

Probing for What *Shows Up* As Mattering: Surface the Questions that Your Evaluation Practices Seem To Address

HAZEL SYMONETTE, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Evaluation is systematic data-grounded inquiry for making judgments about merit, worth, value, significance, congruence.

Ask and Answer Questions that matter to primary stakeholders to make a difference via changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, orientations, relationships, conditions, etcetera.

To what extent are you *asking and answering the right questions right* based on

- Stakeholder expectations
- Data quality judgment criteria
- Relevant inquiry logics:
 - Evidential Inquiry
 - Evocative Inquiry

- ❖ What questions about your participants, your services and other programmatic activities are your current evaluation processes, practices and instruments answering?
 - *How do you know that these are the questions that really matter to your stakeholders: notably, persons and units that are involved in, affected by or can influence your program's/intervention's future (either positively or otherwise)?*
- ❖ To what extent are those questions answered fully and well for all segments of your target populations?
- ❖ How do you know that your evaluations are *providing documentation in ways that matter* to your primary stakeholder constituencies: notably, the envisioned evidence is credible and compelling and, thus, *speaks into their listening*?
- ❖ What important questions remain *unasked* or are not fully and adequately answered by your current processes, practices, instruments and instrumentation?
- ❖ ENVISIONED NEXT STEPS AND RESOURCES FOR YOUR SUCCESS
What would help you address those remaining questions as well as your unmet needs and concerns in order to fully actualize your mission and vision for all persons in your target population?