



Consumer and Community Participation Fact Sheet M12: Evaluation

What is the purpose of the evaluation?

The impact of consumer and community participation can be difficult to measure and quantify however evaluating consumer and community participation activities is fundamental to the principles of continuous quality improvement.

Evaluating participation activities can help to:

- Understand the effectiveness of the participation activities.
- Give people an opportunity to comment on their experiences.
- Make improvements to future activities.

What should be evaluated?

- ✓ Consumer and community participation activities in individual projects.
- ✓ Organisational engagement strategies - conduct an audit on what is currently happening across an organisation to be able to effectively evaluate the strategy.
- ✓ Consultations and forums.
- ✓ Training courses.

What is it not?

- ✗ Evaluating the performance of the consumers and/or community members involved in research teams.

What should be included?

Normally evaluations are conducted in questionnaire format. There are some basic questions which should be asked in any evaluation so that people's individual views are sought. Some questions may be specific to a particular part of the project.

Three basic questions that can be used for any evaluation:

- What worked well?
- What didn't work so well?
- What suggestions do you have to improve for the future?

Practical Considerations

- Questions that use a numbered scale are generally easier for respondents. On the other hand, questions that allow people to freely express themselves can give you more detailed answers and get more imaginative responses.
- Using anonymous evaluation surveys can allow people the opportunity to be more open about their experience. How will the evaluation be collected?
- Consider how the evaluation will be given to recipients. Will it be sent to them, handed out at a meeting or available electronically?
- If there are different groups involved at different stages of the research project, it may be best to send the evaluation forms at different stages, or adapt the evaluation forms for each group.
- Consider evaluating expectations of consumer and community participation at the beginning of the project and again at the end of the project.
- How will it be collected?

Reference: McKenzie A. Haines H. Consumer and Community Participation Fact Sheet M12: Evaluation, Revised (2014). These fact sheets are available for educational purposes. No alteration or adaptation of these materials may be made without obtaining permission of Anne McKenzie. Email Anne. McKenzie@uwa.edu.au

The Seniors Consumer Panel, researchers and health professionals involved in research on medication safety and chronic illness, at the University of Western Australia, completed an anonymous online survey to find out about their expectations about the participation activities.

"I feel we have made an impact". (Consumer)

"consumer participation... added so much value in a common sense way" (Researcher)

