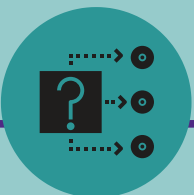


How are research and program assessments different?

Research



The goal of research is to prove or disprove a hypothesis (i.e., a guess about what is happening) and to test a theory (i.e., the reason something is or is not occurring).



Generally, social research requires someone with an advanced degree.



Researchers' methods include gathering numerical (quantitative) and narrative (qualitative) data in order to analyze relationships from that data.



Example: A researcher wants to examine whether race has a relationship with intimate partner violence. A hypothesis might be: American Indian women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence than white women.



Researchers work to establish findings that apply to larger populations.



Programs funded by OVW may not use their grant funds to conduct research. See OJP's decision tree at: <https://ojp.gov/funding/Apply/Resources/ResearchDecisionTree.pdf>

Program Assessment



Internal staff or outside evaluators without advanced degrees may run assessments.



Usually, the goal of assessments is to determine whether goals and objectives have been met (e.g. outputs) and the effectiveness of those services (e.g. outcomes).



Assessments include gathering numerical (quantitative) and narrative (qualitative) data by documenting services and clients' stories.



Example: An assessment for a DV legal program might include documenting all types of legal services provided (e.g., protective orders, divorce, custody, etc.), the number of victims served, the number of times the services were provided, the number of hours spent (outputs), and whether the victim found the assistance helpful (outcome).



Questions to consider for beginning a program assessment:

- What are we doing?
- How are we doing it?
- Who is or isn't receiving our services?
- Are the clients satisfied?
- How are the staff feeling?
- How can our program improve?