

WRITING AND IMPLEMENTING EVALUATION QUESTIONS: STEPS FOR TELESAFE CLINICIANS

Writing Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are designed to reflect the purpose of the evaluation in concrete, measurable ways. By establishing which questions are most important to the program and its partners, the evaluation team can be focused on decisions around participants, measures, and data collection approaches.

When writing evaluation questions, it is important to determine what kind of information is most important to the program and its partners. This is often made apparent by the *type* of evaluation being conducted.

A **process evaluation** examines whether program activities were implemented as intended, whether the activities reached the intended audience (e.g., sexual assault patients), and whether the desired outputs were produced. Questions explore the types and quantities of services delivered, who used the services, the quality of the services, any problems encountered in the delivery of the program activities, and how problems were resolved.

Example process evaluation questions include the following:

1. How many patients seeking medical forensic exams (MFEs) were *offered* teleSAFE services?
2. How many patients *received* MFEs through teleSAFE services?
3. Were all teleSAFE exam steps completed?
4. Was the teleSAFE platform reliable?

An **outcome evaluation** measures the program's impact on the target population in terms of short-term, intermediate, and long-term objectives. The outcome evaluation explores the program's impact on participants and how much of a difference the program made for them and their community. Outcome evaluations should focus on elements such as knowledge or skills, behaviors or attitudes, and well-being.

Example outcome evaluation questions include the following:

1. Has the number of MFEs provided in the community increased since the initiation of the teleSAFE program?
2. Has the number of patient referrals to appropriate agencies (e.g., advocacy) increased since the initiation of the teleSAFE program?
3. Did the patients feel emotionally supported during their teleSAFE exams?
4. Did spoke-site staff describe increased comfort in treating sexual assault patients after participating in teleSAFE services?

TeleSAFE evaluation teams may choose to pursue process and/or outcome evaluation questions, depending on the goals of their program.

Selecting Appropriate Data Collection Methods

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The methods used to collect data are guided by the evaluation questions themselves. Data can be collected to answer evaluation questions via multiple methods, including, but not limited to¹:

- existing sources (i.e., secondary data), like advocacy organization records on the number of advocates dispatched to teleSAFE calls;
- checklists completed by the participant; and
- surveys completed by the participant.

Lower-burden methods (e.g., use of existing secondary data, brief surveys, and checklists) should be prioritized whenever possible and considered before implementing higher-burden methods (e.g., longer surveys with open-ended questions). The data collection method will likely vary by participant group. For example, to assess the same evaluation question, the evaluation team may choose to pursue surveys with on-site clinicians and use checklists with patients.

Upon selection of a data collection method, additional decisions will require consideration. For example, should checklists and surveys be completed via paper and pencil or via the web? Working with stakeholder points of contact will allow your team to make effective decisions for your community.

Developing Data Collection Tools

Developing data collection tools may feel overwhelming at first. Begin by considering the following categories of information:

- *Participant background*: Who are the participants? What experiences do they have? If they are clinicians, what type of training do they have?
- *Successes of the program*: What went well?
- *Challenges of the program*: What could have gone better?

Next, review your evaluation questions and ensure that each question is appropriately represented in the data collection tool. Items that are not related to an evaluation question should be removed from your data collection instruments to reduce burden on participants.

It is important to note that data collection tools should vary as needed to capture different experiences, perspectives, and expertise:

- Differing data collection modes intended for the same stakeholder group should not ask the same questions—if identical information can be gleaned from each, use only the lower-burden method.
- Surveys intended for two different stakeholder groups should be customized for each group (e.g., ask questions and use language relevant to that group). Work with your stakeholder points of contact to ensure that each data collection tool is appropriately customized for their groups' needs.

Once data collection tools have been developed, they should be reviewed for their application of patient-centered, trauma-informed practices. Additional guidance on these approaches is included in ***Trauma-Informed Evaluation: Steps for TeleSAFE Clinicians***.

¹ Information on additional evaluation data collection methods (i.e., interviews and focus groups) can be found in IAFN's *TeleSAFE Evaluation Handbook*.

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Selecting Appropriate Data Analysis Approaches

Once data have been collected, the evaluation team can pursue data analysis approaches. Methods by which data are analyzed depend on the type of data collected.

Quantitative data analysis may include

- descriptive statistics of all key ideas (e.g., number and type of activities completed),
- correlational analyses (e.g., whether two variables are related), or
- inferential analyses (e.g., whether one variable can predict another).

Additional guidance on selecting a quantitative data analysis method can be found at <https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/other/mult-pkg/whatstat/>.

Qualitative data analysis may include

- basic documentation of key themes (e.g., captured in an Excel spreadsheet or a Word file),
- advanced analysis using coding approaches, or
- extraction of quotes that highlight key project findings.

Additional guidance on qualitative data analysis can be found at [https://www.cottagehealth.org/app/files/public/2246/Analyze and Interpret Data Cottage Health Evaluation Toolkit.pdf](https://www.cottagehealth.org/app/files/public/2246/Analyze_and_Interpret_Data_Cottage_Health_Evaluation_Toolkit.pdf).

Interpreting Findings

Upon completion of data analysis, review the results to identify answers to your original evaluation questions. Look across data collection and analysis types to synthesize findings and identify key themes, recommendations, and best practices. When necessary, consult stakeholder points of contact to support the interpretation of findings. Once you interpret your findings, consider ways to share the information with key project partners (e.g., full report, PowerPoint presentation, summary brief).

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