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## Gathering Evidence: Why evaluation is so important!

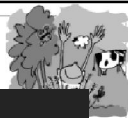





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## Why Evaluate? - general

- To show your project or visit works
- To highlight successes (and further needs)
- To convince potential and existing:
  - Funders
  - Commissioners
  - Participants
- To become sustainable in the longer term
- To add to the 'green care' or 'ecotherapy' evidence base



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## Why evaluate?

- **Who for?**
  - What is your audience?
  - Funders – potential/existing
  - Participants
  - Trustees/ directors / other supporters
- **To show what?**
  - Key outcomes or successes
  - Improvement / stability / lack of decline in symptoms
  - Value for money



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## How to evaluate?

- **Methods chosen will depend on:**
  - What you want to achieve
  - Resources – time, money, people
  - Ability/ willingness of participants to participate
- **A mixed method approach is usually best**
  - Quantitative
  - Qualitative
  - Interactive



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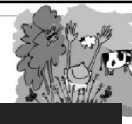


## Who to evaluate?

- **Who will carry out the evaluation?**
  - Who has best skills for your evaluation?
  - External consultant/ academic partner
  - Project staff
  - Participant involvement
- **Who/ what will be evaluated?**
  - All or sample of participants
  - Staff too?
- **Ethical considerations both for evaluator and evaluatee**



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## When to evaluate?

- Always good to incorporate evaluation at the outset to enable changes to be compared to a baseline measurement
  - i.e. **Before/ after study**
- If this is not possible then could also compare with similar people who aren't involved in the project
  - i.e. **a with/without study**



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## How much will it cost?

- Depends on how you have answered the previous questions!
- Some examples.....
  - Gold standard – well known external evaluator, longitudinal aspect, mixed methods (including some standardised measures, some case studies and qualitative elements), statistical analysis, cost benefit element, quality report
  - Small scale, one moment in time, conducted by project staff, purely qualitative, short report
  - One off questionnaire or discussion after every visit on what worked, what didn't and possible improvements.



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## Tools and Tips.....

- Large range of outcome measures already developed – don't need to reinvent the wheel
- However this range can be confusing
- Use appropriate measures – check out what other similar projects/ researchers have used, ask around, check the literature
- If using external evaluators – check they have skills/ staff you need, experience of evaluating these types of project, good reputation etc
- It is not possible to evaluate every element of your project
- Beware of evaluation fatigue
- Dovetail evaluation into your project