Use and Share Lessons

The ultimate purpose of program evaluation is to use the information to improve programs. Now that you have analyzed your data, you want to use the evaluation results to demonstrate the effectiveness of your health workforce training program, identify ways to improve the program, modify program planning, demonstrate accountability, and justify funding.

Follow these five steps to ensure that you are using your program data results effectively and communicating the lessons.

STEP 1: Make recommendations

Recommendations are actions that should be considered in response to an evaluation. Your recommendations will depend on the audience and the purpose of the health workforce training evaluation. If you have identified and engaged key audiences as outlined in Module 1, you will maximize the chances that your recommendations will be relevant and useful to them.

STEP 2: Prepare recommendations

Thoughtful preparation of recommendations can help:

- Strengthen your ability to translate new knowledge about your health workforce training program into appropriate action.
- Discuss how potential findings might affect decision making of the health workforce training program.
- Explore positive and negative implications of potential results and identify different options for program improvement.

STEP 3: Gather feedback

Gathering feedback of evaluation findings will create an atmosphere of trust among all your stakeholders. At the early stages in your evaluation, gathering and sharing feedback will keep everyone informed about how the program is being implemented and how the evaluation is going. As the evaluation progresses and preliminary results become available, sharing feedback will ensure

Uses of program evaluation data

- Describe program performance and outcomes.
- Compare outcomes to previous years.
- Compare actual outcomes with intended outcomes.
- Support realistic goal forming in the future.
- Support program planning in the future.
- Focus attention on important issues.

Application to health workforce training programs

- Better engage faculty in the program.
- Justify use of resources to administration.
- Engage and expand clinical preceptors and sites.
- Grant or research opportunities.
- Educate students on data use

that all stakeholders can comment on evaluation decisions. Valuable feedback can be obtained by holding discussions and routinely sharing interim findings, provisional interpretations, and draft reports. Recommendations may be shared in preliminary fashion and revised based on stakeholder feedback.

STEP 4: Follow-up

Follow-up refers to the support users need after receiving evaluation results and beginning to reach and justify their conclusions. Active follow-up with your stakeholders can achieve the following:

- Remind users of the intended purposes of the health workforce training program evaluation.
- Help to prevent misuse of results by ensuring that evidence is applied to the intended questions, not extrapolated to new questions (unless appropriate).
- Prevent lessons from becoming lost or ignored in the process of making complex or political decisions.

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STEP 5: Disseminate results and lessons

Dissemination involves communicating the evaluation processes, results, and lessons to relevant audiences in a timely, unbiased, and consistent manner. You should tailor your report timing, style, tone, message source, vehicle, and format to your audiences.

Methods of getting the information to your audiences include:

- Mailings.
- Web sites.
- Community forums.
- Personal contacts.
- Listserves.
- Organizational newsletters.
- Meetings and conferences.
- Scholarly and professional publications.

Use the Communications Plan Worksheet listed in the resources section (example below) to help you identify your health workforce training audience and the most effective formats and channels for disseminating results to them.

If you develop a formal evaluation report to discuss your health workforce training evaluation findings, it must clearly, succinctly, and impartially communicate major components of the evaluation. The report should be written so that it is easy to understand and not lengthy or technical. You should also consider oral presentations tailored to various audiences.

TIP: Consider using a data dashboard as a way to effectively communicate evaluation results to leadership and your stakeholders. A great dashboard can showcase actionable information and focus a user's attention on the most important information on the page. This document provides information on how to develop an effective data dashboard.

Case example, by audience

Audience: health workforce training faculty
Purpose of evaluation: Assess mentorship program impact on trainee proficiency and skills to lead a population health quality improvement project.

Recommendation: Trainees want to be able to discuss population health quality improvement project results with interdisciplinary team. Include a facilitation skill module in next year's mentorship program.

Audience: Preceptor clinical sites
Purpose of evaluation: Assess mentorship program and trainee population health quality improvement project on clinical outcome of increased colorectal cancer screening.

Recommendation: Implement process improvements identified through trainee quality improvement project that demonstrated higher colorectal cancer screening rates.

Evaluation report outline

- Executive Summary
- Background and Purpose
  - *Program background and rationale*
  - *Program purpose and activities*
  - *Key evaluation questions*
- Evaluation Methods
  - *Design*
  - *Sampling procedures*
  - *Measures or indicators*
  - *Data collection procedures*
  - *Data processing procedures*
  - *Analysis*
- Results
- Discussion and Recommendations
- Limitations
- Conclusion

Example: Communication Plan Worksheet

I need to communicate to this AUDIENCE:	The FORMAT that would be most appropriate:	This CHANNEL would be most effective:
Faculty	*Short PowerPoint presentation*	*Spring faculty meeting*

Communication Plan Worksheet

I need to communicate to this AUDIENCE:	The FORMAT that would be most appropriate:	This CHANNEL would be most effective: