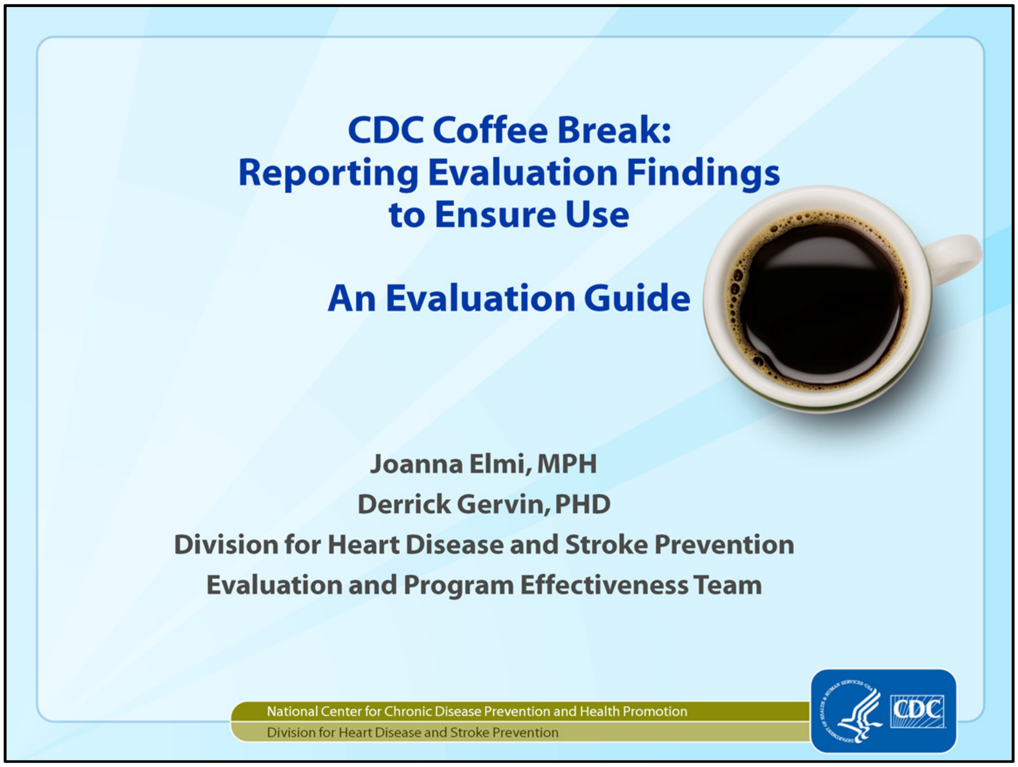
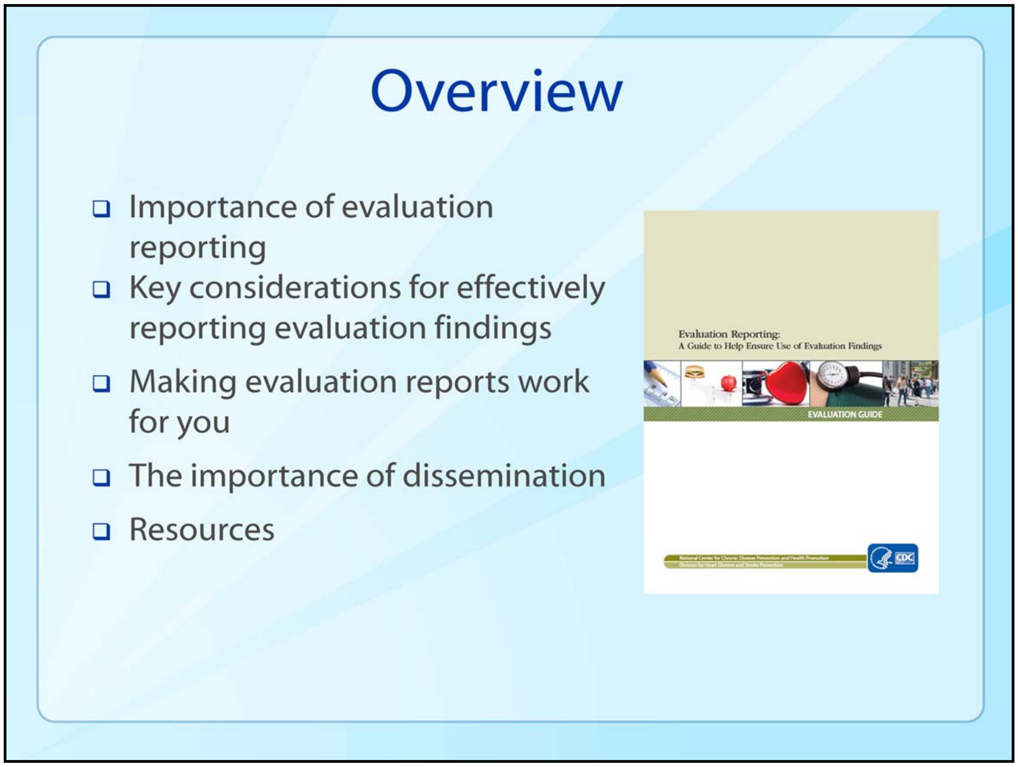


Welcome to today's coffee break presented by the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team and the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We are fortunate to have Joanna Elmi and Derrick Gervin as today's presenters. Joanna and Derrick are health scientists on the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team. My name is Jan Losby, and I am today's moderator. I am an evaluation fellow here on the same team as the presenters. Today, Joanna and Derrick will be presenting on how to report evaluation findings to ensure use.

*Note: Screen magnification settings may affect document appearance.

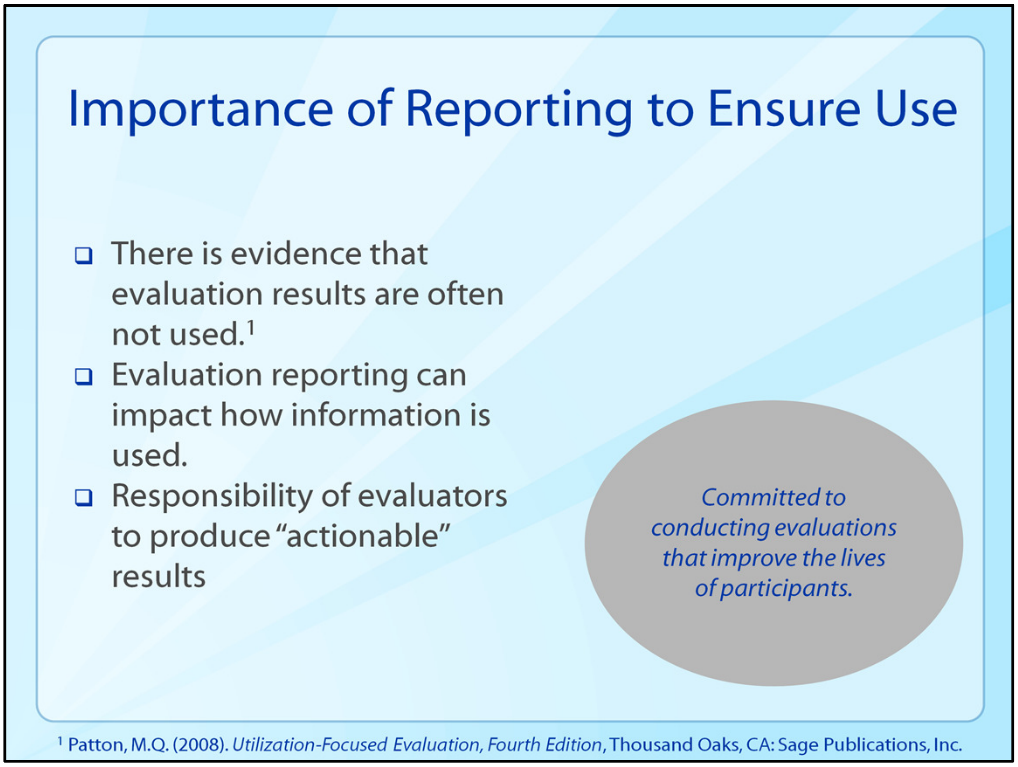
Disclaimer: The information presented here is for training purposes and reflects the views of the presenter. It does not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Today's coffee break serves as a preview to our recently released evaluation guide, "Evaluation Reporting: A Guide to Help Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings." This guide is one in a series of program evaluation guides developed by DHDSP to assist in the evaluation of heart disease and stroke prevention activities.

Over the next couple of minutes, Joanna and I will highlight some of the key areas of the guide, which address the importance of evaluation reporting, key considerations for effectively reporting evaluation findings, how to make evaluation reports work for you, and the importance of dissemination.

Feel free to reference the guide, which is accessible through the Division's Evaluation Resources page, as we move through each section. We will conclude the coffee break with some helpful resources.



There is some evidence that evaluation results are often not used. In fact, in a 2006 survey of American Evaluation Association members, 68% reported that their evaluation results were not used.

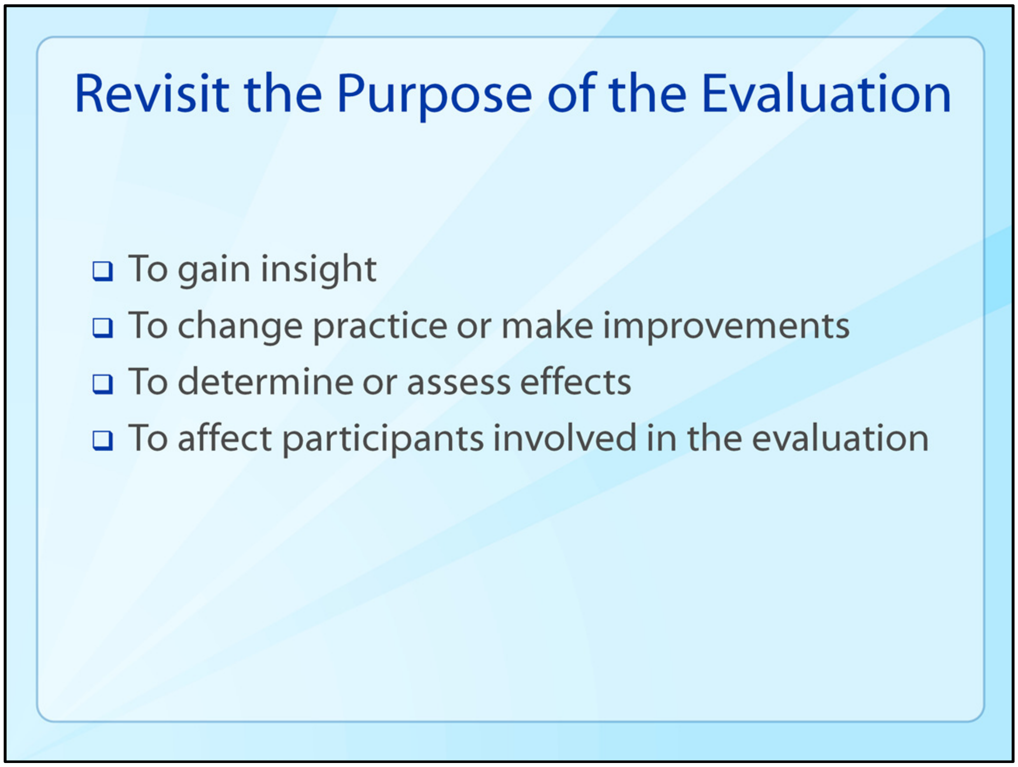
Although there may be a variety of reasons for why evaluation results are not used, one reason for the limited use of evaluation results has to do with how information is reported. As a result, those engaged in the evaluation process have a responsibility to consider how results can be used.

Over the next couple of slides, we will discuss some of the key considerations for effectively reporting evaluation findings. They include: engaging stakeholders, revisiting the purpose of the evaluation, and defining the target audience.

Most program evaluation frameworks, including the CDC Framework for Program Evaluation, promote the engagement of stakeholders as an important component of the evaluation process. Stakeholders can play a key role by offering input throughout the evaluation process to ensure effective and useful reporting of evaluation results. Encouraging input and participation from this group at critical points along the way can increase the likelihood that evaluation findings will be used.

Here are some opportunities for engagement:

- During the planning phase, stakeholders can help determine the intended use of the evaluation findings, identify potential primary users of findings, and help identify the most appropriate communication channels.
- Once data have been collected, stakeholders can review interim findings, interpret data, help prepare findings, and assist in developing potential recommendations.
- In the dissemination phase, stakeholders also can play a key role when developing the evaluation report by defining the audience, identifying any new potential uses of the information, and ensuring report findings meet the purpose of the evaluation.



It's helpful for an evaluation to have a clearly defined purpose statement that articulates the reason for and intended use of findings. At every phase of the evaluation, consider revisiting the agreed-upon intent of the evaluation to see whether the purpose continues to capture new program developments and emerging needs or priorities.

The purpose determines how the evaluation report and findings are used, who the users are, and the most appropriate type of reporting. There may be multiple purposes for conducting an evaluation. Some common public health evaluation purposes are:

To gain insight
- Assess feasibility or practicality of a new approach for broader implementation.

To change practice or make improvements
- Describe what a program has done and to what extent.
- Enhance program operations by improving quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of activities.
- Monitor activities for program management or routine reporting.

To determine or assess effects
- Understand the relationship between program activities and certain effects or outcomes.
- Demonstrate accountability to funder or partners.
- Judge the value or worth of a program.

To affect participants involved in the evaluation
- Generate a positive influence on stakeholders or participants (to reinforce program messages, empower participants, or facilitate social transformation).

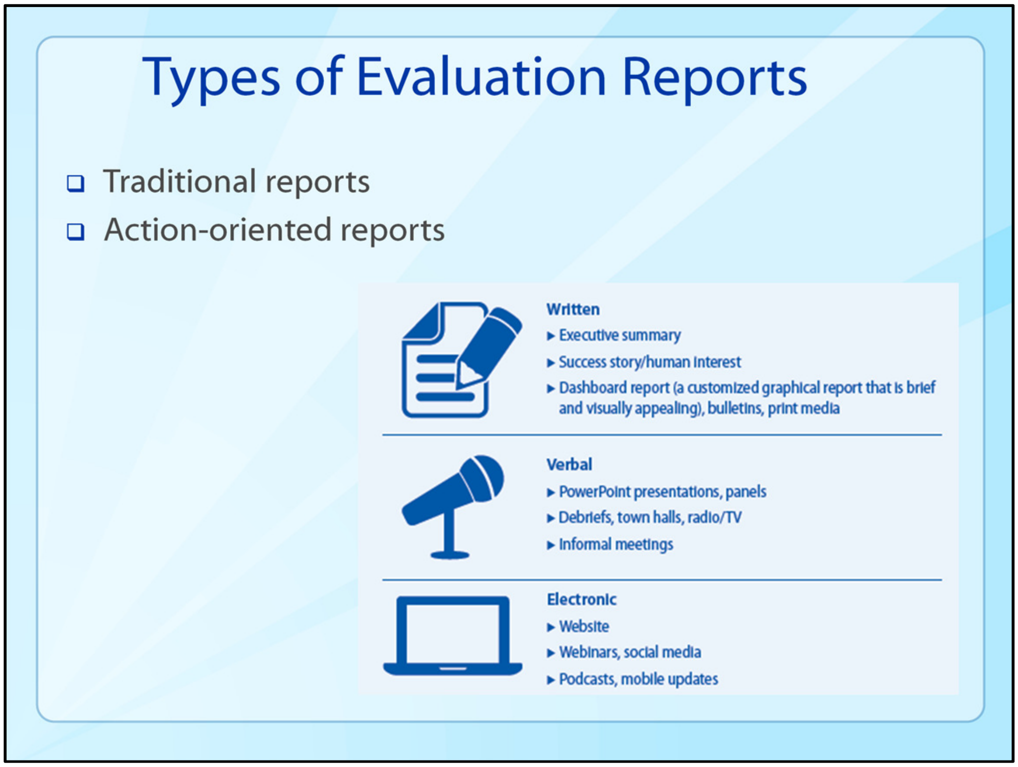
Consider and define the target audience of your evaluation report and findings. For example, who are the intended primary users or the specific stakeholders who will most likely use the findings? Is it for the funding agency of the program, individuals who are served by the program, or key legislators or decision makers in your local government? Evaluation findings can be presented differently based on the target audience and primary users of the evaluation.

Some points to keep in mind about your audience that may contribute to the development of the report and ensure use of evaluation findings are:

- *Effective communication channels*. Identify the appropriate, preferred, and commonly used channels of communicating with your audience.
- *Desired action.* Consider what action you want the audience to take and what is within their sphere of influence. Explore how the target audience makes decisions or decides to take action based on new information.
- *Technical expertise or comprehension.* Reflect on the level of familiarity the audience has with the particular subject matter and tailor the level of language to meet their comfort level. Opt to use plain language over more technical language.
- *Culturally appropriate.* Ensure that reports are culturally appropriate for the audience.
- *Perceptions and expectations.* Identify the audience's interest in or expectations of the project. Evaluation results may not always be expected or favorable. Regardless of the perception of the findings, the opportunity for use remains. Also consider how the audience perceives the evaluator and the evaluation process.
- *Presentation of information.* Present findings according to the audience's preference. For example, select between written documentation and oral communication, or presenting anecdotal stories versus data.
- *Experience and context*. Consider how your audience may interpret the findings based on their understanding and experiences.

Next, Joanna will share more about how to make evaluation reports work for you.

The considerations mentioned will help define the scope of the evaluation report, the way findings are discussed, and how the report is delivered. Keeping these considerations in mind, we're now ready to discuss the essential elements for evaluation reporting and focus on key features for preparing an evaluation report designed to ensure the use of findings.



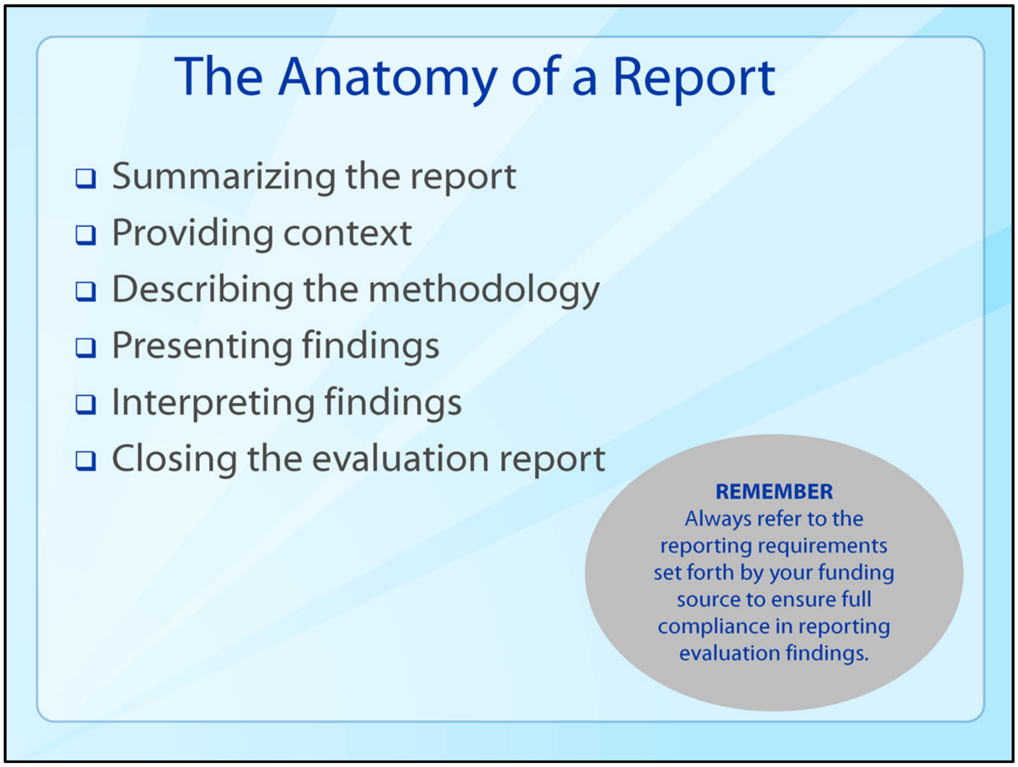
Evaluation reports can take on many forms, from detailed reports to one-page briefs. We'd like to highlight two different approaches for evaluation reporting: traditional and action-oriented.

Traditional evaluation reports tend to be formal and comprehensive—for example, a detailed final report needed to satisfy a funding requirement. Traditional reports have great value. However, sometimes the expense and time to prepare this kind of report and the length of the report may not be conducive to ensuring use of evaluation results.

Action-oriented reporting is an approach that can prompt your audience to action. This type of report is intentionally shorter than a traditional formal report and is focused, simple, and tailored toward a particular audience. A well-designed action-oriented report saves time by calling attention to important findings and possible next steps.

Action-oriented reports can be presented in many formats, for example, as a newsletter article, a Web site posting, one-page fact sheets, or executive summaries, among others. Also, verbal presentations and briefings bring people together who share a common interest and provide the opportunity to discuss findings or recommendations.

Selecting the appropriate format or mode of delivery will rest greatly on who the intended users or target audience is. For example, program leadership often appreciate something brief, like an executive summary, program staff might prefer an article in an agency newsletter, and policy makers may be more likely to value the findings presented in a journal article.



This slide lists the essential sections of an evaluation report, whether you choose a traditional or an action-oriented approach.

The purpose of the summary is to succinctly share the highlights of the evaluation. A summary can serve as a useful reference tool and may be delivered in a variety of ways, such as a written executive summary, a verbal briefing, or a short blurb in a newsletter.

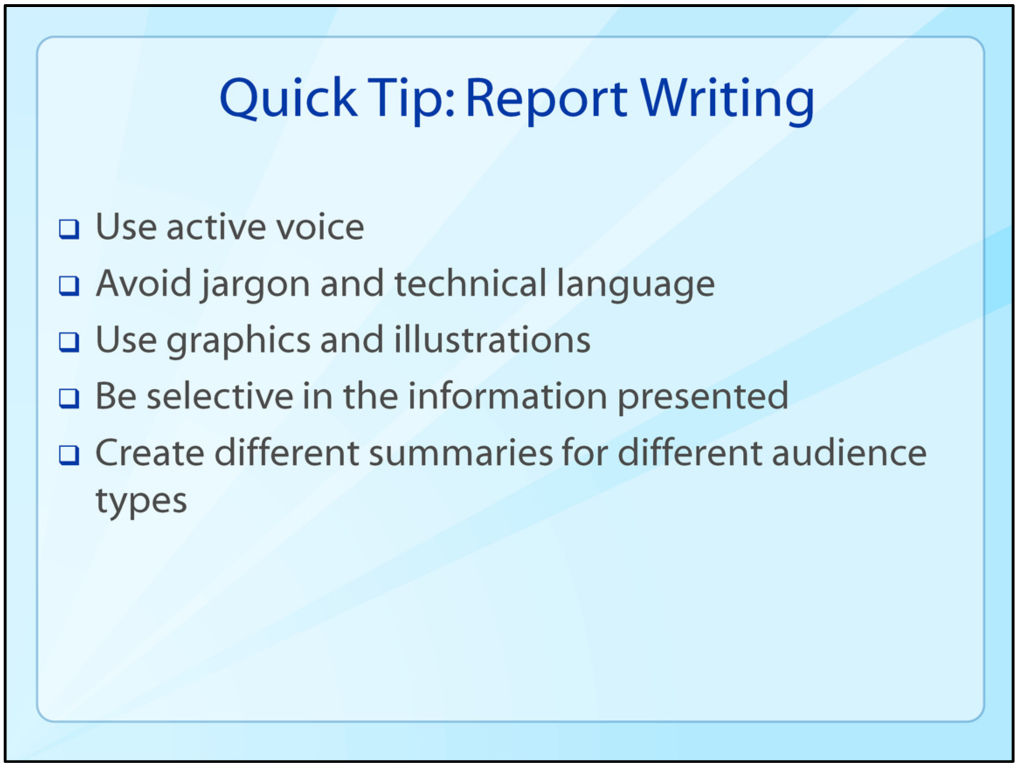
The background, overview, or introduction section presents baseline information and the context for the evaluation. In this section, the reader should learn about key evaluation questions as well as the evaluation's purpose, use, and stakeholders. You also may include a statement of need and a description of the program or intervention being evaluated.

The methodology section describes the approach taken to answer the evaluation questions and should address the evaluation design, data collection, sample or target population of the evaluation, data analysis procedures, and limitations of the evaluation. You can adjust the detail and length of this section based on your target audience.

The purpose of the findings section is to convey your most important results. Be sure that the presentation of results is balanced and objective; therefore, include both positive and negative findings. Try to present the data in a way that the audience can easily understand what was found.

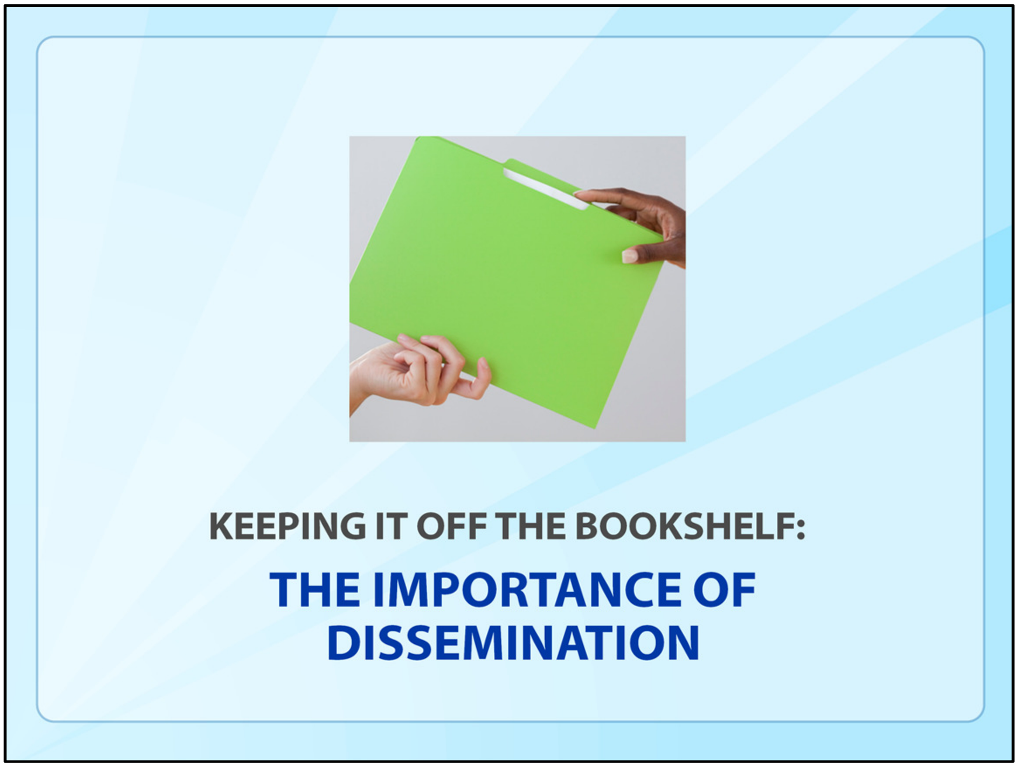
Interpretation means looking beyond the data and asking what the results mean in relation to your evaluation questions. Again, pulling in your stakeholders here can help with understanding what the data mean or infer.

The closing of the report is the most important section when it comes to ensuring use of an evaluation and informing next steps. This section can include recommendations, lessons learned, or a combination of both.

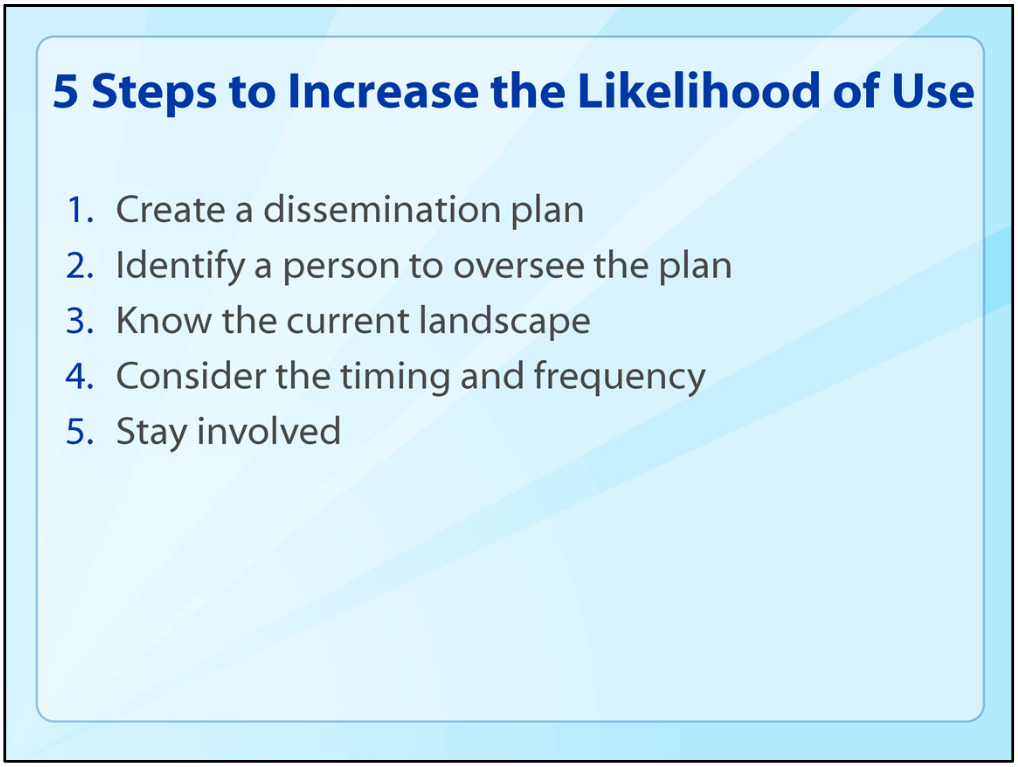


Before we move on to dissemination, here are some general quick tip reminders for developing well-written reports:

1. Use active, not passive voice. If you use Microsoft Word, use the readability statistics tool in the Spelling and Grammar tab to assess the percentage of passive sentences over active sentences present in the report.
2. Avoid jargon and technical language. Keep it simple, plain, and clear. Avoid using acronyms or program names that only have meaning to some.
3. Use graphics and illustrations where possible, and include a narrative explanation.
4. Be selective with the information you choose to present. As the evaluator, you know all the details; try to step away and think about what essential information the audience needs to know.
5. Explore different summary products for different audiences.



How many times have you had the experience of investing a lot of time and attention into developing an evaluation report, only to have it sit on the shelf? I know it’s happened to many of us. Let’s talk about how to make a plan for dissemination.



Dissemination should be an intentional activity. Here are five easy steps you can take:

1. Create an effective dissemination plan.
2. Identify a person to lead the dissemination effort. This person makes certain that the dissemination plan is carried out. This person also should have experience making information accessible and understandable to different audiences.
3. Recognize that most reports have a shelf-life and findings have a "relevancy date." Be knowledgeable of your context and select optimal release times. For example, February is American Heart Month. This month could be a great opportunity to share promising results of a program evaluation for a hypertension control intervention and potentially get a lot of media coverage.
4. Always consider timing and frequency of products. Dissemination works best when multiple products (e.g., a full report, summary report, evaluation brief) and channels (i.e., print, verbal, Web) are used. For example, we were fortunate to present this coffee break at the same time that the written evaluation guide was posted on the DHDSP website. In addition, the guide includes a short checklist of main points as a handy reference document.
5. Make certain there is involvement beyond the dissemination of the report. Convene follow-up discussions and facilitation as needed to enhance use. Take advantage of events that may help keep continued focus on your findings, such as social media, brown bag lunches, meetings, conferences, or workshops.

A Dissemination Plan Answers Core Questions

- Who is the target audience?
- What medium will you use to disseminate findings-hard copy print, electronic, presentations, briefings?
- How, where, and when will findings be used?
- Who is responsible for dissemination?
- What resources are available to accomplish the work?
- What are the follow-up activities after release?
- How will follow-up activities be monitored?

Your dissemination plan identifies:

- The target audiences.
- The preferred medias used to reach the target audiences.
- How, where, and when the findings will be used.
- Who will be responsible for disseminating what.
- Some resources to support dissemination.
- Monitoring for follow-up activities (i.e, reconnect with users, get feedback, etc.).

In summary, to improve the likelihood that your evaluation report will have utility for those you're targeting, remember to engage stakeholders, revisit and revise the evaluation purpose as needed, and define who you want to write the report for and consider their characteristics.

Be selective in what you report. An important step is to identify the critical evidence that will help inform decision makers and meet stakeholder needs.

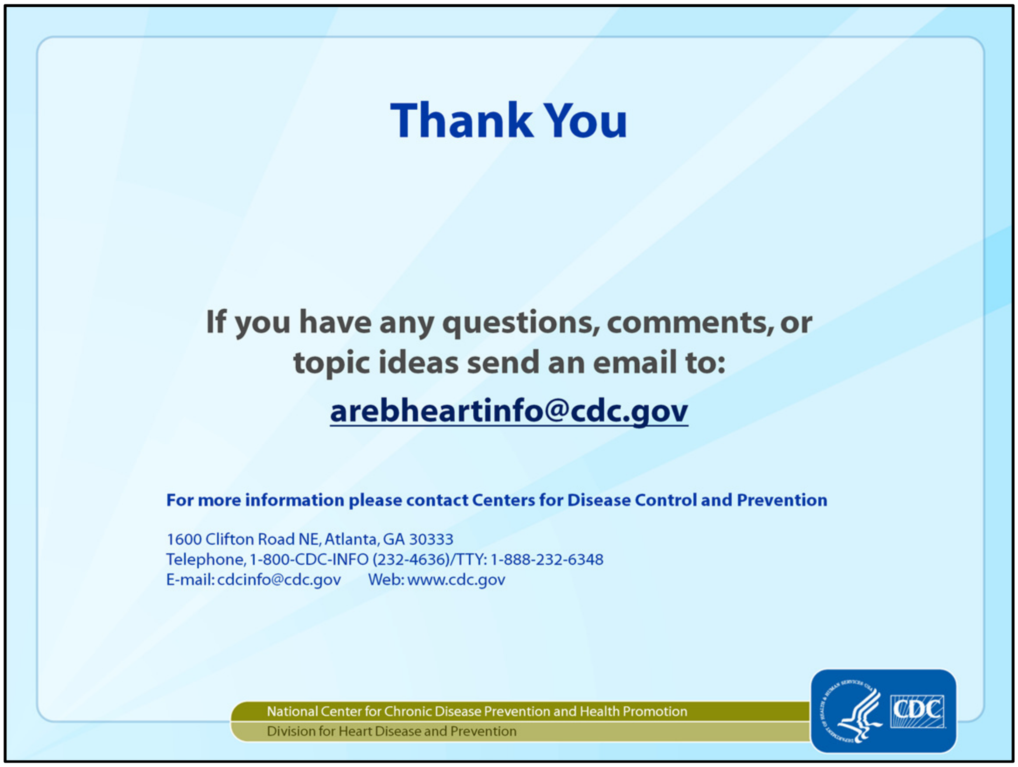
Prepare an evaluation report that is going to drive the intended users to action.

Disseminate, disseminate, disseminate. Get the report moving and into the hands of those who will use it.

References and Resources

- CDC. Evaluation Reporting: A Guide to Help Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings.
  - www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/evaluation_resources.htm
- Baxter LW, Braverman MT. Communicating results to different audiences.
- CDC. CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Practitioners Training—2011: Communicating Data for Action.
  - www.orau.gov/hsc/hdspinstitute/2011/session-summaries/wk_2ab.html
- CDC. Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned.
  - www.cdc.gov/eval/steps/ensuringuse.pdf
- CDC. Evaluation briefs: preparing an evaluation report.
  - www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief11.pdf
- Kansas University. Checklist for ensuring effective evaluation reports.
  - www.ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_tools_1338.aspx#tool2
- www.plainlanguage.gov/

Here are a few tools and resources for your review and for referencing information related to reporting evaluation findings. The resources also should serve you well for learning more about this topic.



If anyone thinks of additional questions or topics related to reporting evaluation findings or ways you would like to receive more technical assistance about this topic, please feel free to email us at the address listed on the slide.