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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health and wellness programs are operated in communities across Canada to improve residents’ health and help prevent chronic disease. It’s important to make sure that these programs are accomplishing their goals and meeting the community’s needs; this is done through program evaluation.

There are challenges to conducting program evaluations in any community. Within northern, remote and Aboriginal communities, there often exist specific and unique evaluation challenges. Understanding the context of these communities and dealing with challenges in a positive way can lead to more helpful evaluation, improved programming and increased community support.

In 2010, a project was undertaken to gather information and offer advice on how best to meet the needs of organizations working with northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. The project’s key component was a survey, which aimed to provide a greater understanding of the challenges, and more importantly, solutions to those challenges when doing evaluations in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities.

The survey’s scenario-based format prompted survey respondents to offer many practical and innovative ideas for facilitating evaluation with northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. At a higher level, a number of overarching themes emerged from their suggestions. The most significant themes were:

- The need for the program evaluation to be culturally sensitive
- The use of a participatory evaluation approach
- The use of the principles of community-based research
- The need to ensure that the evaluation has respectful relationship building
- The importance of including a community context

These themes may be seen as guiding principles for facilitating program evaluation in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. By embedding these evaluation principles into their approach, individuals and organizations can help make the evaluation process more valuable to their programs and to the communities they serve.
INTRODUCTION

Throughout Canada, a variety of organizations – including government, not-for-profit organizations and community-based groups – are involved in developing and offering programs designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of Canadians. An important element of this process is program evaluation: determining whether programs are achieving their goals and meeting the needs of the community and the funder.

While it can be a challenge to build an evaluation culture in any community, this can be particularly true in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. Historical and cultural context, along with past experience with research and evaluation, may pose significant and specific barriers. Overcoming these challenges requires a clear understanding of both the issues around evaluation and the practical approaches and solutions that can help make evaluation more acceptable and helpful to these communities.

In 2010, the Public Health Agency of Canada, in partnership with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC), provided funding to the Canadian Platform to Increase the Usage of Real World Evidence (CAPTURE) to understand the evaluation needs of northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. Components of the project included: developing a greater understanding of the challenges faced when conducting evaluations in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities; providing evaluation support to CPAC-funded coalitions working with these communities; and finding ways to support the development of culturally-relevant data collection tools.

Reciprocal Consulting was engaged to gather information and offer advice on how best to meet the needs of organizations working with northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. The Reciprocal project team sought this information through two means: by using an internet-based survey, and through the use of engagement events in selected Canadian communities.

This report summarizes the results of the Solutions to Evaluation Challenges survey.
METHODOLOGY

The survey aimed to provide a greater understanding of the challenges, and more importantly, solutions to those challenges, when doing evaluations in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities.

The survey tool (Appendix A) consisted of 16 questions, the majority of which were qualitative in nature. In addition to asking respondents to name their top two barriers or challenges to conducting program evaluation, the survey presented eight different scenarios that described challenges with conducting evaluation in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. Survey respondents were asked to think about how they had dealt with similar issues in the past or, if they had not experienced the issue, how they might deal with the issue.

The survey was available online through SurveyMonkey for three weeks, between February 2 and February 23, 2011.

In total, 584 individuals were invited by email to participate in the Solutions to Evaluation Challenges Survey. Email contact lists were drawn from websites for government, Aboriginal and Northern organizations.

Of the 584 invitations issued, surveys were returned by 261 respondents (44.7%); of this number 220 respondents (37.6%) completed the entire survey. There were respondents from every province and territory in Canada.

Limitations of the survey
While there was a high response rate to the survey, we cannot assume that the findings of this survey apply to every northern, remote or Aboriginal community. There is great variation and uniqueness among these communities.

The themes generated from the data and the interpretation of the themes was not able to be verified by the survey respondents.
RESULTS

Evaluation challenges
Respondents in the Solutions to Evaluation Challenges survey were asked to identify the top two challenges to program evaluation in northern, rural and Aboriginal communities. The most frequently-mentioned top challenges were:

- Time (i.e. not enough time to get the work done);
- A lack of capacity in the communities, organizations or program evaluators to conduct useful program evaluations;
- A lack of funding or financial resources to conduct an adequate program evaluation.

Other frequently-mentioned challenges included factors that could influence the reliability or validity of the data, getting buy-in for the program evaluation from the stakeholders (e.g., community members, program coordinators), and making sure that the program evaluation is culturally relevant.

Insights and solutions for evaluation challenges
Respondents were asked to offer their perspectives and solutions for eight mock scenarios involving evaluation in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities. Every scenario touched on a challenge that could occur in a program evaluation, and there was considerable overlap in solutions across the different scenarios. This report presents the major themes and issues that emerged for respondents around these evaluation challenges.

The information is organized around five major program evaluation activities:

- Program planning and implementation
- Evaluation planning
- Data collection and analysis
- Reporting
- Evaluation capacity building

Each section summarizes the major themes of respondents’ comments, along with a selection of their suggestions about potential solutions or options for consideration. The text boxes contain quotes from respondents that illustrate in their own voices suggested approaches to addressing challenges and issues.
PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Programs benefit from clear strategy and good organization from the beginning.

Comments and suggestions:
- Ensure that roles are assigned.
- Program planners need to be strategic.
- Have a communications advisor for the program who can help with wording about the program.
- Garner support from the community. This can be achieved through community engagement events where the program can be promoted.
- Consider pilot testing the program.

A needs assessment can help provide a good place to start when there is a lack of baseline data or little existing research in the area of the program.

Comments and suggestions:
- You should conduct a needs assessment or an environmental scan. A needs assessment can help gather information on community strengths and existing services, as well as help prioritize community needs.
- Your needs assessment should be carried out at in a community setting such as in a workshop or community gathering.

While you’re planning your program, remember to keep future evaluation needs in mind.

Comments and suggestions:
- The program needs to have plans in advance to measure outcomes.
- Plan for evaluation at beginning of program; include this as part of the work plan and budget.
- Obtain buy-in for the evaluation prior to evaluating the program. One option is that you obtain buy-in from local leadership such as Chief and Council.
- Funding agencies should advise programs about evaluation at the outset so they can set aside resources.
EVALUATION PLANNING

Relationship building is a key component to conducting program evaluation in northern, rural and Aboriginal communities.

Comments and suggestions:

• For any program evaluation to be successful, it requires buy-in from the stakeholders.
• Build relationships with people in the community including community leaders, Elders, program coordinators and participants. An in-person visit helps to build relationships and trust. Ways to build trust included being transparent, having ongoing communication, talking about program evaluation fears, and being open and flexible.
• When meeting with stakeholders, it is important to follow protocol and offer food, incentives and transportation (if possible).
• Discussing the value of program evaluation, and discussing program evaluation fears can obtain buy-in. When discussing the value of program evaluation, ask the stakeholders how the program evaluation can be useful for them.
• Ensure that evaluation sessions be kept comfortable and informal, and that evaluators should be aware of issues of anonymity and consider methods for dealing with this issue (e.g., cleaning the data).
• Address fears about program evaluation at the beginning of the process (e.g., cut funding, judgment, fear of losing program); if this is an issue, focus on the program strengths and next steps.
• Be clear about the purpose of the program evaluation and to frame it as an opportunity. Show the community some samples of program evaluations that have been completed and which have assisted programs in securing or accessing better resources as a result of the independent evaluation.

If this is an Aboriginal community, then I would start talking with the elders and women within the community. Building relationships and trust is important. Then I would involve the community, because the community knows what works and what does not work within their community regarding programming. However, it’s a touchy subject because many of their relatives are employed within these programs. So, we would have to have the program staff on board (which would take time to build trust and relationships because they may feel threat in losing their jobs). I would also have pot luck meetings with program staff and the community to keep them informed and involved.
Stakeholder engagement is a significant component of evaluation.

Comments and suggestions:

- Be respectful by asking permission to visit and collect data, ask about communication preference, be accessible and accommodating, learn the governance and accountability structure, and allow time to build relationships.
- Stakeholders should be engaged throughout the program evaluation process.
- All community members should be engaged, particularly the Chief and Council, Elders, and the target group.
- Collaborate with stakeholders on designing the program logic model, developing the evaluation questions, and identifying outcomes.
- Stakeholders should be informed on the progress of the program evaluation and on the program evaluation activities.

Before conducting a program evaluation, it is important to learn about the context of the program and of the community.

Comments and suggestions:

- Learn about the community dynamics and background (e.g., cultural protocols, demographics, geography, available resources), and conduct an evaluability assessment of the program considering the community context.
- Be aware that northern, rural and Aboriginal communities are not homogenous; there are differences in beliefs and protocols between communities. Evaluators should become familiar with the policies on collecting data, the local preferences for communication (e.g., VHF, radios), the OCAP principles, local traditions and cultural values, and include all these considerations when planning the program evaluation. Organizations that could help with this process include Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement offices, Friendship Centres, and Aboriginal Health Care Centres.

*Communities prefer to share information with individuals willing to come to them. I would suggest contacting the community leaders to set up a date, and then going to the community center in each community in order to meet with potential informants.*
While it can be challenging for evaluators to find a champion in the community for the evaluation, having a champion is an important component of obtaining buy-in.

Comments and suggestions:
- Identify a local champion to help advocate for the program evaluation who could provide a cultural sensitivity/safety aspect to the program evaluation and could help roll out the program evaluation operations.

It is fundamentally important to be culturally safe, including being culturally sensitive, respectful, relevant, reciprocal and responsible.

Comments and suggestions:
- Ask permission from the community members before conducting the program evaluation; include or appoint individuals with experience in program evaluation, Elders and other key evaluation users; and have a Terms of Reference and meeting regularly.
- Develop a program evaluation steering committee and a program evaluation advisory committee to help make the program evaluation relevant, useful, and culturally appropriate.
- For a culturally appropriate evaluation plan, use either a participatory approach or an empowerment approach.
- Build capacity in the organizations through training and mentorship. It was noted that when developing the program evaluation instruments, to incorporate questions that the stakeholders wished to address.
- Cultural safety training is important for evaluators.

Talk with as many people who have lived in the area as possible, as they can provide you with the best ways of approaching the situations. The more support you have from the community, the more participation you will receive.

Consider whether you should hire an external or internal evaluator.

Comments and suggestions:
- The evaluator should be able to deal with language barriers.
- Consider hiring someone from that culture.
- Include someone who could bridge communication, such as a cultural advisor.
During the evaluation process, communication and ensuring all stakeholders are on the same page are important issues.

Comments and suggestions:
- Develop a communication plan (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding) with the stakeholders, including:
  - an evaluation protocol; the type of communication method(s) that will be used (e.g., in person, email, telephone); the frequency of communication; as well as realistic milestone dates that are also flexible and compatible with community activities and events.
- Discuss with the stakeholders which language and jargon to use; consider creating a glossary of terms.
- Include a dissemination plan, a confidentiality agreement, and an agreement for ownership of data; OCAP principles provide a framework that could be used if applicable.

First choice is to hire a professional evaluator if they have funds available. If they don't have funds for [the] entire contract, perhaps hire [the evaluator] to design it along with program staff helping, it is administered by program staff, [they] partner with neighbouring university Aboriginal program/professor, [a] student assists the community with the analysis in exchange for experience, and [they] co-publish the results.

Developing appropriate evaluation tools and determining how to administer them are key considerations in evaluation planning.

Comments and suggestions:
- Acquire input from the advisory committee and the target group on the evaluation tools/instruments.
- When designing the tool, use mixed methods (such as a survey and an interview) and make sure they are simple to understand; specific and concise, and to ask key questions such as “how might we word these questions better?”, “what else should we be asking?”, “are there any questions that you think community members would be uncomfortable measuring?”, and “is this evaluation working?” Before collecting your data, you should ensure that the program evaluation tool has been pilot tested.
- There are multiple methods for accessing participants; consider who you are trying to reach and use the method that would be most appropriate. Program staff, local organizations and community members can help access participants. Consider offering incentives to stakeholders and participants for taking part in the evaluation. Community gatherings (e.g. kitchen table discussion, forums, feast, dinner, dance) are an effective way to collect data.
- Minimize barriers for participants as much as possible (e.g. using email, send dial-up friendly emails to remote communities or ensure that postage and shipping are paid for if using the mail system).
- Be aware of language barriers and phrase questions in a culturally safe way.

Face to face contact with individual community members, asking open ended questions that could have a theme, asking for examples when there is a concern, using unbiased staff important, someone respected, preferably capable of using the language.
Develop a realistic, innovative and flexible evaluation framework.
Comments and suggestions:
• Acquire an accurate description of the program and be realistic with what sort of program evaluation can be achieved given the budget.
• The program evaluation framework can include the Most Significant Change technique, an outcome mapping approach or an Action Research approach.
• If the program evaluation is not working as planned, revisit and reassess the program evaluation plan, as well as review any agreements that were made in the initial phase if there is confusion or disagreements [e.g., concerning roles, responsibilities, expectations, ownership].
• Revisit the purpose and overall goals of the program evaluation to refocus the evaluation and get back on track. You should also conduct an evaluation on the program evaluation to make it more effective and useful. Finally, if one approach is not working, consider using another.

When working with communities, look for ways to deal with language barriers.
Comments and suggestions:
• Consider issues such as English as a second language, literacy levels, and the use of jargon. If English is not the primary language, you should use a translator for translating program evaluation tools and documents. This approach would require back-translation and would need to be done in a non-exploitive way.
• Use accessible language and avoid jargon if possible. Consider developing a glossary to help clarify unfamiliar terms.

A priority is to ensure that any evaluation will cause no harm. Considering the resource limitations can there be any expectation that an evaluation will be relevant and of benefit to the community, and in doing so, will not draw down upon the community’s limited resources.

Ethics are one of the most important considerations when doing any program evaluation.
Comments and suggestions:
• Consider whether you need an ethics review or a research license before beginning a program evaluation. Know what the ethical standards are.
• Establish a code of conduct, including an informed consent that covers confidentiality and anonymity.
• Acquire consent from community before sharing findings or disseminating information.
Networking with other people, programs, organizations and communities is an effective way to tap into additional expertise and resources.

Comments and suggestions:

Connecting with researchers and evaluators:
- Get advice from colleagues who are involved in program evaluations on a regular basis, or use tools available online to do self-learning.
- Ask for advice from others with expertise (researchers, academia, epidemiologists, etc.).
- Contact key individuals through various provincial networks for help with design, process, etc.

Connecting with other organizations or communities:
- Find out what other programs with similar circumstances are doing.
- Communicate with nearby communities, make phone calls and listen to others who have done evaluations.
- If possible, get all programs together to talk about how doing their work, see if they have same process, and if it suits the people from that area.
- Contact organizations in the North to see who has experience at evaluation.
- Utilize live web programs, staff exchange programs.
- Use social media.
- Review other organizations’ evaluation reports and methodology.
- Contact member organizations in this field and ask for assistance.

Talk to people from other jurisdictions – it’s amazing how much knowledge and help is available with a few phone calls. The internet seems like an obvious choice, but our experience has been that, in the far north, it can be down as often as it’s working, so it can be a good resource, but contact with other people does go a lot farther.
Connecting with academic institutions:
- Contact the nearest university to see if there are any Masters level students who could do a program evaluation plan at no cost.
- Partner with a university – have a student knowledgeable in evaluation do an internship.
- Consider collaborations with academic settings (e.g. Centre for Aboriginal health research at the University of Manitoba).
- Approach the local college or UNBC for a student to take on a role in the evaluation as a research project.

Turn to the Internet to find tools and resources for conducting a program evaluation.
Comments and suggestions:
- Research program evaluation on the Internet, and develop your own template based on organizational mandate, scope of authority/influence.

Do some research on the Internet to find resources that would help, e.g. Logic Model Workbook by the Kellogg Foundation, as well as any resources on how to conduct a program evaluation.

Searching for literature on similar programs can be of great value when there is no baseline data and limited literature available.
Comments and suggestions:
- Look for similar programs, and particularly research examples of benefits in other evaluations.
- Try modeling the evaluation after successfully completed evaluations.
- Consider using or modifying existing evaluation templates.
- Use other evaluations as a baseline if a baseline is not possible for the program being evaluated.
- Conduct a culturally appropriate literature review.
DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The community should be engaged throughout the evaluation.

Comments and suggestions:
- Engage stakeholders to help with the data collection.
- Use a participatory approach.
- Present benefits of evaluation to the community at a gathering, meeting, celebration or other event.
- Make a presentation to leadership.
- Once the information has been gathered, the stakeholders can provide insightful interpretation of the results. Ask the community if there is any information that they would like to exclude (e.g. for anonymity or sensitivity reasons).
- Celebrate success of initial program outcomes.

Have a large community meeting where all this information will be collected. You would need to have community members participate in the planning but mainly ensuring the importance of their participation!

The data collection and analysis process needs to be culturally appropriate.

Comments and suggestions:
- Evaluators should be cognizant of the historical context.
- Engage all stakeholders.
- Developing a common language and understanding.
- Devise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between program evaluation users.
- Ensure language is local and jargon is not used.
- Ensure there is a respectful relationship and applicable questions to the target population or community.
- Use story-telling rather than surveys, with Elders in particular.
- Use indigenous ways of measuring data.
- Include Aboriginal people in interpreting and drafting the results.
- Give participants opportunity to review the data before publication or reporting is done.

Often the reluctance comes from being studied over and over with no results back to them. If they own the results they may feel differently.
It is important to develop a mutual understanding regarding the ownership of data.
Comments and suggestions:
• Have a discussion about who owns the data with the community
  (e.g. OCAP principles).
• Make sure there is an effort to return meaningful results to the community.

Prior to gathering your data, develop an action plan.
Comments and suggestions:
• Create a timeline.
• Have ongoing data collection.
• Send updates and have follow-up meetings.

Identify data collection methods that are appropriate to the community you are working with.
Comments and suggestions:
• There are many options for collecting data. They include:
  · Community gathering or community engagement events
  · Online or by email
  · Surveys: sent out in person or by mail
  · Telephone
  · In-person interviews
  · Through a local organization or local media
• It is also important to collect information necessary for the funder and relevant for the community.
• You can use qualitative data to identify themes which can in turn inform on areas of quantitative data tools.

Written surveys get a small return with any population including our Aboriginal People, many of whom are not comfortable with the idea, or whose second language is English. You might consider having a staff person assist with the data collection. If they speak the language, this would be a real asset.

Work with community to determine who will collect and analyze the data.
Comments and suggestions:
• Partner with a community member to help gather the data
• Use a combination of community members and external evaluators to collect the data
Ensure that your data collection methods maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Comments and suggestions:
• When gathering sensitive information, it is important to hire an appropriate evaluator.
• Clean data and aggregate responses.
• Prepare community ahead of time and build trust. Provide reassurance that data is being collected for evaluation purposes only and no identifying information will be used.
• Establish a coding system for analyzing the data.
• Collect surveys in a drop-off box in an envelope with no names or personal identifiers on it.
• If the interview is being done in person, ensure there is privacy.

Create documents that will help the organization/program get more funding support in the future.

REPORTING

Reporting results, successes and recommendations can offer benefits to the program, the community and the evaluation literature.

Comments and suggestions:
Overall benefits of reports
• Having an opportunity to share learnings with other communities.
• Gaining more participants for future programs.
• Sharing results can serve as baseline for next evaluation.
• Sharing results can also contribute to literature.
• Funders may feel more confident about the program’s effectiveness and sustainability.
• Sharing results can provide a framework/model and become a resource for other communities.

Opportunities to develop program documentation
• Meet with the program evaluation users at the beginning of the evaluation process and record information on how they have developed and delivered the program.
• Document stages of the program and keep information organized so as to make reporting and describing the program easier.
• Appoint a team member to be in charge of keeping records of all documents.

Opportunities to address evaluation successes and difficulties.
• If there was a lack of organizational support throughout the evaluation process, describe this in the final report.
• Have a section in the reporting template where there is an option to record successes and difficulties.

Opportunities for program improvement.
• Create an action plan to address recommendations that have resulted from the project.
Reporting is useful even when there are gaps in the literature.

Comments and suggestions:

- State that there are knowledge gaps in the report if there is not baseline information.
- New programs may have gaps in data and literature; focus on celebrating programs that are the first of their kind.
- Disseminate results so that the report can contribute to the literature base and fill the knowledge gaps.

Sharing the results from your program evaluation can be accomplished many ways.

Comments and suggestions:

- Hire or enlist someone in the community to go door-to-door to deliver the results.
- Showcase positive results at conferences and regional meetings.
- Design a celebration of the service they provided and document/video tape the celebration.
- Share what was unsuccessful as well as what was successful.
- Share information with evaluation users as part of communication process.
- Work with community champions or leaders to decide how to share the evaluation findings with other community members.
- Develop timelines for when and how information should be shared.
- Discuss a dissemination plan with the stakeholders and collaborate in disseminating the information. Invite the stakeholders to review the information before publishing or disseminating.
- Share the program evaluation results with the community before disseminating the results outside of the community, so that stakeholders would see their successes as a tool for others to follow.

They can share real, documented, measured results with the community itself so that they might have more participants in future and a sense of hope and positive change in the community.
EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING

When conducting program evaluations, it is important to build evaluation capacity. A decision about where to focus the capacity development efforts needs to be made.

Comments and suggestions:
• Consider assigning someone from the project to research evaluation methodologies.
• Consider capacity development for leaders and managers of the programs in an effort to sustain the capacity in that particular community/program.

Providing training and workshops on program evaluation can be helpful.

Comments and suggestions:
• Consider bringing in an external evaluator to conduct an initial training session: even if funding allows for only one visit.
• Consider creative ways to provide training, such as classes on the Internet.
• You can get telephone coaching, particularly on interpreting jargon and how to practice evaluation approaches in the community. Training sessions should be interactive, experiential, and should focus on what to measure and how to measure it.
• Training should also explain the how, why and purpose of program evaluation is.

Capacity can be built through mentorship opportunities.

Comments and suggestions:
• Consider connecting with universities and colleges as an opportunity for mentoring. This way, communities and programs could get help from a college/university student who could assist in the program evaluation process in exchange for course credit or co-publishing the results.
• Use email for support and guidance, since the Internet is more widely accessible. Consider creating an email helpline with your mentor for support.
• An evaluator mentor could provide mentoring to local leader champions who could take the lead on the program evaluation and provide evaluation support with future programs.

Building capacity through training should also include education about the benefits of program evaluation.
Comments and suggestions:
• During training, highlight the benefits of evaluating your program and why it is important.
• Look for help or support through local governments and the funders, who may also offer education about
  the benefits, consequences and value of evaluations.

It is essential to have opportunities to apply the program evaluation knowledge that has been learned
during training.

Comments and suggestions:
• Applying knowledge is key to building program evaluation capacity. The program evaluation team should
  provide opportunities for the trainees to apply what they have learned.
• Training could be delivered over time and in modules, which gives participants the opportunity to apply
  what they have learned.

SUMMARY OF KEY EVALUATION THEMES
Although there were eight different evaluation scenarios presented to respondents and many different
suggestions, at a higher level there was notable consistency in the responses, regardless of the evaluation
challenge. A number of overarching themes emerged from respondents’ suggestions. These themes
included:
• The need for the program evaluation to be culturally sensitive
• The use of a participatory evaluation approach
• The use of the principles of community-based research
• The need to ensure that the evaluation has respectful relationship building
• The importance of including a community context

These themes may be seen as important guiding principles for conducting evaluations in northern, rural and
Aboriginal communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
We would like to acknowledge the generous feedback from respondents across Canada who contributed
their valuable knowledge to this report. It was a privilege to be able to work and correspond with these
respondents. We were humbled by their generous support and knowledge sharing.

We wish to acknowledge the professional services provided by
Alison Osborne, of Monkey Hill Health Communications Inc.
and Stringbean Design.
...
We would like to invite you to participate in our Solutions to Evaluation Challenges Survey. We have been hired by CAPTURE (www.thecaptureproject.ca) to gather information on barriers and solutions to program evaluation in northern, remote and Aboriginal communities.

This survey is designed to have you think about solutions to some challenges. Information from this survey will help the Capture project design a relevant web-based platform of support for program evaluations in northern, rural and Aboriginal communities.

We are looking for individuals who have:
* experience in evaluation (as a stakeholder, participant, or evaluator)
* experience working with northern, rural and Aboriginal communities.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. To thank you for your time, your name will be entered into a draw for prizes, with a grand prize given to the person who refers the most participants to complete our survey!!

** The grand prize is a 16 gb iPad (for completing the survey and the most referrals)
** Other prizes include either an iPod Nano, e-reader or gift cards.

This survey is for program evaluation knowledge gathering purposes only. All of your responses will be confidential and anonymous.

We want to thank you in advance for your time and valuable feedback!
SOLUTIONS TO EVALUATION CHALLENGES SURVEY

1. Do you agree to participate? (yes/no)

2. What is the name of your organization ________________________________

3. In which of the following health promotion and chronic disease prevention activities are you engaged (check all that apply)
   a) Program evaluation
   b) Policy planning and/or policy evaluation
   c) Research
   d) Education
   e) Community-based program planning or delivery
   f) Other
   Please specify ________________________________

4. In which province or territory do you work [all listed]

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Overall, how would you rate your organization’s capacity to meet its evaluation needs (please select one)
   a) Little or no experience
   b) Some experience in evaluation
   c) Experience designing and/or conducting evaluations
   d) Extensive experience in leading program evaluations

6. What are the top two barriers or challenges to conducting program evaluation?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
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   ________________________________________________________________
The next few questions are about some challenges you could encounter in an evaluation. If you have encountered these types of challenges, we would like to hear about solutions you have used. If you haven’t encountered these types of challenges, we would like to hear your suggestions on how you would deal with it.

a) Program A is thinking about conducting a program evaluation in the North with a limited budget and little experience doing program evaluation. They are at a loss of what to do (remember – they are far from urban cities, they have little experience, and have a limited budget). What steps would you recommend they take to start the evaluation?

b) Program B is in the North in a rural and remote area. The evaluators wish to collect information from various Aboriginal communities. However resources are lacking in many of the communities, for example only dial up internet is available, and phone connectivity is poor. The evaluators want to connect with surrounding communities, what solutions do you have to connect with these past participants?

c) Program C, located in rural North West Territories, has been informed by their funding agency that in order to maintain funding they need to prove that their services are effective and that the program is worthwhile. Program C thinks that their program is great and that they do not need a “researcher” to tell them what they already know. They are unhappy that they have to undergo a program evaluation and are only complying because they would like their program to continue. How do you get Program C on board and excited about the benefits of an evaluation?

d) Organization D wants to evaluate a program in the northern regions of Canada with Aboriginal communities. This program has been highly successful in Southern regions with a diverse population. The program evaluators of the programs in the South developed an evaluation plan with surveys that they want to share with Organization D. What would you recommend Organization D think about when they adapt the plan to make sure it is culturally sensitive and culturally safe?

e) Program E has hired an external evaluator and is midway through their program evaluation. The evaluator is collecting data but the evaluation has come to a standstill because: a) stakeholders and evaluators use different jargon in their work b) stakeholders have different expectations on how and when to communicate c) poor communication because there is no leadership in supporting the program evaluation within the organization. What steps would you take to address these three communication issues:

i. miscommunication or different communication style?

ii. lack of communication?

iii. no leadership in supporting the program evaluation?

f) Program F has been running a program for six months in a remote Aboriginal community. This is a small fly-in community with approximately 750 members. Program F has recently hired an external evaluator to initiate the process. Some participants have expressed concerns about the evaluation because of the community relationships (being able to identify community members based on their evaluation responses). What steps would you take to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in this small community?
g) Program G has been in operation for two years in a rural Aboriginal community which adheres to the OCAP principles (self-determination and self-governance to research, statistics and information including ownership, control, access, and possession). An external evaluator was hired for the program. While the community feels the data belongs to the program, the funders and evaluators want to disseminate the results outside of the community. What steps would you take to respect the OCAP principles?

h) Program H is the first intervention of its kind to be conducted in a small northern community. An external evaluator has been hired to evaluate the program; however there is very limited literature on this type of intervention. Furthermore, there is no pre-program data (baseline data). How would you go about overcoming the challenge of no base-line information and limited literature?

8. Often there are challenges and barriers that programs face that others may not think of or did not consider as challenges. If you have faced or are facing challenges that have not been listed about, please share your experiences.

9. We hope you enjoyed thinking about creative solutions to some of the challenges that exist in program evaluations. Do you have any feedback about this survey?

10. How did you hear about this survey?

11. Please tell us your name and email address to be entered into the draw for the prizes. We will remove and delete all names and email addresses so your responses will be anonymous and confidential. This information is for prize draw purposes only.

Name

Email

We appreciate your contributions! The information will be very helpful in developing a relevant Capture Platform for evaluation support.
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