

Purpose

Interactive evaluations let you collect data in a more engaging way that integrates the evaluation into the program

Key Points

- Like with written surveys, be very clear about the questions and answers to choose from
- Use the social nature of the exercise to understand the ways social context (especially the presence of peers) can influence behavior
- Document the number of people who give each answer



What are interactive assessments?

Interactive assessments are a way of collecting data without using written surveys. They can be done in many different ways, including moving around the room, putting post-it notes on the wall, sorting cards, sticker polls, dropping answers in designated boxes, etc. to show one's answer

What can you learn from interactive assessments?

You learn much the same thing as you do from simple written survey questions. However, the advantages are:

- No written surveys are needed
- Participants may be more engaged
- It can be done in real time during a program, allowing the facilitator to tailor instruction to the audience

What is an example of an interactive assessment in evaluation?

Staff running a bystander empowerment program for middle school students knew from past experience that the students didn't take surveys seriously. They understood why, in light of all the written tests students take, they would be tired of paper-and-pencil assessments. So the staff wanted a more interactive approach to evaluation. They also wanted the evaluation to be a part of the program itself rather than something added on at the end.

They prepared questions ahead of time about different scenarios where a bystander intervention might be needed. For each scenario, they came up with four responses: (1) a direct and effective intervention, (2) an indirect and effective intervention, (3) a direct intervention that would actually make the situation worse or pose other problems, and (4) ignoring the situation. Instead of simply using these four labels, they came up with responses that were specific

to each scenario and had a volunteer who was artistic draw cartoons on newsprint to illustrate each response.

They used a pre-test/post-test design, but did so with real-time, interactive assessments where they had students move around the room to show their answers

Preparation

- Knowing that students would be giving answers publicly, the staff spent the first session of the program doing interactive activities to build trust and rapport among the group and to set a tone of respectful communication.

Pre-Test

- Before they introduced any activities or concepts about bystander interventions, they had students gather in a circle in the center of the room.
- The stack of newsprints containing the scenarios were posted at the front of the room. The stack of newsprints with the responses were posted in each of the four corners of the room.
- The facilitator described the first scenario and had students quietly think about what they might do. While students thought, the facilitator went around and revealed each of the answers by unveiling the newsprints in the four corners of the room.
- When all four answers were revealed, the facilitator asked the students to move to the picture that best matches what they would do.
- Then the facilitator had students move back to the center of the room, revealed the next question and responses, and repeated the procedure for 4 - 5 scenarios. Participants indicated their responses in silence.
- While the activity was taking place, the teacher recorded how many students stood in each corner of the room.
- At the end of the assessment, the facilitators led a discussion with students about why they made the choices they did, what it was like to make their choices and to have their peers see their answers. This led into an in-depth discussion about peer influences on our actions and was the springboard into talking about bystander roles and the power of bystander interventions. The teacher took notes on the discussion.

- Note: There is a possibility that students would be influenced by what their peers do in this exercise. That is why the facilitators took the time for the trust-building exercises during the prior session.
- Throughout the exercise, they repeatedly reminded students that there were no right or wrong answers and that we might do different things in different situations.
- The facilitators were comfortable with the possibility of peer influence during the exercise because, in reality, students will be in social situations when they have the opportunity to intervene as bystanders. Therefore, the facilitators thought their public choices during this activity were a better reflection of what they would really do, than an anonymous survey where they might be more likely to say what they would want to do.

Intervention

- During the remainder of the five-session curriculum, the facilitators would use what came out of the activity as a springboard into further discussion and as a reference point for students to reflect on their choices. This helped to make the discussions more concrete and to go in greater depth.

Post-Test

- During the last session, the facilitators repeated the pre-test assessment, using different but similar scenarios.
- Following the assessment, they talked about what it was like to do the activity and what students noticed in how their choices were similar to or different from the choices they made during the prior session. Again, notes were taken.

Data Analysis

- Following the completion of the five-session curriculum, the program staff compared the counts for the actions students would take. They were looking for an increase in direct and effective and indirect and effective interventions. They were looking for a decrease in direct but problematic interventions and ignoring the situation.
- They also reviewed the notes on students' responses to see if there were any common themes that would help them better understand students' motivations and decision making.

Using the Findings

- Program staff noticed that there were significant increases in effective interventions and significant decreases in problematic and no interventions. They shared this information with the school to continue fostering support for the program.
- They noticed that there were a lot more direct and effective actions chosen than indirect and effective interventions. In thinking about this, they realized that during the curriculum they spent a lot more time talking about direct interventions. They wanted to make sure that students also valued indirect interventions because sometimes those are the safest and the ones students are more likely to use because they involve less confrontation. So they made adjustments to the activities and discussions to make sure they gave equal time to both direct and indirect interventions.
- They also used the findings, along with testimonials from the middle school teachers, to approach a school in the neighboring district about adopting the program. They found that illustrating the changes with a simple graph got people interested, but it was the quotes from the students and teacher testimonials that sold them on wanting to bring the program to their school.