



Amy Cyr, Ph.D.

Managing Consultant, The Improve Group

Amy thoughtfully collaborates with clients and communities to balance the big picture, a utilization focus, and attention to detail. Outside of work, she spends time with family and explores nature.

Expertise

Qualitative evaluation and research

Amy takes a participatory, creative approach to projects that maximizes both stakeholder involvement and use of results. She takes time with clients to understand their hopes and constraints regarding project goals and considers these realities as she designs projects that will provide useful findings. Building off what she learns from clients, Amy supports teams to design community responsive, accessible, and trauma-informed engagement to ensure that community voice is a key part of project findings and that use of results can respond to needs of people most affected by programs and policies.

Working in complex contexts, Amy artfully manages the details and logistics of equitable engagement and evaluation as she keeps teams moving toward overall project goals. Clients appreciate working with Amy because of her responsiveness, adaptability, and focus on ensuring results are useful and high quality.

Amy has deep expertise in qualitative design, data collection, analysis, and reporting. She is known as a resource in the organization for advice on qualitative approaches, including analysis tools. Amy enjoys working with a range of qualitative methods, from participatory workshops to focus groups and interviews. She is inspired by hearing people's stories and appreciates flexible interview approaches that enable stories to unfold. Amy thrives in the spaces of deep exploration alongside study participants that qualitative inquiry offers and enjoys collaboratively creating case studies. She has experience working with a wide range of communities to tell stories of experience and impact. Amy's training in qualitative work stems from her Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy training in the ethnographic discipline of ethnomusicology.

Strategic planning

Amy's strategic planning experience spans topic areas, as she focuses on leveraging clients' and community members' own expertise and lived experience in the process. Amy designs strategic planning processes that center internal and external interest-holders. Amy considers the experience of strategic planning participants, such as how power dynamics can affect participation. Amy factors these considerations into the design and facilitation of workshops, aiming to create environments that invite everyone to contribute to planning an organization's future. Drawing on her evaluative skillset, Amy applies community data to the strategic planning process and supports clients to measure progress on their strategies.

Consulting

In her relationships with clients, Amy tends to the full picture of an organization's work and broader goals, such as capacity building and ongoing use of results. She practices thoughtful partnership, blending evaluation and community expertise for a multifaceted approach. She believes everyone has unique strengths to bring to projects and that thinking together can bring the best outcomes. For example, Amy often supports clients to engage community liaisons or organization partners to expand the expertise represented on project teams.

Professional Experience

The Improve Group | St. Paul, MN | Managing Consultant | 2023-present | Lead evaluation projects and phases to make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure clients' investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact. Project experience includes:

Building capacity of Hennepin Healthcare's East Lake Clinic staff to support long-term evaluation of the clinic's trauma-informed care practices.

Leading design and development of a public engagement evaluation toolkit to be used by federal agencies as part of a nationwide challenge from President Biden's Presidential Management Agenda Learning Agenda.

Leading meeting facilitation, project management, and stakeholder engagement for DHS's E1MN initiative, a partnership of DHS, DEED, and MDE to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities.

Leading a community-based strengths and needs assessment to inform Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County's work supporting residents with lower incomes. This project included hiring and collaborating with community liaisons to ensure we reached diverse county residents with data collection.

Leading disability equity strategic planning to guide the Minnesota Department of Health's agency-wide disability-focused work.

Leading an environmental scan of provider practices related to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome to inform public health's response.

The Improve Group | Senior Consultant, Research Analyst | 2014-2023 | Plan, lead, and execute project activities.

San Francisco Department of Public Health | San Francisco, CA | Evaluation Associate | 2013-2014 | Interviewed individuals living with mental health conditions and housing instability to inform program improvements for a mental-physical health services integration program.

Dominican University of California | San Rafael, CA | Adjunct Lecturer | 2013-2014 | Taught interdisciplinary humanities and sociology courses, including social science research methods and research design.

Independent ethnographic research | Cairo, Egypt and Oakland, CA | 3 years | Designed and conducted ethnographic research for Doctor of Philosophy program. Research focused on music and national identity in Egypt and on music-based youth development programs in Oakland, CA.

Education

University of California-Santa Barbara | Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology, with a focus on applied and qualitative research methods

University of California-Santa Barbara | Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology, with a focus on Middle East studies and Arabic language

Indiana University | Bachelor of Music in Flute Performance

Training

Technology of Participation® Facilitation Methods and Strategic Planning

Toastmasters Competent Communicator

Professional Affiliations

American Evaluation Association

Minnesota Evaluation Association