



Mapping Your Reentry Program Evaluation Design

DESIGN MAPPING is a process through which researchers identify and plot research questions, associated data elements, and data sources for an evaluation. This four-step process helps ensure that your evaluation captures the data necessary to answer the key research questions you need to answer.

Step 1

Finalize your research questions Carefully review and refine your evaluation research questions.

Research questions for a process study will have to do with the implementation of an intervention whereas those for an outcome study will concern recidivism, employment, and other outcomes the program is designed to impact. Make sure your research questions make sense based on the program you are evaluating.

Step 2

Identify Your Constructs Determine what data elements you will need to answer your research questions. In other words, what key constructs need to be measured to allow you to answer your questions?

Step 3

Find Your Data Locate data sources for your constructs of interest. Some measures may need to be obtained through new data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews); others may be available in administrative data (e.g., case management systems). Be sure to assess data availability for all populations included in your evaluation. If you have a treatment and control group in your evaluation, are the data elements available for both groups?

Step 4

Check Your Design Review your design map and identify any gaps to be filled.

EXAMPLE DESIGN MAP

	Research Questions	Constructs	Data Sources
Process Study	Q. How engaged in the programming were program participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sessions completed Number of homework assignments completed Staff ratings of client engagement Client self-reported level of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program administrative records Staff surveys Client surveys <p><i>All data available for treatment group members only</i></p>
Outcome Study	Q. Did individuals served by the program have better recidivism outcomes than those who did not participate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and timing of new criminal arrests Community supervision violations Self-reported criminalized behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative data maintained by jail (<i>treatment and control groups</i>) Administrative data maintained by probation (<i>treatment and control groups</i>) Post-release interviews (<i>treatment and control group members</i>)