

Discussion Guide

1. What is one set of data that you're collecting (e.g., playground observations, parent focus groups)?

2. What story does that data tell or what story will it tell?

3. Which stakeholder group could you share the data with?
 - Coalition
 - Kaiser Permanente
 - School District Staff
 - School Site Administrators
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Community Residents

4. How might the selected group use the data?

5. What's the best way to share the data with the selected group? Why?
 - Comprehensive Written Report
 - Executive Summary
 - Working Session
 - Personal Discussion
 - Video Presentation
 - Verbal Presentation
 - Newsletter, Bulletin, Brief, Brochure
 - Memo, Postcard
 - Poster
 - Email

Communicating and Reporting Evaluation Findings

Comprehensive Written Report

A comprehensive written report typically provides a full account of the evaluation purpose, design, methods, findings, and recommendations. It is often designed for more uninformed readers who also want to know about the appropriateness of both the data collection and the analysis methods and the validity of the conclusions and recommendations.

Executive Summary

An executive summary is usually one to two pages and focuses on the evaluation findings. It can also include brief background and methodological information to orient the reader. It often accompanies a comprehensive written report and key audiences who are very busy frequently only read the executive summary. Being shorter, executive summaries have the advantage of being deliverable in numerous ways. They can be written in memo style and faxed or attached to an e-mail. They can be produced on eye-catching paper and formatted with bullets and boxes for easier reading and comprehension.

Working Session

Working sessions are facilitated meetings with primary audiences that can be used to present and interpret findings. Participants have the chance to reflect, share their perspectives, and engage in dialogue. They are particularly well suited for developing action plans based on the evaluation findings.

Personal Discussion

Personal discussions are less formal conversations with key stakeholders to present and interpret findings. Like working sessions, participants have an opportunity to reflect, share their perspectives, and engage in a discussion about the results.

Video Presentation

Video presentations are used to create stand-alone, distributable, visual communications about evaluation findings. The major determinant for use of this format is typically cost. These kinds of presentations can be particularly useful when you want to provide a visually engaging presentation to numerous audiences who are not in the same location. For local audiences, you can incorporate interaction by including question-and-answer or discussion periods during or at the end of the presentation.

Verbal Presentation

Verbal presentations can be part of working sessions or other meetings where evaluation findings need to be addressed. They can vary in the extent to which they are interactive with the audience. Even if verbal presentations allow for only minimal audience interaction, they need not be boring or static. PowerPoint or other slides, flipcharts, and other props can make verbal presentations more accessible to audience members.

Newsletter, Bulletin, Brief, Brochure

These are existing communication channels that can be used to reinforce or introduce evaluation findings. For many readers, these documents have the advantage of already being part of an information stream they regularly receive and assimilate in their work or professional lives.

Memo, Postcard

Memos are short communications that are delivered internally within organizations or sent (via fax or email) to outside organizations. They are often used for reporting interim or final findings in summary form. Postcards can be used to send these types of updates as well. They are usually limited to a single message and can include a graphic design or a catchy typeface on bright paper to draw attention.

Poster

Posters or other visual displays of evaluation findings can be viewed by audiences at a single event, they can be used at additional events, or they can be placed where they will be accessible to audiences over a period of time (e.g., in the hall or entry area of any organization). A poster display can include any amount or type of information, and it can be interactive or static. A representative for the evaluation can be present to orient audiences and answer specific questions.

Email

E-mail can be used to keep audiences informed of evaluation findings and to solicit feedback. In addition, any evaluation report can be part of a file attached to an e-mail or the e-mail can include a link to an online version of the report.