

Traditional vs Participatory Evaluation

There are also two different ways for communities and evaluators to work together: traditional and participatory.

- In a **traditional approach** to evaluation, an evaluator is hired to conduct an evaluation and works independently, interacting with program or agency staff as needed to retrieve information.
- In a **participatory, or collaborative approach** to evaluation, an evaluator is invited to take part in an evaluation as more of an advisor and partner, interacting regularly with all involved as part of, rather than outside of, the group. The team, of which the evaluator is a member, works together to plan and carry out the evaluation.

Benefits of the participatory approach include the following:

- Builds on the strengths and values of all participants
- Increases evaluation buy-in and capacity among participants
- Increases the likelihood that the evaluation will be culturally appropriate and relevant
- Increases the likelihood that the evaluation results will be valued and used
- Can reduce evaluation costs

From the Prevention Solutions@EDC online course: [What Is the SPF? An Introduction to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.](#)