CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND EQUITABLE EVALUATION (CREE)[1]

Equitable evaluation is a culturally responsive evaluation method that does not consider culture as a subjective factor needing to be controlled. Instead, it explicitly acknowledges culture and context when assessing program effectiveness. Equitable evaluation relies heavily on engaging community members, including those who are involved in community engagement, participate in prevention programs, and provide evaluation data. According to the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#), evaluation efforts should be in service of equity, and evaluators should consider the following aspects while developing their evaluation approach:

- Diversity of their evaluation teams, including cultural backgrounds, disciplines, beliefs, and lived experiences
- Cultural appropriateness and validity of evaluation methods
- Involvement of community members in the evaluation design, implementation, and dissemination, including selection of evaluation questions and indicators
- Ability of the evaluation design to reveal structural and systems-level drivers of inequity (present-day and historical)
- Degree to which communities have the power to shape and own how evaluation happens

Strategies to Practice Equitable Evaluation
State, tribal, and community leaders can use the following questions to apply CREE practices at each stage of the evaluation process.

Evaluation Process Step	Guiding Questions
Putting together an evaluation team	• Are proposed team members culturally and racially diverse? • Do they represent different backgrounds and beliefs and have lived experience with the issue at hand? • What types of training or capacity building are necessary to enable all members of the evaluation team to participate in the evaluation?
Evaluation purpose(s) and audience(s)	• Does the overall evaluation purpose explicitly reference progress toward equity at multiple levels (e.g., individual, structural, or systemic)? • Do evaluation audiences include the under-resourced and other populations served?
Evaluation questions	• Has the organization involved community members in the identification and prioritization of evaluation questions? • Do the evaluation questions consider the extent to which different groups experience community engagement and prevention services differently?
Outcomes and indicators	• Have community members participated in the identification of outcomes and indicators? • Are outcomes and indicators meaningful and relevant to community members? • Do selected outcomes and indicators reflect community engagement principles and community-identified community engagement priorities and practice standards? • Do selected outcomes and indicators provide the community with evidence of progress?
Data collection, analysis, and dissemination	• Is the organization or community transparent about how and why it collects and uses data? • Are community members involved in data collection, and how? • Are data collection tools culturally relevant to and appropriate for the community? • Is disaggregated data prioritized to account for contextual and cultural differences? • Is the organization actively engaging the community in interpreting the data and formulating recommendations? • Is the community involved in presenting evaluation results to different audiences?

CREE Resources

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[1] Excerpt from SAMHSA. (2022). Community Engagement: An Essential Component of an Effective and Equitable Substance Use Prevention System. Retrieved from https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep22-06-01-005.pdf (p. 41-46)

EVALUATION TOOL 5: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND EQUITABLE EVALUATION (CREE)

The Equitable Evaluation Initiative's [Equitable Evaluation Framework™](#) seeks to provide foundations and nonprofit organizations with an understanding of equity and how to use an equity lens while performing evaluations.

Mathematica's [Using a Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation Approach to Guide Research and Evaluation](#) introduces the CREE approach and tools to maximize its utilization.

Child Trends' [How To Embed a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research](#) provides researchers with guiding principles in accomplishing research and evaluation in an equitable manner.

WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center's [Reflections on Applying Principles of Equitable Evaluation](#) deals with how equitable evaluation principles can be applied and the implications of equity focused research and evaluation.

The Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, Fourth Edition's [Culturally Responsive Evaluation Theory, Practice, and Future Implications](#) provides a foundation for culturally responsive evaluation—from preparation for the evaluation to disseminating and using the results.

Cultural Competence Resources
The American Evaluation Association's [Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation](#) affirms the importance of cultural competence in evaluation and provides a guide to the essential practices for cultural competence.

The Foundation Review's [Raising the Bar – Integrating Cultural Competence and Equity: Equitable Evaluation](#) presents a framework for building equitable evaluation capacity.

The CDC provides practical strategies for [Culturally Competent Evaluation](#).

The Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center created an [Indigenous Evaluation Toolkit](#).

[A Language Justice Framework for Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation](#) proposes an evaluation framework grounded in language justice, defined as the right to communicate in the language in which one feels most comfortable.

SAMHSA developed a Treatment Improvement Protocol, [Improving Cultural Competence](#), which includes guidance for conducting culturally responsive evaluation.