

# Utilizing Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation Techniques in Program Development, Planning, and Implementation

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Understanding the well-being of children and caregivers who are living in kinship/grandfamilies is important for the program and planning efforts of agencies that provide services to these families. Program development and evaluation decisions affect policies, programs, and communities, and ultimately peoples' quality of life. There is no one-size-fits-all gold standard program or evaluation technique that is equitable and responsive to all kinship/grandfamily caregiving homes. To ensure we are building programming that is sensitive to the unique challenges of families from marginalized backgrounds, we need to build and evaluate programs that meaningfully address the unique circumstances these families face in the communities in which they reside. One way to do this is to build programs that are informed by local culture and community context and to evaluate them using culturally responsive and equitable evaluation techniques.

## What is Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation?

- ▶ Culturally responsive and equitable evaluation (CREE) is an evaluation paradigm that incorporates cultural, structural, and contextual factors (including historical, social, economic, racial, ethnic, and gender considerations) into a participatory process that shifts power to individuals who are members of the group most impacted by the intervention.
- ▶ CREE is not just one type of evaluation method; it is a framework that should be infused into all types of evaluation methodologies.
- ▶ CREE advances equity by informing evaluation strategy, program improvement, decision-making, policy formation, and the identified solution(s) for instituting meaningful change.

Program developers and evaluators who are not culturally responsive can misdiagnose a social problem and draw inaccurate conclusions as to what appropriate solutions are.

## Steps of Culturally Relevant Evaluation

Figure 1 comes from "Considerations and Strategies for Embedding CREE in the Design and Evaluation of a Benefits Cliff Calculator," by Kimberly Harris and Anne Chamberlain, which appears in *Culturally Responsible and Equitable Evaluation: Visions and Voices of Emerging Scholars*. It outlines the key steps that should be employed in an evaluation plan that is informed by the CREE framework (Frierson et al., 2002). It shows that there is not one step that says, "Think about culture and context"; instead, one should consider context and culture

in every step of the program-building and evaluation process. Engaging with communities can help program developers and evaluators understand how to ask the right questions and when to adapt instruments. This process necessitates giving a platform to communities so that their voices are heard and listened to every step of the way, instead of merely consulting them once to complete a step on a checklist.

Figure 1



From Harris, K., & Chamberlain, A. (2024). Considerations and strategies for embedding CREE in the design and evaluation of a benefits cliff calculator. In A. C. Adedoyin, N. N. Amutah-Onukagha, & C. D. Jones (Eds.). *Culturally responsive and equitable evaluation: Visions and voices of emerging scholars* (54-56). Cognella.

**The next page contains a bibliography/list of resources to support the development of CREE-informed program development and evaluations.**

## **Bibliography/Resources to Support the Development of CREE-Informed Program Development and Evaluations**

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The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center (Network) helps government agencies and nonprofits in states, tribes, and territories work across jurisdictional and systemic boundaries to improve supports and services for families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so. For more information, please visit [www.GKSNetwork.org](http://www.GKSNetwork.org).

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