**Navigating Program Evaluation**

**Observation Activity**

**Instructions**

1. Select a program that someone else facilitates and that you can observe.
   1. Make sure the program facilitator agrees to let you observe.
   2. Tell the facilitator that you are observing as part of a workshop assignment and will be looking at how the program engages participants
2. Think of questions you may have about your own programs or about the program you are observing. For this activity, focus on questions about participation and activities. Examples:
   1. Are all participants equally engaged in the activities? (Or, who is and is not engaged?)
   2. Which activities or facilitator strategies are most effective in engaging participants?
   3. Which program elements appear to be most effective?
   4. What behaviors by participants indicate understanding of activity directions or program content?
3. Your goal is to observe for about 30 minutes – recording your observations every 5 minutes.
4. If asked, let participants know the purpose of the observation. Example: *I work for (organization). We want to improve our programs, so I am observing this program.*  When conducting a program evaluation in the future, be sure to let all participants know when you or someone else will be observing the program and why. Be sure to introduce the evaluator to the group.
5. For this activity, observe rather than participate or facilitate activities. When conducting *participant observation*, the evaluator participates with the people in the program and often gains valuable data from those interactions. That requires additional evaluation skills and plans, so for this workshop assignment, please focus on simply observing from the sidelines. Observe in as unobtrusive a way as possible by sitting/standing at the back of a room or at the side if you want to look at facial expressions.
6. Note what each participant does. It is useful to think of yourself as a video recorder. Write the description as a narrative including any conversation.

* Do not analyze or judge while you are observing.
* Write description “Four of the group of five girls has a hand on the tower, and the fifth holds extra parts.” Put inferences in parenthesis: (It looks like the one holding the parts is taking on the role of leader and is guiding the others in where to put each part.)

1. It is helpful to use shorthand so you can watch the entire group and still get details on participants. For example: F (female), M (male), G (girl), B (boy), Hat (father wearing a hat), Stripes (girl in a striped dress)

**Debrief**

Write a brief reflection after your observation to identify patterns. Write as soon as you can after the observation. You may want to use these questions to prompt your thinking.

1. What was the most surprising thing I saw in this observation?
2. What did I learn watching this group?
3. Right now, what can I say about the type and level of participant engagement in the program?

**Observation Sheet**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Case #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Program:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants: ( ) Adult Females ( ) Adult Males ( ) Female Children ( ) Male Children

Total Number: ( )

**Description of Setting** (Draw diagram if possible):

**Segment 1** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

**Segment 2** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

**Segment 3** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

**Segment 4** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

**Segment 5** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

**Segment 6** (5 minutes) Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Observation:

Observation End Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Debrief (as soon after observation as possible)**

1. What was the most surprising thing I saw in this observation?
2. What did I learn watching this group?
3. Right now, what can I say about how this program engages participants?