

CENTER FOR DEMENTIA RESPITE INNOVATION

Key Takeaways from “Program Evaluation” 2025-26 Keys to Sustainability Webinar #9

What is the purpose of evaluation? Evaluation simply means **checking how well a program is working and if program participants are satisfied**. In respite care, it helps us understand if services are meeting the needs of the care recipients and their caregivers.

What is evaluation important? Evaluation helps answer practical questions to assess and ultimately enhance your program offerings and care. Evaluation helps make sure respite services are **useful, effective, and worth the investment**.

Who should be included in evaluation? To get a full picture, it’s important to hear from different groups:

1. **Caregivers/care partners** – outcomes examined could include their stress levels, satisfaction, and needs
2. **Care recipients** – comfort, safety, and experience
3. **Staff/providers** – what’s working and what challenges they face
4. **Program partners or funders** – impact and value of services

How to evaluate?

Effective evaluation relies on collecting *multiple forms of data*:

- **Data types:** Surveys, interviews, observations, focus groups, and program records/attendance
- **Question design:** Use both **closed-ended** and **open-ended** questions, avoid leading or biased wording, consider Likert scales

Evaluation should occur at multiple points (e.g., beginning and end) to measure change. Programs must balance collecting sufficient data with avoiding survey fatigue.

Common evaluation frameworks that may be most applicable in respite settings include:

1. **Theory of Change** – A comprehensive approach that explains *why* and *how* change happens. [Template](#)
2. **Logic Model** – A simplified way to show what goes into a program, what we do, and the results we hope to see.
3. **360-degree feedback** – evaluation tool for employees, offering evaluations from self-ratings, supervisor ratings, peer ratings, and client ratings.

How to make evaluation successful?

Keep tools **short and simple**. Use **plain language**. Offer **multiple ways to respond** (online, paper, phone). Respect **privacy and confidentiality**. **Share results**.

To have longer term impacts, evaluations should assess:

- Are we meeting our goals?
- Are outcomes trending positively?
- Where are we falling short?

Based on these questions, if gaps are identified:

- Reassess and refine goals
- Identify actionable improvements
- Seek additional feedback if needed
- Strengthen and sustain successful areas