



CCN Fact Sheet: Evaluation

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is the process of measuring the work of a research project. The type of project determines the type of evaluation that is needed. For example, a project with a goal of enrolling women in a breast cancer education class can evaluate their work by counting the number of women enrolled in the class before and after their work began. If the project includes both enrolling women and leading the education class, then researchers could ask women to complete a survey testing their breast cancer knowledge before and after the class begins. In the best cases, researchers also ask the same questions to a group of people who were not involved in the research (i.e., women who did not attend the breast cancer class might be given the same survey as women in the class.)

Why do we need to evaluate?

Evaluation is important in public health research because it is a way to show that research is working. This gives grantees and funders a way to show how the money put into grants is being used and the impact that it makes. It is important to think about project evaluation from the beginning of a project to make things easier at the end of the project.

How do we plan for evaluation?

Think about how you'd like to report your progress when you start writing the grant: what is the best way to show that your work is making a difference? Make sure to find ways to measure what the population characteristics were before you started your work so that you can show the difference your program makes. Keep good records of everything you do and use the same format for reporting data every time you record information.

How do we show our progress?

CCN Core Staff can help you plan and conduct your project evaluation. Entering the data into a table or figure is helpful, but not always possible. CCN staff will help you design the best evaluation plan for your project.