**Session Name:** Confusion, Suspicion, and Shattered Dreams: An Evaluation Play in Three Acts

**Speaker:** Annelise Carleton-Hug, Trillium Associates

**Session Date/Time:** 6/23/2011 2:45 PM

**Notetaker:** Katelyn Cummings

**Main Themes:**

* Purpose of this session:
  + To demonstrate the different types of interactions than an environmental evaluator might encounter
  + To spark discussion for how to deal with these problems
* The typical problems of an environmental evaluator are detailed in a three part play.

**Detailed Notes:**

**Act One:**

Premise: This skit represents the difficulties that can occur when initially getting started with an evaluation. Clients may have difficulties defining the goals of the evaluation and might underestimate the expense of performing an evaluation. This skit also shows that evaluators can confuse clients by using technical jargon.

Points of Discussion:

* Common problems with initial interaction with the client?
  + Scope in terms of money
  + Scope in terms of the questions they want to ask
  + Some ask, “What can you do for nothing?”
* Solutions?
  + No value is placed on evaluations if they are free
  + Many non-profits have never done evaluation -> Give them an assessment of readiness so they know what to expect
  + Go deeper into buy in and purpose
  + Give coaching to get funders to define goals
  + Promote capacity building -> show how it can improve their programs
  + Use common terminology

**Act Two:**

Premise: This skit talks about the difficulties that can arise in getting accurate tests and samples of the customers/constituencies.

Points of Discussion:

* Common problems with getting good results?
  + Potential for biases
  + Difficulties in getting all sides of the story
  + Have group sample that is not representative of the group

**Act Three:**

Premise: This skit portrayed the difficulties that can arise when explaining bad results to clients.

Points of Discussion

* Solutions?
  + Temper bad results with good ones
  + Show data to people early in the process
  + Talk them through the results
  + Frame it from the needs of the users
  + Do not assign judgment or responsibility

**Comments on Play as a Form of Teaching**:

* Some said “it’s effective because you can say things that you might not be able to say otherwise”
* Some though it would be best for newer people
* Others thought it would be good for demonstrating subtler problems
* Many agreed that it was an effective way to teach evaluation