

Evaluation ideas and templates

Evaluation is a very important step in program planning. It helps you assess your program's activities, supports, resources and outcomes, helping you identify what worked well and what could be improved.

The data collected can also tell you a story, helping you truly understand the outcomes while articulating the impact of your program to community partners, funders, youth, and others.

There are many fun, creative and effective evaluation methods.

“Evaluation supports youth programs to do what they do, better.” –YouthREX

Before choosing and designing an evaluation method, consider the following questions:

- Why, where, when and how will the data be collected and stored?
- Will your school or organization need an ethics review?
- How can we ensure participants are fully informed and understand what their involvement will be?
- What is the program timeline?
- How many participants will be involved in the program?
- Are you confident and have the skills needed to deliver the activity?
- Will the activity gather information that can be used to improve future programming?
- What resources do you have available?
- What do you want to know or learn?

Remember to meaningfully engage youth in evaluation to improve the overall quality of evaluation.

1. Not sure what you should evaluate? Here are some examples of indicators

Process indicators	Outcome indicators
Measures what happens in a program to help understand why the program produced the results it did.	Measures the changes in participant knowledge, skills and attitudes; helps track and measure your program's intended outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of meetings held• # of staff or volunteers that planned and delivered activities• # of staff or volunteers trained• # of activities or trainings delivered• Amount of money spent• Promotional strategies implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved knowledge (e.g., prevention strategies, key terms, facts)• Changes in attitudes towards a topic or issue• Developed or enhanced skills (e.g., leadership, teamwork, program planning, public speaking, social skills)• Increased confidence

Process indicators Measures what happens in a program to help understand why the program produced the results it did.	Outcome indicators Measures the changes in participant knowledge, skills and attitudes; helps track and measure your program's intended outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of participants or people reached and their characteristics (age, location, peer group, hobbies, interest, behaviours) • Participant satisfaction • Obstacles or challenges encountered (How were they addressed?) • Earned or paid media coverage • # of resources developed and distributed (e.g., posters, info sheets, recipes, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness of available resources • Change in behaviour or action (e.g., school attendance, drug use, healthy eating, adhere to school policies) • Intentions to continue the initiative next year • Objectives achieved • Partnerships created • Increased collaboration between partners • Increased interest in the initiative

2. Creative evaluation activities

Activity Profile

An Activity Profile allows the team to profile a minimum of one of their initiative activities that they felt truly addressed youth wellness. Information collected includes the activity goal, description, things the team is especially proud of, and anticipated outcomes. There's also the option to include a story, photos, videos, or other creative resources. Scroll down for a Sample Activity Profile you can use.

Anonymous Cups

The purpose of this activity is to get feedback without the risk of social bias as participants are unable to see the answers that others have chosen.

Materials:

- Large pieces of paper
- Several non-transparent cups or mugs, with lids or covers that you can cut a hole in
- Scissors
- Beads or other small items in several colours
- Marker or pen



Instructions:

1. Write your key questions or statements on large pieces of paper (one per paper) and post them on the wall or on a table.
2. Cut a small hole in each cup lid (large enough to fit the beads) and place one cup at each question.
Tip: Label each cup to avoid accidentally mixing the cups at the end of the activity.
3. Distribute the appropriate number of coloured beads to each participant. If there are five questions, each player should receive five of each coloured bead.

4. Explain to participants that each colour represents a specific answer. You can also display a colour legend in the room. For example:
 - a. If asking true or false questions: green beads = true; red beads = false
 - b. If using a rating scale: green beads = agree; blue bead = neutral; red beads = disagree
5. Instruct participants to drop their corresponding-coloured bead in each cup to record their answer.

Art-based methods

Arts-based activities encourage youth to express and creatively share their experiences in a different way. They can also help provide a well-rounded picture of the impact of a program or activity.

Here are some examples of art-based evaluation methods:

- **Chalk it out** – Have questions ready for participants to answer using outside chalk.
- **Collage** – Participants can cut out images, symbols and/or words from old magazines and newspapers, and glue them onto a piece of sturdy cardboard to express how they felt about the program or activity.
- **Comics Jam** – Participants take turns drawing each panel of a comic strip. Comics are dedicated to answering a question, and allowing participants to express their perceptions, experiences, and emotions.
- **Group drawings, graffiti wall or paintings** – Put out a piece of flip chart paper or large Bristol board for each question, key word, or theme, and only allow the participants one to two minutes to sketch out their responses. They can respond by using words, drawings and/or images.
- **Photovoice** – A process which uses photography and storytelling to express opinions, answer questions or show key learnings. Have a question ready for participants to answer by taking a photo and write a short caption that will accompany their photo.
- **Poetry or Storytelling** – Have participants share their experience through poetry and storytelling.
- **Post-its board** – Have participants write their answer to a specific question on a sticky note and add it to a flipchart or large Bristol board.
- **Scrapbook** – Take books with blank pages and add photos, memorabilia (certificates, coupons, postcards), media clips, and embellishments. Have a section for participants to add their experiences and impact of their program.
- **Symbols** – Prepare a selection of laminated symbols (which represent a range of moods or answers from negative to positive) with blue tack on the back, and a flipchart paper with your questions. Make sure to have enough copies of each symbol so everyone can choose the same one if they want to. Instruct participants to select a symbol that best represents their answer and stick it on the flipchart under the appropriate question. Inform participants they can write under their selected symbol if they want to expand on their answer.
- **Timeline** – Lay out photographs on a timeline and add notes about how members felt at different points and where new skills and knowledge was gained.
- **Video montage** – Compile videos taken throughout the program and create a montage.

No matter the method you select, take a photo of the finished product to keep a record and potentially share. You can showcase the final product and use it as a promotional tool for the next program roll-out. If you choose to do this, ensure you have participants consent and anonymity.

Dotmocracy

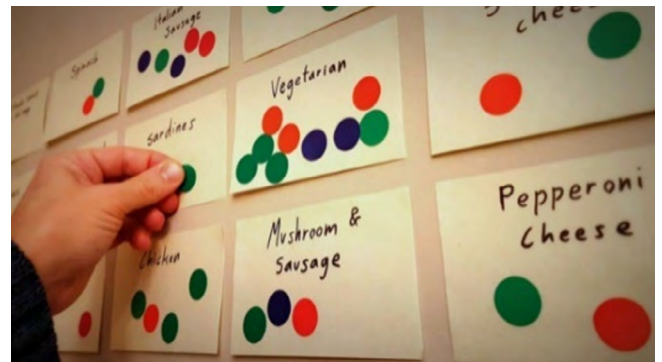
Dotmocracy is a quick and simple activity that can be used as an evaluation method. It's like multiple-choice questions done with stickers.

Materials:

- Large pieces of paper
- Index cards
- Stickers

Instructions:

1. Write your key questions on large pieces of paper (one per page) and answers on the index cards (one per index card). Post them on the wall or on a table.
2. Distribute a set number of dot stickers to each participant.
3. Instruct participants to place their stickers next to their answer.



Be cautious of the bandwagon effect, that is, when people add their dots where everyone else has dotted, without considering their own opinion.

Option: If you want to include a rating scale question, you can use coloured stickers and assign each colour with a specific rating; unhappy for red stickers, neutral for blue stickers and happy for green stickers.

Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit

This tool allows participants to quickly reflect on a program or the initiative as a whole and share their engagement experiences, including what they've learned and what they plan to do next. The activity can be completed individually or as a group.

Materials:

- Copies of the Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit sheet (scroll down for a template)

Instructions:

1. Give each participant a copy of the Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit sheet. Instruct participants NOT to write their names on the sheet.
2. Ask participants to reflect on the following questions and write their answers on the sheet:
 - a. Head (feeling) – What did they learn or find interesting?
 - b. Heart (thinking) – How are they feeling?
 - c. Feet (doing) – What do they plan to do with what they learned? What behaviour do they plan to adopt?
 - d. Spirit – Did they have a sense of belonging? How did they feel connected to the activity?
3. If they are comfortable, ask volunteers to share their reflections for one of the four dimensions – Head, Heart, Feet or Spirit—or for all four.

Lego Scale

This evaluation activity is an easy way to gather feedback without the risk of social bias or the bandwagon effect.

Materials:

- Lego blocks (any colour or size)
- Small boxes with a hole in the lid (big enough to fit the Lego blocks)
- Close-ended or rating scale questions printed on large pieces of paper (one question per page)

Instructions:

1. Place one question, one box and several Lego blocks at the center of each table. **Tip:** Label each box with the question being asked to avoid accidentally mixing them up at the end of the activity.
2. Inform participants the number of stacked Lego blocks represents a specific answer. For instance,
 - a. 1 block = Yes/True; 2 blocks = No/False
 - b. 1 block = Strongly Disagree; 2 blocks = Disagree; 3 blocks = Agree; 4 blocks = Strongly Agree**Tip:** Include a legend at each question.
3. Instruct participants to go to each table and answer the question by inserting the corresponding number of Lego blocks to record their response. Advise participants that Lego blocks stay intact before placing it in the box. If the pieces accidentally separate, it might be mistaken for a different answer.
4. Collect the boxes

Stop, Start, Continue

The Stop, Start, Continue exercise is a simple and effective way for your team to reflect on your activities and decide on what things the team should keep doing, stop doing and start doing.

Hand out and ask participants to complete the Stop, Start, Continue sheet on page 13.

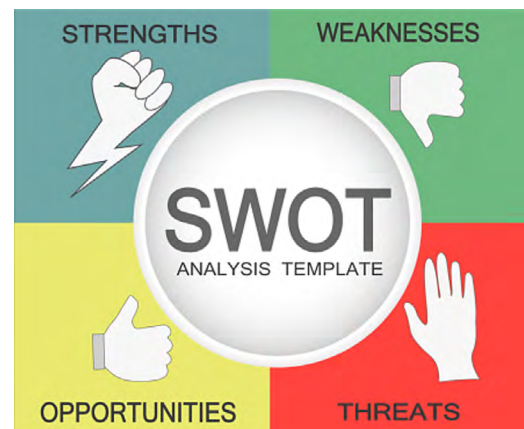
SWOT Analysis

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is a simple tool your group can use to reflect on your program and discover actions that can help build on strengths, minimize, or eliminate weaknesses, maximize opportunities, and confront threats.

There are several SWOT Analysis templates available online. Please see page 14 for an example of a SWOT Analysis template.

The activity can be completed individually or as a group.

If done as a group, display a SWOT Analysis chart on a wall and distribute sticky notes to participants. Pose one question at a time and give participants one minute to write their answers on the sticky notes and add it to the chart.



Testimonials

A testimonial is a person's written or spoken statement about their experiences and how they may have benefited from the initiative.

Testimonials can provide others with real feedback from those who are or were directly involved. This can improve the "trustworthiness factor" of your initiative and encourage others to participate.

You can set up interviews with volunteers and ask open-ended questions that will encourage them to tell their story or experience. Testimonials can be recorded, written or filmed.

"Not only did joining give me well over double the needed volunteer hours to graduate, it also gave me memories, friendships, and knowledge to last a lifetime."

Word Cloud

Word clouds are a fun, visual way to display text data in graphical form. Word clouds display the most prominent or frequent words used. The larger the word in the graphic, the more common the word. Words mentioned less frequently will be smaller or not included at all.



This type of visualization is a simple way to analyze text and can be used to identify common themes in participant responses.

There are a variety of free word cloud generators available online.

3. Internal tracking forms

You can track your program or activity progress by keeping an internal log.

Below are some examples of tracking tools you can use to keep track of key indicators (things you can measure). See the list of indicators above.

- Activity or progress report
- Budget report
- Contact log
- Intake form or registration sheet
- Meeting minutes/notes
- Workplan

4. Focus groups and interviews

Focus groups

A focus group is a **qualitative** research method. During the group discussion, participants are encouraged to converse with other members of the focus group, which involves sharing their thoughts,

opinions and commenting on others' statements.

Focus groups usually last one to two hours, consist of eight to 12 participants, and are held in a neutral and comfortable environment. Questions are typically open-ended permitting less biased, less structured and more in-depth responses than surveys or one-on-one interviews.

More tips for a successful focus group:

- Develop a plan and outline a goal.
- Have a minimum of two moderators – one of the moderators asks the questions and the co-moderator takes care of any technical issues and takes notes.
- Record the group discussion – participants must be advised of the recording and consent is required.
- Design five to seven major questions with probes and follow-up questions to keep the conversation moving.
- Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”. Do use questions that get participants thinking and involved
- Frame each question in the present – don't ask what they are going to do. Ask what they are currently doing!
- Finish the focus group by asking if participants would like to add anything

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are conducted with a single participant, typically last 10–45 minutes, and are held in a private and comfortable environment. Like a focus group guide, an interview guide should be composed of five to seven major questions with follow-up questions (probes).

Additional tips for a successful interview:

- Provide fidget toys such as pipe cleaners, stress ball or Legos – something for members to manipulate while participating in the conversation
- Do not begin the interview with sensitive questions
- Build rapport with the participant with small talk
- Avoid:
 - ◇ Don't ask questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”
 - ◇ Avoid leading questions (“What do you think of _____'s terrible policy?”)
 - ◇ Avoid overly wordy and complex questions
- Silence is ok – don't try to fill every void (unless participant is stuck)

5. Observations and field notes

The **observational method** provides the opportunity to monitor or assess a program by documenting what is seen and heard. For example, program planners would take notes on the participants' behaviours, emotions and interactions to get a sense of how people experience your program. This can involve creating a checklist of items that your group decides would be important to collect (e.g., skills, behaviours, actions, conversations, responses).

Here are a few tips when writing your observations:

- Write down your observations as they happen.
- Be as objective as possible – Record the facts and avoid interpretation.

- Note the following: Details of the activity, physical space, people, behaviour, interactions, body language, reactions, facial expressions, etc.
- Be as detailed as possible – Make the readers feel like they were at the event.
- Have two or more observers, as one person alone might miss things that someone else may note.

6. Questionnaires or surveys

Collect quantitative and sometimes qualitative information on specific questions from a large number of participants. You can include a variety of question types such as:

1. Multiple choice – respondents are asked to choose one or more answers provided
2. Open-ended – respondents can answer in their own words
3. Likert scale – usually a five-point ranking scale which is used to allow respondents to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement
4. Rank order scaling – respondents rank preferences in the order of choice

Surveys can be in electronic or paper form.

- **Pre- and Post-Surveys** – Ask participants the same questions before they start the program or activity, and after they complete the program or activity, and then compare the results to see if there were any changes.
- **Post-only** – Ask participants to reflect on their program experiences and the degree to which their experiences impacted them once they have completed it. This is a good option if the program has already begun, and you are not able to use a pre-post design.
- **Retrospective post-then-pre:** Participants who completed a program are asked to rate their current knowledge, skill, attitude, etc., and then asked to reflect and rate that same knowledge, skill, attitude, and so on, before participating in the program. You can then compare the two sets of results to see if there were any changes.

Sample evaluation

Activity Profile

Tell us about your work!

For Facilitators and Adult Allies:

Please use the form below to tell us about the activities and events you have completed as part of the Youth Wellness Champions (YWC) Program.

You can decide which activity to tell us about. We'd like to hear about activities that you are especially proud of, and that you think will have a lot of impact on the youth in your school or community, today, for the rest of the school year or for the years to come. Please try to answer the questions below in as much detail as possible.

You can distribute the survey to individual Youth Champions, or you may decide to complete this survey together in a group. Feel free to be as creative as you want when describing your activity! Some ideas include:

- Write a story
- Create a photovoice
- Produce a video
- Write a blog

Tell us about yourself

Name (insert name of group if you have one):

School:

Local health unit:

Age range of group members (youngest member to oldest member):

of months group has been working with the YMHAC initiative:

Which of the following adults helped you with this initiative? Check all that apply.

teacher

guidance counsellor

principal

community agency staff

public health staff

other:

Tell us about your project

What is the name of your activity?

What issue does your activity focus on (e.g., decreasing mental health stigma, sharing information and resources, promoting mental health, raising awareness about substance misuse, etc.)?

Where did the idea for your project come from and how did you develop the idea?

What was the overall goal(s) of your activity? What changes were you hoping to see among youth in your school or community?

Do you think the activity reached its goal(s)? Do you think you have had an impact on youth? If so, how do you know?

How did this initiative impact you and your team of youth? What did you learn about working together? Please describe your experience:

Do you have anything extra to add to this profile?

Pictures

Designs/drawings

Videos

Websites

Social network/blog pages

Photovoice

Written story (text)

other:

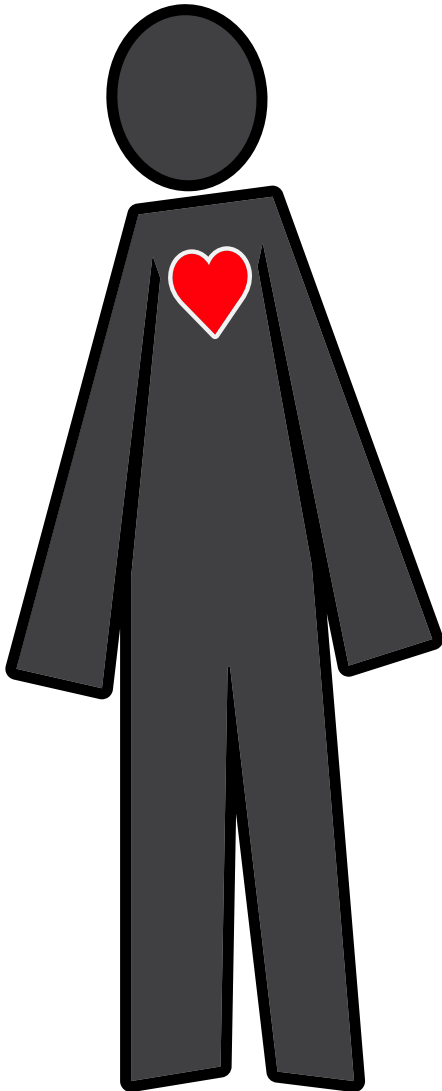
Please attach any extras at the end of this profile or just list a link below to whatever you'd like us to view.

Sample evaluation

Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit

Please complete each section below, using full sentences or bullet points. You can also include images.

HEAD – What have I learned from your experience?



HEART – How do I feel about the initiative and my participation in the initiative?



FEET – What will I do with what I've learned? What do I plan to do as a result of my participation?



SPIRIT – How did my experience relate to who I am? How did it help me connect to something bigger than myself?



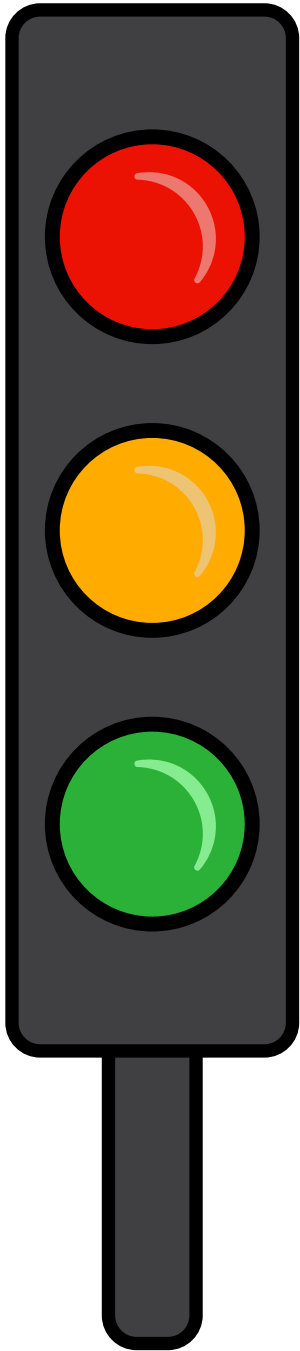
Sample evaluation

Stop, Start, Continue

Complete the exercise below to reflect on your activities and decide on what things the team should keep doing, stop doing and start doing moving forward.

STOP – What should we stop doing?

List ideas that are not working or helping, isn't producing the outcomes you want or the group just plain dislikes.



START – What should we start doing?

List ideas that the group should be doing or things worth experimenting with for better results.

CONTINUE – What should we continue doing?

List ideas that are working well or the group likes and wants to keep.

Sample evaluation

SWOT Analysis

S.W.O.T. stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. **Strengths** and **weaknesses** represent **internal factors** – things you have some control over and can change. **Opportunities** and **threats** represent **external factors** – things that you can't change.

Here's a sample chart with questions to ask the Youth Champions and then a blank chart for you to print and use.

	Positive (Helpful to achieving the objectives)	Negative (Harmful to achieving the objectives)
Internal (Attributes of the organization or group)	<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you do well? • What did you like most about being a part of the initiative? • What about the initiative are you most proud of or satisfied with? • What did you find rewarding? • What resources, experiences or connections did you have access to? 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we improve? • What did you like the least about being part of the initiative? • What things didn't you like and would change? • What should we avoid? • What challenges did you face?
External (Attributes of the environment)	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities are available? • What should the initiative have more of? • What resources, experiences or connections would you need to support the initiative? • What interesting trends (i.e., new technology, events, lifestyle changes) could you take advantage of that may enhance the initiative? • What could help improve your experience? 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What threats could harm the initiative? • What challenges or setbacks might you face? • What are some potential barriers? • What obstacles have you seen other groups overcome?

SWOT Analysis

	Positive (Helpful to achieving the objectives)	Negative (Harmful to achieving the objectives)
Internal (Attributes of the organization or group)	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
External (Attributes of the environment)	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

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