Tips for Data Collection

When selecting tools for quantitative or qualitative data collection, whenever possible, it's best to use standardized measurement tools as this will increase the reliability, validity and generalizability of the data.

Prior to data collection, it's also important to inform program participants in writing of the purpose of the evaluation. That letter should include their rights of confidentiality and anonymity should they decide to participate and the fact that refusing to participate in the evaluation does not affect their services in any way.

Potential Sources of Data include:

- **Service recipients:** program participants; community indexes for programs designed to improve community-level variables; artifacts produced by program participants or community members
- **Service providers:** program staff and program records
- **Observers or people who are not part of the program:** accreditation staff; evaluation staff; trained observers; people who have contact with the program participant(s) outside of the program and may be able to provide important information on improvements or problems

Evaluation plans should describe how evaluation data will be gathered and may include:

- A description of participants
- Sampling techniques
- Participant recruitment strategy
- Consent processes and how ethical concerns such as confidentiality are addressed
- Data collection methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys)
- Whether collected data will be qualitative, quantitative, or both
- If data is extracted from an existing database, a description of the original database
- If document reviews are used, an overview of how it's done and the nature of the documents being reviewed
- A description of any available baseline measures, if applicable
- Whether a literature review will be carried out, and if so, a description of the focus of the review and search strategy
- A description of how access to third party data will be negotiated, if the evaluation will involve a third party; as well as, description of any information sharing agreements, if applicable

Source: Alberta Health Services
http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/res/mhr/if-res-mhr-eval-resources-plan-framework.pdf

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Peel Region Evaluation Platform

Data Collection Questions

Questions	Answers
Who will we collect data about? *For example: Clients, caregivers, other service providers working with clients, staff, some other group?*	
Who are considered participants of our program? *Be sure to clearly specify the evaluation target population.*	
What instruments do we need? *Surveys, interview guides, observation checklists and/or protocols, record extraction or record review protocols?*	
Are there any pre-tested instruments that can be used for our evaluation? If not, how will we confirm validity?	

Source: Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health
http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/sites/default/files/docs/program-evaluation-toolkit.pdf

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