

MNEA COVID and Social Justice Survey Qualitative Results

Overall Survey Notes: 23 responses, low open-end completion rate

COVID

Over half of the respondents said they are seeking information about evaluation practice during COVID, with the most common question being about how to practice evaluation virtually.

“Remote data collection. Contracting. . . how is this impacting the economic landscape of finding evaluation work?”

“How much should evaluators push program staff to engage in evaluation in the midst of COVID? How do evaluators balance their needs with program needs, especially if the pandemic will continue for years?”

Many also had questions about specific evaluation topics, the most common centering around equity for various groups.

“It is time to dig seriously on the disparities that emerge along crisis times. How the most affected communities are IPOC and that is happening over and over. We must explore that and on how evaluation could offer new approaches to understand it and solve it.”

“How are the impacts of COVID-19 felt differently across people and communities? Who is impacted the most and in what ways? What are those impacts - both from a numerical sense and from personal accounts/stories of these impacts? How can evaluators/researchers contribute to building awareness around the differential impacts of COVID, and be a part of community-driven solutions?”

The most common uses for this data would be to inform respondents’ personal evaluation practice or to solve an immediate programmatic or current project need. A few mentioned helping to solve a societal need.

“As I practice, being aware that even when race and covid and climate are not the subject matter, people are living in a sort of collective trauma state right now. How can I ethically and practically navigate that from a human subjects stand point and good human being standpoint.”

There were no meaningful themes present in the gaps respondents mentioned seeing around COVID data.

SOCIAL JUSTICE/GEORGE FLOYD

Respondents said they are seeking information about policing, equity in the field and practice of evaluation, and taking personal responsibility.

“How does the field of evaluation/evaluators contribute to white supremacy -both directly and indirectly? How does/can the field and evaluators contribute to anti-racist policies and solutions? How can evaluators/applied researchers support municipalities in exploring alternatives to the traditional policing/public safety models? How can evaluators/applied researchers be a tool/bridge for ensuring that Black voices are centered in conversations about next steps?”

“How can I use my skills on behalf of anti-racist action and healing?”

They would use this information to solve societal needs and/or for personal purposes.

“Help educate the public and elected officials, formulate public policy.”

“To become a better, anti-racist evaluator and hold myself and my colleagues accountable. To do a better job making the case for clients to incorporate Black voices and community members into the forefront of evaluation design and sense-making.”

There were no meaningful themes present in the gaps respondents mentioned seeing around social justice and evaluation.

The most common response to which communities have the greatest need for evaluation around COVID and social justice were BIPOC communities and immigrant communities, but many various community groups were mentioned.

“Black Americans (men, women, boys, girls, LGBTQ+), Indigenous populations, immigrants and refugees - and it's (we) white people who need to learn from the insights.”

“Disability, older adults, Urban Indian communities and Indian Country as distinct categories for analysis, Rural communities of color and immigrant communities.”

POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS FOR MNEA

The few respondents who answered this question said MNEA could better support members through sharing resources or journal articles and hosting spaces for discussion of these issues. One other idea was to offer a mentorship program.

“I also would love to have conversations with other evaluators about these items, to be pushed to be better, to get us uncomfortable, and to actively work collectively to continue becoming a more anti-racist, community-driven field.”