**Evaluative Thinking Discussion**

Organization/Department:

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**Note:** “Evaluative thinking” requires a willingness and flexibility to continuously question the way things are done and the assumptions about quality that underlie them; is linked to action, to help make better decisions that lead to more positive outcomes; and is demonstrated in the implementation of well-focused programming and in the use of well-designed evaluations that feed into program and organizational decision making. ([source](https://www.theclearinitiative.org/sites/clearinitiative/files/2016-04/Evaluative-Thinking-Report.pdf)) While this is an unprecedented time for your organization, applying evaluative thinking can help staff learn more about a program and how to make it responsive in times of uncertainty and when things are going well.

**Purpose:** This guide is designed to help your department in its decision making, work planning, and overall departmental support for staff and the organization. This process can be used under general programming circumstances, and in particular to the current climate.

**Outcome:**

* Respond to the following questions during your department meeting using the collaborative notes section below. Responses will be analyzed across departments for emerging themes for departmental and leadership feedback.

**Instructions**:

1. **If using within multiple departments, create a new copy of this document** and label it “[Department Name] Evaluative Thinking Discussion”. Feel free to also use this with your entire staff
2. Discuss and answer the following questions based on your department’s work
3. Respond to the [collaborative notes section below](#kix.akhymo3idxhi) . Responses can be developed collectively or typed individually in the same document

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**Program Decision Making**

**Instructions**: List out your department’s current programs and strategies based on its current status:

* Departmental programs/strategies currently in operation:
* Departmental programs/strategies currently paused:

**Collaborative Notes**

In the first column, list the programs and strategies. For each program/strategy, answer the following:

**Questions:**

1. Why? *What were the determining factors that led to this program’s continuation or pausing? (i.e., program implementation, staff capacity, participant priority, ease of pivoting, perceived impact, perceived priority, etc.)*
2. What’s going on? (*What is currently happening with the program’s activities? What is going on for the participants? What’s going on for staff? For paused programs, in what ways can program activities and implementation be reviewed to be responsive to different contexts in the future?)*
3. What’s new? *(What new strategies were implemented? Where are noticeable shifts occurring, both big and small, with the program’s activities, for program participants, and for staff? What is occurring now that wasn’t occurring before? For paused programs, in what ways can program activities and implementation be reviewed to be responsive to different contexts in the future?)*
4. What remains? (*What are the emerging needs and how could they be addressed?)*
5. What does it all mean? *(Think about the program within the bigger picture of your organization’s priorities of staff and community care, emergency response TA, and urgent funding to support the organization. What does this program mean to the staff and to the community? For operating programs that required more heavy lifting, was it worth the effort to do so? For operating programs that experienced little to no changes, is that considered a success? For paused programs, was there more that could have been done to continue the program?)*

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| **Program/Service Name** | **Why?** | **What’s going on?** | **What’s new?** | **What remains?** | **What does it all mean?** |
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