Increasing Response Rates: Tips for Getting Staff and Faculty to Provide Participant Feedback

When most of your participants give you feedback, you can use these data to ensure that trainings are having the intended effects on knowledge, skills, or behaviors. These data will help your college and the Chancellor's Office understand how activities funded through the California State Legislature approved $10 million of one-time funding in the 2018-19 State Budget for California Community Colleges to support mental health services and training are impacting student mental health.

This tip sheet offers suggestions for encouraging participants to provide initial and follow-up feedback on trainings. Not all of them will be useful for all campuses, but creative mixing and matching can help you gather more robust data and create opportunities for improving your trainings.

Training Strategies to Increase Response Rates

- Have participants sign a commitment form that states that they will submit feedback.
- Ensure that Instructors understand the data submission expectations and can share these expectations with participants.
- Consider creating materials for Instructors so that they can clearly explain the value of feedback (e.g., data could prompt further funding of the trainings, helps to establish whether training is working, lets us know if changes in the trainings need to be made).
- At the trainings, clearly set the expectation that participants will be asked to submit feedback; have Instructors reinforce the request multiple times during the trainings, especially at the end.
- Make sure that participants know that you will be contacting them with reminders to submit feedback.
- Make sure that they know what to look for, when to expect your request, and how to recognize your call/text/email.
- Obtain contact information from participants at trainings and ask what method they prefer to be contacted through; some colleges report increased response rates when offered multiple options for feedback submission (i.e., allowing data to be submitted online, over the phone, via fax, or snail mail).
- Let participants know how long the feedback will take (e.g., only a few minutes of their time.).
- Consider including incentives to encourage participants to submit feedback; make sure to tell participants about these incentives during your trainings.

Follow-Up Strategies to Increase Response Rates

- Consider your timing when asking for follow-up feedback: some colleges found requests for data 60 days after a training is an optimal interval.
- Consider setting up regular "newsletters" or other forms of communication in which you can offer something to the participants that would be beneficial to them.
- Alternatively, send out a simple message with the request for feedback rather than inundating the participants with information; try out different strategies to find out what works best for your staff.
- Within communications, thank them for their part in helping to achieve goals (e.g., reduce stigma, support students, increase mental health awareness), so that they keep the bigger picture of why this information is being requested.
- If you are planning to use incentives to encourage participants to share their data, remind them about the incentives whenever you communicate with them.
- Have a very simple and quick method for submitting feedback that everyone can easily use.
- Provide clear and easy instructions for the feedback submission process.
- Thank participants who submit feedback and let them know that their data has been received.