CONSIDERATIONS AROUND PRIVACY

In our work, privacy and confidentiality are important to keeping people safe. In evaluation, privacy is understood at two different levels:

- *Confidentiality*: The identity of the individual is known to the evaluator or others as stated, but their individual information is not shared with anyone outside of the stated audience.

- *Anonymous*: Information is being collected in a way that no identifiable information is available about the individual who is providing it.

Data can be collected in a way that is anonymous and confidential – meaning you do not have information about the individuals participating AND that no information will be provided to others outside of the stated audience. But note, confidentiality does not ensure anonymity.

Privacy is hard to do in the context TA when it is being delivered one-on-one or in small doses to specific groups around specific issues. If we are collecting information one person at a time it can be hard to keep that information confidential and anonymous. What is important is that we are clear about the level of privacy they can expect and that the tools we choose support that privacy.

Ways in which tools impact privacy:

- For surveys sent out over text message, keep in mind that some people share cell phones. Check to make sure you're chatting with the right person.

- On-line tools track IP addresses and locations or emails of individuals providing data without them necessarily knowing this information is being gathered. You can turn off these functions in many on-line survey tools.

- Including a privacy statement in a survey along with the consent allows individuals a more informed choice about how to participate.

- We need staff training and accountability procedures around confidentiality of information and ways in which to protect the data we collect from misuse. How we do this needs to be clearly articulated in our evaluation practice guidelines.

- Tools can be built to include personal identification numbers that allow us to match individuals to look at their responses over time while maintaining confidentiality.

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