

Findings from the ‘Sticky Wall’ exercise – Working in a team of one – the realities of evaluators working in regional centres.

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Issues

Isolation/lack of collegial support (8 comments)

Lack of collegial support

Lack of interaction to bounce ideas off

Isolation

Team of one. Geographical distance

Not as easy to share ideas/resources and learn from one another

Working in isolation

I miss having easily accessible colleagues to talk evaluation with

Connection working together to provide evaluation support services within the team and across the region.

Lack of peer review/professional development/ concern about quality of the evaluation (8 comments)

Limited avenues for peer review at all stages of evaluation and ethical reviews

Who is evaluating the evaluators?

How do you know you've considered everything?

How do you know you are doing the right thing?

Poor quality evaluations

Trust – credible service

Lack of frameworks

Hard to get to professional development

Lack of understanding of evaluation and evaluative thinking (6 comments)

Not really understanding evaluation

Lack of understanding of research/evaluation

Lack of understanding around the area of evaluative thinking

In Northland agencies and organisations are hard-pressed! Emphasis on contract monitoring can overshadow evaluative thinking as a whole.

Not seeing the importance of evaluation.

Lack of appreciation of value of evaluation

Maintaining Consistency and Communication with team members outside region (3 comments)

Consistency – working together to mutually support team to apply a consistent approach, but still allowing for flexibility and agility to ensure services fit the environment

Communication – working together and effectively. Communication key messages about evaluation when still setting up and developing approach

Diverse range of practise across services (i.e. Army different from Air Force and Navy), so team does not always understand other people's issues.

No local network (2 comments)

Not part of a local network

Identifying people, i.e. who are able to carry out evaluation in a meaningful way and foster evaluative thinking/ethos

Solutions

Build Networks (8 comments)

Gather support allies from: organisation, networks with colleagues or university, direct line to the ANZEA board.
Connect with Wellington, e.g. invite to the region to join in meetings and workshops. (Wellington people are generally happy to travel).
Generate local conversations (face-to-face and email) about evaluative thinking (things people would enjoy). Broad-based involvement.
Networking.
Have to make our own networks in the regions and with other regions.
Ability to build networks.
Getting opportunities to meet/discuss. Knowing what evaluative thinking is about. Organisation wide involvement. Capacity building.
Use exiting professional networks who have some interest in evaluation and spark their interest.
Regular team (whole team) get-togethers while team is establishing and building.

Mentoring/Peer review (7 comments)

Buddy system with appropriate contracts
Joint projects
Mentoring – teaching evaluation skills
Peer-review
Mentoring
At conference seek a mentor who you can phone/email/Skype
Identify professional mentors that can partner with other ANZEA members to offer support and identify good practice.

Use of technology (5 comments)

Skype training sessions with another branch
Branch meetings are helpful – can you join in a ‘virtual’ conversation/meeting?
On-line forums and meetings increased sharing and support.
Online chat room. Occasional face to face.
Bi-monthly whole of team VTC (Video conferencing). Possibly VTC with other similar DHB’s for example to share good practice.

Communication/Marketing (3 comments)

Evaluation as a continuum
Marketing – sell product, win trust
Get organisations to sponsor an evaluation (simple and small) event to begin with to build momentum.

Support from ANZEA

Information Sharing and networking opportunities (6 comments)

Does ANZEA website have a 'blog'? Increase information sharing opportunities.

Circulate information. On-line communication.

Networking

On-line forums

On-line networks

Being able to network at conferences.

Collegial Support/Mentoring (3 comments)

Collegial support

Mentoring/buddy system

Match up new members to welcome and take through, share evaluation practices etc.

Supporting regional branches (3 comments)

Consider some of the regional boundaries

Support inter-regional connections (.e. Taranaki/Manawatu) [It is noted this is all part of the central region]

Information about where the regional centres are – what is already there and what can be offered.