

Appendix F

Glossary of Terms

aggregate data: the combined or total responses from individuals.

anonymous: unknown. In the case of outcome evaluation, this means you do not know who the responses to questions came from. For example, questionnaires left in locked boxes are anonymous.

closed-ended question: a question with a set number of responses from which to choose.

confidential: you do know (or can find out) who the responses came from, but you are committed to keeping this information to yourself. A woman who participates in a focus group is not anonymous, but she expects her responses to be kept confidential.

data: information, collected in a systematic way, that is used to draw conclusions about process or outcome. NOTE: data is plural for datum (a single piece of information), which is why, when presenting results, sentences should read "the data were collected" instead of "the data was collected."

demographic data: background and personal information (e.g., age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) gathered for evaluation or statistical purposes.

measurement instrument: also called "measure" or "instrument," this is the tool used to collect the data. Questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews are all measurement instruments.

mean: the "average" response, obtained by adding all responses to a question and dividing by the total number of responses.

median: the "middle" response, obtained by choosing the score that is at the midpoint of the distribution. Half the scores are above the median, and half are below. In the case of an even number of scores, the median is obtained by taking the mean (average) of the two middle scores.

mode: the response chosen by the largest number of respondents.

open-ended question: a question that invites a reply from the respondent in their own words. A question without set responses.

outcome: an end (intended or unintended) result of a program. For purposes of evaluation, this needs to be a result that can be observed and measured.

outcome evaluation: assesses the measurable impact your program is having.

outcome measure: sources of information that show whether or to what extent the outcome has been achieved. Also called measurement instrument. Common outcome measures are surveys, questionnaires, and staff forms.

process: *how* something happens; the step-by-step procedure through which something is accomplished.

process evaluation: assesses the degree to which your program is operating as intended.

qualitative data: information gathered in an "open-ended" fashion, where the respondent has the opportunity to provide details in her or his own words.

quantitative data: information gathered in a structured way that can be categorized numerically. Questionnaires and interviews involving response categories that can be checked off or circled are collecting quantitative data.

representative sample: a part of a group, chosen for being typical or characteristic of the larger group as a whole.

research: collecting information about a topic in an organized, systematic way.

sampling: collecting information from a part of a group to represent the views or experiences of the group as a whole.

verbatim: word for word; in a respondent's own words.