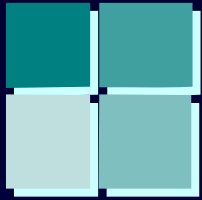**IPDET**
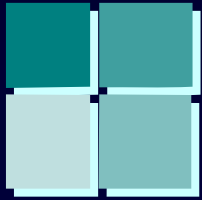
Module 14: Evaluation Ethics, Politics, Standards, and Guiding Principles

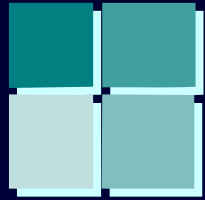Ethics
Politics
Standards
Guiding
Principles

Introduction

- Ethical Behavior

- Politics and Evaluation

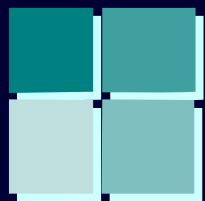- Evaluation Standards and Guiding Principles

Ethics

- A set of values and beliefs that guide choices

- Ethics are complicated, no laws or standards can cover every possible situation
 - behavior can be legal, but unethical

Identifying Ethical Problems

- Survey of AEA identified these problems:
  - pressure by stakeholders to alter findings
  - before evaluation, stakeholder has already decided what "should be"
  - findings suppressed or ignored by stakeholder
  - evaluator reluctant to present findings fully
  - evaluator discovers illegal, unethical, behavior
  - evaluator unsure of ability to be objective
  - evaluator is concerned about reporting findings
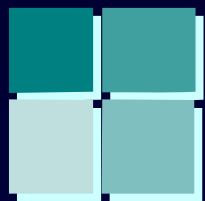
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Identifying Ethical Problems (cont.)

- Survey of AEA identified these problems:
    - evaluator pressured by stakeholder to violate confidentiality
    - misuses of findings by stakeholder
    - findings are used to punish someone
    - findings are deliberately modified by stakeholder prior to release
    - stakeholder declares certain research questions "off limits"
   - legitimate stakeholders are omitted from the planning process
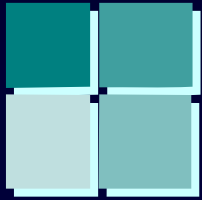
Ethics Issues

- To be useful, the work must be honest, objective, and fair

- Difference between subtle influence and bribe

- "Do No Harm"

- Maintain a written record of your findings and reactions, separate from evaluation material

Politics

- Politics as it refers to behavior that occurs when conflict is perceived to exist by at least one party in a relationship

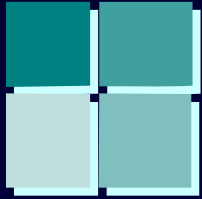- Politics can undermine integrity of an evaluation
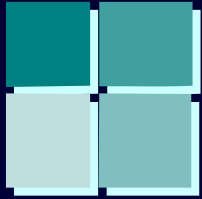
Causes of Politics

- Too much room for subjectivity in the following questions:
    - What is the purpose of the evaluation?
    - What will be considered a success or failure?
    - So what? How will the information be used in subsequent decision making?
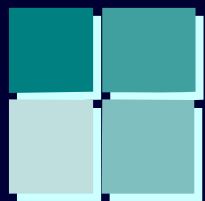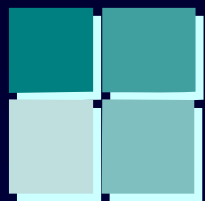
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Causes of Politics (cont.)

- Technical weaknesses
  - difficult to agree on what to measure, difficult to focus
  - measuring one level but generalizing about another
- Human weaknesses
  - Look Good Avoid Blame (LGAB)
  - Subjective Interpretation of Reality (SIR)
 - trust factors

Political Games by Evaluatees at Beginning

- Denying the need for evaluation
- Claiming the evaluation will take too much time away from their normal workload
- Claiming evaluation is a a good thin, but introducing delaying tactics
- Seeking to form close personal relationships with the evaluator to convince the evaluator to trust him or her

Political Games by Evaluatees during Data Collection

- Omitting or distorting the information they are asked to provide so they do not look bad

- Giving the evaluator huge amounts of information so they have difficulty sorting out what is relevant and what is not (snow job)
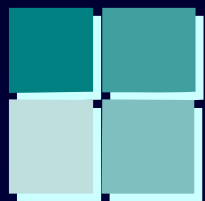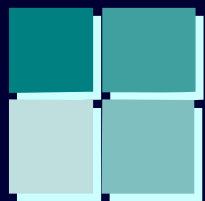
Political Games by Evaluatees during Interpretation

- Denying the problem exists

- Downplaying the importance of the problem or attributing it to others or forces beyond their control

- Arguing that the information is now irrelevant because things have changed
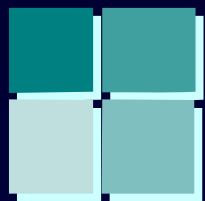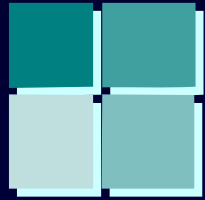
Political Games of Stakeholders

- Similar to those of people being evaluated

- May try to get media to criticize the organization and tell how they should have done the evaluation differently

- Giving own conclusions to meet their agenda

Political Games by Evaluators during Design

- Insisting evaluations be quantitative (statistics don't lie)

- Using the "experts know best" line (evaluators do not trust those being evaluated and want to have them be "caught"

Political Games of Evaluators during Data Collection

- Collecting information "off the record" then allowing that information to enter into the interpretation phase
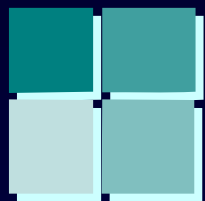
Political Games by Evaluators during Interpretation

- Not stating or shifting the measurement standards
- Applying unstated criteria to decision making
- Applying unstated values and ideological filers to the data interpretation
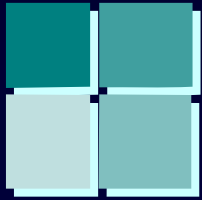- Ignoring findings of evaluations
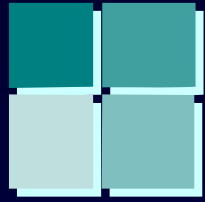
Managing Politics in Evaluations

- Building trust
  - takes time and many encounters
  - keep all involved in the process responding to and answering the important questions
- Building logic models
  - all parties understand the underlying logic so there is little room for misunderstanding
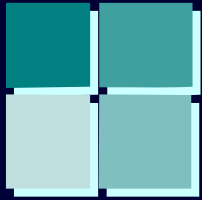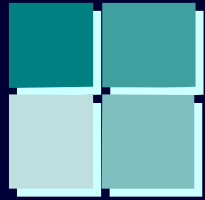
Balancing Stakeholders with Negotiation

- Recognize political nature
- Value multiple stakeholder contributions
- Assess stakeholder positions
- Assure evaluator is an active player within stakeholder community
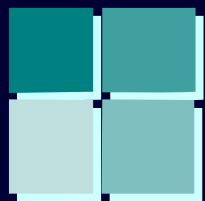- Develop negotiation skills
- Develop skills to manage conflict

Negotiation

- Initial stage

  - positions put on the table

- Middle stage

  - active negotiation

- Last stage

 - steps are taken to reach concensus

Active Negotiation

- Empathy
  - ability to see the world through the eyes of the other
  - express the empathy to the person (restate what hear)
- Assertiveness
  - ability to express and advocate for one's own needs, interests, and positions
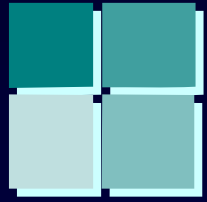 - facilitator authority

Standards and Guiding Principles: Two Prominent Codes

- **Program Evaluation Standards**
  - concerned with professional performance
- **Guiding Principles for Evaluators**
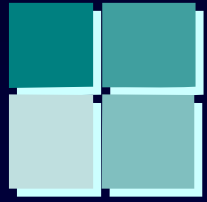 - concerned with professional values
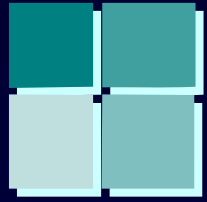
Program Evaluation Standards Categories

- Utility

- Feasibility

- Propriety

  - (8 sub-categories)

- Accuracy

8 Sub-categories of Propriety

- Service orientation
- Formal agreements
- Rights of human subjects
- Human interactions
- Complete and fair assessment
- Disclosure of findings
- Conflict of interest
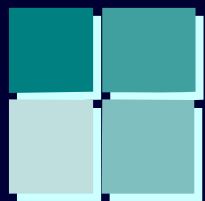- Fiscal responsibility

Guiding Principles for Evaluators

- Systematic inquiry

- Competence

- Integrity/honesty

- Respect for people

- Responsibilities for general and public welfare
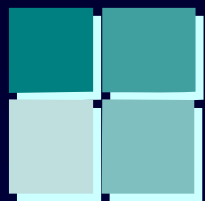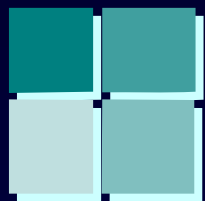
Other Standards and Guiding Principles

- Australian Evaluation Society
- Swiss Evaluation Society
- German Society for Evaluation
- Italian Evaluation Association
- African Evaluation Association (draft)
- Others

Norms for Evaluation in the UN system

- Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity

- Evaluators must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them.

- Evaluators must be sensitive to beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work.

Norms for Evaluation in the UN system (cont.)

- In light of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

- Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Also, the evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.
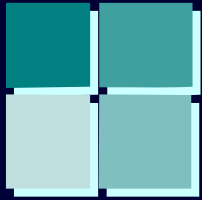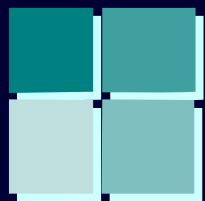
UN Standards for Ethics

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UN Standards for Ethics (cont.)

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