



**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Rita S. Fierro, PhD**

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

## Enhancing Evaluation Through Effective Communication and Interaction

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Lansing Center, Lansing, Michigan

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### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Michigan Association for Evaluation (MAE) is accepting proposals for posters and breakout sessions at the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, to be held Thursday, May 10, 2018 at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing. **The deadline for proposals is Monday, January 22, 2018.** Accepted posters and breakout sessions will be notified by **February 26, 2018.**

[Breakout Session Proposal](#)

[Poster Proposal](#)

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### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Rita S. Fierro, PhD

This year's conference theme is *Enhancing Evaluation through Effective Communication and Interaction*. Dr. Rita S. Fierro, founder and principal consultant of Fierro Consulting, is the scheduled Keynote Speaker. Dr. Fierro will share her personal journey and initial struggles as an independent evaluator and how facing those struggles motivated her to improve her communication and facilitation skills. By identifying the dynamic tensions that are at play in group conversations, including our own biases, she explains how active facilitation can improve conversations and the outcomes of meetings.

This is the basis for the journal article *Enhancing Facilitation Skills: Dancing with Dynamic Tensions* in **New Directions for Evaluation**, Spring 2016, a volume that she co-edited. She will share examples from her work and demonstrate how to navigate and encourage real conversations that bring people to a mutual goal and understanding. She will also outline specific tools and methods to engage people in one on one or group conversation, sharing her experiences from 15 years of culturally-competent research and evaluation. During a breakout session later in the conference day she will engage her audience while demonstrating multiple facilitation skills.

Dr. Fierro has worked for over 20 years in the fields of facilitation, research and evaluation, teaching, and personal development. She uses predominantly mixed-methods designs to highlight the perspectives of different stakeholders and triangulate data results, especially among vulnerable populations, particularly

women and people of color conducting gender responsive and equity-focused evaluations. She is an intellectual artist who skillfully combines innovative and analytical thinking by bridging groups, networks, and arenas that may seem far apart.

Her most recent interest is in sharing the lessons learned from writing the book *Give Me Back My Child! How the USA System Kidnaps Children*, which is based on 14 years of conversations with mothers who lost their children to foster care. (Due out in 2018) She also speaks on the new frontier for social justice, trauma and peace activism, which she calls Healing Activism. A frequent presenter at the American Evaluation Association (AEA), she currently serves on the AEA Board after serving as Chair and Program Co-chair for the Independent Consulting Topical Interest Group for three years.

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## AUDIENCE

The Field of Evaluation has evolved over the years drawing people from every discipline- Psychologists, Sociologists, Social Workers, and Public Health practitioners to name just a few. What evaluators have in common is curiosity and an interest in improving the world through better services and education for everyone.

Since Evaluation draws people from diverse disciplines the level of Evaluation knowledge and training any one "evaluator" varies greatly. The MAE annual conference audience generally falls into three broad categories of evaluation knowledge and experience, and each session proposal should demonstrate how it will benefit at least one of the targeted audiences below.

- **Beginner:** Typically, new to evaluation, with no formal training or currently in formal evaluation training. Minimal knowledge of standard evaluation tools and techniques, and little to no experience doing evaluation (1-3 years). This group could also include non-evaluators such as program managers and funders who are consumers of evaluation, but have little or no experience conducting evaluation.
- **Intermediate:** Usually have formal training or education in evaluation, or a combination of informal training and on-the-job experience, are familiar with standard evaluation tools and techniques, and have experience completing evaluations (3-5 years).
- **Advanced:** Have formal education and training in evaluation, routinely use standard evaluation tools and techniques, are looking for new or innovative ideas that they can apply to their knowledge, and have extensive experience completing evaluations (5+ years).

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## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Each presentation will be 60 minutes in length. Highly interactive sessions are preferred. Please read the definitions of four different types of presentations below and indicate which format you will utilize for your presentation on the Submission Form. If selected, breakout session presenters will be given a complimentary registration for the conference (**maximum of two**).

- **Lecture:** A didactic talk with audio-visual support. While Q&A is integrated throughout the talk, it is concentrated at the end of the session.
- **Workshop:** Allows for ample time to reflect, interact, and discuss an evaluation technique, method, tool, idea, tips or tricks. Audience members learn by doing.

- **Demonstration:** A step by step explanation of an evaluation technique, method, or tool, which gives the audience the skills to understand or replicate what was taught.

**Case Study:** Uses actual example(s) or case(s) to illustrate an evaluation technique, method, tool, idea, tips or tricks.

## [Breakout Session Proposal](#)

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### POSTERS

Preferences will be given to poster submissions that have clear objectives, promote discussion, use concrete and relevant examples, and provide immediate tools, skills and takeaways for attendees. Posters will be featured throughout the day in the main hall as well as at the **Networking Mixer** at the end of the afternoon. The winning poster will receive a \$50 gift card (see below for poster contest rules).

**JUST FOR STUDENTS:** In order to encourage the participation of evaluation students in its activities, the MAE will award a \$10 Visa gift card, in addition to a complimentary MAE Student Membership for the upcoming year, to all students who have a poster accepted for display at the conference. (Limit of one \$10 card per poster.)

- **How to Enter:** Submit poster proposal in response to Call for Proposals for the 2018 MAE Conference by required submission date.
- **Eligibility:** Open to all individuals except MAE Board members. Submission of a poster proposal does not guarantee entry into the contest. All posters must be screened by the MAE Board prior to eligibility to contest.
- **Number of Entries:** Applicants may enter up to two (2) posters if each submission is unique.
- **Size:** Posters should not exceed 36" x 48".
- **Display:** Easels and supplies to hang posters will be supplied.
- **Judging:** Judging will be conducted exclusively by MAE conference attendees. Entries will be judged (via a ballot box) on the following criteria: effectiveness in making the subject matter interesting and understandable; and overall design, impact, and creativity. In the event of a tie, the MAE Board will decide the final winner.
- **Contest Period:** The judging period will be from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on the day of the conference.
- **Prize:** \$50 pre-paid credit card to the winning entry.
- **Notification of Winner:** The winner will be announced at the **Networking Mixer** event to close out the conference and **must be present** to collect prize unless prior arrangements are made with the approval of the conference chair.
- **Publicity:** Contest winner agrees to allow MAE to publish their name, organization's name, and description and visual documentation of the work in all MAE media communications now known or later developed.
- **Statement of Originality:** By submitting an entry(ies), the applicant asserts that the entry(ies) is their own work and independently produced.

## [Poster Proposal](#)