

No Evaluation Without Collaboration

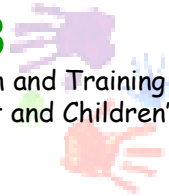
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Stakeholder Analysis



Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health



Potential benefits of effective family-evaluator collaboration

- Increases cultural sensitivity of study
- Improves the instruments/surveys
- Better retention of the study participants
- Incorporation of community context
- More authentic interpretation of the data
- Improves dissemination of the information

(Vander Stoep, Williams, Jones, Green, & Trupin, 1999; Osher & Telesford, 1996; Friesen & Stephens, 1998)



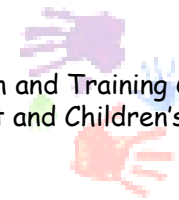
Evaluator and family evaluator study

Rationale:

- Need for information about family-evaluator collaboration.

Purpose:

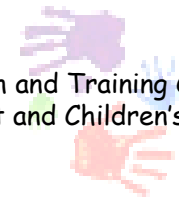
- To identify strategies that promote collaborative relationships in evaluation teams.
- To develop training materials for evaluators and family members



Evaluator and family evaluator study

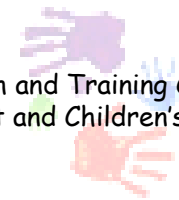
Method:

1. Identified evaluators and family evaluators who are collaborating on evaluation teams, through:
Nomination by key informants
Snowball sampling
2. Telephone or face-to-face interviews using open-ended qualitative questions
3. Taped and transcribed interviews or took detailed notes, analyzed for themes



Demographics of evaluators and family evaluators

- 20 evaluators from all areas of the U.S.
 - Educational level: Ph.D.: 14 Masters/ABD: 6
 - Personal or family experience as a consumer of mental health services: 66%
- 10 female family evaluators from all areas of the U.S.
 - Educational level:
 - High School diploma: 2 Some college: 2
 - Currently in college: 1 Bachelor's degree: 5
 - Prior experience in evaluation:
 - No experience: 7 Some college classes: 2
 - Prior experience: 1
 - Child with serious emotional disorder currently lives in home: 70%



Findings: Lack of prior training for family-evaluator collaboration

Evaluators:

- 55% reported that were trained to keep distance from research participants.
- 70% reported that they learned on the job.

Family evaluators:

- 40% reported that had not received any training in evaluation.
- 30% reported that they had received the Federation of Families training.
- 30% reported that they had taken some college classes that helped prepare them.



Challenge: Concerns about objectivity/neutrality



- Some stakeholders are reported to perceive family members as lacking objectivity.

“We are in a big fight up there right now because they keep saying we can't believe any of your data because it all came from families.”



Strategies: Addressing objectivity concerns



- Some professionally trained evaluators reported modifying their views on objectivity.

“I think that, I was a little less flexible about (objectivity) than I am now, realizing that sometimes that fuzziness of boundaries actually benefits us researchers in a lot of ways.”



Challenge: Family-related concerns



- Ongoing challenges resulting from family evaluators having a child with mental illness living at home
- Stress associated with the difficulty balancing work and family needs

“I don't think we've spent enough time thinking about the employment piece...what's it's like to be the employer of and be accepting of the kinds of flexibility you have to have.”

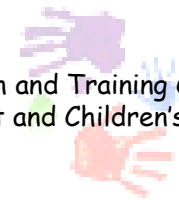


Strategies


- Requires trust and believing that family participation is worthwhile
- Use of e-mail, telecommuting, conference calls, flexible scheduling

“I think we always have to be cognizant that they are working this around the rest of their lives.”

“You have to be a very flexible employer. With children receiving services, sometimes things come up.”



Challenge: Advocate vs. evaluator conflict



"...the experience means something different to her than it does for us...we are thinking of this as data collection and our end goal may be to produce some findings that are helpful for families...she [family evaluator] wants the process itself to be helpful for families. So during the interviews, she wants to be making connections and having the participation be worthwhile for them."



Strategies: Open communication



“The other thing, I think, is the ability to negotiate things, like the advocacy and research issue. The willingness, we realize that we have to talk about this and we have to hash it out. What is the solution going to be.”

“...Constantly reminding each other that all our perspectives are equally important.”



Perceptions of training needs



- Joint trainings, e.g. expanded Federation training
- A curriculum or "how to" guide" with examples of what others have done
- A compilation of effective strategies or a catalog of partnership models
- Lessons learned and suggestions from those who have done it
- Success stories from family members and evaluators who have worked together



Training program key topics



- Collaboration in evaluation
- Effective teamwork skills
- Diversity and evaluation teams
- Power dynamics and empowerment
- Advocacy and objectivity in evaluation
- Communication in evaluation teams
- Staff support and supervision
- Leadership and decision making in teams



Achieving collaboration exercise

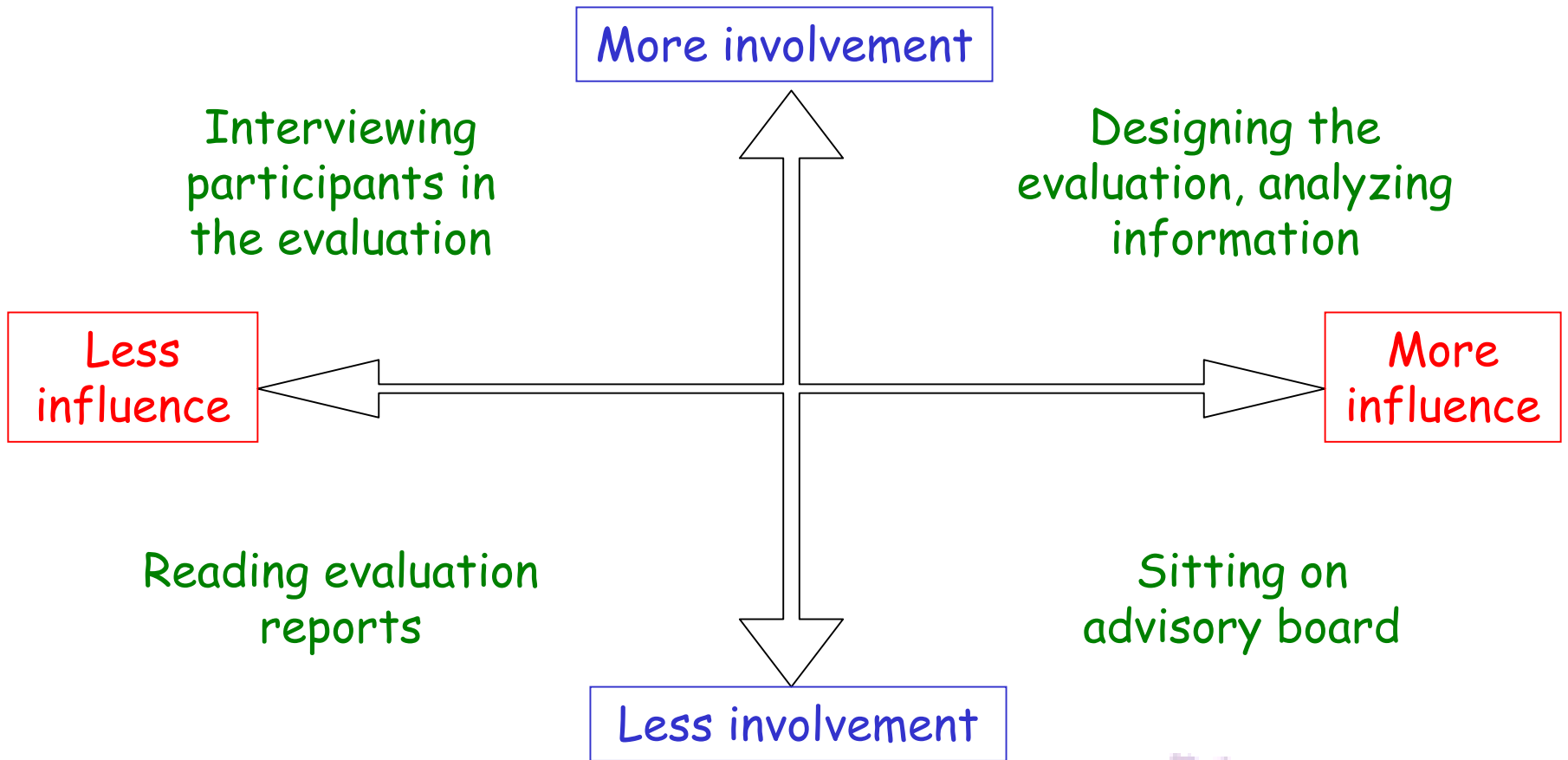


Questions for debriefing:

- What were the sticking points?
- How did the group manage disagreements?
- Did anyone take on a facilitator role, and if so, what did s/he do?



Family involvement in evaluation



Family-evaluator collaboration



Traits:

- Trust, respect, and tolerance for others
- Flexibility and openness to suggestions
- Creativity and curiosity
- Patience
- Honesty
- Willingness to take risks
- Warmth and empathy
- Willingness to share power

Adapted from Myers, Kaufman, & Goldman (1998)



Family-evaluator collaboration



Perspectives:

- Recognition that the complexity of the task requires collaboration
- Valuing others' knowledge and contributions
- Valuing diversity of culture, background, and communication
- Shared goals and philosophy
- Commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment

Adapted from Myers, Kaufman, & Goldman (1998)



Family-evaluator collaboration



Knowledge:

- Clarity about roles, especially one's own
- Strategies for collaborative problem solving
- How to work on a team

Skills:

- Group process and facilitation skills
- Communication skills
- Conflict management skills



Training resources



- Federation of Families "World of Evaluation" trainings
 - Contact Elaine Slaton or Shannon CrossBear
- Training for family-evaluator collaboration
 - Contact Pauline Jivanjee or Kathryn Schutte
 - For project and training updates look on our webpage:
<http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgProjEvaluators.php>



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