Summer Institute on Program Evaluation 2014

ETHICS IN EVALUATION

Gerry Kaplan
(Kaplan Research Associates Inc.)

June 2, 2014

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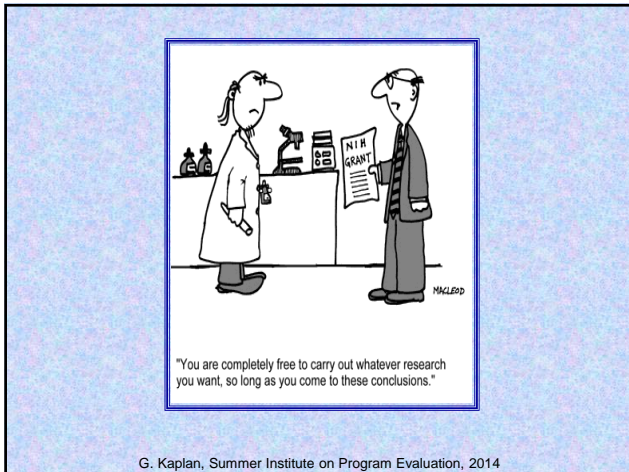
Presentation Objectives:

- To explore potential ethical issues experienced by some evaluators

- To explore ethical standards related to evaluation practice (Tri-County Policy, CES standards, OCAP)

- To explore ethical standards for organizations, government departments, etc. undertaking evaluations

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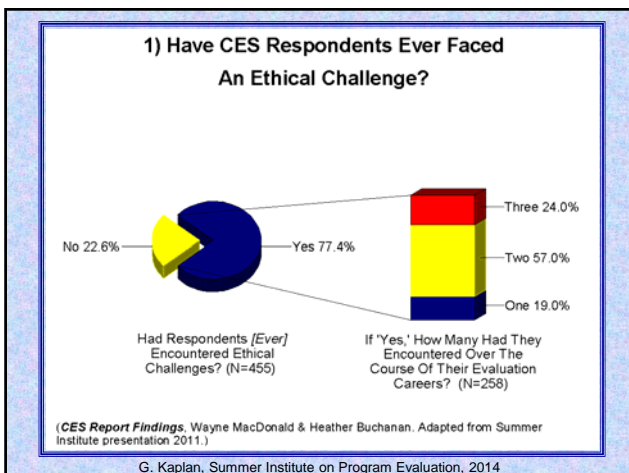## EVALUATORS' EXPERIENCES WITH ETHICAL ISSUES

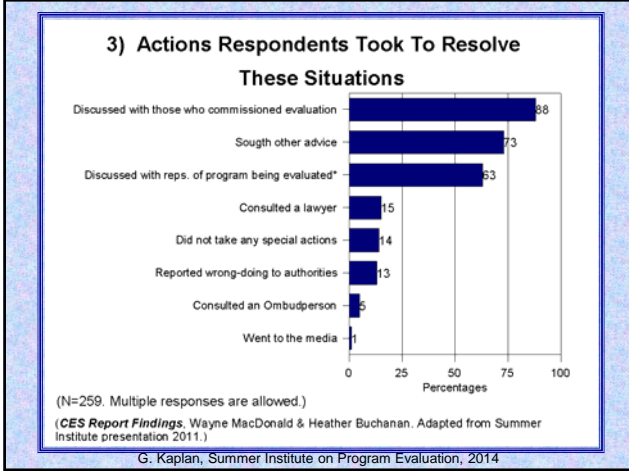G. Kaplan, Summer Institute on Program Evaluation, 2014

"You are completely free to carry out whatever research you want, so long as you come to these conclusions."

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Results of the Canadian Evaluation Society Membership Report On *Ethical Challenges Related To Their Evaluation Practices*

(With a 25% Response Rate)
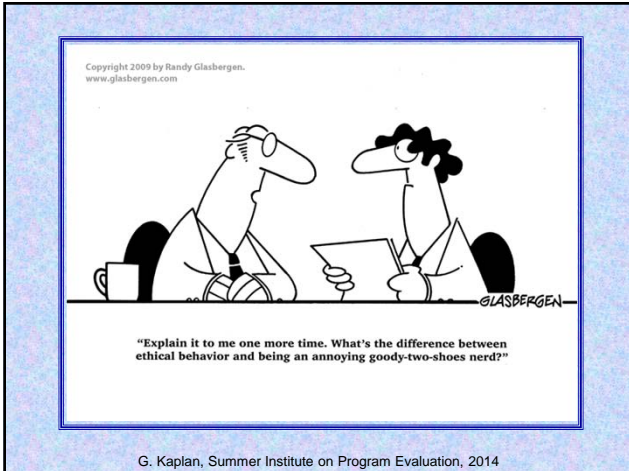
(Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan, 2011)

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1) Have CES Respondents Ever Faced An Ethical Challenge?

No 22.6%   Yes 77.4%

Three 24.0%

Two 57.0%

One 19.0%

Had Respondents *[Ever]* Encountered Ethical Challenges? (N=455)

If 'Yes,' How Many Had They Encountered Over The Course Of Their Evaluation Careers? (N=258)

(*CES Report Findings*, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

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2) Ethical Challenges Respondents Faced

1) Conflicting stakeholder expectations	86
2) Stakeholder pressures evaluator to alter presentation	73
3) Evaluation findings supressed or ignored	61
4) Stakeholder declares relevant questions 'off-limits'	56
5) Stakeholder decides findings in advance	54
6) Evaluator concerned about confidentiality violation	52
7) Legitimate stakeholders omitted from planning	52
8) Evaluator is reluctant to present full findings	49
9) Stakeholder misrepresented findings	49
10) Disputes over ownership/distribution of report	44
11) Difficulty in stakeholder identification	44
12) Eval. uncertain of ability to present findings objectively	37
13) Stakeholder deliberately modified findings prior to release	34
14) Illegal/unethical/dangerous behaviour discovered by evaluator	31
15) Stakeholder pressures to violate confidentiality	27
16) Unspecified stakeholder misuse	26
17) Evaluation was redefined as a management study	25
18) Plaiarism/authorship was misrepresented	22
19) Study findings used to punish evaluator	17
20) Study findings used to punish others	17

Percentages

(N=338. Multiple responses are allowed.)

(*CES Report Findings*, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

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Slide 1

3) Actions Respondents Took To Resolve These Situations

Action	Percentage
Discussed with those who commissioned evaluation	88
Sougth other advice	73
Discussed with reps. of program being evaluated*	63
Consulted a lawyer	15
Did not take any special actions	14
Reported wrong-doing to authorities	13
Consulted an Ombudperson	5
Went to the media	1

(N=259. Multiple responses are allowed.)

(*CES Report Findings*, Wayne MacDonald & Heather Buchanan. Adapted from Summer Institute presentation 2011.)

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Slide 2

What other ethical challenges have you faced regarding your research or evaluation activities?

What did you do about them?

Slide 3

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"Explain it to me one more time. What's the difference between ethical behavior and being an annoying goody-two-shoes nerd?"

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Slide 4

An Overview Of Research Ethics In Canada

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THREE DOCUMENTS (BRIEFLY) REVIEWED

➢ The Federal Government's <u>Tri-Council Policy Statement</u>: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

➢ CES <u>Guidelines for Ethical Conduct</u>

➢ <u>OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession</u>

The Tri-Council Policy Statement Regarding Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

An Overview Of The <u>Tri-Council</u> Policy Statement

RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

➢This is expressed through three core principles:

- *Respect for the person*
- *Concern for their welfare*
- *Justice*

An Overview Of The <u>Tri-Council</u> Policy Statement

1) RESPECT FOR THE PERSON:

➢ *Ethical treatment of persons involved in research as participants, or based on their data, or their human biological materials*

➢ *The dual moral obligation to respect persons' autonomy, and protect those with developing, impaired or diminished autonomy*

➢ *Respects participants' autonomy by the respecting their need to provide their free, informed and ongoing consent to participate*

An Overview Of The <u>Tri-Council</u> Policy Statement

2) CONCERN FOR THEIR WELFARE:

➢ *Includes participants' physical, mental and spiritual health, and their physical, economic and social circumstances*

➢ *Researchers should attempt to achieve the most favourable balance of risks and potential benefits for participants.*

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An Overview Of The <u>Tri-Council</u> Policy Statement

3) JUSTICE:

➢ *Refers to the obligation to treat people fairly and equitably, with equal respect and concern*

➢ *Vulnerability of participants is a key factor*

➢ *Vulnerable or marginalized people or groups may need to be afforded special attention to be treated justly in research*

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The Canadian Evaluation Society's Guidelines For Ethical Conduct

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Guidelines For Ethical Conduct

ETHICAL CONDUCT ENTAILS:

➢ *<u>Competence</u>:* **Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service**

➢ *<u>Integrity</u>:* **Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders**

➢ *<u>Accountability</u>:* **Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and products (deliverables)**

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Ethical Guidelines & Standards

1) COMPETENCE: *Evaluators should…*

➢ *Apply systematic methods of inquiry*

➢ *Possess or provide appropriate content knowledge*

➢ *Continuously improve their methodological and practice skills*

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Ethical Guidelines & Standards

2) INTEGRITY: *Evaluators should…*

➢ *Accurately represent their skills and knowledge*

➢ *Declare any conflicts of interest prior to beginning the evaluation process*

➢ *Be sensitive to the cultural or social environments of all stakeholder, and act accordingly*

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Ethical Guidelines & Standards

2) INTEGRITY: *Evaluators should…*

➢ *Confer with their clients, at the outset, regarding:*
  ▪ *Confidentiality*
  ▪ *Privacy*
  ▪ *Communication*
  ▪ *Ownership of findings and reports*

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Ethical Guidelines & Standards

3) ACCOUNTABILITY: *Evaluators are responsible for…*

➢ *Providing information to clients to facilitate their decision-making regarding evaluation strategies and methods*

➢ *Providing clear, accurate and fair written/oral representations of study findings and limitations*

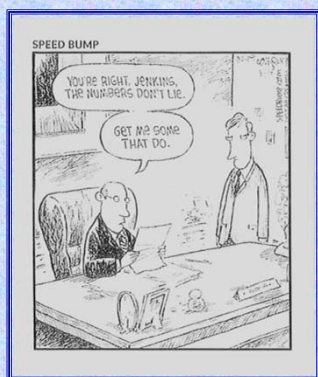➢ *Their fiscal decision-making and ensuring clients receive good value for their dollars*

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An Overview Of The <u>CES</u> Ethical Guidelines & Standards

3) ACCOUNTABILITY: *Evaluators are responsible for…*

➢ *Ensuring the completion of the evaluation within reasonable time, as agreed to with the client**

(*With the exception of unforeseen circumstances, or those outside the control of the evaluator. In that case, make sure to keep clients informed about these situations, and what you are doing to rectify them.)

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SPEED BUMP

YOU'RE RIGHT, JENKINS, THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE.

GET ME SOME THAT DO.

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The OCAP Principle of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession

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OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

➢ *These principles represent an expression of self-determination in research. Key notions include:*
  - *Collective Ownership of group information*
  - *First Nations Control over research and information*
  - *First Nations management of Access to their data*
  - *The physical Possession of their data*

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OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

1) OWNERSHIP:

➢ *Relationship of a First Nations community to its cultural knowledge, data, information*

➢ *Community or group owns information collectively the same way an individual owns personal information*

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OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

2) CONTROL:

➢ *Reflects aspirations of First Nations peoples to maintain and regain control of all aspects of their lives and institutions (including research, information and data)*

➢ *Extends to the control of resources and review processes, the formulation of conceptual frameworks, and data management*

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OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

3) ACCESS:

➢ *First Nations peoples must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities*

➢ *The right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information*
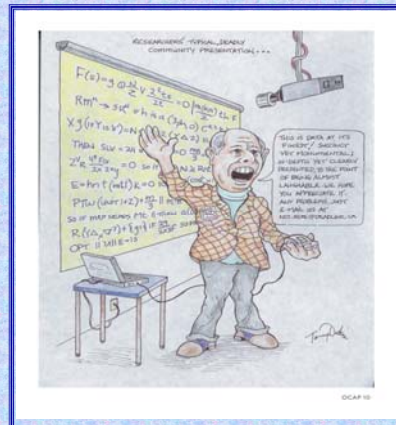
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OCAP Principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession

4) POSSESSION:

➤ *Possession of data is a mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected*

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OCAP Principles: Related Ethical Guidelines

➤ *All ethical requirements for research apply to research of Aboriginal people and communities*

➤ *Researchers should provide ongoing explanations regarding all aspects of the research study*

➤ *Ongoing community involvement, participation and consultation are required*

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OCAP Principles: Related Ethical Guidelines

➤ *Research relationships must be negotiated, ideally in writing*

➤ *Local and traditional knowledge should be incorporated*

➤ *Research must respect the privacy, protocols, dignity and individual and collective rights of Aboriginal peoples*

➤ *Meaningful capacity building should be incorporated into each project*

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OCAP Principles:
Related Ethical Guidelines

➢ *Reports and summaries must be returned to communities in an appropriate language and format*

➢ *Aboriginal people should have access to the research data, not just reports*

➢ *Community protocol should be respected*

➢ *Community interests should be supported, benefits maximized, and harm reduced or avoided*

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Some Ethical and Practical Considerations for Consumers of Evaluation to Consider

(Excerpts from *"The Evaluation Check-List"* developed by Kaplan Research Associates Inc.)

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These are some of the steps that organizations or government departments need to address _before_ beginning the evaluation process…

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

➢ *Know why you're evaluating. What are your evaluation goals?*

➢ *Develop or update your Logic Model with your:*

- ▪ *Goals*
- ▪ *Measurable objectives*
- ▪ *Related activities*
- ▪ *Measures of success*

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

➢ **Determine, in advance, how you will handle negative or problematic evaluation findings**

➢ **Negotiate, in advance, who will own the data and the evaluation report**

➢ **Ensure that you have all resources in place <u>before</u> engaging an evaluator**

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

➢ **Ensure that you have adequate time to complete the evaluation, based on the scope of the study, research methods, resources, and access to enough participants to successfully evaluate your program or service**

➢ **Have a process in place to ensure the confidentiality (or the anonymity) of your respondents**

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The *Evaluation Check-List*

➢ **Be prepared for less than positive results. How will the organization address findings that identify areas in need of action?**

➢ **Ethically, if you are going to ask clients or program participants to take the time to complete a form or questionnaire, you need to ensure that the resulting data are used for the purposes for which they were intended.**

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