

Tools to Collect Information

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires Surveys Checklists	To quickly and/or easily get an abundance of information in a non-threatening way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can complete anonymously ◦ Easy to compare and analyze ◦ Can obtain extensive data ◦ Many sample questionnaires already exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Might not get careful feedback ◦ Wording can bias client responses ◦ Impersonal ◦ For surveys, need sampling expert ◦ Do not get full story
Interviews	To get someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Depth of information ◦ Develops relationship with client ◦ Can be flexible with client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can be hard to analyze and compare ◦ Can be costly ◦ Interviewer can bias client responses
Documentation Review	When we want impression of how program operates without interrupting the program; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Get comprehensive and historical information ◦ Does not interrupt program or client routine in program ◦ Information already exists ◦ Few biases about information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Often time-consuming ◦ Information may be incomplete ◦ Need to be clear about what looking for ◦ Not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Observation	To gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ View operations of a program as they are actually occurring ◦ Can adapt to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors ◦ Can be complex to categorize observations ◦ Can influence behavior of program participants ◦ Can be expensive
Focus Groups	To explore a topic through group discussion, e.g. about reactions to experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Quickly and reliably get common impressions ◦ Can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time ◦ Can convey key information about programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can be hard to analyze responses ◦ Need good facilitator for safety and closure ◦ Difficult to schedule 6 to 8 people together
Case Studies	To fully understand or depict client experiences in a program, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fully depicts client experience in program input, process and results ◦ Powerful means to portray program to outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Time-consuming to collect, organize, and describe data ◦ Represents depth of information rather than breadth

http://managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm