

Who's In Charge, Here?

The Importance of Diversity of Program Evaluators and Broadening of the Evaluation Team

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Session Overview

- CAAV description; evaluation partnership; how evaluation informed CAE's program administration
Susan Moesker
- Evaluation design, coordinating evaluation partnership
Anita Baker
- Over-years findings, features and challenges; how CAAV has provided a meaningful real-world evaluation learning opportunity
Jamie Bassell

Who's In Charge, Here?

The Importance of Program Staff Representation on the Evaluation Team

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CAAV Background

- The Community Alliance Against Violence (CAAV) project included developing, conducting and evaluating a “high-dosage” series of workshops (20) for a universe of at-risk LGBTQI youth/young adults, with a focus on youth who are currently, formerly, or at risk of becoming homeless and/or street-involved.
- CAAV also includes multiple (3-5/agency) staff trainings for each of the four partner organizations who work with LGBTQI youth.

CAAV Background, Continued

- The multi-session training for LGBTQI youth/young adults integrates verbal and physical self-defense techniques and strategies, and focuses on recognizing, avoiding and/or de-escalating violent or potentially violent situations, and reducing stress that results from repeated encounters with violence.
- These are all critically important skills for LGBTQI youth living in volatile situations, including the streets, shelters, “couch surfing” from home to home, and in often hostile communities—family, geographic communities, work communities (sex workers), etc.

Evaluation Coordination at Four Program Sites

- Up-sizing: in Year 2 of CAAV, we grew from 3 to five sites—a giant project to manage in addition to CVPP
- The economy: lost a partner due to the downturn, and had to replace it with a specific other partner in order to get matching grant money
- The weather: Hurricane Sandy, and its profound impact on 2 of our 4 program sites

Evaluation Coordination at Four Program Sites, Cont'd

- The timing: the economy and the weather cataclysm derailed the carefully-planned calendar
- The little things: similarities, but differences, across the agencies (staffing, scheduling, youth, rules & regs, etc.)
- The staffing puzzle: realizing we needed 2 teachers/site, and working this out via paid staff/social work intern

Challenges of Being an Evaluation Partner

- Collecting maximum data: getting the best possible picture in the face of noncompliance from all sides (youth, agency staff, our own staff) + asking for more
- Working with staff and evaluators who are “off-site” (limited leverage) and the challenges of sharing resources in a timely fashion
- Limited access to youth and staff at one partner site (confidentiality issues)
- Re-inventing the wheel: a whole new learning curve at AFC, and everything’s new at Safe Space

Benefits of Being an Evaluation Partner

- First-ever longitudinal study for our agency: hoping to use to leverage more funding to continue this vital work with an underserved population
- Really getting a comprehensive look at our program: what's working & where we could improve - at a level we just don't have the capacity to do in-house (a very intensive evaluation process)
- A deeper understanding of the challenges faced by homeless/street-involved LGBTQ youth and the staff who serve them

Benefits, Cont'd

- A professional-looking report to show to potential funders, and data to report back to partner agencies
- Better compliance from partner organizations in Y2 because we could back up our claims with hard data: perceived value of CAE's work borne out by evaluation process

How Evaluation Informed Program Administration

- Updated surveys, and created a new, less specific tool (“interim survey”) to try to capture more data and better serve our agency needs (fundraising, grant reporting)
- Added staff to assist primarily with evaluation-gathering ... but who ended up being invaluable across the board
- Re-tooled incentives program to synch up with surveys as a “reward”
- Issue of “verbal self-defense” - remove program jargon and speak in a language our clients can understand (change in surveys and in workshops)

Who's in Charge Here?

Coordinating a Diverse Evaluation Team: Challenges, Opportunities and Benefits

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Evaluation T. A.*

1) Project Development

- Outcomes and Target Identification
- Proposal Review
- Funder Site Visit Prep

2) Project Initiation

- Workplan Revisions
- Needs Assessment
- Instrument Development

3) Project Implementation

- Data Collection (design and participatory administration)
- Interim Reporting

4) Lessons Learned

- Staff Presentation
- Workplan Revisions

* CAE is a long-term *Evaluation Services* client

CAAV Evaluation

1) Project Overview

Year 1 (completed) = 3 agencies, 20 workshops for youth at each agency, 2-3 staff workshops at each agency

Year 2 (completed) = 4 agencies and 1 site with program running 2x/week, same number of workshops

2) Evaluation focused on learning about anti-violence, self-defense and self-care techniques

3) Evaluation and evaluation-related T.A. included from start, continued

4) Evaluation team worked closely with CAE decision-makers to design and conduct evaluation

CAAV Evaluation Questions

- 1a. How and to what extent has the CAAV project helped participating youth achieve desired outcomes?
- 1b. What are the challenges and effective strategies related to delivery of the CAAV training for youth?

CAAV Evaluation Questions

2. How and to what extent are participating youth able to apply what they have learned through CAAV to life choices they make while involved in the program?
3. How and to what extent has the CAAV project helped staff at the four participating agencies achieve desired staff outcomes?

8 Desired Outcomes for Participants

- Learn three de-escalation strategies
- Learn three anger management techniques
- Learn safety planning
- Identify healthy and abusive relationships
- Increase awareness of surroundings
- Learn self-defense rights and responsibilities
- Learn how to access support
- Develop better communication skills and ability to negotiate

Evaluation Strategies: Staff Workshop Surveys

- Closed and open-ended questions about learning, customized by agency
 - self-defense techniques
 - avoiding and de-escalating violence
 - reducing stress, increasing safety
 - helping youth/YA with life disruptions
- Items about usefulness and applicability of training
- Overall rating of workshop quality
- 2-3 pages long, administered and collected immediately following the training

Evaluation Strategies: Participant Workshops

- Participant Surveys
 - Open & closed-ended questions (including demographics)
 - Content-specific questions about learning/usefulness/use of SD topics and anti-violence strategies
 - Hard copy, comprehensive, administered after every other session
- CAE Instructor Survey
 - Delivery/Support
 - Engagement
- Partner Agency Staff Surveys
 - Delivery/Support
 - Engagement

Evaluation Strategies

Participant Workshops Cont'd

- Participant Sign-in Forms
 - Unique identifiers*
 - Name
 - Age
- Interim Surveys
 - Only asked about outcomes, # of sessions, overall ratings; no demographics

Note: Only ID number included on surveys, attendance and demographics merged into one data base. Individual databases developed for each survey (includes demographics and sessions responses)

Evaluation Strategies: Site Visits

- Session Observation
 - Conducted at mid-point, 1 at each site
 - Session delivery including opening, verbal SD, physical SD, discussion, and closing
 - Participant engagement
- Participant Interviews
 - Small group (2-5 select participants)
 - 1 hour, structured protocol, incentives
- Staff Interviews

Evaluation Challenges

- Instrument/item validity
- Timing/scheduling of data shipments
- Site visits / data collection (One site in particular)
- Modified case studies
- Participant unique IDs/instructions
- Participant attendance at more than one site
- Participants repeating the same training in year 2
- Lots of paper used!
- Changes to instruments

Evaluation Assets

- CAE staff committed to the process & motivated to be involved with the evaluation
- Having an intern for whom CAAV was a key focus
- Tied evaluation to incentives
- Introduced the whole evaluation (participants, staff, instructor, data collection) to each agency
- Site visits
- CAE ownership of the evaluation - several phone calls & meetings during development of new instrument; time spent reviewing & editing the report; invite ESC to present on the report; use data for stakeholders
- Real commitment to having complete data

Next Steps

Final year (3) of the study begins...

- One more full set of surveys for staff and young adults
- Continued mini-case studies
- Follow-up staff surveys from the first 2 years of staff training
- Follow-up staff interviews with staff previously interviewed in years 1 and 2
- Additional interviews with administrative staff at agencies

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A New Evaluator's Perspective on Evaluation Collaboration

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Summary of Staff Workshop Participant Feedback about CAAV Training Year 1

ALL SITES: AFC, MCCNY, & SI LGBT CC	(n=55)	
	Somewhat Applicable	Very Applicable
Workshop was applicable to everyday work	21%	79%
	No	Yes
Would recommend training to a colleague	4%	96%
	Okay	Very Good / Excellent
Overall Rating*	16%	83%

* Please note that the overall rating scale included options of *poor* (1 participant at AFC selected this), *okay*, *very good*, and *excellent*

Summary of Staff Workshop Participant Feedback about CAAV Training, Year 2

ALL SITES: AFC, MCCNY, & SI LGBT CC	(n=73)	
	Somewhat Applicable	Very Applicable
Workshop was applicable to everyday work	9%	91%
	No	Yes
Would recommend training to a colleague	0	100%
	Okay	Very Good / Excellent
Overall Rating*	7%	93%

* Please note that the overall rating scale included options of *excellent*, *very good*, *okay* and *poor* (no participants selected this).

Year 2 - All Participants Indicated They Would Apply What They Learned, for Themselves and their Clients

Staff reported they are <i>likely</i> * to use strategies or tools to:	Self	Clients
De-escalate potential violent or dangerous situations	5/5	5/5
Reduce stress	24/25	24/25
Work with youth who have experienced major life disruptions	2/2	2/2
Reduce or prevent crises	16/16	16/16
Help staff or clients feel safer	21/23	23/23
Help prevent bullying	19/22	23/23
Help manage difficult behaviors in groups	5/5	5/5

*includes those who indicated they were *somewhat* or *very* likely

Participants Reported That Staff Training was Useful and Necessary

I have a framework for the conversation that happens after an incident. I have these at least once per week.

I learned to de-escalate situations without yelling.

I will know better how to intervene in bullying situations and recognize when they are occurring.

I will use everything I've learned in every shift I work. Every night there is some crisis, altercation or stressful situation.

Who Participated in the Youth/YA Workshops?

- 246 youth/YA participated in Year 2 of CAAV
 - 98 at AFC Mondays
 - 41 at AFC Saturdays
 - 44 at MCCNY
 - 17 at Safe Space
 - 60 at SI LGBT CC.
- A total of 25 participants attended sessions at multiple sites & 52 respondents also participated in Year 1.
- Despite increased goals, attendance in Year 2 was very similar to Year 1. About 46% of participants attended two or more workshops in Year 2, vs. 49% in Year 1.

Summary of Participant Findings

- Instructor, staff and participant feedback across all four partner agencies was uniformly very positive.
- Instructors, staff and youth/YA at all four partner agencies reported that the workshops were helpful and useful to youth/YA participants.
- When asked, youth/YA and staff could give detailed examples of application of the trainings both in their daily lives and when at the partner agencies.
- At all four agencies, relatively large proportions of participants reported learning how to keep themselves safer in multiple settings. This was corroborated by staff at each site.

Summary of Participant Findings

- Many participants, especially those that attended more regularly, accomplished all of the desired outcomes.
- Many participants learned the key topics at each session.
 - Varied by session and site
 - Possible improvements at later sessions

Attendance at CAAV Workshops, by Agency, Year 1

	AFC	MCCNY	SI LGBT CC	TOTAL
N	86	70	78	234
Average number of workshops	2.4	1.9	2.9	2.4
1 WORKSHOP ONLY	42%	64%	49%	51%
2 WORKSHOPS ONLY	23%	13%	10%	16%
3 - 5 WORKSHOPS	27%	19%	28%	25%
6 -10 WORKSHOPS	7%	3%	10%	7%
11 OR MORE WORKSHOPS	1%	1%	3%	2%

Attendance at CAAV Workshops, by Agency, Year 2

	AFC (Both)	MCCNY	Safe Space	SI LGBT CC	TOTAL
N	108	44	17	60	246
Average number of workshops	2.0	2.0	5.4	2.8	2.6
1 WORKSHOP ONLY	63%	68%	35%	45%	54%
2 WORKSHOPS ONLY	17%	9%	12%	13%	15%
3 - 5 WORKSHOPS	14%	16%	18%	27%	19%
6 -10 WORKSHOPS	5%	7%	18%	15%	10%
11 OR MORE WORKSHOPS	1%	0	17%	0	2%

Youth/YA Participants Confirmed That They Learned About Anti-violence and Self-defense

“I learned the hammer fist technique, where I pull back my arm and fist, and then drop it down as if it were a hammer.”

– *AFC Sat. participant*

I finally learned a few techniques to defend myself which are important as a person who does not fight. I look forward to the next defense session.

– *MCCNY participant*

It was awesome. I liked how I could project my voice and make body movements to help prevent the situation.

– *SI LGBT CC participant*

Participants' Ratings of Usefulness of Trainings

Usefulness of training:	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
AFC Mon. (n=21)	70%	25%	5%
AFC Sat. (n=11)	91%	9%	0
MCCNY (n=27)	88%	12%	0
Safe Space (n=7)	71%	29%	0
SI LGBT CC (n=24)	86%	14%	0
ALL SITES (n=90)*	82%	17%	1%

A Real-World Learning Opportunity for a Newbie Evaluator

- “How long will this take?” Planning for data entry, report writing
- High tech versus low tech (paper vs. e-surveys, handwritten vs. laptop note taking at observations and interviews)
- You can’t always get what you want... learning how to go with the flow & working smartly with what you have when faced with limitations
- Interfacing with clients - best strategies for effective communication

A Real-World Learning Opportunity Cont'd

- This works because CAE staff made sure data collection was happening and CAE intern made sure data collection happened at each site and session.
- We as the team are overseeing and encouraging data collection while other people also collect data for us (staff from agency and trainers)
- Diversity of all collectors & evaluators work for this
- The project and evaluation learning experiences were also valuable for the CAE intern

Questions & Comments

