


**Trends, Challenges & Opportunities in
Conducting Culturally-Sensitive Evaluations
of Child Mental Health Programs**

Alisha Nichols Johnson, MPA
Monica Mitchell, PhD
Jessica Valenzuela, PhD
Kenneth Gilyard, MBA
Jennifer Allen, BS






Acknowledgements

INNOVATIONS in community research and program evaluation

- Community collaboration program that provides program evaluation and consultation services

Thank you to our Cincinnati-based community collaborators:
Success by 6
Beech Acres Parenting Center
Center for Closing the Health Gap



Presentation Goals

- I. Discuss current demands and constraints of program evaluation for child mental health programs
- II. Provide examples of trends, challenges and opportunities concerning cultural sensitivity in program evaluations
- III. Provide strategies for ensuring cultural-sensitivity in evaluating child mental health programs

**Demands and Constraints:
Evaluating Child Mental Health Programs**

**Demands for Evaluating
Child Mental Health Programs**

Current program evaluations are often required to incorporate cultural sensitivity by demonstrating:

- Impact
- Sustainability
- Generalizability

Constraints to Ensuring Cultural-Sensitivity

- Institutional and Staff Capacity
- Limited Technological Savvy
- Limited Time
- Limited Expertise

Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

I. Winning Beginnings

II. Beech Acres Parenting Center

III. Center for Closing the Health Gap

Success by 6 Winning Beginnings



The Project

- Winning Beginnings promotes positive social, emotional and cognitive development in preschool children.
- Integrates coaching and mentoring with results from assessments including the Bracken Basic Concept Scale Receptive, Ages & Stages and Get-It-Got-It-Go to help teachers understand and support the healthy development of children.
- **INNOVATIONS** facilitates learning circle meetings and trainings for teachers, directors and administrators as well as provides technical assistance and consultation in collaboration with Success By 6, 4C, Cincinnati Public Schools and Cincinnati Early Learning Centers.



Evaluation Trends

- Professional Development and Staff Training are often used as methods to ensure that programs improve services and programs.
- Winning Beginnings provides teachers and program administration with training that will directly impact the culture of the environments in which they serve children.



Evaluation Challenges

- Changing the culture of evidence-based instruction including compliance with data entry and aligning curricula or school programs.
- Developing common and/or shared outcomes across all participating sites, measures and databases, and aligning reporting cycles.
- Developing steps and finding the time to improve the culture of an environment after training.



Evaluation Opportunities

- Training opportunities empower agencies to change culture while providing the most up-to-date methods for administering programs.
- For Winning Beginnings, training opportunities have become so popular that the number of classrooms will double next year at almost every center.

Beech Acres Parenting Center Family Peer Support Program



The Project

- Beech Acres has become a force in the Greater Cincinnati community to help parents raise their children.
- With consultation from **INNOVATIONS**, Beech Acres developed a needs assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the Family Peer Support (FPS) program that provides family-to-family mentorship.



Evaluation Trends

- Community agencies often opt to conduct a needs assessment to identify the needs and strengths of multi-faceted services and programs.
- Beech Acres also introduced web-based tracking systems into the organizational culture to better organize various data sources and enhance service delivery.



Evaluation Challenges

- Fully understanding the culture of programs to best meet the needs of the children and families.
- With FPS, several parents received multiple services from the program, which magnified the need to devise ways to examine the overlap of services received by parents and bridge gaps where needed.



Evaluation Opportunities

- Needs assessments help to determine the true culture of program operations and effectiveness.
- Strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats to sustainability are all identified during the process, which can be designed to incorporate various evaluation methods and technology.

Center for Closing the Health Gap

Norwood ¡Hazlo Bien! Campaign





The Project

- ¡Hazlo Bien! Norwood project is geared toward increasing the awareness of health disparities, maximizing collaborative opportunities and developing a research network to collect local data on health within the targeted Hispanic community.
- **INNOVATIONS** in Community Research and Program Evaluation served as primary evaluator for the Do Right! Norwood project.



Evaluation Trends

- This project invited Hispanic community members to participate in certain aspects of the evaluation including survey development.



Evaluation Challenges

- The survey was designed as a self-report instrument.
- Despite community and cultural input in the survey development, there may have been challenges with item interpretation and/or sensitivity about certain aspects of the survey, causing respondents to be reluctant to answer questions.



Evaluation Opportunities

- Evaluators should consider developing instruments that include the language, customs, beliefs and other aspects of culture that can be used to help build validity and trust in community research and evaluations.
- Soliciting the input of stakeholders including service recipients is key.

Strategies for Ensuring Cultural-Sensitivity in Evaluating Child Mental Health Programs

Strategies for Ensuring Cultural-Sensitivity in Evaluating Child Mental Health Programs

1. Determining the need and identifying the goals for a culturally-sensitive program evaluation
2. Soliciting the input of stakeholders of diverse, yet relevant backgrounds
3. Developing an evaluation plan that will capture and highlight any key differences or nuances between and/or within groups
4. Developing evaluative instruments that reflect the program as well as the cultural diversity (socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, language, customs, beliefs, communication styles, etc.) and values of the population served

*Strategies for Ensuring Cultural-Sensitivity in
Evaluating Child Mental Health Programs*

5. Administering the evaluation instruments in a manner that is non-threatening to cultural differences
6. Analyzing and interpreting data using appropriate cultural contexts
7. Report findings to all stakeholders including funders, staff, parents and community members
8. Ensure that the data provides the context for developing and designing and effective culturally sensitive program

***Trends, Challenges and Opportunities
Summary***

- Conducting culturally-sensitive program evaluations for child mental health programs are tied to agency mission, vision, goals and funding requirements
- Demands and constraints on evaluating child mental health program programs establish trends, present challenges and provide opportunities for agencies to develop insightful ways to refine programming
- Culturally-sensitive program evaluations provide opportunities for maximizing impact and sustainability over time

Thank You!