

MONITORING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION
GUIDEBOOK

Table of Contents

Guidebook Purpose And Summary	4
How to use this Guidebook	4
Chapter 1: An Introduction	5
<i>Section 1: Monitoring</i>	5
<i>Section 2: Research</i>	6
<i>Section 3: Evaluation</i>	7
Similarities and differences between monitoring, research, and evaluation.....	8
<i>Section 4: Participatory Approaches</i>	9
Chapter 2: Some Fundamentals Of Research	10
<i>Section 1: IRB</i>	10
External IRBs.....	11
Internal IRBs	11
<i>Section 2: Human Subjects Training</i>	11
<i>Section 3: An Overview Of Publicly Available Data</i>	12
Crime data	12
Social explorer	12
<i>Section 4: Some Basics On How To Do Research</i>	13
Study designs.....	13
Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods.....	14
Sampling methods: Random vs non-random sampling.....	15
Experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research	16
<i>A Research Design Decision Tree</i>	18
Chapter 3: An Overview Of Evaluation	19
<i>Section 1: Evaluation Process</i>	19
<i>Section 2: Types Of Evaluation Practice And Theories</i>	20
<i>Section 3: Needs Assessment</i>	23
<i>Section 4: How To Write An Evaluation Plan</i>	23
Chapter 4: An Overview Of Participatory Action Research	25

<i>Section 1: PAR Is More Than Just A Method</i>	25
<i>Section 2: How To Do PAR</i>	26
Chapter 5: Taking Action	28
<i>Section 1: Data Utilization</i>	28
Strategies for data utilization	29
<i>Section 2: Making Action Plans</i>	29
Appendix A: Data Utilization Handout	31
Gantt Chart Template	32
Appendix B: Crime data summary	33
Endnotes	36

GUIDEBOOK PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this guidebook is to serve as a resource and reference guide for all Cure Violence Global (CVG) staff who are interested or engaged in monitoring, research, and evaluation. CVG is an organization that is committed to giving staff the power and tools needed to create change and build safer, less violent communities. As such, this guidebook offers tools, summaries, and strategies to give all CVG staff, regardless of level of training or education, the information required to make informed decisions relating to monitoring, research, and evaluation.

- ✓ [Chapter 1](#) provides an introduction of **monitoring, research, and evaluation**, including their similarities, differences, and the application of each tool. This section also introduces an overview of **participatory approaches** for each.
- ✓ [Chapter 2](#) overviews some of the **fundamentals of research**, specifically focusing on the need for an institutional review board (IRB), human subjects training, how to access and utilize publicly available data, and some basics about designing a research study.
- ✓ [Chapter 3](#) takes a deeper dive into **evaluation**, including a summary of the evaluation process, different evaluation types and theories, and an introduction to needs assessment. This chapter also includes an overview of how to write an evaluation plan.
- ✓ [Chapter 4](#) more explicitly focuses on **Participatory Action Research (PAR)**, why it is so important, and details some basic steps for how to conduct PAR.
- ✓ [Chapter 5](#) focuses on **taking action**, including special sections on data utilization and action planning, why each is essential, and some strategies to increase these practices.
- ✓ [Appendices](#) are included for handouts, a crime data summary, and endnotes.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

Embedded links are provided throughout the Guidebook that lead to more content.

- ✓ Full links are listed in the endnotes section of [Appendix B](#).

This guidebook pulls heavily from the [Community Toolbox!](#)

- ✓ This is a fantastic, free resource developed by the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas.
- ✓ It covers a variety of information relevant to community-based interventions, research, advocacy, and more. It offers toolkits, PowerPoints, and case examples of many things relating to monitoring, research, and evaluation.
- ✓ The Community Toolbox is available in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Farsi at the time of this writing.

This Guidebook was prepared by Andrea DaViera who can be contacted at adavie6@uic.edu to address any questions.

CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION



We often hear the words “monitoring,” “research,” and “evaluation” used interchangeably. Funding agencies and federal and local partners often want to see that we do some or all of these activities in our work, and the language that these partners and agencies may use may add to the confusion. This chapter details a basic description of each to clarify language and offer an understanding of how each tool is used and for what purpose. This description draws attention to where there is overlap, and

additionally offers descriptions for how each tool can be used to answer different types of questions.

SECTION 1: MONITORING

Monitoring can be defined as routine, on-going tracking of data about a program, intervention, or policy. Data can be defined as the raw numbers, words, or facts, about something. When this data is analyzed or summarized in some way, we can refer to it as information¹.

Why do monitoring?

- ✓ The purpose of monitoring is to simply answer the question, “What is currently happening?”
- ✓ Ideally, monitoring follows a routine, standardized process where data is collected and analyzed or summarized to provide information for program accountability and/or program management.
- ✓ One of the common reasons why we must monitor is to demonstrate simply what we are doing. This information is often valuable to communicate to partners, funders, or others who need and want to be up-to-date on the program and organization.

What do I monitor?

- ✓ Since monitoring is commonly used to provide program accountability, sometimes you want to monitor things just to know that they happen.
- ✓ While monitoring is important, it’s not necessary to monitor everything, as doing so may increase human, temporal, and financial burdens on the organization.

What is an example of monitoring at CVG?

- ✓ A great example of monitoring at CVG includes the weekly site reports which detail “what is happening” at each CVG intervention site.
- ✓ These reports include sections to understand information about the site itself (i.e., the number of violent incidents), the staff (such as the amount of hours they work in the community), violent conflict mediations (such as how many mediations were conducted and their status), and participants (including risk level and contact attempts).
- ✓ These site reports are conducted weekly at each site to offer an on-going understanding of how the site is conducting the intervention and the immediate outcomes of those activities.

Learn more about how, what, and why to monitor [here](#)!

SECTION 2: RESEARCH

Research can have many definitions, but for the purpose of the work at CVG, research can be defined as using scientific methods to understand something about a topic that we want to know more about. Doing research can look very different depending on what you want to learn and why you are doing it. One may want to use a variety of social science theories, frameworks, or methodologies in order to do research. Across all of the different ways that we can do research, there are some fundamentals - more of this will be elaborated on in [Chapter 2](#).

Why do research?

- ✓ Simply put, research is conducted to generate knowledge about something that you want to know more about.
- ✓ The purpose of generating this knowledge is to share it with others (from community members to academic researchers) to contribute and grow a knowledge-base about something.

What do I research?

- ✓ Research should always correspond to some specific kind of information that you want to know more about.
- ✓ A common thing that we might want to research is the context of CVG’s violence intervention programs. That is, before implementing a violence prevention intervention, CVG might want to know more about the locality of the proposed intervention site and therefore might conduct research to learn more about the violence that occurs in that space.

What is an example of research at CVG?

- ✓ One example of a research study that was conducted with CVG is a study completed by Roman, Klein, and Wolff (2018) entitled, "[Quasi-experimental designs for community-level public health violence reduction interventions: a case study in the challenges of selecting the counterfactual](#)."ⁱⁱⁱ
 - The purpose of this study was not to evaluate the CVG program, but to understand how to conduct complex statistical analyses required for either research or evaluation, therefore contributing to the knowledgebase.

SECTION 3: EVALUATION

Evaluation can be defined as a systematic process in which data is gathered for the purpose of understanding something about a program, intervention, or policy. Often working in tandem with monitoring, and using research methods, evaluation goes beyond just asking “what is happening” to ask other questions, such as “why is this happening?” and “were we successful?” There are numerous theories, frameworks, and approaches to evaluation – how you choose each should carefully reflect on the kind of evaluation question that you want to answer, the resources that you have available (including time, money, and person-power), and the purpose of the evaluation. (These concepts will be further detailed in [Chapter 3](#).)

Why do evaluation?

- ✓ There are many reasons why one might want to do an evaluation. The biggest, and likely most pressing reason why we choose to evaluate our programs is to know if what we are doing or have done is successful.
- ✓ Funding agencies will require that programs, policies, or interventions are evaluated in some way.

What do I evaluate?

- ✓ Interventions, programs, policies, and even whole organizations can be evaluated.
- ✓ What you choose to evaluate should always reflect a specific purpose. Most commonly, we want to know if our program achieved its goals, or conversely, we want to evaluate if the program was not successful (also known as an *outcome evaluation*).

What is an example of evaluation at CVG?

- ✓ CVG has to-date had several external evaluations, i.e., an external person or agency evaluated the program. These activities have resulted in several reports

that have demonstrated the success of the program and can be found on CVG’s website^{iv}.

- ✓ CVG also does a fantastic job at doing internal evaluations, building off of data obtained from monitoring and data collected explicitly for evaluation purposes.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MONITORING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

Clearly, there are similarities between monitoring, evaluation, and research – that’s part of the reason why these terms are often used interchangeably! The biggest similarity is that each tool takes data and analyzes or summarizes it in some way to answer some type of question. The biggest difference is in the types of questions that you can answer with each tool. See the table for a summary of this information.

	Monitoring	Research	Evaluation
Definition	Routine, on-going tracking of information about a program. Answers the question of “what is happening?”	Using scientific methods to systematically ask and answer questions about something that you want to know more about.	Systematically gathering data or information for the purpose of understanding something about a program, intervention, or policy.
Similarities: Each collect data/information through research methods			
Purpose	Increases program accountability; is used for program management	Contributes to knowledge about specific things, people, or circumstances.	Multiple purposes based on evaluation type, some of which include demonstrating if, why, or how programs and policies work as intended, improving or refining programs, or adapting programs to different contexts.
CVG examples	Site reports	Roman, Klein, and Wolff (2018).	John Jay Research and Evaluation Center – NYC Cure Evaluation

SECTION 4: PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

While often, monitoring, evaluation, and research is completed by trained staff or “experts,” it can also be completed by those who are most impacted by the program, intervention, or policy. That is, actual program participants can make decisions about what information is being collected, for what purpose, and how that information is used. These concepts will be elaborated in [Chapter 4](#), but for now, let’s consider how participatory approaches can be used for monitoring, evaluation, and research.

Participatory Monitoring:

- ✓ Participatory monitoring would allow those most affected by the program or policy, i.e., CVG’s participants, to make decisions about what data is monitored and how it is used.
- ✓ This can also include participants in the collection of the monitoring data as well.

Participatory Research:

- ✓ Participatory research (often called PAR, or participatory action research), transforms research participants into actual researchers and decision makers in the process. That is, the community of interest generates a research question that they want to answer and comes up with research methods to answer that question, often with the help of a “traditional” (i.e., academic or professional) researcher. This process is discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Participatory Evaluation:

- ✓ Participatory evaluation allows the program stakeholders, (i.e., participants and staff) the ability to make decisions about the evaluation process itself and carry it out.
- ✓ Participatory evaluation is its own theory and evaluation approach; as such, this will be further elaborated upon in [Chapter 3](#).

CHAPTER 2: SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF RESEARCH

Research in the social sciences is dynamic and can look like many different things. This chapter outlines some basics of research and offers some information on how CVG can do different things relating to research. First, we will clarify the need for an Institutional Review Board and go through different options to obtain one. Second, we introduce human subjects training and a creative approach to engage diverse research partners in the process. Then, this chapter reviews some main sources of relevant publicly available data and offers a guide for how to access them. Lastly, this chapter builds capacity for conducting research by introducing some basics about designing a research study.

SECTION 1: IRB

An **Institutional Review Board** (IRB) is a committee of individuals that reviews research activities before they are conducted to make sure that those activities follow ethical standards and federal regulations. In the United States, IRBs are regulated through the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Why do I need an IRB?

- ✓ All human subjects research requires IRB approval, with some exceptions (e.g., analyzing publicly available or existing data).
- ✓ IRBs are essential to ensure that the research we conduct is following federal laws and is in the best interest of our research communities.
- ✓ This [paper](#)^v covers a thorough review of the purpose and challenges associated with IRBs.

Important Things to Note!

This is when the distinction between research and evaluation becomes very important; evaluation does not need an IRB because the purpose of evaluation (gathering information about a program or policy to be used to refine, improve, or test programs) is different than the purpose of research (to share information with broader audiences). **As of the writing of this guidebook, CVG does not have an IRB and most work falls under the umbrella of evaluation.**

How do I know if I will need an IRB to review my work?

- ✓ Usually, when you are doing any kind of research that involves people, you will need an IRB.
- ✓ A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, ask the IRB if a review is needed.
- ✓ The OHRP has a number of [decision trees](#)^{vi} that can help you determine if what you are doing is research that requires an IRB approval.

- Note that OHRP has not yet updated these decision trees to reflect the Common Rule changes implemented in January '19; learn more about that change [here](#)^{vii}.

How do I get an IRB?

- ✓ Externally, such as partnering with a different organization or company, or
- ✓ Internally, developing CVG's own IRB. Each come with different costs, so information will be summarized into the different options.

EXTERNAL IRBS

There are two different ways to obtain an external IRB, including finding a commercial IRB venue (e.g., Western IRB, also known as WIRB) or partnering with an academic institution (e.g., University of Illinois at Chicago, UIC). If there is financial support, working with an external IRB venue might also be easiest for CVG – however, this option is quite expensive. Click the example PDFs below to see two different commercial IRB review services and associated fees. Note that these fee schedules reflect costs as of the creation of this guidebook.



Pearl IRB Fee Schedule_2020.pdf



WCG Fee Schedule 2020_Final.pdf

INTERNAL IRBS

It's also equally possible that CVG can develop and upkeep its own IRB; in fact, this may be the most sustainable option for CVG. Important to note, to create and maintain an IRB requires both a lot of work to meet required federal regulations and person-power to staff the committee. However, this process is cheaper, and many large non-profit organizations have their own internal IRB. To create an internal IRB, it must be registered with the OHRP. To learn how to apply to create an IRB, check out [this](#)^{viii} video developed by the OHRP.

SECTION 2: HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING

Human subjects training, also known as IRB training or ethics training, is a crucial step to conducting research safely and successfully. Often required by IRBs, the purpose of this training is to familiarize researchers with rules and laws regarding human subjects research. While a summary of these laws is beyond the scope of this guidebook, there is a fantastic, free tool that I recommend: **CIRTification**.

What is CIRTification?

- ✓ This is a community-orientated, free training for Human Subjects Research offered through UIC's Center for Clinical and Translational Science.
- ✓ This program was developed specifically for community researchers who may be less familiar with research methods or who are new to research.
- ✓ It's a step-by-step program to orient new researchers to the ethics of human subjects research and can satisfy IRB requirements for human subjects training.

Why CIRTification?

Often, community researchers (or those who have not been trained academically) have been frustrated with traditional human subjects training. This is because they sometimes use language not familiar or appropriate for community researchers. CIRTification gives a thorough review of...

- ✓ Standards and best practices for recruitment and informed consent
- ✓ Collecting and protecting data
- ✓ Handling challenges that may arise during participant interactions
- ✓ Reviews the role of the institutional review board in protecting the right and safety of research participants
- ✓ Includes a dictionary of research terms and a toolbox with resources related to human research protections

How do I get access to CIRTification?

It's **free**! And as of this writing, currently trainings and materials are available both in English and Spanish. Check it out [here](#)^{ix}!

SECTION 3: AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

Publicly available data is commonly used when conducting a variety of things related to research. There are a number of sources of publicly available data that could be helpful for CVG that might be good to use in research or evaluation later on.

CRIME DATA

Crime data is the most relevant publicly available data for CVG's research and evaluation needs. There are numerous ways to access crime data. See [Appendix B](#) includes a crime data summary for some of CVG's intervention sites.

SOCIAL EXPLORER

What is [Social Explorer](#)^x? Social explorer is essentially, a repertoire of publicly available data. From things like crime to cancer rates, Social Explorer allows users to easily access and visualize

data through charts, tables, and maps. Some data that might be of particular significance to CVG includes ...

- ✓ *United States (US) Decennial Census*: Gives information about population counts in the US for over 220 years.
- ✓ *American Community Surveys*: Gives detailed data about US population, demographic, and socioeconomic indicators, collected more frequently than the Decennial Census.
- ✓ *US Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics*: Gives detailed data about income dynamics in the US
- ✓ *World Development Indicators*: Collected by the World Bank, includes data on demographic and socioeconomic indicators for available countries.

Unfortunately, Social Explorer is not free however, **it is free for UIC students and faculty with a UIC institutional login**. Note that these data sources are still publicly available elsewhere; the purpose of Social Explorer is to have a user-friendly, consolidated source for a variety of data. Check out their [YouTube Channel](#)^{xi} for an overview of the data available and several tutorials.

SECTION 4: SOME BASICS ON HOW TO DO RESEARCH

Once you've gotten IRB approval, human subjects training, and access to data, you are ready to do research! But how do we "do" research and what that looks like might still need some clarification.

STUDY DESIGNS

When we talk about study designs, we are referring to how exactly we want to do research, such as what types of data that we collect and what we can do with that data. When you decide to start research, the first thing you want to do is to figure out your **research question**. How do you come up with a research question? Some strategies might include...

- ✓ Get creative! Creative thinking is one of the building blocks of scientific thinking.
- ✓ Observe what you want to do research about. Your own curiosity and insight into the topic will likely generate a great research question.
- ✓ Think about what types of data you have or want to collect. This will be further detailed below.
- ✓ Read as much as you can on the subject that you are interested in.
- ✓ Working through this [toolkit](#)^{xii} on Analyzing Problems and Goals might help you think of a research question

Important to note, **your research question should mirror the study design and data that you collect**. This is why it's really important to plan these things out before you start research.

There are a number of decisions that you need to make when designing a research study. See the [Research Design Decision Tree](#) at the end of this chapter for an overview – the following sections detail what you need to know to make each decision, starting with the types of data that you want to collect.

QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE, AND MIXED-METHODS

The first thing that you will want to decide is what types of data do you need to answer your research question.

Quantitative data is data that is represented by numbers.

- ✓ For example, the crime data previously described would be an example of quantitative data.
- ✓ Quantitative research generally answers questions like “does X affect Y?” Common ways that CVG might collect quantitative data is through surveys, questionnaires, and other publicly available data.
- ✓ How you “make sense” of quantitative data is through a variety of statistical analyses, such as [exploratory data analysis](#)^{xiii}.
- ✓ Benefits of quantitative data include that it is easier to collect more of it and it is more **generalizable**, i.e., you are more able to say that your results reflect the broader population of interest.
- ✓ Disadvantages of quantitative data is that the information that you get from it is less detailed than qualitative data and analyzing quantitative data may require specific statistical skills and computer software.

Qualitative data is data that is represented by words or images.

- ✓ This could include interviews, focus groups, and pictures.
- ✓ Qualitative research can answer questions like “how does X affect Y?” CVG might want to conduct interviews as a method of qualitative research.
- ✓ To learn how to analyze qualitative data, check out this [step-by-step guide](#)^{xiv}.
- ✓ Benefits of qualitative data include that it can provide very detailed information about what you are interested in exploring and gives you a better sense of another individuals reality.
- ✓ Disadvantages of qualitative data is that is can it is less generalizable than quantitative data, you usually collect less of it, and analyzing qualitative data can be prone to bias.

Mixed-Methods is when you use both a combination of quantitative and qualitative data – you don't have to just choose one type!

- ✓ Mixed-methods research can be very powerful, answering questions like “how and why does X affect Y?”
- ✓ CVG might want to use a survey to assess the amount of someone's exposure to violence and then conduct an interview to further understand how that impacted them.

SAMPLING METHODS: RANDOM VS NON-RANDOM SAMPLING

Once you decide on the types of data you want to collect, you should plan how you are going to get that data and from whom, i.e., the research sample. A research sample is a group of individuals that represent the broader population of interest. Here, population refers to the group of people that you want to do research with. The ways in which we determine who to collect data from is referred to as a sampling method.

Why do I need to have a sample? Why not just include everyone?

It is generally not feasible to collect data on an entire population. For example, a research study looking at the effects of CVG's intervention in a particular city can't collect data from every individual who lives in that city.

- ✓ In this example, the entire city is the population of interest and you would use one of the following sampling methods to determine your research sample.

There are two main types of sampling methods: Random and Non-Random Sampling, sometimes also known as Probability and Non-Probability Sampling.

Random Sampling (also known as Probability Sampling) tries to determine a research sample that mirrors the broader population as much as possible.

- ✓ This is when the research sample is chosen randomly (not haphazardly) from the broader population of interest.
- ✓ When we say “random” that doesn't mean that there was no thought put into the selection of individuals; it means that each member of the broader population has the same chance of being selected for the study.

Non-Random Sampling means that something other than random chance determines who is in the sample.

Convenience Sampling is when volunteers are asked to participate in the study, permitting that they fit the desired characteristics.

Snowball Sampling is used when the research population of interest is hard to get in contact with. Snowball sampling is when research participants use their own social networks to recruit others for the study. This is another non-random sample that lends itself particularly useful for participatory action research (more in *Chapter 4*).

Purposive Sampling is when you select participants that are particularly knowledgeable, experienced, or familiar with the research topic of interest. This is a non-random sample that is particularly well-suited for qualitative research.

Check out this [Guide to Sampling](#)^{xv} to learn more about sampling methods!

EXPERIMENTAL, QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL, AND NON-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

There are generally three branches of research designs, experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research. The biggest difference between each includes what you do with your independent variable and if or how you are comparing groups of people.

Wait - what is an independent variable?

An independent variable is the thing that you are able to measure to see how it is related to or influences the variable you are most interested in, the dependent variable.

- ✓ In the question, “*How does X affect Y?*” X is the independent variable, and Y is the dependent variable.

Experimental Research

- ✓ This is when are able to change or manipulate the independent variable and you use random assignment to compare two or more groups.
- ✓ The purpose of experimental research is to really understand causality, i.e., the how the dependent variable changes as a result of manipulating the independent variable.
- ✓ Often, experimental research occurs in well-controlled situations, such as in lab or clinic settings.
- ✓ This chapter on [Experimental Research](#)^{xvi} covers more information, check it out!

What’s random assignment?

Random assignment means that when comparing two or more groups of people, everyone has the same chance of being in either group.

- ✓ To illustrate what this means, say CVG wants to do an experiment to test for the effects of their violence intervention on violent behavior. CVG would use random assignment to compare two groups of people, those who participated in the intervention (referred to as the “*treatment group*”) and those who did not (referred to the “*control group*”). Before the intervention, CVG would use random assignment to select who is in the

treatment and control groups, and each individual would have the same chance at being in each group.

Note that it is not always possible, or even ethical, to conduct experimental research depending on your research topic and the research community.

- ✓ For example, a researcher who wants to understand how exposure to violence (the independent variable) is related to health outcomes (the dependent variable) among at-risk youth (the population of interest) cannot change the amount of violence that youth are exposed to.

This is where quasi- and non-experimental research comes into play.

Quasi-Experimental Research

- ✓ This is when are able to manipulate your independent variable, you want to compare groups, but do not use random assignment.
- ✓ The purpose of quasi-experimental research is similar to experimental in that it tries to understand causality, but you can't have as much confidence in your ability to do this because there could be other things that influence your study beyond your control.
- ✓ Quasi-experimental research is used often in different intervention research when random assignment is either not feasible or ethical.

Non-Experimental Research

- ✓ This is when you don't have random assignment nor are you able to manipulate the independent variable.
- ✓ Non-experimental research is sometimes called "observational research" because you are merely observing, and not changing or manipulating, the variables of interest.
- ✓ The purpose of non-experimental research is to understand or describe a phenomena.
- ✓ Check out this chapter on [Non-Experimental Research](#)^{xvii} here!

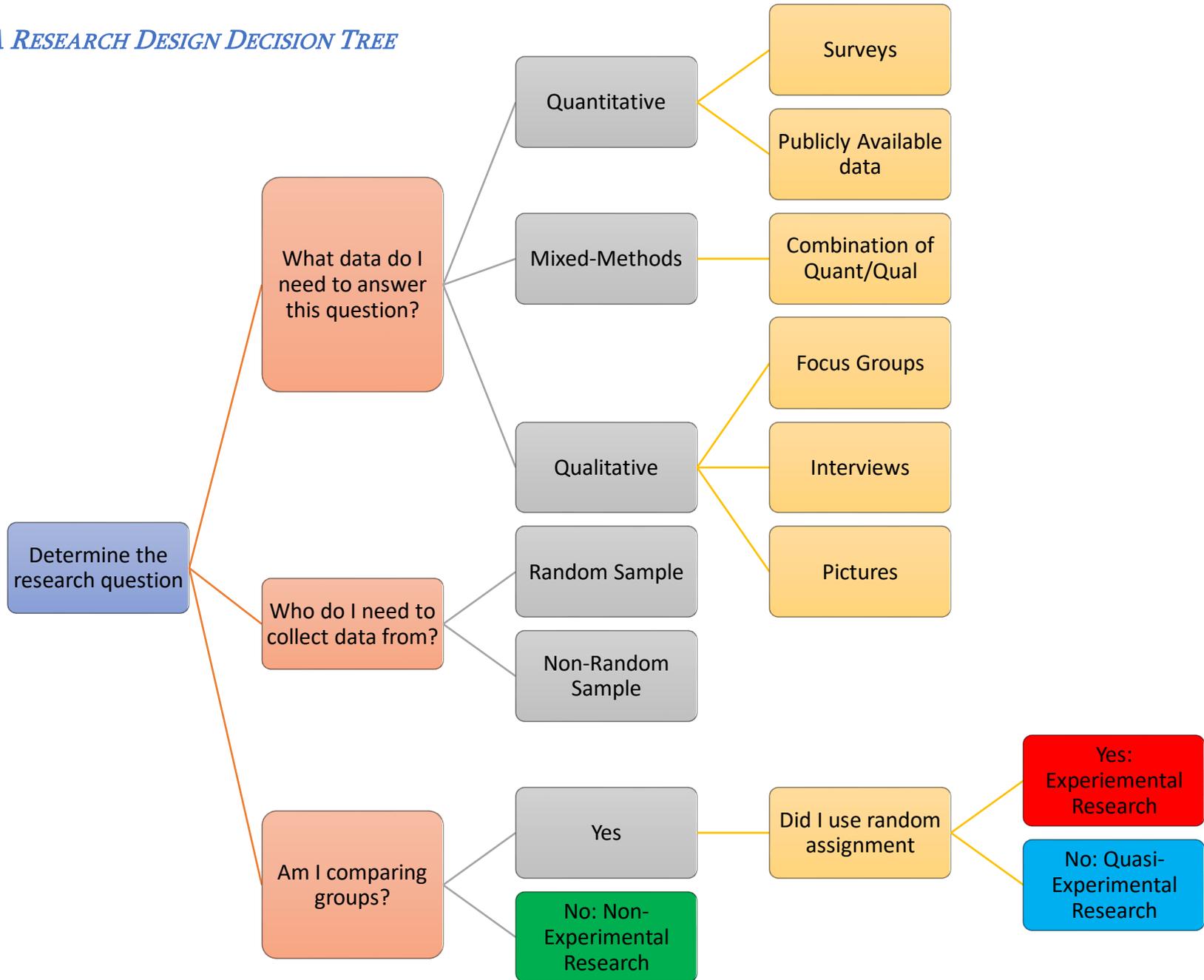
Note that each of these types of designs are used to different purposes. Remember, always align your research design with your research question.

Where does PAR fit into this?

PAR can use any of these designs, although it is more commonly used with non-experimental research. As we'll cover in Chapter 4, PAR is more than a methodology – It's a whole different approach to research.

This description of research designs is not exhaustive! **Check out this [guide](#)^{xviii} for more!**

A RESEARCH DESIGN DECISION TREE



CHAPTER 3: AN OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION



As previously introduced in [Chapter 1](#), evaluation is an approach that uses research methods to understand something about an intervention, program, or policy. Evaluation questions try to ask things like, “does a program work?” to “why did the program work?” Evaluation itself is its own field in the social sciences, and therefore comes with its own frameworks, theories, and applications. This chapter gives an overview of evaluation process, theories, a special section on needs assessment, and a guide on how

to write an evaluation plan.

Important to note!

Evaluation applies research methods to answer different types of questions. All the methods described in *Chapter 2* are applicable for evaluation!

SECTION 1: EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation can be best achieved through five cyclical phases.

Planning for an evaluation: Consider the following:

- ✓ Your resources (including time, person-power, financial means, knowledge of evaluation methods),
- ✓ The context of evaluation (where, who, when), and
- ✓ Why you need to do evaluation.

Designing an evaluation plan:

- ✓ Just like thinking through your research design, think about what types of data you need or want to collect and how you want to design your study. Think of this phase as creating a “road map” for how you will conduct evaluation.
- ✓ More on how to create an evaluation plan is described in [Section 4](#) of this chapter.

Collecting data and information:

- ✓ Once you designed your evaluation study, you can collect data and gather information.
- ✓ Bear in mind that sometimes challenges, complications, and unanticipated events might occur. It’s all a part of the evaluation process!

Analyzing and interpreting information:

- ✓ As discussed in [chapter 2](#), there are a few different ways to analyze data depending on what type of data you collect.
- ✓ Check out the Chapter on [Analyzing and Interpreting data](#)^{xix} from the Community Toolbox!

Taking action:

- ✓ Finally, it is time to take action – that is, you completed the evaluation, you have the results, what do you do with them?
- ✓ This can include action planning and data utilization, and these strategies will be further elaborated upon in [Chapter 5](#).
- ✓ After changes or actions are in place that respond to the evaluation findings, the process can inform the next evaluation and the cycle continues!

But how do I “do” evaluation?

Learn more about the evaluation process [here](#)^{xx} and check out this [Evaluation Toolkit](#)^{xxi} to plan for your own evaluation!

SECTION 2: TYPES OF EVALUATION PRACTICE AND THEORIES

When one is designing an evaluation, it is incredibly useful to consider the type of evaluation that you want to conduct in addition to an evaluation theory that can guide you. Thinking through these options allows you to have a framework to guide what types of questions you want to answer through evaluation, who might be involved and to what extent, and what to do after the evaluation.

It is common to design your evaluation plan with a specific type and theory in mind and how you choose your strategy should reflect why you are choosing to evaluate a program. Just like thinking of a good research study that mirrors one’s research question, one must also try to carefully align their evaluation study to a type of practice, theory, and purpose. See the Table below for a summary different evaluations types and theories, as well as helpful links to learn more about each.

Type or Theory	Name	Description	Purpose	Read more!
TYPES OF EVALUATION	Evaluability Assessment	Assess the extent that a program can be evaluated.	To understand if evaluation can be done feasibly and reliably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evaluability Assessment - BetterEvaluation^{xxii} ✓ Evaluability Assessments - CDC^{xxiii}
	Needs assessment	Determines the “need” for a program.	To understand if the program, intervention, or policy aligns with community needs.	✓ Needs Assessment-Community Toolbox Chapter ^{xxiv}
	Process Evaluation	Focuses on the processes and implementation of the program.	To understand how a program is functioning, i.e., “What are we doing?”	✓ Process-Outcome Evaluation Brief
	Outcome Evaluation	The focus of the evaluation is on the outcomes of the program.	To explore if a program is meeting its objectives, i.e., “Were we successful?”	✓ Process-Outcome Evaluation Brief ^{xxv}
	Cost-benefits analysis	Compares the costs associated with the program to the benefits yielded from the program.	To estimate the efficiency of programs (sometimes known as an Efficiency Assessment)	✓ Cost-Benefits Analysis – BetterEvaluation ^{xxvi}

Type or Theory	Name	Description	Purpose	Read more!
THEORIES OF EVALUATION	Theory-Driven Evaluation	Focuses on how or why programs lead to change or achieve outcomes.	To understand why something does or doesn't work, i.e., "Why is the program successful?"	✓ Evaluation Models, Approaches, and Designs^{xxvii}
	Participatory Evaluation	Partners with those most affected by the program (e.g., participants, staff) to design and carry out evaluation.	To build capacity and empower individuals through the evaluation process.	✓ Participatory Evaluation - BetterEvaluation^{xxviii} , ✓ Understanding and Practicing Participatory Evaluation^{xxix}
	Developmental Evaluation	Partners with program leaders, staff, and participants to use evaluation findings to adapt, refine, or change programs.	To develop continuous program improvements and feedback loops.	✓ Developmental Evaluation – BetterEvaluation^{xxx}
	Empowerment Evaluation	Focuses on giving stakeholders (e.g., participants, staff, management) the tools they need to evaluate their own programs.	To build sustainability in evaluation and programs while also improving self-determination.	✓ Empowerment Evaluation - BetterEvaluation^{xxxi}
	Utilization-Focused Evaluation	Focuses on involving all stakeholders in evaluation with emphasis on how they use the findings.	To maximize the use of evaluation process and findings.	✓ Utilization-Focused Evaluation - BetterEvaluation^{xxxii} ✓ Utilization-Focused Evaluation Checklist^{xxxiii}

SECTION 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

What is a **needs assessment** and why is it getting a special section in this guidebook? A needs assessment is usually something that you do before an intervention or evaluation to determine what the “need” of the community is. Trying to understand what this means and why we might want to do it might require a little clarification.

What is a “need?”

- ✓ A “need” is a community-specific issue; it’s something that the community really cares about or is concerned about.

Why do a needs assessment?

- ✓ Needs assessments accomplish exactly what you could expect – they tell you what the community needs. This is critical to know because how we work and conduct programs with communities should ideally address the needs that they have.
- ✓ If a program is misaligned with a community’s need, this might cause the program to fail or be less than successful.
- ✓ It’s not always easy to assume that we know what a community needs, particularly if we are not a part of that community.
- ✓ It may not be ethical to assume to know what a community needs, especially for communities that have been historically oppressed.

Aligning your goals and actions with community needs not only reveals a lot of important information, but also makes how you work with communities more successful. Read more [here^{xxxiv}](#)!

How do I do a needs assessment?

- ✓ The Community Toolbox features an excellent [Toolkit^{xxxv}](#) to help you prepare and think through the steps of conducting a needs assessment– check it out!

SECTION 4: HOW TO WRITE AN EVALUATION PLAN

An evaluation plan is just like what it sounds – it’s your own self-designed step by step guide on how you want to evaluate your program, intervention, or policy.

Why make an evaluation plan?

- ✓ When we set out to evaluate something, it can feel really daunting. Making an evaluation plan, your “roadmap,” makes things easier.
- ✓ Having a plan helps you know what to do, when, how, and who to involve.
- ✓ Check out this step-by-step [guide^{xxxvi}](#) on how to make an evaluation plan.

What do I need to think about when making an evaluation plan?

A good place to start is thinking through the following questions:

Who?	Who needs to be involved to conduct the evaluation?
	Who needs to be involved to collect the data?
	Who will be impacted by this evaluation?
What?	What are we evaluating?
	What resources do I need to conduct the evaluation?
	What do I do after the evaluation?
	What about this local context is important to know when doing evaluation?
Why?	Why are we evaluating?
When?	When do activities need to happen (what is the timeline)?
	When should the evaluation be complete?
Where?	Where are we conducting evaluation activities and what about this setting is important to know?

CHAPTER 4: AN OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory action research (PAR) is social justice orientated approach to thinking about social problems and how to address them through research itself. Like described in [Chapter 1](#), PAR doesn't just do research *on* communities, but it does research *with* communities by involving those most impacted by the issue as key players in the monitoring, research, or evaluation process.

SECTION 1: PAR IS MORE THAN JUST A METHOD

What is PAR?

- ✓ PAR partners together key players in the communities most affected by the issue to collaboratively design and carry out research activities.
- ✓ PAR generally involves not only systematically addressing a key issue through collaborative research, but also incorporates direct actions as a result of that process.
- ✓ Check out this [video^{xxxvii}](#) for a wonderful description of PAR and this [video^{xxxviii}](#) to see a powerful example of what PAR can do.

What is the difference between PAR and traditional research?

- ✓ Traditional research has much less involvement and contact with the research community or participants.
- ✓ The purpose of research is different than the purpose of PAR; while research is conducted for the purpose of knowledge generation, PAR is conducted to do that but also for the purpose of addressing important social issues.

Different types of PAR

Depending on who you partner with, there are different types of PAR so you might also hear these phrases.

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is when you conduct PAR with any community, broadly defined. This can include collaborating with any community or group of people, such as a neighborhood-based organization, a specific social group (e.g., people with disabilities), a professional group (nurses), or whomever you partner with!

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) is specifically when you partner and collaborate with young people, adolescents, or children. Doing so often introduces a lot of other things to consider (e.g., difference in status and power due to age) which is why YPAR is considered its own branch of PAR.

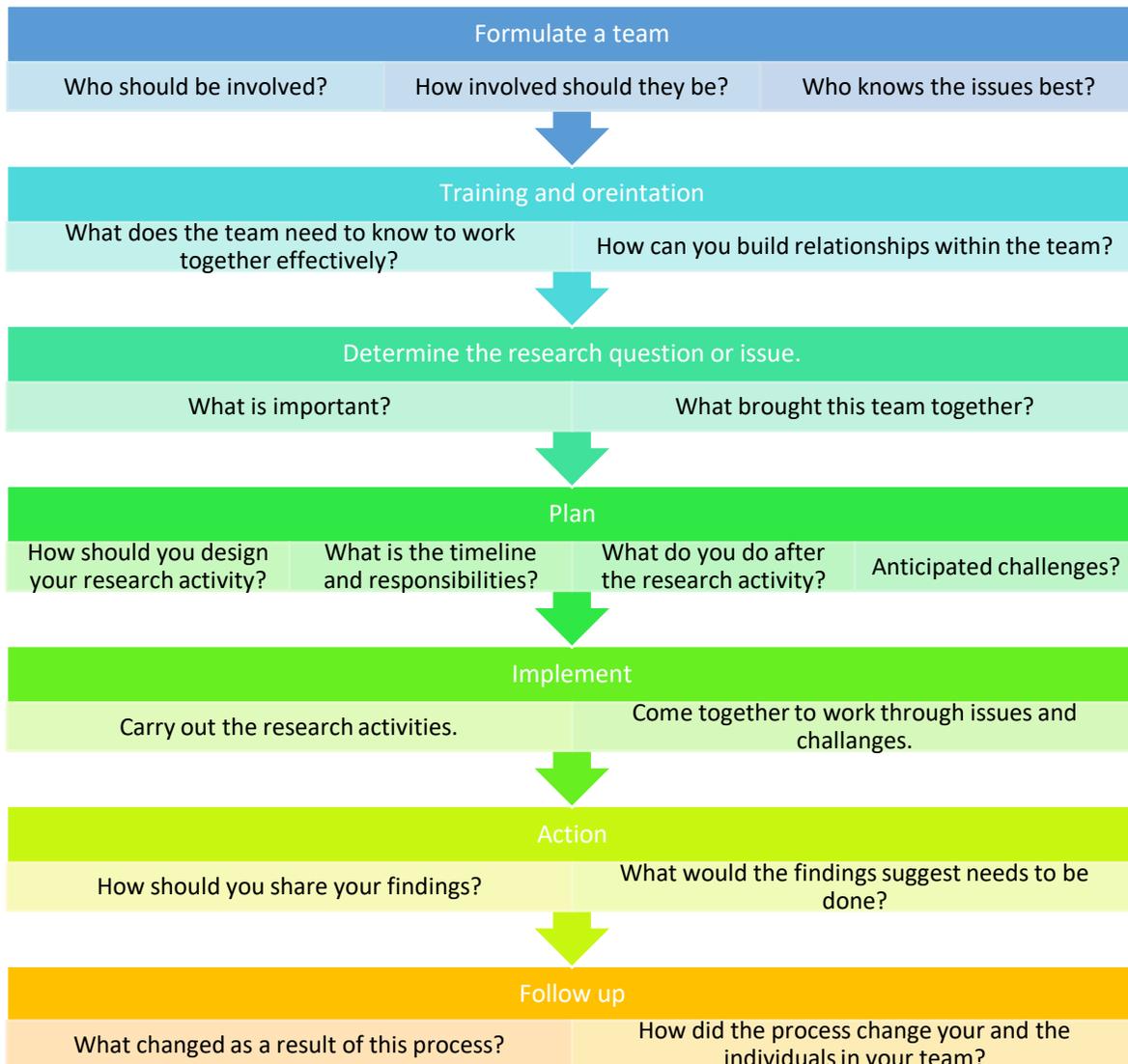
What are some of the benefits of doing PAR?

- ✓ Partnering with the community allows you to gain first-hand understanding the issue.
- ✓ PAR builds powerful relationships, trust, and coalitions between different groups.
- ✓ Doing PAR can result in actions that directly challenges issues related to inequality and oppression.

SECTION 2: HOW TO DO PAR

How do I “do” PAR?

[This^{xxxix}](#) section from the Community Toolbox lays out the steps. The diagram below summarizes the main steps and some of the things you will need to think through when doing PAR.



Additionally, to key things to consider for the success of any PAR project includes **building and sustaining coalitions and partnerships** and **participatory planning**.

Why focus on building and sustaining coalitions?

- ✓ If there is a “secret ingredient” to PAR, it’s having a strong partnership with the community, organization, or group that you are collaborating with.
- ✓ Strong partnerships are essential to build and sustain the trust required to carry out this necessary work.
- ✓ How we build coalition could look like different things, but one of the most central ways we can do that is by co-creating and clarifying a goal for the partnership.
- ✓ Check out this Toolkit on how [Creating and Maintaining Partnerships and Coalitions^{xi}](#). Note that this toolkit focuses on creating coalitions between organizations, but the principles apply to partnerships with any coalition.

Why focus on participatory planning?

- ✓ Participatory planning involves bringing in everyone effected by the intervention or research to hold some role in the planning and decision-making process of that initiative.
- ✓ Participatory planning is a requirement of PAR – to do PAR successfully, all members on your team should have some voice in making decisions and planning the study or intervention.
- ✓ Participatory planning can also be used for a variety of decisions – read more [here^{xii}](#) on what participatory planning is, when to use it (or not use it), and how to prepare for it.

CHAPTER 5: TAKING ACTION

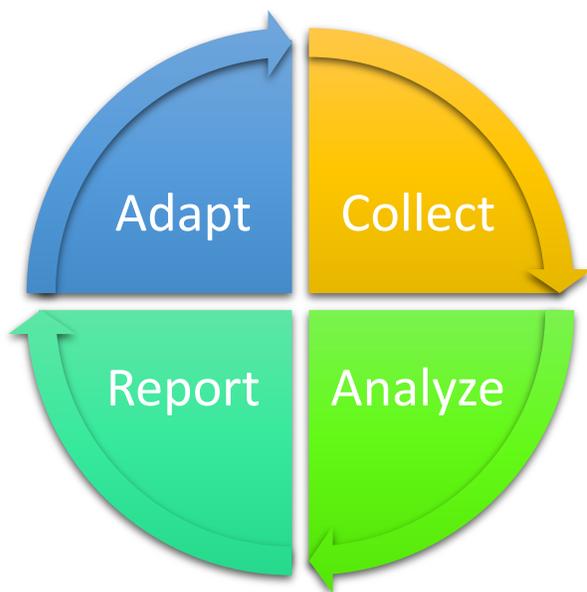
By this point, we have covered a lot of material relating to planning and implementing monitoring, research, or evaluation. The question remains, what do you do afterward? These activities ideally produce information and results that we should respond to, but how we use information could use more detail. This final chapter answers some questions relating to data utilization and action planning.

SECTION 1: DATA UTILIZATION

Data utilization is when we make a plan and take actionable steps as a result of our monitoring, research, or evaluation activities. That is, once we have the data, analyzed, and interpreted it, we can make decisions, changes, and future plans that reflect those findings.

Why is data utilization important?

- ✓ Our funders and partners want to know what we do with the data.
- ✓ It demonstrates to our community partners that the data was collected for some purpose that leads to actionable changes and improvements.
- ✓ Data utilization ensures that we give something back to the communities that we work with.
- ✓ It is a tenant of certain evaluation theories (e.g., Developmental and Utilization-Focused Evaluation, see [chapter 3](#)) and Participatory Action Research ([chapter 4](#))
- ✓ Data utilization is also an important foundation of **continuous program improvement** and **evidence-based practice**. Both strategies are popular phrases and may be things that our funders and community partners want to see, so let us clarify what each means.



Continuous program improvement is when we develop a feedback loop of using monitoring, research, or evaluation data to inform decisions about programs in real-time. This feedback loop includes 4 parts

- ✓ Collect the data.
- ✓ Analyze and interpret the data
- ✓ Report or share the data with partners.
- ✓ Work with program partners to conceive adaptations, changes, or decisions.

Essential to using data for continuous program improvement is having a trusting relationship with your program partners. Revisit [chapter 4](#) on building and sustaining partnerships and coalitions to think about how to build a solid partnership with your program.

Evidence-based practice is when we specifically use research and evaluation to support, refine, or implement programs, policies, or interventions. When we say something is “evidence-based,” that means that some type of research or evaluation study found the program to be successful.

When do I plan for data utilization?

- ✓ Best practice would suggest that you plan on how you use the data before you collect it.

STRATEGIES FOR DATA UTILIZATION

A simple, but effective, way to think about data utilization is to work through the “What? So What? Now What?” worksheet in [Appendix A](#). This framework will help you think about how to use data in a way that will break down not only what the results are telling you, but how to act on them.

What?
Describe what we found out:
Were the results what we expected to find?
What contextual factors may be related to what we found?
So What?
What do these results mean?
Who should know or learn about these findings?
How should you share these findings with them?
Now What?
What do they results suggest should be done or not done?
What do we need to make those changes?
What would those changes mean for our community?

SECTION 2: MAKING ACTION PLANS

Action plans, or strategic plans, are helpful for just about any project or endeavor that CVG might want to take on. Just like how it sounds, action plans are frameworks for thinking about what needs to get done and by when. More than that, they are a way to clarify the big goals and ideas that one has in relation to all the smaller steps that one would need to take to reach that goal.

A good action plan includes things like....

- ✓ The overall mission or goal,
- ✓ Anticipating actions and changes,

- ✓ Who carries out these actions and changes,
- ✓ When these actions and changes happen,
- ✓ Resources needed to make the changes happen,
- ✓ How, when, and who is in communication.

Check out the Community Toolbox [chapter](#)^{xiii} to learn more about action planning and this [Toolkit](#)^{xiii} to make one yourself!

Another way to do action planning is to make a *Gantt Chart*. This is similar to an action plan but uses a calendar-like visual aid to plan big and small goals.

- ✓ Gantt Charts have 4 basic elements:
 1. The “Big Picture” goal,
 2. The smaller goals and steps needed to complete the Big Picture,
 3. Who does what,
 4. When things happen.
- ✓ They are very commonly required when applying for grant funding.
- ✓ Gantt Charts can be made with software (such as [TeamGantt](#)^{xiv}) or by just creating tables in a Word or Excel file. Check out the Gantt Chart Template in [Appendix A](#) to make one yourself.

APPENDIX A: DATA UTILIZATION HANDOUT

After you collect and analyze your data, try filling out this worksheet to think about data utilization.

What?
Describe what we found out:
Were the results what we expected to find?
What contextual factors may be related to what we found?
So What?
What do these results mean?
Who should know or learn about these findings?
How should you share these findings with them?
Now What?
What do they results suggest should be done or not done?
What do we need to make those changes?
What would those changes mean for our community?

GANTT CHART TEMPLATE

Use the template to create a plan for your projects. See the example below.

The Big Idea	Tasks	Who?	Date	Date	Date	Date

Example (X's are used to indicate that the task is complete)

The Big Idea	Tasks	Who?	3/10/20	4/3/20	4/10/20	4/17/20	4/24/20	5/1/20	5/8/20
CVG Evaluation Guidebook	Chapter 1	AD	X						
	Chapter 2	AD	X						
	Chapter 3	AD		X					
	Chapter 4	AD		X					
	Chapter 5	AD			X				
	Feedback	JS				X	X		
	Revise	AD						X	
	Deadline	AD							

APPENDIX B: CRIME DATA SUMMARY

Notes:

- **This should be updated routinely for all key implementation cities, approximately once a year. When updating, save as a new version and new document.**
- Search was completed by using Google. Search terms include:
 - "CITY" crime data
 - "CITY" crime statistics
 - "CITY" crime records
- We can obtain statewide data through the FBI Crime Data Explorer. Might be a good comparison point to examine how crime at the city-level differs from the state-level.
 - Raw Data: This data is not very user-friendly, downloading the statewide crime data package will result in a zip file of multiple datasets organized by crime type. This may be good to have for analytical purposes.
 - <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/downloads-and-docs>
 - The Crime Data Explorer Tool is more user-friendly and breaks down crimes into demographic information, victimization information, and other things that are likely relevant.
 - <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/explorer/state/illinois/crime>
- Can use the LexisNexis Community Crime Map to look at crime data from many different cities or states
 - <http://communitycrimemap.com/>
 - Only issue is it seems to cap the data at 500 events, may limit how much data you can observe at once

Summary of city level data and key variables

City	Target area	Crime Type/s	Date Range	Locations	Source	Note
New Orleans		Violent and Property crimes	Last 4 weeks, Year to date, and Last 52 weeks	Police district and city-wide	Public Tableau	

City	Target area	Crime Type/s	Date Range	Locations	Source	Note
		All, can specify by crime type	Yearly	Police district and city-wide	MAX	
		Property, murder, and violent crime rates (per 100,000 people)	Yearly (2005-present)	City-wide, has comparisons to other large cities (Atlanta, Nashville, Oklahoma City, Tampa, Miami, Memphis, Raleigh, and Baton Rouge)	Open Data	This is supposed to be 2005-present but the most recent data for NOLA is 2015
Milwaukee		All, breaks down by type	1 week, 3 weeks, 4 weeks, and yearly	Police district, neighborhoods, aldermanic district, and city-wide	Milwaukee Police Dept.	
Jacksonville		Use Filters; All, breaks down by type	Use Filters; Can specify date range	Use Filters; Can specify location	Crime Map	Must “accept” terms and agreements; After selecting the filters in the Crime Map, click “Summary”
Durham	May not be known	All try, breaks down by type	Weekly	By police district and city-wide	Weekly Summary	
New York City		All	2018 and all years prior	Midblock xy coordinates (nearly exact locations), precincts, and city-wide	Historic Shooting incident data	Historic, most recent records are the previous calendar year
		All, breaks down by type	Weekly	City-wide	City-wide Crime Statistics	
St. Louis		All, specifies type	Exact date	Nearly exact address	St. Louis Police Department Crime Detail	Raw data; Download the data and use excel to count total per

City	Target area	Crime Type/s	Date Range	Locations	Source	Note
						location and date range
		All, breaks down by type	Monthly	City-wide	St. Louis Police Department Crime summary	Pdf file
District of Columbia		Specify, all, property, or violent	Specify daily, weekly, yearly	Specify ward, PSA, ANC, Police district, Police Sector, or city-wide	Crime Cards	Filters at the top of the page
Baltimore		All, can specify	All, can specify	Midblock xy coordinates (nearly exact locations), precincts, and city-wide	Open Baltimore	Use the “Filters” to specify crime type, date range, or location

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

ⁱ An excellent handbook that clarifies these concepts and more is by Donna Podems, *Being an Evaluator: Your Practical Guide to Evaluation*. Check it out here:

<https://www.guilford.com/books/Being-an-Evaluator/Donna-Podems/9781462537808>

ⁱⁱ <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluate-community-initiatives/monitor-progress/main>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11292-017-9308-0>

^{iv} <https://cvg.org/impact/>

Chapter 2

^v <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26042632>

^{vi} <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/full-2016-decision-charts.pdf>

^{vii} <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/finalized-revisions-common-rule/index.html>

^{viii} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57EQt8xtwsc>

^{ix} <https://ccts.uic.edu/tools/cirtification/>

^x <http://www.socialexplorer.com/>

^{xi} <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC57Ci2PYDMHo1y4eOxjQQyW>

^{xii} <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/analyzing-problems-and-goals>

^{xiii} <https://medium.com/@pratheesh.27998/exploratory-data-analysis-dcb5e7189c4e>

^{xiv} https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292432218_A_Step-By-Step_Guide_To_Qualitative_Data_Analysis

^{xv} <https://nciph.sph.unc.edu/cha-learning-congress/guideToSamplingForCHA.pdf>

^{xvi} <https://opentextbc.ca/researchmethods/part/experimental-research/>

^{xvii} <https://opentextbc.ca/researchmethods/chapter/quasi-experimental-research/>

^{xviii} <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns>

Chapter 3

^{xix} <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluate-community-interventions/collect-analyze-data/main>

^{xx} <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation>

^{xxi} <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/evaluating-initiative>

^{xxii} https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/themes/evaluability_assessment

^{xxiii} https://www.cdc.gov/eval/tools/evaluability_assessments/index.html

^{xxiv} <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conducting-needs-assessment-surveys/main>

^{xxv} <https://www.jbassoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Understanding-Process-Outcome-Evaluation.pdf>

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- xxvi <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/CostBenefitAnalysis>
- xxvii https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/5068_Preskill_Chapter_5.pdf
- xxviii https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/participatory_evaluation
- xxix
- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elizabeth_Whitmore2/publication/227754509_Making_sense_of_participatory_evaluation_Framing_participatory_evaluation/links/5e70e587299bf15867b8c27c/Making-sense-of-participatory-evaluation-Framing-participatory-evaluation.pdf
- xxx https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation
- xxxi https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/empowerment_evaluation
- xxxii https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation
- xxxiii https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u350/2014/UFE_checklist_2013.pdf
- xxxiv <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conducting-needs-assessment-surveys/main>
- xxxv <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>
- xxxvi <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/evaluation-plan/main>

Chapter 4

- xxxvii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D492AP9JP4>
- xxxviii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvsNeKlbbss>
- xxxix <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/intervention-research/main>
- xl <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-coalitions-and-partnerships>
- xli <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/where-to-start/participatory-approaches/main>

Chapter 5

- xlii <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/develop-action-plans/main>
- xliii <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans>
- xliv <https://www.teamgantt.com/free-gantt-chart-excel-template>