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Excessive Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety (XSEA): Helping Your Stakeholder Find Their Sea
Legs with Program Evaluation

by

Samantha B. Langan

Claremont Graduate University

2022

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APPROVAL OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Samantha Brooke Langan as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in psychology.

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ABSTRACT

Excessive Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety (XSEA):

Helping Your Stakeholder Find Their Sea Legs with Program Evaluation

by

Samantha B. Langan

Claremont Graduate University: 2022

Fear of negative evaluation from others is an innate human characteristic. When a program is being evaluated and program staff are involved in evaluation activities, these stakeholders are allowing their services and by extension, themselves, to be examined by evaluators. Consequently, program evaluation can be an anxiety-inducing and uncomfortable experience for program staff. In instances when stakeholders are highly anxious over the prospect of having their program evaluated, they are said to be experiencing *excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety* (XSEA). Prior to this study few researchers had empirically examined XSEA, though initial evidence suggested that stakeholders with XSEA employed coping strategies that intentionally or unintentionally harmed the integrity of an evaluation.

To provide greater clarity on the phenomenon and management of XSEA, an exploratory sequential mixed methods study was conducted that first examined XSEA in the context of a large Midwestern nonprofit organization (Phase 1), and then assessed how these Phase 1 results applied to evaluators associated with the American Evaluation Association (Phase 2). Findings from this research provide tentative evidence that stakeholders have an accurate understanding of their own anxiety towards evaluation, and that asking stakeholders how they feel about the evaluation process may be the most reliable way for evaluators to learn if their stakeholders are

experiencing XSEA. Additionally, 10 sources or risk factors for developing XSEA emerged across both research phases: four stakeholder characteristics, two program or organizational factors, three situational factors, and one evaluator characteristic. Stakeholders characteristics included program staff having a high vested interest in the success of their program, feeling overwhelmed with their everyday work responsibilities and worrying about the extra time and resources evaluation would require of them, feeling concerned about disappointing external audiences, and having a strong desire to showcase their programs' strengths to others.

Organizational factors included uncertainty about a program's future and a mismatch between a program's interests and its funder's interests. Few resources to conduct an evaluation, concerns over the national US climate and policies, and community interest in the results of evaluation data comprised the situational sources of XSEA. The evaluator characteristic—and the only one within an evaluator's control—was the evaluator not successfully explaining the anticipated benefits of evaluation or evaluation activities to stakeholders. Relatedly, employing effective communication and facilitation skills, working in partnership with program staff, and demonstrating the value of evaluation to stakeholders emerged as key themes in preventing and managing XSEA.

Ultimately, this research resulted in a theoretical framework of XSEA that provides evaluators with a foundational understanding of the phenomenon, as well as in the development of a tool called the *XSEA Detection and Management Checklist* that evaluators can use as a guide to systematically uncover and address XSEA. A major implication of this research is that evaluators would benefit from continual assessment and strengthening of their interpersonal competencies, which play an essential role in effectively perceiving, preventing, and mitigating XSEA.

DEDICATION

To my son, Will, who became my motivation for finishing.

And to my brother, Tyler Charles Langan, who always believed I could.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I started on the path towards earning my doctorate, I had no idea how rocky, winding, and long the road ahead would be. I would not have accomplished such a challenging (though rewarding) journey without the support and care of *many*, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who have been by my side throughout this trek.

First and foremost, I am grateful for the guidance my chair and advisor, Tarek Azzam, has provided. Tarek first ignited my passion for the field of program evaluation in 2009, and when I expressed an interest in working with him, he quickly took me under his wing. Tarek has been a consistent and *core* member of my support team, and I am appreciative of his wisdom, patience, sense of humor, friendship, and for his never wavering belief in my ability to succeed, even when I was, at times, doubtful.

I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee who were instrumental in helping me with this work. I am grateful to Leslie Fierro for being a wonderful role model and sounding board throughout my time in school, and appreciate not only her critical insights and vast amount of knowledge and experience, but also her warm heartedness, empathy, and commitment to helping me move forward. I am also grateful to Stewart Donaldson for spearheading RoE's focus on evaluation anxiety, for his enthusiasm for my topic, and for including me on exciting evaluation projects while I was in graduate school that turned out to be fantastic learning opportunities. I thank Bianca Montrosse-Moorhead, as well, for agreeing to be on my committee and for her thoughtful and useful feedback on my research. I would also like to thank my data collector, Doug Moon, for his help in collecting Phase 1 data and for his interest in this topic.

I have an abundance of gratitude for my colleagues at Catholic Charities. I am appreciative of the support I have received from Jessica Meyerson, Keith DeRaad, Anna Turosak, Carina Aleckson, Jen Drews, Jia Mikuls, and countless others who found out through the grapevine that I was earning my PhD. I am especially thankful to Jessica, who helped me think through Phase 1 data collection methods, carved out time during team meetings to hear about my progress, and read and discussed my dissertation with me. This research would have been infinitely harder without her support.

My family has also been essential in helping me on this journey. My parents, Alf and Becky Langan, are amazing, resilient people who instilled in me the importance of obtaining a high quality education, as well as the values of working hard, setting extraordinary goals, and doing my best to make this world a better place. They, along with my two brothers, Zachary and (the late) Tyler Langan, have provided me with unconditional love, patience, and encouragement in helping me earn this degree. I would not be who I am or where I am without them, and certainly would not have been able to start and finish graduate school without their endless emotional support. I am also thankful to my in-laws, Tim and Katie Spencer, who live a mile from me in Minnesota and have played a vital role in helping my husband and me stay afloat, especially since we became parents. For context, I completed my dissertation proposal while pregnant, then conducted my dissertation research during my son, Will's, first five years of his life. Every Sunday I committed to working on my dissertation and am grateful to Tim and Katie for babysitting Will, sending us dinners, helping my husband with tasks I was too preoccupied to do, and for celebrating major milestones with me as I made progress.

The encouragement I received from friends has also been invaluable. I found kindred spirits and lifelong friends among my graduate school peers: Nicole Galport, Matt Galport,

Cristina Whyte, David Mendelsohn, Monique Matelski, Shelly Sloper, Silvana McCormick, Aly Lopez, and Nancy Hankel have been constants in my life since I started on this journey. I am thankful to them for staying in touch with me after I moved out of state, and appreciate all their calls, gifs, and messages of support throughout the years. Nicole and Cristina, who are part of my cohort, have been especially vital in helping me cross this finish line.

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Finally, I would like to thank my two cats, Phinny and Gus Gus. Bob and I adopted them in 2010 during my first year in graduate school, and they have been sweet, entertaining, loving companions who have helped me manage my own stress and anxiety.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite our plethora of differences, all humans have in common the ability to experience fear and anxiety (Beck, 1985). Fear arises when we feel threatened, and anxiety occurs when we anticipate a future threat. When we are afraid and highly anxious, multiple body systems become autonomically triggered, and we engage in reflexive safety behaviors such as fighting, fleeing, freezing, fainting, fawning, or calling for help (Beck, 1985). We can also experience physiological stress responses such as sweating, trembling, having difficulty breathing, and feeling our pulse racing. Our cognitions may focus on the potential negative consequences of the situation, as well as on thinking through ways to efficiently decrease or lessen the danger. Emotionally, we can feel afraid, worried, tense, stressed, and threatened (Beck, 1985). These reactions, as uncomfortable as they are, have the very real benefit of helping us maintain our physical or psychological integrity during life threatening situations.

Interestingly, both real and *perceived* threats elicit feelings of anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). While useful in situations where a threat is real, anxiety reactions are often unhelpful and detrimental when a threat is, in actuality, not as harmful as it is perceived to be. One such instance is found in the field of program evaluation, where social services staff can perceive the evaluation of their program to be an especially threatening endeavor and may respond in ways that ultimately hurt the integrity of the evaluation or are professionally damaging (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson, Gooler, & Scriven, 2002; Scriven, 1991).

Stakeholders¹ may argue with evaluators, withdraw their participation from the evaluation, tamper with program data, and resist any organizational changes brought on by an evaluation because of their anxiety (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002). When experiencing high anxiety over the prospect of program evaluation—referred to specifically as *excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety* (XSEA)—stakeholders fear negative consequences for themselves or their program that are brought on by program evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2002; Taut & Brauns, 2003).

To date the topic of anxiety has been widely researched in the field of psychology, but little is understood about the manifestation of anxiety in the context of program evaluation. This dissertation research attempts to narrow the gap in the program evaluation literature by exploring possible indicators, antecedents, consequences, and management strategies of XSEA. The paper begins by providing an overview of the psychological foundations of anxiety from an evolutionary perspective, and then transitions into detailing what is known specifically about XSEA from the program evaluation literature. After this overview, a hypothesized theoretical framework of XSEA is presented along with this exploratory study's guiding research questions and methodological design. XSEA is examined first in the context of large Midwestern nonprofit that is being introduced to program evaluation, and secondly via a reflective survey shared with a

¹ The term *stakeholder*, though widely used in research on evaluation, has recently been identified by evaluators as inappropriate and offensive (MacDonald & McLees, 2021). The word originates from colonial practices when European settlers placed stakes on land that was occupied by Indigenous Peoples in North America as a means of claiming the territory as their own (Delaney, 2021). The term also has the potential to offend the Aboriginal community in Australia, who have constitutionally protected rights that go beyond those of stakeholders' (Sharfstein, 2016). While the term evolved to mean those that have an interest in or are affected by an evaluation or its results (Salabarría-Peña, Apt, & Walsch, 2007), it is recommended that evaluators begin replacing *stakeholder* with phrases such as *interested and affected parties* (Delaney, 2021).

subset of American Evaluation Association (AEA) members. Results informed the creation of an XSEA Detection & Management Checklist that evaluators can use in the field to detect and potentially manage XSEA (see Appendix AE). Last, implications, limitations and ideas for future research are discussed. Even though XSEA is a less understood phenomenon, its parallels to empirically supported anxiety research suggest potential benefits for understanding and effectively addressing XSEA.

The Psychological Foundations of Anxiety

Advantages of Anxiety from An Evolutionary Perspective

Without learning how to cope with fear and anxiety, humans would not have effectively dealt with dangers that threatened their survival. Experiencing anxiety had evolutionary advantages, since those who successfully worried about, avoided, and responded to threats increased their chances of survival (Bateson, Brilot, & Nettle, 2011). It was beneficial to be too anxious and identify false alarms than to not be anxious and miss potential dangers altogether (Beck, 1985). Through genetic inheritance the propensity for anxiety was passed on to survivors' offspring, and it is theorized that people who experience Generalized Anxiety Disorder today may be genetically predisposed to experiencing high anxiety since anxious tendencies once helped their ancestors survive (Willers, Vulink, Denys, & Stein, 2013).

In addition to becoming more anxious over time, humans, like other mammals, also evolved to live in groups with others since doing so increased their chances of survival (Beck, 1985; Dunbar, 2007; Leitenberg, 1990). This evolution towards group living led to the formation of increasingly complex human social systems and, as stated in the social brain hypothesis, a larger neocortex in the human brain that is responsible for social cognitive skills and rational thinking (Dunbar, 2007). Humans' evolution to group living and increased social complexity and

cognitive functioning likely fostered a tendency to fear negative evaluation from others, since those who were rejected from their group for being disliked had a lower chance of survival (Dunbar, 2007; Leitenberg, 1990). In short, there were evolutionary benefits to experiencing anxiety both in response to external, life-threatening dangers, as well as in response to breaking intragroup social rules that resulted in group ostracization (Beck, 1985; Dunbar, 2007; Leitenberg, 1990).

Anxiety and Performance. While we in the United States may not currently face as many acute life-threatening dangers as our descendants, anxiety continues to be advantageous and reinforced in present day. In particular, moderate amounts of anxiety tend to trigger our best performance (Deshpande & Kawane, 1982; Sharma, 1970; Tecce, 1965; Yerkes-Dodson, 1908/2007). Yerkes and Dodson (1908/2007) tested the association between performance and arousal (or stress and anxiety) in mice and discovered a curvilinear, inverted U-shaped relationship between the variables. A moderate amount of arousal was ideal for inducing higher quality performance in the mice, as compared to low and high levels of arousal that elicited lower quality performance (see Figure 1). The Yerkes-Dodson (1908/2007) law has also been assessed among humans, and similar patterns were found in that too little or too much anxiety impaired people's task performance, whereas moderate amounts led to improved performance up to a certain degree. Examples where this relationship between anxiety and performance were exhibited include studies on problem solving (Tecce, 1965), serial verbal learning (Deshpande & Kawane, 1982), and academic achievement (Sharma, 1970). Altogether, these studies demonstrate that too little or too much anxiety can impair our behavior, while a moderate amount of anxiety is ideal for focusing our attention and efforts to help us achieve an ideal level of performance.

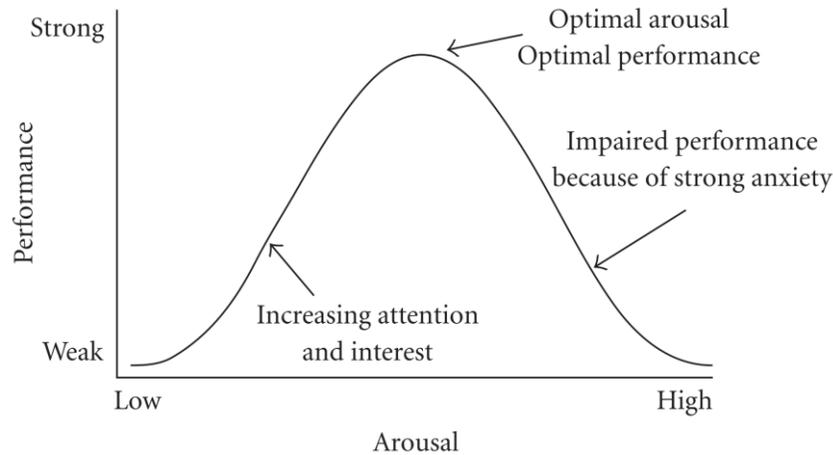


Figure 1. Yerkes-Dodson Law

How Anxiety Occurs

Fear and anxiety work hand-in-hand in that fear precedes feelings of anxiety; in other words, it is not possible to experience anxiety without also experiencing fear (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Antony, 2001; Beck, 1985). Because of this, Beck (1985) describes an anxiety reaction as a fear reaction. The difference between fear and anxiety, however, is elucidated by the American Psychiatric Association (2013): “Fear is the emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat, whereas anxiety is anticipation of future threat” (p. 189). While fear is a primal “alarm reaction” (Antony, 2001, p. 10) one has when confronting a danger (real or imagined), anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state one experiences when reflecting on a fear (Losada Morchio, 2002; Medical Dictionary, 2015; Spielberger, 1972). Both fear and anxiety involve cognitive and affective responses, but it is the *thinking* about a fear that specifically elicits feelings of anxiety.

Similarities and differences among models of anxiety. Models depicting how anxiety occurs share important similarities. For instance, when comparing well-known frameworks of anxiety such as Beck’s (1985) Vicious Cycle (see Appendix A), Witte’s (1994) Extended

Parallel Process Model (EPPM) (see Appendix B), and Clark's (1986) Cognitive Model of Panic (see Appendix C), one notices that all models describe a cognitive appraisal of a threat or danger, followed by an assessment of one's ability or efficacy to cope with the danger. If the threat is high and a person has inadequate resources to deal with the threat, then the individual will experience distressing emotions. Secondly, all three models describe an awareness of one's feelings of distress. Beck's (1985) and Witte's (1994) frameworks go a step further than Clark's (1986) by showing that after gaining an awareness of being in distress, a person engages in coping responses (e.g., fight, flight, freeze) to deal with his or her negative emotions. Lastly, all three models depict feedback loops or "vicious cycles," whereby one's awareness that they are feeling anxious and physiologically uncomfortable leads to increased feelings of anxiety and dysregulation.

One of the key differences between the three example frameworks is their emotional focus based on how one encounters a threat. For instance, with Beck's (1985) and Clark's (1986) models a person assesses danger by perceiving threat in his or her environment, and work particularly well in explaining how one experiences anxiety or panic when believing that they may be judged by others. Witte's (1994) EPPM, on the other hand, describes how a person reacts specifically to a threatening persuasive message that is attempting to change one's attitudes or behaviors. The EPPM, in this respect, describes the individual as a passive recipient to a message rather than one actively observing cues in his or her environment, and focuses primarily on fear responses rather than anxiety.

Beck's (1985) and Clark's (1986) models also emphasize the cause-effect relationship between fear and anxiety by depicting anxiety as an emotional response to a cognitive appraisal of threat. Comparatively, Witte's (1994) model describes a lengthier cognitive process preceding

an affective response, whereby experiencing negative emotions—in this case, fear—is not possible until one realizes that a threat is too great to protect oneself from or that one's responses to a threat would not be effective. With Beck's (1985) and Clark's (1986) models, on the other hand, one feels negative emotions—*anxiety specifically*—as soon as s/he/they detects a threat.

Lastly, a key difference between the anxiety models is their consideration of others in one's environment. Witte (1994) and Clark's (1986) models assume an individual is acting in isolation and do not consider how cues from others could influence one's cognitive and emotional processes. The inclusion of a negative audience reaction in Beck's (1985) framework considers the impact others have on our emotions and behaviors, specifically that others can inadvertently increase or decrease our anxiety. This aspect may be especially important in understanding how in the context of program evaluation, stakeholders' anxiety could change based on the effectiveness of anxiety management strategies employed by evaluators. It is primarily for this consideration of others, as well as the model's focus on experiencing anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation, that Beck's (1985) Vicious Cycle is hypothesized to be the most relevant in explaining how XSEA occurs. However, it is also hypothesized that because XSEA is situation-specific to the context of program evaluation, Clark's (1986) and Witte's (1994) frameworks can supplement Beck's (1985) by illustrating how prior to an assessment of danger there are internal and external stimuli, or antecedents, which are missing from Beck's (1985) model (see Figure 3 on pp. 27 for the hypothesized XSEA model).

Anxiety Classifications

Anxiety is typically classified as either a trait or state based on individual differences in how prone one is to experiencing anxiety (Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982; Spielberger et al., 1983). A person is said to have trait anxiety if they have a general disposition to be anxious on a

regular basis (Medical Dictionary, 2015; Spielberger et al., 1983). If severe enough, trait anxieties may be classified as disorders according to diagnostic criteria established by the American Psychiatric Association. Currently there are at least 12 anxiety disorders, ranging from Social Anxiety Disorder to Generalized Anxiety Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), and many of these occur in part because of a fear of negative evaluation by others (see Figure 2).

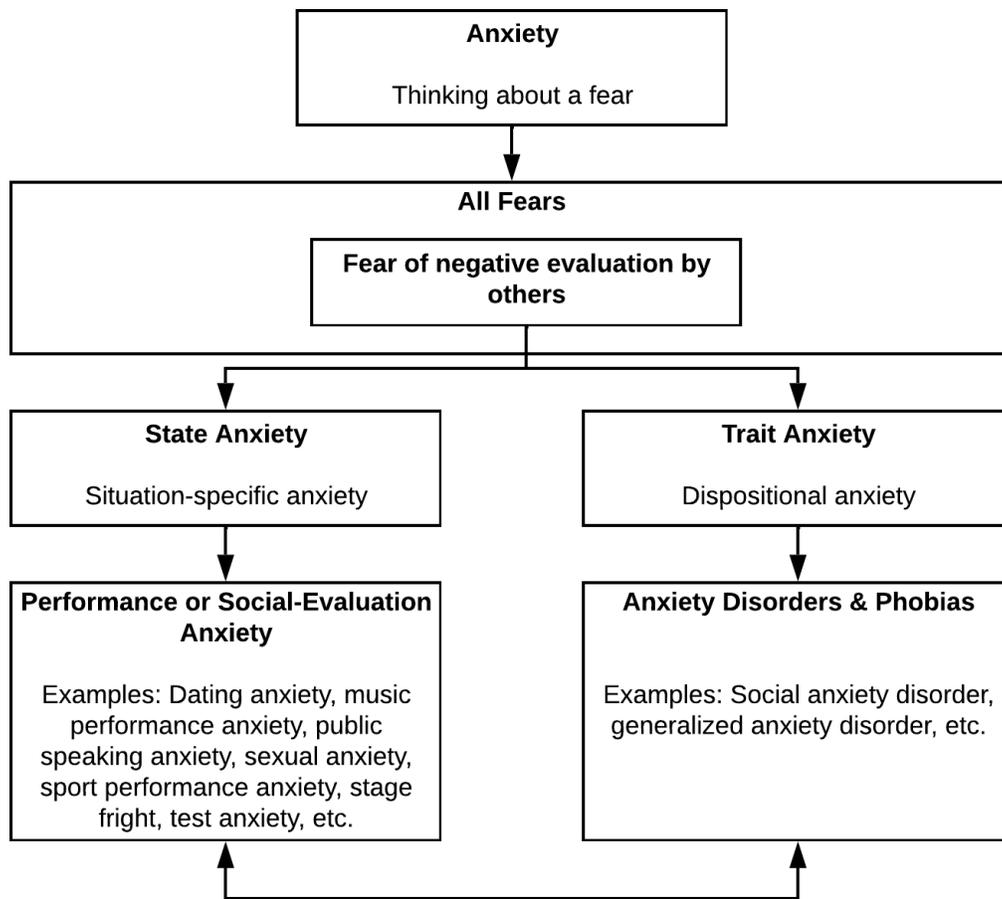


Figure 2. The relationship between fear of negative evaluation and state and trait anxieties

Note. The feedback loop shows that interactions may occur between state and trait anxieties.

Compared to trait anxiety, state anxiety is temporary and fleeting, and occurs in response to an immediate perceived threat (Kuan, 2012; Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982). The intensity of state anxiety fluctuates with the perceived severity of the danger; the more threatening a situation is suspected to be, the more anxiety a person will have (Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982). One of the most common types of state anxieties that we all experience at some point in our lives is *performance or social-evaluation anxiety* (also known as *social anxiety* or *evaluation anxiety*) (Leitenberg, 1990). Anxieties classified as this type share in common the fear of one's performance being negatively judged by others in specific situations. Instances include test taking (Sarason & Sarason, 1990), playing sports (Smith & Smoll, 1990), public speaking (Fremouw & Breitenstein, 1990), and playing music in front of an audience (Kuan, 2012). Common fears of negative evaluation in anxiety-producing situations are feeling humiliated, criticized, socially rejected, and abandoned by others (Beck, 1985; Leitenberg, 1990). Wine (1982) adds that there are individual differences in the types of situations people find anxiety-inducing; being prone to anxiety in one instance where judgment by others is possible does not guarantee one will also be anxious in another performance-type situation.

Based on one's response to stress, both trait and state anxieties can become problematic and pathological if a person's everyday functioning is affected by their anxiety, if one has adjusted their lifestyle to accommodate chronic symptoms of anxiety, or if an individual's coping strategies to deal with anxiety are maladaptive (Kuan, 2012; McLean, 2001). Using the example of a musical performance situation, examples of poor coping behaviors to deal with high performance anxiety include emotional detachment during an event (e.g., purposefully not thinking about being on stage), task difficulty (e.g., playing his or her musical instrument

inaccurately), second-guessing oneself (e.g., questioning whether s/he/they can play the instrument), and escaping or avoiding a situation (e.g., running off stage) (Kuan, 2012).

Additionally, a variety of research suggests a positive correlational relationship between state and trait anxieties, such that individuals who are high in trait anxiety are likely to also experience state anxieties (Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982; Wine, 1982). Examples of this relationship include pregnant women with general anxiety who also experience high pregnancy-specific anxiety (Huizink et al., 2014); students' test anxiety positively correlating with their level of trait anxiety (Eysenck, 2013; Szafranski, Barrera, & Norton, 2012); and positive relationships between trait anxiety and teachers' cursive handwriting anxiety (Karataş, Arslan, & Karataş, 2014). Thus, individuals' responses to types of state anxieties may be predicted by their susceptibility to be anxious, in general.

Summary. Altogether, anxiety is a complex construct. Models vary in their depiction of how anxiety occurs, but share commonalities such as making a cognitive appraisal of danger, being aware of one's own feelings of distress, and experiencing an escalating cycle of anxiety by becoming hyperaware of one's psychological and physiological state (Beck, 1985; Clark, 1985; Witte, 1994). Experiencing anxiety is a phenomenon all people feel because of how we evolved, and we are particularly likely to feel anxious in situations where others may judge us negatively (Beck, 1985; Leitenberg, 1990).

The following section describes anxiety in the context of program evaluation. For many who have a stake in an evaluation, program evaluation can be a stressful event because of the possibility of undesirable judgments (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson, Gooler, & Scriven, 2002; Scriven, 1991). Since evaluators are interested in overcoming their negative reputation as a profession (Donaldson, 2001), better understanding stakeholders' excessive

evaluation anxiety and psychological responses to being involved in evaluation may prove to be beneficial to evaluation practice.

Anxiety in the Context of Program Evaluation

For many stakeholders—who are considered in this research to be program staff who are directly involved in and have the capacity to influence program evaluation activities—evaluation is an anxiety-inducing and uncomfortable experience (Donaldson et al., 2002; Rinne, 1993; Taut & Brauns, 2003). Often there are high stakes involved in an evaluation (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003), and stakeholders can be reluctant to submit their program to examination and potential criticism (Konrad, 2000). When evaluation clients are fearful and highly anxious because of the “prospect, imagined possibility, or occurrence of an evaluation” (Scriven, 1991, p. 145), they are said to be experiencing *excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety* (XSEA). It should be noted that excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety is referred to as *excessive evaluation anxiety* (XEA) in previous program evaluation literature (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002, Scriven, 1991). The addition of the word “stakeholder” in the term was added to differentiate XSEA from generalized evaluation anxiety or performance anxiety in the psychological literature, as well as to reference the situational nature of XSEA as a state anxiety.

XSEA is described as having affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses “that accompany concern over possible negative consequences contingent upon performance in an evaluative situation” (Donaldson et al., 2002, p. 262). XSEA focuses on stakeholders’ rather than evaluators’ psychological experiences with evaluation, even though evaluators can also feel anxious about evaluation (Hilton, 2013; Picciotto, 2016). The construct could also be considered a type of state anxiety since participating in program evaluation activities serves as the context and catalyst for stakeholders’ responses. Additionally, because XSEA is based on the fear of

negative evaluation and is situation-specific, it could be classified as a type of performance or social-evaluation anxiety.

According to Bechar and Mero-Jaffe's (2014) case study and Donaldson et al.'s (2002) reflective article, there appears to be an inverse relationship between XSEA and stakeholder performance, such that stakeholders' likelihood of becoming non-cooperative with evaluation activities increases as their anxiety towards evaluation also increases. Furthermore, Donaldson et al. (2002) postulate that stakeholders' evaluation anxiety can appear at varying levels (i.e., low, moderate, high), and that those with moderate amounts of anxiety may be the most cooperative and engaged with evaluation activities. Thus, it is possible that the relationship between stakeholders' evaluation anxiety and their performance follows the inverted U-shaped pattern exhibited in the Yerkes-Dodson law (1908/2007), and that stakeholders with moderate amounts of evaluation anxiety may serve as evaluation champions.

Conversely, stakeholders with excessively high evaluation anxiety are described as being liabilities to quality evaluation practice (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002). XSEA is thought to trigger reactionary responses such as stakeholders purposefully excluding evaluators from informative meetings, limiting evaluators' access to data, keeping evaluators uninformed about changes made to program activities and goals, withholding program timelines from evaluators that would inform data collection, and refusing to schedule time for data collection (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014). Because of these responses, Donaldson et al. (2002) referred to XSEA as "an occupational hazard that can wear down evaluators" (p. 265). Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) also added that XSEA is "always negative" (p. 364) and never beneficial for either the stakeholder or evaluator(s).

Manifestations and Consequences of Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety

There are seven primary stakeholder reactions that scholars consider manifestations of XSEA: (1) conflict; (2) withdrawal or evasion; (3) resistance; (4) shame; (5) anger; (6) professional disparagement; and (7) sense of loss of control (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002) (see Table 1). These reactions parallel responses exhibited among people experiencing anxiety, in general. For instance, conflict, anger, and professional disparagement mirror a fight response; withdrawal, evasion, and resistance mirror a flight or retraction response; shame mirrors a humiliation response; and sense of loss of control mirrors a fainting or fawning response (Beck, 1985; Leitenberg, 1990). Some authors discuss these manifestations as indicators of general anxiety (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006; Taut & Brauns, 2003), while others describe these as indicators of XSEA specifically (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002). Further research is needed to understand how these manifestations may vary based on degrees of XSEA, but the examples provided in the descriptions below tend to be extreme in nature, suggesting that they may primarily be signs of XSEA. It should also be noted that the outcomes and indicators listed below might occur for reasons other than a stakeholder feeling highly anxious about evaluation; for instance, a stakeholder may feel angry or engage in professional disparagement if they have legitimate concerns about how an evaluation was conducted.

Conflict. The first indicator that a stakeholder may be experiencing XSEA is conflict. Conflict can occur between the client and the evaluator, or among a variety of stakeholders, and happens when individuals have incompatible desires regarding how to accomplish goals (Stevahn & King, 2005). Stevahn and King (2005) describe factors that affect conflict, such as individual emotion regulation, trust of others, number of people involved in the situation, cultural

misunderstandings, and the nature of people's issues, values, and preferences. Power imbalances are also described as leading to conflict (Cockerill, Myers, & Allman, 2000; Stevahn & King, 2005). Examples of conflict occurring in program evaluation are a program director's timeline interfering with the evaluator's data collection abilities, stakeholders and evaluators disagreeing over ideal data collection instruments, or stakeholders arguing amongst one another about the purpose of the evaluation (Stevahn & King, 2005). When conflict occurs between stakeholders and evaluators, clients may accuse the evaluators of hidden agendas or feel dissatisfied with the program evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2002).

Withdrawal or evasion. A stakeholder who disagrees with an evaluator or how an evaluation is being implemented may avoid the evaluator or refuse to participate (Donaldson et al., 2002). This response was exhibited in a case study described by Geva-May and Thorngate (2003), where a program director did not believe her program was ready for an evaluation—particularly one focused on program effectiveness—and distanced herself from the evaluators. Stakeholders with XSEA may also withdraw by not attending meetings related to the evaluation, not responding to evaluators' attempts at communication, or by blocking elements of the evaluation process (Stevahn & King, 2005).

Resistance. Through their theoretical postulations and interviews with 21 experienced evaluation practitioners, Taut and Brauns (2003) suggest that resistance to evaluation is also frequently exhibited by anxious stakeholders. Taut and Brauns (2003) examined resistance within the context of both program evaluation and organizational development, and describe it as a behavior to maintain and defend the status quo when real or perceived changes are imminent. There are various reasons for resistance such as: (1) program management fearing the results of negative evaluation findings, such as public knowledge of program failure or program

termination; (2) stakeholders believing resources should be allocated towards program development instead of evaluation activities (e.g., cost-benefit considerations); (3) stakeholders perceiving the evaluator to be a threatening outsider who will exert power and control over their program; (4) clients disagreeing with the evaluators' methodological choices; and (5) program management having negative past experiences with evaluation (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006; Taut & Brauns, 2003). Examples of passive resistance, specifically, have been described as stakeholders withholding information, declining to take part in data collection (similar to a withdrawal or evasion response), missing work due to pretend illness, falsifying program information, and organizing covert efforts with co-workers to take part in further resistance strategies (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). Resistance to evaluation may also result in lack of utilization of evaluation findings (Taut & Brauns, 2003).

Shame. Shame as a manifestation of XSEA can be described as stakeholders' consciousness of something disgraceful or dishonorable regarding their program. Evaluators suspect stakeholders feel ashamed when they hide or cover up weaknesses about their intervention or when they make access to necessary programmatic information difficult (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002).

Anger. Anger, or a strong feeling of displeasure, frustration, and annoyance with something one perceives as being bad or wrong, is a defensive response to XSEA (Donaldson et al., 2002). Anger can lead to "destructive actions, win-lose outcomes, and long-lasting scars" (Donaldson et al., 2002, p. 416). When stakeholders are angry with evaluators, they may become hostile towards them; one example includes senior members of a public health team resisting the inclusion of all internal stakeholders in a workshop to develop a program theory (Siebert & Myles, 2019). In this instance, the senior members who had developed the program were fearful

of subjecting their model to criticism and scrutiny, and their “initial resistance was expressed [during the workshop] more strongly in the form of animosity” (Siebert & Myles, 2019, p. 473). Stakeholders may also express their anger with evaluators during meetings or during work on the final evaluation report, or by complaining about the evaluation team to program leadership (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014).

Professional disparagement. Another possible indicator of XSEA is professional disparagement, or stakeholders’ attempts to discredit and belittle evaluators’ expertise (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014). Stakeholders may criticize evaluators for lacking essential knowledge of the program or field to conduct a useful evaluation, for favoring inappropriate methods and data analysis procedures, and for not being reliable in following through with established evaluation plans. Professional disparagement may especially occur if clients are dissatisfied with the final evaluation report, or if their organization has a “blaming culture” where others pin responsibility for failure on scapegoats (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014).

Sense of loss of control. Last, a final potential sign of XSEA is stakeholders feeling a sense of loss of control with the evaluation, or believing there is little they can do to address difficulties arising with a project. Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) describe a specific instance where a program head felt as though he lost control over his staff and students to help with an evaluation. Students and staff were not cooperating with the evaluators’ requests to participate in data collection, and the program head was unsuccessful in changing their minds. Ultimately, the program head asked his commissioner to step in and exert authority over the situation. Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) add that the pressure the evaluators put on the program head to obtain data may have exacerbated his sense of loss of control.

Table 1.

Negative XSEA Reactions and Indicators, as Identified in the Literature

| Negative Reactions | Definition in Context of Evaluation | Indicators |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Conflict | Disagreement and incompatible desires regarding how to accomplish goals | Accusing evaluators of hidden agendas Dissatisfaction with program evaluation |
| Withdrawal or evasion | Avoidance or refusal to be part of an evaluation | Lack of cooperation by critical stakeholders Avoiding or refusing to work with evaluators Compromises the quality of the data collected due to false reporting Compromises the quality of the data collected due to partial reporting* |
| Resistance | Behavior to maintain and defend the status quo when real or perceived changes are imminent | Stalling, protesting, or challenging the validity of evaluation results Lack of utilization of evaluation results Lack of program improvement Decrease performance and productivity in general Shelving or limited publication of evaluation report* |
| Shame | Consciousness of something disgraceful or dishonorable regarding a program | Hiding weaknesses/difficulty in gaining access to required information |
| Anger | A strong feeling of displeasure, frustration, and annoyance with something one perceives as being bad or wrong | “Killing the messenger.” Expressing anger or becoming hostile with evaluators |
| Professional disparagement* | Attempts to discredit and belittle an evaluator’s expertise | Dissatisfaction with the final report* “Blaming culture,” or attributing failure to others rather than oneself* |
| Sense of loss of control* | Belief that there is little one can do to address difficulties arising with an evaluation | “Diffusion of responsibility”*, or attributing identified program weaknesses to factors outside the program’s control Mobilizing support among authority figures to perform evaluation procedures and products when evaluands do not cooperate* |

Note. Table was adapted from Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014, p. 370). All items without an asterisk were originally identified by Donaldson et al. (2002), whereas those with an asterisk* were later added by Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014). The current author added the definitions and referred to the responses as “negative reactions” as opposed to “manifestations” to stress the problematic and triggering nature of XSEA.

Sources of Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety

Descriptive articles (Donaldson et al., 2002), thought exercises (Konrad, 2000; Morris, 2000), and case studies (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Whitehall et al., 2012) suggest that stakeholders develop XSEA for a variety of reasons. These antecedents, sources, or risk factors for developing XSEA are categorized into stakeholder dispositions, program or organizational factors, situational or external variables, and evaluator characteristics. The stakeholder dispositional and situational sources of XSEA were explicated by Donaldson et al. (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014), and evaluator characteristics and program or organizational factors were added by this dissertation's primary researcher following an extensive literature review.

Stakeholder characteristics. The first source of XSEA—stakeholder dispositional factors—are characteristics that affect how stakeholders react to and experience program evaluation. These factors can refer to stakeholders' attitudes towards evaluation in general, their beliefs about the specific evaluation and evaluators they are working with, and their vested interest in a program. Based on anxiety research discussing the interrelationship between trait and state anxieties (Eysenck, 2013; Huizink et al., 2014; Karataş, Arslan, & Karataş, 2014; Szafranski, Barrera, & Norton, 2012), it is suspected that stakeholders' propensity to be generally anxious (an individual trait) may also increase their likelihood of experiencing XSEA. This is exemplified in Huizink et al.'s (2014) longitudinal study on pregnant women, where expecting mothers with high levels of trait anxiety—specifically, general anxiety—tended to have higher pregnancy-specific state anxiety.

Regarding clients' attitudes towards evaluation, stakeholders are described to exhibit XSEA when they fear that evaluation results could be used to discontinue program funding or

terminate the program itself (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Whitehall et al., 2012). These beliefs may stem from prior learning experiences such as stakeholders witnessing programs being cut due to financial or budgetary constraints, programmatic inefficiencies, or agendas based in political ideology (deLeon, 1983). Stakeholders may also believe that evaluations are cumbersome and will infringe on time needed for effective program implementation (Whitehall et al., 2012), which can enhance their resistance to evaluation (Taut & Brauns, 2003). However, stakeholders may also have positive beliefs about evaluation, and Whitehall et al. (2012) cautions against overestimating the number of participants who have a negative orientation towards evaluation. In Whitehall et al.'s (2012) study on practitioner evaluators, or staff who played a dual role as program deliverers and internal evaluators for a parenting and family strengthening program, the practitioner evaluators tended to assume their participants would dislike the evaluation process, when in fact participants had significantly more positive beliefs about the evaluation than the practitioner evaluators predicted.

Stakeholders' attitudes towards the specific evaluations in which they are involved may also lead to XSEA. For example, clients can mistrust the evaluators and their choice in evaluation design and data collection methods. Stakeholders may disagree with elements of the evaluation methodology, such as quantification of their program's impact when qualitative methods are preferred, or with the research design employed, such as a randomized control trial that prohibits program services from immediately reaching all program recipients. Because of this, the evaluation may not accurately capture the richness and depth of program impact from the stakeholder's point of view (Whitehall et al., 2012). The utility of the evaluation may also come into question if clients perceive the evaluation findings to be inaccurate or untrustworthy (Taut & Brauns, 2003; Whitehall et al., 2012). Stakeholders may also feel highly anxious if their

values and voices are lacking in the criteria used to evaluate their program, the measures employed to assess worth or merit, and in the evaluation recommendations for program improvement (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003).

Perhaps the most recognized source of XSEA can be traced to the amount of vested interest stakeholders have in their program's current and future impact (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Taut & Brauns, 2003). Those likely to have a vested interest in a program's demonstrated effectiveness are also those with high personal involvement in the program; as Taut and Brauns (2003) explain, "The higher someone's commitment to the programme (its goals, programme theory, potential outcomes, etc.), the more they feel affected [by evaluation]" (p. 249). Authors describe program directors as being especially likely to experience XSEA since they are so heavily involved in developing programs (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Bonoma, 1977; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). These stakeholders may feel a personal sense of pride if their program is demonstrated to be effective; conversely, these same stakeholders may also feel guilty, ashamed, and personally responsible for program weaknesses (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003).

Furthermore, when stakeholders fear that factors that impeded program success will be traced back to their individual choices and actions, they can interpret program evaluation as personnel evaluation (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Morris, 2000). In these instances, stakeholders perceive negative evaluation of their program as negative evaluation of themselves (Bonoma, 1977), and can worry that the evaluation results will lead to severe consequences such as being dismissed from their positions (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Morris, 2000).

Program and organizational factors. In addition to stakeholder characteristics, clients may also experience XSEA when their organization lacks a learning culture (Bechar & Mero-

Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003), or does not support “the systematic and ongoing use of knowledge and information for improvement” (Botcheva, Roller White, & Huffman, 2002, p. 422). In these instances, evaluation can be viewed as disrupting the status quo and weakening organizational cohesion (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). Those benefitting from current organizational arrangements may be hesitant to act on changes suggested by evaluation findings.

Introducing innovations into a program is a type of organizational factor that can increase XSEA (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). For instance, Geva-May and Thorngate (2003) found that when a training program incorporated new practices into its curriculum, the director was fearful that the evaluation would yield negative findings highlighting the program’s weaknesses. The director ended up withdrawing her participation from the evaluation because she was fearful that the evaluation findings would damage the reputation of her program’s institution (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003).

Situational factors. Situational or external factors that can lead to XSEA include: (1) requirements and pressure from external funding sources insisting program effectiveness be demonstrated; (2) limited time and financial resources to conduct an evaluation; (3) historical events affecting the normal implementation of a program, such as program participants going on strike; and (4) new national policies that affect a program’s future (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). Many of these situational variables alone are enough to cause stakeholders to be fearful about the future of their program. When an evaluator enters the scene, their fear can intensify due to a perception that the evaluation will lead to a public revealing of program failure (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003).

Evaluator characteristics. Contrasting the other sources of XSEA are evaluator characteristics, which may be modifiable on the evaluator's end with proper foresight, evaluation experience, and training. One such evaluator factor refers to how evaluators deliver and present evaluation findings. Evaluators may unintentionally create XSEA if they tend to ignore program accomplishments and focus primarily on program challenges (Donaldson et al., 2002).

Role ambiguity is also an important evaluator factor that can contribute to XSEA, since responsibilities are associated with roles and inform stakeholders what to anticipate during an evaluation process (Cartland et al., 2008; Fleischer & Christie, 2009; Skolits et al., 2009; Thoits, 1991). One example is evaluators taking on the role of a critical friend, where they partner with stakeholders to develop shared meanings about the current status of the program and the program's future (Morabito, 2002; Rallis & Rossman, 2000; Wiltz, 2005). Evaluators in this role will also encourage an evaluation process that fosters dialogue, reflection, and inquiry among the stakeholders while taking a critical stance throughout the evaluation process (Morabito, 2002; Rallis & Rossman, 2000; Wiltz, 2005). Without knowing the evaluator's role and intentions, as well as the part they play in the evaluation, stakeholders can feel stressed, tense, confused, and highly anxious about evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2002).

XSEA may also occur if evaluators do not foster positive relationships with their stakeholders. This can be especially challenging for internal evaluators trying to maintain a degree of objectivity, or evaluators who play dual roles as evaluation practitioners and program implementers (Whitehall et al., 2012). Preliminary evidence, however, suggests that internal evaluators may be able to create more positive attitudes and less anxiety towards evaluation since they can form close relationships with participants (Love, 1991).

Interacting sources. Interactions may arise among the four sources of XSEA, which can create difficult working conditions for all involved in an evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2002). For instance, when stakeholder characteristics (e.g., lack of support for the evaluation from the program head), program and organizational factors (e.g., changes in the organizational environment of the program), and situational factors (e.g., a strike among the program's target audience) clashed in Bechar and Mero-Jaffe's (2014) evaluation, the result was poor communication and cooperation between the stakeholders and evaluators.

How to Manage Excessive Evaluation Anxiety

Donaldson et al. (2002) identified 17 strategies for preventing and managing XSEA (see Table 2). The strategies tend to focus on preventing miscommunication and misunderstanding around evaluation processes, as well as on providing stakeholders and evaluators with regular opportunities to discuss various topics together. In their case study, Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) added an 18th strategy of clearly defining the persons entitled to react to the draft proposal and evaluation reports, as well as modes of reaction and distribution.

Table 2.

XSEA Management Strategies, as Identified in the Literature

| XSEA Management Strategies | Brief Definition |
|--|---|
| 1. Expect and accept | Acknowledge and accept that program evaluation can be anxiety-inducing for stakeholders. |
| 2. Work through hangovers from bad evaluation experiences | Discuss with stakeholders any negative evaluation experiences they may have previously had and reflect on how to prevent or mitigate those issues from reoccurring. |
| 3. Make sure this isn't legitimate opposition to bad evaluation | Determine if there is a weakness in the evaluation that needs to be addressed. |
| 4. Determine program psychologic | Assess what stakeholders are hoping the program will do for them personally, or how the program's success or failure may damage them personally. |
| 5. Discuss purposes of this evaluation | Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss the various purposes of evaluation, in general, along with the specific purposes and focus of their evaluation. |
| 6. Discuss the professional standards for program evaluation | Discuss with stakeholders the field's professional standards and associations (e.g., the American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for Evaluation, etc.). |
| 7. Discuss why honesty with the evaluator is not disloyalty to the group | Explain to stakeholders that being honest with the evaluator about a program's issues is not equivalent to being disloyal to the program, and that an accurate understanding of the program will help strengthen the evaluation design and ultimately, the program. |
| 8. Discuss the risk/benefit ratio of cooperation for individuals | Share how evaluation can bring about benefits to stakeholders, such as improvements in their work environment or reality-leavening of the expectations laid on them. Also share that their honest feedback will be anonymous and kept confidential if that is feasible for the evaluation design. |
| 9. Provide balanced continuous improvement feedback | Identify and highlight program strengths along with areas in need of improvement. |
| 10. Allow stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation | Provide stakeholders with opportunities to discuss and voice their concerns about the evaluation and evaluation findings. |
| 11. Be prepared to wear your psychotherapy hat | Actively listen to stakeholders' frustrations and concerns about the evaluation or their program. |

| <i>XSEA Management Strategies</i> | <i>Brief Definition</i> |
|--|--|
| 12. Role clarification on an ongoing basis | Discuss the roles and responsibilities the stakeholders and evaluators have throughout the evaluation process. |
| 13. Be a role model | Encourage stakeholders to evaluate the evaluation and the evaluation team formally on a regular basis. |
| 14. Distinguish the blame game from the program evaluation game | Explain that evaluation focuses on assessing the quality of program services through systematic inquiry and is not focused on identifying specific people to blame for poor program performance. |
| 15. Facilitate learning communities/organizations | Establish a community of stakeholders that engage in critical reflection and discussion of evaluation findings for continuous quality improvement purposes. |
| 16. Push for culture change | Help normalize rigorous evaluation practices as a routine aspect of the organization. |
| 17. Use multiple strategies | Employ a variety of strategies to manage XSEA. |
| 18. Define clearly the persons entitled to react to the draft proposal and evaluation reports, as well as modes of reaction and distribution | Identify key stakeholders and decision makers at the onset of evaluation activities who have access to evaluation products. |

Donaldson et al. (2002) note that because the strategies often focus on candid discussion with stakeholders that they are most applicable in highly interactive or collaborative evaluations. This was especially illustrated in Siebert and Myle's (2019) article, where senior program staff who were involved in a workshop to create a program theory were suspected to be experiencing XSEA. By moving from a theory-driven to a participatory approach where they were given greater control of the facilitation process, the evaluators observed these stakeholders becoming less anxious, more engaged, and more open-minded to others' perspectives.

Model of XSEA

Altogether, these descriptions of XSEA can be exemplified in a hypothesized theoretical framework that is based on both evaluators' (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002) and psychologists' (Beck, 1985; Clark, 1986; Witte, 1994) research. The framework portrayed in Figure 3 was created by this researcher as a first attempt to visualize the phenomenon of XSEA. The sources or risk factors of XSEA (i.e., stakeholder characteristics, program or organizational factors, situational factors, and evaluator characteristics), when ineffectively managed or not addressed, trigger XSEA. Stakeholders' XSEA then leads to negative reactions or consequences that represent stakeholders' attempts to suppress XSEA and provide themselves with short-term relief. Ultimately, however, their negative reactions (e.g., tampering with program data, refusing to assist with data collection, etc.) can cause additional problems longer-term (e.g., conflict with the evaluator or other stakeholders, inaccurate evaluation findings, wasted resources) that exacerbate their XSEA. This vicious cycle will not be interrupted without either the evaluator or stakeholder addressing or effectively managing the fear(s) underlying XSEA, either preventatively before stakeholders' anxiety becomes excessive, or responsively to already high levels of evaluation anxiety.

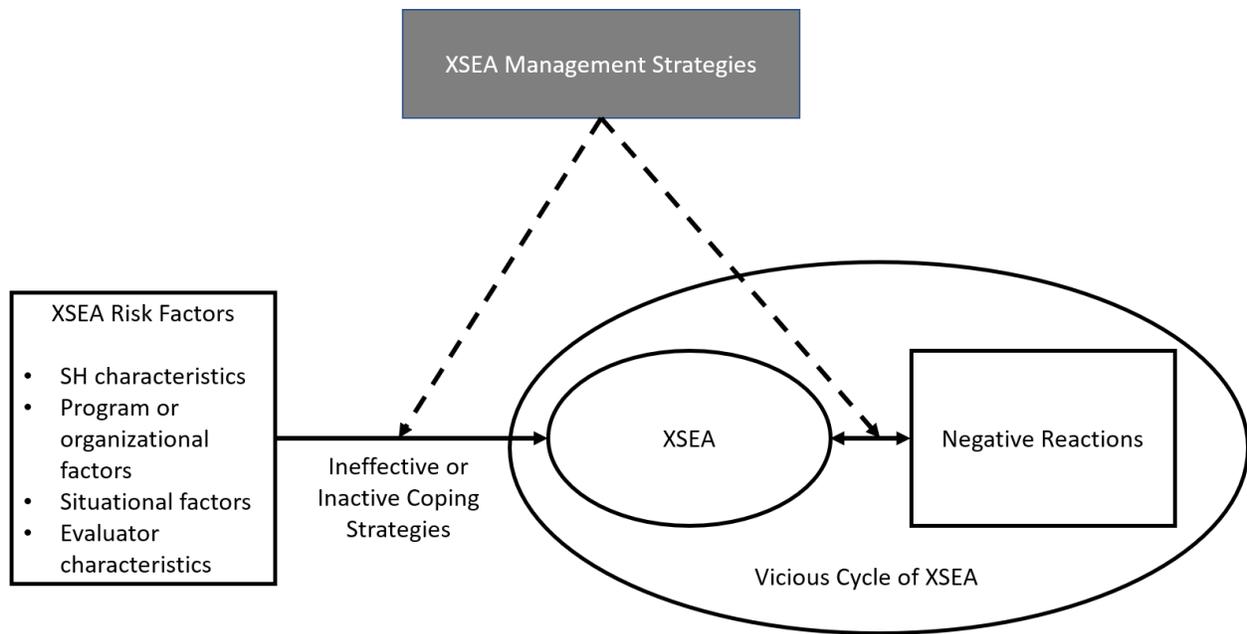


Figure 3. Hypothesized Theoretical Framework of Excessive Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety (XSEA)

The Current Study

Despite the dearth of research on XSEA, anxiety towards program evaluation is recognized as an issue worth addressing in the larger evaluation community. For instance, in its 2019 conference proposal submission guidelines the American Evaluation Association (2019) posed the question to evaluators, “How do we...manage the anxiety our presence may stir?” The little research that does examine XSEA demonstrates the damaging nature of XSEA on both evaluators and stakeholders; when stakeholders’ XSEA is exhibited through conflict, withdrawal, resistance, shame, anger, professional disparagement, or a sense of loss of control, the quality of the evaluation process as well as both parties’ well-being suffers, making evaluation a difficult experience for all involved. Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) also describe how not knowing how to effectively manage their clients’ XSEA challenged their ability to adhere to professional and ethical guidelines such as integrity and honesty, respect for people, systematic inquiry, and

responsibility for general and public welfare (American Evaluation Association, 2004); this suggests that ethical evaluation practice may be at risk if evaluators are unable to effectively predict, detect, and manage XSEA.

In addition to there being few studies that examine clients' anxiety towards program evaluation, another major limitation of evaluators' knowledge of XSEA is that little research to date has collected data directly from stakeholders on the topic. A systematic search for the term "anxiety" through eight well-recognized evaluation journals yielded few results, in general, and of those pertaining to XSEA and not anxiety as the focus of a program intervention, only one collected data from stakeholders (see Table 3). By better understanding how stakeholders react to evaluation, the field would begin to advance to the same level as other service professions that recognize the value in collecting data from its service recipients. For example, patient perceptions of physician-patient communication (Tasaki et al., 2002), physician's skills (Curtis, 2002) and ideal physician behaviors (Bendapudi et al., 2006) are examined in healthcare research. Within education research, students' perceptions of their teachers' effectiveness are examined (Coats & Swierenga, 1972), as well as the quality of the relationships students have with their teachers (Hughes, 2011). These domains collect firsthand data from their service recipients, which is a deficiency of most research on evaluation. While the sources of XSEA and its manifestations provided in this review are comprehensive, they are also founded primarily on evaluators' observations, assumptions, and beliefs about the psychology of stakeholders. Further evidence deriving directly from stakeholders is needed to validate the phenomenon of XSEA.

Table 3.

Search results by journal for the term "anxiety"

| Source | Years Published Articles Available | Number of Results | Results Relevant to XSEA | Collected Data from Program Stakeholders |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| American Journal of Evaluation | 1998—2019 | 5 | Bechar & Mero-Jaffe (2014) | No |
| | | | Donaldson, Gooler, & Scriven (2002) | No |
| | | | Whitehall, Hill, & Koehler (2012) | Yes |
| Evaluation and Program Planning | 1978—2021 | 11 | Wasserman (2010) | No |
| Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice | 1992—2019 | 2 | Geva-May & Thorngate (2003) | No |
| | | | Siebert & Myles (2019) | No |
| Journal of Policy Analysis & Management | 1981—2022 | 2 | 0 | N/A |
| Journal of Health Services Research & Policy | 1997—2022 | 15 | 0 | N/A |
| Evaluation and the Health Professions | 1978 | 1 | 0 | N/A |
| New Directions for Evaluation | 1995—2021 | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation | 1991—2022 | 0 | N/A | N/A |

To address these limitations, this research first examined the model of XSEA (see Figure 3) in the context of a Midwestern nonprofit organization, and then asked evaluators affiliated with the American Evaluation Association (AEA) to validate which XSEA manifestations may be universal to the majority of program stakeholders.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions and hypotheses to explore XSEA include the following:

1. To what extent do program staff experience XSEA when participating in an evaluation, including in evaluation capacity building activities²? How aware are program staff of their own psychological responses to evaluation, and how do evaluators and program staff who have experienced or witnessed anxious responses to evaluation describe XSEA?
 - a. H1: Because of the natural tendency to feel anxious when being evaluated by others, all program staff, and particularly those with a strong vested interest in their program, will be able to describe personal experiences with and the concept of XSEA.
2. What increases or decreases the likelihood that program staff experience XSEA? To what extent do these sources of XSEA align with those hypothesized in the current literature?

² Given the broad nature of evaluators' work, it is unclear what types of evaluation activities induce XSEA. The researcher included the addition of "evaluation capacity building activities" in Research Question 1 to capture the wide range of situations in which stakeholders may develop XSEA because an evaluator is present. This framing was especially helpful in Phase 1, where the Catholic Charities' internal evaluation team had different goals for different programs; in some instances, their focus was *only* on building the evaluation capacity of programs, whereas with other programs the team worked with program staff to design and implement program evaluations.

- a. H2: There will be a positive relationship between the number of hypothesized sources of XSEA mentioned (i.e., stakeholder characteristics, evaluator characteristics, program or organizational factors, and situational factors) and the *presence* and *intensity* of XSEA, such that XSEA will be more recognizable and excessive in nature when a greater number of sources or antecedents are discussed by both evaluators and staff.
3. What are the consequences or negative reactions of XSEA as described by evaluators and program staff?
 - a. H3: The consequences of XSEA will match the hypothesized manifestations described in the literature, specifically the following indicators of conflict, withdrawal or evasion, resistance, shame, anger, professional disparagement, and sense of loss of control.
4. How do evaluators' and program staff's suggestions for managing XSEA vary? What are the similarities and differences in their descriptions, and to what extent do the descriptions align with the literature?
 - a. Evaluators' use of XSEA management strategies will align with those suggested in the literature.
 - b. Given the scarcity of research on XSEA, in general, and especially on XSEA from stakeholders' points-of-view, there is currently not enough information available to generate a hypothesis to this research question.

Overview of the Research Design

This dissertation research employed an exploratory sequential mixed methods design (see Figure 4) to answer the stated research questions. The purpose of an exploratory sequential

mixed methods design is to first gain insight into a less understood phenomenon in the first phase of research, then to use the findings to inform further investigation of the phenomenon in the second phase of research (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). Data in Phase 1 are collected qualitatively so that findings are grounded in the perspectives and experiences of the study's participants. The researcher then creates a quantitative instrument that builds on Phase 1's findings and uses the new instrument to gather primarily quantitative data in Phase 2. This type of design is beneficial when a researcher wants to explore an emerging theory or phenomenon that lacks existing measures and research, and also helps one examine the generalizability of qualitative results to different groups (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

Chapter 2 of this dissertation describes Phase 1 of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, where the researcher conducted a qualitative instrumental case study of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis to thoroughly explore XSEA in the context of a specific organization. Chapter 3 then covers Phase 2 of the research design and details how case study findings were used to develop a primarily quantitative survey for American Evaluation Association (AEA) members to assess the generalizability of Phase 1 qualitative findings. Results from both phases helped refine the hypothesized theoretical framework of XSEA and informed the development of an XSEA detection and management checklist.

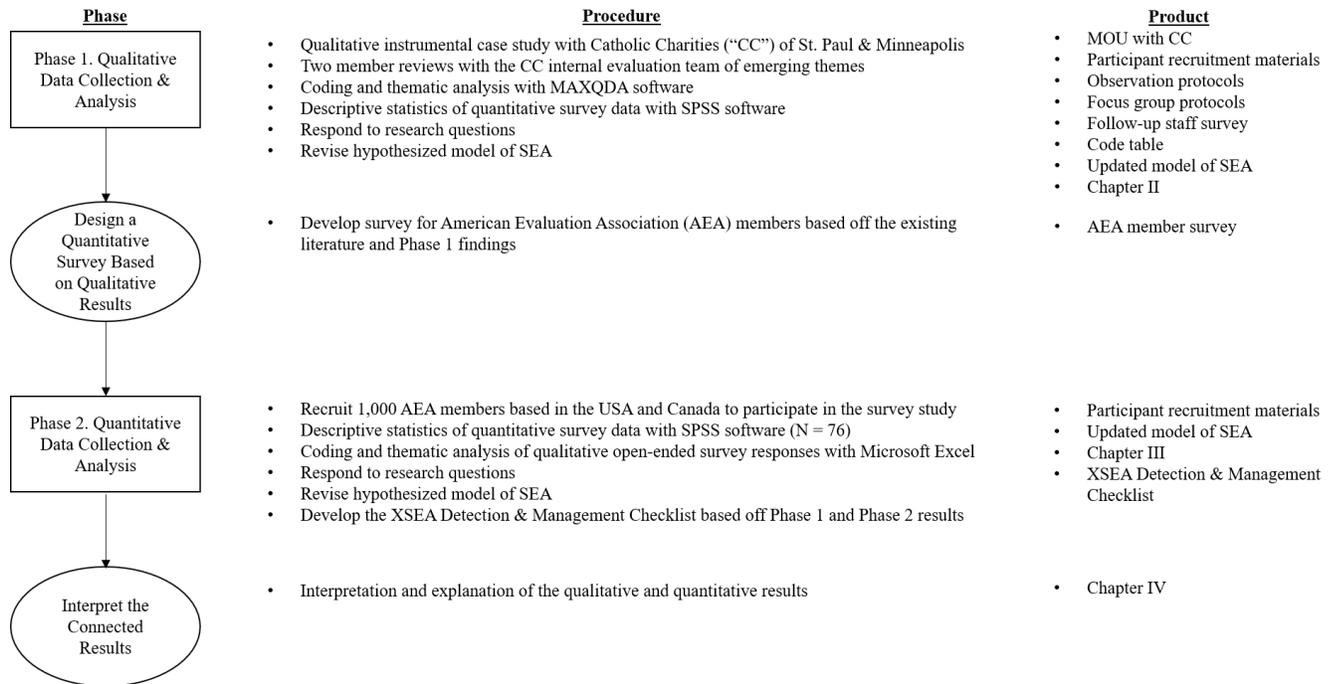


Figure 4. Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

Positionality Statement

This researcher, Samantha Langan, grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin in the United States. She comes from a middle class background and identifies as a white, non-Hispanic, cis-gendered, liberal woman. Samantha is a native English speaker and has some ability to communicate in Spanish. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and then attended graduate school in southern California at Claremont Graduate University, where she completed her Master's degree in Psychology with an emphasis in Health Behavior Research and Evaluation. This dissertation research was conducted to help fulfill the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology, with an emphasis in Evaluation and Applied Research Methods.

Samantha's research is informed by a commitment to recognizing the power dynamics in play during program evaluations, and to helping make both the experiences and outcomes of evaluations more positive, useful, and equitable for all those involved.

CHAPTER II

PHASE 1. QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Overview

Phase 1 of the exploratory sequential mixed methods study focused on examining how XSEA manifested among stakeholders within a specific context and organization. Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (“CC”) had various advantages for case selection (see the *Reasons Why CC was Selected as the Case to be Studied* section below) and was chosen as the organization to be thoroughly examined.

CC’s Background and Context During Data Collection

CC is an affiliate of Catholic Charities USA and one of the largest private networks of social service providers in the United States. CC has served the Twin Cities, Minnesota area since 1869 by working with the poorest and most vulnerable members of the community, and is one of the principal comprehensive social service nonprofits in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region. At the time of Phase 1 data collection, CC employed 586 staff who were predominantly under the age of 49 ($n = 388$, 66%), female ($n = 411$, 70%), identified racially and ethnically as white ($n = 179$, 31%) or Hispanic or Latino ($n = 298$, 51%) (Table 4). During Phase 1 data collection CC served approximately 22,000 clients through 30 different programs in the areas of Child and Family Services (CFS), Aging and Disabilities Services (ADS), and Housing Stability.

Table 4.

CC Employee Demographics between July and December 2018 (N = 586)

| | | Percentage | N |
|--------|----------------------------------|------------|-----|
| Age | 20-29 | 22% | 126 |
| | 30-39 | 23% | 135 |
| | 40-49 | 22% | 127 |
| | 50-59 | 19% | 109 |
| | 60-69 | 14% | 81 |
| | 70+ | 1% | 8 |
| Race | Hispanic or Latino* | 51% | 298 |
| | White | 31% | 179 |
| | African American or Black | 15% | 86 |
| | Two or more races | 3% | 16 |
| | American Indian or Alaska Native | 1% | 4 |
| | Asian | 1% | 3 |
| Gender | Female | 70% | 411 |
| | Male | 30% | 175 |

**Note.* This researcher recognizes that Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx is typically considered an ethnicity variable. The demographics in this table are reported as they were shared with this researcher by the CC organization.

Unlike other Catholic Charities’ affiliates, CC is unique in that it has an internal Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation and Research (PAPER) team³. PAPER, at the time of data collection, was acclimating to a new director, growing in size, and consisted of four staff, including this researcher. The unit’s growth was reflective of CC’s commitment to building the evaluation capacity of the agency and its individual programs.

In January 2017—about 18 months prior to the start of Phase 1 data collection—PAPER began working with staff from two Housing Stability programs to write a retrospective

³ In June 2018 PAPER merged with CC’s Information Technology team and changed its name to the Data Analysis, Research, and Technology (DART) unit. This merge occurred about six months after case study data collection had completed.

evaluation report, construct a logic model, and provide survey data collection support (see Figure 5 for a timeline of PAPER-led evaluation activities at CC prior to and during Phase 1 data collection). Soon afterwards throughout the spring of 2017, PAPER worked with members of the Aging and Disability Services (ADS) division to create a division-wide logic model. Logic modeling continued with the CFS division in the fall of 2017 when PAPER met regularly with managerial staff from the eight CFS programs to create program-level logic models. In the winter of 2018, PAPER and the CFS division director created a division-wide logic model that illustrated how its programs contributed to a continuum of care that worked to prevent, mitigate, and treat the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Some of PAPER's initial and most intensive evaluation work occurred with two CFS programs between the fall of 2016 and summer of 2017. During this nine-month period PAPER met bi-weekly for two to four hours at a time with a diverse range of staff from CC's youth Emergency Shelter and Residential Treatment programs—which both resided within a CC building called St. Joseph's Home for Children ("St. Joe's") and often worked in partnership—to help staff re-imagine and re-design their program models. In an effort to help the agency move towards becoming a trauma-informed organization, St. Joe's staff involved in revisioning work were also tasked with selecting a trauma-informed framework to incorporate into their treatment milieu. This work culminated with two new theory of change models reflecting the programs' aspirations to more effectively meet the needs of their clients, as well as with the adoption of the *Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC)* trauma-informed framework (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010) to be integrated into all CFS programming.

During Phase 1 data collection, which began in July 2018 and concluded in December 2018, PAPER helped CFS and ADS leadership develop evaluation plans. This researcher led

evaluation plan development for each CFS program and the CFS division, and another PAPER team member led the creation of a division-wide evaluation plan for ADS during the summer and fall of 2018. The newly created logic models helped frame the development of each evaluation plan.

While staff involved in evaluation planning were generally cooperative and engaged in the work, CFS staff at St. Joe's were coping with CC's decision to close its youth Residential Treatment program in August 2018, about a month into Phase 1 data collection. Despite the extensive work of St. Joe's and PAPER staff to re-design Residential Treatment the year before, the agency decided to discontinue the program because clients were demonstrating more complex mental and behavioral health needs than they felt equipped to financially invest in to effectively address. St. Joe's staff learned of the impending program closure in June 2018, and the majority working in Residential Treatment spent the summer transitioning to the Emergency Shelter program so they could continue working in the building with many of their same clients. Even though a small number of employees became unemployed because of the program closure, staff morale was low at St. Joe's during the summer and fall of 2018 during Phase 1 data collection as staff grieved the loss of one of the agency's largest and oldest CFS programs.

In addition to these significant CFS program changes, the agency was involved in reaccreditation work with the Council on Accreditation (COA) during Phase 1 data collection, which required all CC senior- and managerial-level staff to engage in evaluation-related activities. In January 2017, PAPER began facilitating and organizing the re-accreditation process for the agency, primarily by helping staff write their self-studies. The self-studies necessitated staff to formally assess their programs and services against COA's standards—in many ways paralleling the focus of program evaluation work—and were due to COA in mid-September

2018. COA then visited CC in mid-November 2018 to conduct their own site visits, and upon review of the various self-study and site visit evidence, officially re-accredited CC for four more years in January 2019.

Thus, the culture of CC at the time of the case study was one in which managerial staff across all service divisions—and particularly those in the CFS and ADS divisions—were building relationships with the PAPER team and learning more about evaluation and their programs through logic modeling, evaluation plan development, and participation in reaccreditation tasks. CFS staff, and particularly those at St. Joe's, were experiencing low morale due to a recent program closure, and all staff throughout the agency were anxiously preparing for and anticipating the imminent site visits from COA.

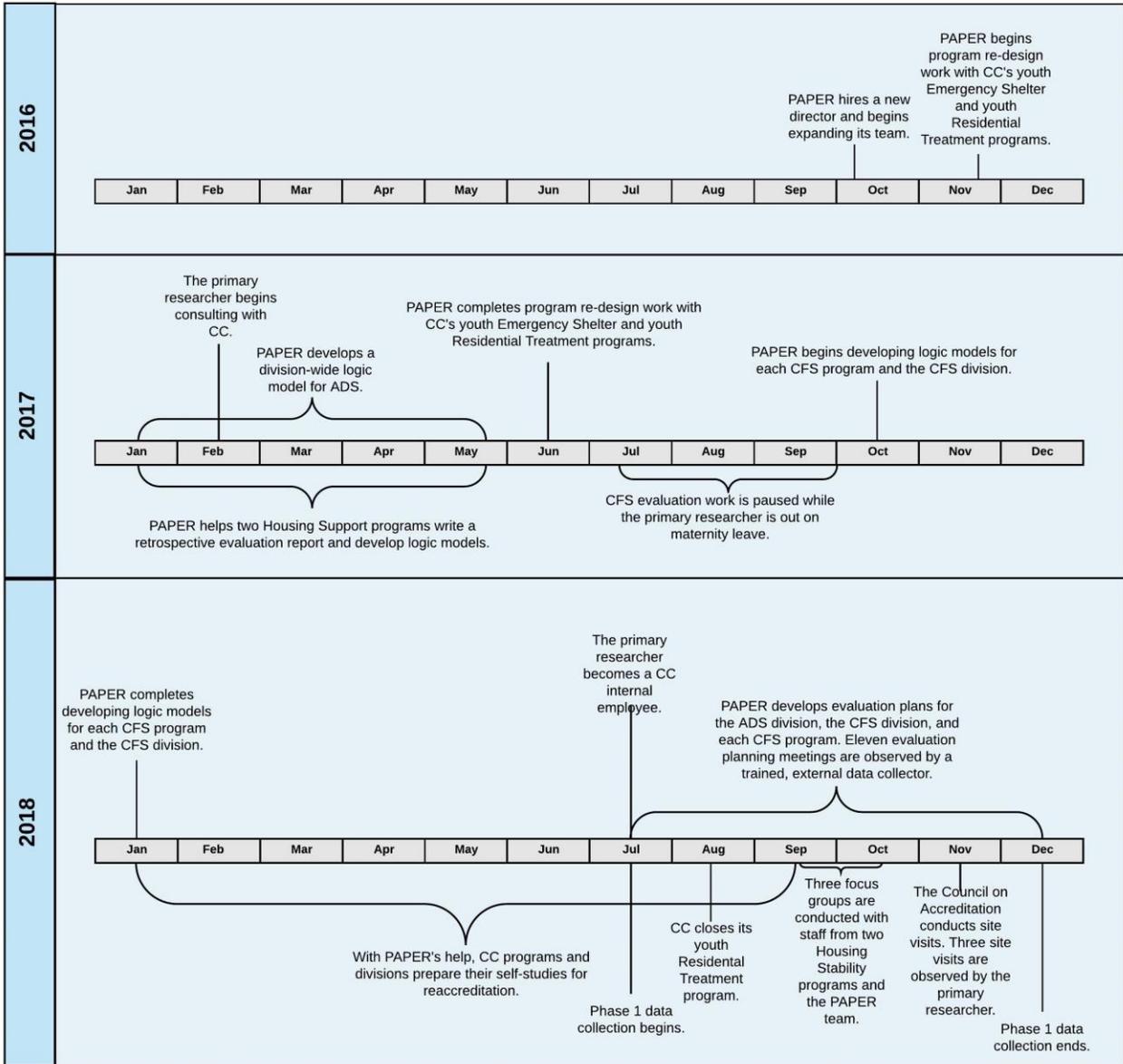


Figure 5. Timeline of PAPER-led evaluation activities at Catholic Charities prior to and during Phase 1 data collection

Role of this Study's Researcher. This researcher joined CC as an external evaluation and data visualization consultant in February 2017, and in July 2018 transitioned to becoming a fulltime internal employee with PAPER as a Senior Research and Evaluation Specialist. The start of Phase 1 data collection occurred in tandem with this transition.

In terms of staff familiarity, this researcher had developed positive, professional relationships with CFS program leadership and some frontline staff while working with CC as an evaluation consultant. During her consulting contract she assisted primarily with CFS evaluation activities, and in particular, helped facilitate the intensive program re-design work and the identification of the ARC trauma-informed framework for the St. Joe's programs. This work often involved meeting outside of staff's normal working hours, such as on weekends, and this researcher became quite familiar with these staff during this time because of the PAPER team's democratic approach to logic modeling and the large amount of time staff and the PAPER team spent together. While she was a consultant this researcher also oversaw the creation of logic models for the CFS programs and division throughout the fall and winter of 2017, and it was during these meetings that she began developing positive relationships with the other CFS program leaders outside of St. Joe's. Once she transitioned into becoming an internal employee, this researcher became the point of contact for all CFS evaluation planning and corresponding evaluation activities, and at the time of Phase 1 data collection was meeting regularly with managerial staff across CFS to develop evaluation plans. Based on program staff's candor during these meetings, this researcher suspects that transitioning from an external to an internal employee role increased staff's trust in her since she was now one of their own.

Compared to her relationships with CFS staff, this researcher was less familiar with ADS and Housing employees at the time of Phase 1 data collection. She had not worked with any staff from the Housing programs prior to or during the time of data collection, and was introduced to ADS division leadership during evaluation planning meetings, which—like the CFS evaluation planning meetings—were occurring at the time of Phase 1 data collection.

Reasons Why CC was Selected as the Case to be Studied

CC was selected as the case to be examined for a variety of reasons. First, CC's newly formed internal evaluation team was beginning to introduce program staff across the agency to evaluation, so all programs were at a similar point in their implementation of PAPER-led evaluation activities. Second, the agency was involved in reaccreditation work with COA which required all CC senior- and managerial-level staff to think critically about how well their services were meeting best practice performance standards. Third, CC shares similarities with other social service nonprofits in the United States; in particular, CC is mission-focused, has a governing board that oversees the direction of the organization, receives funding from a variety of sources (i.e., government and private grants, program service fees, endowments), and relies on the active participation of volunteers. While CC is considered a larger than average-sized nonprofit (Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report, 2018) with approximately 570 employees and a total revenue of around \$36 million in 2018 (ProPublica, 2018), its programs are part of the health and human services sector, which is the most common service sector for most nonprofits. Because of its characteristics as a typical nonprofit, it was thought that the experiences of CC staff would likely resemble the experiences of other nonprofit stakeholders.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, CC was selected as the case to be studied because this researcher was familiar with many of CC's program staff and the organizational culture of the agency. By the time Phase 1 data collection began she was considered "an insider," which was especially advantageous for conducting qualitative research and studying a sensitive topic like XSEA. By July 2018 this researcher had already established trusting professional relationships with many CFS program leadership and understood their personalities and communication styles, which proved especially useful in understanding their reactions during

evaluation planning meetings. Her position within CC as an internal employee also allowed her to act as a participant observer during data collection, where her direct involvement in evaluation activities as well as familiarity with the staff and CC culture was helpful for contextualizing and understanding staff's exhibitions of XSEA.

Methods

Design

A qualitative instrumental case study was selected as the design for Phase 1 of the overall exploratory mixed methods design to explore how XSEA manifested among CC program staff. The case study design was appropriate for the following reasons: (1) case study research is a preferred strategy for examining phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2014); (2) case studies are helpful for answering “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2014), such as those posed by this research; (3) XSEA is a relatively unexplored construct, especially from stakeholders' points-of-view, and understanding the organizational culture of CC shed light on contextual factors that influenced XSEA; (4) this researcher's emic or insider perspective facilitated a deep understanding of CC's organizational culture and helped contextualize case study findings; (5) it was not the intention to manipulate the behavior or attitudes of this study's research participants, but rather to uncover and understand CC program staff's natural reactions to evaluation and related activities; and (6) by being qualitative, in nature, a case study design meets the qualitative requirements needed for Phase 1 of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design.

All data collection aligned with participants' natural involvement in CC evaluation activities, particularly agency-wide re-accreditation work with COA as well as evaluation planning for the CFS and ADS divisions. This was done intentionally to help strengthen the accuracy of participants' self-report data, which is subject to recall bias and tends to become

more unreliable as the time between the event and an assessment increases (Hassan, 2005). Accordingly, the unit of analysis (Yin, 2014) in this case study was the group of CC program staff from the CFS, Housing Stability, and ADS divisions who were participating in evaluation activities with PAPER or with COA. Evidence was collected over the course of six months so that this researcher had sufficient time to observe participants' behaviors and natural reactions to reaccreditation work and evaluation planning.

In addition to being qualitative, this research is also classified as an *instrumental case study*, or one where the case is used to facilitate understanding of a certain phenomenon (Stake, 2005). With this type of design, the case—in this instance, CC—may be considered typical or atypical, but the context of the case is studied in great detail so that a researcher can gain deep understanding into a particular issue—such as XSEA—occurring within that context (Stake, 2005).

Construct validity. Case studies can face criticism for studying a phenomenon that has not been sufficiently operationalized (Yin, 2014). To increase a case study's construct validity, or the degree to which a concept under investigation is correctly operationalized, Yin (2011; 2014) recommends collecting multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence that demonstrates to readers what specific data is informing case study conclusions, and having key informants review initial case study findings. This study follows these guidelines by collecting various types of data (i.e., observations, survey, focus groups, critical reflection notes) for triangulation purposes. The results from these various types of evidence—or the chains of evidence—are provided in greater detail when addressing this study's research questions. Lastly, and as is described in a subsequent section of this chapter, the initial findings from this research were reviewed by key informants during two member reviews.

Participants

A purposeful sampling method was employed to recruit staff from the CFS, ADS, and Housing Stability divisions who had previously participated in or were about to participate in PAPER-led evaluation activities. Staff participation in Phase 1 was voluntary and all participants—regardless of how they were involved in data collection—could opt out of the study at any time. Staff participation varied in the following ways depending on their involvement in naturally-occurring evaluation activities with PAPER at the time of data collection: (1) CFS, ADS, and PAPER staff who were scheduled to attend evaluation planning meetings were observed by an external, trained data collector; (2) after evaluation planning meetings had concluded, CFS and ADS staff who had participated in these meetings were asked to complete an anonymous follow-up survey; (3) Housing Stability staff who had worked with PAPER previously on evaluation activities participated in a focus group with this researcher; (4) the PAPER team participated in a focus group with this researcher after evaluation planning had concluded; (5) COA’s site visits to select Housing sites (which coincidentally were programs that had not previously collaborated with PAPER) were observed by this researcher; and (6) this researcher engaged in critical reflection throughout Phase 1 to document her personal reactions during data collection and reflect on patterns she was noticing among CC staff.

Program staff participating in evaluation planning meetings were recruited via email (see Appendix F) and sent an opt-out form (see Appendix G). PAPER team members facilitating these meetings were also recruited via email (see Appendix H) and allowed to opt-out (see Appendix G). After evaluation planning meetings ended, these same staff were invited via email to complete an anonymous follow-up survey (see Appendix I). Those who chose to leave their contact information after completing the survey were compensated with a \$10 Amazon gift card.

Housing Stability staff were recruited for focus groups via email (see Appendix J), as were the PAPER team staff (see Appendix K). COA site visitors and Housing Stability staff whose programs were being visited by COA were recruited via email to be observed during the site visit (see Appendix L for program staff; see Appendix M for COA reviewers) and sent an opt-out form (see Appendix N). No one who was recruited for Phase 1 opted out of the study at any time or declined to participate. Consent forms (see Appendices O-Q) were also collected before participants took part in focus groups or completed the follow-up staff survey. In total, Phase 1 included 39 unique participants. Table 5 shows that of those 39 participants, 33 (85%) were program staff, four (10%) were PAPER team members (including this researcher), and two (5%) were COA site visitors.

The majority of the 33 program staff who participated in the case study worked within the CFS division ($n = 18$, 55%), followed by the Housing Stability division ($n = 12$, 36%) and then the ADS division ($n = 3$, 9%). Furthermore, 45% ($n = 15$) of the program staff were managers, an additional 45% ($n = 15$) were frontline staff, and 9% ($n = 3$) were directors. Eighteen of the Phase 1 participants (46%) contributed data in more than one way (i.e., participated in both observations and the follow-up survey, or observations and a focus group). To increase the likelihood that CC staff would behave naturally and speak candidly during the different methods of data collection, CC participants were guaranteed that their names and personal demographic information would not be requested or recorded at any point. This also ensured participants that their identities would be protected in any future publications of this research.

Table 5.

Phase I Participant Characteristics

| | | Percentage | <i>N</i> |
|---|---|------------|----------|
| Occupation (<i>N</i> = 39) | CC Program Staff | 85% | 33 |
| | CC PAPER Staff (incl. primary researcher) | 10% | 4 |
| | COA Site Visitors | 5% | 2 |
| CC Program Staff's Division (<i>n</i> = 33) | CFS | 55% | 18 |
| | Housing Stability | 36% | 12 |
| | ADS | 9% | 3 |
| CC Program Staff's Position (<i>n</i> = 33) | Frontline/Direct Service Staff | 45% | 15 |
| | Manager | 42% | 14 |
| | Director | 12% | 4 |

Materials and Procedures

Qualitative data collection occurred over the course of six months, beginning in July 2018 after IRB approval had been granted by Claremont Graduate University (see Appendix R) and after a Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix S) had been signed between this researcher and CC. COA also agreed to participate in this research after a phone conversation with the Associate Director of Volunteer Services. The following methods are listed in chronological order of when they occurred during this six-month period.

Observations of Evaluation Planning Meetings. Observations of evaluation planning meetings were conducted for the purposes of documenting program staff's reactions to evaluation in real-time. The observation protocol was developed by reviewing both the program evaluation and psychological literature on evaluation anxiety. Affective, cognitive, and behavioral indicators of XSEA were adapted from Beck's (1988) Anxiety Inventory (BAI) (e.g., "Staff member describes/appears feeling upset, distressed, or unsteady because of the evaluation," etc.) (see Appendix D) and Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

(STAI) (e.g., “Staff member describes/appears nervous or jittery because of the evaluation,” etc.) (see Appendix E). The negative reactions and consequences of XSEA as listed in Table 1 were also incorporated into the observation protocol. The final sections of the protocol included post-meeting debriefing and reflection questions for the PAPER team, as well as space for the data collector to take notes (see Appendix T).

All observations were conducted by a trained external data collector who had experience working as an evaluation consultant and was also pursuing his PhD in evaluation studies from the University of Minnesota. Since this researcher was helping facilitate each evaluation planning meeting and familiar with many of the program staff involved in the meetings (particularly the CFS staff), the external observer acted as a third-party presence and helped reduce potential conflicts of interest between the research participants and primary researcher.

Prior to the observations, this researcher conducted a qualitative training session with the data collector to review qualitative data collection techniques and familiarize him with Phase 1 materials and procedures. Once trained, the data collector accompanied this researcher to evaluation planning sessions as an unobtrusive observer. Participants were made aware via the recruitment emails that the data collector would be accompanying this researcher to the meetings to observe for research purposes, and at the beginning of each meeting he was introduced to the program staff. The data collector’s observations focused on the following during these meetings: (1) program staff behaviors potentially indicative of XSEA such as those mentioned previously in the literature (e.g., conflict, withdrawal, resistance, anger, professional disparagement); (2) program staff’s and the PAPER team evaluators’ conversational behaviors, such as their pauses, interruptions of each other, gestures, and other mannerisms that occurred during discussions; (3) noteworthy features of the interactions between program staff and the evaluators; and (4) the

physical surroundings of the environment, and particularly any environmental factors affecting the meeting (e.g., uncomfortably warm room, small meeting space). After each meeting concluded the data collector led the PAPER team members who facilitated the meeting in a guided debriefing session (e.g., “How receptive to evaluation planning do you think the staff are? Did anything surprise you about their reactions today?”), as well as recorded his own perceptions of the meeting by answering some reflective questions (e.g., “Was there anything the evaluator(s) did that may have produced or contributed to staff anxieties about evaluation?”).

Altogether 21 CFS and ADS program staff and three PAPER evaluators (including this researcher) were observed over the course of 11 evaluation planning meetings (see Table 6). Each meeting lasted between two to three hours, and the majority of the six programs involved in evaluation planning ($n = 4$, 67%) met more than once with the PAPER team. Among the program staff observed, 15 (71%) were in director or manager positions and six (29%) were in frontline positions. Two of the PAPER staff—including this researcher—were observed during every meeting.

Table 6.

Number of Observed Participants during Evaluation Planning, by Service Area

| Division— Program | Number of Observations | Number of Program Staff Participants | Number of Times a PAPER Evaluator was Observed* | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | | A (this researcher) | B | C | D |
| CFS—School- Based Counseling | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| CFS—Day Treatment | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| CFS—Parenting | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| CFS— Emergency Shelter | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| CFS— Northside Child Development Center | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ADS | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 11 | 21 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 0 |

**Note.* Evaluators A (this researcher) and Evaluator B facilitated the CFS evaluation planning meetings and were observed 11 times by an external data collector. Evaluator C facilitated the ADS evaluation planning meeting and attended two CFS meetings so was observed three times by the external data collector. The fourth PAPER team evaluator (“Evaluator D”) was hired after the majority of evaluation planning meetings and observations had concluded and did not attend any of the meetings. However, this evaluator participated in PAPER focus groups and member reviews.

Follow-Up Staff Survey. After evaluation planning concluded, the program staff who attended the meeting(s) were asked to complete an anonymous online follow-up survey (see Appendix U). This survey provided program staff with an opportunity to candidly share their reactions, concerns, and anxieties towards evaluation that may have surfaced during the evaluation planning meetings.

The survey contained a mixture of quantitative and qualitative items, where quantitative items were largely developed based off evaluation literature on potential antecedents of XSEA (e.g., “I have had negative past experiences with program evaluation,” “I would describe myself as an anxious person”) and potential indicators of XSEA (e.g., “I feel nervous or jittery when I think about my program being evaluated,” “I feel anxious over the prospect of program evaluation”). Respondents answered these items on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) agreement Likert scale. Qualitative items asked participants to expand on any concerns or worries they had about program evaluation, as well as to provide suggestions for ways in which the PAPER team could make the process of evaluation a more positive or useful experience for them.

Fifteen out of the 21 program staff who were sent the survey responded, yielding a response rate of 71%. Eleven out of the 15 respondents (73%) chose to leave their contact information and were compensated with a \$10 Amazon gift card for their participation.

Focus Groups with Housing Stability Staff. Staff from two Housing Stability programs who had previously collaborated with PAPER were recruited to participate in a focus group with this researcher and external data collector. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes and followed a semi-structured approach. Participants were asked to elaborate on their reactions to re-accreditation work with COA and the extent to which they considered re-accreditation tasks

to be evaluation activities, their attitudes towards and potential anxieties concerning program evaluation, their personal and their program’s history with program evaluation, and aspects about the CC culture or PAPER team that affected their feelings towards evaluation (see Appendix V).

One director and one manager from CC’s Hope Street Permanent Supporting Housing program and three lead staff (one director and two managers) from CC’s Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter (CAHS) Diversion program participated in the focus groups (see Table 7). This researcher and focus group participants met for the first time during these focus groups.

Table 7.

Number of Focus Group Participants from Housing

| Division—Program | Number of Participants |
|---|------------------------|
| Housing—Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter (CAHS) | 3 |
| Housing—Hope Street Permanent Supportive Housing for Runaway and Homeless Youth | 2 |
| Total | 5 |

Focus Groups with the PAPER Team. To gain CC practitioner perspectives, this researcher also facilitated a focus group with the other three PAPER team evaluators.⁴ Similar to the focus groups with Housing staff, the PAPER team focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes and followed a semi-structured approach. The focus group was conducted after the majority of evaluation planning meetings had concluded and about two weeks prior to COA’s site visit.

⁴ One of these evaluators was newly hired to the PAPER team, but by the time the focus group occurred she had met with most of the program staff in this study and was beginning to assist with implementing the evaluation plans.

Participants were asked to reflect on their recent interactions with program staff, including how receptive they believed staff were to evaluation planning, how often they suspected staff were anxious about evaluation during the meetings and what strategies they used, if any, to help ease staff's anxieties, and how staff's reactions to reaccreditation work compared to their reactions to evaluation planning (see Appendix W). The PAPER team evaluators were also asked to comment on emerging themes this researcher was observing during evaluation planning meetings.

Observations of COA Site Visits. Similar to the observations of the evaluation planning meetings, the observations of the COA site visits were conducted for the purposes of documenting program staff's immediate reactions to being assessed by an external reviewer. Because the Housing Stability division was not yet participating in evaluation planning with PAPER, the COA site visits served as an opportunity to observe Housing staff's real-time responses to evaluation-related activities. This researcher gained permission from three Housing Stability programs to observe their site visit with COA: (1) Outreach Services, (2) Workforce Development, and (3) St. Christopher's Place. This researcher attended the site visits as an unobtrusive observer and met the staff from these three programs for the first time during the observations.

The COA site visit observation protocol mirrored the evaluation planning observation protocol, where staff behaviors indicative of XSEA, notable features of interpersonal interactions, and important aspects of the physical environment were documented (see Appendix X). The qualitative prompts also resembled those in the evaluation planning observation protocol, and the COA reviewers participated in a debriefing session with this researcher following each site visit to share how they thought the visit went, how receptive they thought

staff were to their presence, and how the visit compared to others they had conducted. Following the debriefing this researcher documented her personal reflections on how the visit transpired and noted if there was anything the COA reviewer did to produce or manage staff’s anxieties.

In total, seven program staff and two COA reviewers were observed during the three COA site visits (see Table 8). One COA reviewer and one program manager (a staff member involved with both Outreach Services and Workforce Development) were observed twice.

Table 8.

Observed Participants during November 2018 COA Site Visits, by Housing Program

| Division—Program | Number of Observations | Number of Program Staff Participants | Number of Times a COA Reviewer was Observed | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------|
| | | | A | B |
| Housing—Outreach Services | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing—Workforce Development | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Housing—St. Christopher Place | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 |

Researcher Self-Reflection. As is recommended with case study research (Patton, 2002), this researcher engaged in critical reflection during data collection to document characteristics of the settings and of the participants that potentially affected the data gathered (e.g., any interruptions that occurred during an observation). After each data collection activity, this researcher reflected on her personal reactions and documented any information that may have affected her own ability to collect and interpret data. Altogether, the reflections provided this researcher with the opportunity to record her thoughts on emerging themes throughout the course of data collection.

Analysis

All qualitative data (i.e., open-ended staff survey responses, focus group transcriptions, typed observational notes) were uploaded into the qualitative data analysis software package MAXQDA 2020 (VERBI Software, 2019). Once in MAXQDA, this researcher implemented an iterative, two-cycle coding process described by Saldaña (2016) that began with first cycle exploratory coding methods. During this first round of coding, provisional codes, or a priori researcher-generated codes that were created based off the research questions, themes from this researchers' critical reflections, and the theoretical model of XSEA were assigned to segments of text. Implementing an a priori, provisional coding scheme based on a theoretical proposition is considered a preferred strategy for analyzing case study data (Yin, 2014) and helped focus initial data analysis. Because these codes provided a guiding framework for second cycle coding, the majority of the a priori codes were considered Level 1 or parent codes.

After completing first cycle coding, this researcher implemented second cycle focused coding (Saldaña, 2016), where categories of text with significant or frequent codes that were not captured in the a priori coding scheme were added, often as Level 2 or nested codes since they tended to expand upon a priori concepts (see Appendix Y for the final codebook). Typically, these codes were created from the verbatim words participants used to describe their experiences (e.g., "Have a conversation, not an interrogation"). Once coding was complete, the data were further explored through MAXQDA's options for organizing and categorizing information, as well as via Microsoft Excel to discern any patterns relevant to answering this study's research questions.

In addition to qualitative data analysis, quantitative data analysis of CFS and ADS staff's follow-up survey responses was conducted in the statistical software program, SPSS (IBM Corp,

2017). Because of the small number of survey responses ($N = 15$), only descriptive analyses were run on the quantitative items.

This researcher used mixed methods data analysis by comparing qualitative and quantitative findings from multiple sources of evidence to answer each of the research questions. This process of triangulation to identify patterns and help explain phenomenon is especially recommended in case study research (Yin, 2014).

Member Review. Reviewing researcher-produced findings with a study's participants enhances the trustworthiness, validity, and overall quality of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Locke & Velamuri, 2009). During member reviews participants have an opportunity to validate a study's findings by contributing to the descriptive accuracy of a researcher's interpretations, which "honors their right to know what is being said about them" (Locke & Velamuri, 2009, p. 489) and also helps participants become "the agents and instruments of their own change" (Locke & Velamuri, 2009, p. 489). For these reasons, member reviews are often considered an ethical and necessary practice for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Locke & Velamuri, 2009).

This researcher conducted two member reviews with the PAPER team during Phase 1, the first of which was more informal and incorporated into the PAPER team focus group. During this first member review participants were presented with a list of emerging themes this researcher had noted during her critical reflection and asked to comment on them. Their reactions and commentaries were qualitatively analyzed with the other Phase 1 data and are further elaborated on in response to this study's research questions.

The second member review occurred after Phase 1 data collection had commenced while this researcher was engaged in second cycle coding. During this session the PAPER team

reviewed patterns that were emerging in response to answering the research questions and the group members tended to concur with initial findings. When discussing the antecedents of XSEA, the team provided additional behavioral indicators they had noticed during their meetings with CC staff (e.g., staff giving each other meaningful looks during a meeting, etc.), which were then added as supplementary indicators of XSEA to this researcher's codebook during second cycle coding.

Phase 1: Results

Findings from the preceding analyses were used to answer this study's research questions as well as to inform the development of the AEA survey launched in Phase 2.

R1a. To what extent do program staff experience XSEA when participating in an evaluation, including in evaluation capacity building activities?

Observation, survey results, and focus group findings suggest that few CC staff felt highly anxious about evaluation when participating in evaluation activities. No program staff were observed to be overtly anxious during evaluation planning, and during the COA site visits staff who were observed from the three Housing programs also demonstrated little to no evaluation anxiety. In the follow-up survey the majority of respondents *disagreed* they felt anxious over the prospect of evaluation ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.67$), though three out of the 15 staff (20%) *somewhat agreed* ($n = 2$) or *agreed* ($n = 1$) they felt anxious, indicating moderate levels of XSEA among a smaller number of the staff.

XSEA was noted during focus groups with Hope Street and CAHS staff. Hope Street staff described feeling anxious over their ongoing reporting requirements for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (e.g., "We have more rigid parameters for reporting... For HUD, I guess it's kind of ongoing [where] there is actually some anxiety."), whereas staff from

CAHS described feeling anxious because of the upcoming COA site visits (e.g., “As we were talking about maybe having a visit [from COA], that makes me anxious. Especially after the last time around and just...just to...make sure we have things together. Like that part makes me anxious.”). During evaluation planning one program staff member also shared she felt anxious about COA but not about working with PAPER: “I’m anxious about COA but not anxious about our evaluation planning.” When asked why, she explained, “Because I can be honest with you [PAPER team member].” These themes regarding reporting requirements, approaches to evaluation, and trust as antecedents to XSEA are further elaborated on in response to Research Question 2 (p. 61).

Sharing Concerns as a Frequent Theme. In their qualitative survey remarks, seven out of the 15 respondents (47%) shared their worries or concerns about evaluation, particularly around the additional time evaluation work would require. As one participant disclosed, “I am worried about the time commitment and staff response/resistance to adding more evaluation tools.” Another participant noted:

I am always concerned about the time it may take to implement new systems and their relevancy for our program. Both evaluators have been very open to our concerns and work hard to understand our program. I feel confident we will come up with something helpful for all of us.

Relatedly, the most frequent indicator of XSEA observed during evaluation planning meetings was staff expressing concerns ($N = 30$ coded segments) (Table 9); at least one staff member from each of the six programs expressed concerns during the meetings. Other indicators of XSEA such as staff exhibiting signs of nervousness, fear, distress, or stress were infrequently observed. These results were corroborated by survey findings where few respondents agreed

with statements about feeling afraid ($n = 1$), nervous ($n = 1$), or distressed ($n = 0$) because of evaluation (Table 10).

There was variation in respondents' self-reported level of XSEA among those who shared concerns in the survey. When asked to indicate the extent to which they were anxious about the prospect of evaluation, two participants *strongly disagreed* ($n = 2$, 13%), two *disagreed* ($n = 2$, 13%), one *neither agreed nor disagreed* ($n = 1$, 7%), and two *somewhat agreed* ($n = 2$, 13%). Furthermore, the code "Staff express concerns" co-occurred infrequently with "Staff feel anxious" ($n = 1$), "Staff feel afraid" ($n = 1$), and "Staff feel distressed" ($n = 1$) in MAXQDA. Altogether these findings suggest that sharing concerns alone may not be strongly associated with XSEA, though further examination is needed.

Table 9.

Evidence of staff experiencing XSEA – XSEA Codes by Number of Sources Coded

| Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Staff express concerns | 30 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Staff feel anxious | 11 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Staff feel stressed | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Staff feel nervous | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Staff feel distressed | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Staff feel afraid | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Table 10.

CFS & ADS Staff's Survey Responses to XSEA Items (N = 15)

| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>N (%) to Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|---|
| I feel anxious over the prospect of program evaluation. | 2.73 | 1.67 | 3 (20%) |
| I am afraid of negative evaluation findings. | 2.47 | 1.19 | 1 (7%) |
| I feel nervous or jittery when I think about my program being evaluated. | 2.13 | 1.25 | 1 (7%) |
| The thought of my program being evaluated distresses me. | 2.27 | 1.03 | 0 (0%) |
| I am calm and relaxed when thinking about my program being evaluated. | 5.40 | .83 | 12 (60%) |

Note. Response scale: 1=*Strongly Disagree* to 7=*Strongly Agree*

R1b. How aware are program staff of their own psychological responses to evaluation, and how do evaluators and program staff who have experienced or witnessed anxious responses to evaluation describe XSEA?

Similarities between the data collector’s observational notes from evaluation planning and staff’s self-report data on the follow-up survey suggest that the data collector correctly interpreted staff’s responses. These similarities also suggest that when prompted to reflect, staff are aware of their personal level of anxiety towards evaluation.

The most descriptive accounts of XSEA were gathered via focus groups, and both program and PAPER staff were forthcoming in discussing their experiences with XSEA. Program staff tended to postulate the reasons behind their lack of anxiety (e.g., “Well, I guess if our program wasn’t running so well there’d be anxiety.”—Hope Street staff member) or presence of anxiety (“We are really star performers, and maybe that’s where the anxiety comes from.”—CAHS staff member). In comparison, the PAPER team, who was composed of social science researchers, touched more on their psychological understandings of anxiety:

I think, ultimately, when we’re talking about anxiety... We now know enough about brain development and human emotion to know it’s not always rational or [that there is a] direct correspondence between what one should be anxious about and what one is anxious about, or what different people are going to find anxiety provoking.

When asked what types of behaviors the PAPER team had observed CC program staff exhibiting when they suspected staff were anxious about evaluation, the evaluators mentioned they had noticed staff appearing uncomfortable, staff engaging in private conversations with one another during larger group meetings, staff appearing reluctant to speak up during larger group meetings, and non-verbal communication between staff (e.g., meaningful eye contact, hand

gestures) (Table 11). The data collector noted these same behaviors in his open-ended notes during evaluation planning observations, and these additional indicators were added to the AEA survey launched in Phase 2.

Table 11.

Behavioral Indicators of XSEA That Were Observed by the PAPER Team

| Behavioral Indicators of XSEA | Example Focus Group Quotes from Members of the PAPER Team |
|--|--|
| Staff appear uncomfortable | “I think part of it is that this [CC] is a culture that has bred people who are pretty compliant and want to be helpful and mutually supportive, so sometimes the best way that they have of showing their discomfort is just sitting there and being uncomfortable.” |
| Staff engage in private side conversations with one another | “I think sometimes people will start private conversations with the person next to them, trying to process and share an idea or a thought. Like ‘Are you thinking what I’m thinking?’ And doing a reality check. I’ve seen a fair amount of that here.” |
| Staff appear reluctant to speak | “I would say there’s a reluctance to speak, literally, and to draw logical conclusions about what the data are saying. There were a lot of conversations in the small meetings I had with program leaders where we would be presenting them with data about the performance of their programs and asking them to draw some conclusion or at least make some statement about what the implication of that might be about which of their programs was doing a better job, or might represent an area of strength where there should be continued investment. But the program leaders were really, really unable to articulate what was an obvious, upspoken truth to everyone in the room, that maybe this program isn’t so good.” |
| Staff communicate non-verbally via meaningful eye contact, hand gestures, etc. | “One thing I noticed at St. Joe’s was there was a lot of nonverbal communication, where when you would mention stuff there would be some shifting with people, but then also looks across the table at each other. And so, it was very evident when different ideas were brought up that staff weren’t happy with that. You knew what staff were going to say before they even said it.” |

R2. What increases or decreases the likelihood that program staff experience XSEA? To what extent do these sources of XSEA align with those hypothesized in the current literature?

A variety of themes emerged regarding the reasons behind CC staff's evaluation anxiety. The majority of these data derived from the staff survey as well as from the CAHS team's and PAPER team's reflections shared during their focus groups. These themes were also included as behavioral, affective, and cognitive indicators of XSEA that were examined in the AEA survey launched in Phase 2.

Using the hypothesized theoretical model of XSEA, antecedents are categorized into four types: (1) stakeholder characteristics; (2) program and organizational factors; (3) situational factors; and (4) evaluator characteristics. Interactions between these sources of XSEA are noted when supporting data are available.

Stakeholder Characteristics that may Increase XSEA. While XSEA was not observed among most participants, those who demonstrated some anxiety towards evaluation tended to also feel overwhelmed with their existing responsibilities or perceive a hidden agenda for evaluation.

Feeling Overwhelmed with Existing Responsibilities. A prominent theme related to XSEA was concern that evaluation activities would burden staff who were already overwhelmed with their existing responsibilities. Out of the three staff experiencing XSEA as reported via the follow-up survey, two described that they were concerned about the time commitment evaluation would require. Staff from five different programs during evaluation planning meetings also questioned how much additional time evaluation activities would require since they already felt

overwhelmed with their everyday responsibilities and existing data collection and reporting requirements. As one evaluation planning participant expressed on the follow-up survey:

I feel like there is so much going on and I am trying to keep up with what is already on my plate including COA, doing some extra work related to St. Joe's racial equity committee, staff performance goals, and preparing for training for next week, that the [evaluation planning] meeting became too much. After discussing the three new surveys we will be implementing, and developing new client and family surveys, I felt overwhelmed with adding any more.

Some program staff also questioned how much they would benefit from evaluation and if the additional work evaluation activities would require would be worth their time. On the follow-up staff survey an evaluation planning participant shared, "I worry that the evaluation will require time from me that I do not have with a limited return value to me."

CAHS staff also shared they felt stressed by the extra work responsibilities reaccreditation work required, especially given the daily stressors of their jobs: "We're stretched thin already just working with the day-to-day crises that we're managing and the situations we're working with, that to add COA to it is another responsibility to juggle and can be challenging." One CAHS participated mentioned, "[The preparation] just creates a lot of tedious work sometimes," and another shared there was a high learning curve: "You're learning, it's not an easy thing like, 'Here, go do this.' You have to study and understand what [COA requires], and that takes time, it takes time to understand and educate yourself." Staff also commented that evaluation tasks with PAPER were at times difficult to accomplish:

It's great that Catholic Charities has a PAPER division that does evaluation because...And I know that always hasn't necessarily been the case, and so the evaluation

piece is just, it's hard. I think it's hard just because we're so busy maintaining programs that to take the time, again, to do all the evaluation work that you need is challenging.

Altogether, this concern that evaluation activities may be cumbersome is supported by existing research (Whitehall et al., 2012).

Perception of a Hidden Agenda. The idea of hidden agendas behind evaluation and suspicions that evaluation may lead to program closures (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Whitehall et al., 2012) also emerged as a prominent theme in the case study. Out of the three staff who agreed they were anxious about the prospect of evaluation, one “somewhat agreed” that negative evaluation findings would cause harm to their program. Some of the staff’s distrust in the CC leadership asking for evaluation seemed to derive from their having been previously disappointed by the agency’s decisions to discontinue programs. For instance, Emergency Shelter staff in one of their evaluation planning meetings were observed to be “experiencing a lot of staff anxiety and negative feedback from the closure of Residential Treatment,” which made them appear “on edge” during the meeting as they questioned the purpose of evaluation activities and expressed their concerns about staff buy-in for evaluation. The PAPER team agreed that they noticed signs of XSEA among Emergency Shelter staff:

I think the only team where I've seen real anxiety or resistance to the idea of being evaluated is at St. Joe's, and I think that has less to do with our evaluation and the concept of evaluation than it does...I think it stems from general uncertainty about the future of programs at St. Joe's and a lack of transparency and some trust issues between different levels of staff.

A member of the PAPER team also added that distrust in the authority asking for evaluation was related to XSEA:

Often the real root of evaluation anxiety is, or reluctance to buy in, is about the program staff's attitudes towards who they perceive as the funder or authority that is asking for evaluation, and that if there isn't good trust there, there will be a lot of anxiety and suspicion.

Less Common Themes. Less common though still present themes that emerged were staff's tendencies to be concerned about upsetting or disappointing others, to view COA as an exam, to have a vested interest in the success of their program (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Taut & Brauns, 2003), and to showcase their program's strengths.

Regarding the former theme, XSEA was associated with CC staff's tendencies to be concerned about upsetting others, either by not living up to others' expectations or by having conflicting ideas with others about evaluation. As one CAHS program staff member illustrated regarding not wanting to disappoint others:

We've learned from experience that the [St. Paul] community will come back [to us] and wish that we had something that we hadn't been tracking, and we'll say, 'Gee, wouldn't it have been nice if we hadn't thrown away all that data' ... So... you just... You want to do really good work, you want to anticipate what would be important for the community to know.

Another CAHS program staff member shared that she "didn't want to let anyone down or make anyone upset" if she was not collecting the appropriate type of data for their program's reports:

Things have changed throughout the years regarding what's collected and what's not collected, and there was some anxiety knowing we had old forms of people who weren't

eligible for the program that we'd been hanging onto for a while. And conversations with my supervisor were like, 'Why are we keeping these? Do we need to keep these?' And we finally came to the conclusion that, 'No one's looking at these, we don't need to keep these.' But for a while I worried if I should get rid of the forms, and I don't want to throw away something or shred something we may need... So the anxiety went away, but in the back of my mind I'm like, 'I hope this is OK.' Somebody's going to get mad at me sometime.

This idea of "not wanting to let others down" was attributed by a PAPER team member to Midwestern regional factors. She described how it was challenging at times to have "difficult conversations" with CC staff who preferred to avoid conflict:

It was actually much easier to be an evaluator in DC than it is in Minnesota, because in Minnesota, people don't like... It's very much a no-no to upset anyone in a professional culture. But that's not actually what most of America is like, and in most of America it's OK sometimes for people to be upset and frustrated in a business setting. I think that the agency avoids dealing with a lot of really difficult issues at places like St. Joe's because people aren't forced to have those difficult conversations.

Staff from both CAHS and PAPER also noted that program staff viewed the COA site visit as a test to pass, which was increasing their anxiety. The PAPER team described reaccreditation as "a driving test at the DMV" where staff have to "check the boxes" and gather together various types of documentation to share with COA as evidence that they are meeting certain performance standards. When discussing the upcoming COA site visit with the CAHS team, one staff member mentioned that "you just never know what they're [COA reviewer] going to ask" during the on-site interviews, and implied that there were correct and incorrect

responses to reviewers' questions. The CAHS team expanded on this by sharing that during their previous site visit the COA reviewer had quizzed them on what languages their safety signs were written in, which they found to be stressful:

The last visit we had was really, really stressful for me, and the reviewer was really, really challenging, and asked what language or cultures were on the wall. He pointed to our client agreements or client rights poster and said, 'What language is this?' Things like that, that we weren't really prepared for. And so when I think of COA, I can just see that stuff happening again.

Regarding the theme that staff's XSEA may stem from their vested interest in their program, all three of the staff who exhibited some level of XSEA on the survey indicated that they *strongly agreed* they had a vested interest in the success of their program. The PAPER team found it plausible that highly anxious staff would also have a vested interest in their program:

If evaluation is working as it should in giving staff real tangible things to work on, then yeah, I think that it makes perfect sense that staff would have some level of anxiety. It also shows a level of investment, I think, because that means staff care about the outcome [of their program] at some level. And program staff should care about whether or not they're doing a good job and getting results. I mean it's a bit like if people shouldn't care about the outcome of a test, then why bother taking it? If they care, if we're doing a good evaluation, staff should care about the outcome. And if we're doing a good evaluation and staff don't care about the outcome, then that's an apathetic staff person and not a good situation either.

Staff from CAHS demonstrated that some of their anxiety about evaluation derived from wanting to showcase their program's strengths to others. A CAHS staff member shared that, "We

are really star performers, and maybe that’s where the anxiety comes from. We work so hard to prepare for everything and we don’t just take our success for granted. We try to do a really, really good job.” Another CAHS staff member added, “We’re doing the work that we should be doing, and consistently, and so we want to be able to showcase that and to explain [to others] that we’re not just meeting [best performance] standards, we’re exceeding those standards.”

These stakeholder characteristics linked to XSEA and the frequency in which they appeared by data source are listed in Table 12.

Table 12.

Stakeholder Characteristics Associated with XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Overwhelmed w/existing duties | 23 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Distrust in funder/authority asking for evaluation | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Don’t want to upset others | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Feeling tested by COA | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Vested interest | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Want to showcase program’s strengths | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Stakeholder Characteristics that may Prevent or Decrease XSEA. It is important to note that XSEA was not observed among the majority of Phase 1 participants, and in the absence of anxiety, most stakeholders were observed to be calm and excited about evaluation activities.

Feeling Calm. During the COA site visits staff were observed to exhibit little to no evaluation anxiety; conversely, they appeared relaxed and calm. The theme of feeling calm when participating in evaluation-related activities was also observed during evaluation planning meetings among staff in three out of the six programs. Example observation notes touching on how calm staff appeared to be are included in Table 13.

Table 13.

Examples of Observation Notes that were coded as “Staff feel calm”

| Source | Example Segment of Coded Text |
|--|---|
| Evaluation Planning Meeting with Program 1 | It was notable across both the domains of “feeling calm” and “feeling self-confident” that there was a high participation level among most staff members, with high energy and solution-oriented suggestions and questions. |
| Evaluation Planning Meeting with Program 2 | Throughout the meeting the staff were very engaged in making astute observations about their program and how to measure success, using concrete language regarding ARC and its components. |
| Evaluation Planning Meeting with Program 3 | This group just seems to roll with the session, like it’s been done a million times before. I suggested that this was a lack of enthusiasm, but more so seems just routine. |
| COA Site Visit Observation with 1 st Site | The staff member seemed accustomed to having been through COA reviews before, and he told me afterwards this was his third COA experience. He appeared at ease during the interview. |
| COA Site Visit Observation with 2 nd Site | I entered the room as the COA reviewer was asking the staff member her final questions, and it seemed like a very relaxed meeting I was stepping into, almost like the reviewer and staff member had met before. |
| COA Site Visit Observation with 3 rd Site | The lead staff member was very hospitable, offering the COA reviewer and me refreshments and baked goods. She seemed content and at ease with having us there. |

Twelve survey respondents (60%) further *agreed* that they felt calm when thinking about their program being evaluated, as referenced in Table 10 (p. 58). Generally, as staff’s level of calmness increased, their level of anxiety decreased (Figure 6). No regression analyses were conducted because of the small sample size.

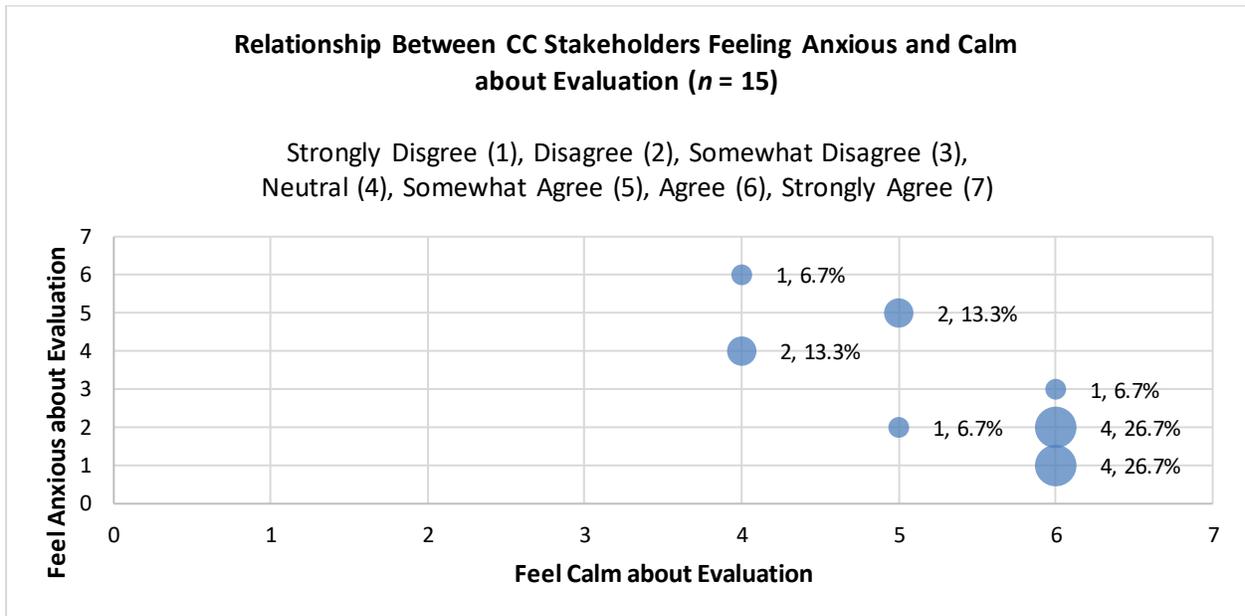


Figure 6. Relationship between CC Stakeholders’ Ratings of Feeling Anxious and Calm about Evaluation

Feeling Excited. In addition to feeling calm about evaluation, some staff described or were observed to be excited about receiving evaluation support (Table 14). These participants exhibited a “can-do” attitude and were often champions for evaluation work. In these cases where excitement was noted, staff shared that they viewed evaluation activities and the products or tools produced by the PAPER team as especially helpful.

When examining the co-occurrence of XSEA codes with “Staff feel calm” and “Staff feel excited” codes, there were no instances where the codes co-occurred with one another, suggesting that in the absence of anxiety, staff may feel excited or calm about evaluation.

Table 14.

Examples of Observation Notes and Quotes that were coded as “Staff feel excited”

| Source | Example Segment of Coded Text |
|--|---|
| Evaluation Planning Meeting with Program 1 | Staff #2 frequently appeared as a champion with a “we can do it” and “this is important” attitude. |
| Evaluation Planning Meeting with Program 2 | They move into the discussion of the dashboard and again provide the description of it being like data on a car, except this will be what your program is interested in. Staff #4 seems engaged with this and asks what it will look like. The evaluators explain that it’s like doing the quarterly report and the group seems really savvy about both the IT discussion and data visualization, and are excited that such a dashboard will give real-time pictures of how the program is doing. |
| Follow-Up Survey Respondent | “As we discussed, for the most part I am very excited [about evaluation] and think the evaluation activities will be helpful.”— Staff member involved in evaluation planning |
| Focus Group with Housing Program 1 | “It’s a lot of work [preparing the retrospective evaluation report], but we’re doing it anyway. It’s exciting to me to see in writing what my team has done and to see the difference it makes to the community. It’s a tool that can be used to inform funders on where to put their money, and that’s so amazing...To me, I’m just energized by it, I really am.”—Housing staff member |
| Focus Group with Housing Program 1 | “I have a degree in social science and I really love everything about research and evaluation— love, love, love. I thought somehow my career was going to go in that direction and it didn’t, and it became more about community organizing...And then one thing led to another and I ended up eventually at Catholic Charities and I was so excited that they had the Office for Social Justice here and that data was important.”—Housing staff member |
| Focus Group with PAPER | “...I think there’s no resistance and varying levels of buy-in [among staff participating in evaluation planning], from really wanting to be very active partners and being excited about evaluation, to just being OK with it and willing to do whatever we want.”—PAPER team member |

Longevity with a Program and Experience Communicating Program Results. In

addition to feeling calm and excited about evaluation, other stakeholder characteristics that were noted in the absence of XSEA were staff's longevity with their program and staff's prior experiences communicating their program's activities and results to outsiders. These themes tended to co-occur with one another.

Regarding their longevity with their program, some of the staff who were observed during the COA site visits and evaluation planning meetings shared they had been at CC for at least a decade. A COA observation note read, "The lead staff member said she's been at the Opportunity Center for at least 10 years and is very experienced in her position and knowledge of the program." Another observation note from an evaluation planning meeting demonstrated staff's long history with the organization: "Staff #1 and #5 were identified early as having the most (21 to 30 years) experience and often introduced comments during the meeting demonstrating such expertise." Often because of their long history with their programs, these staff were accustomed to explaining their services to others and using data to demonstrate their program's effectiveness. For example, during one COA observation this researcher recorded, "The staff member seems accustomed to having been through COA reviews before (and he told me afterwards this was his 3rd COA experience) and appeared at ease during the interview." In another COA observation the "lead staff member seemed experienced at describing her program to others." Staff from Hope Street also shared during their focus group that "people are always asking for our data" and they were "just used to" sharing their program data with others. During an evaluation planning meeting staff also seemed nonplused by discussing their program's data, as exemplified by the following observation note: "This group just seems to roll with the session,

like it's been done a million times before. I suggested that this was a lack of enthusiasm, but more so seems just routine.”

Less Common Themes. Less common themes that were associated with a lack of XSEA were: (1) a Housing staff member's description that she is not generally an anxious individual (i.e., “Nothing really causes me that much anxiety.”) and (2) staff's jobs in and of themselves being anxiety-producing, so evaluation activities, in comparison, were not (i.e., “That staff member is worried about the cottage burning down or having a kid trying to commit suicide. So in the universe that our service providers are living in, anxiety about things like evaluation and accreditation is going to be, for them, they may not think of that as anxiety.”—PAPER team member).

These stakeholder characteristics linked to an absence of XSEA and the frequency in which they appeared by data source are listed in Table 15.

Table 15.

Stakeholder Characteristics Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Staff feel calm | 13 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Staff feel excited | 10 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Prior experience communicating activities and results | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Longevity with program | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Not an anxious person | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Staff's jobs are anxiety-producing | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Program Factors that may increase XSEA. As seen in Table 16, two main programmatic themes emerged that appeared related to XSEA: (1) perceived uncertainty about the program’s future and (2) a mismatch between the program’s and agency’s interests. The first theme was observed during evaluation planning meetings with Emergency Shelter, which at the time of data collection was undergoing significant transitions with the closure of Residential Treatment. Staff stressed needing to “get Emergency Shelter where it needs to be” in terms of training staff on ARC and focusing on how to achieve desired program outcomes, particularly decreasing clients’ length of stay in shelter. This urgency to improve Emergency Shelter was especially exacerbated after the closure of Residential Treatment. While some staff saw evaluation activities as an opportunity to gather baseline data on ARC implementation, most others appeared stressed and tired during the evaluation planning meetings.

The second theme emerged during the focus group with the CAHS program, where staff discussed their frustrations and anxiety around collecting the appropriate data for the agency as well as with their various funders. Staff expressed that often what the agency was interested in tracking did not align with complexities of their client population:

When it came to all the things Catholic Charities wants to track, there was almost nothing that aligned with our services, right down to who we serve. Race? Who falls into African American? We work with so many different groups; I don’t even know the names of all these countries and people.

Another staff member described the mismatch between agency leaders’ and program staff’s perceptions about what was feasible for program staff to do: “It’s just a lack of understanding between higher up agency level and program level realities of what your program looks like, how you’re tracking data, the challenges of your data tools, that kind of stuff.” The

staff noted feeling like they, “had to adapt to make the agency’s reporting requirements work for us.”

The PAPER team attributed both of these themes to staff’s distrust and dissatisfaction with agency leadership, particularly because CC leadership “had a history of not having a clear and steady direction in areas like evaluation and overhauling its data systems.” As a PAPER team member described regarding the context of CC:

I think the leadership sort of changed direction about how it’s approaching those tasks [evaluation and data systems] several times in the last five years. And staff has turned over as part of that. Sometimes staff turnover has been the cause for the change of direction, sometimes it’s been a symptom. But I think that distrust has been part of the context here that has shaped how people initially engaged with us, and what kind of bridge-building we have to do in our jobs as evaluators.

Table 16.

Program Characteristics Associated with XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Perceived uncertainty about program future | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mismatch between program and agency’s interests | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Program Factors that may Prevent or Decrease XSEA. The only theme that emerged that seemed to decrease staff’s anxiety was support from the agency leadership in addressing a program’s reporting issues (see Table 17). This theme was discussed during both focus groups with the Housing programs. After sharing their frustrations that agency leadership’s perceptions of their program have historically been misaligned with their own, CAHS staff discussed that their reporting tools “have recently gotten better.” The CAHS team attributed this improvement in their technological resources to “the agency leaders coming together and talking about [program] needs and figuring out what are the IT priorities across the agency,” as well as to working more collaboratively with agency leadership to “find a solution together.” Hope Street participants also shared how members of CC Shared Services had been helpful in working with their team to create useful reports. This “better alignment,” both among agency leaders and between agency leaders and program staff, was emphasized by the CAHS participants as “a good thing.”

Table 17.

Program Characteristic Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Effective technological resources to meet reporting requirements | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

Situational Factors that may Increase XSEA. Some external or situational factors linked to XSEA were discussed during each focus group with the Housing Stability teams (Table

18). The CAHS participants shared that the local community's interest in their program data produced some of their anxiety, particularly because of the essential role they play in the Ramsey County Continuum of Care (CoC) to prevent homelessness. As one participant explained, "HUD's mandate is that if CoC's across the United States do not have a coordinated entry system, they don't get the funding. So, our program makes it possible for funding to come into the state and into our county." The CAHS team described how they have regular meetings with community providers and engage them in decision-making; because of this, the community "has a sense of ownership" over their services as well as a "vested interest in teaching us what they need, who they're looking for [to admit into their own programs], and how the system should work." Community members also have "many questions about CAHS's data" as well as suggestions for CAHS, and while the CAHS team does their best to respond, they "don't have the capacity" to always do so.

Similar to the previously mentioned stakeholder characteristic of feeling overwhelmed with existing responsibilities, a related situational theme that emerged with CAHS was having few resources for evaluation. Staff described how their program can operate in "crisis mode," which makes it difficult for staff to prioritize admin tasks such as meeting notes and agendas that they are later asked to share with COA and funders:

Like you're doing the meetings, you're having team meetings, or you're bringing in a lot of community engagement. But to think like, 'Oh, did I save that agenda?' when I'm dealing with a crisis that we have 200 [people needing help]... We have 70 phone calls a week here and we've been trying to manage those things, but that [question of] 'Oh, did I save that agenda' and then later COA wants it, and I'm wondering 'Where did I save it? It's probably in a drawer in a file cabinet somewhere...' So it's like we're doing the

things that we need to... And [meeting these requirements] is not just for COA. It's for our other funders, too.

Comparatively, Hope Street staff shared their concerns that changes in the national climate would negatively affect their potential to receive future funding. The program leaders discussed that this concern around funding stemmed partly from being judged by their funders on criteria that is not applicable to their program goals and their client population: "The biggest problem I see is that our funder is comparing our program to other programs that aren't really comparable, right? And I think it's hard because we're serving youth and young adults, which is much different than serving those 55 and older in a different community provider." One of the staff added:

Well say, so take for example, you have all of these non-profits and each one of them has the same set of goals with these written standards that go across the board for everybody, and they want to make sure that everybody has their GRH, their MA, their SSI, whatever. But then there's somebody over here that is a group of young people that you don't want to become dependent on the system, and you want them to get employment, and then you get docked for that because they're not maintaining an increasing income like these guys over here."

Additionally, Hope Street expressed concern about the availability of future funding for their services, which serves LGBTQ+ homeless youth: "I think just national policy and things like that...[we wonder] will these services be available for us to provide because of the [political] changes?" Hope Street described that their clients' trust in social services was also eroding as the political climate became more conservative. In particular, clients felt less safe to provide Hope Street with sensitive identifying information. As one staff member explained, "I

think there are young people who are maybe afraid to come receive our services to start with, for fear of getting in some sort of database or something like that. And so, I would say that’s kind of newer, where before [the 2016 presidential election], maybe not so much.”

Table 18.

Situational Factors Associated with XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Community interest in program data | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Concern about national climate | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Few resources for evaluation | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Situational Factors that may Prevent or Decrease XSEA. Situational factors that seemed to decrease or prevent XSEA were rarely mentioned, though staff from both the CAHS and Hope Street teams touched on the subject. The CAHS team explained that despite the anxiety they sometimes felt due to the community’s interest in their program, that they often also felt supported by their community. This was exemplified in their descriptions of working in partnership with community providers “to figure things out” and “find creative solutions to problems” they were all experiencing. A CAHS team member explained how community members often praised them for their work:

Even though we have all these issues around us, the feedback we get from the community at this point has been really good. People call upon us for information, but it’s not like,

‘Oh, not enough people are getting housing and you’re not doing well.’ It’s like, ‘We know as a community that we don’t have enough housing, and these are the issues, and you’re doing what we need to be doing.’

Hope Street staff shared that occasionally they missed a reporting deadline because of issues with the quality of their data. However, missing a deadline was not anxiety-inducing for them since they believed their funders understood the challenges of their work: “That’s the one thing about our funders. I think a lot of them have worked with the people we’re working with and have worked in the youth world, and so they kind of get it [when we miss a deadline] and usually they’re pretty flexible, I feel.”

Table 19.

Situational Factors Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Community support | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Funders understand program challenges | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Evaluator Characteristics that may Increase XSEA. Two evaluator characteristics that increased staff anxiety towards evaluation emerged during Phase 1: (1) evaluators not effectively communicating and (2) evaluators making staff feel uncomfortable (see Table 20). With regards to the first theme, evaluators communicated poorly when they did not explain the purpose and anticipated benefits of evaluation activities. One staff member involved in evaluation planning

who *agreed* they were anxious about the prospect of evaluation on the follow-up survey also commented that communication was an area where the PAPER evaluators could improve, writing, “Ensure that you’re explaining the purpose of activities and anticipated benefit of the activities.” During the PAPER team focus group an evaluator echoed these sentiments and shared that, “There just hasn’t been room in our approach to work on [increasing] staff’s capacity, to really [help them] understand what evaluation is or why you do it, or the different kinds.”

This researcher was also observed to not be effectively communicating when she overwhelmed staff with too much new information during an evaluation planning meeting. The data collector noted that “there appears to be a lot of information and it is a little bit confusing about what information is being referred to. Staff #3 is leafing through the pages trying to figure out what is what.” In her notes about this particular meeting, this researcher shared similar thoughts that she had presented too much information at once to staff who were new to evaluation and reflected, “I think that’s something I can personally do better with meetings with other teams.”

The CAHS team also discussed some communication challenges both with a PAPER employee and with external evaluators, sharing that their interpretations of their program and what was discussed during meetings were often different:

I learned with the PAPER team evaluator, and even in Hennepin County research and especially in Ramsey County, that sometimes programs and evaluators understand things completely differently. I could have a meeting with them where I thought we were on the same page, and then I get an email from the evaluator the next day and it was like,

‘That’s not what I understood of that conversation.’ And I’d have to explain, ‘I thought this is what we agreed to.’

The CAHS team also shared that external evaluators from Hennepin and Ramsey counties sometimes struggled with understanding the purpose of their program, as well as with communicating research “onto a program level.”

The second theme was observed largely during two COA site visits that were conducted by one COA reviewer, herein referred to as “Reviewer A.” During Reviewer A’s site visits he was observed to make staff feel uncomfortable at times through awkward interpersonal interactions, such as when he abruptly changed conversation topics, did not laugh at staff’s jokes, or when he took noticeably long pauses between his interview questions. This researcher described Reviewer A as “very serious and a bit quirky” in her observation notes and noticed that when staff felt uncomfortable by Reviewer A’s behaviors that they would slightly withdraw and become quiet.

Table 20.

Evaluator Characteristics Associated with XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Evaluator not effectively communicating | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Making SHs uncomfortable | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |

Note. The term *stakeholder* was often abbreviated during coding as *SH*.

Evaluator Characteristics that may Prevent or Decrease XSEA. Evaluator characteristics refer to the more consistent attributes of practitioners such as their values,

demeanor, and preferences for how to interact with and involve clients in evaluation activities. At CC there were two main evaluator characteristics that contributed to an absence of XSEA among most CC participants: (1) evaluators' collaborative approach to evaluation and stakeholder involvement and (2) evaluators' focus on building stakeholders' buy-in and trust.

Both the PAPER team and COA reviewers used collaborative and participatory approaches to engaging staff in evaluation activities and expressed the importance of partnering with staff. Some of the key ways the evaluators presented themselves as engaged partners were by validating and addressing staff's concerns, involving stakeholders in decision-making, working hard to understand programs and the staff, applauding stakeholders for their hard work, asking staff what kind of evaluation support they needed, and meeting staff in their preferred environments (see Table 21 for a comprehensive list).

Table 21.

Presenting One's Self as an Engaged Partner—Evaluator Characteristics Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Present self as an engaged partner | 14 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Validate and address SH concerns | 12 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Involve SHs in decision-making | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Work hard to understand program | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Work hard to understand SHs | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Applaud SHs for their hard work | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Ask SHs how we can help | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Meet SHs in their preferred environment | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Adjust evaluation plans | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Listen to SH's expertise | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Tailor information to fit audience's comfort levels | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

The PAPER team articulated their approach to evaluation in their evaluation plans, and explicated that they were drawing on principles from Patton's (2010) *Developmental Evaluation* approach and King and Stevahn's (2013) *Interactive Evaluation Practice* (IEP). With developmental evaluation the team prioritized being flexible, changing their evaluation priorities as new program developments occurred, and efficiently providing stakeholders with information to inform decision-making. With IEP the PAPER team committed to building positive relationships with stakeholders and intentionally and actively engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process. According to observation notes of two evaluation planning sessions, these commitments were exemplified by comments the evaluators made such as, "We're here for you," "We're on your side," and "We want to help you answer the questions you have about your program." This type of communication was noted to increase staff's engagement in evaluation planning, and afterwards staff began sharing what type of information needs they had, the challenges they were experiencing implementing and capturing the success of their program model, and their concerns and questions about aspects of the evaluation process.

The PAPER team also partnered with staff by involving them in all decision-making about their program's evaluation. For instance, while the evaluators incorporated some standard evaluation questions into all the plans (e.g., "How satisfied with program services are clients?"), they also included questions that were of interest to the program staff (e.g., "To what extent do Day Treatment clients have strengthened core life skills and protective factors?"). In this vein the evaluation plans were developed jointly between the PAPER team and program staff, and the implementation of evaluation plan activities also continued in partnership after Phase 1 data collection concluded.

Effective collaborations between evaluators and program staff were also noted by the CAHS team, who described having positive partnerships with evaluators from both Hennepin County and PAPER. CAHS staff were impressed with Hennepin County’s evaluation support and described how the evaluators “have been really deliberate about walking us all through [logic modeling] and [asking us] what do we want to know at the end of this? And they really take time to think about that.” They also described the Hennepin County team as “really engaged in the success of our program; they feel really responsible and they want to support us.” Similarly, the CAHS team shared that the PAPER evaluator they primarily worked with also believed in the value of their program: “She helped affirm that what we were already seeing was really important in the community,” and helped spread the message of their success to Ramsey County and CC executive leadership. The CAHS staff also shared their appreciation for the PAPER team evaluator’s support: “I think that I really value and appreciate having met our PAPER evaluator. She taught me things I didn’t know and I have really loved to work side-by-side with her.”

The COA reviewers also worked to present themselves as partners during their site visits, and when debriefing with this researcher, both reviewers shared that they were cognizant of how they would likely be perceived as outsiders coming in to critically examine and judge programs. Reviewer A shared with this researcher that “my style is to ask questions about the process of the programs, versus coming in using the more formal language in the COA standards.” He presented himself as an active learner rather than a judge, and asked staff at the end of each of his visits if the accreditation process had been helpful to them. Reviewer B was also observed to be “genuinely interested in Outreach Services and is very warm and approachable.” When staff shared examples of difficult client situations with her, she validated their feelings and expressed

that she also works in social services with comparable populations and experiences similar issues. The reviewers’ approaches were well-received by CC staff; staff that appeared nervous at the beginning of the site visit were observed to visibly relax when each reviewer shared that they worked in similar fields and were hoping to have “a friendly conversation” and learn as much as possible about CC programs. The reviewers’ approaches also appeared to help staff be receptive to their feedback, including to their recommendations for improving program processes or aspects of the programs’ environments.

The PAPER team and COA reviewers’ collaborative approaches to interacting with staff facilitated trust-building, which is the second theme that emerged as an evaluator characteristic that contributed to no or low XSEA (see Table 22).

Table 22.

Trust Building—Evaluator Characteristics Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Thematic Code | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Trust | 22 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

The PAPER team noted during their focus group that, “Trust-building is really slow in a culture like this” because of the recent program closures, and suspected many staff viewed them as CC executive team representatives and saw evaluation activities as a “test” to pass in order to keep their programs open. Another PAPER team evaluator articulated that because of staff’s distrust in agency leadership that, “Staff are afraid to speak up, so you don’t actually know how they’re feeling until however many meetings in until they finally [feel comfortable enough to] share.”

Trust-building was especially challenging with the St. Joe's staff involved in evaluation planning; the influx of employees from Residential Treatment to Emergency Shelter meant that large numbers of staff were adjusting to new staffing structures and learning to build trusting relationships with one another. A PAPER team evaluator suspected that St. Joe's managers were worried that CC leadership had ulterior motives for evaluation and were concerned about losing the trust of their staff: "I think the St. Joe's managers, in particular, are often very worried about losing the trust of their staff by being sucked into [evaluation activities] that will turn out to either not be productive or of value or have some hidden agenda. I think a lot of that's because of agency history."

In order to combat CFS staff's suspected distrust in evaluation, the PAPER team prioritized being transparent about their objectives and motives in addition to building positive partnerships with staff. Evaluation plans were developed in collaboration with staff so that stakeholders understood what type of client and staff data would be collected and analyzed, what evaluation questions the data would be answering, who would see the evaluation report, and ways in which the results could inform future decision-making about their programs. These interactive methods seemed to increase staff's trust in the PAPER team; as one PAPER member noted, "I think in the children's group, what I've seen is the development of trust in us as people...confident people with something to offer that may be worth buying into, or at least building of trust that they're willing to suspend some disbelief and skepticism."

The PAPER team noted increased trust from staff over time during evaluation planning, as well, particularly after staff made comments such as, "When you listen like this it gives us much more confidence in evaluation" and "I can be honest with you." These recollections were corroborated by the data collector, who also observed staff's trust in the PAPER team increasing:

Staff (it seems) feel increasingly comfortable with the evaluators, even at the beginning of the meeting suggesting (insisting) that they need time to read information presented to them; Power dynamics seem minimized, permission for staff to read and evaluators' admission that the plan doesn't need to be 'set in stone' and that their partnership will continue after the evaluation.

This researcher also noted while observing a COA site visit that staff's trust in the reviewer was evident, particularly because staff felt safe to be emotionally vulnerable with the COA reviewer: "The lead staff member started to get teary when talking with the reviewer about working with clients with drug problems, which showed me how much she cares about her clients and also that she trusted the reviewer enough at that point to be emotional." Ultimately, and despite their initial misgivings about the agency's reasons for evaluation, staff appeared to drop their defenses and open up with the PAPER team and COA reviewers after learning to trust them.

Interactions between Factors. The co-occurrence of codes via the MAXQDA code relations browser identified meaningful interactions across sources of XSEA. Among factors that contributed to the presence of XSEA, an interaction was found between the stakeholder code *don't want to upset others* and the situation code *community interest in program data*. This relationship was observed in the CAHS focus group as staff were discussing the St. Paul community's high interest in their data, their essential role in conducting Coordinated Entry assessments in Ramsey County's Continuum of Care, and how the CAHS team wanted to ensure they were providing their stakeholders with comprehensive findings. No other interactions occurred among codes across factors associated with XSEA.

Among factors linked to the absence of XSEA, an interaction occurred between the stakeholder code *staff feel excited* and the evaluator code *trust*. This was exhibited when a PAPER team evaluator noted during their focus group that most of the CFS staff seemed enthusiastic about evaluation as they were also simultaneously learning to trust the PAPER team. Other than this interaction, no other co-occurrences were displayed between codes across factors associated with a lack of XSEA.

There were multiple instances where evaluator codes associated with an absence of XSEA co-occurred with stakeholder characteristics and program factors associated with the presence of XSEA. These interactions represent instances where the evaluator attempted to lessen stakeholders' XSEA by employing certain management strategies (i.e., trust building, validating and addressing stakeholders' concerns, explaining and demonstrating the value of evaluation activities, and involving stakeholders in decision-making). These interactions and evaluator management strategies are further elaborated on in response to this study's fourth research question (p. 95). Table 23 summarizes all the factors that were associated with XSEA, and Table 24 summarizes those that contributed to decreased or no XSEA.

Table 23.

Summary of Factors Associated with XSEA

| Factor | Thematic Codes |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Stakeholder Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overwhelmed with existing duties Distrust in funder/authority asking for evaluation Don't want to upset others Feeling tested Vested interest Want to showcase program's strengths |
| Program Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived uncertainty about program's future Mismatch between program and agency's interests |
| Situational Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community interest in program data Concern about national climate Few resources for evaluation |
| Evaluator Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluator not effectively communicating Making SHs uncomfortable |

Table 24.

Summary of Factors Associated with an Absence of XSEA

| Factor | Thematic Code with Subcodes |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Stakeholder Characteristics | Staff feel calm Staff feel excited Prior experience communicating activities and results Longevity with program Not an anxious person Staff's jobs are anxiety-producing |
| Program Characteristics | Effective technological resources to meet reporting requirements |
| Situational Factors | Community support Funders understand program challenges |
| Evaluator Characteristics | Present self as an engaged partner Validate and address SH concerns Involve SHs in decision-making Work hard to understand program Work hard to understand SHs Applaud SHs for their hard work Ask SHs how we can help Meet SHs in their preferred environment Adjust evaluation plans Listen to SH's expertise Tailor information to fit audience's comfort levels Gaining SH's trust |

R3. What are the consequences or negative reactions of XSEA as described by evaluators and program staff?

Evaluation literature describes negative reactions to evaluation such as anger, conflict, and resistance (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002). To determine which of these reactions occurred when XSEA was present, the co-occurrence of XSEA codes from *Research Question 1—Evidence of staff experiencing XSEA* with negative reaction codes from *Research Question 3—Negative Reactions to Evaluation* were examined in MAXQDA using the code relations browser.

Altogether, there were few instances where XSEA evidence codes from Research Question 1 co-occurred with negative reactions to evaluation codes from Research Question 3, though there were two individual instances where the Research Question 1 code *staff express concerns* co-occurred with the Research Question 3 codes *conflict* and *frustration about specific issues*. The co-occurrence of *conflict* and *staff express concerns* transpired in the observation data from one CFS evaluation planning observation meeting when a group of staff doubted the value of proposed evaluation activities after having “been down this road before” with another evaluator. Furthermore, when the PAPER team suggested examining the program’s existing data to help answer evaluation questions, these staff strongly disagreed because they considered their data system to be “a nightmare” and unreliable. This then opened up a conversation around the program’s data systems where much anger and frustration was expressed by the team, who shared that their multiple attempts over the years to reach out to CC shared services staff for help in improving their data systems had been largely unsuccessful.

In terms of the Research Question 3 code “frustration about specific issues,” this code co-occurred with the Research Question 1 code “staff express concerns” in observation notes from

another CFS evaluation planning session. The data collector described the stakeholder to “appear frustrated in tone and body language about the current amount of reporting to multiple funders,” and that the stakeholder was “expressing concerns that this evaluation planning has to be done now, with an implication that more tasks are coming her way.” During this same session, another individual co-occurrence was exhibited between the Research Question 1 code “reason for anxiety” and the Research Question 3 code “overwhelmed” when the PAPER team suggested having a focus group with the stakeholder’s program staff to learn more about their experiences with program implementation. The stakeholder challenged that idea and described how her staff are “already overwhelmed” with their everyday work and also were not willing to engage in reflection about the program. In the observation notes, the data collector captured her disclosing, “My staff would prefer for me to think more reflectively about the program, and have actually told me, ‘That’s your job, not mine.’” Based on her hesitation to include her staff in evaluation activities, this researcher and Evaluator B later questioned in their debrief of the session if there were other reasons why the stakeholder did not want her staff talking with the PAPER team.

In sum, findings from Phase 1 suggest that manifestations of XSEA include stakeholders showing signs of frustration about specific issues with their program, being overwhelmed with their daily program responsibilities, or expressing doubt or anger towards the evaluator’s proposed ideas for evaluation. These negative responses could also be considered indicators of resistance and conflict.

R4. How do evaluators' and program staff's suggestions for managing XSEA vary? What are the similarities and differences in their descriptions, and to what extent do the descriptions align with the literature?

During Phase 1 the evaluators employed various strategies to help increase stakeholders' receptiveness to evaluation activities. These strategies were categorized by this researcher as either proactive actions to prevent XSEA or respond to growing XSEA, or reactive responses to manage XSEA as suspected from stakeholders' negative reactions.

Proactive responses. The PAPER team and COA reviewers' proactive strategies to prevent XSEA were reflective in their collaborative values and participatory approaches to evaluation. Three overarching types of strategies emerged regarding proactively managing XSEA: (1) communication and facilitation strategies (Table 25), (2) partnering strategies (Table 26), and (3) strategies that demonstrated the value of evaluation activities (Table 27).

Eight sub-codes composed the communication and facilitation strategies, with the most common four codes being: (1) having a conversation and not an interrogation (e.g., "When asked about her approach to interviewing staff, the COA reviewer said she tries to be light and not an interrogator. She also tries to create a conversation with staff."—COA visit observation notes); (2) active listening (e.g., "Well, I think what we're all saying, in different ways, is it's really important to show people you're listening and that you care about the things they care about, and to adjust the approach that you use based on their willingness to engage and their anxiety."—PAPER focus group); (3) selling stakeholders on the vision for evaluation (e.g., "There were a few different instances where different staff members echoed how excited they are, or how it felt like you were listening to them and really understood them. And so I think, with that trust, it's clear that they're very happy to be a part of the process and trust the vision of what you're

doing.”—PAPER focus group); and (4) setting expectations by having an agenda and describing that evaluation may be uncomfortable at times, as exemplified in the following quote from a PAPER team member during the focus group:

I will say that I think one of the things that I try hard to do, because I actually think it hurts organizations like Catholic Charities, is to just be honest with people about the fact that one of the purposes of the measurement and activity that we engage in as evaluators is to uncover what’s not working and to identify problems and to provide the best services for clients that we can. And that sometimes that does mean making hard decisions and having hard conversations, and that people are going to be uncomfortable; that’s just part of the process. You’re probably not really doing a good evaluation and asking all the questions that need to be asked if you’re never making people uncomfortable.

Table 25.

*Proactive Communication and Facilitation Strategies Implemented by the PAPER Team to**Prevent XSEA*

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Communication and Facilitation | | | | | | |
| Have a conversation, not an interrogation | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Be an active listener | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Sell SHs on the vision for the evaluation | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Setting expectations— Agenda | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Setting expectations—May feel uncomfortable | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Setting expectations— Create a data collection plan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Communicate wanting to support SHs | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Communicate wanting to identify program strengths | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Additionally, there were seven subcodes that demonstrated ways in which the PAPER team and COA reviewers partnered with stakeholders by customizing their plans and approaches to various stakeholder groups. The most common subtheme was demonstrating flexibility, particularly during evaluation planning meetings. The data collector observed that the PAPER team was “trying a few things differently and rearranging what topics were discussed [from the agenda] and in what order” so that program staff could help direct the conversation, and also that the evaluators “had a very nice and kind presence, were very prepared, and were open to the flow of the meeting changing as it needed to.” Additionally, the COA reviewers demonstrated flexibility in how they assessed programs; Reviewer A shared with this researcher that, “while COA has a set of standards to judge programs against, it’s a contextual accreditation, meaning there’s no right way to implement program services.”

Other partnership strategies included meeting stakeholders in their preferred environment where they would be most comfortable, getting to know stakeholders’ personalities and interests to better connect with them, empowering stakeholders by involving them in making decisions about the evaluation, demonstrating kindness and compassion, especially when stakeholders were sharing their frustrations and concerns, meeting stakeholders one-on-one to discuss issues they did not feel comfortable sharing in the presence of other program staff, and demonstrating sensitivity to underlying tensions and historical issues among programs. As explained by one of the PAPER team members, “You’re always going to have to customize. And you always need to do what you have to do to get the information you need.”

Table 26.

Proactive Partnering Strategies used by the PAPER Team to Prevent XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Work in Partnership | | | | | | |
| Demonstrate flexibility | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Meet SHs in their preferred environment | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Get to know SHs | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Empower SHs by involving in evaluation decision-making | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Be kind | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Meet SHs one-on-one | 1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Demonstrate sensitivity | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The third overarching theme to prevent XSEA focused on demonstrating the immediate value of evaluation activities to key stakeholders. In particular, a member of the PAPER team described how when by presenting themselves as problem solvers, staff start to understand the value of evaluation:

The way I have had the most success at getting buy-in, even in evaluations with very formal evaluation designs that are involving lots of resources, is not by coming in and presenting myself as an evaluator, but by coming in and presenting myself as someone who wants to use data and observation, and different methods of learning, to help people solve problems. And that makes people much more receptive.

The PAPER team also discussed with staff during an evaluation planning session that evaluation questions could be answered efficiently and in part by looking at their existing data, and elaborated on during their focus group that demonstrating the immediate value of evaluation activities helped increase buy-in and prevent XSEA. As one PAPER evaluator explained, “Well, personally, I have always found the most valuable way to build bridges with staff, as a person involved in evaluation activities...is to act as quickly as possible to do something of value for the people that you’re engaged with, even if it’s not something you want to do first.”

Table 27.

Proactive Demonstrating Value Strategies used by the PAPER Team to Prevent XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | N Coded Segments | Number of Sources Coded | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Evaluation Planning Meetings (n = 11) | Follow-Up Survey Responses (n = 15) | COA Site Visits (n = 3) | Housing Focus Groups (n = 2) | PAPER Focus Group (n = 1) |
| Demonstrating Value Present self as a problem solver | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Demonstrate immediate value of evaluation | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Use existing data to the extent possible | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Reactive responses. Reactive responses to XSEA differed from proactive ones in that these were strategies the evaluators employed in real-time when they suspected staff were anxious about evaluation activities. To identify these strategies, the co-occurrence of Research Question 2 “evaluator characteristics that decreased XSEA” codes were examined with Research Question 1 XSEA indicator codes and Research Question 2 “increased XSEA” codes. Reactive XSEA management strategies included validating and addressing stakeholders’ concerns, as well as evaluators sharing their expertise with staff (see Table 28).

Table 28.

Number of Coded Segments Showing Interactions between Evaluator Behaviors to Manage XSEA and XSEA Indicator Codes

| Thematic Codes with Subcodes | Research Question 2—Evaluator Characteristics that Decrease XSEA | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| | Validate and address SH concerns | Share expertise |
| Research Question 1—Evidence of staff experiencing XSEA Staff feel nervous | 2 | 1 |
| Research Question 2—SH Characteristics that Increase XSEA Distrust in funder or authority asking for evaluation—Bad history with evaluation | 1 | 0 |
| Research Question 2—Program Factors that Increase XSEA Perceived uncertainty about program’s future | 0 | 1 |

With regards to validating and addressing stakeholders’ concerns, both the PAPER team and a COA reviewer were observed to implement this strategy when staff appeared nervous about evaluation activities. For instance, the PAPER team was observed validating and addressing staff’s concerns during an evaluation planning session after a stakeholder shared that she had a “bad history with evaluation,” “does not get back an equal amount of what she has to put into evaluation and reporting,” and is burdened with multiple tedious reporting requirements. The PAPER team responded by acknowledging the tediousness of her reporting realities and clarified that “PAPER’s role is to help programs answer questions that staff want addressed about their program’s performance and other issues.” The evaluators then asked the stakeholder if there was information she wished she knew about her program that she was not already

reporting on, and she expressed that she wanted to know more about her staff's well-being and the extent to which they were experiencing compassion satisfaction and burnout. After validating and responding to the manager's request to incorporate these foci into the evaluation plan, the stakeholder "appeared less defensive" during the remainder of the meeting.

This validation and responsiveness to staff was also observed among the COA reviewers. Reviewer A recognized that a newer staff member he was interviewing appeared nervous and said to her, "You're doing fine" after she responded to his first question with a soft and shaky voice. Reviewer B was observed to be "very validating with staff, often saying, 'Nice' in response to learning about their processes and affirming difficult programmatic decisions she learned staff had made." After acknowledging and validating staff's feelings, the stakeholders were observed to be visibly more relaxed during the site visits.

In general, evaluators' validation of staff's concerns was a prominent theme that occurred during most evaluation planning sessions; as mentioned previously, staff involved in evaluation planning were primarily concerned about the additional time commitment evaluation would require and expressed their concerns openly during meetings. Two staff involved in evaluation planning commented on the follow-up survey that the PAPER team "was very open to our concerns" and that their "concerns were addressed fully" by the evaluators. Evaluators' responsiveness to stakeholders' concerns during evaluation planning was also noted by the data collector, who observed a CFS member commenting during a meeting, "When you listen like this [to our concerns] it gives us much more confidence in the evaluation." By helping staff feel heard and understood, the PAPER team's validation of staff's apprehensions may have prevented stakeholders from experiencing severe or long-lasting XSEA.

In addition to providing validation, the PAPER team also shared their expertise with staff when they suspected they were anxious about evaluation. A survey respondent involved in evaluation planning who *somewhat agreed* they were anxious about evaluation commented, “They [the PAPER evaluators] are doing a great job of sharing their expertise and listening to ours.” In one particular instance during an evaluation planning meeting with key St. Joe’s stakeholders, staff communicated their concerns about their program’s future and being able to demonstrate that they could successfully implement the new ARC framework they had recently adopted. The data collector noted that “there are job concerns and a focus with moving on with ARC implementation. The program is in a period of learning the basics of ARC and that they go ‘block-by-block,’ and as of yet they do not have full buy-in from all the staff.” Staff asked the PAPER team if they were be going to be evaluated on how well they could implement the ARC framework with fidelity. Sensing their concern, Evaluator B explained that the evaluation would not be focused on ARC implementation fidelity but rather on the degree to which their program “follows and implements their own model or adaptation of ARC.” Program staff were receptive to this idea and her expertise, and “appeared relieved” after they received clarification.

Staff suggestions for managing XSEA. CC program staff’s suggestions for ways to improve their experiences with evaluation mirrored some of the proactive strategies the PAPER team used and included customization, presenting oneself as a problem solver, and effectively communicating the vision for the evaluation.

When asked on the follow-up survey what the PAPER team evaluators could do to make the process of evaluation a more positive or useful experience for them, ten out of the 15 respondents (67%) had “no suggestions” or bestowed praise on the team (e.g., “I have been impressed with the depth of program knowledge of our evaluators, so it’s been a positive and

useful experience already.”). Three respondents (20%) omitted answering the question, and the remaining two respondents (13%) provided suggestions. Out of these two, one touched on the idea of evaluator-as-problem-solver and asked that the evaluators, “Simplify how I collect my data so that I’m not looking in so many places to gather the data.” The other’s suggestion was for more effective communication regarding the purpose and benefit of evaluation (e.g., “Ensure that you’re explaining the purpose of activities and anticipated benefit of the activities.”).

During the focus group with CAHS, participants expressed their desire that those asking for data—whether it be CC agency leadership, evaluators, or community members—set clear expectations for the type of information they wanted in order to minimize their stress and anxiety during reporting. As explained by one staff member, “It would be helpful if we could make sure we’re all on the same page so we know what we are expecting of each other.” The group also asked that if they were going to be required by CC to use certain data systems, that agency leadership should “recognize that one size doesn’t fit all” and allow their program to customize the systems to best fit their needs.

Alignment with the Literature. In the case of CC, the PAPER team’s approaches for managing XSEA corresponded with 11 out of the 18 strategies (61%) suggested by Donaldson et al. (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) (see Table 29). The PAPER team employed *multiple strategies* to manage staff’s XSEA, including *expecting and accepting* XSEA after learning about staff’s personalities, histories, and attitudes towards evaluation and the agency during logic modeling work. This prior knowledge was advantageous in that the evaluators were able to anticipate which stakeholder groups, such as St. Joe’s staff, would likely experience XSEA. The PAPER team also *worked through hangovers from bad evaluation experiences* with staff whose programs had been recently closed because of data-driven decision-making. The

evaluators expected that these stakeholders would be especially distrustful of the agency's motivation for evaluation with their existing programs. Like *expecting and accepting XSEA*, it was also possible for PAPER to *determine programs' psychology* prior to evaluation planning since the evaluators were familiar with the stakeholders and the agency's priorities, and were already aware that some staff felt as though the future of their current program depended on their ability to demonstrate its worth to CC leadership. The team also *wore their psychotherapy hat* as they listened and responded with empathy to staff's concerns and frustrations about their programs and evaluation activities.

Discussing the purposes of evaluation was another strategy the PAPER team employed, whose participatory and collaborative evaluation approach also naturally *allowed stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation*. Stakeholders' questions about their program and ideas for data collection were incorporated into all evaluation plans, and no decisions about evaluation activities were made without program stakeholders' approval. The PAPER team also *provided balanced continuous improvement feedback* by demonstrating the immediate value of evaluation activities by updating client satisfaction surveys to better correspond with programs' logic models and efficiently reporting on findings, as well as gathering staff well-being data via surveys and focus groups and sharing the results with program leadership. The evaluators also ensured that evaluation questions focused not only on identifying areas in need of improvement, but also on capturing programs' strengths.

Additionally, the evaluation team worked to *clarify their roles with stakeholders on an ongoing basis*. In particular, the PAPER team suspected that some staff were concerned the evaluators were figureheads for CC's executive team. The team shared with staff that they were "a bridge" between programs and agency leadership, and "aspired to be as objective as possible."

They also articulated that they wanted to work “in partnership,” help answer staff’s questions about their program, and “couldn’t do the evaluation without [staff’s] support.” Furthermore, the PAPER team encouraged program staff to provide them with feedback on how they could be most helpful, and provided an anonymous, safe venue for assessing the PAPER team via the follow-up survey. In these ways the team was a *role model* for demonstrating how to be open to data for learning and improvement purposes.

Altogether, these strategies and meetings with stakeholders were PAPER’s attempt to *push for culture change* at CC, or one in which an organization embraces a continuous learning mindset, regularly participates in rigorous evaluation activities, and applies evidence-based research practices.

As exhibited in the findings from Research Question 4, the evaluators were also observed implementing proactive and reactive XSEA management strategies in addition to those suggested by Donaldson et al. (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014). A list of all identified strategies for potentially managing XSEA is provided in the XSEA Detection & Management Checklist developed in Phase 2.

Table 29.

Literature-based XSEA Management Strategies Employed by the PAPER Team

| XSEA Management Strategies Previously Identified in the Literature | Strategies Implemented by the PAPER Team during Phase 1 |
|--|---|
| 1. Expect and accept | ✓ |
| 2. Work through hangovers from bad evaluation experiences | ✓ |
| 3. Make sure this isn't legitimate opposition to bad evaluation | ✗ |
| 4. Determine program psychologic | ✓ |
| 5. Discuss purposes of this evaluation | ✓ |
| 6. Discuss the professional standards for program evaluation | ✗ |
| 7. Discuss why honesty with the evaluator is not disloyalty to the group | ✗ |
| 8. Discuss the risk/benefit ratio of cooperation for individuals | ✗ |
| 9. Provide balanced continuous improvement feedback | ✓ |
| 10. Allow stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation | ✓ |
| 11. Be prepared to wear your psychotherapy hat | ✓ |
| 12. Role clarification on an ongoing basis | ✓ |
| 13. Be a role model | ✓ |
| 14. Distinguish the blame game from the program evaluation game | ✗ |
| 15. Facilitate learning communities/organizations | ✗ |
| 16. Push for culture change | ✓ |
| 17. Use multiple strategies | ✓ |
| 18. Define clearly the persons entitled to react to the draft proposal and evaluation reports, as well as modes of reaction and distribution | ✗ |

Phase 1: Conclusion

The original model of high XSEA was modified to incorporate findings from Phase 1 (see Figure 7), and in particular, XSEA management strategies were specified as being either proactive or reactive. The model was further revised in Phase 2 to incorporate trends found across a heterogeneous array of contexts.

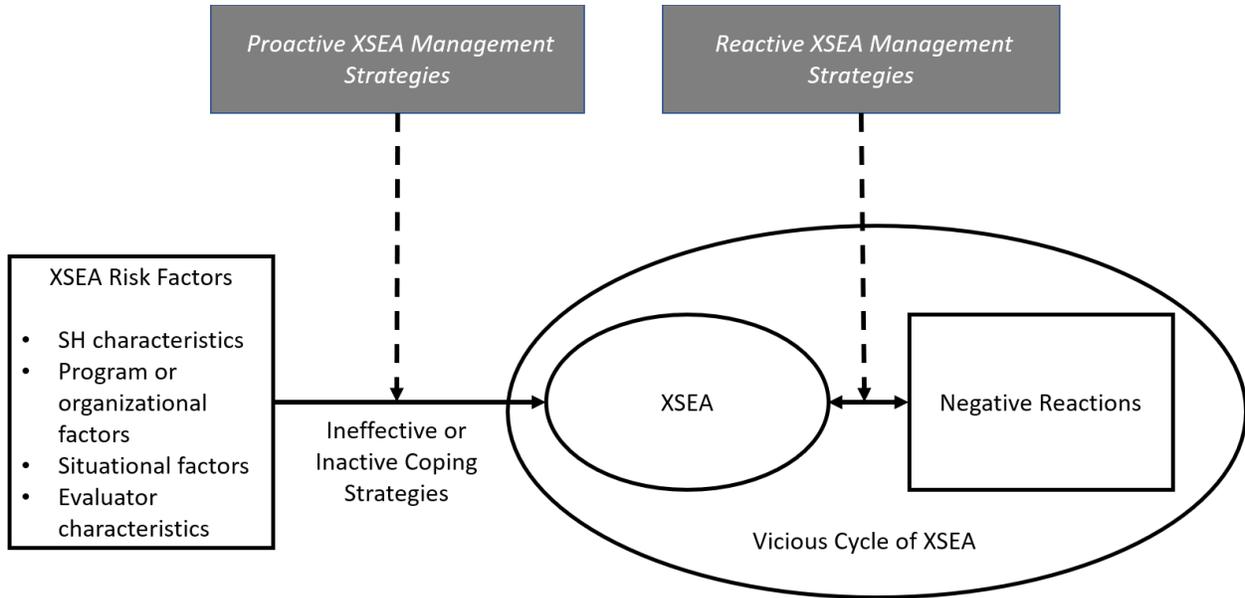


Figure 7. Updated Theoretical Framework of XSEA, based on Phase 1 Findings.

Note. Text that is italicized shows content that was added to the original framework.

To summarize findings by hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. *Because of the natural tendency to feel anxious when being evaluated by others, all program staff, and particularly those with a strong vested interest in their program, will be able to describe personal experiences with and the concept of XSEA.* This hypothesis was partially supported. Results suggest that when prompted to reflect, staff are aware of their personal level of anxiety towards evaluation. However, XSEA was not observed or self-reported among most participants, and those that demonstrated some anxiety towards evaluation also tended to feel overwhelmed with their existing responsibilities or perceive a

hidden agenda for evaluation. Comparatively, having a vested interest in the success of their program was a less common factor that contributed to XSEA.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a positive relationship between the number of hypothesized sources of XSEA mentioned (i.e., stakeholder characteristics, evaluator characteristics, program or organizational factors, and situational factors) and the presence and intensity of XSEA, such that XSEA will be more recognizable and excessive in nature when a greater number of sources or antecedents are discussed by both evaluators and staff. Given the nature of the case study data and there being only a few instances of XSEA exhibited among staff, this hypothesis could not be rigorously tested in Phase 1. Phase 2 examines this hypothesis in greater detail.

Hypothesis 3. The consequences of XSEA will match the hypothesized manifestations described in the literature, specifically the following indicators of conflict, withdrawal or evasion, resistance, shame, anger, professional disparagement, and sense of loss of control. This hypothesis was partially supported. In Phase 1 there were individual instances where resistance, anger, and conflict were observed along with other indicators of XSEA. New manifestations of XSEA not previously mentioned in the literature included stakeholders feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and doubtful about the value of proposed evaluation activities.

Hypothesis 4: Evaluators' use of XSEA management strategies will align with those suggested in the literature.

The PAPER team implemented 11 out of the 18 (61%) literature-based suggestions for managing XSEA, providing partial support for this hypothesis. The CC evaluators were also observed implementing other strategies not previously explicated in the XSEA literature.

Proactive XSEA management tactics included effective communication and facilitation strategies, customization strategies, and strategies that demonstrated the value of evaluation activities. Reactive strategies included validating and addressing stakeholders' concerns, as well as sharing their evaluation expertise with program staff.

CHAPTER III

PHASE 2: FEEDBACK FROM AEA EVALUATORS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE XSEA DETECTION & MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Overview

Following Phase 1, the exploratory sequential mixed methods study advanced to Phase 2 where AEA members were surveyed and asked to share their personal experiences working with highly anxious stakeholders. The AEA member survey was developed based off existing literature and Phase 1 findings, and evaluators' responses helped confirm the generalizability of various Phase 1 themes. Phase 2 findings were also used to further revise the model of XSEA as well as create the XSEA Detection & Management Checklist for practicing evaluators.

Methods

Design

Phase 2 utilized a survey research design where a random subset of 1,000 AEA program evaluators from the USA and Canada were recruited to participate. Only evaluators from these countries were recruited for a variety of reasons: (1) there are some cultural differences in the experience and expression of anxiety between individualistic Western and collectivist Eastern societies (Hofmann & Hinton, 2015), and to explore XSEA this researcher wanted to focus on how the phenomenon occurs specifically within Western societies; (2) this researcher, who is from the USA (an individualistic society), recognized how her cultural background would influence the interpretation of data and that she would be better able to correctly interpret participants' responses if they were also from Western societies; and (3) it was Phase 2's aim to assess the generalizability of Phase 1 findings, and because Phase 1 results derived from a US-based organization that is located in the northern part of the country and borders Canada, there

was a greater likelihood that Phase 1 results would be generalizable to evaluators from these same countries.

AEA members who volunteered to participate completed the survey online via Qualtrics, and their names were entered into a lottery to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. This type of incentive was chosen based on Coryn et al.'s (2019) research, which demonstrated that entry into a lottery induced the highest response rate among AEA members.

Participants

Out of the 1,000 AEA evaluators recruited to participate, 127 opened the survey and 76 provided complete responses, yielding a response rate of 7.6%. This was lower than anticipated since previous studies recruiting from AEA typically have had response rates ranging from 15% (Azzam, 2010; Seidling, 2015) to approximately 30% (Ayoo, 2020; Fleischer & Christie, 2009), with the average response rate being roughly 25% (Coryn et al., 2019).

According to the evaluators, the majority of stakeholders exhibiting XSEA were between the ages of 40 and 59 ($n = 32, 57\%$), white ($n = 44, 58\%$), non-Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx ($n = 56, 74\%$), and female ($n = 51, 67\%$) (see Table 30). Staff were often in some type of leadership position, either working as a director ($n = 23, 30\%$) manager ($n = 20, 26\%$), or part of the organization's executive leadership team ($n = 19, 25\%$). Stakeholders primarily worked in educational settings ($n = 25, 33\%$), nonprofit charitable foundations ($n = 17, 22\%$), or social service organizations ($n = 13, 17\%$).

Table 30.

Stakeholder Demographics, as reported by their Evaluator (N = 76)

| | | Percentage | N |
|-----------|---|------------|----|
| Age | 18-29 | 7% | 5 |
| | 30-39 | 18% | 14 |
| | 40-49 | 24% | 18 |
| | 50-59 | 33% | 25 |
| | 60-69 | 3% | 2 |
| | Unknown | 16% | 12 |
| Race | White | 58% | 44 |
| | Unknown | 13% | 10 |
| | African American or Black | 11% | 8 |
| | Asian | 7% | 5 |
| | Two or more races | 4% | 3 |
| | Other | 4% | 3 |
| | American Indian or Alaska Native | 3% | 2 |
| | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 1% | 1 |
| Ethnicity | No, not Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx | 74% | 56 |
| | Unknown | 15% | 11 |
| | Yes, Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx | 12% | 9 |
| Gender | Female | 67% | 51 |
| | Male | 22% | 29 |
| | Unknown | 4% | 3 |
| Position | Director | 30% | 23 |
| | Manager | 26% | 20 |
| | Executive leadership | 25% | 19 |
| | Frontline program staff | 9% | 7 |
| | Other | 9% | 7 |
| Setting | Education setting (K-12 school, higher ed, school district, etc.) | 33% | 25 |
| | Nonprofit charitable foundation | 22% | 17 |
| | Social service organization | 17% | 13 |
| | Government setting | 12% | 9 |
| | Other | 12% | 9 |
| | Corporate setting | 1% | 1 |

The evaluators exhibited similar demographics, where the majority identified as white ($n = 64, 84\%$), non-Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx ($n = 66, 87\%$), and female ($n = 57, 75\%$) (see Table 31). Evaluators tended to be somewhat younger than the majority of stakeholders, where approximately half ($n = 40, 53\%$) were between the ages of 18 and 39 and in an external evaluator role ($n = 35, 46\%$) when they worked with their stakeholder.

Table 31.

Evaluator Demographics (N = 76)

| | | Percentage | N |
|-----------|--|------------|----|
| Age | 18-29 | 24% | 18 |
| | 30-39 | 29% | 22 |
| | 40-49 | 17% | 13 |
| | 50-59 | 21% | 16 |
| | 60-69 | 9% | 7 |
| Race | White | 84% | 64 |
| | Two or more races | 7% | 5 |
| | African American or Black | 3% | 2 |
| | Asian | 3% | 2 |
| | American Indian or Alaska Native | 1% | 1 |
| | Other | 1% | 1 |
| | Unknown | 1% | 1 |
| | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0% | 0 |
| Ethnicity | No, not Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx | 87% | 66 |
| | Yes, Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx | 11% | 8 |
| | Unknown | 3% | 2 |
| Gender | Female | 75% | 57 |
| | Male | 18% | 24 |
| | Transgender Male | 1% | 1 |
| Position | External evaluator | 46% | 35 |
| | Internal evaluator | 28% | 21 |
| | Other | 26% | 20 |

Materials and Procedures

AEA Member Survey. The AEA member survey prompted evaluators to think about a time when they worked with an evaluation client or program stakeholder they believed was highly anxious about the prospect of evaluation or evaluation activities. With this stakeholder and situation in mind, the AEA member then answered a series of questions describing their observations and interactions with the stakeholder (see Appendix AA).

Survey items examining potential affective, behavioral, and cognitive indicators of XSEA were developed based on previous psychological literature on anxiety and XSEA (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Beck, 1988; Donaldson et al., 2002), as well as on Phase 1 findings. The majority of Phase 1 findings confirmed patterns previously described in the literature—as indicated by the checkmarks in Table 32—though each type of XSEA indicator was further expanded on by Phase 1 results. This expansion was most evident for the behavioral dimension of XSEA, where six new indicators of XSEA were added after the completion of the CC case study. Altogether 28 potential indicators were examined in the AEA member survey: 12 affective indicators, six cognitive indicators, and 10 behavioral indicators. Three out of the 10 behavioral indicators focused on physiological, autonomic responses (i.e., stakeholders appearing reluctant to speak, appearing uncomfortable, or appearing nervous, jittery, or on edge). Participants rated whether or not they observed their stakeholder demonstrating each of the XSEA indicators using a 4-point scale (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*, 3 = *I don't remember*, 4 = *This item is confusing*).

Table 32.

Basis of AEA Survey Items Examining Potential Indicators of XSEA

| Survey Construct | Survey Item | Derived from Previous Literature | Derived from Phase 1 Findings |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Affective XSEA Indicators | “When discussing or participating in evaluation, did the stakeholder share that they felt any of the following emotions?” | | |
| | Anxious | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Tested | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Afraid | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Worried or concerned | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Nervous, jittery, or on edge | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Stressed | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Suspicious of the organization’s/authority’s motives for requesting the evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Skeptical about the value of evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Distrustful of the evaluator/evaluation team | ✓ | ✗ |
| | Uncomfortable | ✗ | ✓ |
| | Frustrated | ✗ | ✓ |
| Doubtful about whether or not evaluation activities would be carried out as planned | ✗ | ✓ | |

| Survey Construct | Survey Item | Derived from Previous Literature | Derived from Phase 1 Findings |
|--|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Behavioral XSEA Indicators | “When discussing the evaluation or participating in evaluation activities, did you observe the stakeholder exhibiting any of the following behaviors?” | | |
| | Walking out of meetings or not attending a scheduled meeting they originally agreed to attend | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Appearing nervous, jittery, or on edge | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Appearing uncomfortable (e.g., shifting around in their seat, etc.) | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities (their remarks may have included versions of, "No, we're not going to do this," or sarcastically saying, "Good luck trying to do that.") | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Appearing reluctant to speak | ✗ | ✓ |
| | Appearing disinterested, disengaged, or preoccupied (e.g., spending a lot of time on their phone or personal computer) | ✗ | ✓ |
| | Communicating non-verbally with at least one other stakeholder, particularly during a larger group meeting (e.g., making meaningful eye contact, using hand gestures, etc.) | ✗ | ✓ |
| | Engaging in private side conversations with another stakeholder, particularly during a larger group meeting | ✗ | ✓ |
| | Making dismissive or passive aggressive gestures (e.g., rolling their eyes, etc.) or sounds ("Hmph") in response to discussing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities | ✗ | ✓ |
| Laughing dismissively at others' ideas | ✗ | ✓ | |

| Survey Construct | Survey Item | Derived from Previous Literature | Derived from Phase 1 Findings |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cognitive XSEA Indicators | “When discussing the evaluation or evaluation activities, did the stakeholder share any of the following thoughts or information with you?” | | |
| | Their concerns regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| | That they were eager to confirm the program was accomplishing its intended effects | ✓ | ✓ |
| | That they were eager to showcase the good work they believed their program was doing | ✓ | ✓ |
| | That there was much at stake with evaluation (e.g., evaluation results would influence hiring decisions, funding decisions, etc.) | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Their frustrations regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation | ✗ | ✓ |
| | That there was considerable outside interest from the community or other organizations in the results of the evaluation | ✗ | ✓ |

Participants were also asked to qualitatively describe what strategies, if any, they used to effectively manage their stakeholder's XSEA. To prevent response bias, this open-ended item was presented before participants were shown a list of specific XSEA management strategies.

After providing a written description of how they managed their stakeholders' high XSEA, participants were then presented with eight close-ended items assessing if they implemented particular types of management strategies (1 = *Yes*, 2 = *No*), and if so, how effective that strategy was in decreasing their stakeholder's XSEA using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *very effective*, 2 = *moderately effective*, 3 = *somewhat effective*, 4 = *not effective*, 5 = *N/A*). Items were reverse-coded during data analysis so that higher scores were equated with higher levels of effectiveness.

Like the potential indicators of XSEA, management strategies were developed based off previous evaluation literature (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002) and overarching themes from Phase 1 findings (see Table 33). XSEA management strategies discovered during Phase 1 were consolidated into larger themes and items due to concern that the survey length would result in participant attrition. For example, the survey item "*Worked to build a positive, trusting relationship with the stakeholder*" derived from Phase 1 strategies related to effective relationship building (e.g., communicate wanting to support SHs, meet SHs in their preferred environment, be kind).

Table 33.

Basis of AEA Survey Items Examining XSEA Management Strategies

| Survey Construct | Survey Item | Derived from Previous Literature | Derived from Phase 1 Findings |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| XSEA Management Strategies | “Did you implement this strategy to try to decrease the stakeholder's high level of anxiety towards evaluation?” | | |
| | Worked to build a positive, trusting relationship with the stakeholder | x | ✓ |
| | Demonstrated the immediate value of evaluation to the stakeholder (e.g., created a logic model, updated or developed an instrument, etc.) | x | ✓ |
| | Clarified roles and responsibilities | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Involved the stakeholder in making some decisions about the evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Listened to the stakeholder's expertise when designing evaluation methodology or collecting data | x | ✓ |
| | Included the stakeholder in the interpretation of evaluation findings | x | ✓ |
| | Encouraged the stakeholder to think about how they would use the evaluation findings | x | ✓ |
| Asked the stakeholder to evaluate your performance or the evaluation process | x | ✓ | |

Remaining survey items asked evaluators to provide information about their own demographics, the demographics of their stakeholder, the highest level of XSEA observed, the evaluation phases in which XSEA was present, and to self-rate the quality of their interpersonal skills. AEA members were also given opportunities to respond to some open-ended questions in case close-ended items did not sufficiently or accurately capture participants' experiences (e.g., “What other information, if any, do you think is important for us to know regarding why the stakeholder had high evaluation anxiety?”).

After the survey was finalized this researcher recruited AEA members via email (see Appendix Z) between January and February 2020. Those who chose to participate completed the survey online via Qualtrics, and their names were entered into a lottery to win a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Analysis

Similar to Phase 1, this researcher used mixed methods data analysis to answer the study's research questions.

Quantitative analyses. Quantitative data analysis of AEA members' survey ratings were conducted using the statistical software program, SPSS (IBM 7Corp, 2017). Descriptive analyses were conducted on all quantitative survey items and used as the main method of quantitative analysis for research questions 3 and 4.

Analyses were conducted on responses that were 100% complete, largely because the majority of participants with incomplete responses had progressed through only 6% of the survey (essentially consenting to participate and then not continuing on to the rest of the survey). The 11 participants who completed more than 6% of the survey but did not finish were also excluded from analysis since they had not proceeded past the first survey questions asking about stakeholders' demographics.

For research question 1, point-biserial correlations were run to examine the strength of the association between each of the 28 potential indicators of XSEA and the highest level of observed XSEA. This statistical test was deemed appropriate since each indicator variable was dichotomous (e.g., yes/no if the stakeholder shared feeling anxious.), and the highest XSEA level variable was continuous. A Pearson correlation coefficient was also computed to assess the

relationship between the total number of indicators selected and stakeholders' highest XSEA level.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted when examining variables' association with the highest level of observed XSEA for research question 2. In particular, independent variables included stakeholder demographics (i.e., position, ethnicity, race, age, and gender), evaluator demographics (i.e., position, ethnicity, race, age, gender), and other evaluator characteristics (i.e., length of time evaluator worked with the stakeholder, whether or not they were currently working with the stakeholder, level of evaluation experience, how well evaluator knows their stakeholder, and quality of interpersonal skills). This statistical test was selected to examine the effect that stakeholder variables and evaluator variables each had as a whole on XSEA, as well as to assess the relative contribution of each type of stakeholder and evaluator variable on highest XSEA level. Point-biserial correlations were also conducted to determine if highest XSEA level was statistically significantly related to the presence of anxiety during each evaluation stage (e.g., yes/no if anxiety was exhibited during evaluation planning) and each communication method (e.g., yes/no if evaluators and stakeholders communicated primary via email).

The Holm's (1979) Sequential Bonferroni Procedure⁵ was conducted to obtain adjusted alpha levels and address familywise error rates, or the probability of making a Type I error via

⁵ The formula for calculating the Holm-Bonferroni = Target Alpha Level / $n - \text{rank number of pair of correlations (by degree of significance)} + 1$, where the target alpha level = .05 and n = the number of tests. In research question 1, for example, there were 28 point-biserial correlations performed to test the hypothesis, and the formula to calculate the first Holm-Bonferroni adjusted alpha level for the variable with the smallest $p\text{-value} = .05 / (28 - 1 + 1)$. If the original $p\text{-value}$ were less than .002 then the relationship would be considered statistically significant. The formula to calculate the second Holm-Bonferroni adjusted alpha level for the variable with the second smallest $p\text{-value} = .05 / (28 - 2 + 1)$, and so forth.

multiple hypothesis tests (Glen, 2016). This method is helpful for reducing Type I errors, but it is also criticized for being too conservative and increasing the likelihood of Type II errors when the number of comparisons is large (Abdi, 2010). Unadjusted significance levels can be found in Appendices AB and AD.

Post hoc multiple regression power analyses were conducted using G*Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The highest achieved power was .54, meaning there was a 46% probability of committing a Type II error. While the sample fulfilled the assumptions needed for each of the statistical tests that were conducted, results should also be interpreted cautiously given the generally small sample size and low statistical power for the multiple regressions analyses.

Qualitative analyses. This researcher conducted an inductive content analysis of participants' open-ended responses to discover patterns and themes in the data (Patton, 2002). Qualitative analyses were conducted via Microsoft Excel, which was sufficient for analysis since the qualitative data gathered during Phase 2 were less complex and comprehensive than the Phase 1 qualitative data.

Phase 2: Results

Similar to Phase 1, findings from the preceding analyses were used to answer this study's research questions. Results across both phases informed the development of the XSEA Detection & Management Checklist (see Appendix AE).

R1a. To what extent do program staff experience XSEA when participating in an evaluation, including in evaluation capacity building activities?

Using a 1-10 scale, AEA members ($N = 76$) reported that, on average, stakeholders' highest level of XSEA was "moderately high" ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 1.73$) (see Figure 8).

Stakeholders' highest XSEA level ranged from three to 10 and was fairly normally distributed and symmetrical, with skewness of $-.404$ ($SE = .276$) and kurtosis of $.026$ ($SE = .545$).

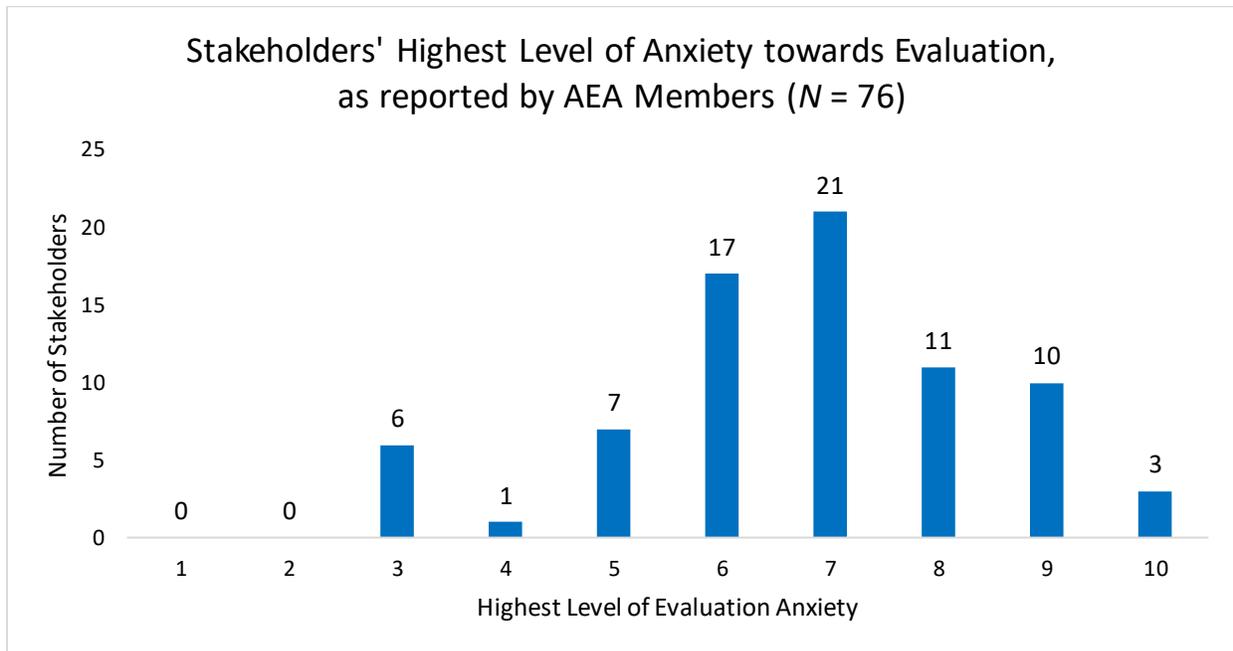


Figure 8. Stakeholders' Highest Level of Evaluation Anxiety, according to AEA Members

More than half of respondents ($n = 42, 55.3\%$) characterized stakeholders' XSEA as "variable, ebbing and flowing in intensity throughout the evaluation process." Other respondents were nearly evenly split in characterizing their stakeholders' XSEA as either "long lasting and detectable during most interactions" ($n = 17, 22\%$) or "fleeting, noticeable only once or a handful of times" ($n = 15, 20\%$) (see Figure 9).

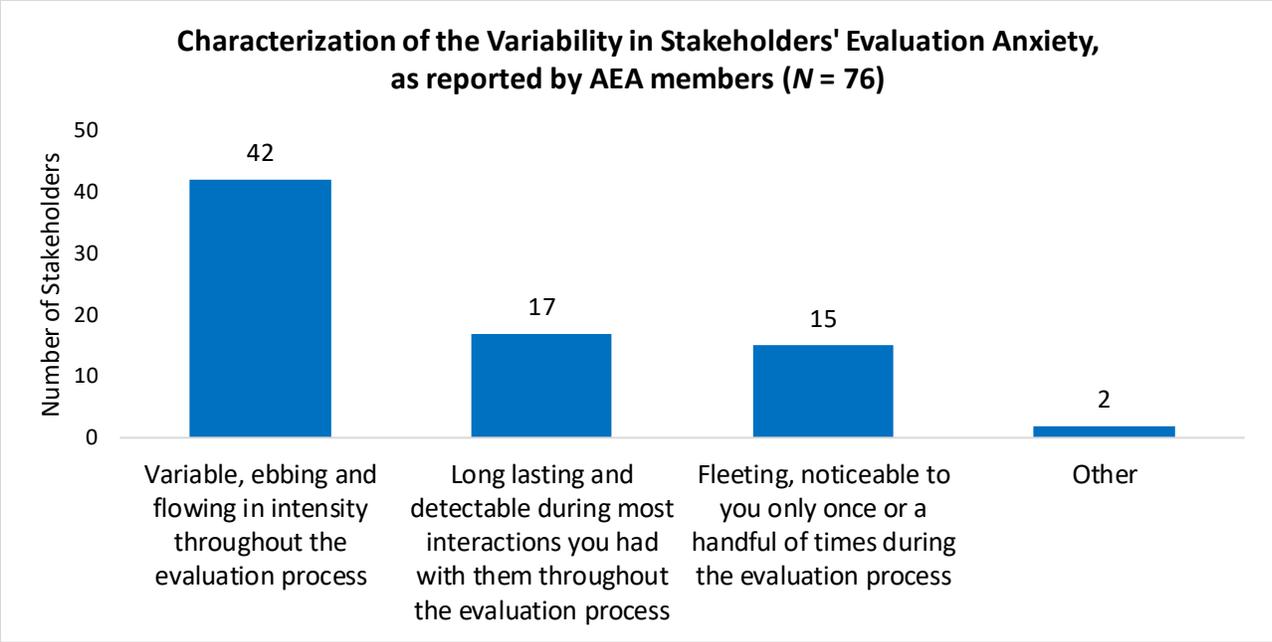


Figure 9. Characterization of the Variability in Stakeholders' Evaluation Anxiety, according to AEA Members

Indicators of XSEA. AEA members were asked whether or not they observed their clients exhibiting certain indicators that suggested that their stakeholder was highly anxious about evaluation or evaluation activities. Point-biserial correlations were run in order to examine the strength of association between each of the 28 potential indicators of XSEA and the highest level of observed XSEA. In total, none of the 28 hypothesized indicators were found to be positively and statistically significantly correlated with XSEA (see Appendix AB).

Interestingly, seven out of the 28 (25%) hypothesized indicators were observed by more than half of the AEA members (see Table 34). Even though these seven indicators were not statistically significantly associated with stakeholders' highest XSEA level, the frequency in which they were observed suggests they were highly prevalent among respondents' stakeholders who the evaluators considered to be anxious about evaluation.

Table 34.

Most Frequent Indicators of XSEA as reported by AEA Members (N = 76), and Point-Biserial

Correlations between These Indicators and Highest XSEA Level

| Indicator Type | Indicator | N | Percentage | <i>r_{pb}</i> |
|----------------|--|----|------------|-----------------------|
| Affective | Worried or Concerned | 55 | 72% | .281 |
| Cognitive | That they were eager to showcase the good work they believed their program was doing | 49 | 64% | .053 |
| Cognitive | That they were eager to confirm the program was accomplishing its intended effects | 44 | 58% | -.043 |
| Affective | Skeptical about the value of evaluation | 43 | 57% | -.096 |
| Behavioral | Pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities (their remarks may have included versions of, "No, we're not going to do this," or sarcastically saying, "Good luck trying to do that.") | 43 | 57% | .289 |
| Cognitive | Their concerns regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation | 40 | 53% | .127 |
| Affective | Frustrated | 39 | 51% | .259 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Three out of the seven items were categorized as cognitive indicators. More than half of the respondents noted that their stakeholders shared that they were eager to showcase their programs' good work ($n = 49, 64\%$), confirm their program was accomplishing its intended effects ($n = 44, 58\%$), and had discussed their concerns regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or authority requesting the evaluation ($n = 40, 53\%$). There were also three affective indicators noted by more than half of the evaluators, where stakeholders shared feeling worried or concerned ($n = 55, 72\%$) or skeptical about the value of evaluation ($n = 43, 57\%$). As one AEA participant noted, their stakeholder saw evaluation activities as "distracting or taking away from the 'good work' the programs and participants were engaged in." Finally, there was one behavioral indicator of XSEA where the majority of stakeholders were noted as pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities ($n = 43, 57\%$).

Association between the Total Number of Indicators and Highest XSEA Level. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the total number of affective indicators selected by AEA members and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA. There was a small but positive and statistically significant correlation between the two variables, Pearson's $r(74) = .259, p < .05$, indicating that XSEA levels tended to increase as the number of affective indicators increased.

Comparatively, this relationship was not observed with the total number of cognitive and behavioral indicators. Results from a Pearson correlation coefficient indicated there was no statistically significant correlation between the total number of cognitive indicators selected by AEA members and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA, Pearson's $r(74) = .102, p = .378$, even though a higher proportion of cognitive indicators was selected by respondents than affective and behavioral indicators. There was also no statistically significant correlation between the total

number of behavioral indicators selected by AEA members and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA, Pearson's $r(74) = .124, p = .284$.

R1b. How aware are program staff of their own psychological responses to evaluation, and how do evaluators and program staff who have experienced or witnessed anxious responses to evaluation describe XSEA?

Phase 2 did not survey stakeholders directly and lacks self-report data. The best indicator this researcher has that stakeholders were aware of their anxiety was if they told their evaluator they were feeling anxious. Survey results show that the majority of AEA members did not have stakeholders who communicated feeling anxious about evaluation ($n = 48, 69\%$).

This researcher explored if stakeholders who shared feeling anxious about evaluation ($n = 22$) with their evaluator tended to have higher XSEA levels than those who did not share feeling anxious ($n = 48$). The data met the assumptions for a Mann-Whitney U test, which demonstrated that those who shared feeling anxious had statistically significantly higher XSEA levels than those who did not tell their evaluator that they felt anxious ($U = 315, p = .006$). These results suggest that when stakeholders do verbally express feeling anxious about evaluation that their XSEA is already high. These results also indicate a further need to understand if stakeholders who did not share feeling anxious about evaluation were misinterpreted by their evaluators to be experiencing XSEA when, in actuality, they were not.

R2. What increases or decreases the likelihood that program staff experience XSEA? To what extent do these sources of XSEA align with those hypothesized in the current literature?

Both quantitative and qualitative survey data helped explicate the reasons behind stakeholders' XSEA. Results are categorized similarly as in Phase 1 by stakeholder

characteristics, program and organizational factors, situational factors, and evaluator characteristics. There is also a new, fifth categorization of *evaluation characteristics* that emerged during data analysis.

Stakeholder characteristics. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine if the stakeholder characteristics of age, race, ethnicity, gender, and workplace position were statistically predictive of stakeholders' highest level of observed XSEA. These variables did not statistically significantly predict highest XSEA level, $F(5, 70) = .812, p = .542, R^2 = .055$, and none of the five stakeholder characteristics were considered statistically significant predictors of XSEA (see Table 35).

Table 35.

Multiple Regression Summary for Stakeholder Demographics Predicting Highest XSEA Level

| Predictor | β | <i>SE</i> | <i>CI</i>^{95% lower} | <i>CI</i>^{95% upper} | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SH position | .032 | .169 | -.292 | .383 | .269 | .789 |
| SH ethnicity | .491 | .441 | -1.184 | .574 | -.693 | .491 |
| SH race | .160 | .123 | -.420 | .071 | -1.420 | .160 |
| SH age | .873 | .135 | -.291 | .247 | -.161 | .873 |
| SH gender | .488 | .191 | -.514 | .248 | -.697 | .488 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

When asked to describe why their stakeholder experienced XSEA, 50 out of the 76 respondents (64%) provided additional qualitative information. Many of their responses focused on several stakeholder characteristics such as clients' lack of trust in the evaluator's expertise ($n = 5$, 10%), stakeholders' inexperience with evaluation and research ($n = 5$, 10%), stakeholders' negative attitude towards evaluation ($n = 4$, 8%), and clients' high vested interest in the success of their program ($n = 4$, 8%) (see Table 36).

Table 366.

Stakeholder Characteristics as Sources of Anxiety, as identified by AEA Members (N = 50)

| SH Characteristics | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| SH doubts the evaluator's expertise | 5 | 10% | "He and others had political and philosophical opposition to the way we were involving only the front-line staff and not the participants." | ✓ | ✗ |
| Lack of evaluation or research experience | 5 | 10% | "[The stakeholder had] no experience with evaluation or using research, and tended to go on their own intuition." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Negative attitude towards evaluation | 4 | 8% | "[The stakeholder considered evaluation to be] distracting or taking away from the "good work" that the programs and participants were engaged in." | ✓ | ✗ |
| High vested interest in the success of the program | 4 | 8% | "[Their anxiety] had to do with proving the program was working/important." | ✓ | ✓ |
| Feels overwhelmed with existing responsibilities | 3 | 6% | "She was overworked and underpaid. She saw the funder's evaluation requirement as an unfunded mandate." | ✗ | ✓ |
| Concerned about upsetting others | 3 | 6% | "Often, religious organizations rely on good will and good intentions - often to their detriment of continual program improvement. They might have a very successful program with one clear hinderance, but don't want to intercede in order to keep from offending an individual or small group." | ✗ | ✓ |

| SH Characteristics | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Bad history with evaluation | 3 | 6% | "I took on this evaluation from another evaluator, and the relationship had *not* been going well up to that point, so there was already some distrust around evaluation." | ✓ | ✗ |
| Dishonest use of program data | 2 | 4% | "He felt the program in the past inflated their numbers or 'gamed the system' to report more favorable numbers at certain points of the year" | ✗ | ✗ |
| Lack of knowledge about the program | 2 | 4% | "[I am] not sure how well informed [the stakeholder] was about the program to be evaluated, even though she was named as an equal partner overseeing the program." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Not open to scrutiny | 2 | 4% | "[The stakeholder had a] fixed mindset and a preference for seeing themselves and their work as already perfect, without issues, and not in need of any improvements." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Naturally a cynical person | 2 | 4% | "[The stakeholder was] cynical, critical, skeptical of 'traditional' evaluation assessments." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Naturally an anxious person | 1 | 2% | "They tend to be an anxious person normally, but during this interaction, the person's nervousness were obvious." | ✓ | ✗ |
| Desire to showcase program's strengths to others | 1 | 2% | "[The stakeholder] was concerned the evaluation wouldn't truly capture all of the good things the organization was doing. Plus she did not like the idea of being boxed into a certain set of results." | ✗ | ✓ |
| Concerned about not feeling respected for their expertise | 1 | 2% | "At the end, the stakeholder indicated that her primary worry was not feeling respected for her judgement." | ✓ | ✗ |

Program and organizational factors. In an effort to provide participants with the opportunity to describe contextual attributes contributing to XSEA in their own words, the AEA survey did not contain close-ended items assessing specific program and organizational antecedents. Rather, 49 evaluators shared information regarding the setting and political factors in which their stakeholders worked, and a variety of themes emerged across respondents (see Table 37). Approximately 14% of respondents ($n = 7$) attributed stakeholders' anxiety to a perception of uncertainty about a program's future. In many of these instances stakeholders believed that "their job was on the line," particularly due to the sector in which they worked (e.g., "This is public education and jobs are determined sometimes based on performance.").

Additionally, 10% of participants ($n = 5$) described a lack of buy-in or support for evaluation among key stakeholders. In one instance the evaluation plan—which was created by program leadership—was not accepted by front-line staff (e.g., "The stakeholders were very anxious that the operational force would not accept what was planned...so what was in the manual would not be operational in the field."). Other themes that were each mentioned by three respondents (6%) were programs being flawed in their design (e.g., "There were features of the program that weren't working properly and weren't effective. It was frustrating."), and there being a mismatch in interests between programs and their funders (e.g., "The funder...is somewhat inconsistent with what they want to see from the program."). A program factor that was mentioned by two respondents (4%) was significant leadership changes in the organization. As one evaluator shared, "The whole organization was under stress due to leadership changes, so emotions were heightened across the board."

Table 377.

Program or Organizational Characteristics Linked with XSEA (N = 49)

| Program or Organizational Characteristics | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Perceived uncertainty about a program's future | 7 | 14% | "[The stakeholder was] in a somewhat volatile situation with concerns about job security." | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of support or buy-in for evaluation among SHs | 5 | 10% | "The program hadn't really done this [evaluation] before so there were participants (faculty) that were highly skeptical. This promoted some anxiety on the part of the stakeholder (who was not a faculty member but who needed their buy-in)." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Flawed program design or implementation | 3 | 6% | "The program was not only not achieving its outcome objectives, but really wasn't being implemented as proposed/funded - so I can understand the anxiety around that." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Mismatch between program's interests and funder's interests | 3 | 6% | "[There is an] uncomfortable relationship with the funder, [and an] awareness that the funder may not understand why low marks do not indicate her performance is bad." | ✗ | ✓ |
| Leadership changes | 2 | 4% | "In this case, the organization was going through a good deal of change and a major change in executive leadership. The stakeholder was aware that the evaluation might be particularly important at this time." | ✗ | ✗ |
| Lack of measurement use | 1 | 2% | "[The stakeholder was anxious because of] current measurement burden (feeling like existing measures were too long) and lack of current measurement use." | ✗ | ✗ |

Situational factors. Like program and organizational antecedents to XSEA, a variety of situational factors were gleaned from participants' contextual descriptions (see Table 38). In general, participants noted few situational factors, though the most common ones were each mentioned by three respondents (6%): (1) community interest in program data (e.g., "The program had high stakeholder interest and long-standing criticism [from the community]."); (2) few resources to conduct evaluation, both in terms of personnel and finances (e.g., "[The stakeholder was concerned about] how the evaluation would affect the measurement burden on their frontline staff and participants."); and (3) pressure to receive funding (e.g., "He felt pressure to evaluate to get more funding.").

Table 388.

Situational Factors Linked with XSEA (N = 49)

| Situational Factors | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Community interest in program data | 3 | 6% | "There were numerous groups interested in the findings- making dissemination a challenge (given the budget), and there was some anxiety about how to meet all those needs." | ✗ | ✓ |
| Few resources to conduct evaluation | 3 | 6% | "[The stakeholder was concerned about] how the evaluation would affect the measurement burden on their frontline staff and participants." | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pressure to receive funding | 3 | 6% | "Funding was always at risk." | ✓ | ✗ |
| Concern about national climate and policies | 1 | 2% | "There were also potentially issues with the stakeholders' immigration status that made her very vulnerable as an employee - her status was known by the ED, and not the focus of the evaluation at all, but in the broader sociopolitical and legal context, it may have led to heightened vigilance and anxiety for the stakeholder." | ✓ | ✓ |

Evaluator characteristics. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine if the evaluator characteristics of age, race, ethnicity, gender, and position as an internal or external evaluator were statistically predictive of stakeholders' highest level of XSEA. These variables did not statistically significantly predict highest XSEA level, $F(5, 70) = .241, p = .943, R^2 = .017$, and none of the five evaluator characteristics were considered significant predictors of XSEA (see Table 39).

Table 39.

Multiple Regression Summary for Evaluator Demographics Predicting Highest XSEA Level

| Predictor | β | SE | CI 95% lower | CI 95% upper | t | p |
|---------------------|---------|------|--------------|--------------|-------|------|
| Evaluator position | -.011 | .249 | -.519 | .472 | -.095 | .925 |
| Evaluator ethnicity | -.016 | .622 | -1.317 | 1.165 | -.123 | .903 |
| Evaluator race | -.113 | .247 | -.711 | .273 | -.887 | .378 |
| Evaluator age | -.081 | .164 | -.434 | .220 | -.654 | .515 |
| Evaluator gender | -.031 | .371 | -.835 | .645 | -.257 | .798 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

In addition to these demographic variables, AEA members were asked to provide other background information about their level of experience, knowledge of their stakeholder, and quality of their interpersonal skills that this researcher questioned would affect XSEA. Most described themselves as having intermediate ($n = 27, 36\%$) or advanced ($n = 23, 30\%$) levels of evaluation expertise at the time they worked with their stakeholder. When asked how well they got to know their stakeholder on a 1 (*not well at all*) to 5 (*extremely well*) Likert scale, respondents selected “moderately well,” on average ($M = 3.03, SD = .952$). The majority of

evaluators also rated the quality of their interpersonal skills as “very good” ($n = 40, 53\%$). Most also indicated they had worked with their stakeholder between one to three years ($n = 39, 51\%$) and that they were not working with them at the time they completed the survey ($n = 49, 64\%$) (see Table 40).

Table 390.

Evaluator Characteristics (N = 76)

| | | Percentage | N |
|---|--------------------|------------|----|
| Length of Time Evaluator Worked with the SH | Less than 6 months | 13% | 10 |
| | Less than 1 year | 17% | 13 |
| | 1-3 years | 51% | 39 |
| | 4-6 years | 14% | 11 |
| | 7+ years | 4% | 3 |
| Currently Working with the SH | No | 64% | 49 |
| | Yes | 33% | 25 |
| | Other | 3% | 2 |
| Level of Evaluation Experience | Expert | 21% | 16 |
| | Advanced | 30% | 23 |
| | Intermediate | 36% | 27 |
| | Novice | 13% | 10 |
| How Well Evaluator Knows their SH | Extremely well | 4% | 3 |
| | Very well | 26% | 20 |
| | Moderately well | 46% | 35 |
| | Slightly well | 16% | 12 |
| | Not well at all | 8% | 6 |
| Quality of Interpersonal Skills | Very good | 53% | 40 |
| | Good | 41% | 31 |
| | Acceptable | 7% | 5 |
| | Poor | 0% | 0 |
| | Very poor | 0% | 0 |

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine if these additional evaluator characteristics were statistically predictive of stakeholders’ highest level of observed XSEA. Similar to evaluators’ demographic variables, these background variables did not statistically

significantly predict highest XSEA level, $F(5, 70) = .865, p = .509, R^2 = .058$, and none of these five characteristics were considered significant predictors of XSEA (see Table 41).

Table 401.

Multiple Regression Summary for Evaluator Characteristics Predicting Highest XSEA Level

| Predictor | β | SE | CI 95% lower | CI 95% upper | t | p |
|---|---------|------|--------------|--------------|--------|------|
| Length of Time Evaluator Worked with the SH | -.077 | .237 | -.608 | .338 | -.570 | .570 |
| Currently Working with the SH | .168 | .411 | -.260 | 1.382 | 1.363 | .177 |
| Level of Evaluation Experience | .074 | .234 | -.331 | .601 | .577 | .566 |
| How Well Evaluator Knows their SH | -.162 | .349 | -1.148 | .244 | -1.295 | .200 |
| Quality of Interpersonal Skills | -.028 | .222 | -.492 | .394 | -.222 | .825 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

In order to assess the importance of congruity between stakeholders' and evaluators' backgrounds, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between the total number of demographic variables evaluators and stakeholders shared in common and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA. There was not a statistically significant correlation between the two variables, Pearson's $r(74) = .056, p = .629$, indicating that XSEA levels were not associated with the number of demographic variables evaluators and stakeholders had or did not have in common.

When prompted to share what other information, if any, participants thought was important for this researcher to know regarding why their stakeholder had high evaluation anxiety, some of the evaluators' responses touched on the evaluator being perceived as an outsider, particularly when working with American Indians ($n = 3, 6\%$) (see Table 42). As one

respondent described, “The evaluator was not from the stakeholders’ world in their minds.” A more common theme was stakeholders’ lack of understanding about the anticipated benefits of evaluation ($n = 7, 14\%$). While respondents tended to place culpability on their stakeholders for this issue (e.g., “I don't think [my stakeholder] fully understood the value of evaluation and all that it could incorporate.”), this researcher categorized this theme as an evaluator factor because of the responsibility she believes evaluators—as service providers—have for effectively communicating with their clients.

Table 412.

Evaluator Characteristics Linked with XSEA (N = 49)

| Evaluator Characteristics | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Evaluator does not effectively communicate the anticipated benefits of evaluation or evaluation activities to SH | 7 | 14% | "I believe this stakeholder did not understand the purpose, function, or importance of the evaluation activities that needed to take place." | x | ✓ |
| Evaluator is considered an outsider to a vulnerable community | 3 | 6% | "Lack of trust working with people from outside Indian Country is common." | x | x |

Evaluation characteristics. AEA members indicated during which phases of the evaluation their stakeholder exhibited XSEA as well as which method of communication they typically used when meeting with their stakeholder. When asked when high XSEA was

noticeable during specific phases of the evaluation, the most common stage was during evaluation planning ($n = 36, 47\%$), followed closely by the evaluation judgments phase ($n = 32, 42\%$) and reporting and dissemination phase ($n = 31, 41\%$) (see Figure 10). Comparatively, few stakeholders exhibited XSEA during the evaluation contracting ($n = 5, 7\%$) and use phases ($n = 8, 11\%$). These results support the notion that stakeholders' XSEA is noticeable throughout most of the evaluation lifecycle but tends to ebb and flow in intensity.

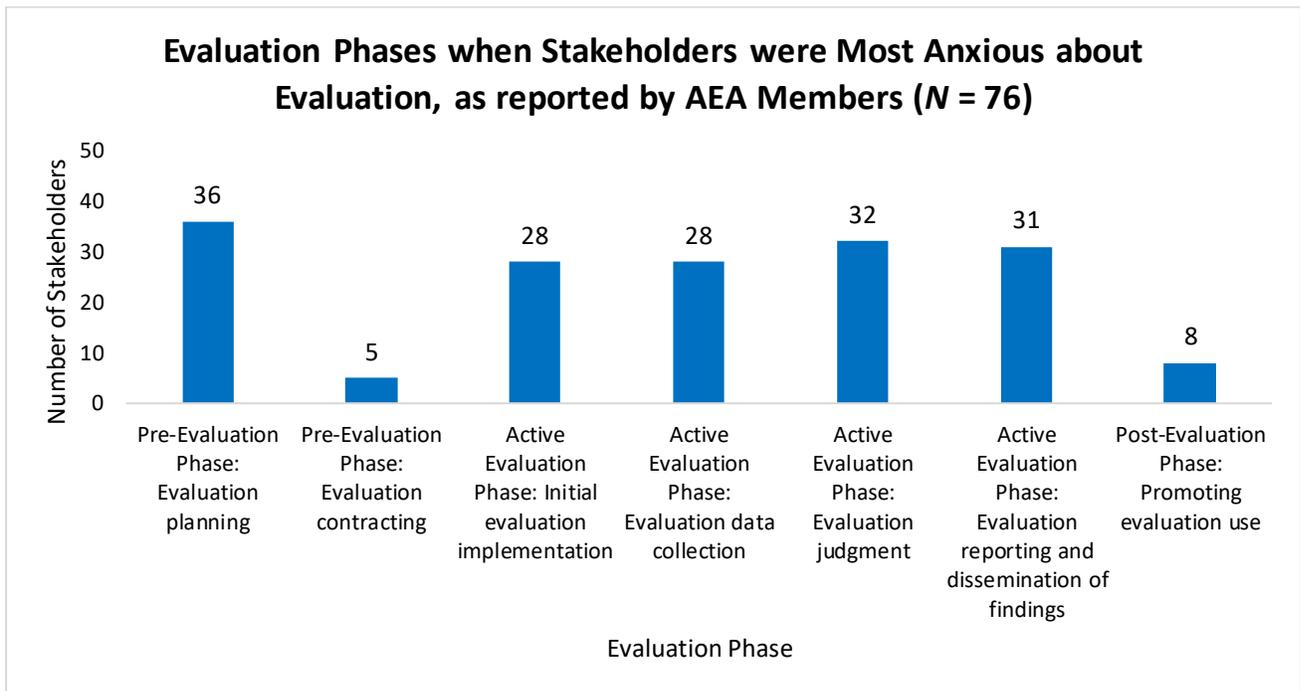


Figure 10. Hypothesized Theoretical Framework of Excessive Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety (XSEA)

Point-biserial correlations were conducted to assess the strength of the relationship between stakeholders' highest level of XSEA and each evaluation stage (whether or not stakeholders exhibited XSEA during a stage). There were no statistically significant correlations between XSEA and each phase of evaluation, demonstrating that stakeholders' XSEA did not change significantly based on the evaluation phase (see Table 43).

Table 423.

Matrix of Point-Biserial Correlations between Evaluation Stage and Highest XSEA Level

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| (1) Evaluation planning | 1 | | | | | | | |
| (2) Evaluation contracting | -.156 | 1 | | | | | | |
| (3) Initial evaluation implementation | -.411** | -.071 | 1 | | | | | |
| (4) Evaluation data collection | -.390** | -.068 | -.178 | 1 | | | | |
| (5) Evaluation judgment | -.348** | -.060 | -.159 | -.151 | 1 | | | |
| (6) Reporting and dissemination | -.252* | -.044 | -.115 | -.109 | -.097 | 1 | | |
| (7) Promoting evaluation use | -.110 | -.019 | -.050 | -.048 | -.042 | -.031 | 1 | |
| (8) Highest XSEA Level | -.207 | -.121 | -.087 | .209 | .146 | .222 | -.186 | 1 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Also note that point-biserial correlations are conducted when one variable is dichotomous (i.e., yes/no if XSEA was exhibited during each evaluation stage) and the another is continuous (i.e., Highest XSEA Level); correlations between variables one through seven do not meet the assumptions required for the point-biserial correlation analysis and should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 434.

Matrix of Point-Biserial Correlations between Primary Methods of Communication and Highest XSEA Level

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| (1) In-person meetings | 1 | | | | | | |
| (2) Virtual video calls | -.248* | 1 | | | | | |
| (3) Phone/virtual calls, no video | .333** | -.092 | 1 | | | | |
| (4) Email | .275* | .086 | .217 | 1 | | | |
| (5) Social Media | .067 | -.057 | .156 | .128 | 1 | | |
| (6) Other | -.200 | -.057 | -.086 | -.104 | -.013 | 1 | |
| (7) Highest XSEA Level | -.168 | .203 | .167 | .001 | .016 | -.051 | 1 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Also note that point-biserial correlations are conducted when one variable is dichotomous (i.e., yes/no to communicating via the methods listed) and the other variable is continuous (i.e., Highest XSEA Level); correlations between variables one through six do not meet the assumptions required for the point-biserial correlation analysis and should be interpreted cautiously.

Furthermore, point-biserial correlations were run to determine the strength of the association between evaluators' and stakeholders' primary methods of communication and XSEA levels. There were no statistically significant correlations between highest XSEA level and each method of communication, indicating that the type of communication method had no significant bearing on stakeholders' XSEA (see Table 44).

In AEA members' qualitative descriptions, two respondents (4%) described a lack of control over elements of the evaluation because of the large geographic distance between themselves and their stakeholders, and believed this distance contributed to their stakeholders' evaluation anxiety (see Table 45). As one of the two respondents noted, "We, the evaluators, are located in a different region of the US than the program that we are evaluating."

Table 445.

Evaluation Characteristics Linked with XSEA (N = 49)

| Evaluation Characteristics | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lack of control over evaluation implementation due to geographical distance | 2 | 4% | "This was an internal evaluation of a state-level initiative; we had very little local control." | x | x |

Total Number of XSEA Source Types. When examining the number of different types of sources of XSEA, the majority of the 49 respondents described one type of antecedent ($n = 28$, 53%), followed by two types ($n = 18$, 34%) and then three types ($n = 3$, 6%) (see Table 46). Most evaluators ($n = 34$, 69%) shared stakeholder characteristics they believed accounted for XSEA; comparatively, only 20% ($n = 10$) described characteristics about themselves that may have led to XSEA.

Table 456.

Types of Sources of XSEA, as reported by AEA Members (N = 49)

| XSEA Source Type | N Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Stakeholder characteristics | 34 | 69% |
| Program or organizational factors | 18 | 37% |
| Evaluator characteristics | 10 | 20% |
| Situational factors | 9 | 18% |
| Evaluation characteristics | 2 | 4% |

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between the total number of different types of sources of XSEA and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA. There was not a statistically significant correlation between the two variables, Pearson's $r(47) = .0165$, $p = .257$, indicating that XSEA was not associated with the number of different types of sources of XSEA.

R3. What are the consequences or negative reactions of XSEA as described by evaluators and program staff?

Stakeholders were considered to have XSEA if their highest level of anxiety was seven or greater, or on the uppermost 30% of the rating scale. Among the 76 respondents, 45 (59%) indicated their stakeholder's highest level of XSEA was in the excessive range. Fourteen out of these 45 evaluators (31%) qualitatively described seven indicators or negative responses of XSEA (see Table 47). The most frequent responses were: (1) professional disparagement ($n = 5$, 36%); (2) withdrawal or evasion ($n = 4$, 29%); (3) resistance ($n = 3$, 21%); and (3) tampering with program data ($n = 3$, 21%). These more frequent responses have also been noted in previous literature (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002).

Table 467.

Negative Responses among Stakeholders with XSEA, as described by AEA members (N = 14)

| Negative Responses | N | Percentage | Illustrative Quote | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 |
|--------------------------------|---|------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Professional disparagement | 5 | 36% | “Tried to discredit the evaluation as done incorrectly and not useful.” | ✓ | ✗ |
| Withdrawal or evasion | 4 | 29% | “Delays in getting some activities scheduled.” | ✓ | ✗ |
| Resistance | 3 | 21% | “The stakeholder was calling into question every part of this process and the creation of data collection tools.” | ✓ | ✓ |
| Tampering with program data | 3 | 21% | “Misplaced paper evaluations that had already been completed by clients.” | ✓ | ✗ |
| Terse communication | 1 | 7% | “She would get 'snappy' in emails sometimes -- using particularly terse, overly-directive, and formal language when she usually would be more collaborative and casual.” | ✗ | ✗ |
| Infighting | 1 | 7% | “Engaging in side private conversations with colleagues at the Foundation but not on the project. This later was a great detriment to the trust of the evaluation team.” | ✗ | ✗ |
| Trying to get rid of evaluator | 1 | 7% | “Went over the evaluator to supervisor to ‘get rid’ of the evaluator” | ✗ | ✗ |

Examples of professional disparagement included a stakeholder who “convinced an administrator that what I [the evaluator] was planning to do for evaluation was not necessary,” as well as another stakeholder who “had concerns regarding the validity of evaluation and was hesitant to share the evaluation results outside of the organization.” A stakeholder was considered to be evading the evaluator when they “consistently became ill on the days of evaluation work and ignored all emails and phone calls related to evaluation.” Resistance was exhibited in an instance when “the stakeholder I [the evaluator] worked with pushed back on a lot of my [their] ideas and suggestions and was only interested in doing the ‘bare minimum’ that was required.” Lastly, and perhaps most concerningly, evaluators shared that their stakeholders tampered with program data by “inflating their numbers or ‘gaming the system’ to report more favorable numbers at certain points of the year,” “misplaced paper evaluations that had already been completed by clients,” and “‘sabotaged’ the post-survey data collection so we [the evaluation team] would not be able to draw any conclusions.” All of these responses compromise the integrity of evaluation and are considered troublesome XSEA-induced reactions.

The least mentioned responses also happened to be indicators not previously described in the literature. While terse communication may not be especially worrisome, infighting and trying to get rid of the evaluator are problematic XSEA outcomes. Without greater context and corresponding data from stakeholders, it is unclear how generalizable these responses are or if these responses may have been warranted in some instances.

R4. How do evaluators' and program staff's suggestions for managing XSEA vary? What are the similarities and differences in their descriptions, and to what extent do the descriptions align with the literature?

The findings in this section solely portray AEA evaluators' experiences since Phase 2 did not collect data from program stakeholders.

When asked whether or not they implemented certain strategies to manage XSEA, at least three-quarters of the evaluators agreed they had used all but one strategy assessed via the survey (see Table 48); the outlier tactic was asking the stakeholder to evaluate the evaluator's performance or the evaluation process, which was implemented by approximately one-third ($n = 25, 35.7\%$) of the respondents. Otherwise, the evaluators appeared to have tried multiple strategies to lower their stakeholders' XSEA. The most frequently implemented tactic was working to build a positive, trusting relationship with the stakeholder ($n = 72, 98.6\%$), which was followed by involving the stakeholder in making some decisions about the evaluation ($n = 65, 91.5\%$) and listening to stakeholders' expertise when designing evaluation methodology or collecting data ($n = 63, 88.7\%$). These three strategies were also considered, on average, to be some of the most effective tactics in managing stakeholders' XSEA. Involving stakeholders in making decisions about the evaluation was considered close to *moderately effective* ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.01$), as was working to build positive relationships with stakeholders ($M = 2.83, SD = 1.02$) and listening to stakeholders' expertise ($M = 2.79, SD = 1.00$). The most effective strategy for managing XSEA, which was used by 79.4% of respondents ($n = 54$), was including stakeholders in the interpretation of evaluation findings ($M = 2.96, SD = .99$). In general, though, all strategies were considered by the evaluators to be, on average, *somewhat to moderately effective*.

Table 478.

Frequency and Mean Effectiveness of AEA Members' Strategies to Manage XSEA (N= 76)

| Strategy | Yes, Implemented the Strategy | Effectiveness of Strategy (1 = not effective, 4 = very effective) |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <i>n</i> (%) | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) |
| Included the stakeholder in the interpretation of evaluation findings (<i>N</i> = 68) | 54 (79.4%) | 2.96 (.99) |
| Involved the stakeholder in making some decisions about the evaluation (<i>N</i> = 71) | 65 (91.5%) | 2.86 (1.01) |
| Worked to build a positive, trusting relationship with the stakeholder (<i>N</i> = 73) | 72 (98.6%) | 2.83 (1.02) |
| Listened to the stakeholder's expertise when designing evaluation methodology or collecting data (<i>N</i> = 71) | 63 (88.7%) | 2.79 (1.00) |
| Encouraged the stakeholder to think about how they would use the evaluation findings (<i>N</i> = 72) | 61 (84.7%) | 2.53 (1.05) |
| Demonstrated the immediate value of evaluation to stakeholder (e.g., created a logic model) (<i>N</i> = 72) | 57 (79.2%) | 2.52 (1.05) |
| Asked the stakeholder to evaluate your performance or the evaluation process (<i>N</i> = 70) | 25 (35.7%) | 2.44 (1.12) |
| Clarified roles and responsibilities (<i>N</i> = 71) | 53 (74.6%) | 2.43 (1.07) |

Fifty-one out of 76 evaluators (67.1%) qualitatively described additional strategies they used to manage their stakeholders' anxiety. Their tactics were inductively coded and then categorized accordingly into one of the three overarching management strategies identified during Phase 1: (1) communication and facilitation strategies, (2) partnership strategies, and (3) strategies to demonstrate the value of evaluation. Unlike in Phase 1, strategies were not categorized as either proactive or reactive because in most instances temporal information was

lacking from the participants' respondents; with some responses this researcher could deduce that the evaluator responded reactively to XSEA (e.g., engaging other influential stakeholders because the anxious stakeholder was uncooperative), but it was largely unclear if respondents' strategies were consciously implemented to proactively prevent XSEA or to reactively mitigate XSEA.

Three of the previously identified communication and facilitation tactics—be an active listener, sell stakeholders on the vision for the evaluation, and communicate wanting to identify program strengths—were identified by those who responded to the open-ended survey question ($n = 32, 62.7\%$) (see Table 49). Active listening, in particular, was frequently mentioned in that evaluators described, “affirming [the stakeholder’s] concerns,” “sharing stories,” and “listening and validating” stakeholders’ anxieties. Furthermore, five new and frequently mentioned tactics were added to the communication and facilitation theme. Teaching stakeholders the fundamentals of program evaluation was especially common; respondents noted, “sharing many examples of how data can be used,” “showing [the] value of using negative responses to help see where [the program] can improve,” and “creating 1-page fact sheets about the purpose of evaluation and limits on use of data collected” to help increase stakeholders’ fundamental evaluation knowledge. One respondent even described, “breaking EVERYTHING down to the least common denominator and making it so the field level users would understand [the evaluation].”

Other new and more frequently mentioned strategies included having regular check-ins and updates with stakeholders (e.g., “Frequent communication.”), clearly communicating the evaluation processes to stakeholders (e.g., “Avoiding eval jargon.”), providing course correction, as needed (e.g., “I tried to steer her back to the task gently but firmly.”), and reporting evaluating

findings in an accessible way to different stakeholder groups (e.g., “We worked closely on multiple dissemination products that were targeted to various audience needs.”). Selling stakeholders on the vision for the evaluation, which was a tactic identified in Phase 1, was also mentioned more than once (e.g., “I explained myself and why we are doing what we are doing.”).

Table 49.

Communication and Facilitation Strategies Implemented by AEA Members (N = 32) to Manage XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | Phase 1— <i>N</i> Coded Segments | Phase 2— <i>N</i> Coded Segments | Illustrative Quote |
|--|--|--|---|
| Communication and Facilitation | | | |
| Teach SHs the fundamentals of program evaluation | 0 | 10 | “[I] created 1-page fact sheets about the purpose of evaluation and limits on use of data collected.” |
| Be an active listener | 3 | 8 | “[I] listened without judgment, and let others share their thoughts and feelings.” |
| Regular check-ins and updates | 0 | 5 | “We initially tried to meet regularly so that they would know what we were doing and learning, but that proved ineffective so we stopped.” |
| Communicate clearly about the evaluation processes | 0 | 5 | “[I provided] clear and concise messaging on evaluation processes.” |
| Course correction | 0 | 4 | “I was sympathetic but soon realized that was wasting a lot of time (she wanted to complain endlessly about things we couldn't change). I tried to steer her back to the task gently but firmly.” |
| Sell SHs on the vision for the evaluation | 3 | 4 | “I talked about how doing this evaluation would likely improve their ability to use measurement more effectively.” |
| Report findings in an accessible way | 0 | 3 | “[I] reduced academic language...and reported findings in accessible way, using a lot of their language, colors, and imagery.” |
| Communicate wanting to identify program strengths | 1 | 1 | “We tried to assure our stakeholder that the other features of the program were successful.” |
| Setting expectations—Agenda | 3 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Setting expectations—May feel uncomfortable | 2 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Setting expectations—Create a data collection plan | 1 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Communicate wanting to support SHs | 1 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Have a conversation, not an interrogation | 3 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |

Thirty-one out of the 51 respondents (60.8%) described tactics that contributed to the next overarching strategy of partnering with stakeholders (see Table 50). The most frequently mentioned partnering strategy was asking stakeholders for their input and incorporating their ideas into aspects of the evaluation. For instance, one respondent, “tried to include [the stakeholder] in the decisions as much as possible and asked for her feedback on ways to conduct the evaluation.” Evaluators also informed their stakeholders that there were “opportunities to provide revisions and oversight” to aspects of the evaluation since they “did not have all the planning in place.”

Other frequently mentioned strategies included meeting stakeholders one-on-one and ideally in person (e.g., “What did work [to manage XSEA] was meeting in person and working with the stakeholder.”), engaging other significant stakeholders to exert their influence (e.g., “We asked managers to repeat the message, including [the] value to successful implementation.”), and demonstrating flexibility, both in terms of being available to stakeholders (e.g., “We made ourselves flexible to their schedule.”) and in the design of the evaluation (e.g., “We affirmed to [the stakeholder] that it was possible to measure the phenomena we sought to monitor, it would just require creativity.”). A number of evaluators also described providing reassurance to stakeholders that, “[evaluation] was not going to be that big of a deal in the end,” and, “that is was not an evaluation of the staff member but just an opportunity to gain context on what was taking place.”

Table 480.

Partnering Strategies Implemented by AEA Members (N = 31) to Manage XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | Phase 1— N Coded Segments | Phase 2— N Coded Segments | Illustrative Quote |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Work in Partnership | | | |
| Asked SH for Input | 0 | 10 | “We tried to include her in the decisions as much as possible and asked for feedback on ways to conduct the evaluation.” |
| Meet SHs one-on-one | 1 | 5 | “I dedicated significantly more time to...having one-on-one conversations with her about the evaluation, and about her experiences at the organization, and in the programs she managed.” |
| Engage other influential stakeholders | 0 | 5 | “We engaged influential peers, their supervisor, and even their supervisees, who were on board and happy to participate.” |
| Demonstrate flexibility | 5 | 5 | “We kept iterating on the design.” |
| Provide reassurance | 0 | 4 | “[I provided] reassurance that it was not an evaluation of the staff member but just an opportunity to gain context on what was taking place.” |
| Clarifying role | 0 | 2 | “We work in a close partnership with her...as her ally, not someone trying to judge her.” |
| Get to know SHs | 2 | 2 | “I worked to get to know her personally, and met with her one-on-one away from her staff to explain some of my decisions, and talk about why I thought we needed changes in data collection. I also mis-read her anxiety for a while (at least a year) as just being obstinate or difficult, so that when I realized she was anxious, it changed my approach to working with her.” |
| Demonstrate kindness | 1 | 2 | “I tried to calm their nerves, explain myself and why we are doing what we are doing, and just be open, kind, and friendly.” |
| Demonstrate reliability | 0 | 2 | “[We] showed up and did what we said we would do.” |
| Tried to fit into the org culture | 0 | 1 | “We demonstrated that we really wanted to understand their org by trying to fit into their culture at in-person meetings (casual dress, friendly, very open).” |

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | Phase 1— <i>N</i> Coded Segments | Phase 2— <i>N</i> Coded Segments | Illustrative Quote |
|---|--|--|---|
| Give SHs first access to evaluation results | 0 | 1 | “I gave stakeholders the first opportunity to respond to the eval results.” |
| Spoke with SH in their native language | 0 | 1 | “All our communication was in Spanish, helping create a direct line of communication between us.” |
| Express gratitude | 0 | 1 | “I consistently thanked her for any and all collaborative thinking that she offered.” |
| Empower SHs by involving in eval decision-making | 2 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Demonstrate sensitivity (to underlying tensions and historical issues within program) | 1 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |
| Meet SHs in their preferred environment | 3 | 0 | <i>NA</i> |

Tactics that aligned with the third overarching strategy of demonstrating value were touched on by four out of the 51 respondents (7.8%) (see Table 51). The tactic of demonstrating the value of evaluation was supported by two Phase 2 respondents; however, unlike in Phase 1 where it was beneficial for the evaluators to show program staff the *immediate* value of evaluation, these AEA evaluators' responses lacked specific temporal information. One evaluator, "modeled for them a broad-minded outcome analysis, with plenty of stories based on extensive interviews and related data." The other was not deterred by their stakeholders' XSEA and shared the following: "I did the work anyway! I was able to show him [the stakeholder] how beneficial my analysis was and what I learned, and he was really encouraged."

A new tactic that emerged from two other evaluators' responses was addressing stakeholders' information needs. One evaluator "worked with staff to meet their and their funders' needs," and the other shared that, "What did work [to manage XSEA] was...listening to them [the stakeholders] and pulling out their evaluation questions, focusing on their evaluation questions over the national evaluation questions."

Table 491.

Demonstrating Value Strategies Implemented by AEA Members (N = 5) to Manage XSEA

| Thematic Code with Subcodes | Phase 1— N Coded Segments | Phase 2— N Coded Segments | Illustrative Quote |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <hr/> | | | |
| Demonstrating Value | | | |
| Demonstrate (immediate) value of evaluation | 2 | 2 | “I did the work anyway! I was able to show him how beneficial my analysis was and what I learned, and he was really encouraged.” |
| Address SH's information needs | 0 | 2 | “What did work was...listening to them and pulling out their evaluation questions, focusing on their evaluation questions over the national evaluation questions.” |
| Present self as a problem solver | 2 | 0 | NA |
| Use existing data to the extent possible | 1 | 0 | NA |
| <hr/> | | | |

Alignment with the Literature. The AEA members' approaches to managing XSEA corresponded with seven out of the 18 strategies (38.9%) suggested by Donaldson et al. (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) (see Table 52). According to their responses on the close-ended survey items, all but one of the 73 evaluators ($n = 72$, 98.6%) implemented *multiple strategies* to help manage their stakeholders' XSEA, and on average implemented six out of eight strategies ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.54$). Additionally, 36 out of the 51 evaluators (70.6%) who provided qualitative descriptions also implemented multiple tactics to manage XSEA. Altogether, these results demonstrate that when the majority of AEA respondents suspected their stakeholders were anxious about evaluation and saw it as a problem worth making multiple attempts to solve.

Perhaps the most commonly touched on XSEA management strategy was *allowing stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation*. Donaldson et al. (2002) describe discussing the evaluation as providing opportunities for stakeholders to "voice their concerns about the evaluation and evaluation findings on a regular basis" (p. 268). Under these terms, the AEA evaluators employed various strategies to increase stakeholders' sense of emotional safety to share their thoughts, concerns, and criticisms by being active listeners, getting to know their clients personally, meeting with stakeholders one-on-one, and demonstrating kindness. In regard to affecting the evaluation, AEA evaluators also used a multitude of strategies such as directly asking stakeholders for their input, demonstrating flexibility during evaluation planning and measurement design so stakeholders could provide revisions, clearly communicating with stakeholders by avoiding evaluation jargon, and by incorporating stakeholders' information needs into the evaluation design when there were also requirements to address funders' questions.

Furthermore, AEA evaluators *discussed the purposes of their evaluations* when they taught stakeholders the fundamentals of program evaluation, as well as when they attempted to sell stakeholders on the vision for the evaluation. Both of these tactics were implemented to create a common understanding of the processes and value of evaluation. AEA evaluators also provided *balanced continuous improvement feedback* by expressing their desire to identify program strengths along with programmatic areas that could be improved. They engaged in *role clarification* by communicating their desire to be collaborative and work in close partnership with their clients, and *wore their psychotherapy hat* when they were active listeners and offered reassuring statements to their stakeholders. Lastly, AEA evaluators *defined clearly the persons entitled to react to the draft proposal and evaluation reports, as well as modes of reaction and distribution* by giving stakeholders first access to the evaluation results and by reporting findings in an accessible way for predetermined audiences.

Table 502.

Literature-based XSEA Management Strategies that were Implemented by the CC PAPER Team and AEA Evaluators

| XSEA Management Strategies Previously Identified in the Literature | Phase 1—Strategies Implemented by the CC PAPER Team | Phase 2—Strategies Implemented by AEA Evaluators (<i>N</i> = 76) |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Expect and accept | ✓ | ✗ |
| 2. Work through hangovers from bad evaluation experiences | ✓ | ✗ |
| 3. Make sure this isn't legitimate opposition to bad evaluation | ✗ | ✗ |
| 4. Determine program psychologic | ✓ | ✗ |
| 5. Discuss purposes of this evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6. Discuss the professional standards for program evaluation | ✗ | ✗ |
| 7. Discuss why honesty with the evaluator is not disloyalty to the group | ✗ | ✗ |
| 8. Discuss the risk/benefit ratio of cooperation for individuals | ✗ | ✗ |
| 9. Provide balanced continuous improvement feedback | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10. Allow stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11. Be prepared to wear your psychotherapy hat | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12. Role clarification on an ongoing basis | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13. Be a role model | ✓ | ✗ |
| 14. Distinguish the blame game from the program evaluation game | ✗ | ✗ |
| 15. Facilitate learning communities/organizations | ✗ | ✗ |
| 16. Push for culture change | ✓ | ✗ |
| 17. Use multiple strategies | ✓ | ✓ |
| 18. Define clearly the persons entitled to react to the draft proposal and evaluation reports, as well as modes of reaction and distribution | ✗ | ✓ |

Phase 2: Conclusion

Phase 2 findings were incorporated into the XSEA theoretical framework (see Figure 11). Evaluation factors were added to the operationalization of XSEA antecedents or risk factors, and XSEA management strategies were once again collapsed into an overarching category since specific temporal information was lacking from most participants' responses. The updated framework also specifies that XSEA can be detected by the five indicators that were statistically significantly and positively correlated with highest XSEA levels:

1. The stakeholder shares feeling anxious about evaluation or evaluation activities.
2. The stakeholder shares feeling frustrated about evaluation or evaluation activities.
3. The stakeholder shares feeling worried or concerned about evaluation or evaluation activities.
4. The stakeholder appears nervous, jittery, or on edge when discussing the evaluation or participating in evaluation activities.
5. The stakeholder pushes back against, resists, or opposes aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities.

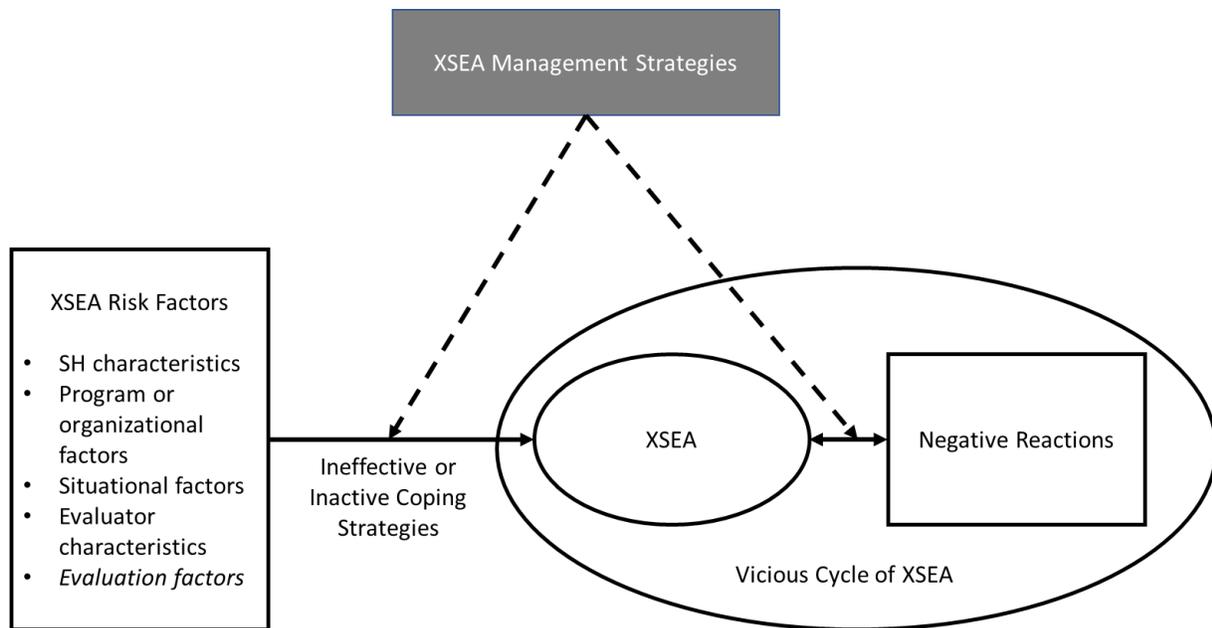


Figure 11. Updated Theoretical Framework of XSEA, based on Phase 2 Findings.

Note. Text that is italicized shows content that was added to the original framework.

XSEA Detection & Management Checklist. This researcher synthesized findings from Phases 1 and 2 to create a checklist that evaluators can use to detect XSEA (see Appendix AE). The five indicators of XSEA are included in this checklist, as is a non-prescriptive list of XSEA management strategies evaluators can try employing if they are looking to expand their toolkit. In an effort to provide guidance around when certain XSEA management strategies may be most appropriate or effective, the tactics are categorized by pre-evaluation, active evaluation, and post-evaluation phases.

To summarize findings by hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Because of the natural tendency to feel anxious when being evaluated by others, all program staff, and particularly those with a strong vested interest in their program, will be able to describe personal experiences with and the concept of XSEA. This hypothesis was partially supported, though could not be rigorously tested given the absence of

stakeholder self-report data in Phase 2. The best indicator that stakeholders were aware of their XSEA was if they told their evaluator they were feeling anxious. Among the 70 AEA evaluators to respond to the survey item, approximately one-third ($n = 22$, 31%) reported that their stakeholder shared feeling anxious about evaluation. Four out of 50 evaluators ($n = 4$, 8%) also qualitatively attributed their stakeholders' XSEA to their having a high vested interest in the success of their program, though that assumption cannot be further tested in this study given the nature of the data.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a positive relationship between the number of hypothesized sources of XSEA mentioned (i.e., stakeholder characteristics, evaluator characteristics, program or organizational factors, and situational factors) and the presence and intensity of XSEA, such that XSEA will be more recognizable and excessive in nature when a greater number of sources or antecedents are discussed by both evaluators and staff. This hypothesis was not supported. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between the total number of different types of sources of XSEA and stakeholders' highest level of XSEA. There was not a statistically significant correlation between the two variables, Pearson's $r(47) = .0165$, $p = .257$, indicating that XSEA was not associated with the number of different types of sources of XSEA.

Hypothesis 3. The consequences of XSEA will match the hypothesized manifestations described in the literature, specifically the following indicators of conflict, withdrawal or evasion, resistance, shame, anger, professional disparagement, and sense of loss of control. This hypothesis was partially supported. The most frequent negative reactions among stakeholders with XSEA ($n = 14$) were identified previously in the literature, particularly professional disparagement ($n = 5$, 36%), withdrawal or evasion ($n = 4$, 29%), and resistance (n

= 3, 21%). Other negative manifestations not specified in Donaldson et al.'s (2002) or Bechar and Mero-Jaffe's (2014) list included tampering with program data ($n = 3, 21\%$), terse communication with the evaluator ($n = 1, 7\%$), infighting ($n = 1, 7\%$), and trying to get rid of the evaluator ($n = 1, 7\%$).

Hypothesis 4: Evaluators' use of XSEA management strategies will align with those suggested in the literature. AEA evaluators implemented seven out of the 18 (38.9%) literature-based suggestions for managing XSEA, providing partial support for this hypothesis. The evaluators also described using a variety of other XSEA management tactics that fell within the domains of the three overarching strategies identified during Phase 1: (1) communication and facilitation, where three Phase 1 strategies were supported and five new strategies were added; (2) working in partnership, where four Phase 1 strategies were supported and nine new strategies were added; and (3) demonstrating the value of evaluation, where one Phase 1 strategy was supported and one strategy was added.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was to advance understanding of excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety (XSEA). While the evolutionary origins and construct of anxiety have been examined for decades by psychologists, research on evaluation is in the nascent stages of learning how participating in program evaluation triggers high anxiety reactions among its stakeholders. The use of a two-phase, exploratory sequential mixed methods design guided this researcher in examining possible indicators, antecedents, consequences, and management strategies of XSEA. Phase 1 explored how XSEA manifested among stakeholders at the Minnesota nonprofit organization, Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (“CC”), where staff were beginning their involvement in program evaluation activities and undergoing accreditation with the Council on Accreditation (COA) at the time of data collection. Phase 2 then assessed the generalizability of Phase 1 findings by surveying members from the American Evaluation Association (AEA). Findings from this research provide researchers with a theoretical conceptualization of XSEA, as well as support for the notion that strong interpersonal skills and positive stakeholder-evaluator relationships are a necessary competency for evaluators. The research findings also culminated in the development of a checklist to guide evaluators in better detecting and managing XSEA among their stakeholders (see Appendix AE).

Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1: To what extent do program staff experience XSEA when participating in an evaluation, including in evaluation capacity building activities? How aware are program staff of their own psychological responses to evaluation, and how do evaluators and program staff who have experienced or witnessed anxious responses to evaluation describe XSEA?

There are individual differences in the likelihood of a stakeholder experiencing XSEA.

Findings across both research phases suggest there are individual differences in the likelihood and intensity of stakeholders' XSEA. In the CC case study, for instance, three out of the 15 stakeholders (20.0%) who provided self-report data indicated feeling anxious about evaluation, even though all 15 were participating in similar evaluation activities. AEA evaluators also described variability in their stakeholders' highest level of XSEA, with scores ranging from moderately low (a score of 3 out of 10) to extremely high (a score of 10 out of 10). These results suggest that what may evoke a strong XSEA reaction among one stakeholder may not have the same effect on another. This finding is expected and aligns with psychological research on anxiety (Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982).

The most reliable way to learn if stakeholders are experiencing XSEA is to ask them.

Hearing from your stakeholders that they feel anxious about evaluation is perhaps the most reliable indicator of XSEA. Phase 1 observation findings corroborated stakeholders' self-report data that few CC staff were anxious about evaluation, suggesting that stakeholders have an accurate understanding of their level of anxiety towards evaluation. Additionally, in Phase 2, approximately one-third (22 out of 70 evaluators, 31.4%) of the evaluators indicated that their stakeholder shared feeling anxious about evaluation with them. Altogether, these findings

provide tentative evidence that stakeholders are aware of their high anxiety towards evaluation. The findings also hint at the importance of evaluators checking-in regularly with their stakeholders throughout the evaluation process to understand how they are feeling and address their concerns.

Research Question 2: What increases or decreases the likelihood that program staff experience XSEA? To what extent do these sources of XSEA align with those hypothesized in the current literature?

Ten factors were associated with the presence of XSEA in both research phases.

Findings across both research phases uncovered various sources of XSEA (see Appendix AC for a comprehensive list). Altogether there were 10 factors associated with XSEA in both Phases 1 and 2, six of which were newly discovered in this research. Among stakeholder characteristics, four factors were supported in both research phases. The first characteristic was stakeholders having a high vested interest in the success of their program, which was an unsurprising finding given the extent to which it had been previously discussed by researchers (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Taut & Brauns, 2003). The other three stakeholder characteristics (all of which were newly unearthed) included stakeholders feeling overwhelmed with their everyday work responsibilities and worrying about the extra time and resources evaluation would require of them, stakeholders feeling concerned about upsetting or disappointing external audiences, and particularly those interested in their program's design and data, and lastly, stakeholders having a strong desire to showcase their programs' strengths to others. For example, CC staff were eager to demonstrate that they were exceeding performance standards, and one AEA evaluator described that their stakeholder was especially concerned that the evaluation would not accurately capture all of their program's achievements.

These three characteristics may be components of or relate to stakeholders having a high vested interest in the success of their program, since they demonstrate staff's commitment to wanting evaluation results to reliably verify their program's worth. While this high level of commitment to their program may make them more vulnerable to experiencing XSEA, it could also be viewed as a strength in these stakeholders since it shows how much they care about their program. Involving these clients in the evaluation process to the extent to which they can and want to be involved may serve as a way for them to channel their commitment into productively helping with evaluation activities. In other words, these stakeholders may become the best champions for evaluation if their concerns about the process are effectively addressed.

Among program or organizational factors examined, uncertainty about a program's future and a mismatch between a program's interests and its funder's interests were associated with XSEA in both Phases 1 and 2. The first characteristic of perceived uncertainty, which had been identified previously by other researchers as a source of evaluation anxiety (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003), seemed to stoke stakeholders' concerns about the longer-term security of their jobs. This factor also relates to how evaluation results will be used to affect the future of a program, suggesting that stakeholders may be especially at risk of developing XSEA if the evaluation results will influence the future of a program, including in summative evaluations where value judgements will be made about program quality. The second characteristic refers to funders or agency leaders asking programs to report out on data that does not meaningfully capture the complexities or stories of the clients served, or that would be difficult to gather with the type of technological resources program staff have available to them. This misalignment tended to be attributed to a lack of understanding on the funders' and organizational leadership's parts.

Three situational factors—one of which had not been previously described in the literature—were also associated with XSEA. Few resources to conduct an evaluation (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2002; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003) was a theme found in both phases of this research, where stakeholders in Phase 1 shared concerns about not having enough time for evaluation activities when they were often operating in “crisis mode,” and when stakeholders in Phase 2 told their evaluators they were concerned about frontline staff being burdened with additional evaluation activities. This factor tended to overlap with the stakeholder characteristic of feeling overwhelmed with existing job responsibilities to devote additional time to evaluation activities.

Another situational factor supported in both phases was stakeholders’ concerns over the national climate and policies; stakeholders were worried about losing program funding if national policies were changed (Phase 1 finding), and were also concerned about how changes in the national climate could affect them personally, specifically concerning their immigration status (Phase 2 finding). Lastly, community interest in the results of evaluation data was a new situational factor associated with XSEA. In both research phases, participants described that numerous stakeholder groups were highly interested in their programs’ data and evaluation findings. This new source of XSEA relates to the stakeholder characteristics of being concerned about upsetting others as well as desiring to showcase their program’s strengths to a broader community, with the difference being that the situational factor focuses on the general community’s investment in evaluation findings rather than on individual stakeholders’ reactions to high community interest.

The last source of XSEA uncovered in this research was a communication-related evaluator characteristic. Specifically, XSEA was attributed in both Phases 1 and 2 to evaluators

not effectively communicating the anticipated benefits of evaluation or evaluation activities to their stakeholders. Hearing the expected benefits of a process that brings up many concerns for stakeholders could be considered a strategy for both preventing and lessening XSEA.

More sources of XSEA did not predict higher XSEA levels (Phase 2 results). The total number of XSEA sources present did not significantly correlate with XSEA levels in Phase 2. This suggests that just one stakeholder, programmatic, situational, or evaluator factor may trigger an XSEA reaction, and also that XSEA is a sensitive emotional response to specific stimuli. This researcher recommends that the reliability of this finding be more rigorously examined via experimental research.

Factors associated with an absence of XSEA (Phase 1 results) may protect against XSEA. Due to the nature of this research's study design, only Phase 1 results explored if there were factors present that may have inhibited XSEA from developing. In total there were 11 main factors found in Phase 1: six stakeholder characteristics, one program factor, two situational factors, and two evaluator characteristics (including one—presenting one's self as an engaged partner—that included 10 subfactors) (see Table 24). Interestingly, many of these variables—such as the stakeholder characteristic of feeling calm about evaluation—could be invoking a relaxation response to evaluation instead of a stress response invoked by anxiety. The evaluator characteristics, in particular, highlight the numerous actions evaluators can take to help their stakeholders feel more positive, relaxed, and in control of the evaluation process. While more research is needed to better understand the effects of these 11 factors on XSEA, it is possible that these variables could be considered protective factors in mitigating or eliminating the risk of stakeholders experiencing XSEA.

Research Question 3: What are the consequences or negative reactions of XSEA as described by evaluators and program staff?

Resistance to evaluation was exhibited across both research phases as a negative XSEA reaction. Among the hypothesized manifestations of XSEA, resistance to evaluation was the only negative reaction exhibited by stakeholders in both Phases 1 and 2. Resistance, which is considered to be behavior that stakeholders engage in to maintain or defend the status quo when real or perceived changes are imminent (Taut & Brauns, 2003), was especially evident when stakeholders expressed their doubts, annoyances, and disapproval towards their evaluators' ideas. Stakeholders tended to oppose the purpose and feasibility of aspects of the evaluation process, which is unsurprising if these same stakeholders also had a high vested interest in the success of their program (stakeholder characteristic), doubts about the future of their program (program factor), few additional resources to conduct evaluation (situational factor), or were unclear about the anticipated benefits of evaluation activities (evaluator characteristic).

Stakeholders' resistance or push-back, while seen in a negative light based on their reluctance to collaborate, may also be considered a precursor to positive stakeholder engagement; if stakeholders were not invested in their program or the evaluation, they would likely not be expending extra energy overtly resisting their evaluators' proposals. Addressing the reasons behind their resistance and XSEA may transform these same stakeholders from naysayers into evaluation champions.

Unmanaged XSEA can lead stakeholders to engage in sabotaging behaviors (Phase 2 results). Some of the most alarming negative manifestations of XSEA were described in Phase 2 when stakeholders tampered with program data, engaged in professional disparagement by trying to discredit their evaluator, or tried to terminate their contract with their evaluator. These types of

reactions had been previously described in the literature (Donaldson et al., 2002), though supported by few empirically-based studies (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2014). Ultimately, these Phase 2 findings provide further support that unchecked XSEA can have damaging consequences and is an issue worth understanding and addressing.

Research Question 4: How do evaluators' and program staff's suggestions for managing XSEA vary? What are the similarities and differences in their descriptions, and to what extent do the descriptions align with the literature?

Stakeholders' suggestions for managing XSEA centered on communication and gaining trust and buy-in. Only five out of the 33 (15.2%) Phase 1 program staff shared suggestions for making evaluation activities less anxiety-provoking. Two of these five stakeholders were involved in evaluation planning with the PAPER team, and the other three were participants in the CAHS focus group. Their suggestions for evaluators focused partly on communication tactics, where they recommended that evaluators better explain the purpose of evaluation activities and set clear expectations for the type of client and program data that would be examined. Staff's suggestions also focused on tactics to gain their trust and buy-in for the proposed evaluation, specifically by explaining the benefit of evaluation activities, helping solve stakeholders' existing problems related to their client data, and by customizing their data systems to best address their program's needs rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Among these recommendations, explaining the purpose and benefits of evaluation aligns distinctly with Donaldson et al.'s (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe's (2014) XSEA management strategy of *discussing the purposes of the evaluation*. The strategies related to helping improve staff's existing data quality problems and gaining stakeholders' trust did not

align with previous XSEA literature, but rather with the theme of *demonstrating the value of evaluation* identified in Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluators' qualitative descriptions.

Six out of 18 (33.3%) literature-based strategies were implemented by evaluators to try to manage XSEA in both research phases. Across both research phases, evaluators implemented 12 out of the 18 (66.7%) strategies suggested by Donaldson et al. (2002) and Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014) to manage their stakeholders' XSEA. Out of those 12, there were six strategies both Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluators commonly employed: (1) discussing the purposes of the evaluation; (2) providing balanced continuous improvement feedback; (3) allowing stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation; (4) wearing their psychotherapy hat; (5) clarifying roles on an ongoing basis; and (6) using multiple strategies to manage their stakeholders' XSEA. Given their use across a variety of evaluation contexts, these six strategies may be some of the most widely used methods evaluators apply when they suspect their clients are highly anxious about evaluation.

The focus of these particular strategies tends to align with principles from collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation approaches, which are also known as stakeholder involvement approaches to evaluation (Fetterman et al., 2017). While each of these three approaches differs in terms of how much control stakeholders are given to shape the evaluation, they share in common the foci on *improvement* and *organizational learning*, which aligns with the XSEA strategy of providing continuous and balanced improvement feedback. Allowing stakeholders to discuss and affect the evaluation also aligns with the principle of *democratic participation* that is key to all of the stakeholder involvement approaches. Wearing one's psychotherapy hat and actively listening to stakeholders' concerns is supported by the stakeholder involvement principle of *empathy*, where evaluators are encouraged to understand

and be sensitive to the feelings of stakeholders. Last, creating a shared understanding of the purpose of the evaluation as well as one another's roles are key features in participatory evaluation approaches, where evaluators and stakeholders share control over the evaluation (Fetterman et al., 2017).

While the Phase 2 survey did not gather information on the type of approach evaluators used, this researcher wonders if stakeholder involvement approaches increase the likelihood that stakeholders experience XSEA since they encourage stakeholder participation, or if evaluators employing these types of approaches may be more in tune with how their stakeholders are feeling about evaluation and thus, more likely to notice that their stakeholders are experiencing XSEA. More research is needed to further understand these topics.

Eight new strategies to manage XSEA were employed by evaluators in both research phases. Three overarching themes to manage XSEA were gleaned from Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluators' qualitative responses. Within these themes, eight tactics were employed by evaluators across both research phases either proactively or reactively, suggesting that these strategies, in particular, may be applicable across a variety of contexts. With the first theme regarding *communication and facilitation*, three strategies were used by evaluators across both research phases: (1) be an active listener, (2) sell stakeholders on the vision for the evaluation, and (3) communicate wanting to identify program strengths. Among the *partnering* XSEA management strategies, participants in both phases suggested that evaluators: (4) meet with stakeholders one-on-one, (5) get to know their stakeholders, (6) demonstrate flexibility, and (7) demonstrate kindness. Last, with the *demonstrating value* XSEA management strategy, Phase 1 and Phase 2 evaluators recommended that practitioners (8) demonstrate the value of evaluation to their stakeholders, and ideally, as quickly as possible. This could be achieved by helping

address some of their stakeholders' existing performance monitoring problems (e.g., ineffective client survey, clunky client data tracking systems). See Tables 49-51 for a full list of all new XSEA management strategies identified in this research.

Theoretical Implications

This research provides provisional empirical evidence for the theoretical framework of XSEA (see Figure 11). With input from CC program stakeholders in Phase 1 and from AEA evaluators in Phase 2, nine hypothesized sources or risk factors of XSEA were supported in both research phases, and a new source—evaluation factors—also emerged in Phase 2. Additionally, there is tentative evidence that there may be seven indicators of XSEA. While this research did not find statistically significant associations between hypothesized indicators and highest XSEA levels, more than half of the stakeholders: (1) felt worried or concerned about evaluation; (2) were eager to showcase the good work they believed their program was doing; (3) were eager to confirm their program was accomplishing its intended effects; (4) felt skeptical about the value of evaluation; (5) were observed to be pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities; (6) had concerns regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or authority requesting the evaluation; and (7) felt frustrated about evaluation. Further research is needed to examine how ubiquitous these possible indicators of XSEA are among stakeholders who are feeling highly anxious about evaluation.

Negative reactions or consequences of XSEA that had been described in the literature (Donaldson et al., 2002) were also supported in this research, particularly the reaction of resistance. Often accompanied with stakeholders' voiced attempts to defend the status quo and hinder evaluation plans were expressions of frustration and annoyance (mirroring a fight response), making the indicator of resistance difficult to disentangle from anger and conflict.

Future research examining the generalizability of the other negative consequences of XSEA that were uncovered in this research (e.g., professional disparagement, withdrawal or evasion, tampering with program data, infighting) would help strengthen the theoretical model of XSEA.

The number of XSEA management strategies identified increased due to the exploratory nature of this research, and Phase 1 findings also demonstrated that strategies could be employed proactively to try preventing XSEA as well as reactively to attempt to decrease XSEA. However, these strategies have not yet been rigorously evaluated to examine how successful they are in affecting XSEA. While more research is needed to continue to test the validity and reliability of the XSEA theoretical model, findings from this research provide the evaluation community with a foundational understanding of the construct and phenomenon of XSEA.

Practical Implications

Interpersonal competence is key to addressing XSEA. Findings from this research have a number of practical implications for evaluators, with the first being that the quality of evaluation practice would improve if evaluators used their interpersonal skills to anticipate and respond to XSEA. The ability to detect XSEA most accurately requires evaluators to apply their interpersonal skills wisely, from sensitively asking their stakeholders how they are feeling about the evaluation, to demonstrating active listening, empathy, and trustworthiness so that stakeholders feel comfortable disclosing their anxieties and concerns. Preventing and managing XSEA also entails effectively using a range of interpersonal skills, such as the communication and partnering strategies uncovered in this research. Ultimately, it is important for evaluators to be mindful of the effects that they and evaluation have on stakeholders, and like other competency domains, to continually work on strengthening their interpersonal skills.

Training could focus more on interpersonal competence. While evaluators do not always consider the strengthening of interpersonal competencies to be as important in their training as learning evaluation methodology and systematic inquiry (Galport & Azzam, 2017; Montrosse-Moorhead et al., 2021), evaluation experts agree that teaching evaluators how to form ethical, interpersonal relationships with their stakeholders should be a high priority in both master's and doctoral programs (Montrosse-Moorhead et al., 2021). This is especially relevant given that an AEA Competencies Task Force—after qualitatively analyzing 11 different evaluator competency frameworks (Garcia & Stevahn, 2020)—included the *interpersonal domain* among their five core competency areas in their 2018 AEA Evaluator Competencies list (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2018). *Interpersonal practice* is also considered one of the core competency areas by the Canadian Evaluation Society (Canadian Evaluation Society [CES], 2018).

The interpersonal domain is based on the premise that effective evaluator-stakeholder relationships and interactions ground quality evaluation practice, and findings from this research support that notion. For instance, the ability to foster positive relationships with stakeholders (AEA 2018 competency 5.1), build stakeholders' trust throughout the evaluation (AEA 2018 competency 5.4), use effective means of communication with stakeholders (AEA 2018 competency 5.6), manage conflict constructively (AEA 2018 competency 5.8), and build partnerships within the evaluation context (CES 2018 competency 5.5) may prevent or lessen XSEA. Evaluation training courses could draw on curricula from fields that value practitioner-client relationship-building. In the social work field, for example, students are taught various engagement, communication, and reflective practice skills so they can effectively interact with their clients by maintaining healthy boundaries (University of Minnesota, 2021-2022).

The XSEA Detection and Management Checklist provides evaluators with additional guidance. The evaluators in this research tried to manage their stakeholders' XSEA in multiple ways, demonstrating both their concern for their stakeholder's psychological well-being as well as their belief that they considered XSEA to be an issue worth addressing. The wide range of themes in their qualitative responses also illustrated that the evaluators were responding to XSEA in individualistic ways. This was perhaps unsurprising, because other than the management strategies provided originally by Donaldson et al. (2002) and later updated by Bechar and Mero-Jaffe (2014), evaluators lack resources regarding how to handle XSEA. The *XSEA Detection and Management Checklist* produced from this research provides evaluators with an additional, practical resource. Evaluators can decide how to interact and partner with their stakeholders to help reduce or even prevent XSEA, even while many of the sources of XSEA may be outside the purview of an evaluator's control (e.g., national policies, community interest in the program's data, stakeholders' high vested interest in the success of their program). By offering suggestions for ways to manage XSEA, the checklist encourages evaluators to reflect on how they are engaging with their stakeholders and to continuously assess how their clients are responding to evaluation activities.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has a number of limitations that should be considered. First, this researcher's interpretations of XSEA during evaluation planning meetings in Phase 1 may have been subjected to observer bias, particularly since she acted as a participant observer and co-facilitated PAPER-led evaluation activities and meetings. To decrease the likelihood that instances of XSEA were not misinterpreted, an external data collector accompanied this researcher to meetings. This researcher also employed other methodological strategies to gain a

holistic understanding of CC, such as gathering staff perspectives via the follow-up survey and regularly engaging in self-reflection.

Another limitation pertains to the questionable construct validity of XSEA in Phase 2. Before launching the survey the items were not reviewed by a panel of experts to examine that the underlying theory and phenomenon of XSEA was being measured. Furthermore, an exploratory factor analysis of survey items was not conducted because of the small sample size, and the item, “The stakeholder shares feeling anxious about evaluation or evaluation activities,” did not statistically significantly and positively correlate with XSEA levels. Evaluators’ open-ended responses provided another source of data in which to understand the survey results, but it is recommended that future research take steps to strengthen the construct validity of XSEA, including but not limited to using a variety of methods to explore XSEA.

A third limitation relates to the generalizability of this research’s findings. Phase 1 data were analyzed primarily through this researcher’s lens, who identifies as a white, non-Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx, middle class, cis-gendered woman from the Midwest region of the United States. While this researcher conducted two member reviews with the PAPER team to examine how well her interpretations aligned with the evaluation team’s perceptions, she ultimately made final decisions about what information was most important to include in this research. The generalizability of this research’s findings is also limited by the low power and small sample size in Phase 2, where only 76 out of 1,000 evaluators completed the AEA member survey. These participants’ experiences and survey responses may differ significantly from those who chose not to take the survey due to self-selection bias. Additionally, from a demographic perspective, AEA survey respondents and their stakeholders identified primarily as white, non-Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx, and female, which limits the applicability of findings to more

diverse audiences. Future studies could address these limitations by collecting data from evaluators outside of AEA, as well as by providing more enticing incentives to participate.

The majority of the AEA member survey findings were also limited by recall bias, since 64% of respondents were reflecting retrospectively on their experiences working with an anxious stakeholder. Additionally, stakeholder perspectives were not gathered in Phase 2 because of feasibility issues; without corresponding stakeholder data, it is unclear whether or not clients would have agreed that they were excessively anxious about evaluation, or would have considered XSEA to be the root cause of their behavior. Future study on XSEA would benefit considerably from greater incorporation of stakeholder perspectives.

Last, and perhaps most significantly, the findings from this research are limited by the exploratory nature of this research. While the dearth of understanding around XSEA warranted the use of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, cause and effect relationships could not be reliably discerned. The design of the AEA survey did not gather information that, in hindsight, would have provided greater clarity on the nature of the work evaluators were implementing (e.g., facilitating program evaluations or focused solely on building evaluation capacity), the evaluators' national origins and cultural biases, the contexts in which evaluators worked, and the program and evaluation team dynamics in play. It is recommended that these variables be examined in future studies on XSEA so that researchers can better understand the amount of influence these factors have on the development and interpretation of XSEA. Additionally, testing the effectiveness of the management strategies in preventing or decreasing XSEA would have practical implications for evaluators as well as strengthen the XSEA theoretical model. It is also suggested that future research examine if those experiencing XSEA can be converted into evaluation champions, since their XSEA suggests that they are highly

invested in the success of their program. Identifying protective factors that prevent stakeholders' evaluation anxiety from becoming excessive is also encouraged.

Conclusion

Neuroscientist Dr. Antonio Damasio (2010) shared in an interview that, "There is no such thing as a mind without emotion... We are not necessarily thinking machines, we are feeling machines that think." This study aimed to better understand how stakeholders feel about evaluation, and particularly, to examine why they develop excessive evaluation anxiety. This research was also based on the premise that while we, as evaluators, may do our best to draw from social science principles and approach our work systematically, we are also working with clients who will experience stressful emotional reactions to both the concept and process of evaluation.

Findings from this research clarify the phenomenon of XSEA, provide researchers with a theoretical framework of XSEA to further test, and enhance evaluators' toolkits with the *XSEA Detection and Management Checklist*. Results from this research also support the notion that interpersonal competence plays a key role in our ability to effectively detect, prevent, and mitigate XSEA, and suggest that evaluators would benefit from learning how to assess and strengthen their interpersonal skills in tandem with their methodological ones.

Last, supplying the evaluation community with a foundational understanding of XSEA and a base for further exploration gives inspiration to future studies; examining how to protect stakeholders from developing XSEA and testing which management strategies are especially beneficial in decreasing XSEA would strengthen this research significantly. It is also recommended that future studies gather stakeholder perspectives, which was a valuable component in Phase 1 of this research. Overall, the core objectives of evaluation practice would

be better achieved by continuing to examine stakeholders' XSEA and other psychological responses to our work, ultimately making evaluation a more useful, impactful, and positive experience for all.

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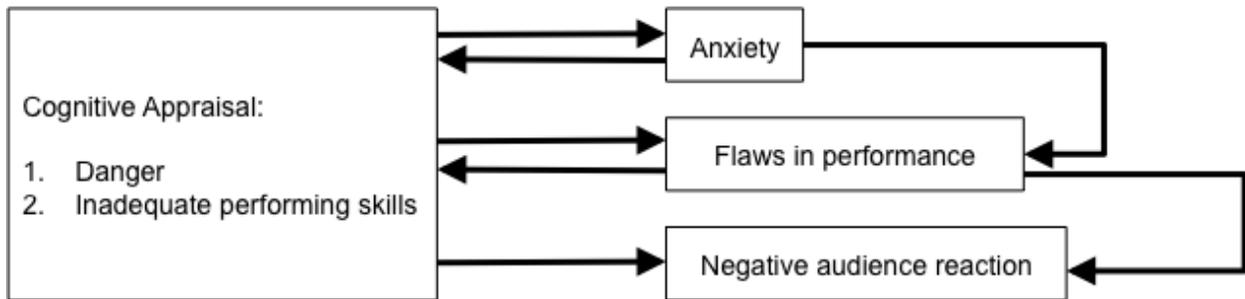
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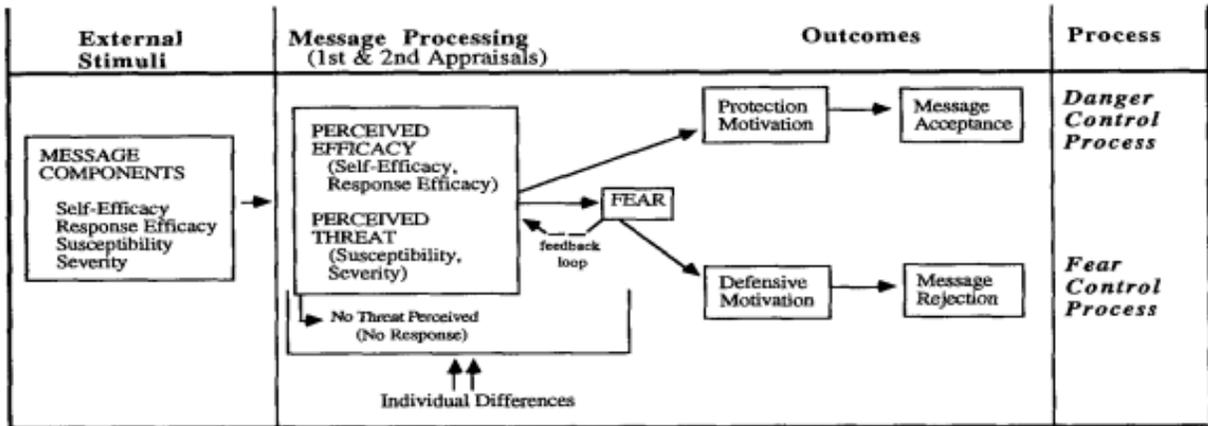
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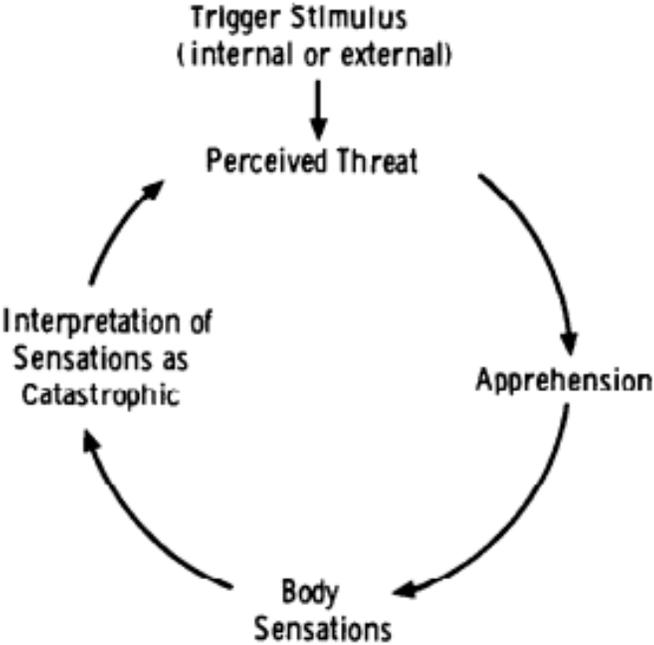
APPENDIX A. Beck's (1985) Vicious Cycle



APPENDIX B. Witte's (1994, p. 115) Extended Parallel Process Model



APPENDIX C. Clark's (1986, p. 463) Cognitive Model of Panic



APPENDIX D. Beck's (1988) Anxiety Inventory (BAI)

Below is a list of common symptoms of anxiety. Please carefully read each item in the list. Indicate how much you have been bothered by that symptom during the past month, including today, by circling the number in the corresponding space in the column next to each symptom.

| | Not at all | Mildly but it didn't bother me much | Moderately—it wasn't pleasant at times | Severely—it bothered me a lot |
|----------------------------|------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Numbness or tingling | | | | |
| Feeling hot | | | | |
| Wobbliness in legs | | | | |
| Unable to relax | | | | |
| Fear of worst happening | | | | |
| Dizzy or lightheaded | | | | |
| Heart pounding/racing | | | | |
| Unsteady | | | | |
| Terrified or afraid | | | | |
| Nervous | | | | |
| Feeling of choking | | | | |
| Hands trembling | | | | |
| Shaky/unsteady | | | | |
| Fear of losing control | | | | |
| Difficulty in breathing | | | | |
| Fear of dying | | | | |
| Scared | | | | |
| Indigestion | | | | |
| Faint/lightheaded | | | | |
| Face flushed | | | | |
| Hot/cold sweats | | | | |

Appendix E. Spielberger (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)

STAI—State

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then select the appropriate circle to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

Sample Items

“I feel calm.”

“I feel self-confident.”

“I am jittery.”

“I feel indecisive.”

STAI—Trait

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then select the appropriate circle to indicate how you generally feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe how you generally feel.

Sample Items

“I feel pleasant.”

“I feel satisfied with myself.”

“I am a steady person.”

“I lack self-confidence.”

APPENDIX F. Recruitment Letter for Program Staff to Participate in Observations during Evaluation Planning

Dear Catholic Charities Staff Member,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in evaluation planning with the PAPER team! We look forward to meeting with you on [insert date here] at [insert time here].

You may know that in addition to working with PAPER, I am also a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University studying evaluation and applied research methods. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and will be examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. This research has been approved by both my university's Institutional Review Board and Catholic Charities. The information gathered will help evaluators, including us in PAPER, to be better service providers.

One of the methods for my study includes observations of staff's engagement in evaluation activities, such as evaluation planning. For the purposes of this research, I would like to invite you to have our evaluation planning meetings observed. The meetings would be observed unobtrusively by a researcher not affiliated with Catholic Charities, who would not record any personally identifying information about you but would focus on our interpersonal interactions and behaviors during the meeting. All data will be confidential and analyzed in aggregate with other observational findings.

If you give permission to be observed you do not need to do anything, but if you are uncomfortable being observed, I have attached an opt-out form that you can complete and send back to me.

Your decision whether or not to be observed will have no effect on your current or future relationship with anyone, including myself, at Catholic Charities or Claremont Graduate University.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thanks so much for the consideration to participate! Regardless of your decision, I look forward to our first evaluation planning meeting.

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
Evaluation & Data Visualization Consultant
Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation & Research (PAPER)
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
1121 E 46th St. Minneapolis, MN 55407
samantha.langan@cctwincities.org
www.cctwincities.org

APPENDIX G. Opt-Out Form for Participants during Evaluation Planning Meetings

Opt-Out Form

Dear Samantha Langan,

I have read the information about your study on program staff's attitudes, concerns, and anxieties about program evaluation and **do not agree** to participate. By signing this I understand that a data collector will attend our evaluation planning meetings but will not record any information about me.

Please sign below to opt out of being observed and return to Samantha Langan at samantha.langan@cctwincities.org.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

**APPENDIX H. Recruitment Letter for PAPER staff to Participate in Observations during
Evaluation Planning**

Dear PAPER Team Member,

I hope this finds you well!

As you know, in addition to working with PAPER I am also a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University studying evaluation and applied research methods. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and will be examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. This research has been approved by both my university's Institutional Review Board and Catholic Charities. The information gathered will help evaluators, including us in PAPER, to be better service providers.

One of the methods for my study includes observations of staff's engagement in evaluation activities, such as evaluation planning. For the purposes of this research, I would like to invite you to have our evaluation planning meetings observed. The meetings would be observed unobtrusively by a researcher not affiliated with Catholic Charities, who would not record any personally identifying information about you but would focus on our interpersonal interactions and behaviors during the meeting. All data will be confidential and analyzed in aggregate with other observational findings.

If you give permission to be observed you do not need to do anything, but if you are uncomfortable being observed, I have attached an opt-out form that you can complete and send back to me.

Your decision whether or not to be observed will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone, including myself, at Catholic Charities or Claremont Graduate University.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thanks so much for the consideration to participate! Regardless of your decision, I look forward to working with you to facilitate our evaluation planning meetings.

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
Evaluation & Data Visualization Consultant
Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation & Research (PAPER)
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APPENDIX I. Recruitment Letter to Participate in Follow-Up Staff Survey

Dear Catholic Charities Staff Member,

Thank you for participating in my dissertation research by agreeing to have our evaluation planning meeting observed! As a follow-up, please complete this short, anonymous survey about your attitudes towards evaluation. The survey should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. While the survey is anonymous, you can choose to leave your contact information at the end of survey via a separate form that will not be associated with your survey responses. Leaving your contact information will allow me to send you a \$10 Amazon gift card for participating. 😊

Please click this link to take the survey:

https://cgu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6ijTR45tWncKKzj

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thank you so much for the consideration to participate!

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
Senior Research & Evaluation Specialist
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**APPENDIX J. Recruitment Letter to Housing Stability Staff to Participate in an Interview
or Focus Group**

Dear Catholic Charities Staff Member,

My name is Samantha Langan and I am a program evaluator with Catholic Charities' PAPER team. In addition to working with PAPER, I am also a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University studying evaluation and applied research methods. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and will be examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. This research has been approved by both my university's Institutional Review Board and Catholic Charities. The information gathered will help evaluators, including us in PAPER, to be better service providers.

The reason I'm emailing is because one of the methods for my study includes interviews or focus groups with staff who have recently been involved in evaluation activities. I know that PAPER has worked with you [list the following ways here] since [list date here]. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview with me to talk about your experiences with this evaluation work. If you would like to invite other staff who were involved, as well, we could alternatively conduct a focus group. I anticipate our discussion would last about 1.5 to 2 hours, and I am happy to bring food!

Learning about your experiences would be wonderful for this research but also in helping me learn how PAPER can better serve your staff's and program's needs moving forward. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future relationship with anyone, including myself, at Catholic Charities or at Claremont Graduate University.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thank you so much for the consideration to participate! I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
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APPENDIX K. Recruitment Letter to PAPER Staff to Participate in a Focus Group

Dear PAPER Team Member,

I hope this finds you well!

As you know for my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group with me to talk about your experiences facilitating evaluation activities, specifically recent ones such as evaluation planning. I anticipate our discussion would last about 1.5 to 2 hours, and I am happy to bring food!

Thank you so much for the consideration to participate, and please let me know if you have any questions about this research. If you are interested, please respond with potential days and times that may work well for you. Thanks again and I look forward to hearing from you!

Best,

Samantha Langan
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www.cctwincities.org

**APPENDIX L. Recruitment Letter to Program Staff to Participate in Observations during
COA Site Visits**

Dear Catholic Charities Staff Member,

I hope this finds you well and that you and your staff are looking forward to the Council on Accreditation's site visit, scheduled for [insert date here].

My name is Samantha Langan and I am a program evaluator with Catholic Charities' PAPER team. In addition to working with PAPER, I am also a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University studying evaluation and applied research methods. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and will be examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. This research has been approved by both my university's Institutional Review Board and Catholic Charities. The information gathered will help evaluators, including us in PAPER, to be better service providers.

The reason I'm emailing is because one of the methods for my study includes observations of COA's site visits. For the purposes of my research, I would like to invite you to have your COA site visit observed by me. I would be there as an unobtrusive observer and would not record any personally identifying information about you, but would focus on interpersonal interactions and behaviors between you and your COA reviewer. All data will be confidential and analyzed in aggregate with other observational findings.

If you give permission to be observed you do not need to do anything, but if you are uncomfortable being observed, I have attached an opt-out form that you can complete and send back to me.

COA has given permission for me to observe, but I wanted to check with you, too, before the site visit. Your decision whether or not to be observed will have no effect on your current or future relationship with anyone, including myself, at Catholic Charities, Claremont Graduate University, or COA.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thanks so much for the consideration to participate! Regardless of your decision, I hope your site visit with COA goes well!

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
Evaluation & Data Visualization Consultant
Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation & Research (PAPER)
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
1121 E 46th St. Minneapolis, MN 55407
samantha.langan@cctwincities.org
www.cctwincities.org

**APPENDIX M. Recruitment Letter to COA Reviewer to Participate in Observations
during COA Site Visits**

Dear COA Reviewers,

I hope this finds you well and that you are looking forward to visiting Catholic Charities in November!

My name is Samantha Langan and I am a program evaluator with Catholic Charities' PAPER team. In addition to working with PAPER, I am also a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University studying evaluation and applied research methods. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative case study of Catholic Charities' programs and will be examining staff's attitudes, concerns, and potential anxieties about program evaluation. This research has been approved by both my university's Institutional Review Board and Catholic Charities. The information gathered will help evaluators, including us in PAPER, to be better service providers.

The reason I'm emailing is because one of the methods for my study includes observations of COA's site visits. For the purposes of my research, I would like to invite you to have your COA site visit observed by me. I would be there as an unobtrusive observer and would not record any personally identifying information about you, but would focus on interpersonal interactions and behaviors between you and program staff. All data will be confidential and analyzed in aggregate with other observational findings.

If you give permission to be observed you do not need to do anything, but if you are uncomfortable being observed, I've attached an opt-out form that you can complete and send back to me.

COA has given permission for me to observe, but I wanted to check with you, too, before the site visit. Your decision whether or not to be observed will have no effect on your current or future relationship with anyone, including myself, at Catholic Charities or at Claremont Graduate University.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research, and thanks so much for the consideration to participate! Regardless of your decision, I hope your site visits with Catholic Charities go well!

Thank you,

Samantha Langan
Evaluation & Data Visualization Consultant
Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation & Research (PAPER)
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
1121 E 46th St. Minneapolis, MN 55407
samantha.langan@cctwincities.org
www.cctwincities.org

APPENDIX N. Opt-Out Form for Observations of Staff during COA Site Visits

Opt-Out Form

Dear Samantha Langan,

I have read the information about your study on program staff's attitudes, concerns, and anxieties about program evaluation and **do not agree** to participate. By signing this I understand that you will be observing COA's site visit to my program but will not record any information about me.

Please sign below to opt out of being observed and return to Samantha Langan at samantha.langan@cctwincities.org.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

APPENDIX O. Consent Form for PAPER Team Focus Group

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN “STAFF RESPONSES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION”

STUDY LEADERSHIP. I am Samantha Langan, a student studying evaluation and applied research methods from the Division of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences at Claremont Graduate University (CGU). I am asking you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Dr. Tarek Azzam, a member of the division, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to learn about Catholic Charities’ program staff’s attitudes, concerns, and anxieties about program evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study you must be 18 years of age or older and a staff member at Catholic Charities.

PARTICIPATION. During the study you will discuss with me your experiences facilitating evaluation activities with Catholic Charities’ staff. I will be asking about your perceptions of staff reactions and attitudes towards evaluation planning and re-accreditation work, discussing emerging themes from the evaluation planning observations, and gather your suggestions for strategies to manage staff’s anxiety towards program evaluation. It is anticipated this discussion will last between 1.5 to 2 hours.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks associated with this study are minimal and not higher than those faced in everyday life. You may experience a minor inconvenience due to the time required to partake in this discussion. Although it is not anticipated that you will feel any discomfort from the interview questions, you are free to skip answering any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, or stop the discussion at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. The findings from this study will be analyzed in aggregate to help advance the field of program evaluation, specifically regarding how evaluators can better understand and address human services staff’s anxieties towards program evaluation. The findings will also strengthen program evaluation practices within Catholic Charities’ Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation and Research (PAPER) team. This study will also benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD.

COMPENSATION: You will receive no compensation for taking part in this discussion today. I will, however, thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University or at Catholic Charities.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the data gathered, and your identity will not be associated with any of your responses. With your permission audio recordings will be used to capture your responses, which will then be transcribed and coded for analysis purposes; however, once the recordings are transcribed they will be erased in order to



protect your privacy. All information collected from this discussion will remain confidential through the use of identification numbers on the transcripts instead of personal names, and all data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I and members of the research team can access. Furthermore, all individual responses will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study, and no other parties, including Catholic Charities, will be informed of your individual responses.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me, Samantha Langan, at samantha.b.langan@gmail.com or at (920) 639-8293. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Tarek Azzam, at tarek.azzam@cgu.edu. CGU's Institutional Review Board, which is responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants, has approved this study and its procedures. You may contact the CGU Board at irb@cgu.edu or at (909) 607-9406 with any questions about this study, and a copy of this form will be given to you if you wish to keep it.

CONSENT. Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Participant _____

The undersigned researcher has reviewed the information in this consent form with the participant and answered any of his or her questions about the study.

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Researcher _____



APPENDIX P. Consent Form for Staff Interviews or Focus Groups

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN “STAFF RESPONSES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION”

STUDY LEADERSHIP. I am Samantha Langan, a student studying evaluation and applied research methods from the Division of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences at Claremont Graduate University (CGU). I am asking you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Dr. Tarek Azzam, a member of the division, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to learn about Catholic Charities’ program staff’s attitudes, concerns, and anxieties about program evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study you must be 18 years of age or older and a staff member at Catholic Charities.

PARTICIPATION. During the study you will discuss with me your reactions to re-accreditation work and also to program evaluation work facilitated by the Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation, and Research (PAPER) team. I will be asking about the types of evaluation activities your program is presently or soon to be engaging in, your attitudes towards program evaluation, any concerns you have about your program being evaluated, and your prior history with program evaluation. It is anticipated this discussion will last between 1.5 to 2 hours.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks associated with this study are minimal and not higher than those faced in everyday life. You may experience a minor inconvenience due to the time required to partake in this discussion. Although it is not anticipated that you will feel any discomfort from the interview questions, you are free to skip answering any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, or stop the discussion at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. The findings from this study will be analyzed in aggregate to help advance the field of program evaluation, specifically regarding how evaluators can better understand and address human services staff’s anxieties towards program evaluation. The findings will also strengthen program evaluation practices within Catholic Charities’ Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation and Research (PAPER) team. This study will also benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD.

COMPENSATION: You will receive no compensation for taking part in this discussion today. I will, however, thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University or at Catholic Charities.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the data gathered, and your identity will not be associated with any of your responses. With your permission audio recordings will be used to capture your responses, which will then be transcribed and coded for analysis purposes; however, once the recordings are transcribed they will be erased in order to



protect your privacy. All information collected from this discussion will remain confidential through the use of identification numbers on the transcripts instead of personal names, and all data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I and members of the research team can access. Furthermore, all individual responses will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study, and no other parties, including Catholic Charities or its PAPER team, will be informed of your individual responses.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me, Samantha Langan, at samantha.b.langan@gmail.com or at (920) 639-8293. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Tarek Azzam, at tarek.azzam@cgu.edu. CGU's Institutional Review Board, which is responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants, has approved this study and its procedures. You may contact the CGU Board at irb@cgu.edu or at (909) 607-9406 with any questions about this study, and a copy of this form will be given to you if you wish to keep it.

CONSENT. Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

The undersigned researcher has reviewed the information in this consent form with the participant and answered any of his or her questions about the study.

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Researcher _____



APPENDIX Q. Consent Form for Follow-Up Online Staff Survey

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN “STAFF RESPONSES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION”

STUDY LEADERSHIP. I am Samantha Langan, a student studying evaluation and applied research methods from the Division of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences at Claremont Graduate University (CGU). I am asking you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Dr. Tarek Azzam, a member of the division, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to learn about Catholic Charities’ program staff’s attitudes, concerns, and anxieties about program evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study you must be 18 years of age or older and a staff member at Catholic Charities.

PARTICIPATION. During the study you will take an online survey asking about the types of evaluation activities your program is presently or soon to be engaging in, your attitudes towards program evaluation, any concerns you have about your program being evaluated, and your prior history with program evaluation. Completing this questionnaire will take about 10 to 15 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks associated with this study are minimal and not higher than those faced in everyday life. You may experience a minor inconvenience due to the time required to complete the survey. Although it is not anticipated that you will feel any discomfort from the survey questions, you are free to skip answering any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, or stop the survey at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. The findings from this study will be analyzed in aggregate to help advance the field of program evaluation, specifically regarding how evaluators can better understand and address human services staff’s anxieties towards program evaluation. The findings will also strengthen program evaluation practices within Catholic Charities’ Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation and Research (PAPER) team. This study will also benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD.

COMPENSATION: For taking part in this study you will be given a \$10 Amazon gift card if you choose to provide your name and email address, which is voluntary.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University or Catholic Charities.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This anonymous online survey is being conducted through CGU’s Qualtrics platform, a subscription software for collecting and analyzing data. You may find out more about Qualtrics, if you wish, at www.qualtrics.com. No identifying information about you will be collected other than what you voluntarily choose to provide, and your identity will never be associated with any of your responses. In order to protect the anonymity of your responses, no IP addresses will be collected, and Qualtrics uses industry-standard security methods to protect data



transmission and storage. All information collected from the survey will remain confidential through the use of identification numbers instead of personal names. Survey data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I and members of the research team can access. All individual answers will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study, and no other parties, including Catholic Charities or its PAPER team, will be informed of your individual responses.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me, Samantha Langan, at samantha.b.langan@gmail.com or at (920) 639-8293. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Tarek Azzam, at tarek.azzam@cgu.edu. CGU's Institutional Review Board, which is responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants, has approved this study and its procedures. You may contact the CGU Board at irb@cgu.edu or at (909) 607-9406 with any questions about this study, and may print and keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

CONSENT. Clicking the "Yes" entry below means that you understand the information on this form, that any questions you may have about this study have been answered, and that you are eligible and voluntarily agree to participate. This link will direct you to the survey. Clicking the "No" entry will close this page and exit the survey.

Yes, I am over 18, a staff member at Catholic Charities, and I would like to participate

No, I do not want to participate



APPENDIX R. IRB Approval Letter from Claremont Graduate University



Dear Samantha Langan,

Thank you for submitting your research protocol to the IRB at Claremont Graduate University. A representative of the Institutional Review Board reviewed your study, CGU #3186 Program Evaluation Anxiety: An Exploration of Stakeholders' Psychological Experiences w/Evaluation, and approved it under the rules for expedited review on **07/12/2018**.

The approval of your study is valid through 07/11/2019, by which time you must submit an annual report either closing the protocol or requesting permission to continue the protocol for another year. Please submit your report by **06/27/2019** so that the IRB has time to review and approve your report if you wish to continue it for another year.

Unless you have received a waiver for the documentation of informed consent, please:

1. use copies of the stamped version(s) of your consent form(s) to obtain consent from all participants.
2. remember a completed consent form (with participant's name redacted) must be submitted with the renewal or closure documentation.

If during the conduct of your research you discover or determine that any changes should be made to the leadership; sponsorship; recruitment scale, venues, or population; consent forms and processes; compensation; experimental interventions, survey elements, observational procedures; or similar significant features of the approved protocol, then promptly report on the proposed changes to the IRB. The proposed changes must not be implemented without IRB approval, except where necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to participants.

If any injuries or problems are encountered in the conduct of your research, whether relating to anticipated or unexpected risks to participants or others, you must notify the IRB as soon as practical but in no case more than five days after the occurrence (phone: 909-607-9406 or via email to irb@cgu.edu).

When your research is completed, please notify the IRB to close out the active file and identify any problems encountered. This will assist the board in approving future research of the type you conducted. Please *note that you are responsible for keeping all consent forms for 3 years after your protocol closes.*

Note: Most listservs, websites, and bulletin boards have policies regulating what types of advertisements or solicitations may be posted, including from whom prior approval must be obtained. Many institutions and even classroom instructors have policies regarding who can solicit potential research subjects from among their students, employees, etc., what information must be included in solicitations, and how recruitment notices are distributed or posted. You should familiarize yourself with the policies and approval procedures required to recruit for or

conduct your study by listservs, websites, institutions, and/or instructors. Approval or exemption by the CGU IRB does *not* replace these approvals or release you from assuring that you have gained appropriate approvals *before* advertising or conducting your study in such venues.

The entire CGU Institutional Review Board wishes you well in the conduct of your research project.

Sincerely,

Andrew Conway,
IRB Chair
andrew.conway@cgu.edu

James Griffith,
IRB Manager
james.griffith2@cgu.edu

150 East Tenth Street • Claremont, California 91711-6160
Tel: 909.607.9406

Attachments:

- Appendix A. Consent Form for Staff Focus Groups - 2018-0604.pdf
- Appendix B. Consent Form for Online Staff Survey - 2018-0604.pdf
- Appendix C. Consent Form for Online Evaluator Critical Feedback Survey - 2018-0604.pdf
- Appendix D. Consent Form for Interviews with Evaluators - 2018-0604.pdf
- Appendix R. Consent Form for PAPER Team Focus Groups - 2018-0604.pdf

APPENDIX S. Memorandum of Understanding with Catholic Charities



Memorandum of Understanding

July 18, 2018

This Memorandum of Understanding, made by and between Claremont Graduate University student, Samantha Langan (“the researcher”), and Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (“Catholic Charities”), is dated as of the 18th day of July, 2018. The researcher and Catholic Charities may individually be referred to as a “Party”, and collectively as “the Parties”.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the researcher seeks to enter into this MOU with Catholic Charities in support of the researcher’s dissertation study entitled, “Program Evaluation Anxiety: An Exploration of Stakeholders’ Psychological Experiences with Evaluation” (“PEA Study”); and

WHEREAS, the Parties acknowledge that sharing data is critical to the performance of this study; and

WHEREAS, Catholic Charities has access to information and records useful to this research and will release information and data to the researcher for research and evaluation purposes.

WHEREAS, this MOU describes the proposed collaboration between the Parties and defines each Party’s respective role and responsibility to each other.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements herein contained, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. CATHOLIC CHARITIES shall:

- i. Allow the implementation of the PEA STUDY across the agency;
- ii. Allow the researcher to contact staff to participate in the PEA STUDY;
- iii. Allow the researcher to make arrangements with staff to be available for data collection;
- iv. Provide the researcher with a secure and private location for interviewing purposes;

- b. THE RESARCHER shall:
- i. Comply with federal, state, and university regulations required for the ethical treatment of research participants in human subjects research
 - ii. Provide training to external data collectors that complies with the federal, state, and university regulations required for the ethical treatment of research participants in human subjects research
 - iii. Provide all supplies for the PEA STUDY;
 - iv. Ensure that all staff participation is voluntary;
 - v. Provide monetary compensation in the form of Amazon gift cards to participants who complete an online survey for the PEA STUDY;
 - vi. Maintain confidentiality of all information;
 - vii. Provide to Catholic Charities summary results from the analysis of data collected;
 - viii. Not publish the results from the PEA STUDY that identifies Catholic Charities by name without prior permission.

2. DUTIES OF COOPERATION AND GOOD FAITH

- a. The researcher and Catholic Charities mutually pledge to each other to cooperate with each other, to consult with each other, and to act in good faith towards each other to further the PEA STUDY. All actions by the Parties in furtherance of the PEA STUDY shall be subject to the covenants of good faith and fair dealing.

3. TERM

- a. Unless terminated earlier this MOU shall conclude on July 11, 2019, the current end date of approval for this research granted by Claremont Graduate University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is anticipated that the analysis and reports for this project will not be completed and approved for dissemination until, at the earliest, May 2019. In the event there is an extension to the researcher's IRB approval end date, then this agreement will automatically extend to coincide with the extension.

4. CANCELLATION

- a. This MOU may be cancelled by either Party upon thirty (30) days prior written notice, delivered as set forth in Section 5 (e) below.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. This MOU shall bind and benefit the parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns.
- b. This MOU is the entire understanding of the parties on this subject matter and may be amended or modified only by written instrument signed and executed by both parties.
- c. The researcher will share aggregate data with Claremont Graduate University to meet the requirements of completing a dissertation.
- d. Any PII (Personally Identifiable Information) will be destroyed upon the conclusion of the project.
- e. If required by this MOU, all notices intended for either party shall be in writing and (i) personally delivered, (ii) mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid addressed to that party at the address noted opposite their signatures below; or (iii) electronically or facsimile transmitted to such party at the electronic address or facsimile number listed below. The identification or location of either party, including their electronic address and facsimile number, if any, may be changed by written notice to the other party.

If to Catholic Charities: Elizabeth Knight, General Counsel
Elizabeth.Knight@cctwincities.org
1200 2nd Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55403

If to the Researcher: Samantha Langan
samantha.b.langan@gmail.com
2017 DeSoto St.
Maplewood, MN 55117

- f. The headings of the sections and subsections of this MOU are not intended to affect construction of the terms of this MOU and are for illustrative purposes only.
- g. In the event that any term of this MOU is deemed invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this MOU shall remain in full force and effect.

[SIGNATURE PAGE TO FOLLOW]

Appendix T. Observation Protocol for Evaluation Planning Meetings

Goal of observations: The aim of the observation is to gain greater understanding of how program staff respond to evaluators and act during in-person evaluation meetings. The observation will result in a primarily qualitative description of the meeting.

Procedures

Prior to the observation

- Gather the following materials:
 - Observation protocol, Sections I—III
 - Note-taking paper (e.g., lined/blank paper, notebook, etc.)
 - Pens (for researchers and participants)
 - Time tracking device such as a phone or watch
 - Folder
 - Hard surface to write on
- Review protocol completely, including the reflection questions.
- Ask that the evaluator(s) introduce you to the staff before the meeting starts. This will help facilitate staff's comfort with you and likelihood of behaving naturally during the meeting.

During the observation

- Observation notes should record what is seen and heard in Section I. For example, record the setting, meeting activities, comments or questions you hear, and events.
- Record observations of the setting, set-up of how staff and evaluator(s) are sitting, and interactions you observe between staff, between evaluators if more than one evaluator is present, and between staff and the evaluator(s).
- Record times in your observation notes to help you keep track of the length of time of some of the activity that you may observe.
- Make notes of behaviors that you observe frequently, especially those that pertain to the reflection questions.
- Be sure to follow the note-taking procedures detailed below:
 - Aim to be as unobtrusive as possible by sitting in an area of the room where you are not as much of a distraction but can still see the staff and evaluator(s) (e.g., perimeters of the table or room).
 - Have access to a watch, clock, or cell phone to be able to easily record the time during the observation. If you have your cell phone with you, please silence or turn off your phone during the observation.
 - Make sure you have a hard enough surface to write on during the observation.

After the observation

- Immediately following the end of the meeting with program staff, debrief the evaluators about how they think the meeting went using the space in Section II. Facilitate this conversation away from program staff.
- After you have completed gathering the evaluators' thoughts, provide your personal reflections on the observation in Section III. Depending on how the observation went you may not be able to answer all of the reflection questions. For each response be sure to include evidence from your observation so that it is clear what influenced your perceptions. Your answers to these questions will help add further context about the evaluation meeting.
- As soon as possible after the observation, review all your notes to ensure they are complete and make sense. Add any details from your observation as necessary.
- Enter your observation notes, notes from the debriefing with the evaluators, and your responses to the reflective questions into the Qualtrics form within 72 hours (3 days) of the observation.

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Intense disagreement between evaluator(s) and staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Intense disagreement between multiple staff members | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Intense disagreement between multiple evaluators | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Lack of consensus among attendees about the purpose of the evaluation or the evaluation procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member accuses the evaluator of a wrongdoing (e.g., hidden agendas) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member verbally expresses dissatisfaction with the program evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff engage in <u>conflict</u> during the meeting</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member refuses to <i>personally</i> take part in evaluation activities (current or suggested activities) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member refuses for their <i>program</i> to take part in evaluation activities (current or suggested activities) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member walks out of the meeting after expressing dissatisfaction with the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Staff member who originally agreed to attend the meeting does not because of dissatisfaction with the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member does not respond to evaluator's attempts at communication during the meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff <u>withdraw</u> from or <u>evade</u> the evaluation meeting</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff express that fewer resources should be allocated towards evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff are unwilling to change their program's status quo to implement evaluation activities | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff mention having had negative past experiences with evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>resistant</u> to evaluation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff share that they feel ashamed or embarrassed about program weaknesses | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>ashamed</u> to have their program evaluated</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff express/appear feeling frustrated, annoyed, or angry about the evaluation or evaluation procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Staff are hostile towards the evaluator | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff complain about the evaluators or evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>angry</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff make disparaging remarks about the evaluator | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff attempt to discredit or belittle an evaluator's expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff engage in <u>professional disparagement</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff describe feeling like there is little they can do to address difficulties (e.g., staff buy-in) that may arise with an evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff describe feeling like they lack control with the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear or mention feeling a <u>loss of control</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes being afraid of negative evaluation findings | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Other fears pertaining to evaluation that are mentioned by staff</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes feeling anxious over the prospect of evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes their worries over possible misfortunes that may occur because of evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears nervous or jittery because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears feeling upset, distressed, or unsteady because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears feeling calm, at ease, comfortable, or relaxed because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears feeling content, joyful, pleasant, or self-confident because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff describe or appear anxious over the prospect of evaluation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Please use this space to describe any other noteworthy aspects of the meeting not previously mentioned (e.g., order of major topics discussed, power dynamics, etc.). <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | | |

APPENDIX U. Follow-Up Staff Survey

Direct Service Staff Survey
(Paper version of a Qualtrics survey)

1. I have participated in evaluation planning meetings with members of the PAPER team since June 2018.
 - a. Yes/No
 - b. *(If yes)* Number of meetings: _____

What types of evaluation activities is your program engaging in with an evaluator’s support? Please think about current activities as well as any activities planned for FY2018-2019.

| | <u>YES</u>, an evaluator is currently helping my program with this activity | <u>NOT YET</u>, but an evaluator will soon be helping my program with this activity in FY2018-2019 | <u>NO</u>, an evaluator is not currently helping nor has plans to help my program with this activity | Undecided |
|---|--|---|---|------------------|
| 2. Evaluation planning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Logic modeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Dashboard creation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Modifying existing data collection instruments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Creating new data collection instruments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Collecting client outcome data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Collecting client satisfaction data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Collecting data on staff experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Analyzing quantitative data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Analyzing qualitative data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Writing evaluation reports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. Discussing how to use data to strengthen my program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

14. (Open-ended) Are there other evaluation activities not mentioned in the table above that your program is currently engaging in or will soon be engaging in during FY2018-2019 with an evaluator’s support? If so, please describe in the space provided.

15. (Open-ended) When thinking about current and upcoming evaluation activities for your program, do you have concerns or worries about program evaluation and what it means for your program? If so, please describe in the space provided.

16. (Open-ended) Is there anything your program’s evaluators can do to make the process of evaluation a more positive or useful experience for you? Please list any suggestions in the space provided.

Please think about current and upcoming program evaluation work for your program. Then read each statement below and select the option to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this moment, when thinking about program evaluation. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 17. I feel anxious over the prospect of program evaluation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. I am afraid of negative evaluation findings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19. I feel nervous or jittery when I think about my program being evaluated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20. The thought of my program being evaluated distresses me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. I am calm and relaxed when thinking about my program being evaluated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Please read each statement below and then select the option to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 22. I have a vested interest in the success of my program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23. I have had negative past experiences with program evaluation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24. I would describe myself as an anxious person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 25. I believe negative evaluation findings would cause harm to my program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26. Upcoming program evaluation work will create additional stress for my staff and me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27. I am excited about <u>current</u> evaluation work my program is engaging in. | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. I am excited about <u>upcoming</u> evaluation work my program will be engaging in. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 29. My program is ready for evaluation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 30. My program's evaluators are knowledgeable and capable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 31. I trust my program's evaluators. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

32. (Open-ended) Were any of these questions confusing or unclear to you? If so, please describe in the space provided.

You are not required to provide any identifying information. However, if you feel comfortable doing so and would like to receive a \$10 Amazon gift card for completing this survey, please click on this link [*link inserted here*] which will take you to an anonymous form where you can submit your name and email. Your name and email will not be associated with the survey responses you provided here.

Thank you!

APPENDIX V. Interview/Focus Group Protocol for Housing Stability Staff

Direct Service Interview or Focus Group Protocol

Materials

- Interview/Focus Group Questions
- Consent forms
- Notebook
- Pens (for researchers and participants)
- Markers
- Digital Recorder (Note: check batteries beforehand)
- Time tracking device such as a phone or watch
- Paper for drawings

Procedures

1. Set up focus group or interview in a quiet and private location. If others are in the space, politely ask them to leave temporarily, explaining that we are conducting a focus group or interview and that the space will be available again in about two hours.
2. Using the resources within the room, position chairs in a circle for a focus group, either freestanding or around a table (preferred method). For an interview, position chairs facing each other so you are sitting directly across from the participant, either freestanding or at a table (preferred method).
3. Greet participants as they come into the room, introducing yourself and asking for their name(s). For re-call, write their name(s) down on a piece of paper according to where they decide to sit (list or diagram form).
4. Once all participants arrive, walk them through the consent form, highlighting the following:
 - a. Who we are and our role at PAPER and in this research.
 - b. Why we are here today—to discuss their reactions to re-accreditation work and also to program evaluation work facilitated by PAPER.
 - c. Focus group only
 - i. They will be participating in a focus group, or a group discussion on a topic. They do not need to raise their hand for permission to speak or speak in any kind of order. Please jump in whenever would like to share

something.

- d. Rules—ask participants to please silence and put away their phones. Focus group or interview should last about 90 minutes to two hours.
 - e. Precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the data gathered. All identifying information about the organization and staff will be removed for research publication purposes. PAPER and possibly members of the executive team at Catholic Charities will also learn of the findings, but only in aggregate form to protect participants' anonymity.
 - f. How data will be used—to learn about people's experiences with engaging in evaluation for research purposes, as well as to gain practical insights into ways evaluators, including PAPER staff, can improve our strategies for conducting evaluations.
 - g. Questions?
5. Ask if participants agree to being recorded. If so, turn recorder on at this moment. If one participant does not consent to being recorded, second focus group facilitator will need to take copious notes versus shorthand notes.
 6. Before asking the first focus group or interview question, make sure you are able to see a clock and start time (cell phone nearby, clock on the wall, watch, etc.). Aim to keep the focus group within the time limit specified.
 7. After the focus group or interview ends, turn off the recorder and thank participants for their time. If any would like to learn more about the research study, provide them with your contact information.

Direct Service Interview or Focus Group Questions

Concerning Re-accreditation

1. We'd first like to learn about your experiences with re-accreditation and to start off, have a fun little art activity. (*Pass out paper, pens, and markers*). Please try to draw the first image that comes to mind when you hear the word 're-accreditation.' What do you see?
 - a. (*After participant has finished drawing*) Can you please explain what you drew and why you included certain elements in your drawing?
 - b. (*Use participants' descriptions*) Can you please provide an example of when you felt this way?
2. How has work on the self-studies for your programs been going? Is there anything in particular you've found to be enjoyable or challenging?
 - a. Are you helping with re-accreditation in other ways, such as being part of any work groups?
 - i. (*If yes*) How have those experiences been going for you?
3. What is your opinion of the COA re-accreditation process? In particular, do you have any concerns about how things are going or about any upcoming deadlines or events?
4. (*If not addressed from previous responses*) Have you ever felt anxious while working on the self-studies or thinking about how the re-accreditation work may affect your program?
 - a. (*If yes*) Can you please elaborate or provide an example of a time when you felt anxious?

Concerning Program Evaluation

5. We would next like to transition to talking about program evaluation and any evaluation work that's been happening with your program. Thinking about the first question we asked about what came to mind when you thought of re-accreditation (*reference their drawing*), what image first comes to mind when you hear the word, 'evaluation'? Feel free to draw on the backside of this paper, or talk about what first comes to mind. (*Participant may draw on the backside of the paper, or verbally describe their image*)

- a. How would you say this image of evaluation compares to your image of re-accreditation?
6. To what extent would you characterize your work on the self-studies as program evaluation?
7. Other than the self-studies you've been doing, I believe your program has also been engaged in (*list evaluation activities here*). I gathered this list from the PAPER team, but are any evaluation activities missing from this list?
8. While engaging in the evaluation activities such as [*list here based on responses to previous question*], did you or do you ever worry about how evaluation may affect your program? If so, what were or are your concerns?
 - a. (*Follow-up question if participant would like further clarification*):
 - i. For example, did you or do you have any anxiety or fears about the quality of your program's data collection instruments, how the results might be used, or having enough resources (time, personnel, etc.) to devote to evaluation work?
 - b. (*Follow-up probe if did not feel fearful, anxious, or worried*):
 - i. Since you have not had any concerns, how have you felt while engaging in these evaluation activities?
9. You mentioned you have felt [*list emotions here*] while working on the self-studies, and that you have felt [*list emotions here*] while engaging in evaluation work. Do you think other staff at Catholic Charities noticed you felt or have been feeling these ways? What would have tipped them off?
 - a. (*Focus group question only as a follow-up if not addressed*):
 - i. Since many of you work together, were you aware that your co-workers felt [*list emotions here*] when working on the self-studies or engaging in any other evaluation activities with PAPER? How did you know they felt that way?
10. We'd like to learn what may have influenced your feelings and attitudes towards program evaluation. You mentioned several feelings that you have about program evaluation (*list a few examples*) – what do you think caused you to feel this way?

- a. Is there anything about you personally in terms of your history with program evaluation or your vested interest in your program that you believe has influenced your feelings towards evaluation?
 - b. Have your feelings towards evaluation been influenced by your beliefs about the PAPER team or relationships with any of the PAPER team evaluators? If so, please describe.
 - c. Is there anything about the culture at Catholic Charities or within your own program that affects your feelings towards evaluation?
 - d. Are your feelings towards evaluation affected by requirements from external funding sources, any new national policies affecting your program, or concerns over resources for evaluation? If so, please describe.
11. Do you think there is such a thing as a healthy or optimal level of anxiety about evaluation, where having some anxiety can be beneficial to a certain degree?
- a. (If yes) Can you describe of a time when you feeling some anxiety helped you while working with PAPER or doing reaccreditation work?
12. In the next year or two, PAPER would like to begin doing more rigorous evaluation work with your program so we can better understand how effective it is in accomplishing its intended outcomes. How do you think your present feelings towards program evaluation may affect your reactions to or involvement in upcoming evaluation work with the PAPER team?
- a. What can the PAPER team do to help make evaluation with your program less anxiety-inducing and more useful and enjoyable for you and your staff?

Closing Question

13. Do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share about the topics we touched on today, including regarding your feelings towards re-accreditation or program evaluation?

APPENDIX W. Focus Group Protocol for PAPER Staff

Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation, and Research (PAPER) Interview & Focus Group Protocol

Materials

- Interview/Focus Group Questions
- Consent forms
- Notebook
- Pens (for researchers and participants)
- Digital Recorder (Note: check batteries beforehand)
- Time tracking device such as a phone or watch
- List of identified themes from evaluation planning observations

Procedures

1. Set up focus group or interview in a quiet and private location. If others are in the space, politely ask them to leave temporarily, explaining that we are conducting a focus group or interview and that the space will be available again in about two hours.
2. Using the resources within the room, position chairs in a circle for a focus group, either freestanding or around a table (preferred method). For an interview, position chairs facing each other so you are sitting directly across from the participant, either freestanding or at a table (preferred method).
3. Greet participants as they come into the room, introducing yourself and asking for their name(s). For re-call, write their name(s) down on a piece of paper according to where they decide to sit (list or diagram form).
4. Once all participants arrive, walk them through the consent form, highlighting the following:
 - a. Who we are and our role at PAPER and in this research.
 - b. Why we are here today—to discuss their reactions to re-accreditation work and also to program evaluation work facilitated by PAPER.
 - c. Focus group only
 - i. They will be participating in a focus group, or a group discussion on a topic. They do not need to raise their hand for permission to speak or speak in any kind of order. Please jump in whenever would like to share something.

- d. Rules—ask participants to please silence and put away their phones. Focus group or interview should last about 90 minutes to two hours.
 - e. Precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the data gathered. All identifying information about the organization and staff will be removed for research publication purposes. PAPER and possibly members of the executive team at Catholic Charities will also learn of the findings, but only in aggregate form to protect participants' anonymity.
 - f. How data will be used—to learn about people's experiences with engaging in evaluation for research purposes, as well as to gain practical insights into ways evaluators, including PAPER staff, can improve how our strategies for conducting evaluations.
 - g. Questions?
5. Ask if participants agree to being recorded. If so, turn recorder on at this moment. If one participant does not consent to being recorded, second focus group facilitator will need to take copious notes versus shorthand notes.
 6. Before asking the first focus group or interview question, make sure you are able to see a clock and start time (cell phone nearby, clock on the wall, watch, etc.). Aim to keep the focus group within the time limit specified.
 7. After the focus group or interview ends, turn off the recorder and thank participants for their time. If any would like to learn more about the research study, provide them with your contact information.

Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation, and Research (PAPER) Interview or Focus Group Questions

1. To start off with, we would first like to talk about the evaluation planning work that has happened with Aging and Disability Services and some of the Child and Family Services programs. Overall, how do you think those meetings have been going? Do you think staff are bought into the evaluation plans for their programs?
2. With these programs and meetings in mind, what is your perception of staff reactions and attitudes to program evaluation?
 - a. Are there any instances you can think of where the staff seemed to be anxious or worried about evaluation?
 - i. *(If yes)* What tipped you off that staff were feeling anxious about evaluation? Do you remember any specific cues or behaviors you picked up on from staff that influenced your thinking?
3. For programs you met with multiple times such as [list here], did you notice any changes in staff's reactions to evaluation over time? If so, how would you describe those changes?
4. You may remember that after the evaluation planning meetings, [second researcher's name here] debriefed with you how the meeting went. Based on what you have shared so far, we have found the following emerging themes across the various meetings [present list of themes and describe key findings].
 - a. Are there any findings that especially catch your attention or surprise you?
 - b. How do you think these findings compare with your recollections today? In looking at this list do you think this seems to be an accurate reflection of your experiences?
 - c. Do you think anything might need to be edited or added?
5. During the evaluation planning meetings did you do anything to try to help staff feel comfortable and manage their anxieties about evaluation? If so, please describe.
6. In transitioning to talking about the work for reaccreditation, have you suspected any staff feel anxious about having their programs evaluated by COA? If so, please describe what you think most concerns them and ways in which you have picked up that staff feel anxious.
 - a. Why do you think some staff may feel anxious about reaccreditation and others may not? Are there any differences between these types of staff?

7. Do you think there is such a thing as a healthy or optimal level of program evaluation anxiety for staff?
 - a. When thinking about the evaluation planning meetings or reaccreditation work, can you describe any instances where you thought some anxiety among staff was beneficial?
8. Do you have any suggestions for ways to help manage staff anxieties about evaluation? Are there any strategies you have used either at Catholic Charities or with other programs during your career that you have found to be especially effective?
 - a. How successful were these strategies from your point of view?
9. Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share about the topics we touched on today, including your experiences working with clients you suspected were anxious about evaluation?

APPENDIX X. Observation Protocol for COA Site Visits

Observation Protocol for Council on Accreditation's Site Visits

Goal of observations: The aim of the observation is to gain greater understanding of how program staff respond to evaluators and act during the Council on Accreditation's site visits. The observation will result in a primarily qualitative description of the meeting.

Procedures

Prior to the observation

- Gather the following materials:
 - Observation protocol, Sections I—III
 - Note-taking paper (e.g., lined/blank paper, notebook, etc.)
 - Pens (for researchers and participants)
 - Time tracking device such as a phone or watch
 - Folder
 - Hard surface to write on
- Review protocol completely, including the reflection questions.
- Introduce yourself to the evaluator(s) prior to the site visit.
- Ask that the evaluator(s) introduce you to the staff when the site visit starts if you are unfamiliar with staff. This will help facilitate staff's comfort with you and likelihood of behaving naturally during the evaluation.

During the observation

- Observation notes should record what is seen and heard in Sections I and II. For example, record the setting, implementation activities, topics discussed, and comments or questions you hear.
- Record observations of the setting and interactions you observe between staff and the evaluator(s).
- Record times in your observation notes to help you keep track of the length of time of some of the activity that you may observe.
- Make notes of behaviors that you observe frequently, especially those that pertain to the reflection questions.
- Be sure to follow the note-taking procedures detailed below:
 - Aim to be as unobtrusive as possible by maintaining a comfortable distance from the evaluators and staff to follow along yet not be a distraction.
 - Have access to a watch, clock, or cell phone to be able to easily record the time during the observation. If you have your cell phone with you, please silence or turn off your phone during the observation.
 - Make sure you have a hard enough surface to write on during the observation.

After the observation

- Immediately following the end of the meeting with program staff, debrief the evaluator(s) about how they think the site visit went using the space in Section III. Facilitate this conversation away from program staff.
- After you have completed gathering the evaluators' thoughts, provide your personal reflections on the observation in Section IV. Depending on how the observation went you may not be able to answer all of the reflection questions. For each response be sure to include evidence from your observation so that it is clear what influenced your perceptions. Your answers to these questions will help add further context about the site visit.
- As soon as possible after the observation, review all your notes to ensure they are complete and make sense. Add any details from your observation as necessary.
- Enter your observation notes, notes from the debriefing with the evaluators, and your responses to the reflective questions into the Qualtrics form within 72 hours (3 days) of the observation.

Section I. Observation Form

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Time observation started: | Time observation ended: |
| Observer name: | Date (mm/dd/yyyy): |
| Number of evaluators present: | Number of program staff present: |
| Program name: | |

Describe where the site visit is taking place (e.g., building) and physical attributes of the space (e.g., level of privacy, temperature, lighting, general atmosphere, etc.).

Describe any other noteworthy features of the site visit location not previously mentioned.

Rating Scale of Manifestations:

- No evidence – Despite the opportunity, there was no sign of this manifestation among any staff members.
- Some evidence – There were minor and/or infrequent signs of this manifestation among at least one staff member.
- Substantial evidence – Signs of this manifestation were intense and/or highly frequent among at least one staff member.

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Intense disagreement between evaluator(s) and staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Intense disagreement between multiple staff members | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Intense disagreement between multiple evaluators | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Lack of consensus among attendees about the purpose of the site visit or the evaluation procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member accuses the evaluator of a wrongdoing (e.g., hidden agendas) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member verbally expresses dissatisfaction with the site visit | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff engage in <u>conflict</u> during the site visit</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member refuses to <i>personally</i> take part in evaluation activities (current or suggested activities) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member refuses for their <i>program</i> to take part in evaluation activities (current or suggested activities) | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member walks out of the site visit after expressing dissatisfaction with the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Staff member who originally agreed to attend the site visit does not | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member does not respond to evaluator's attempts at communication during the site visit | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff <u>withdraw</u> from or <u>evade</u> the evaluator</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff express that fewer resources should be allocated towards evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff are unwilling to change their program's status quo to modify their program or procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff mention having had negative past experiences with evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>resistant</u> to evaluation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff share that they feel ashamed or embarrassed about program weaknesses | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>ashamed</u> to have their program evaluated</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff express/appear feeling frustrated, annoyed, or angry about the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Staff are hostile towards the evaluator | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff complain about the evaluators or the site visit | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>angry</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff make disparaging remarks about the evaluator | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff attempt to discredit or belittle an evaluator's expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff engage in <u>professional disparagement</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff describe feeling like there is little they can do to address difficulties that may arise during the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff describe feeling like they lack control with the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear or mention feeling a <u>loss of control</u></i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes being afraid of negative evaluation findings | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |

| Possible Demonstration | Rating Scale | Description of Evidence |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Other fears pertaining to evaluation that are mentioned by staff</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes feeling anxious over the prospect of evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes presently worrying over possible misfortunes that may occur because of evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears nervous or jittery because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member describes/appears feeling upset, distressed, or unsteady because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member appears/describes feeling calm, at ease, comfortable, or relaxed because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Staff member appears/describes feeling content, joyful, pleasant, or self-confident because of the evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| <i>Other ways in which staff appear <u>anxious</u> over the prospect of evaluation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial evidence | |
| Please use this space to describe any other noteworthy aspects of the site visit not previously mentioned (e.g., power dynamics, etc.). _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ | | |

APPENDIX Y. Phase 1 Final Codebook

Codebook for Program Evaluation Anxiety Study

Research Questions

R1. To what extent do program staff experience XSEA when participating in an evaluation, including in evaluation capacity building activities? How aware are program staff of their own psychological responses to evaluation, and how do evaluators and program staff who have experienced or witnessed anxious responses to evaluation describe XSEA?

R2. What increases or decreases the likelihood that program staff experience XSEA? To what extent do these sources of XSEA align with those hypothesized in the current literature?

R3. What are the consequences or negative reactions of XSEA as described by evaluators and program staff?

R4. How do evaluators' and program staff's suggestions for managing XSEA vary? What are the similarities and differences in their descriptions, and to what extent do the descriptions align with the literature?

Code List

Note. Codes without an “R#” in front were added during second cycle coding. Also, not all codes have definitions due to the explanatory description of the code name.

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|---|-------|------------------------------|--|
| R1—Evidence of staff experiencing XSEA | | | |
| | R1.01 | Staff feel anxious | Staff describe personally or others feeling anxious because of evaluation |
| | R1.02 | Staff feel afraid | Staff describe personally or others feeling fearful because of evaluation |
| | R1.03 | Staff feel nervous | Staff describe personally or others feeling nervous because of evaluation |
| | R1.04 | Staff feel distressed | Staff describe personally or others feeling upset, distressed, or unsteady because of evaluation |
| | R1.05 | Staff feel calm | Staff describe personally or others feeling calm because of evaluation |
| | R1.06 | Staff feel excited | Staff describe personally or others feeling excited because of evaluation |
| | R1.07 | Staff express concerns about | Staff share their or others' concerns about evaluation |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| evaluation | | (the big picture plan). The concerns may be non-anxiety related. |
| R1.08 Anxious behaviors | | Staff act in ways that indicate they are anxious about evaluation |
| R1.09 Non-anxious behaviors | | Staff act in ways that indicate they are not anxious about evaluation |
| R1.10 Reason for anxiety | | The reason for staff feeling anxious about evaluation |
| R1.11 Reason for no anxiety | | The reason for staff not feeling anxious about evaluation |
| Staff feel stressed | | Staff describe personally or others feeling stressed because of evaluation |
| Staff express having no concerns | | No concerns about the process of outcome of evaluation |

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|-------------|------|---------|------------|
|-------------|------|---------|------------|

R1R4—Descriptions of XSEA

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| R1_4.01 Staff descriptions of XSEA | | |
| R1_4.02 Evaluator descriptions of XSEA | | |

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|-------------|------|---------|------------|
|-------------|------|---------|------------|

R2_I—Factors that *increase* presence or intensity of XSEA

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| R2.01 SH Char_IncreaseXSEA | | Stakeholder or staff characteristics that increase their anxiety towards evaluation. Can include staff attitudes and beliefs about evaluation or evaluators, vested interest in their program, amount of trust in the evaluators, or propensity to be anxious, in general. |
| | Want to showcase program's strengths | |
| | Skepticism about value of eval | |
| | Distrust in funder or authority asking for | |

evaluation

Overwhelmed with
existing duties

Vested interest

Feeling tested by COA

People pleasing/conflict
avoidant

Procrastinator

Nitpicky evaluator

Not knowing what info
matters

Regional
factors_IncreaseXSEA

R2.02 Eval Char_IncreaseXSEA

Evaluator characteristics that increase staff anxiety towards evaluation. Can include how evaluator presents or describes evaluation, role ambiguity, role clarification, or relationships formed with staff.

Evaluator not engaging
SH

Evaluators don't give back
to progs

Makings SHs
uncomfortable

Evaluator not effectively
communicating

Evaluator not providing
enough attention

R2.03 Prog Factors_IncreaseXSEA

Program or organizational factors that increase anxiety towards evaluation. Can include factors about the culture at CCSPM, recent program innovations or changes, or the program's readiness for evaluation.

Want to prove worth

Distrust of agency by
progs

First prog of its kind

Diff requirements from
diff funders

Mismatch btwn prog and
agency's interests

Collab w/others takes a
long time

Busy organization

R2.04 Sit Factors_IncreaseXSEA

Situational or external factors that increase anxiety towards evaluation. Can include requirements and pressure from external funding sources, limited time and financial resources to conduct evaluation, historical events affecting the normal implementation of a program, or new national policies that affect a program's future.

Mismatch btwn eval
criteria and prog goals

Concerns about national
climate

Few resources for
evaluation

Community interest in
prog data

Changed COA standards

Operating in crisis mode

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| R2_D—Factors that <i>decrease</i> presence or intensity of XSEA | | | |
| | R2.05 SH Char_DecreaseXSEA | | Stakeholder or staff characteristics that lower anxiety towards evaluation. Can include staff attitudes and beliefs about evaluation or evaluators, vested interest in their program, amount of trust in the evaluators, or propensity to be anxious, in general. |
| | | R1.05 Staff feel calm | |
| | | R1.06 Staff feel excited | |

Supportive teams
 Longevity with program
 Change agents
 Staff's jobs are anxiety-producing
 Realization are meeting COA requirements
 Prior experience communicating activities and results
 Personality—Not anxious
 Appreciation for research and eval

R2.06 Eval Char_DecreaseXSEA

Reactive/responsive behaviors on the part of the evaluator that lowers staff anxiety towards evaluation. Can include how evaluator presents or describes evaluation, role ambiguity, role clarification, or relationships formed with staff.

Be friendly

Trust

Observable or vocal expressions of trust, where staff trust the evaluator(s), other staff, or where the evaluator(s) trusts staff.

Present self as an engaged partner⁶

R2.07 Prog Factors_DecreaseXSEA

Program or organizational factors that lower anxiety towards evaluation. Can include factors about the culture at CCSPM, recent program innovations or changes, or the program's readiness for evaluation.

R2.08 Sit Factors_DecreaseXSEA

Situational or external factors that lower anxiety towards evaluation. Can include requirements and pressure from external funding sources, limited time and financial resources to conduct evaluation, historical events affecting the normal implementation

⁶ 15 subcodes emerged from the "Present self as an engaged partner" code.

of a program, or new national policies that affect a program's future.

Funders understand prog
challenges

Regularly asked to provide
data

Community support

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
| R3—Negative Reactions to Evaluation | | | |
| | R3.01 | Conflict | Disagreement and incompatible desires regarding how to accomplish goals |
| | R3.02 | Withdrawal | Avoidance or refusal to be part of an evaluation |
| | R3.03 | Resistance | Behavior to maintain and defend the status quo when real or perceived changes are imminent |
| | R3.04 | Shame | Consciousness of something disgraceful or dishonorable regarding a program |
| | R3.05 | Anger | A strong feeling of displeasure and hostility with something one perceives as being bad or wrong |
| | R3.06 | Prof Disparagement | Attempts to discredit and belittle an evaluator's expertise |
| | R3.07 | Loss of Control | Belief that there is little one can do to address difficulties arising with an evaluation |
| | R3.08 | Reason for non-anxiety reaction | Reason for staff's reaction to evaluation |
| | R3.11 | Frustration about specific issues | The feeling of being upset or annoyed because of an inability to change or achieve something. May include frustration with data collection or attempts to fix data collection in the past. |
| | | Overwhelmed | |
| | | Complaining | |
| | | Staff do not feel anxious | |
| | | Found process useful | |

Not enjoyable

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|--|-------------|---|--|
| R4—Management strategies for XSEA | | | |
| | R4.01 | Staff management strategies for XSEA | Proactive staff behaviors to prevent anxiety or lower anticipated anxiety. Examples include coming to meetings prepared or bringing materials to share with evaluators at the meeting. |
| | R4.02 | Evaluator management strategies for XSEA | Proactive evaluator behaviors to prevent anxiety or lower anticipated anxiety. Examples include stage setting, meeting preparation, making the meeting environment comfortable. |
| | | Demonstrating Value ⁷ | |
| | | Customization ⁸ | |
| | | Communication & Facilitation ⁹ | |
| | | Staff suggestions | |

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Notes | | | |
| | | Program Background | |
| | | Meeting location | |
| | | Exemplary quotes for write-up | |
| | | Explore more in lit | Explore this idea more in the literature |
| | | Confusing/Revisit | To use if a piece of text is confusing or needs to be re-visited for coding |

⁷ Three subcodes emerged from the “Demonstrating Value” code.

⁸ Six subcodes emerged from the “Customization” code.

⁹ Eight subcodes emerged from the “Communication & Facilitation” code.

| Parent Code | Code | Subcode | Definition |
|--------------------|--|----------------|---|
| Engagement | | | |
| | Participation (Level 1) | | Observable behaviors of engagement. Staff are attending the meeting, asking and answering questions, wanting to learn about the evaluation. |
| | Buy-In about Eval (Level 2) | | Positive attitudes about evaluation; Staff supporting the evaluation. Examples include staff being engaged in conversation, understanding the purpose and vision for the evaluation, and having a desire to be helpful. |
| | Buy-In about Eval Implementation (Level 3) | | Staff are already bought into the idea of evaluation, and are now engaged in trouble-shooting and finding solutions. Staff are looking forward to next steps. |

APPENDIX Z. Recruitment letter for AEA Evaluators

Hello AEA Member,

Have you ever worked with a client or program stakeholder you suspected was anxious about program evaluation? Perhaps this stakeholder was reluctant to cooperate, doubted the value of evaluation activities, or shared that there was much at stake with the evaluation. If so, please consider sharing your experience via this survey for my dissertation research on program evaluation anxiety: [link here]

Program evaluation anxiety is a relatively unexplored phenomenon, and your responses will be used to better understand and manage stakeholders' psychological reactions to evaluation. Your responses will also be used to help create a tool that evaluators can reference to more systematically determine if a stakeholder has excessive evaluation anxiety. **By participating in this research you will also be entered into a lottery to win a \$50 Amazon gift card!**

If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at samantha.b.langan@gmail.com or my faculty advisor, Dr. Tarek Azzam, at uazzat00@gmail.com. Claremont Graduate University's Institutional Review Board, which is responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants, has approved this study and its procedures, and you may also contact them at irb@cgu.edu with any questions about this study.

Thank you so much for the consideration to participate!

Best,

Samantha Langan
PhD Candidate from Claremont Graduate University

Stakeholder Anxiety towards Program Evaluation (SHAPE) Critical Feedback Survey

Start of Block: Consent Form

\ Hello! And thank you for taking the time to help with this study.

On the next page you will see a lot of information about participating in this study. I am required to include this to conduct research through my university. Please read this information, select "Yes, I consent" if you wish to participate, and then continue on. My survey will start on the page after that.

Thank you for your time!

Consent Form AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

STUDY LEADERSHIP. My name is Samantha Langan and I am a student studying Evaluation and Applied Research Methods from the Division of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences at Claremont Graduate University (CGU). I am asking you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Dr. Tarek Azzam, a member of the division, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this research is to learn how to better identify and manage stakeholders' anxiety towards program evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study you must be 18 years of age or older, live in the United States or Canada, and have experience conducting program evaluation activities.

PARTICIPATION. During the study you will take an online survey asking you to reflect on and answer questions related to an experience you had working with a highly anxious evaluation stakeholder. We expect this survey will take less than 30 minutes to complete.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks associated with this study are minimal and not higher than those faced in everyday life. You may experience a minor inconvenience due to the amount of time required to complete the survey. Although it is not anticipated that you will feel any discomfort from the survey questions, you are free to skip answering any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, or stop the survey at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. The findings from this study will be analyzed in aggregate to help advance the field of program evaluation, specifically regarding how evaluators can more systematically identify when their clients or stakeholders are anxious about evaluation. Your involvement will also help us learn more about how to best manage stakeholders' anxiety towards program evaluation, which may contribute to improved evaluation practices.

COMPENSATION: Your name will be entered into a lottery to win a \$50 Amazon gift card if you choose to participate in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. By clicking "Yes" below you are indicating that you are willing to participate. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question for any reason without it being held against you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This online survey is being conducted through CGU's Qualtrics platform, a subscription software for collecting and analyzing data. You may find out more about Qualtrics, if you wish, at www.qualtrics.com. No identifying information about you will be collected other than what you voluntarily choose to provide, and your identity will never be associated with any of your responses. In order to protect the anonymity of your responses, no IP addresses will be collected, and Qualtrics uses industry-standard security methods to protect data transmission and storage. All information collected from the survey will remain confidential through the use of identification numbers instead of personal names. Survey data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I can access. All individual answers will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study, and no other parties will be informed of your individual responses.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please email me at samantha.langan@cgu.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Tarek Azzam, at uazzat00@gmail.com. CGU's Institutional Review Board, which is responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants, has approved this study and its procedures. You may contact the CGU Board at irb@cgu.edu or at (909) 607-9406 with any questions about this study.

CONSENT. Clicking the "Yes" entry below means that you understand the information on this form, that any questions you may have about this study have been answered, and that you are eligible and voluntarily agree to participate. This link will direct you to the survey. Clicking the "No" entry will close this page and exit the survey.

- Yes, I consent to participate. (CONTINUE TO SURVEY) (1)
- No, I do not consent to participate. (EXIT SURVEY) (2)

End of Block: Consent Form

Start of Block: Stakeholder Characteristics

Priming Question Think about a time when you worked with an evaluation client or program stakeholder you believed was **highly anxious about the prospect of evaluation or evaluation activities**. Their anxiety towards evaluation may have been noticeable only once during the evaluation, consistently noticeable during every phase of the process, or variable and somewhat unpredictable while you worked with them.

Please keep this particular stakeholder in mind as you answer the following survey questions.

Q1_Setting In what type of setting did the stakeholder work?

- Nonprofit charitable foundation (1)
 - Social service organization (2)
 - Educational setting (K-12 school, higher education setting, school district, etc.) (3)
 - Hospital or healthcare facility (4)
 - Government setting (5)
 - Corporate setting (6)
 - Other (7) _____
-

Q2_SH_Gender What is the stakeholder's gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Gender Non-Binary (i.e., not exclusively male or female) (3)
 - Transgender Female (male to female) (4)
 - Transgender Male (female to male) (5)
 - Other (6) _____
 - Unknown (7)
-

Q3_SH_AGE What was the stakeholder's age when worked with them?

- Less than 18 years old (1)
 - 18 to 29 years old (2)
 - 30 to 39 years old (3)
 - 40 to 49 years old (4)
 - 50 to 59 years old (5)
 - 60 to 69 years old (6)
 - More than 70 years old (7)
 - Unknown (8)
-

Q4_SH_Race What is the stakeholder's race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
 - Asian (2)
 - African American or Black (3)
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4)
 - White (5)
 - Multiracial (6)
 - Other (7) _____
 - Unknown (8)
-

Q5_SH_Latinx Is the stakeholder Latinx/Hispanic?

- Yes, Hispanic or Latinx (1)
 - No, not Hispanic or Latinx (2)
 - Unknown (3)
-

Q6_SH_Position What was the stakeholder's professional position when you worked with them?

- Executive leadership (1)
 - Director (2)
 - Manager (3)
 - Frontline program staff (4)
 - Other (5) _____
-

Q7_LengthOfTime How long did you work with this stakeholder?

- Less than 6 months (1)
 - Less than 1 year (2)
 - 1-3 years (3)
 - 4-6 years (4)
 - 7+ years (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

Q8_CurrentlyWorking Are you currently working with this stakeholder?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Other (3) _____
-

Q9_MeetingType How did you typically meet with this stakeholder?

- In-person meetings (1)
 - Online virtual meetings with video (2)
 - Phone calls or online meetings without video (3)
 - Emails (4)
 - Social media (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

Q10_HowWellKnowSH How well did you get to know the stakeholder?

- Extremely well (1)
- Very well (2)
- Moderately well (3)
- Slightly well (4)
- Not well at all (5)

End of Block: Stakeholder Characteristics

Start of Block: Assessing SH Anxiety

Q11_EA_Variability How would you characterize this stakeholder's anxiety towards evaluation while you were working with them?

- Fleeting, noticeable to you only a handful of times during the evaluation process (e.g., perhaps only during an evaluation planning meeting, etc.) (1)
- Long lasting and detectable during most interactions you had with them throughout the evaluation process (2)
- Variable, ebbing and flowing in intensity throughout the evaluation process (3)
- Unsure (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q12_HighestEALevel

Low Anxiety Moderate Anxiety High Anxiety
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

At their **most** anxious, how high would you rate the stakeholder's level of anxiety towards evaluation? ()



Q13_EvalStage During what stage(s) of evaluation did you observe the stakeholder to be most anxious about evaluation?

- Pre-Evaluation Phase: Evaluation planning (3)
 - Pre-Evaluation Phase: Evaluation contracting (4)
 - Active Evaluation Phase: Initial evaluation implementation (5)
 - Active Evaluation Phase: Evaluation data collection (6)
 - Active Evaluation Phase: Evaluation judgment (7)
 - Active Evaluation Phase: Evaluation reporting and dissemination of findings (8)
 - Post-Evaluation Phase: Promoting evaluation use (9)
 - Other (11) _____
-

Q14_EvalActivities If applicable, please add more information about the types of evaluation activities that were occurring when the stakeholder was most anxious about evaluation.

End of Block: Assessing SH Anxiety

Start of Block: SHAPE Indicators

Q15_AffectiveInd Please think about the stakeholder when they seemed to be **most** anxious about evaluation.

Affective Indicators: When discussing or participating in the evaluation, did the stakeholder share that they felt any of the following emotions?

| | Yes (1) | No (2) | I don't remember (3) | This item is confusing (4) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Anxious (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tested (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Stressed (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Uncomfortable (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Afraid (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Worried or concerned (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nervous, jittery, or on edge (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frustrated (8) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skeptical about the value of evaluation (9) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Doubtful about whether or not evaluation activities would be carried out as planned (10) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Distrustful of the evaluator/evaluation team (13) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Suspicious of the organization's/authority's motives for requesting the evaluation (14) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q16_BehavioralInd *Please think about the stakeholder when they seemed to be **most** anxious about evaluation.*

Behavioral Indicators. When discussing the evaluation or participating in evaluation activities, did you observe the stakeholder exhibiting any of the following behaviors?

| | Yes (1) | No (2) | I don't remember (3) | This item is confusing (4) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Walking out of meetings or not attending a scheduled meeting they originally agreed to attend (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Appearing reluctant to speak (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Appearing uncomfortable (e.g., shifting around in their seat, etc.) (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Appearing nervous, jittery, or on edge (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Appearing disinterested, disengaged, or preoccupied (e.g., spending a lot of time on their phone or personal computer) (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating non-verbally with at least one other stakeholder, particularly during a larger group meeting (e.g., making meaningful eye contact, using hand gestures, etc.) (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engaging in side private conversations with another stakeholder, particularly during a larger group meeting (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Making dismissive or passive aggressive gestures (e.g., rolling their eyes, etc.) or sounds ("Hmph") in response to discussing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities (8) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Laughing dismissively at others' ideas (9) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities (their remarks may have included versions of, "No, we're not going to do this," or sarcastically saying, "Good luck trying to do that.")
(10)



Q17_CognitiveInd Please think about the stakeholder when they seemed to be **most** anxious about evaluation.

Cognitive Indicators. When discussing the evaluation or evaluation activities, did the stakeholder share any of the following thoughts or information with you?

| | Yes (1) | No (2) | I don't remember (3) | This item is confusing (4) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Their concerns regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Their frustrations regarding the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| That there was considerable outside interest from the community or other organizations in the results of the evaluation (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| That they were eager to confirm the program was accomplishing its intended effects (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| That they were eager to showcase the good work they believed their program was doing (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| That there was much at stake with evaluation (e.g., evaluation results would influence hiring decisions, funding decisions, etc.) (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q18_OtherInds Are there any other indicators not listed above that suggested to you that the stakeholder was highly anxious about evaluation or evaluation activities? If so, please describe here.

Q19_WhyAnxious What other information, if any, do you think is important for us to know regarding **why** the stakeholder had high evaluation anxiety?

Q20_StrategiesOE What strategies, if any, did you use to effectively manage the stakeholder's high evaluation anxiety?

Q21_MgtStrategies Specific Evaluation Anxiety Management Strategies

| | Did you implement this strategy to try to decrease the stakeholder's high level of anxiety towards evaluation? | | How effective was this strategy in decreasing the stakeholder's high evaluation anxiety? | | | | |
|--|--|--------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| | Yes (1) | No (2) | Very effective (1) | Moderately effective (2) | Somewhat effective (3) | Not effective (4) | N/A (5) |
| | | | | | | | |

Worked to build a positive, trusting relationship with the stakeholder (1)

Demonstrated the immediate value of evaluation to the stakeholder (e.g., created a logic model, updated or developed an instrument, etc.) (2)

Clarified roles and responsibilities (3)

Involved the stakeholder in making some decisions about the evaluation (4)

Listened to the stakeholder's expertise when designing evaluation methodology or collecting data (5)

Included the stakeholder in the interpretation of evaluation findings (6)

Encouraged the stakeholder to think about how they would use the evaluation findings (7)

Asked the stakeholder to evaluate your performance or the evaluation process (8)

Start of Block: Evaluator Characteristics

Final Questions

These are the final questions!

Q22_EvalPosition What was your position while working with the stakeholder?

- External evaluator (1)
 - Internal evaluator (2)
 - Other (3) _____
-

Q23_EvalExperience How would you rate your level of evaluation experience when you worked with the stakeholder?

- Expert (1)
 - Advanced (2)
 - Intermediate (3)
 - Novice (4)
-

Q24_EvalGender What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Gender Non-Binary (i.e., not exclusively male or female) (3)
 - Transgender Female (male to female) (4)
 - Transgender Male (female to male) (5)
 - Other (6) _____
 - Unknown (7)
-

Q25_EvalAge What was your age when worked with the stakeholder?

- Less than 18 years old (1)
 - 18 to 29 years old (2)
 - 30 to 39 years old (3)
 - 40 to 49 years old (4)
 - 50 to 59 years old (5)
 - 60 to 69 years old (6)
 - More than 70 years old (7)
 - Unknown (8)
-

Q26_EvalRace What is your race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
 - Asian (2)
 - African American or Black (3)
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4)
 - White (5)
 - Multiracial (6)
 - Other (7) _____
 - Unknown (8)
-

Q27_EvalLatinx Are you Latinx/Hispanic?

- Yes, Hispanic or Latinx (1)
 - No, not Hispanic or Latinx (2)
 - Unknown (3)
-

Q28_Interpersonal How would you rate the quality of your interpersonal skills?

Very Good (1)

Good (2)

Acceptable (3)

Poor (4)

Very Poor (5)

Q29_NameEmail

First and last name (1) _____

Email address (used only to send an Amazon gift card if you are selected from the lottery) (2) _____

Q30_WantInstrument Your responses will be used to help inform the development of an instrument designed to more systematically identify when a stakeholder is highly anxious about evaluation. Would you like to be emailed a copy of this instrument once it is completed?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q31_FinalComments Final comments: Is there any other information you would like to share?

End of Block: Evaluator Characteristics

APPENDIX AB. Frequency of Potential Indicators of XSEA as reported by AEA Members (N= 76), and Point-Biserial

Correlations between Hypothesized XSEA Indicators and Highest XSEA Level

| Potential Indicators of XSEA | N | % | <i>r_{pb}</i> | Unadjusted <i>p-value</i> | Holm- Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|--|----------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Affective Indicator— Worried or concerned | 55 | 72% | .281 | .018 | .002 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—Eager to showcase the good work they believed their program was doing | 49 | 64% | .053 | .657 | .007 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—Eager to confirm their program was accomplishing its intended effects | 44 | 58% | -.043 | .720 | .013 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Skeptical about the value of evaluation | 43 | 57% | -.096 | .414 | .004 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Pushing back against, resisting, or opposing aspects of the evaluation | 43 | 57% | .289 | .014 | .002 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—Share their concerns re: the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or authority requesting the evaluation | 40 | 53% | .127 | .286 | .003 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Frustrated | 39 | 51% | .259 | .028 | .002 | No |

| Potential Indicators of XSEA (cont'd) | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>r_{pb}</i> | Unadjusted <i>p-value</i> | Holm- Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|--|----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Affective Indicator— Stressed | 37 | 49% | .116 | .339 | .004 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Uncomfortable | 36 | 47% | .195 | .101 | .002 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—Share their frustrations re: the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or authority requesting the evaluation | 36 | 47% | .117 | .325 | .003 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—Share that there was much at stake with evaluation | 34 | 45% | .111 | .382 | .004 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Appearing nervous, jittery, or on edge | 31 | 41% | .047 | .011 | .002 | No |
| Cognitive Indicator—There was considerable outside interest from the community | 31 | 41% | .152 | .208 | .003 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Appearing uncomfortable | 31 | 41% | .047 | .703 | .010 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Doubtful about whether or not evaluation activities would be carried out as planned | 27 | 36% | -.128 | .286 | .003 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Communicating non- verbally with at least one other stakeholder | 24 | 32% | .089 | .490 | .005 | No |

| Potential Indicators of XSEA (cont'd) | <i>N</i> | % | <i>r_{pb}</i> | Unadjusted <i>p</i>-value | Holm-Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|---|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Behavioral Indicator— Engaging in side private conversations with another stakeholder | 23 | 30% | .037 | .759 | .017 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Anxious | 22 | 29% | .319 | .007 | .002 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Making dismissive or passive aggressive gestures | 22 | 29% | .066 | .585 | .006 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Appearing disinterested, disengaged, or preoccupied | 22 | 29% | -.002 | .989 | .050 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Appearing reluctant to speak | 20 | 26% | -.035 | .772 | .025 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Walking out of meetings or not attending a scheduled meeting | 19 | 25% | .114 | .337 | .003 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Distrustful of the evaluator/evaluation team | 18 | 24% | .197 | .089 | .002 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Suspicious of the authority's motives for requesting the evaluation | 15 | 20% | .058 | .631 | .006 | No |
| Affective Indicator— Feeling nervous, jittery, or on edge | 12 | 16% | .227 | .060 | .002 | No |

| Potential Indicators of XSEA (cont'd) | <i>N</i> | % | <i>r_{pb}</i> | Unadjusted <i>p</i>-value | Holm-Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|--|----------|-----|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Affective Indicator—Tested | 12 | 16% | .175 | .186 | .003 | No |
| Affective Indicator—Afraid | 10 | 13% | .081 | .499 | .005 | No |
| Behavioral Indicator— Laughing dismissively at others' ideas | 5 | 7% | -.050 | .674 | .008 | No |

APPENDIX AC. Sources of XSEA

| SH Characteristics | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 | Supported in Phase 2 |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| High vested interest in the success of the program | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Feels overwhelmed with existing responsibilities | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Concerned about upsetting others | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Desire to showcase program's strengths to others | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SH doubts the evaluator's expertise | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Negative attitude towards evaluation | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Bad history with evaluation | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Naturally an anxious person | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Concerned about not feeling respected for their expertise | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Distrust in funder/authority asking for evaluation | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Feeling tested | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Lack of evaluation or research experience | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Dishonest use of program data. | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Lack of knowledge about the program | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Not open to scrutiny | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Naturally a cynical person | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Program or Organizational Characteristics | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 | Supported in Phase 2 |
| Perceived uncertainty about a program's future | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mismatch between program's interests and funder's interests | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of support or buy-in for evaluation among SHs | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Flawed program design or implementation | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Leadership changes | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Lack of instrumental use | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |

| Situational Factors | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 | Supported in Phase 2 |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Concern about national climate and policies | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Few resources to conduct evaluation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community interest in program data | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pressure to receive funding | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Evaluator Characteristics | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 | Supported in Phase 2 |
| Evaluator does not effectively communicate the anticipated benefits of evaluation or evaluation activities to SH | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Evaluator is considered an outsider to a vulnerable community | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Evaluator not effectively communicating | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Making SHs uncomfortable | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Evaluation Characteristics | Supported by Previous Literature | Supported in Phase 1 | Supported in Phase 2 |
| Lack of control over evaluation implementation due to geographical distance | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |

APPENDIX AD. Holm-Bonferroni Adjusted Levels of Significance

Point-Biserial Correlations—Association between Evaluation Stage and Highest XSEA Level

| Evaluation Stage | Unadjusted <i>p-value</i> | Holm- Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| Active—Evaluation data collection | .043 | .007 | No |
| Pre-Evaluation—Evaluation planning | .073 | .008 | No |
| Active—Evaluation reporting and dissemination of findings | .164 | .010 | No |
| Active—Evaluation judgment | .200 | .013 | No |
| Post-Evaluation—Promoting evaluation use | .293 | .017 | No |
| Pre-Evaluation—Evaluation contracting | .310 | .025 | No |
| Active—Initial evaluation implementation | .960 | .050 | No |

Point-Biserial Correlations—Association between Primary Methods of Communication and Highest XSEA Level

| Communication Method | Unadjusted <i>p-value</i> | Holm- Bonferroni adjusted α level | p-value \leq adjusted α level? |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| Virtual video calls | .078 | .008 | No |
| In-person meetings | .146 | .010 | No |
| Phone/virtual calls, no video | .150 | .013 | No |
| Other | .659 | .017 | No |
| Social media | .891 | .025 | No |
| Email | .994 | .050 | No |

Multiple Regression—Stakeholder Demographics Predicting Highest XSEA Level

| Stakeholder Demographics | <i>p-value</i> | Holm-Bonferroni adjusted α level | <i>p-value</i> \leq adjusted α level? |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Race | .160 | .010 | No |
| Gender | .488 | .013 | No |
| Ethnicity | .491 | .017 | No |
| Position | .789 | .025 | No |
| Age | .873 | .050 | No |

Multiple Regression—Evaluator Demographics Predicting Highest XSEA Level

| Evaluator Demographics | <i>p-value</i> | Holm-Bonferroni adjusted α level | <i>p-value</i> \leq adjusted α level? |
|------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Race | .378 | .010 | No |
| Age | .515 | .013 | No |
| Gender | .798 | .017 | No |
| Position | .925 | .025 | No |
| Ethnicity | .903 | .050 | No |

APPENDIX AE. XSEA Detection and Management Checklist

Checklist for Detecting and Managing *Excessive Stakeholder Evaluation Anxiety (XSEA)*

Samantha B. Langan, PhD

The purpose of this checklist is to help evaluators assess if stakeholders involved in evaluation activities (e.g., frontline or managerial program staff, organizational leadership) are experiencing excessive stakeholder evaluation anxiety (XSEA). XSEA occurs when stakeholders are fearful and anxious because of the “prospect, imagined possibility, or occurrence of an evaluation” (Scriven, 1991, p. 145¹⁰). XSEA tends to ebb and flow in intensity throughout the stages of an evaluation, though is especially prevalent during the evaluation planning phase, the evaluation judgments phase, and the reporting and dissemination phase.

When stakeholders’ evaluation anxiety is high they may unconsciously or consciously react in ways that negatively compromise the integrity of an evaluation (e.g., tampering with program data,), harm the evaluator (e.g., professional disparagement), or hurt their own well-being (e.g., anxiety-induced illness). Therefore, detecting when XSEA is occurring and taking steps to manage it is essential for ethical evaluation practice.

The information in this checklist was derived from dissertation research¹¹ and applies only to Western audiences, particularly those based in the USA or Canada.

¹⁰ Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

¹¹ (Citation here when available)

How can I tell if my stakeholder is highly anxious about evaluation?

If your stakeholder exhibits **one or more** of the following, **please confirm with them** if they are feeling highly anxious about evaluation or evaluation activities.

| POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF XSEA | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The stakeholder... | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ...feels worried or has concerns about the evaluator(s), evaluation, program, or organization/authority requesting the evaluation. | |
| ...feels frustrated about evaluation or evaluation activities. | |
| ...feels skeptical about the value of evaluation. | |
| ...is eager to showcase the good work they believe their program is doing. | |
| ...is eager to confirm that their program is accomplishing its intended effects. | |
| ... pushes back against, resists, or opposes aspects of the evaluation or evaluation activities. | |

What can I do to help lower my stakeholder's XSEA?

The table on the following page lists 32 strategies that may help prevent or decrease XSEA. The tactics are categorized as either ongoing tactics or as strategies that may be most applicable or appropriate during specific evaluation phases (pre-evaluation phase, active evaluation phase, post-evaluation phase), but may be implemented during other stages as is appropriate and feasible for the specific context.

Please note that the effectiveness of each strategy in affecting XSEA will vary based on program or organizational factors, situational factors, stakeholder and evaluator characteristics, and the interactions among these variables. Also, this list is not meant to be all-encompassing or prescriptive, but rather to serve as a starting place for those looking to expand their toolkit.

| XSEA MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| ONGOING TACTICS | | |
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 1. Speak with the stakeholder in their native language | "All our communication was in Spanish, helping create a direct line of communication between us." | |
| 2. Get to know the stakeholder personally | "I worked to get to know her personally and met with her one-on-one away from her staff to explain some of my decisions and talk about why I thought we needed changes in data collection. I also misread her anxiety for a while (at least a year) as just being obstinate or difficult, so that when I realized she was anxious, it changed my approach to working with her." | |
| 3. Meet with the stakeholder one-on-one | "I dedicated significantly more time to...having one-on-one conversations with her about the evaluation, and about her experiences at the organization, and in the programs she managed." | |
| 4. Meet with the stakeholder in their preferred environment | "Sometimes in a really unfriendly environment I'll invite people to come to my office and chat with me, because the staff don't trust each other." | |
| 5. Provide the stakeholder with reassurance when hearing their concerns | "[I provided] reassurance that it was not an evaluation of the staff member but just an opportunity to gain context on what was taking place." | |
| 6. Demonstrate sensitivity, particularly to underlying tensions and historical issues within program | "There are underlying tensions among staff and historical issues within the program, and I find it helpful to acknowledge and be sensitive to those issues." | |
| 7. Demonstrate kindness | "I tried to calm their nerves, explain myself and why we are doing what we are doing, and just be open, kind, and friendly." | |
| 8. Demonstrate reliability | "[We] showed up and did what we said we would do." | |
| 9. Express gratitude | "I consistently thanked her for any and all collaborative thinking that she offered." | |
| 10. Try to fit into the organization's culture | "We demonstrated that we really wanted to understand their organization by trying to fit into their culture at in-person meetings (casual dress, friendly, very open)." | |
| 11. Be an active listener | "[I] listened without judgment, and let others share their thoughts and feelings." | |
| 12. Have conversations, not interrogations | "I try to be light and not an interrogator. I try to create a conversation with staff." | |

| ONGOING TACTICS (cont'd) | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Set expectations for meetings by creating agendas and sharing them ahead of time, and allow the stakeholder to contribute to the agendas | "I find it helpful to create an agenda and share it before our meeting so staff know what to expect during our conversation, and I'll ask if there's anything they would like added to the agenda, as well." | |
| 14. Communicate clearly about evaluation processes and avoid evaluation jargon | "[I provided] clear and concise messaging on evaluation processes." | |
| 15. Ask the stakeholder for their input throughout the evaluation | "We tried to include her in the decisions as much as possible and asked for feedback on ways to conduct the evaluation." | |
| PRE-EVALUATION PHASE | | |
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Clarify your role as an evaluator | "We work in a close partnership with her...as her ally, not someone trying to judge her." | |
| 17. Present yourself as a problem solver | "The way I have had the most success at getting buy-in is not by coming in and presenting myself as an evaluator, but by coming in and presenting myself as someone who wants to use data and observation, and different methods of learning, to help people solve problems. And that makes people much more receptive." | |
| 18. Teach the stakeholder the fundamentals of program evaluation, especially if they are less familiar with evaluation | "I created 1-page fact sheets about the purpose of evaluation and limits on use of data collected." | |
| 19. Address the stakeholder's information needs | "What did work was...listening to them and pulling out their evaluation questions, focusing on their evaluation questions over the national evaluation questions." | |
| 20. Communicate wanting to identify program strengths | "We tried to assure our stakeholder that the other features of the program were successful." | |
| 21. Use existing data to the extent possible | "Staff can be engulfed in their everyday responsibilities and operating in crisis mode, so if we can use existing data to answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation itself can be less overwhelming for them." | |
| 22. Demonstrate flexibility, particularly during evaluation planning | "We kept iterating on the design." | |

| PRE-EVALUATION PHASE (cont'd) | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Sell the stakeholder on the vision for the evaluation | "I talked about how doing this evaluation would likely improve their ability to use measurement more effectively." | |
| 24. Set the expectation that the stakeholder may feel uncomfortable at times during the evaluation | "I will say that I think one of the things that I try hard to do...is to just be honest with people about the fact that one of the purposes of the measurement and activity that we engage in as evaluators is to uncover what's not working and to identify problems and to provide the best services for clients that we can. And that sometimes that does mean making hard decisions and having hard conversations, and that people are going to be uncomfortable; that's just part of the process." | |
| 25. Set expectations around data collection by creating a data collection plan | "I think a data collection plan is the one thing they'll read and get. It operationalizes it all into, 'Oh, this is what is being collected, this is probably who is collecting it, this is when it'll be collected, and here's the data that will be analyzed and go in a report.'" | |
| ACTIVE EVALUATION PHASE | | |
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Demonstrate the immediate value of evaluation | "I have always found the most valuable way to build bridges with staff is to act as quickly as possible to do something of value for the people that you're engaged with, even if it's not something you want to do first." | |
| 27. Provide your stakeholder with regular check-ins and updates | "We initially tried to meet regularly so that they would know what we were doing and learning." | |
| 28. Provide "course correction," as needed | "I was sympathetic but soon realized that was wasting a lot of time (she wanted to complain endlessly about things we couldn't change). I tried to steer her back to the task gently but firmly." | |
| 29. Engage other influential stakeholders when the stakeholder is uncooperative | "We engaged influential peers, their supervisor, and even their supervisees, who were on board and happy to participate." | |

| POST-EVALUATION PHASE | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Management Strategy | AEA Evaluators' Quotes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Report findings in an accessible way | "[I] reduced academic language...and reported findings in accessible way, using a lot of their language, colors, and imagery." | |
| 31. Give the stakeholder first access to the evaluation results, as is feasible and appropriate | "I gave stakeholders the first opportunity to respond to the eval results." | |
| 32. Ask the stakeholder to evaluate your performance or the evaluation process | "I think stakeholders are more receptive to evaluation when they know it's a two-way street and that they'll have a chance to evaluate my performance." | |

Please note that this checklist is a work in progress. If you have feedback for its author, please contact Dr. Samantha Langan at samantha.b.langan@gmail.com