

Ethics of Evaluation

Evaluation data collection, presentation of results or findings, and management of information should follow ethical standards. Major considerations include:

Cultural Sensitivity: We should be aware of our own attitudes, beliefs and values to avoid or minimize biases. Evaluation protocols should be developed only after careful review of cultural norms and values. Recognize cultural differences.

Political Nature of Evaluation: We need to understand how evaluation is influenced by internal and external politics. How do evaluators maintain neutrality in the political atmosphere and to whom they are accountable.

Data Collection and Analysis: We have to address the ethical and privacy concerns of the people from whom we gather data. Always seek permission or informed consent from the participants. Obtain parental consent and participant assent if data are to be collected from minors. Do not collect information unless you will be using it. Obtain institutional approval for evaluative studies involving human subjects. Appropriate analysis is critical. Present information in a way that is easy to understand and free of jargon. Always protect and respect the privacy of participants and respondents.

Presentation of Findings: We should understand that not all information is useful to all stakeholders. Also, not all stakeholders are information users. So, getting the right information to the right people is essential so that information intended for specific uses is likely to hit the target. At the same time, telling the truth to people who may not want to hear it is another purpose of evaluation (Patton, 1997).

Safe Storage of Evaluation Data: Information collected for evaluation, whether quantitative in the form of surveys or qualitative in the form of recordings or pictures, should be maintained in a safe and secure storage place. The information should be disposed of appropriately after the program ceases or the information is no longer deemed useful for future follow-ups.