Pathways

A Guide For Evaluating Programs In Jewish Settings

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PROGRAM EVALUATION AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Programs in the Jewish Community

In recent years, the American Jewish community has seen an explosion of programs in a variety of areas.

The energy unleashed by the "wake-up call" of the 1990 National Population Study, which documented high levels of both assimilation and diversity in the Jewish community, has resulted in both large and small initiatives on the part of Federations, synagogues, schools, youth groups, Hillels, camps, Jewish Community Centers, Jewish Family Services, and other organizations, such as B'nai Brith, Hadassah, and the National Council of JewishWomen.

The overall purpose of these programs has been to reach, touch, and influence the many different kinds of people who make up the Jewish population of America. However, each program has its own goals and objectives and is carried out by program providers within a specific setting and with a particular population.

For example, in many cities, Federations and Bureaus of Jewish Education are making grants to synagogues for self-directed change projects or for new initiatives in broadly defined areas, such as outreach to marginally or unaffiliated individuals, outreach to newly arrived immigrants, outreach to interfaith families, youth programs, or adult education programs.

Community and family foundations are supporting teacher training, curriculum development and family education projects in day schools and afternoon schools. Teen trips to Israel are being supplemented by pre-and post-trip programming.

Many of these programs and projects are using increasingly sophisticated management tools including advertising, public relations, cause marketing, inter-institutional partnerships. strategic planning, Web pages and teleconferencing.

Those involved in designing and promoting these efforts are filled with optimism and enthusiasm. They believe that these experiments are likely to be the well-spring of 21st century American Jewish revitalization.

Program Evaluation in the Jewish Community

Because we are living in this era of change and active experimentation, we are not exactly sure of "what will work." New programs represent the "best guesses" of program providers, funders and policy makers as to what will reach this generation of American Jews. In order for us to distill the maximum learning from all these experiments, some form of program evaluation is essential.

Thus, there is a greater imperative to do program evaluation now than there was in the past. In the past, synagogues and schools and agencies appealed to a population with known characteristics. Common sense and previous experiences were enough to create successful programs. Everyone was operating in familiar territory.

Now, the territory is not so familiar. Program providers, policy makers and funders who function within the affiliated Jewish community may not be well attuned to those who are unaffiliated. The older generation may not be able to readily intuit the needs of a younger population.

For example...

- we may not know, for sure, what will attract pre-school parents to Jewish family education programs

- we may not know, for sure, how to link rural Jewish teens with the rabbi, via Email and chat lines

- we may not know, for sure, how to help new Americans from the former Soviet Union become more Jewish

- we may not know, for sure, how to develop in-the-dorm Shabbat dinners for college students

At first, we mount such programs by trial and error. We learn how to do them by doing them. Program evaluations can cut down on our learning time, and make us more effective more efficiently.

But many in the Jewish community are not yet convinced of this. Program evaluations have not yet become standard practice. While applauded in concept, funders and policy makers rarely make sufficient dollars available for evaluation. And program providers secretly worry about having their mistakes made visible. And, at the present time, there are too few skilled evaluators available, too few training programs in evaluation, too few mechanisms for dissemination of evaluation findings.

But the trend is in the right direction. The value added by evaluation is becoming more apparent. The benefits to be accrued from program evaluation for the entire community are becoming better understood and appreciated. Among such benefits are:

- increased awareness of the diversity of the American Jewish population
- greater knowledge of how to appeal to different populations
- improved techniques for delivering high quality, well-managed programs
- greater capacity to positively affect the participants in a program
- increased ability to engage program participants as active partners rather than as passive audiences

The Emerging Evaluation Paradigm

In the last chapter, we indicated that evaluation is fast becoming a necessary element in developing and delivering programs because it is a way to improve or expand such programs.

Earlier thinking about program evaluation was dominated by concerns with accountability. Program funders and program policy makers set up evaluations to ensure that money was spent as they intended, and that the outcomes of the program justified the expenses of the program.

Today, when we are less sure that we know how to devise programs to meet new needs and we want to encourage fruitful experimentation, program funders, program policy makers, and program providers must be partners in working together. Evaluations should be seen as an organized form of working together.

The emerging evaluation paradigm, then, starts with a trust among program partners in one another's good faith. In this new way of thinking, evaluation is an enterprise equally valued by everyone and not something that someone in one role does to someone else in another role. Evaluation is regarded as an essential part of everyone's learning.

Three Approaches to Program Evaluation: Non-formal, Informal and formal

We can distinguish three different approaches to evaluation.

Non-Formal: Non-formal evaluation is that which we do normally in the course of daily life as we make judgments about people and events. Non-formal program evaluation occurs when someone says to someone else I had a good time," "That seemed to go really well," or "I don't think they are doing the right thing." Non-formal evaluation of programs happens when we - whether we are participants, program providers, or program funders - react reflexively out of our own perceptions and biases. It usually occurs spontaneously. As a program provider, we may not plan for or consciously seek such feedback, but we listen when it is offered. As a program participant, we might not analyze our reactions. We just talk. As a program policy maker, we may not make considered and comprehensive judgments. We just react.

Informal: By contrast, informal evaluation is what we do when we intentionally set out to learn from experience and bring some level of analysis to what we see and hear from others. Although we use this approach in many circumstances, we are referring specifically to doing informal program evaluation when trying to learn what works and what doesn't work about small or start-up programs.

Informal program evaluation usually relies on post-program analysis by program providers plus oral or written feedback from participants. Doing informal program evaluation is inexpensive. It does not require careful research designs nor pilot-tested instruments. But, informal program evaluation is not free. Its costs are in program providers' and participants' time–time spent discussing, analyzing, and debriefing after a program. Also, informal program evaluation, while not relying on technical expertise in data collection and analysis, does require of those engaged in it an open attitude, skills in "listening for" issues raised by others, talent in synthesizing information from many sources, and the ability to make judgments about appropriate next steps. Informal program evaluation requires intention and attention, both of which can be improved upon by practice.

Formal: The third approach presented in this *Guide* is formal evaluation. When we do formal program evaluation, the planning of the evaluation requires the same careful thought as the planning of the program. In fact, the formulation and framing of evaluative questions - one of the critical steps in doing a formal evaluation - helps to clarify the intentions as well as the operations of the program. For example, evaluative questions such as "How will we know whether the program is a success?" or 'What can we look at as indicators of program impact?" or 'What do we expect in the way of participant changes as a result of the program?" often stimulate the restatement of program goals or produce new ideas for program activities.

Unlike informal evaluations, where surveys, interviews, and evaluative go-rounds are created by those running the program, in formal evaluations the development of instruments for data collection and the data analysis should be guided by someone knowledgeable about these matters. *(see figure 2)*

(Figure 1)

THE EMERGING EVALUATION PARADIGM

OLD WAYS OF THINKING

1. Evaluation is imposed on a program by outsiders.

2. Evaluation is needed to make sure that funds have not been misappropriated or misspent.

3. Evaluation is done at the end of a program.

4. Evaluation findings are seldom integrated into an organization's ongoing decision making and planning.

5. Resistance to evaluation comes from fear that negative evaluative findings will lead to loss of funding.

6. Evaluation takes time away from the real work of the program or organization.

7. Evaluation must be statistical to be valid. Perceptions do not count.

8. Evaluation must always be done by an impartial arms-length evaluator.

NEW WAYS OF THINKING

1. Evaluation is seen as important by insiders.

2. Evaluation looks at implementation as well as impacts,

3. Evaluation begins as a program is planned and continues throughout the life of the program.

4. Evaluation is viewed as organizational learning - a way to fine-tune its work.

5. Evaluation is a developmental process, not a report card process. There is a problem-solving relationship between grantors and grantees.

6. Evaluation is essential to the real work of the program or organization.

7. Evaluation may be done by different methods, matched to audiences' needs for credible, persuasive findings.

8. Evaluation is everybody's job

(figure 2)

THREE APPROACHES TO PROGRAM EVALUATIONS NON-FORMAL, INFORMAL AND FORMAL		
NON-FORMAL	**INFORMAL**	**FORMAL**
Relevant Program Characteristics • very small • one time only • first time through	• start-up or pilot • multi-session	• well-formulated with clear purpose • goals or expected outcomes • conceptual rationale • stable structure • likely to be transported or replicated • well-funded • multi-site
Pre-Requisite For Evaluation • personal willingness to learn from experience • openess to feedback	• personal willingness to learn from experience • atmosphere of trust • evaluative questions • skill in soliciting feedback from participants • skill in analyzing and synthesizing feedback • ability to make judgements about appropriate changes • ability to communicate about such changes • resources for materials • time to engage in pre- and post-program evaluation activities	• program readiness in terms of above characteristics • evaluation readiness. sufficient trust/ time/money/skill/stakeholder buy-in • rationale and purpose for evaluation • evaluation questions • plan for collecting. data; instruments, sample schedule • plan for analysis and formulation of findings • plan for communicating and taking action • resources of time, money and skill
Framework for Evaluation • concurrent with program • little additional cost	• pre-program intention to evaluate evaluative awareness while conducting program • solicitation of participant and peer feedback • costs of up to $2000	• concurrent and integrated program and evaluation planning • data collection before, during, and after program, along with follow-up costs starting at $5000 • outside consultant for part or all
Data Collection • personal interactions • observations	• observations, interviews, surveys, journals/logs, record analysis, evaluation go-rounds - from all or a sample of participants	• surveys, in-person or phone interviews, focus groups, case studies, observation journals/logs, document and record analysis - from all or a sample of participants with a formal design
Findings • personal and or collegial interpretations • learnings benefit those running the program • possible program changes	• personal, collegial and/or stakeholder analysis and interpretations • learnings beneficial for those running, supporting, or participating in program • possible program modification, expansion, or termination	• expert, collegial, and or stakeholder analysis and interpretations • learnings beneficial for those running, supporting, or participating in program, as well as others in field or community • possible program modification, expansion, or termination
Communication • conversation	• face-to-face discussions • written progress and final reports to audiences on/off-site	• face-to-face discussions • formal, written progress and final reports to audiences on/off-site • publication of findings

Case 8:
Evaluating a Grants Program:
The Jewish Identity and Continuity Grant Program of Bergen County and North Hudson

The author of this case is Leora Isaacs. She designed the evaluation described in the example.

General Comments

The 1990 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) documented an overall decline in Jewish population, affiliation, involvement and practice among large segments of the North American Jewish community. These findings heightened concern about the current identity of Jewish individuals and the future of the Jewish community. In response, federations and their affiliated agencies across North America established commissions to support and develop programs and initiatives designed to strengthen Jewish identity and to ensure Jewish continuity. A number of communities launched competitive grants initiatives to provide funding to community agencies and institutions for innovative programming directed toward designated target populations (*e.g.,* families with young children, teens and youth, college students). A few communities built systematic evaluation processes into their grants from the onset; others began to formalize the assessment process farther along the way.

Program Description

The Jewish Identity and Continuity Grants Program was one of two mechanisms established by The Commission on Jewish Identity and Continuity of The UJA-Federation of Bergen County & North Hudson to build community and ensure Jewish continuity. During the program's first year $212,500 was awarded for 21 grants aimed at teens, college age youth, young adults and young families. Grant recipients were existing communal institutions, agencies and organizations.

Priority was placed on implementing programs as soon as possible. A reporting system was developed for monitoring grants.

Evaluation Purpose

At the end of the first year of operation, the Commission engaged Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation at JESNA and the Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center to evaluate the attainments of the first-year grants and to help revise the grants management and evaluation process for the future.

Collecting Data

The evaluators prepared their report based on review of the records documenting the history and progress of the Commission; a review of the original grant applications, implementation reports, supporting documentation and year-end reports for each project; discussions with project staff; and attendance at two meetings of the commission's sub-committee on evaluation. Findings were placed in the context of other identity and continuity initiatives being conducted across North America.

As part of the formative evaluation of the grants process, the Director of the Federation's grants initiative participated in a four-day seminar workshop on program evaluation conducted by one of the evaluators under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Federations through their Continuing Professional Education (CPE) program. As part of the seminar, the Director of the Grants Initiative analyzed the goals and, implementation of the grants process and revised the continuity grants program's application, monitoring and evaluation procedures and instruments in consultation with fellow participants and faculty. A framework was created to guide applicants and then recipients through a process of clearly articulating objectives and measurable benchmarks at the outset of their projects, describing "inputs" providing ongoing, objective feedback on their progress ("outputs"), and documenting outcomes. Emphasis was placed on not only finding ways to document what was done, but also on assessing the impact of the programs on participants both in the short-term and creating baseline measures for longer-term assessment (if possible). Instruments and tools to guide the process were designed for use in the second round of grants.

Findings and Recommendations

Among the first year findings:

1. The Grants Initiative elicited strong communal involvement. Proposals were received from 24 institutions for 44 projects. The selection process resulted in awarding 21 grants.

2. The Commission's strategic decisions to implement the grant-supported programs in the shortest time possible and to work through and with existing organizations had both benefits and costs. It allowed new programs to be quickly established and clearly expressed the Federation's serious commitment to the Jewish continuity agenda, to its role as the community's central planning and coordinating body and to working with existing agencies, institutions and organizations in the community. The short time frame made it difficult (if not impossible) for grant recipients to plan adequately, to amass appropriate human and other resources, to devise appropriate evaluation strategies, etc.

3. The six focal areas identified by the Commission for its efforts were consistent with those emphasized by other North American Jewish communities.

4. The continuity objectives articulated by the Commission for each of the focal areas focused primarily on inputs, activities and outputs, and to a lesser degree on outcomes (the effects these programs would be expected to have on participants and institutions). This, in turn, influenced the emphases of the grantees.

5. The objectives of the grant recipients were consistent with the overall objectives of the Commission.

6. Most of the funded projects were analogous to those initiated in other communities, either through their continuity initiatives or as part of ongoing community activities.

7. It was not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of many of the individual projects because:

   a) indicators and benchmarks to be used in assessing achievement of objectives were not well defined;

   b) without acceptable indicators/benchmarks it was difficult (if not impossible) to provide adequate instruments and measurements;

   c) objective data were unavailable for most projects. In some cases inputs and processes were well described (i.e., the number of programs actually conducted and their attendance), but data for both baseline and outcome assessments were lacking.

   These inadequaies were due to lack of experience with program evaluation (on the part of both the Federation and grantees) and inadequate time and resources to engage in the process.

8. Two key factors influencing institution's success in implementing the programs were institutional capacity (i.e., qualified staff, volunteer support, collaborative relationship between partnering institutions, access to target population) and valid assessment of the need/responsiveness of the target population for the program. There was great variation in the numbers of participants engaged by programs.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. The Commission should review and revise their Continuity Objectives to more clearly articulate preferred outcomes. Grant proposals should be evaluated relative to their potential to bring participants and institutions closer to those outcomes.

2. The revised monitoring and evaluation process should be implemented to provide the UJA-Federation with the information needed for decision-making and the institutions with the information needed to maximize the potential for success.

3. UJA-Federation should provide additional direction and professional development and training to assist grant applicants and recipients in articulating measurable objectives, designing appropriate evaluation methodologies, documenting their activities and in assessing effectiveness at the outset of the grant development process. Additional human and financial resources for supervising the grants initiative must be provided.

4. To optimize success, the Commission should carefully assess the institutional capacities of grant recipients. No matter how great the merit of a project, the lead institution must demonstrate appropriate levels of expertise, staffing and institutional organization to sustain it. Where collaborating partners are involved, the Commission should also have assurance that the partners will cooperate and that the necessary resources are available.

5. Similarly, the Commission should require evidence of the need and/or readiness of potential participants for proposed programs.

6. Consideration should be given to offering renewable (multi-year) grants, especially for projects likely to require more than one year to become established. Renewal should be contingent on achieving articulated "benchmarks" for each period of the grant.

Evaluating Jewish Programs: Issues

Informal Evaluation: Evaluating One's Own Work

The perspective taken in this *Guide* is that informal evaluation is very important for Jewish professionals and lay leaders and should be encouraged and valued by every Jewish institution. At this time of rapid change and experimentation, it is essential for everyone to cultivate habits of reflection and self-evaluation both for maintaining their sense of balance and for stimulating their growth. Doing this is difficult in synagogues, schools, and agencies, where there is more work to be done than can be done and where the press is towards getting on to the next task almost before the last is completed.

If you are a program provider, informally evaluating your own work can take many different forms.

1. **Intentional reflection on your own performance.** Techniques that you might use for doing this include journal keeping so that you make for yourself a chronological flow of facts and feelings that you can review at periodic intervals; writing down on post-its, index cards or on computer of critical incidents to capture particularly important events or conversations; scheduling periodic time-outs where you mentally assess how you feel about where things are, where they should be going, and what you should do next. Cultivating habits of reflection helps you to become a very acute observer of your own thoughts, feelings and actions.

2. **Intentional solicitation of feedback starting with sympathetic friends, colleagues and others.** This may feel difficult to do especially if you anticipate criticism that you are reluctant to hear. If you start with people you trust and open the conversation with comments such as "Tell me how I did, from your perspective. What might I have done differently? What would you have done in my position. You are likely to get feedback in a form that you do not have to defend against. As you get practice, you can then move on, little by little, to soliciting the same kind of feedback from less friendly individuals. But do stay away from those people you regard as toxic until you know you can handle their responses without damaging your mental health.

3. **Intentional solicitation of feedback from program participants.** It is very helpful to purposefully change the role of participants in a program from passive audience to engaged partner. Most people need encouragement to take active responsibility for their own learning and to critique both the content and the form of what is presented to them. By taking time out during programs or at the end to ask people, "How is this going for you? Are you stimulated engaged by what you are learning? What would work even better for you?-' you

help them to do their own "metalearning - learning about their own learning - and in the process of doing this, they give you insights into improving the program.

Informal Evaluation: Helping Others Evaluate Their Own Work

If you are responsible for the work of others who do programming or services, there are at least four ways in which you can interact with them to encourage them to informally evaluate their own work, and provide them with evaluative guidance: through supervision, mentoring, coaching, and team leadership.

Supervision works best when there are one-on-one regularly supervised uninterrupted appointments. Supervision meetings should always have a mutually agreed upon agenda. The supervisor should be encouraging the supervisee to evaluate his or her own work, as outlined about, as well as providing feedback, guidance, suggestions and direction.

Mentoring is different than supervision. Mentoring occurs when you choose someone you admire and trust to provide you with guidance. This relationship is less formal and more comprehensive than that with a supervisor. Mentors usually guide mentees by discussing personal and interpersonal as well as task-related issues. In addition, a mentor models what a mentee would like to become. Conversations between mentor and mentee encourage on both sides the awareness and reflection that is part of self-evaluation. Sometimes mentor-mentee relationships, instead of forming spontaneously between two people, are arranged for by others, for example, when someone designates a relationship between senior and student rabbis, between college students and community leaders, or between school administrators and student interns.

Coaching is yet another kind of relationship where an expert guides a novice through critique, demonstration, and support. This enables the novice to fine-tune skills and develop the confidence to carry out complex tasks. Coaching can be part of informal program evaluation with the coach providing perspective and wisdom for program improvement.

Team Leadership. Programs in Jewish settings are mounted rarely by someone working completely alone. They are usually team efforts. Post-program debriefings produce useful insights. To debrief effectively, good communication skills are critical. People must be capable of both giving and receiving constructive criticism. They must become astute analysts of one another's work, while supportive of one another's efforts and charitable about one another's short-comings.

FORMAL EVALUATION: REQUIRING OTHERS TO EVALUATE THEIR OWN WORK

Increasingly, Jewish funders are asking grantees to evaluate their own work. Increasingly, boards and policy makers are asking program providers to evaluate their own work. It is time to be careful and thoughtful about what kinds of evaluation to mandate.

We know from the history of public educational reform efforts that formal evaluations, prematurely imposed by Federal or state funding agencies, killed promising new programs. We know that mandated evaluations, some with very detailed specifications, were burdensome for local sites and, even worse, distorted the way in which local programs could respond to local needs. The government's investment in program evaluation did not always pay off in getting better education. Evaluations that yielded answers different from what powerful interests wanted were often ignored. Decisions about program continuation, for example, were sometimes influenced more by political considerations than by effectiveness considerations.

So, what can be inferred from these general education experiences that is pertinent for evaluation in Jewish settings? First, avoid premature evaluations. Second, negotiate with program providers about evaluation purposes and questions. Third, acknowledge and deal with the political as well as the technical aspects of program evaluation.

As a policy maker who endorses a program, or as a funder who supports a program, you might weigh the following considerations in deciding the kind of formal program evaluation to mandate.

Program readiness. When programs are in the early stages of conceptualization and execution, you might ask the program providers to plan and carry out informal self-evaluation and provide them with the technical assistance and resources they need to do this. If you think it is desirable to have a formal evaluation at this stage, using an outside evaluator, it is likely that mandating a formative evaluation emphasizing implementation concerns, with frequent feedback and discussion will be very helpful.

When programs are mature and stabilized, formal summative evaluations of impact are useful and provide the information needed to make refunding decisions.

Evaluation negotiation. Policy makers and funders should participate in framing the evaluation questions and acknowledge the politics at work. These individuals should also ensure that there are sufficient resources to do high quality evaluations.

Building the evaluation infrastructure. As formal evaluations become more common as attachments to programming in the Jewish community, funders, policy makers, evaluators and program providers might want to consider building better theoretical, conceptual and political frameworks for evaluation. They might consider adding training in evaluation to existing pre- and in-service educator courses, orienting experts with evaluation skills in the unique issues of evaluation in Jewish settings, and creating various networks to share evaluation techniques and findings.

FORMAL EVALUATION: WORKING WITH AN OUTSIDE EVALUATOR

Sometimes, an entire evaluation is contracted to an outside evaluator who is given discretion to handle the evaluation in any way he or she sees fit. This rarely works well.

More helpful is when an outside evaluator works with an insider or with an evaluation committee to focus, frame, and carry out the evaluation.

Sometimes, an outside person will do only specified portions of the evaluation - for example, the design or analysis of a questionnaire, the conduct of a series of focus groups, or follow-up telephone interviews with program participants several months after the end of the program leaving the rest to insiders.

Finding the right outside person to do the program evaluation may be a major challenge. Evaluators come in many shapes and sizes and have preferred ways of working. Some are interested in implementation evaluation; others are interested in impact. Some prefer goal-based evaluations; others want to do goal-free evaluations. Some are skilled in quantitative techniques, others like to work with qualitative data. Some see their responsibility as ending with the generation of findings; others believe they should make recommendations based on what they have discovered.

During the interview and reference- checking process, candidates talents and preferences should be thoroughly explored. Whoever is charged with recruiting and selecting the evaluator should bear in mind the purposes for the evaluation and aim to find an evaluator whose orientation is compatible with those purposes. Proposals may be solicited from several evaluators, so the selection committee will have comparative costs and alternative evaluation designs from which to choose.

In the Jewish community, many people doing program evaluation have had and will have other relationships with program providers and funders. **Role conflict or role ambiguity may complicate the program evaluation, and this possibility should be explored before selecting an evaluator.**

Once the evaluator is on board, ways of working together should be negotiated. An evaluation committee may be formed to work with the evaluator, or the program director and the evaluator might work together on the evaluation. Sometimes a board member might be the contact person for the evaluator. **It is important to be clear in advance about who the evaluator "works with" and who the evaluator "works for." Many evaluations**

become confused or enmeshed in the politics of the institution unless care is taken to do this.

The reporting process should be clarified early on. If the evaluation is primarily formative, the evaluator usually will provide reports orally to those involved in program delivery before informing others. Even if the evaluation is primarily summative, the evaluator might present preliminary findings to those most closely involved in the program to find out if there are any gaps that should be filled before reporting to boards or outside funders. Drafts of the written report should be discussed with many stakeholders before being finalized.

FORMAL EVALUATION: MINIMIZING EVALUATION RISKS, MAXIMIZING REWARDS

As we have indicated throughout this *Guide*, evaluations are not only conceptual and technical exercises but also political and social activities that have costs and benefits as well as risks and rewards for institutions and groups. We have argued that at this point in time in Jewish settings the benefits of evaluation will outweigh the costs and the rewards will outweigh the risks. However, this will happen more frequently in those circumstances when people not only recognize the risks and intentionally set out to minimize them, but also welcome the rewards and intentionally set out to maximize them.

What are some program evaluation risks and how might they be minimized?

Risk 1: Evaluations may become embroiled in, and exacerbate, institutional politics.

From time to time, program evaluations can leave institutions worse rather than better off. To guard against this happening, from its inception the evaluation must be genuinely well-intentioned. It should focus on learning rather than on finding fault. If it is not possible to do a well-intentioned evaluation under the existing circumstances, it should not be done. Other forms of inquiry, problem solving, or conflict resolution should be found to solve such institutional issues. Assuming that stakeholders can be assured that a program evaluation is well- intentioned, everyone must become aware of the anxieties and resistance that they themselves are experiencing and how they are defending against them. Everyone also must be sensitive to other people's anxieties and try to assuage them. Sometimes, anxieties and resistances can be laid to rest simply by discussing everyone's fears and "worst nightmares." Sometimes, creative negotiation is needed to develop specific safeguards at sensitive points in the evaluation process. And sometimes, it must be accepted that not all evaluations run a smooth course, especially if there

is a great deal at stake. People with differing interests may have major disagreements about how to frame the questions, collect the data, analyze the data, or publish results. These disagreements should be worked through in as facilitative a manner as possible. In these situations, power is better regarded as "Power to," "power with" or "power for" rather than as "power over."

Risk 2: Evaluations may be seen as having negative consequences for individuals.

Evaluators and evaluation committees should regard program evaluation as distinct and separate from personnel evaluation. Program evaluations may sometimes touch on personnel issues if it appears that programs are insufficiently staffed or if there is a mismatch between program requirements and job responsibilities or performance. However, personnel decisions should be always insulated from the program evaluation process and handled in separate deliberations that will consider all relevant factors and options.

Risk 3: Evaluations may surface issues that have been intentionally buried.

People's forebodings about program evaluations are that they will bring bad news rather than good news. However, when appropriately conceptualized, evaluations should surface what works well. They should provide visibility and recognition for accomplishments, as well as spotlighting what needs improvement. The evaluator and the evaluation committee need to remind themselves of this, so that they remain vigilant about nurturing and rewarding the positive. As for issues that have been intentionally buried, they are probably not very wellhidden, only ignored or denied. Bringing them to light and resolving them in an orderly, structured process should make for a healthier institution in the long run.

Risk 4: Evaluations may prematurely kill off promising program ideas.

Premature formal evaluations can indeed bludgeon a newly-formed program to death, and care should be taken by funders and policy-makers not to have this happen. Encouraging non-formal reflection and informal collegial evaluation should be considered when promising practices look like they have not yet reached the stage where they are making an impact, but they have the potential to do so. As much as possible, program evaluators, like doctors, should customize what they do, so that they will "do no harm."

What are the rewards of program evaluation and how might they be maximized?

The rewards of program evaluation are reaped not only by particular programs within a particular Jewish setting but also by those in other settings who can learn, at low cost, from the experiences of others. The Jewish community rewards from program evaluation include the following.

Reward 1: More outstanding programs.

Programs improve with attention. Program evaluation provides such attention and can move programs from fledgling to mature, from mediocre to sophisticated, from poorly managed to well managed, and from low impact to high impact.

Reward 2: More skilled programming.

Going through the process of an informal or a formal program evaluation is educative for everyone concerned. The skills and "habits of mind" acquired during one program evaluation are likely to ripple through and benefit the development of subsequent programs by heightening everyone's awareness about how to frame questions and find answers.

Reward 3: More sophisticated understanding of desirable and realistic program outcomes.

Funders, policy makers, and program providers often have unrealistic expectations of what single, small programs can do. Program evaluation, by stimulating the discussion of realistic and probable outcomes, can encourage the development of linkages among programs so that multiple and cumulative experiences will result in long-term and important effects.

Reward 4: More frequent communication among program stakeholders.

This reward may be ancillary to the primary purpose of a program evaluation, but it is a frequently observed reward. Program evaluations are useful vehicles for organizing cross-conversations among people who may interact only infrequently in the course of their usual routines. Creativity and new ideas are generated when people with different perspectives come together to do a common task.