PART IV

QUALITATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION
Organizational evaluation provides information for stakeholders about the details of a program, aiding them in decision-making that enhances quality of life in affected organizations and communities (Julian 2005). Systemic evaluation is a structured series of steps that can target the local, community, or policy levels. Given such a wide scope, methodological approaches for evaluation vary considerably. This chapter gives a brief overview of types and methodological approaches to evaluation and offers a case example from a county psychiatric emergency service.

Evaluation methodology includes conceptualization, research design, measurement, data collection, and data analysis. The foremost reason for selecting a method is the purpose of the evaluation. The purpose directs the questions asked and the research design, which requires understanding the initiative’s goals and objectives, its structure, the expected impact on the target group(s), and the performance criteria designated by stakeholders. The scope of the evaluation is shaped by the number of partners, the resources available, and the time frame. The design ultimately establishes when and from whom measurements will be gathered (data collection) and how the data will be analyzed.