

# Evaluation Method: Creative Evaluation

## HOW-TO-GUIDE

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### Purpose of Creative Evaluation:

- To help evaluators collect visual data from individuals who may not have the words to share their feelings, learning, or experiences.
- To allow participants to share their feelings, learning, or experiences in a reflective manner.

### Creative Evaluation's 8 Steps:

#### **1. Write a list of what you want to know.**

*What kind of information do you want to know?*

Are you looking for evidence of a need in the community? Or are you looking for evidence that your efforts have been successful? In either case, a list of what you want to know will help you be intentional about what you want your evaluation to help you discover.

#### **2. Write a list of questions.**

This list of questions will act as an anchor for your creative evaluation, reminding you what you are looking for and why.

#### **3. Choose an effective creative evaluation method.**

*What method might help people reflect on their experience? What method might help them share their reflections?*

Think about the people you plan to talk to. Then, look at the methods listed on page 2 of this resource to determine which method(s) might help them think about their experience and share their thoughts.

#### **4. Plan and prepare yourself for the creative evaluation.**

Re-read the questions you wrote about what you want to know. Think carefully about how to ask the questions, how to lead the evaluation process, and what to look for from participants.

#### **5. Lead the creative evaluation with participants.**

When you have developed a strong plan, it is time to lead the creative evaluation. Observe carefully, following the plan and taking detailed notes, and enjoy what you learn.

#### **7. Analyze and summarize the results.**

Read through the data you collected and reflect on what you observed. What patterns do you see? What do the patterns tell you? Finally, how would you apply what you learned to this situation or another?

#### **8. (Optional) Decide how to tell the “story” of your observations.**

*How do you want to share what you learned through the creative evaluation? What impacts might you want to build on? Where might more work be needed? Who else should be involved?*

# Creative Evaluation Methods

As you develop a plan for creative evaluation, choosing the most effective method for the data you want to gather and the people you want to gather it from is very important. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each of the following methods:

<p><b>Words</b>—Gathering words in response to questions you have developed can help to identify what is important to participants.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> After several weeks in a nutrition program, youth could be asked to write a nonsense poem about what they learned. Their collected responses paint a clear picture about their learning and growth.</p>	<p><b>Scrapbooking</b>—Asking participants to, over a period of time, collect, edit, and share media (images, video, etc.) helps them document a journey of change.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Individuals in a farmer’s market project could take pictures during each market to document how participants change during the season</p>
<p><b>Physical Forms</b>—Encouraging participants to be part of physical games or challenges can allow them to communicate without saying a word.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> During a community garden family night, a leader could read several statements, asking individual family members to stand on a line to indicate what they think about that statement.</p>	<p><b>Acting It Out</b>—Simple drama and dance techniques can be a creative way for participants to express emotions or concepts that are difficult to put into words.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Asking children who are part of a walking program to make a movement that expresses how the day’s activity made them feel.</p>
<p><b>Drawing</b>—Drawing pictures in response to key words or to represent feelings can allow participants to communicate ideas more openly than they might if they were asked to speak them out loud.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Asking young people and their parents to draw pictures about the local playground may show joy at playing together and/or concerns about the safety of the equipment and surrounding areas.</p>	<p><b>Symbols</b>—Symbols are a way to give participants a starting point and allow them to personally express the choices they make after that.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> During a family program, parents and children are asked to create a shield that shows what makes their family strong. The words they use and drawings they make on the shield can tell a detailed story of strength that can be analyzed.</p>
<p><b>Technology</b>—photos, videos, mind pping, and other digital technology strategies can help participants show their thoughts and ideas in creative ways.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Following a program about how organizing the refrigerator can encourage healthy eating, asking young people to take pictures of changes they made in their home refrigerator.</p>	

## Additional Resources:

For more detailed information, visit the [Creative Evaluation Toolkit](#). The toolkit provides creative evaluation activity suggestions as well as additional guidance for choosing, leading, analyzing, and talking about the evaluation. Also, visit [Better Evaluation](#) for additional guidance.



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