

Evaluation Considerations in the Time of COVID-19

COVID-19 has likely impacted nearly every aspect of your program, including your program evaluation. As you begin updating your evaluation tools this year, think carefully about the essential items you need to **keep**, those you can respectfully **remove**, and a few you may want to **add** along the way.



What do I **keep**?

Your organization's "must have" items

How do you determine your "must have" items? These may be the items your organization is required to collect (and cannot be renegotiated). They may also include the items that are considered essential for your evaluation plan or internal and external program reporting.

Items that support your benchmarks and/or annual trends

As you consider your essential items, there might be benchmark and annual trend data you'd really like to continue tracking. If these are areas that are still in line with the content you've covered or services you've provided, keep these in so you can maintain the year-over-year and program-to-program reporting you've been tracking.



What do I **remove**?

Items that no longer align with content you covered or services you provided
COVID-19 has certainly highlighted how flexible we can be, shifting from Plan A to what must be plan T, U, or V at this point. As you revise your evaluation tools, make sure you remove any items that are related to content you did not *actually* cover or services you did not *actually* provide this past year.

All "nice to know" items

In the evaluation world, we often cut back on survey content by asking ourselves, "Is this 'nice' to know or do we 'need' to know it?" Reduce the evaluation burden on your participants AND your staff by removing every item you don't actually need to know this year. If you cannot identify a specific intended use for the data, it's likely you don't need it.



What do I **add**?

Items specific to the impact of your program in the context of COVID-19
While it certainly feels like we will be in our bubbles forever, we are hopeful that change is on the horizon. We recommend including at least one item about the specific role of your program (or organization) in supporting your participants during the pandemic to document your impact during these challenging times.

Items that address new content areas, services, and/or methods of delivery
What was *new* to your program this year? Did you cover new content, offer new services, change from in-person to virtual and then perhaps to hybrid? If so, you may need to adjust your program evaluation content to get feedback on these shifts. While some changes may be temporary, you may find that others stand the test of time.