

Program Evaluation

When you have completed each activity, consider a program evaluation that can be used to determine the best means for improving on future arts in healthcare activities. Keep your audience in mind though – simple is better.

For general evaluations, you can use a simple “smiley face” evaluation forms for every event. You will be most successful in this endeavor if you have plenty of volunteers to assist you. One key to successful program evaluation is to make the process as simple and unobtrusive as possible for your audience members. A team of ten or so volunteers with evaluation forms on clip boards can collect over one hundred completed forms in the ten or fifteen minutes following a public performance. Do not rely on people to voluntarily fill out forms and leave them following an event. It is best to NOT announce anything about the forms, but to have friendly volunteers who hand the simple form on a clipboard with a pen to audience members following the event. The forms take seconds to complete and can even be completed by the volunteer on behalf of a patient.

For more in-depth evaluations, collect a small sampling of before and after data *from caregivers only* to better demonstrate the impact of the performing arts on stress and mood levels in the healthcare environment. You can collect this information during one event or several, depending on what is simplest in your environment. These measures may not be administered to patients as this would be considered clinical research and would require IRB approval. Since every healthcare institution has unique policies, please obtain permission from your nursing administration or other appropriate department before administering these measures to caregivers. You will want to approach this as a pilot study and, in keeping with our recommended evaluation methodology, engage a significant team of volunteers to administer the forms. In this case, the forms should never be handed to the caregivers, but should be filled in by the volunteer.

Additional evaluative information can be obtained in the form of letters of appreciation, comments that can be written down, e-mailed comments, complaints, and suggestions. All information can be useful in strategizing future activities for the healthcare setting, the patients and families, and the artists.