**Center for Learning and Leadership**
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center – College of Medicine

**Comments and Suggestions for Initial Outcome Questions for Technical Assistance**
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Our staff is involved in work in the community that fits the definition of technical assistance. However, most of this work is accomplished through relationships and partnerships, which we have built over time. As we work with these partners, we do not always designate ourselves as the lead entity. We have a collaborative approach in which we promote equal access for all partners. When we lead, facilitate, or influence the direction of a group, it is done in a manner that it is not seen as "the UCEDD providing technical assistance". In fact, we promote a reciprocal exchange of information in which all partners share expertise or information. We are therefore more likely to be seen as a contributing member, even though leadership and TA functions are integrated into our participation. So, it is awkward to ask our partners to rate the assistance we gave them when we are viewed by them as one of the members of the group.  Additionally, even though our staff members work for the UCEDD, their community partners do not necessarily see the UCEDD as the one giving the technical assistance. They see the individual staff member as the source of their information or help.

So you can see that the questions given to us do not adequately fit the populations or partnerships with whom we provide technical assistance. Many of our respondents would not understand these questions for a number of reasons. Some of the questions are so standardized that they may not make sense or be appropriate for the respondents (even though we understand they need to be standardized). Some of the words such as 'technical assistance', 'networking', and 'evidence -based' may not be words that our community partners use and some may not understand what is meant by those words.  If we continue to use the phrase or words 'technical assistance' in the evaluation questions then we would have to define it for these groups. Instead of using the term 'technical assistance' we could use 'help' or 'information'.

Additionally, we either need to modify the questions for each specific group based on the mission of the group and the purpose of the staff member's presence in that group or change some of the wording. The following are suggestions for ways we could ask the questions to our partners that would make sense to them.

The numbered questions in black are the original questions.  We have provided suggested alternate questions below in red:

1.  **This technical assistance has enhanced the services I provide.**
    The following suggestions for alternate forms of this question would be appropriate for the groups with whom we work.
    a. (*Name of person*), through her leadership in (*name of group*), has enhanced my organization's collaboration with other people and entities that serve children with autism and related disabilities.
    b. The technical assistance (information/help) enhanced the services that my child received.
    c. The help I received at (*name of the group*) increased my knowledge about resources available for my family in my state and community.
    d. The help I received at (*name of the group*) made a positive difference to my family.
    e. I received the help I hoped to get by attending (*name of group*) meetings.
    f. I achieved a better quality of life since attending (*name of group*) meetings.
    g. (*Name of group/person*) has helped me get the services and/or resources my child with developmental disabilities needed.
    h. (*Type of tools or assistance such as…'The Person Centered Thinking'*) technical assistance has enhanced the services I provide.

2.  **This technical assistance has strengthened networking of public and private entities across communities I am engaged with.**
    The focus of this question is on collaboration. However, there is a need to clarify what is meant by public and private entities. The word 'networking' is another word that may need a definition if the partners do not use that term.  The following are suggestions for altering the questions for the partners with whom we work.

    a.  This technical assistance has strengthened information sharing and connections among community members (e.g, self advocates, families, state and local professionals, university faculty).
    b.  (*Name of person*), through his/her leadership in (*name of group*), has enhanced my organization's collaboration with other people and entities that serve and support people with disabilities [or ...children with autism and related disabilities].

3.  **This technical assistance has increased awareness of evidence-based practices.**
    The term, evidenced-based practices, is more likely to be used in academic settings and not usually used in our community groups.  We incorporate the information into the groups but may not label it as such. Therefore our community partners might not be well equipped to respond to this question.

    a.  *Due to the technical assistance (help or information) that was received, I now have the general ability to identify if specific practices are best practices.*

4.  **This technical assistance has enhanced my capacity to assess current practices in relation to evidenced-based approaches.**
    a.  This technical assistance has enhanced my capacity to assess current practices. (take out the words 'evidence-based approaches')

5.  **This technical assistance has helped me identify policy changes needed within the … (areas of emphasis)**.
    a.  (*Name of person/group*'s) participation has helped to identify policies that need to be changed or addressed.
    b.  The information I have received from *(name of person/group)* has helped to identify policy or practice changes needed within the community.

**Additional Questions to consider:**
    a.  This information I have received from *(name of person/group)* has helped me advocate for better services.
    b.  The provided by (*name of person*) has helped me in my work as a self-advocate or in my everyday life.
    c.  The information I have received today will help in my future work as an advocate or in everyday life.
    d.  The information I have received from (*name of person/group*) has increased our capacity to reach larger audiences or groups.