



Amy Cyr, Ph.D.

Senior Consultant, The Improve Group

In her work at The Improve Group, Amy thoughtfully directs teams and collaborates with clients and communities to balance the big picture, a utilization focus, and attention to detail. Outside of work, she can be found engaging with a local Zen meditation community, spending time with family, and in nature.

Expertise

Evaluation

Amy takes a participatory, creative approach to evaluation to maximize both stakeholder involvement and usability of results. She has 6 years of experience in evaluation. Amy applies The Improve Group's Community-Responsive ApproachSM to make evaluation inclusive and accessible. She ensures utilization by engaging stakeholders through creative approaches; crafting relevant evaluation questions and data collection tools that align; and ensuring reports serve their audiences and use.

Consulting

In her relationships with clients, Amy listens carefully to attend to the full picture of an organization's work and a client's broader goals, such as capacity building and ongoing use of results. She practices thoughtful partnership, blending project, community, and other types of expertise with evaluation expertise for a multifaceted approach. This is rooted in her belief that everyone has unique strengths to bring to projects and that thinking together can bring the best outcomes.

Qualitative evaluation and research

Amy has deep expertise in qualitative and ethnographic 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 and participant observation to focus groups and interviews. She is inspired by hearing people's stories and appreciates flexible interview approaches that enable stories to unfold and the focus to move where it needs to be based on the emerging data. Amy thrives in the spaces of deep exploration that qualitative inquiry offers and enjoys collaboratively creating case studies. She has experience working with diverse 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.

Practice areas

Strategic Planning

Professional Experience

The Improve Group | St. Paul, MN | Senior Consultant | 2014-present | Plan, lead, and execute project activities to make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure clients' investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact. Project experience includes:

Leading a community-focused, mixed-methods strengths and needs assessment of LGBTQIA+ communities to ensure a local funding group distributed grants in a community-responsive way.

Collaborating with local leaders and fellowship recipients to design and produce case study reports illustrating community impacts and uncovering ways to improve the fellowship program.

Leading qualitative evaluation of the workplace wellness component of a city-wide, 10-year initiative to prevent cardiovascular disease, in order to inform future work.

Facilitating strategic planning for an organization focused on legal assistance for LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants.

San Francisco Department of Public Health | San Francisco, CA | Evaluation Associate | 2013-2014 | Interviewed individuals experiencing mental illness 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, research design, and ethics.

Independent ethnographic research | Cairo, Egypt and Oakland, CA | 3 years | Designed and carried out ethnographic research for Doctor of Philosophy program. Research focused on music and national identity in Egypt and on music-based youth development programs that help youth work with issues of community violence 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

Ethnographic Praxis in Industry