THE CHALLENGES OF EVIDENCE

Description

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Excerptâ?¦.

â??Which of these statements is true?

Evidence is essential stuff. It is objective. It answers questions and helps us to solve problems. It helps us to predict. It puts decisions on the right track. Evidence makes sure that decisions are safer. Evidence can turn guesswork into certainty. Evidence tells us what works. It explains why people think and act as they do. It alerts us to likely consequences and implications. It shows us where and when to intervene. We have robust methods for using evidence. Evidence is information; information is abundant. It is the most reliable basis for making policy. Evidence is the most reliable basis for improving practice. There has never been a better time for getting hold of evidence.

Now, what about truth in any of these statements?

Evidence is dangerous stuff. Used unscrupulously it can do harm. It is easily misinterpreted and misrepresented. It is often inconclusive. Evidence is often insufficient or unsuitable for our needs. We will act on it even when it is inadequate or contradictory or biased. We ignore or explain away evidence that doesnâ??t suit our prejudices. We may not spot where evidence has flaws. It can conceal rather than reveal, confuse rather than clarify. It can exaggerate or understate what is actually known. It can confuse us. Evidence can be manipulated politically. We can be persuaded to accept false correlations. A forceful advocate can distort what the evidence actually says.

The answer is that each statement in each cluster is sometimes true, in particular circumstances

Category

1. Uncategorized

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