Research Plan

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A human service evaluation of any kind has a lot of moving parts. In order to conduct a proper evaluation, the practitioner needs to have a respectable research plan. The practitioner needs to get in touch with the stakeholders and carefully select the type of evaluation that will be most beneficial. Once the evaluation type is selected, the practitioner must begin planning the evaluation. In the planning stage, the practitioner should come up with affective research and data collecting methods. The research plan for the evaluation of the Rappahannock area community service board (RACSB) will be discussed in more detail.

**Stakeholders**

There are numerous stakeholders at the Rappahannock area community service board day support program. The stakeholders for the RACSB include caregivers, managers, behavioral specialist, case managers and psychiatrist. The caregivers provide a wide variety of services in this organization. They are the main ones responsible for taking care of the clients and have to be trained to handle a wide variety of situations. The upper management of the RACSB are responsible for running the organization. They make sure that the caregivers are doing their jobs properly, help set up community activities and make sure clients are getting the best help possible. The management also help find new clients and help them transition into the RACSB. The behavioral specialist come in to help with behavioral solutions for troubled clients. Since the RACSB serves clients with a wide range of disabilities, behavioral specialist are needed to come up with behavioral plans. The case managers serve as an intermediate between clients and the RACSB. Case managers help find services for their clients and work closely with upper management. Finally, the RACSB has a psychiatrist that helps clients with there disabilities. The psychiatrist works closely with the client’s family and the RACSB.

The most important stakeholder for a human service organization is the client. Without the proper cliental, organizations like the RACSB would have trouble staying open. In order to get clients, organizations need to provide services that the general population needs. The clients can shape how an organization functions because their needs are always changing. Since human service organizations are there to serve the clients, they have to adjust to the client’s needs and wants.

**Type of evaluation**

The type of evaluation that will be used for the evaluation of the RACSB is goal free evaluation. According to Posavac, goal free evaluation mainly focuses on the evaluator’s personal observation (Posavac, 2016, p. 24). The practitioner does not have to know the exact goals of the organization when using the goal free evaluation method. Most of the information in a goal free evaluation is gathered by personal interactions. These personal interactions and observations help show how organizations function. The goal free evaluation can also give agencies useful information which could be used to improve their organization. Goal free evaluations will be used for my evaluation because students are unable to get all the necessary information. Due to limited resources, goal free evaluations are a great way to practice conducting an evaluation of a human service agencies. The goal free evaluation makes conducting an evaluation much more attainable.

**Evaluation Questions**

Question 1: What type of services does the day support program at Rappahannock area community service board Provide?

The day support program at the RACSB has provided services for the special need’s community for countless years. During my evaluation, I want to find out the exact services the RACSB provides. I want to learn if the services provided increases or decreased over the years. Also, conducting an evaluation can help me understand if these services are still applicable for the clients and the community in todays society. Due to the changing society and increase number of special needs individuals, the RACSB is bound to adjust to the changing population. I’m interested in learning if RACSB has changed their services in recent years because of the different needs of the special need’s population.

Question 2: How are the services at this day support program being implemented?

After finding out about the services provided, it is important to study how these services are implemented. A service will not fully benefit the special needs population if it is not properly implemented. During the evaluation, I want to find out how the RACSB provides services to there cliental. I want to learn specific details about who and how much people are responsible for implementing these services. Also, the rules regarding these services would be important to understand. Understanding the rules can give me more insight about who is allowed to use these services. Finally, studying the implementation of different services can help me see if there are any flaws within the services provided. Hopefully, this evaluation will provide the answers that I need.

Both of the questions discussed can be answered by using the goal free evaluation method. Goal free evaluation method should be adequate because of the gathering data technics. The goal free evaluation relies on personal interactions, this is why finding out about services and how they are implemented is easily attainable. Also, not being overconcerned by the agencies goals and being unbiased should result to a great evaluation. The evaluator would be able answer these evaluation questions without anybody influencing their personal opinion before the evaluation begins. For a first-time evaluator, goal free evaluation can be a wonderful way to get their evaluation questions answered. A young evaluator like myself would be able to conduct an evaluation without a extreme amount of stress.

**Data Collection**

The data collection methods for the evaluation of the RACSB are observation, interviews and personal research. Gaining data from observations is an efficient way to gain knowledge about how organizations function internally. For the evaluation of the RACSB, I will spend a day observing both the clients and the stakeholders. During the observation, I’m interested in seeing the interactions between the clients and stakeholders. The interactions between clients and stakeholders are important because it can make or break an organization. Human service organizations would benefit from having positive interactions between clients and stakeholders. Conducting interviews is another efficient data collecting technic. Interviews can give a practitioner more in-depth data that an observation cannot provide. The amount of useful information depends on the person an evaluator is interviewing. For example, for my observation I will have the privilege to interview the person in charge of the day support program. Interviewing somebody in management should produce a ton of useful information. Interviewing somebody in charge should help an evaluator have a deeper understanding of the bigger picture. Finally, doing personal research can be just as important as observations and interviews. This is where an evaluator gains knowledge of an organization by doing research outside an organization. This research can include internet searches and talking to former employees.

**Research Method**

The method that would best fit my evaluation is the qualitative research method. The basic principle of qualitative research is to study things in their natural setting (McLeod, 2017, p. 1). An evaluator using this method would try to evaluate an organization without changing the organizations natural environment. The reason evaluators don’t want to alter the natural setting is because it can influence the results in a negative way. The results will not be completely accurate if the environment is toyed with in anyway. This research method is perfect for my situation because I plan on doing natural observations and open interviews. The qualitative research method will be a productive method for the evaluation of the RACSB.

The reason qualitative research is perfect for the evaluation of the RACSB is because it will give me sufficient answers to my research questions. By conducting interviews and observing, I would be able to find out most of the services the RACSB provide. Observing these services in action will help me understand how they are implemented. For this method to be productive, I will need to play close attention to my surroundings. Practicing observation skills is a requirement for productive qualitative research. Qualitative research and goal free evaluation combined should make for a productive evaluation.

**Conclusion**

As previously discussed, evaluating the RACSB requires a lot of attention from the evaluator. The type of evaluation that will be used is goal free evaluation. Before conducting the evaluation, I came up with two questions that will help guide me throughout the observation process. Once the questions are completed, it is important to identify the stakeholders. Once the stakeholders are defined, I will be using interviews and observations to gather the necessary data. To conclude, there is a lot of ways to conduct an evaluation and it all comes down to the evaluator and the organization.

References

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