

Briefing Note for Outcome Evaluation

Recommended practice for questionnaire administration

This briefing note sets out the principles of good practice concerning questionnaire administration for grantees' reference only. Grantees may opt to follow the suggestions hereunder at their own discretion for project evaluation.

Confidentiality

Drug use is a sensitive issue that rendered confidentiality of personal information a major concern of respondents, particularly those most in need of service. A hasty implementation of project evaluation means getting the task done with ease at the expense of accuracy of results and the trustful relationship between participants and service provider. Therefore, steps to protect respondents' privacy shall be observed as far as possible. Where possible, the following measures are to be undertaken:

- Questionnaire administration and collection of completed forms is to be done by service provider (social worker) rather than authority figure (e.g. teacher in school).
- Introductory message which particularly addresses the confidentiality issue shall be delivered to participants before conducting evaluation.
- Although absolute anonymity is not possible for pre-test/post-test evaluation, every effort shall be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information obtained. Individual participant should select a unique reference code to serve as personal identifier instead of requesting respondents to put down their names on questionnaire.
- Data shall be handled with care. Completed forms shall be placed in sealed envelope in front of the respondents. Results shall be disseminated to participating organization (e.g. school) in the form of summary and statistics, which means only aggregate information rather than raw data shall be provided. Any specific information that could allow a respondent to be identified shall be removed.
- Once the data has been collected, it shall be kept in a safe and secured database for the purpose of data analysis until the end of the project, at which point all questionnaires will be destroyed.

Reference number system

A reference number system shall be developed in such a way that individual respondents shall have a unique reference code serving as personal identifier which is not readily decoded by others to facilitate pre-test/post-test evaluation and/or progress monitoring. For instance, a student in Class 3A with a class number (8) may be asked to put down "3108" as reference code (3 A 0 8 → 3 1 0 8, where the first two digits refer to class and the last two digits denote class number). Some other options may include the use of composite code of respondent's birthday plus particular digits of the residential telephone number (e.g. 2 8 0 2 3 9 for a person born on 28 February with the last two digits of his/her telephone number being "39"), alternate digits and numbers in reverse order. Grantees may design their own numbering system creatively and shall not disclose to participating organizations.

Introductory message

An introductory message shall be given before the questionnaire is administered. It shall cover information about your affiliation, the purpose of evaluation, the way it benefits the respondents, the subjective nature of questions that solicit opinion, and confidentiality and privacy issues. A sample introductory message is set out below for reference:

“As the representative(s) of our organization [name of organization], I/we welcome and thank you for your participation in today’s programme. We would be grateful if you would take the time to fill in the questionnaire which should take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. This questionnaire aims to understand your (opinions/thoughts/attitudes about drug use/treatment) / (habit/intention of drug use) / (feedback about the activity)*. These useful information will help us (provide the most suitable service for you) / (understand your treatment progress) / (review the effectiveness of programme and improve our service)*. This is not a test and there is no right or wrong answer, so please be thoughtful and honest in answering all questions. All information provided in the questionnaire will only be used for the purposes of evaluation and service improvement. You do NOT have to put down your name on the questionnaire (but simply a reference code)*. Please be assured that our workers will be the only ones opening and viewing the individual forms. Data collected will be kept strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to your teacher/school/family*. Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions or concerns, as it is important that you feel comfortable in completing the questionnaire. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your patience and co-operation.”*

**Please delete as appropriate*

Implementation of pre-test/post-test evaluation

The pre-test/post-test evaluation can be administered in two ways. For activity-based evaluation, participants are required to fill in the questionnaire before and after individual activities. For project-based evaluation, the questionnaire shall be completed before the whole programme starts and after finishing all activities in the project.

Choice of questionnaire items

In view of the uniqueness of project and its target beneficiary group, flexibility is allowed in the choice of questionnaire items for some of the Beat Drugs Fund evaluation question sets. For the scales developed by Beat Drugs Fund (namely Evaluation Question Set No. 1, 2, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20), grantees may select and/or add appropriate items according to their needs and interests, provided that the resultant questionnaire shall consist of at least seven questions from the original evaluation question set in order to ensure test validity.

For the post-test survey instrument designed for evaluation of publicity and education activity, training or parents’ workshop (namely Evaluation Question Set No. 8, 10, 21), its length and content are subject to user’s adjustment which means grantees may tailor the questionnaire to their specific needs by adding and/or deleting any items/options as appropriate without restriction.

In the light of the proven reliability and validity of the existing scales (namely Evaluation Question Set No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14), flexibility in the alteration and choice of items in these scales is very limited, save that individual subscales can be selectively adopted as appropriate. Grantees are required to use the whole scale/subscale to preserve the integrity of the instrument. The copyright held by the original author(s) shall be respected.

Apart from the Beat Drugs Fund standard question sets, grantees are also welcome to use alternative validated evaluation tools. All proposed instruments, whether being a modified version of Beat Drugs Fund questionnaire or any other suitable scales, shall be submitted to Beat Drugs Fund Association for approval in advance.