



Consumer's Guide to Using Evaluation Findings

SBCA Professional Development Workshop

June 13, 2024

For more information and to register: <https://www.benefitcostanalysis.org/workshops>

Description: Benefit-cost analysts, as well as most other policy analysts, often find themselves consuming evaluation evidence generated by other researchers. In doing so, they must always be asking themselves “How confident can I be in using the estimates reported in a study as part of my analysis?”

This workshop provides a framework of ten questions to ask about evaluation findings, including randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and other designs. It offers a straightforward approach for assessing the quality of the estimated effects and deciding whether to incorporate them into an analysis. In addition, the workshop illustrates the approach with real-world examples, including situations where problems with estimated effects are not particularly self-evident. Participants will receive a two-page summary of the ten questions as well as a reference list for those interested in exploring the issues in more detail.

This workshop is designed for analysts in government, foundations, and elsewhere who advise decisionmakers on the basis of available evaluation evidence or who want to incorporate such evidence into their own policy or program analyses. It will be particularly useful for U.S. Federal agency staff charged with meeting the requirements of the [Evidence Act](#) as well as those tasked with meeting similar requirements.

The workshop will be led by an outstanding team of evaluators with decades of experience designing, leading, and interpreting research studies.

Instructors



[Craig Thornton](#) (organizer) specializes in evaluation design, benefit-cost analyses, and health and disability policy. He has helped design and implement evaluations in the fields of health, education and training, disability, and climate change. Dr. Thornton is past president of the Society for Benefit-Cost Analysis and a past board member of AcademyHealth. Thornton holds a Ph.D. in economics from the Johns Hopkins University.



[Randall Brown](#) specializes in the evaluation design for complex interventions, focusing primarily on studies of health care coordination, primary care reform, and long-term care, for Medicare and Medicaid populations. The Association for Public Policy and Management awarded Dr. Brown the [Peter H. Rossi Award](#) for Contributions to the Theory or Practice of Program Evaluation. Throughout his career, Dr. Brown has focused on bringing the strongest and most robust methodological approaches to program evaluations, and providing clear, heuristic interpretations.



[John Czajka](#) is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and a recipient of its [Founders Award](#). He has served on six review committees for the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences. His research has focused on statistical applications of program administrative data and the analysis of survey data from large national samples, smaller scale panel studies, and more specialized surveys. He has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Michigan.



[Anu Rangarajan](#) led Mathematica's International Research and Climate Change units, playing key roles on agriculture and energy evaluations, maternal and child health initiatives, and water and sanitation projects. She led the effort to produce *The Oxford Handbook of Program Design and Implementation Evaluation*. Rangarajan holds a Ph.D. in economics from Brown University.