Culturally Competent Evaluation in Tobacco Control Programs

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Workshop Objectives

Learning outcomes related to

- Recognize relevance and value-addedness of culture in evaluation and program intervention
- Improve understandings of challenges with diverse cultural groups
- Improve knowledge of resources and advice to respond to requests from projects serving priority populations
- Identify tools and strategies for assisting participants and agencies in becoming culturally responsive
- Role of light bulbs lift important theoretical and practical questions to fore
- Role of parking lots to capture nagging/emergent questions, issues
- Exercises designed to skill build evaluative assumptions, definitions, and practice elements
Warm up/Introductions

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- What experiences (cultural, professional, personal) do you bring to evaluation or program intervention work?
  - How were you introduced to evaluation?
  - What do you like (or not) about evaluation?
Illuminations (challenges, questions, insights)

Why now focus on culture in evaluation?

What definitions, perspectives, characteristics are foundational to our understandings of culture in evaluation?

How are your program goals important in the way you think about culture and evaluation?

What do your program goals say about your evaluation priorities and perspectives?

How might your program goals better reflect issues related to culture in evaluation?
STILL an opportune time for re-examining cultural context

- Flurry of evaluation discussion in conference meetings, periodicals, and special meetings, BUT:
- Limited understanding and consideration in evaluation mainstream by funders and evaluation staff
- Lack of courses and training opportunities that pay attention to cultural context, relevance, responsiveness, competence in evaluation
- Lack of understanding at project and program levels about how to integrate cultural responsive strategies
Challenges for understanding evaluation in cultural context

“What has frustrated me in the ways multicultural programs have been evaluated is that the people who do the evaluation generally do not understand the nature of multicultural work...The evaluators and their evaluations often miss the point of what the program is about and use inappropriate standards on which to interpret the program on which to make value judgments” (Stockdill, 1992:17)
And its far-reaching implications

- Cultural differences not simply surface variations in style, preference, behavior, BUT

- Fundamental differences how people experience social life, evaluate info, decide what is true, attribute causes to social phenomena, understand their place in the world

- Understanding at level of social structure
Problematizing notions of culture: from whence have we come?
Local,…

- Role of *primary inclusion* of participants:
  - “As Lincoln (1991) points out, most people who evaluate social programs know very little about the minority program participants’ world view, the appropriateness of program interventions in meeting their needs, or programs’ personal consequences for these clients” (Madison, 1992).
...international, and...

- Being careful to use one set of methodologies in one cultural context and apply to others:

- “...evaluators must exercise great caution in trying to apply the methodologies, models, and categories devised in and for the developed world in Third World countries...different views of reality and the nature of change lead to different assumptions about appropriate goals, treatment, and evaluation models” (Cuthbert, 1985).
...indigenous perspectives/practices of evaluation

- Re-naming evaluation and research activities
- "...Smith also describes an indigenous research agenda in which the very naming of the research agenda denotes self-determination...This suggests that as indigenous people move into evaluating their programs, they take charge of their own agenda; name their own evaluation processes; and use the methodologies that fit within their framing of place, community, values, and culture." (LaFrance, 2004)
Basic Tenets & Components...

- Social location of evaluator matters: lived experiences shape assumptions and frames of reference in evaluation process

- Evaluators play roles in furthering social change and justice: we are “more than technicians” but have duty to recognize power relations, challenge systems of inequity
...for Multicultural and Culturally Competent Evaluation

- Avoiding ethnocentrism means embracing multiple cultural perspectives
- Culture is central to the evaluation process
- Culturally and ethnically diverse communities have contributions to make in redefining field of evaluation

(Hopson, 2003)
Culture

the way of life of a group of people, the complex of shared concepts and patterns of learned behavior that are handed down from one generation to the next through the means of language and imitation.

(Barnouw, 1985)

the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion

(Nieto, 1999)
Contextual Diversity

- Demographic dimensions
  - Race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation

- Sociopolitical dimensions
  - Power, economy, living situation, class

- Contextual dimensions specific to culture

(SenGupta, Hopson & Thompson-Robinson, 2004)
Characteristics: Culture

- Culture is dynamic.
- Culture is multifaceted.
- Culture is embedded in context.
- Culture is influenced by social, economic, and political factors.
- Culture is created and socially constructed.
- Culture is learned.
- Culture is dialectal.

(Nieto, 1999)
Cultural Locations

Culture may be considered within the characteristics of the

- Person
- Persons in interaction
- Program, organization or affiliative group
- Community, locality or tribe
- Society
- Global position
Perspectives: Culture

Culture encompasses both majority and minority perspectives.

Terms used to mark cultural identifications include:

Race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, social class, geographic location, economy, living situation, education
Cultural Competence

A set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs, and to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing focused interventions, communications and other supports.

(Orlandi, 1992)
Evaluation and Culture

- All evaluation standards, guidelines or frameworks are culturally saturated—imbued with both implicit and explicit cultural assumptions.

- Cultural competence involves identifying culturally imbedded assumptions, understanding one’s own cultural position, and doing evaluation that is multiculturally valid.
Small/Large Group Exercise, More Illuminations

Program goals and focus on culture

What do your program goals say about your evaluation priorities and perspectives?

How might your program goals better reflect issues related to culture in evaluation?
  - Demographic, sociopolitical, contextual dimensions?
  - Characteristics, locations, perspectives?

How do we think about the relevance of culture in all stages of evaluation for those in public health, education, and other helping professions/social services?
Scenario: Dialogue for Diversity and Social Change (DDSC)

- What elements of culture, at what levels, seem salient to this scenario?
- How would you prepare for the evaluation, engage stakeholders, state the purpose(s) of your evaluation?
- What questions, design, and instrumentation issues would drive your evaluation process?
- How would you collect, analyze, and disseminate/use results?
Culturally Responsive Evaluation

- Takes into account the culture of the program that is being evaluated
- Describes and explains the context of the program being evaluated
- Considers the culture of participants as an important factor
- Rejects the notion that assessments must be culture-free to be unbiased
- Honors the cultural context in which an evaluation takes place

(Frierson, Hood & Hughes, 2002)
(Doing) Culturally Responsive Evaluation

Step 1: Prepare for the evaluation.
- Step 2: Engage stakeholders.
- Step 3: Identify the purpose of the evaluation.
- Step 4: Frame the right questions.
- Step 5: Design the evaluation.
- Step 6: Select and adapt instrumentation.
- Step 7: Collect the data.
- Step 8: Analyze the data.
- Step 9: Disseminate and use the results.

(Frierson, Hood & Hughes, 2002)
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Cultural Responsive Evaluation

Cultural Relevance
Prepare for the Evaluation

- Examine the sociocultural context of the evaluand, including
  - History
  - Community
  - Intersecting cultural identifications

- Assemble an evaluation team whose collective lived experience is appropriate to the context of the evaluand.
Engage Stakeholders

- Develop a stakeholder group representative of the population served by program.
- Seek to include direct and indirect consumers.
- Pay attention to distributions of power.
- Include multiple voices.
Identify Purpose of Evaluation

- How well is the program connecting with its intended consumers?
  - Is the program operating in ways that are respectful of cultural context?
  - Are program resources equitably distributed?
  - Who is benefiting from the program, and are these benefits equitably distributed?
  - What environmental factors must be included to understand outcomes correctly?
Frame the Right Questions

- Include questions of relevance to significant stakeholders.
- Determine what will be accepted as evidence in seeking answers to the questions.
- Examine whose voices are heard in the choice of questions and evidence.
- Is the lived experience of stakeholders reflected in these choices?
Design the Evaluation

- Build design appropriate to both evaluation questions and cultural context.
- Seek culturally appropriate methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Try to collect data at multiple points in time, extending the time frame of the evaluation as needed.
- Construct control or comparison groups in ways that respect cultural context and values.
Select & Adapt Instrumentation

- Establish reliability and validity of instruments for the local population.
- Norms must be appropriate to the group(s) involved in the program.
- Language and content of instruments should be culturally sensitive.
- Adapt instruments as needed and conduct additional validation studies.
Collect the Data

- Procedures used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data must be responsive to cultural context.

- Nonverbal as well as verbal communications provide qualitative data.

- Careful training of data collectors in both technical procedures and culture is key.

- Shared lived experience provides optimal grounding for culturally-responsive data collection.
Analyze the Data

- Cultural context is a necessary component of accurate interpretation.
- Disaggregate data to examine diversity within groups.
- Examine outliers, especially successful ones.
- A cultural interpreter may be needed to capture nuances of meaning.
- Stakeholder review panels can assist in accurate interpretation.
Disseminate & Use the Results

- Cultural responsiveness increases both the truthfulness and utility of the results.
- Communication mechanisms must be culturally responsive.
- Inform a wide range of stakeholders.
- Make use consistent with the purpose of the evaluation.
- Consider community benefit
Postscript

- All evaluative understandings, judgments, standards, and guidelines are grounded in culture.
- Culture is relevant, if not central, to all aspects of the evaluation process.
- Evaluators must reflect on their own cultural positions = social location matters
- Evaluation is art and science = beyond technicians
References


References

