

Evaluation Data Collection Tools

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Surveys/ Questionnaires	Quickly and easily gets lots of information from lots of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive to administer • Easy to compare and analyze • Can administer to many people • Can get lots of data • Respondents can complete anonymously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording can bias client's responses • Impersonal • Might not get careful feedback • Sampling bias • Doesn't get full story
Secondary Data Review	Want impression of how program operates. Gather data from the review of applications, finances, activity records, and products, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get comprehensive and historical information • Doesn't interrupt program or participants • Information already exists • Few biases about information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often takes a lot of time • Information may be incomplete • Data restricted to what already exists
Focus groups	Explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly and reliably get common impressions • Efficient way to get range and depth of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to analyze responses • Need good facilitator • Difficult to schedule
Interviews	Want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences or learn more about their answers to surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get full range and depth of information • Develops relationship with client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Difficult to analyze and compare • Costly • Interviewer can bias client's responses
Observation	Gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View operations of a program as they are actually occurring • Can adapt to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to interpret seen behaviors • Can influence behaviors of program participants • Costly
Document Review	Want impression of how program operates. Gather data from the review of applications, activity records, and products, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't interrupt program or participants • Information already exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often takes a lot of time • Information may be incomplete • Data restricted to what already exists

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