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Using the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* to Improve Your Practice

Ethics Committee Professional Development Task Force

Note: This workshop has been approved by the AEA Board for public use and dissemination.

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Objectives of Workshop

- Increase knowledge of the AEA *Guiding Principles for Evaluators (GP)*
- Analyze the *Guiding Principles* in a program evaluation context
- Consider how the *Guiding Principles* can be used to inform ethical evaluation practice

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AEA's Development of the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*

- 1986: Founding of American Evaluation Association
- 1993-1994: Original five *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* developed and ratified
- 2002-2004: *GP* reviewed and updated
- 2004: Revised *GP* endorsed through referendum of AEA membership

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Assumptions behind the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*

- Purposes of the *Guiding Principles*
  - Promote ethical evaluation practice
  - Foster continuing professional development
  - Stimulate discussion within and outside evaluation
- Evaluators aspire to provide best possible information that might bear on the value of whatever is being evaluated

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Assumptions behind the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (cont.)

- The *Guiding Principles*:
  - Proactively guide everyday practice
  - Cover all kinds of evaluation
  - Are not independent, but overlap
  - May sometimes conflict; need to consider trade-offs
- The *GP* were developed in the context of the United States

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Principle A: Systematic Inquiry

- Evaluators conduct **systematic, data-based** inquiries:
  - Adhere to highest technical standards
  - Explore strengths and shortcomings of evaluation questions and approaches
  - Communicate approaches, methods and limitations accurately

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Principle B: Competence

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- Evaluators provide **competent performance** to stakeholders:
  - Possess appropriate skills and experience
  - Demonstrate cultural competence
  - Practice within limits of competence
  - Continually improve competencies

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Principle C: Integrity/Honesty

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- Evaluators **display honesty and integrity** and attempt to ensure them throughout the entire evaluation process:
  - Negotiate honestly with clients and stakeholders
  - Disclose values, interests and conflicts of interest
  - Represent accurately methods, data and findings
  - Disclose source of request and financial support for evaluation

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Principle D: Respect for People

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- Evaluators **respect security, dignity and self-worth** of all stakeholders:
  - Understand evaluation context
  - Get informed consent and protect confidentiality
  - Maximize benefits and minimize harm
  - Foster social equity
  - Respect differences among stakeholders

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Principle E: General and Public Welfare

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- Evaluators take into account **general and public interests**:
  - Include relevant stakeholders
  - Balance client and stakeholder needs
  - Examine assumptions and potential side effects
  - Present results in understandable forms

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Case Study for Small Group Work

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- Summary of an actual evaluation case, adapted for discussion
- Case includes all phases of evaluation
- All details could not be included in summary

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Instructions for Small Group Work

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- **Individually:**
  1) Read the complete case study
  2) Identify issues or questions that relate to each *Guiding Principle*
  3) Record issues/questions on work sheet

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Instructions for Small Group Work

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As a Group:

1) Identify main issues to report

2) Record on flipchart and choose a reporter

3) Discuss how the *Guiding Principles* relate to the evaluation summarized in the case study

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Reporting Out from Small Groups

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Summarize small group reports—what are similarities and differences across groups?

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Large Group Discussion

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How can you use the *Guiding Principles* as you design and conduct your own evaluations?

How can the *Guiding Principles* inform the ethical practice of evaluation?

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Professional Support Resources

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EvalTalk (http://www.bama.ua.edu/archives/evaltalk.html)

AEA Local Affiliates and TIGs (http://www.eval.org/AboutUs/Organization)

Evaluation colleagues

Faculty who teach evaluation and peers

Ethical Challenges column in *American Journal of Evaluation* (http://www.eval.org/Publications/AJE)

Evaluation Ethics for Best Practice, by Michael Morris

Ethical Reasoning article from the IU Poynter Center

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Professional Support Resources (cont.)

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Selected Cultural Competence References:

In Search of Cultural Competence in Evaluation, *New Directions in Evaluation vol. 102* (2004)

Co-Constructing a Contextually Responsive Evaluation Framework, *New Directions in Evaluation vol. 101* (2004)

Overview of Multicultural and Culturally Competent Program Evaluation: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities (2003)
http://www.calendow.org/evaluation/pdf/overviewbook.pdf

Selected Bibliography Related to Culture and Context in Assessment and Evaluation Studies 1994-2004
http://www.howard.edu/schooleducation/ETI/bibliography.pdf

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Other Resources for Guiding Evaluation Practice

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Meta-evaluation Checklist for AEA *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/checklistmenu.htm

Program Evaluation Standards, 2nd Edition (1994)
Under revision by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/

Personnel Evaluation Standards (1988)
Under revision by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. Field tests are currently underway.
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/

International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation
http://ioce.net/home/index.cfm?dv=1&lan=en

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Ethics Committee Professional Development Task Force

- 2006 Ethics Committee: Jules Marquart, Leslie Goodyear, Dennis Affholter
- Professional Development Committee: Bill Rickards
- Diversity Committee: Denice Cassaro, Jennifer Williams
- Other AEA members: Marcie Bober, Edie Cook, Randall Davies, Amy Germuth, Tom Grayson, Kelly Hannum, Judith Inazu, Rita O'Sullivan, Stephanie Schneider, Linda Schrader, Veronica Thomas, Brian Yates

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Workshop Evaluation

- Wrap-up

- Now it's up to you to use the *Guiding Principles* in your practice!

- Your turn to give us feedback
  - Please complete and return the evaluation form

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