

Participant Journey Mapping:

A Culturally Responsive Approach for Defining Community Defined Evidence Program Implementation and Evaluation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the Participant Journey?

The Participant Journey is the path that your local participants (i.e., clients) take when they enter, participate in and complete a program. It typically begins with community outreach and recruitment, continues through program activities, and ends with your participants' graduation at the end of the program. The participant journey may also go beyond graduation and include after-care programs and/or referrals to other community resources.

What is a Participant Journey Map?

Simply stated, the Participant Journey Map is a visual description of your participants' journey from the beginning of their engagement with your program until they complete the program. It also seeks to document or illustrate how they might feel at key milestones or touchpoints throughout the program. In developing a map of your participants' journeys, you and your team are encouraged to be as creative as you like.

How can I use the Participant Journey Map?

If you are a staff member, you may consider using this exercise to facilitate a process within your organization to help you and your team creatively reflect on the different stages of the program and document the successes, changes, or areas of improvements. Programs with multiple sites are encouraged to engage each site in creating a map and use the maps from each site to discuss consistency in program administration and problem solve common challenges.

Program administrators may consider using the maps to tell the story of the program to external stakeholders and/or showcase the program to the broader community.

Evaluators may consider using the information collected through the maps to inform program processes, data collection practices and reflect on program fidelity across sites (if applicable) and phases of programming.

Who should contribute to creating the Participant Journey Map?

Frontline staff, program coordinators and administrators, evaluators and where applicable, executive directors. In general, it is helpful to engage all staff who are involved with the program to map different perspectives and highlight opportunities and challenges.

How much time will it take to complete this activity?

It is really up to you and your team. Ideally, we recommend between 60 and 90 minutes.

What kind of materials will my team need to do this?

For the map itself, you may consider using butcher paper, sticky notes, poster boards or flip charts. Markers, stickers, colored paper, glue, scissors, pens, and tape are useful for filling in the map. To complete the activity, you may wish to use reference materials you've created for the program. For example, a curriculum, a calendar of events, promotional fliers or ads, activity handouts, evaluation results or feedback, and photos from the program.

What should the end result look like?

How the map ends up looking is up to you and your team! Some ideas or examples include: a large timeline with written descriptions and photos on butcher paper or a scrapbook with pictures and descriptions.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

SUMMARY:

Here is a set of steps you can use to approach building a participant journey map. The steps are intentionally general, as different organizations and staff may approach the work slightly differently depending on specific goals and program focus. You can use the list of questions below as a guide. Please note that there are no right or wrong way to do this.

- 1) Select a program you would like to focus on for the exercise.
- 2) Decide which perspective perspective/person you would like to inhabit while building your map. You can always create maps of the same program from different perspectives because it is often help to consider a program from multiple perspectives to get a sense of the overall success and potential improvement opportunities. Options include:
 - a. Participant
 - b. Participants' support system, like family/friend/teacher
 - c. Staff members (line staff or directors)
- 3) Chart or draw out the skeleton frame of different touchpoints or moments of the program. Some stages of the journey might include, but are not restricted to:
 - a. Outreach, engagement, recruitment (Promotion)
 - b. Intake and enrollment – beginning entry into program
 - c. Program activities (either Prevention or Treatment)
 - d. Program completion and next steps (Recovery/next steps)
- 4) Start with a brainstorm discussion of the specifics for each stage of the map.
 - a. Home in on one stage or touchpoint at a time to further define details and reactions.

- b. You may consider splitting up team members to focus on different stages simultaneously depending on the size of your team.
- 5) Use all available materials and have fun!

Encourage staff to add stages, activities, touchpoints, reactions and reflections to the journey wherever they feel makes sense.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM PHASES

Consider thoughts, actions, and feelings throughout:

- *What are (participants/staff/families, etc) thinking at this phase?*
- *What are (participants/staff/families, etc) feeling at this phase?*
- *What are (participants/staff/families, etc) doing at this phase?*

Outreach and recruitment

- How does a community member first learn about your program?
- Which community members have been easy to reach?
- Who have been harder to reach? Why do you believe they have been harder to reach? Are there strategies that might be more effective in reaching them?

Intake

- What is the intake process for your program?
- What are the next steps if your program is not a good fit for a community member?

Program components and participation

- Which components are the most successful? Most well-received? Why do you think that is?
- If you have made changes to activities, how and why have you made them?
- What are things that participants consistently ask for? What does this say about your program?
- Are there any challenges that commonly occur during program implementation? How have you managed them so far?

Program completion and beyond

- How do you know when a participant has completed the program? What does the end look like?
- What is different about the participant at the end of the program compared to at the beginning of the program? How do you know that the change has happened?

- Where do participants go after completion?
- If you refer participants who've completed the program to other community resources, please describe this process. How do you decide who gets referral services, and what referrals to provide? How do you track the referrals you provide, if they are tracked?
- Can participants remain involved with your program after they graduate? If yes, how?

Evaluation

- Indicate on the map the points when data is gathered about the participant.
- How are evaluation activities integrated with program activities?
- How is data about the program or the participants shared back with those involved with the program? (staff, clients, families, external stakeholders, etc.)
- How is data used to make course corrections to the program or even larger changes?

Group Reflection

- What does the map tell you/your team about the overall picture and success of the program?
- Where do participants experience the greatest success and impact? Where are they the most challenged?
- Where are there opportunities to improve the program? Improve staff capacity?
- Would it be useful to share the map with other stakeholders? How might you do that?