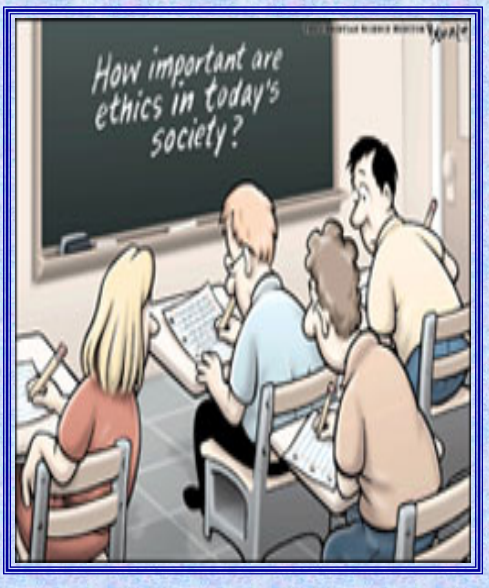
The Summer Institute in Program Evaluation 2018

Ethics in Research and Evaluation

Presented by:

Gerry Kaplan
Kaplan Research Associates Inc.



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- To explore ethical issues experienced by some evaluators
- To explore ethical standards related to evaluation practice (Tri-Council Policy, CES standards, OCAP)
- To explore ethical standards for agencies, organizations or government departments undertaking evaluations

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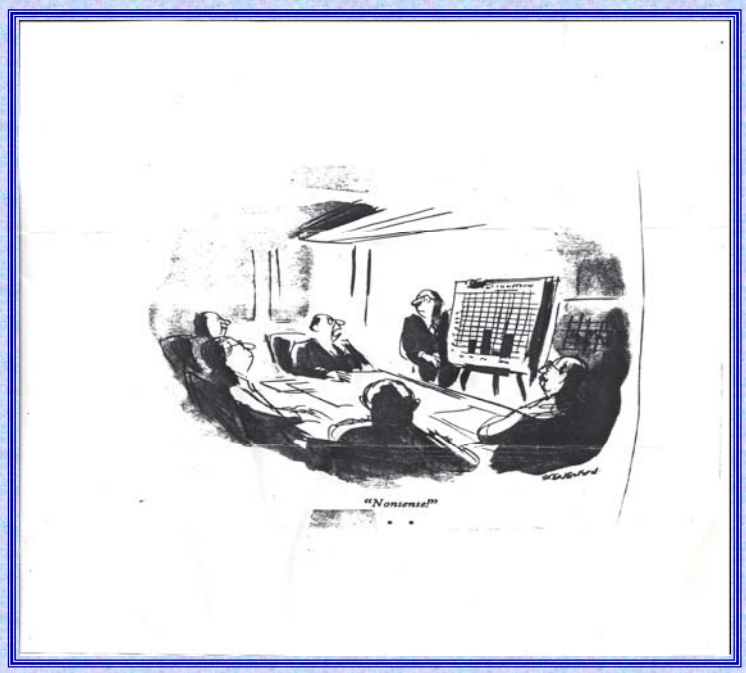

Defining Ethics

As a starting point for this presentation, evaluations are a form of applied research. As such, the methods, principles, standards and ethics that apply to research Involving human subjects also apply to evaluations, and to evaluators.

Defining Ethics

Ethics are defined as:

The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and/or with moral duties and obligations:

- a set of moral principles;
- a theory or system of moral values;
- the principles of conduct governing an individual or group;
- a guiding philosophy.[1]

1. cf. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethic

Defining Ethics

Research Ethics are defined as:

The application of moral rules and professional codes of conduct to the collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research subjects, in particular the active acceptance of subjects' right to privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent.[2]

2. cf. http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-researchethics.html

Defining Ethics

Research ethics also require That evaluators are competent to carry out the studies they undertake.

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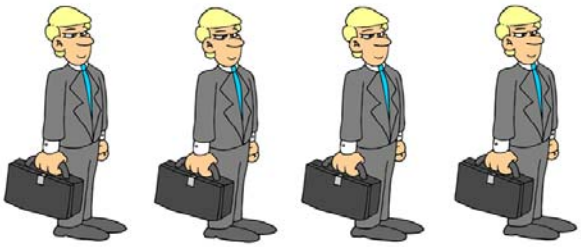


Three consultants and one jerk.

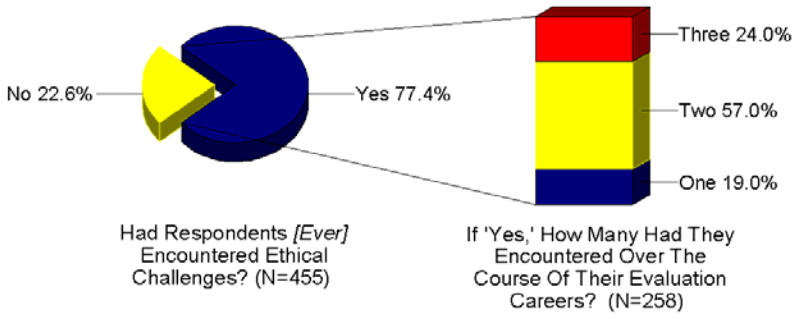
Evaluators' Experiences with Ethical Issues

Results of the Canadian Evaluation Society Membership Report on *Ethical Challenges Related to Their Evaluation Practices*

(With a 25% Response Rate, N=455)

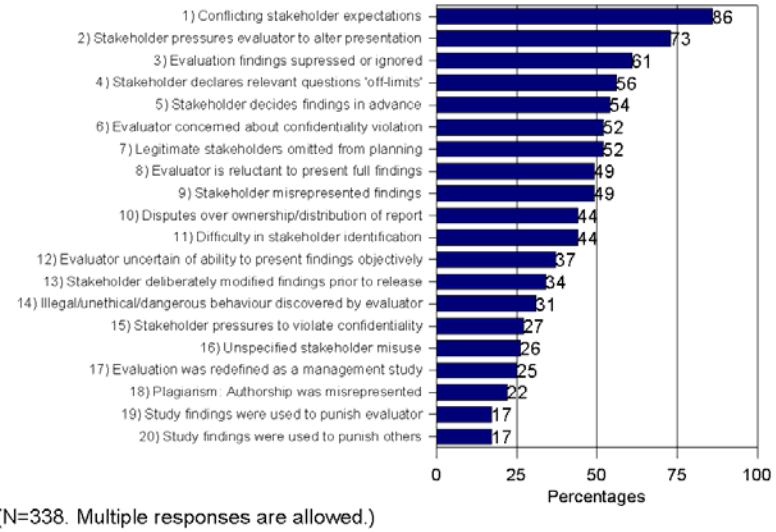
(Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan, 2011)

1) Have CES Members Ever Faced An Ethical Challenge?



(***CES Report Findings***, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

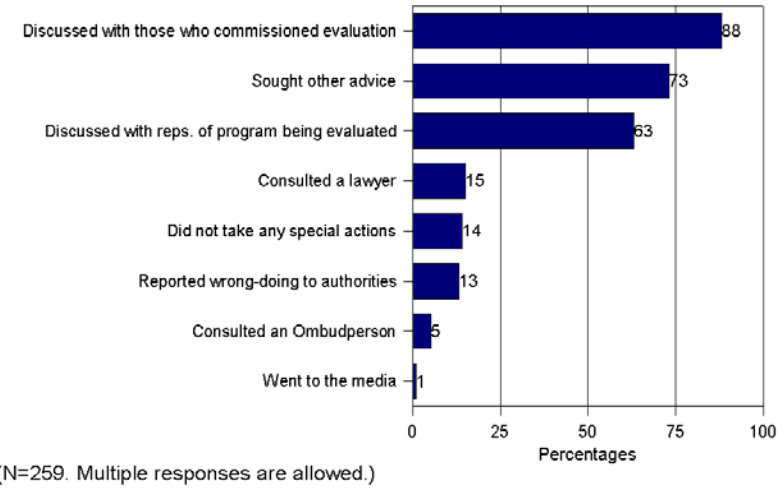
2) Ethical Challenges Evaluators Faced



(N=338. Multiple responses are allowed.)

(***CES Report Findings***, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

3) Actions Evaluators Took To Resolve These Situations



(N=259. Multiple responses are allowed.)

(***CES Report Findings***, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

"Explain it to me one more time. What's the difference between ethical behavior and being an annoying goody-two-shoes nerd?"

What ethical challenges have you faced regarding your research or evaluation activities?

What did you do about them?

What consequences, if any, did you experience as a result of your actions?

An Overview of Research Ethics in Canada

Three Document Will be (Briefly) REVIEWED

- The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
- CES Guidelines for Ethical Conduct
- OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

Each code has a different perspective on this topic

The Tri-Council* Policy Statement Regarding Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

*[*In 2001, Canada's three federal research agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRK) jointly created the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics as part of a collaborative effort to promote the ethical conduct of research involving human participants.]*

A Brief Overview Of The Tri-Council Policy Statement

Respect for Human Dignity

- This is expressed through three core principles:
  - *Respect for the person*
  - *Concern for their welfare*
  - *Justice*

A Brief Overview Of The Tri-Council Policy Statement

1) Respect for the Person:

- Ethical treatment of persons involved in research as participants, or based on their data, or their human biological materials
- The dual moral obligation to respect persons' autonomy, and protect those with developing, impaired or diminished autonomy
- Respects participants' autonomy by respecting their need to provide their free, informed and ongoing consent to participate

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2) Concern for Their Welfare:

- Includes participants' physical, mental and spiritual health, and their physical, economic and social circumstances
- Researchers should attempt to achieve the most favourable balance of risks and potential benefits for participants.

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2) Concern for Their Welfare:

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- Researchers should attempt to achieve the most favourable balance of risks and potential benefits for participants.

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3) Justice:

- Refers to the obligation to treat people fairly and equitably, with equal respect and concern
- Vulnerability of participants is a key factor
- Vulnerable or marginalized people or groups may need to be afforded special attention to be treated justly in research

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The Canadian Evaluation Society's Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

An Overview of the CES Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

Ethical Conduct Entails:

- ***Competence:*** Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service
- ***Integrity:*** Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders
- ***Accountability:*** Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and products (deliverables)

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- Possess or provide appropriate content knowledge
- Continuously improve their methodological and practice skills

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2) INTEGRITY: Evaluators should…

- Accurately represent their skills and knowledge
- Declare any conflicts of interest prior to beginning the evaluation process
- Be sensitive to the cultural or social environments of all stakeholder, and act accordingly

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2) INTEGRITY: Evaluators should…

- Confer with their clients, at the outset, regarding:
  - Confidentiality
  - Privacy
  - Communication
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3) **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Evaluators are responsible for…

- Providing information to clients to facilitate their decision-making regarding evaluation strategies and methods
- Providing clear, accurate and fair written/oral representations of study findings and limitations
- Their fiscal decision-making and ensuring clients receive good value for their dollars

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3) **ACCOUNTABILITY**: Evaluators are responsible for…

- Ensuring the completion of the evaluation within reasonable time, as agreed to with the client*

[**With the exception of unforeseen circumstances, or those outside the control of the evaluator. In that case, make sure to keep clients informed about these situations, and what you are doing to rectify them.]*

The OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession

OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

- These principles represent an expression of self-determination in research. Key notions include:
  - The collective Ownership of group information
  - First Nations' Control over research and information
  - First Nations' management of Access to their data
  - The physical Possession of their data

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- Relationship of a First Nations community to its cultural knowledge, data, information
- Community or group owns information collectively the same way an individual owns personal information

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- Reflects aspirations of First Nations peoples to maintain and regain control of all aspects of their lives and institutions (including research, information and data)
- Extends to the control of resources and review processes, the formulation of conceptual frameworks, and data management

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- The right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information

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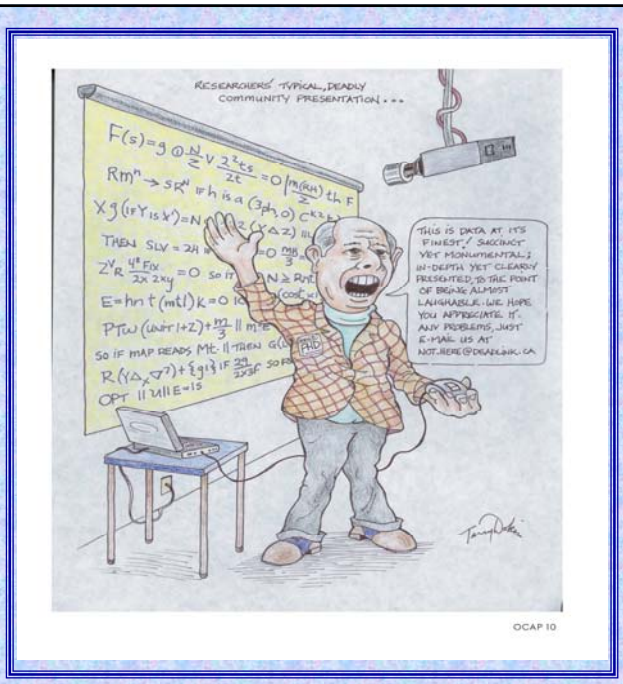
4) POSSESSION:

- Possession of data is a mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected



OCAP Principles: Related Ethical Guidelines

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- Researchers should provide ongoing explanations regarding all aspects of the research study
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- Indigenous people should have access to the research data, not just reports
- Community protocol should be respected
- Community interests should be supported, benefits maximized, and harm reduced or avoided

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The Benefits of OCAP

- It rebuilds community trust in the power of data
- It facilitates more democratic methods with higher participation rates
- It promotes First Nations analyses and perspectives with minimal bias and misinterpretation
- It contributes to community empowerment and self-determination, and encourages meaningful capacity development
- It produces more relevant and useful results, which lead to change

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OCAP's Key Principles:

- Respect for the knowledge, experience and cultural background each Knowledge Holder brings
- Listening to hear, learn and understand; not to expropriate
- Awareness of your own biases and history with Indigenous people
- Transparency of agenda
- Collaborative partnerships
- Appropriate remuneration

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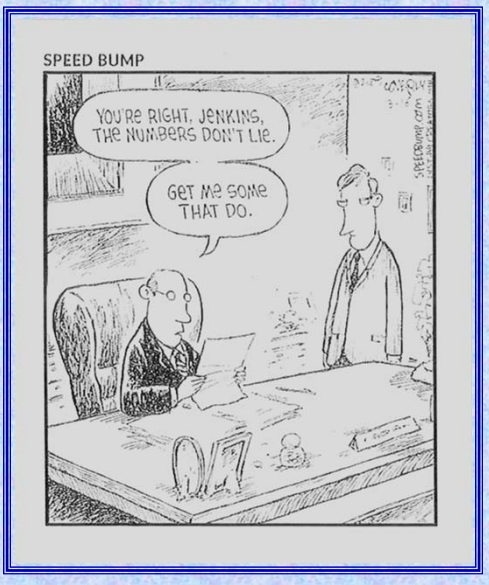
Some Ethical and Practical Considerations for Consumers of Evaluation

(Excerpts from *"The Evaluation Check-List"*
Produced by Kaplan Research Associates Inc.)

Here are some of the steps that agencies, organizations or departments need to address *before* beginning the evaluation process…

Basically, *Be Prepared*



The *Evaluation Check-List*

- Know why you're evaluating. What are your evaluation goals?
- Develop or update your Logic Model that includes your:
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  - Measurable objectives
  - Related activities
  - Measures of success

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- Be prepared for less than positive results. How will the organization address findings that identify areas in need of change or action?
- Determine, in advance, who will own the data and the evaluation report (who has the right to share the evaluation reports or related findings?)
- Ensure that you have all of your resources in place

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

- Ensure that you have adequate time to complete the evaluation, based on the scope of the study, research methods, resources, and access to enough participants to successfully evaluate your program or service
- Have a process in place to ensure the confidentiality (or the anonymity) of your respondents

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

- Ethically, if you're asking clients or participants to complete a form or questionnaire, you need to ensure that the resulting data will be used for the purposes for which they were intended.

"You are completely free to carry out whatever research you want, so long as you come to these conclusions."

?

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

The End