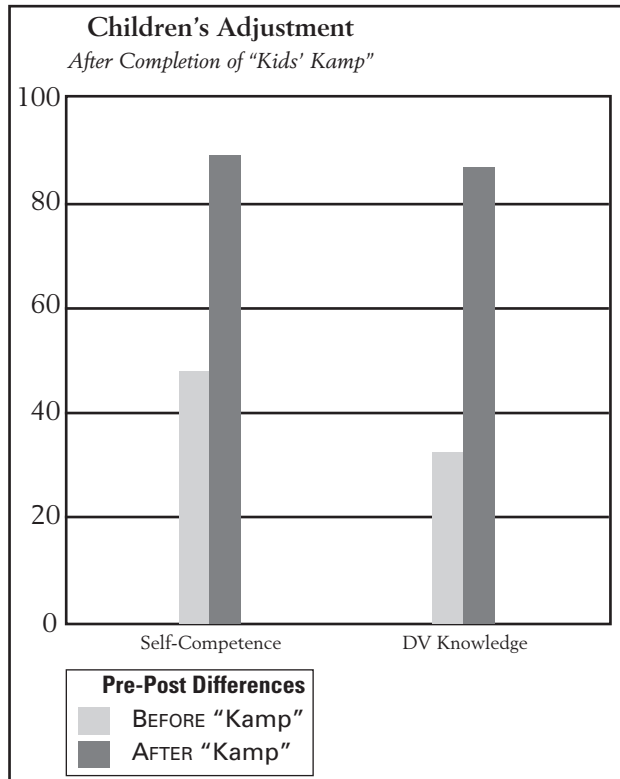
Pie charts *can be useful in showing varying distributions* — for example, when you want to demonstrate how service recipients responded to a question with four response choices.:

Extent to which Women Found Program Helpful

Helpful 24.3%
A Little Helpful 5.1%
Not Helpful 2.2%
Very Helpful 64.8%
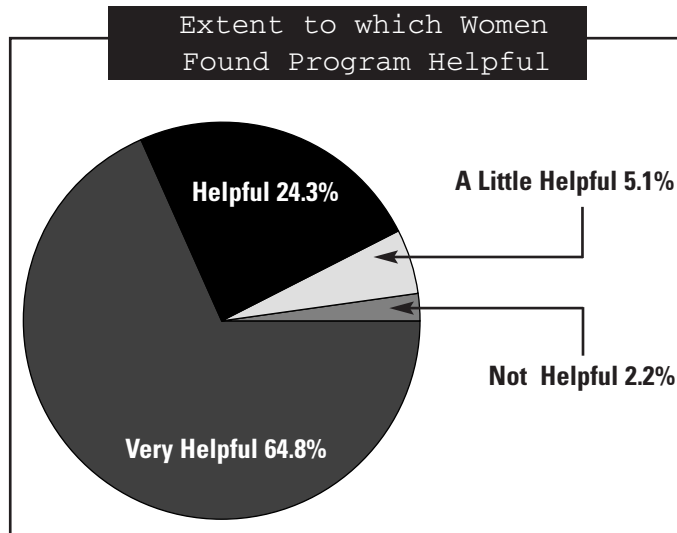
Your choice of presentation will also be based on the type of computer programs you have available to you and the amount of time you have to devote to this project.

One other technical point: If you are preparing information for an overhead, make sure your font size is 18 or larger (the larger the better) to maximize people's ability to read it easily.

When Your Findings Are "Less than Positive"

So what do you do when your findings are not as positive as you had hoped? If your findings show your program was not as successful in certain respects as you had expected? Again the same principles apply:

Keep it positive and keep it simple.

Avoid using negative words like "problem," "mistake," "error" and "failure." Instead, use words like "obstacle," "difficulty," "challenge," "unexpected," and "complication."

Remember, one person's failure is another person's obstacle to be overcome! If you have to present negative findings to the public, don't just leave them hanging out there. Discuss how you addressed the obstacle or how you plan to address it in the future. What valuable lesson did you learn and how will you incorporate this knowledge into your program in the future? Presented correctly, even negative findings can be used to enhance your image with the public.

Using Your Findings to Support the Continuation of Current Services

One of the problems programs complain of repeatedly regarding funders is that many funding sources want to give money to new, innovative programs instead of to current day-to-day activities.

When this is the case for your organization, you might try using your outcome data to justify the need for your current operations. Let the funder know how worthwhile and important your *current* services are instead of always adding new services that stretch staff to the breaking point.

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Using Your Findings to Justify Creating New Services

There may be situations when you will want to use outcome findings to request funds for a new service. Say, for example, that your current *Support and Education Program for 7-10 Year-Olds* has demonstrated some positive results. The majority of the children who have attended the group have reported that they:

(1) enjoyed the program

(2) appreciated having a safe place to discuss their feelings

(3) learned about keeping themselves safe

(4) learned that they were not to blame for the violence

You could use these findings to justify the need for creating another similarly structured group for either adolescents or for pre-schoolers.

You could also use your positive findings to justify expanding a popular service. Perhaps your current Housing Advocate is doing a terrific job but cannot handle the heavy caseload.

Having data that illustrate for the funder how many people currently use your service, how many are turned away due to lack of personnel, and how beneficial recipients find the service can be an effective strategy for securing additional funds for expansion.

Some Important Points to Remember:

■ *The safety and well-being of the women you serve must always take precedence over gathering data.* Design your questions and procedures accordingly and include feedback and input from the women who use your services.

■ *Always take the time to explain why you are asking women for information.* If you explain that their input will be used to improve your services, women will usually be happy to answer some questions. It is disrespectful to introduce questions with only "I need you to answer some questions" or "I need you to fill this out."

■ *Don't request any more information from women than is necessary, and be committed to using this information to understand and improve your services.*

■ *Consider issues of diversity in designing your outcome evaluation.* Such issues include, but are not limited to, literacy, language, and culture. Again, including input from the women who use your program is vital.

■ *The logic models and outcome questions developed for this guide may or may not make sense for your specific program.* They were created only to provide a foundation from which to begin your evaluation efforts. You will need to tailor your strategies to fit your specific program.

■ *Design outcome questions that will answer whether or not women ATTAINED OUTCOMES THEY IDENTIFIED as important to them.*

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Appendices

Appendix A

Development of the Outcome Questions

Development of the Outcome Questions

The outcome measures in this appendix are the result of a multi-stage process spanning 12 months. The first step in the process involved holding regional meetings with domestic violence program directors across Pennsylvania. During these meetings, PCADV's director of contracts, board president, and the author facilitated a brainstorming discussion of evaluation.

Members of small groups discussed:

■ what they thought their various programs could realistically accomplish

■ what outcomes they were most interested in

and

■ whether their current activities matched their desired outcomes

The information gained from those initial meetings was then synthesized and initial outcome measures were designed for the following types of services:

(1) residential

(2) legal advocacy

(3) counseling

(4) 24-hour hotline

(5) support groups

These questionnaires were then distributed to all domestic violence programs receiving funding through PCADV.

Subsequently, a second meeting was held at PCADV to discuss the measures. All program directors were again invited and feedback was requested from those who could not attend the meeting.

At this meeting, the questions were refined and the various ways the information could be gathered was discussed. One attendee mentioned that it would have been easier to know if the questions were appropriate if we had developed logic models first. This excellent observation resulted in the development of the logic models in *Chapter 5*.

The questionnaires were also further refined based on the discussion at the meeting, and a measure of children's programs was constructed.

At a PCADV board meeting a month later, the director of contracts asked for volunteers to pilot a select number of the outcome measures. Over 20 programs volunteered to be a part of the pilot.

Final sites were selected based on:

- diversity in geographic region
- types of services offered
- ethnic composition of survivors and staff

A rural program serving survivors of domestic violence as well as sexual assault piloted the legal advocacy and support group questions. A large, urban-based counseling program piloted the hotline and counseling measures. A medium-sized residential program serving a large Latina population piloted the residential questionnaire and hotline measure. The children's programs measure was piloted at two sites, one with an extensive children's program and one with a more modest program for children.

The measures were piloted for one month, during which time the sites communicated with the researcher by telephone and through e-mail as questions or concerns arose. After the end of the pilot period, a meeting was held with all pilot programs, the author, and PCADV's director of contracts. Additional revisions to the instruments and to this guide were made based on feedback from this meeting.

Appendix B

Sample Outcome Measures

▲ PLEASE NOTE

Not all the questions on the following pages measure outcomes. Some measure process (See Chapter 3), and all instruments end with demographic items that you might use to see if some women are having different experiences with your programs than others.

The questions on the following pages should be used as a guide for your own outcome evaluation efforts. You might choose a subset of questions from each section and/or add questions specific to your program that you don't see in this guide. This is especially true for the demographic questions. Tailor them to the women served by your program and the geographic region.

Mother's Feedback about Children's Advocacy

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT!
Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. We know you are very busy right now, but we really appreciate your telling us what was helpful as well as not helpful about our children's advocacy services. We take your comments seriously and are always trying to improve our services. We need your feedback so please answer as honestly as you can.

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

(1) What were you and your children hoping to get out of participating in our Children's Advocacy Services?

❑ having someone listen to them about their thoughts and feelings

❑ learning more about why/how domestic violence happens

❑ learning the violence isn't their fault

❑ being able to have fun and forget their troubles

❑ getting support from other children

❑ learning how to stay safe if violence happens

❑ other (*please describe* _____)

PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT BEST MATCHES HOW YOU FEEL.

(2) I feel that the Children's Advocates understand what the children are going through.

❑ strongly agree

❑ agree

❑ disagree

❑ strongly disagree

❑ don't know

(3) The Children's Advocates tell the children that the abuse is not their fault.

❑ strongly agree

❑ agree

❑ disagree

❑ strongly disagree

❑ don't know

(4) The Children's Advocates talk to the children about how they can stay safe.

    ❑ strongly agree

    ❑ agree

    ❑ disagree

    ❑ strongly disagree

    ❑ don't know

(5) My children are coping better since being a part of the Children's Advocacy Services.

    ❑ strongly agree

    ❑ agree

    ❑ disagree

    ❑ strongly disagree

    comments _____

    _____

(6) My children have plans for staying safe if violence occurs again.

    ❑ strongly agree

    ❑ agree

    ❑ disagree

    ❑ strongly disagree

    ❑ don't know

    comments _____

    _____

(7) My children know the violence is not their fault.

    ❑ strongly agree

    ❑ agree

    ❑ disagree

    ❑ strongly disagree

    ❑ don't know

    comments _____

    _____

(8) When I think about what I wanted my children to get out of the Children's Advocacy Services, I would say:

❐ the program has met or exceeded all of my expectations

❐ the program has met most of my expectations

❐ the program has met some of my expectations

❐ the program has met few or none of my expectations

comments _____

_____

(9) The most helpful part of your Children's Advocacy Services was:

_____

_____

(10) To improve your Children's Advocacy Services, you might consider:

_____

_____

The following questions will help us know who is using our services so we can continue to improve them to meet the needs of all children.

(11) My children are: (check all that apply)

❐ African American/Black

❐ White

❐ Asian/Pacific Islander

❐ Native American

❐ Latina/Hispanic

❐ other (*please describe* _____)

(12) My children who were with me while I was here are: (check all that apply)

❐ infant(s)

❐ toddler(s)

❐ preschool

❐ 5-12

❐ 13-18

❐ over 18

(13)   Overall, I think my children felt accepted and welcomed by the staff here.

❏ strongly agree

❏ agree

❏ disagree

❏ strongly disagree

❏ don't know

comments _____

_____

(14)   In thinking back to how comfortable I think my children were here, I would say that, overall, they were:

❏ very comfortable

❏ somewhat comfortable

❏ somewhat uncomfortable

❏ very uncomfortable

If you answered anything other than "very comfortable," what would you recommend we do to help children feel more comfortable?

_____

_____

Thank you again for taking the time to fill this out. We will use your comments to continue to improve our services! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Individual Counseling Feedback

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT!
Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. We know you are very busy right now, but we really appreciate your telling us what was helpful as well as not helpful about our counseling services. We take your comments seriously and are always trying to improve our services. We need your feedback so please answer as honestly as you can.

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

(1) What were your reasons for coming to [agency name] for counseling?

❒ I needed someone to talk to who would understand my situation.

❒ I wanted to learn more about why/how domestic violence happens.

❒ I thought the violence was my fault.

❒ I wanted to make my relationship work.

❒ I wanted to end my relationship.

❒ I wanted to understand myself better.

❒ I wanted to better understand the person who abused me.

❒ I wanted someone to help me develop a safety plan.

❒ I wanted help to figure out what to do with my life.

❒ I wanted to talk about my children.

❒ I was having a hard time sleeping.

❒ I was sad.

❒ I was angry.

❒ I felt alone.

❒ I was scared.

❒ other (*please describe* _____)

PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT BEST MATCHES HOW YOU FEEL.

(2) I feel like my counselor understands what I am going through.

❒ strongly agree

❒ agree

❒ disagree

❒ strongly disagree

(3) My counselor explained that the abuse was not my fault.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

(4) My counselor helped me develop a safety plan.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

   ❐ didn't need a safety plan

(5) I feel better able to handle my life than I did before starting counseling.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

(6) I blame myself for the abuse I experienced.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

(7) I blame the person who hurt me for the abuse I experienced.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

(8) I feel better about myself than I did before starting counseling.

   ❐ strongly agree

   ❐ agree

   ❐ disagree

   ❐ strongly disagree

(9) I attended the following number of counseling sessions:

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-5

☐ 6-10

☐ more than 10

(10) When I think about what I wanted to get out of counseling, I would say:

☐ it has met or exceeded all of my expectations

☐ it has met most of my expectations

☐ it has met some of my expectations

☐ it has met few or none of my expectations

comments? _____

_____

(11) If a friend of mine told me she was thinking of using your counseling services, I would:

☐ strongly recommend she contact you

☐ suggest she contact you

☐ suggest she NOT contact you

☐ strongly recommend she NOT contact you

because _____

_____

(12) The most helpful part of your program for me was:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(13) To improve [agency name]'s services, you might consider:

_____

_____

_____

_____

 The following questions will help us know who is using our services, so we can continue to improve them to meet the needs of all women.

(14) I consider myself to be: (check all that apply)

❐ African American/Black

❐ White

❐ Asian/Pacific Islander

❐ Native American

❐ Latina/Hispanic

❐ other (*please describe* _____)

(15) I am _____ years-old.

(16) I have _____ children living with me.

(17) I consider myself to be:

❐ heterosexual/straight

❐ bisexual

❐ lesbian/gay

❐ transgender

❐ other (*please describe* _____)

(18) My current income qualifies me for welfare benefits.

❐ yes

❐ no

❐ don't know

(19) In thinking back to how I was treated by the staff of [agency name], I would say that, overall, I was:

❐ completely respected

❐ somewhat respected

❐ somewhat disrespected

❐ completely disrespected

(20)   I would say that, overall, my religious beliefs (or lack of religious beliefs) were:

    ❐ completely accepted and understood

    ❐ somewhat accepted and understood

    ❐ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

    ❐ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(21)   I would say that, overall, my sexual orientation was:

    ❐ completely accepted and understood

    ❐ somewhat accepted and understood

    ❐ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

    ❐ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(22)   In thinking back to how comfortable I was with the staff, I would say that, overall, I was:

    ❐ very comfortable

    ❐ somewhat comfortable

    ❐ somewhat uncomfortable

    ❐ very uncomfortable

If you answered anything other than "very comfortable," what would you recommend we do to help women feel more comfortable?

_____

_____

(23)   If you were to need our services again, would you contact us?

    ❐ yes, definitely

    ❐ probably

    ❐ probably not

    ❐ no, definitely not

If you answered anything other than "yes," please take a minute to tell us why. It's important for us to know how we should improve our services.

_____

_____

Thank you again for taking the time to fill this out. We will use your comments to continue to improve our services! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Legal Advocacy Feedback

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT!
Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. We know you are very busy right now, but we really appreciate your telling us what was helpful as well as not helpful about our legal advocacy services. We take your comments seriously and are always trying to improve our services. We need your feedback so please answer as honestly as you can.

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

(1) I used [agency name]'s services to:

    ❐   get a protection order

    ❐   help me prepare to testify in court against the person who assaulted me

    ❐   help the prosecutor press charges against the person who assaulted me

    ❐   learn more about my legal rights and options

    ❐   have someone go with me to court

    ❐   help me deal with the district justice/magistrate

    ❐   help me deal with the police and/or district attorney (prosecutor)

    ❐   get an attorney

    ❐   other (*please describe* _____)

PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT BEST MATCHES HOW YOU FEEL.

(2) [Agency name] staff clearly explained my legal rights and options as they related to domestic violence.

    ❐   strongly agree

    ❐   agree

    ❐   disagree

    ❐   strongly disagree

(3) [Agency name] staff treated me with respect.

    ❐   strongly agree

    ❐   agree

    ❐   disagree

    ❐   strongly disagree

(4) [Agency name] staff were caring and supportive.

    ❒ strongly agree

    ❒ agree

    ❒ disagree

    ❒ strongly disagree

PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT BEST APPLIES.

(5) Did you decide to get a protection order against the person who assaulted you?

    ❒ yes

    ❒ no

(6) What factors influenced your decision?

	YES	NO
prior experience with the criminal justice system	❒	❒
prior experience with a protection order	❒	❒
information received from [agency name]	❒	❒
information received from friends/relatives	❒	❒
information received from prosecutor/district attorney/police	❒	❒
fear of person who assaulted me	❒	❒

other (*please describe* _____)

(7) If you wanted a protection order, did you get it?

    ❒ yes: duration = _____

    ❒ no

▶ **PLEASE NOTE**

Questions 8-16 should only be used if you are seeking to identify systems barriers that women face.

If the police were called or contacted about the assault(s) against you, please answer the following questions. If the police were not contacted and are not involved, please skip to #17.

(8) Did the police file charges against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes

❐ no

(9) Did the police give you the option of filing charges against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes

❐ no

(10) Did the district attorney/prosecutor ask you to participate in pressing charges against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes

❐ no

(11) Did the district attorney/prosecutor try to talk you out of wanting charges pressed against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes

❐ no

(12) What decision did the district attorney/prosecutor make regarding pressing charges against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes, will press or has pressed charges

❐ no, will not or did not press charges

❐ don't know

(13) Did you want the person who assaulted you to be prosecuted?

❐ yes

❐ no

❐ not sure

(14) What decision did you make regarding participating in pressing charges against the person who assaulted you?

❐ yes, participating in pressing charges

❐ still undecided

❐ no, will not or did not participate in pressing charges

(15) What influenced your decision?   YES   NO

     prior experience with the criminal justice system   ❐   ❐

     information received from [agency name]   ❐   ❐

     information received from friends/relatives   ❐   ❐

     information received from prosecutor/district attorney/police   ❐   ❐

     fear of person who assaulted me   ❐   ❐

     other (*please describe* _____)

(16) If the case is now over, what happened?

     ❐   case was dismissed

     ❐   plea bargain

     ❐   bound over for trial

     ❐   trial occurred resulting in:

          ❐ conviction   ❐ acquittal

     ❐   don't know

(17) How helpful was [agency name] overall in explaining your rights and options to you?

     ❐   very helpful

     ❐   helpful

     ❐   a little helpful

     ❐   not at all helpful

(18) How helpful was [agency name] overall in assisting you develop a safety plan?

     ❐   very helpful

     ❐   helpful

     ❐   a little helpful

     ❐   not at all helpful

(19) How helpful was [agency name] overall in assisting you to get what you needed from the system?

     ❐   very helpful

     ❐   helpful

     ❐   a little helpful

     ❐   not at all helpful

(20) If I were to need the legal system for a similar reason in the future, I believe I am aware of my rights and options.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

(21) If I were to need the legal system for a similar reason in the future, I would contact [agency name] for help.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

because:_____

_____

(22) Ways to improve [agency name]'s program would be to:

_____

_____

The following questions will help us know who is using our services, so we can continue to improve our programs to meet the needs of all women.

(23) I consider myself to be: (please check all that apply)

☐ African American/Black

☐ White

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ Native American

☐ Latina/Hispanic

☐ other (*please describe* _____)

(24) I am _____ years-old.

(25) I have _____ children living with me.

(26)   I consider myself to be:

❐   heterosexual/straight

❐   bisexual

❐   lesbian/gay

❐   transgender

❐   other (*please describe* _____)

(27)   My current income qualifies me for welfare benefits.

❐   yes

❐   no

❐   don't know

(28)   In thinking back to how I was treated by [agency name] staff, I would say that, overall, I was:

❐   completely respected

❐   somewhat respected

❐   somewhat disrespected

❐   completely disrespected

(29)   I would say that, overall, my religious beliefs were:

❐   completely accepted and understood

❐   somewhat accepted and understood

❐   somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❐   completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(30)   I would say that, overall, my sexual orientation was:

❐   completely accepted and understood

❐   somewhat accepted and understood

❐   somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❐   completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(31) In thinking back to how comfortable I was with the staff, I would say that, overall, I was:

  ❐ very comfortable

  ❐ somewhat comfortable

  ❐ somewhat uncomfortable

  ❐ very uncomfortable

  If you answered anything other than "very comfortable," what would you recommend we do to help women feel more comfortable with [agency name]?

  _____

  _____

Thank you again for taking the time to fill this out. We will use your comments to continue to improve our services! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Resident Feedback

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT!
Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. We know you are very busy right now, but we really appreciate your telling us what was helpful as well as not helpful about your stay here. We take your comments seriously and are always trying to improve our services. We need your feedback so please answer as honestly as you can.

PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT BEST APPLIES.

(1) I was safe from the person who abused me while I was in the shelter.

❐ yes

❐ no

comments _____

_____

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

(2) While at the shelter I needed help with:

❐ talking about my options and choices

❐ housing

❐ the legal system/legal issues

❐ health issues for myself

❐ health issues for my children

❐ childcare

❐ education/school for myself

❐ education/school for my children

❐ employment or employment training

❐ furnishing my home (furniture, appliances, etc.)

❐ getting government benefits

❐ transportation

❐ getting counseling for myself

❐ getting counseling for my children

❐ understanding issues of domestic violence

❐ creating a safety plan

❐ emotional support

❐ other (*please list* _____)

(2) While at the shelter I received help with:

☐ talking about my options and choices

☐ housing

☐ the legal system/legal issues

☐ health issues for myself

☐ health issues for my children

☐ childcare

☐ education/school for myself

☐ education/school for my children

☐ employment or employment training

☐ furnishing my home (furniture, appliances, etc.)

☐ getting government benefits

☐ transportation

☐ getting counseling for myself

☐ getting counseling for my children

☐ understanding issues of domestic violence

☐ creating a safety plan

☐ emotional support

☐ other (*please list* _____)

(3) Shelter staff were effective in helping me get what I needed from the community.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

☐ I didn't need anything from the community.

(4) Shelter staff treated me with respect.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

(6) Shelter staff were caring and supportive.

   ❒ strongly agree

   ❒ agree

   ❒ disagree

   ❒ strongly disagree

(7) Shelter staff helped me create a safety plan for the future.

   ❒ strongly agree

   ❒ agree

   ❒ disagree

   ❒ strongly disagree

   ❒ I already had a safety plan.

(8) Overall, thinking about my stay here, I would rate the help I received as:

   ❒ very helpful

   ❒ helpful

   ❒ a little helpful

   ❒ not helpful

comments _____

_____

(9) Overall, thinking about my stay here, I would rate the support I received as:

   ❒ excellent

   ❒ good

   ❒ fair

   ❒ poor

(10) If a friend of mine told me she was thinking of coming here for help, I would:

   ❒ strongly recommend she come

   ❒ recommend she come

   ❒ recommend she not come

   ❒ strongly recommend she not come

because: _____

_____

(11) The most helpful part of being here was:

_____

_____

(12) To improve your services for women and children staying here, you might consider:

_____

_____

The following questions will help us know who is using our services, so we can continue to improve our programs to meet the needs of all women.

(13) I stayed at the shelter _____ days. (Count this stay only, if you've been here more than once.)

(14) I consider myself to be: (check all that apply)

❐ African American/Black

❐ White

❐ Asian/Pacific Islander

❐ Native American

❐ Latina/Hispanic

❐ other (*please describe* _____)

(15) I am _____ years-old.

(16) I have _____ children living with me.

(17) I consider myself to be:

❐ heterosexual/straight

❐ bisexual

❐ lesbian/gay

❐ transgender

❐ other (*please describe* _____)

(18) My current income qualifies me for welfare benefits.

❐ yes

❐ no

❐ don't know

(19) In thinking back to how I was treated by the staff of [agency name], I would say that, overall, I was:

❐ completely respected

❐ somewhat respected

❐ somewhat disrespected

❐ completely disrespected

(20) I would say that, overall, my religious beliefs were:

❐ completely accepted and understood

❐ somewhat accepted and understood

❐ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❐ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(21) I would say that, overall, my sexual orientation was:

❐ completely accepted and understood

❐ somewhat accepted and understood

❐ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❐ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(22) In thinking back to how comfortable I was with the staff, I would say that, overall, I was:

❐ very comfortable

❐ somewhat comfortable

❐ somewhat uncomfortable

❐ very uncomfortable

If you answered anything other than "very comfortable," what would you recommend we do to help women feel more comfortable with [agency name]?

_____

_____

Thank you again for taking the time to fill this out. We will use your comments to continue to improve our services! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Support Group Feedback

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT!
Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. We know you are very busy right now, but we really appreciate your telling us what was helpful as well as not helpful about our support group(s). We take your comments seriously and are always trying to improve our services. We need your feedback so please answer as honestly as you can.

(1) How many of these support group meetings have you attended? _____

(2) About how often do you attend the group meetings?

- ❏ every week
- ❏ almost every week
- ❏ about once a month
- ❏ less than once a month

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

(3) What were your reasons for joining this support group?

- ❏ I needed people to talk to who would understand my situation.
- ❏ I wanted to learn more about why/how domestic violence happens.
- ❏ I thought the violence was my fault.
- ❏ I wanted to make my relationship work.
- ❏ I wanted to end my relationship.
- ❏ I wanted to understand myself better.
- ❏ I wanted to better understand the person who abused me.
- ❏ I wanted people to help me develop a safety plan.
- ❏ I wanted help to figure out what to do with my life.
- ❏ I wanted to help other people by sharing my experiences with them.
- ❏ I wanted to talk to other mothers about our children.
- ❏ I was lonely.
- ❏ I was having a hard time sleeping.
- ❏ I was sad.
- ❏ I was angry.
- ❏ I was scared.
- ❏ other (*please describe* _____)

PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT THAT BEST MATCHES YOUR FEELINGS OR THOUGHTS.

(4) I feel like the members of the group understand what I am going through.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(5) I feel like the group facilitators understand what I am going through.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(6) I feel better able to handle my life than I did before first coming to the group.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(7) I blame myself for the abuse I experienced.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(8) I blame the person who hurt me for the abuse I experienced.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(9) I feel better about myself than I did before first coming to the group.

- ❒ strongly agree
- ❒ agree
- ❒ disagree
- ❒ strongly disagree

(10) Other group members have told me about different resources available in the community that I wasn't aware of.

    ❐ strongly agree

    ❐ agree

    ❐ disagree

    ❐ strongly disagree

(11) I've told other group members about resources available in the community that they were not aware of.

    ❐ strongly agree

    ❐ agree

    ❐ disagree

    ❐ strongly disagree

(12) This group helped me develop a safety plan.

    ❐ strongly agree

    ❐ agree

    ❐ disagree

    ❐ strongly disagree

(13) The most helpful part of this group for me is/was:

_____

_____

(14) When I think about what I wanted from this support group, I would say:

    ❐ the group has met or exceeded all of my expectations

    ❐ the group has met most of my expectations

    ❐ the group has met some of my expectations

    ❐ the group has met few or none of my expectations

because _____

_____

(15) If a friend of mine told me she was thinking about going to a support group here, I would:

☐ strongly recommend she contact you

☐ recommend she contact you

☐ recommend she NOT contact you

☐ strongly recommend she NOT contact you

because _____

_____

The following questions will help us know who is using our services, so we can continue to improve our programs to meet the needs of all women.

(16) I consider myself to be: (check all that apply)

☐ African American/Black

☐ White

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ Native American

☐ Latina/Hispanic

☐ other (*please describe* _____)

(17) I am _____ years-old.

(18) I have _____ children living with me.

(19) I consider myself to be:

☐ heterosexual/straight

☐ bisexual

☐ lesbian/gay

☐ transgender

☐ other (_____)

(20) My current income qualifies me for welfare benefits.

☐ yes

☐ no

☐ don't know

(21)   In thinking back to how I was treated by the staff of [agency name], I would say that, overall, I was:

❒ completely respected

❒ somewhat respected

❒ somewhat disrespected

❒ completely disrespected

(22)   I would say that, overall, my religious beliefs were:

❒ completely accepted and understood

❒ somewhat accepted and understood

❒ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❒ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(23)   I would say that, overall, my sexual orientation was:

❒ completely accepted and understood

❒ somewhat accepted and understood

❒ somewhat unaccepted or misunderstood

❒ completely unaccepted or misunderstood

(24)   In thinking back to how comfortable I was with the staff, I would say that, overall, I was:

❒ very comfortable

❒ somewhat comfortable

❒ somewhat uncomfortable

❒ very uncomfortable

If you answered anything other than "very comfortable," what would you recommend we do to help women feel more comfortable with [agency name]?

_____

_____

(25)   If you were to need our services again, would you contact us?

    ❒ yes

    ❒ probably

    ❒ probably not

    ❒ no

comments _____

_____

(25)   To improve [agency name]'s support group, you might consider:

_____

_____

Thank you again for taking the time to fill this out. We will use your comments
to continue to improve our services! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

24-Hour Hotline/Crisis Line Evaluation

HOTLINE/CRISIS LINE STAFF/VOLUNTEERS SHOULD COMPLETE THIS
EVALUATION AFTER EACH PHONE CALL, WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

(1) This call was a:

❑ crisis call

❑ call for counseling

❑ call for information, advice, or support (Caller was not currently in crisis.)

❑ crank call (Don't complete the rest of this form.)

(2) Was the caller calling for:

❑ herself or himself

❑ someone else

❑ generic information request only

(3) Did the caller want information about domestic violence from you?

❑ no

❑ yes

If so, to what degree do you think the caller received the information she/he wanted?

❑ a great deal
❑ somewhat
❑ a little
❑ not at all

comments _____

_____

(4) Did the caller request information about services we offer?

❑ no

❑ yes

If so, to what degree do you think the caller received the information she/he wanted?

❑ a great deal
❑ somewhat
❑ a little
❑ not at all

comments _____

_____

(5) Did the caller request information about other services in the community?

    ❏ no

    ❏ yes

       If so, to what degree do you think the caller received the information she/he wanted?

         ❏ a great deal
         ❏ somewhat
         ❏ a little
         ❏ not at all

    comments _____

    _____

(6) Did the caller request the address or phone number of another service/agency in the community?

    ❏ no

    ❏ yes

       If so, were you able to provide that information?

         ❏ yes
         ❏ no

    comments _____

    _____

(7) Was the caller (or person needing help) looking for emotional support?

    ❏ no

    ❏ yes

       If so, to what degree do you think the caller received the support she/he wanted?

         ❏ a great deal
         ❏ somewhat
         ❏ a little
         ❏ not at all

    comments _____

    _____

(8) Did the caller (or person needing help) have any special communication needs? (e.g., hearing or language issues)

    ❏ no

    ❏ yes

       If so, please list: _____

(9) Did the caller need emergency shelter because of domestic violence?

❒ no

❒ yes

If so, were you able to arrange that emergency shelter?

❒ yes
❒ no

comments _____

_____

(10) Did you discuss a safety plan with the caller?

❒ no

If not, why?

❒ Not applicable: caller did not need a safety plan
❒ Caller did not want to discuss a safety plan
❒ Caller was incoherent
❒ other (*please describe* _____)

❒ yes

comments _____

_____

(11) _____Did the caller need you to make phone calls on her or his behalf?

❒ no

❒ yes

If so, did you make the call?

❒ yes
❒ no

comments _____

_____

PLEASE WRITE DOWN ANYTHING ELSE THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW ABOUT THIS CALL:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.
Your answers will help us continue to understand and improve our services to callers!

Appendix C

Additional Readings

Additional Readings

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Matsumoto, D. (1994). *Cultural Influences on Research Methods and Statistics*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

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Appendix D

Glossary of Terms

aggregate data — The combined or total responses from individuals.

anonymous — Unknown. In the case of outcome evaluation, this means you do not know who the responses to questions came from (e.g., unsigned questionnaires left in locked boxes).

closed-ended question — A question with a set number of responses from which to choose.

confidential — In the case of outcome evaluation, this means you do know (or can find out) who the responses came from, but you are committed to keeping this information to yourself. (e.g., A woman who participates in a focus group is not anonymous, but she expects her responses to be kept confidential.)

data — Information, collected in a systematic way, that is used to draw conclusions about process or outcome. (NOTE: Data is plural for datum (a single piece of information), which is why, when presenting results, sentences should read, "The data *were* collected" instead of "The data *was* collected.")

demographic data — Background and personal information (e.g., age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) gathered for evaluation or statistical purposes.

measurement instrument — Also called "measure" or "instrument," this is the tool used to collect the data. Questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews are all measurement instruments.

mean — The "average" response, obtained by adding all responses to a question and dividing by the total number of responses.

median — The "middle" response, obtained by choosing the score that is at the midpoint of the distribution. Half the scores are above the median, and half are below. In the case of an even number of scores, the median is obtained by taking the mean (average) of the two middle scores.

mode — The response chosen by the largest number of respondents.

open-ended question — A question that invites a reply from the respondent in her own words, one without set responses.

outcome — An end (intended or unintended) result of a program. For purposes of evaluation, this needs to be a result that can be observed and measured.

outcome evaluation — Assesses the measurable impact your program is having.

process — How something happens; the step-by-step procedure through which something is accomplished.

process evaluation — Assesses the degree to which your program is operating as intended.

qualitative data — Information gathered in an "open-ended" fashion where the respondent has the opportunity to provide details in her own words.

quantitative data — Information gathered in a structured way that can be categorized numerically. (e.g., Collecting quantitative data includes questionnaires and interviews, with response categories that can be checked off or circled.)

verbatim — Word-for-word; in a respondent's own words.

PCADV

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence...

a private, nonprofit organization, founded in 1976,
dedicated to ending violence against women and children and restoring
their fundamental right to live free from fear in their own homes