

Family Members as Evaluators: Preliminary Results of a Training Curriculum

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PARADIGM SHIFT Applied to Research and Evaluation

	Researcher Driven	Family Driven
Source Of Questions For Study	Researchers	Families and providers in systems of care
Relationship	Child, family, therapist, and teacher kept at a distance from researchers - subjected to experimental conditions, then tested and observed	Families and providers collaborate with researchers in designing and implementing studies, interpreting and presenting results
Orientation	Objectivity of the independent observer - controlled studies often done in hospital or artificial environments	Ecological approach seeking to understand how things work in the real world and what is effective in real communities
Purpose	Better understanding of topics of interest to the researcher - adds to the body of knowledge	Advocacy tool for system change and improvement in quality of life for children and families

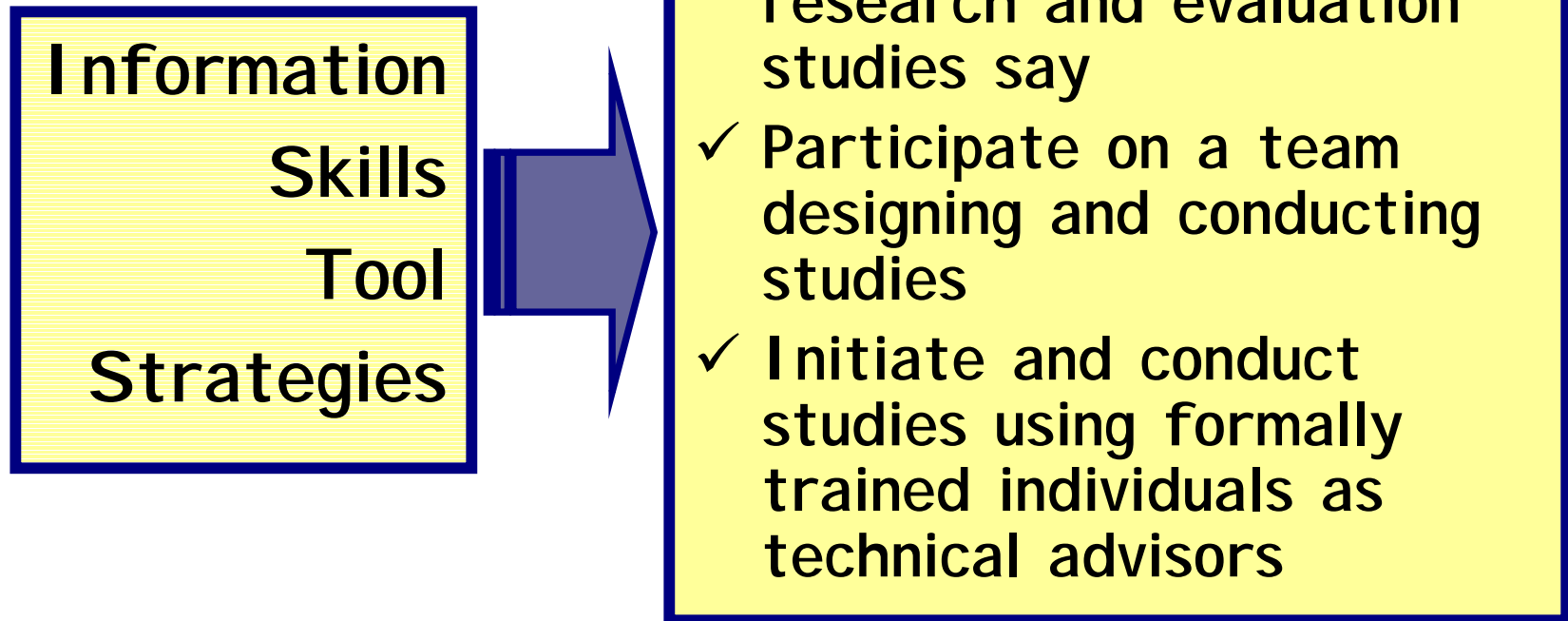


PARADIGM SHIFT Applied to Research and Evaluation (continued)

	Researcher Driven	Family Driven
Study Design and Data Analysis	"Context stripped" to control variables in search of definitive cause and effect relationships	Action oriented qualitative and descriptive methods integrated with quantitative analysis with attention paid to the environmental influences on variables
Access To Data	Closely held by researchers to avoid influencing the results	Shared frequently with families, providers, and other stakeholders as a form of quality control
Dissemination	Research journals and professional meetings and publications	Newsletters, magazine articles, conferences, public forums, legislative hearings, reports to funding sources
Potential For Application and Use	Limited to situations exactly like the research conditions	Adaptable for a variety of settings



The World of Evaluation: *A Curriculum for Families*



The World of Evaluation

Course I Objectives

For Family Members to Understand:

1. How to use evaluation results for advocacy.
2. The role evaluation plays in improving services and outcomes for children and their families.
3. The history of evaluation and emerging roles for family members.
4. The types of evaluation.
5. The steps in the evaluation process.
6. The political influences on evaluation.
7. The visual display of data.
8. How to read an evaluation report or article.
9. The key terms used in evaluation.

Design of the Evaluation

- The evaluation design was created in collaboration with the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- 24 of the 40 participants of the Course 1 trainings were interviewed by phone.
- Interviews lasted about 30 minutes and were conducted by RTC staff



Design of the Evaluation

- The interview schedule contained questions about what they learned and how they were using the knowledge.
- Questions were both open ended and scaled.
- The scaled questions ranged from 1= a little to 5 = a lot

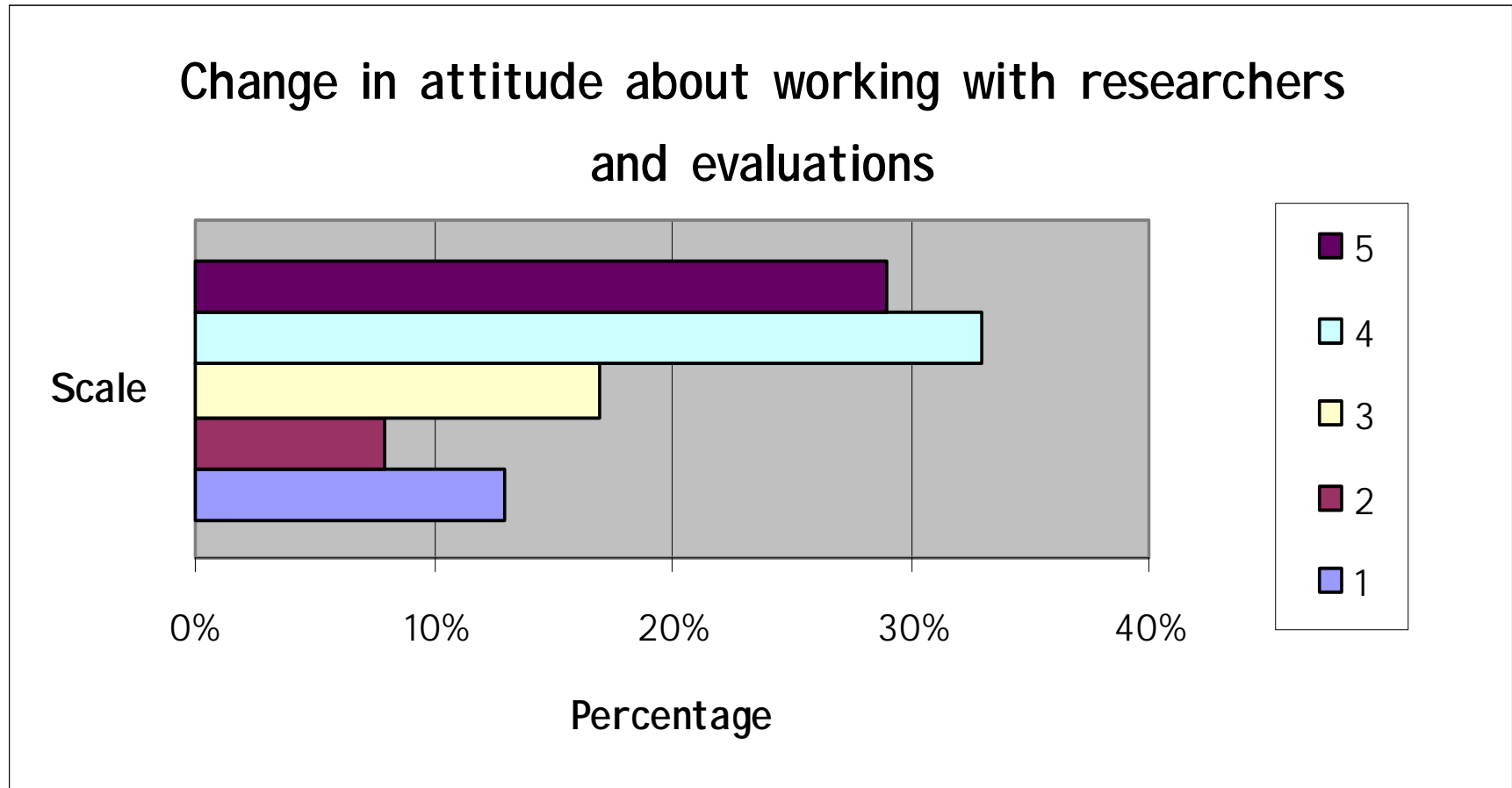


Summary of the Findings

- Participants rated the change in their confidence in voicing opinions about evaluation as 4.1 on a 5 point scale. 45% reported that the training changed their confidence level “a lot”.
- Participants were asked if participation in Course 1 training had affected their ability to advocate. 83% reported that it had affected their ability to advocate.
- Participants rated the change in their ability to use evaluation reports and articles as 4.1 on a 5 point scale. 50% reported that they learned “a lot” about how to use evaluation reports and articles.



Summary of the Findings



Major Themes from the Qualitative Data



- Participants experienced an increased confidence level regarding evaluation. This resulted in:
 1. Developing confidence to ask questions.
 - Speaking up and asking questions.
 - Asking about an evaluation if they don't understand.
 - Asking more knowledge based questions.



Major Themes from the Qualitative Data

2. Not feeling intimidated by researchers and evaluators.

- Evaluators seem less intimidating, they seem more human - not just working with numbers and figures.
- The training raised questions to ask in the future – questions to ask evaluators when the data comes back.
- It is important to work with evaluators.



Major Themes from the Qualitative Data



3. Increased their ability to advocate on the family level and policy level.

- An increased level of confidence to go out and advocate with families.
- An increased level of comfort in working with state level policy makers on system level changes.
- An increased level of confidence using information for testimony and feeling confident to explain the information if asked questions.



Involving Participants in Data Analysis



Why?

Consistent with collaborative nature of the evaluation

Participants expressed interest

We were curious about the additional perspective



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Involving Participants in Data Analysis

How?

Did preliminary analysis at RTC

Mailed narrative results + frequency tables + tip sheet to interested participants

Held conference calls at two different times to discuss themes



Involving Participants in Data Analysis

Results?

Its difficult to do qualitative analysis by phone.

Importance of separating “participant” hat from “evaluator” hat.

Participants identified different examples as important.



Involving Participants in Data Analysis

Next Steps?

One more conference call to talk about how and where to report

Think more about ways to incorporate the analysis into courses.

I deas??



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