

As surveys are self-reported by participants, there is a possibility that responses may be biased particularly if the issues involved are sensitive or require some measure of disclosure on trust by the participant. It is therefore vital that surveys used are designed and tested for validity and reliability with the target groups who will be completing the surveys.

Careful attention must be given to the design of the survey. If possible the use of an already designed and validated survey instrument will ensure that the data being collected is accurate. If you design your own survey it is necessary to pilot test the survey on a sample of your target group to ensure that the survey instrument is measuring what it intends to measure and is appropriate for the target group.

Questions within the survey can be asked in several ways and include:

- closed questions
- open-ended
- scaled questions
- multiple choice questions.

Closed questions are usually in the format of yes/no or true/false options. Open-ended questions on the other hand leave the answer entirely up to the respondent and therefore provide a greater range of responses. Additionally, the use of scales is useful when assessing participants' attitudes.

A multiple choice question may ask respondents to indicate their favorite topic covered in the program, or most preferred activity. Other considerations when developing a survey instrument include question sequence, layout and appearance, length, language, and an introduction and cover letter. Sensitive questions should be placed near the end of a survey rather than at the beginning.

Offering young people an incentive for completing the survey or embedding the survey as a compulsory item within the program schedule or curriculum may be useful to maximize the response rate.

Interviews

Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or by telephone. They can range from in-depth, semi-structured to unstructured depending on the information being sought.

Face to face interviews are advantageous since:

- detailed questions can be asked
- further probing can be done to provide rich data
- literacy requirements of participants is not an issue