

### Step 3: Determining your Purpose using Central Questions

**Central questions** establish boundaries for the evaluation by stating what specific aspects of the program will be examined. These should be based on stakeholder needs identified in Step 2.

Articulating a clear **purpose** for your study will prevent premature decision-making about how to conduct your evaluation. The three general purposes for program evaluation are to:

- a. **Gain insight** into program activities, innovations, or courses to determine strengths and weaknesses. Examples include answering questions about the **how** and **why** clients enter the program **what** benefits they gain from participating.
- b. **Change practices** related the program such as training procedures, policies and procedures, or services offered. Examples include answering questions about whether clients prefer online registration to paper or documenting client reaction to a new service.
- c. **Measure the effects** of the program or some change in program practices. Examples include answering questions about program impact or the effects of a new training approach.

**Use the Worksheet F below to help determine your assessment purpose:**

- Write each of your central questions in the first column of Worksheet F.
  - Adjust phrasing as necessary.
- In column two of Worksheet F, circle the assessment purpose of each central question you listed.
  - Each of your questions should fit in one of the three categories listed above.

## Worksheet F: Identifying Purpose and Uses

Central Question	Purpose	How Results Will Be Used
1.	Gain Insight Change Practices Measure Effects	
2.	Gain Insight Change Practices Measure Effects	
3.	Gain Insight Change Practices Measure Effects	