

Developing consumer surveys



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The *ESDT Alliance Consumer Feedback Toolkit* is also available electronically. Microsoft word versions of some tools have also been created so they can be used electronically.

<https://www.esdt.com.au/>

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Surveys use a structured set of questions to measure people's attitudes, beliefs, values, knowledge or behaviours. They can be designed to collect information from almost any audience and can be delivered in a wide range of formats.

This resource provides information about how to plan and develop effective surveys for consumers. It brings together information from the best practice literature and our experience in designing and implementing evaluations with consumers in health and community services.

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Introduction

Surveys use a structured set of questions to collect information about people's knowledge, opinions or behaviour. They can be tailored to fit almost any purpose and administered in a range of ways (e.g. on paper, online or over the phone). Surveys can be an inexpensive and efficient way to gather feedback, but must be designed carefully.

Surveys are most useful when you want to collect specific information to clarify, or verify, a known issue. When used effectively, they can help you understand those issues and develop responses that will create the biggest impact.

Surveys can be useful to understand

- Consumers' experience of a program, including information about what they value and opportunities for improvement.
- The difference your intervention has made.
- Consumer needs and expectations (before, during and after your intervention).
- How consumers' knowledge, behaviour or attitudes change over time (e.g. before and after an intervention).
- Variations in people's opinions or attitudes within a group and whether those variations can be linked to specific traits of consumers, or elements of your service.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost effective to collect feedback from a large number of people relatively quickly.• Results are easy to compare and analyse.• Can be administered at different points in time to track changes.• Allow you to collect feedback from people that you don't usually have direct contact with (e.g. consumers that don't physically visit your service including carers, family members or past clients).• Paper based and online surveys can be completed anonymously which can increase the accuracy of information provided (particularly when asking potentially sensitive or personal questions).• Structured format enhances the consistency (and therefore reliability) of information collected and the potential generalisability of your findings across a broader group of consumers. To do this, you need to be sure that your participants are representative of the broader group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey development can be time consuming.• Consumers often provide brief/vague answers.• There is no opportunity to 'probe' for clarification/expansion (particularly for written surveys).• Wording can be misinterpreted.• Can be impersonal (particularly paper based and online surveys).• Lower response rates (reduces the likelihood that the feedback will be representative of the broader group).• Structured questions must be broad enough to be relevant to the entire target group. Therefore issues that are important to an individual can be overlooked.• Unreliable when asking about people's past experiences as surveys capture people's feelings or knowledge at a specific moment in time.• Difficult to capture information or explanations about 'why' participants have answered in a certain way or the context of their responses (potentially reducing the validity of findings).

Planning your survey approach



Before designing a survey, it's important to understand whether this is the most appropriate way to collect feedback from your consumers.

Further information about selecting your approach and each of the key planning steps is included in '**Collecting and using consumer feedback effectively: Designing your approach**'.

Good planning is the key to success!

Before you start writing a survey, make sure you are clear about its purpose and the information you need to collect. This will allow you to tailor the content, format and structure of your survey accordingly. The following table includes a summary of some of the key questions that you need to consider when planning your survey.

Key Question	Planning Approach
Who needs to participate in the survey?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collecting feedback from the right participants is critical to the success of your survey and requires thoughtful planning. Most importantly, your participants should be representative of your target population, and be willing and able to provide the information you need.• Clearly define your target group. Consider who can provide the information you require to meet your objectives. Be specific!
How much time do I need to conduct the survey?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While surveys can be distributed quickly, people often underestimate the amount of time and energy required to design a great survey. Poor planning often leads to long and tedious surveys that don't collect the information you actually need.• Your survey design will be driven by how much time you have available to collect and use the feedback. You need to consider the time required for each step of the process, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Developing/designing your survey.– Piloting the approach.– Distributing the survey.– Collecting your responses (including data entry).– Collating and analysing the data.– Writing relevant reports and/or presenting findings.
When should the survey be conducted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember that surveys are most effective when used to collect information about the way people think and feel in the 'here and now'. Therefore, you need to think carefully about the timing of your survey. Wherever possible, standardise the timeline to improve the consistency of your responses.
What questions should I ask?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no 'one size fits all' survey tool, list of questions or approach. Every survey should be unique – designed to collect specific information, from a clearly defined group of people at a particular time.

Creating effective survey tools

People often rely on traditional written surveys, but there are many other ways you can administer survey questions. The following sections provide information about a range of approaches, including:

- Paper based surveys.
- Electronic surveys.
- Phone based surveys.
- Face-to-face surveys.
- Survey posters.
- Activity based surveys.
- Technology based surveys.

You are only limited by your imagination, so get creative!

As with all consumer feedback strategies, there is no one right way of designing a survey. Each approach has strengths and weaknesses. You need to consider what is achievable within the timeframe (and within your skill set) and what feedback is most important to you. The most critical consideration though, is to ensure that you match your survey design to what is most appropriate and convenient for your consumers.

Remember that your consumers are all different, so it's unlikely that one survey approach is perfect for everyone. Wherever possible, collect feedback in a number of different ways and allow people to choose the approach that's right for them.

Make the most of existing opportunities

Think about ways to integrate survey questions into other activities. This allows you to collect information quickly and easily, making the survey process less of a burden for you and your consumers. Think about:

- Asking a couple of key questions at intake or assessment.
- Embedding survey questions into your care plan review sessions.
- Including one question on a sign in/sign out sheet to capture information at the beginning or end of a session. Multiple choice questions and rating scales work best in this format.
- Utilising staff and/or volunteers to ask questions within regular interactions (given consumer consent).

Example:

If you want to collect information about people's experience finding and accessing your service, this should be collected as early as practicable. If you wait too long, the person's perception will be affected by their ongoing experience of your service. Include a couple of key questions in your intake tools to capture this information easily and accurately.

Paper based surveys

Paper based surveys are effective for people with strong literacy skills who are able to respond accurately and completely in writing. They can be circulated in a range of ways including:

- **Mailing surveys out to people.** This can be an efficient way to reach a large number of people, including consumers who you don't see regularly. Mailing surveys reduces delivery time and costs, however mailed surveys generally have a lower response rate, the turnaround time is slower and data entry can be time consuming.
- **Dropping off surveys and picking them up from consumers.** This allows you to personally introduce the survey and answer any questions that people may have. This personal approach often leads to a higher response rate and can be an effective way to engage consumers, especially when you are targeting people in a small community or neighbourhood.
- **Completing the survey during usual appointment/session times.** Having a 'captive audience' significantly increases your response rate and reduces the amount of time required to administer the surveys. Consider providing time at the end of a session to complete a questionnaire.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to reach a large number of people relatively quickly and easily.• Convenient for people to complete as they can fill in the survey in their own time.• Can be completed anonymously which increases the likelihood that consumers will provide accurate feedback, particularly around sensitive issues.• No interviewer bias (i.e. consumer's responses won't be affected by the person asking the questions).• Can effectively target specific groups of consumers.• Visual information/cues can be integrated into the survey.• Easy for staff to distribute when working out in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumers may not be motivated to participate in a written survey (especially when they are not invested in the issue and/or don't know the people/service asking for feedback).• Low response rates (e.g. average response rates for postal surveys is 20 - 25%).• Participants often provide very brief or vague answers to open ended questions (or skip questions entirely).• No opportunity to clarify questions or provide prompts to follow up incomplete or inappropriate responses (i.e. when someone misinterprets a question).• Participants need the ability, skills and literacy level to complete a paper based survey (therefore biasing which consumers respond).• Can't pick up cues about how the participant is feeling as they complete the survey. You need to anticipate sensitivities and address possible objections in advance.• Unable to guarantee who has filled out the survey.

Setting up for success with paper based surveys

Designing the survey

- Rather than completing one long survey each year, break the survey down into a number of shorter, targeted questionnaires that can be administered throughout the year (ideally, you should consider utilising a range of data collection strategies). This will improve your response rate and significantly improve the quality of the feedback you collect.
- Make sure that every question has a specific purpose.
- Keep your surveys short and to the point. Research suggests that in many surveys, response rates start to drop when surveys include more than 10 questions.
- Pay attention to the format and layout of your survey. Make sure that your survey is easy to read and complete. A well-formatted survey that is two pages long is preferable to a one page survey that is poorly formatted.



Please refer to the following tools within '**Consumer survey tools and templates**' for additional information:

- Detailed information about survey design, including recommendations about layout, structure and question design is available in the '**Survey design guide**'.
- The '**Survey checklist**' provides a detailed list of the key elements of a well designed survey. The checklist can be used to evaluate an existing survey and/or to review a new survey before it is piloted.

Collecting responses

- If consumers need to post the survey back to you, provide a reply paid envelope (some research shows that providing a postage stamp, as opposed to a reply paid envelope, further increases the response rate).
- Keep track of how many surveys are distributed and how many are returned.
- Send a friendly reminder note out to consumers who haven't responded. Include a second copy of your survey and information about how and why it should be completed. The literature suggests that three follow up letters are adequate, and two to three weeks should be allowed between each mailing.
- Store the surveys securely and ensure that consumer confidentiality is maintained.



Maximising survey response rates



Detailed information about participant selection, sampling and recruitment strategies is included in ***'Collecting and using consumer feedback effectively: Designing your approach'***. Outlined below is a brief summary of some specific strategies to consider when recruiting participants for a survey.

Allow consumers to complete the surveys in a range of ways

Remember that the priority for most surveys is to collect feedback and understand consumers' perspectives. It often doesn't matter too much if surveys are completed on site, over the phone, online or in person. Providing people with a choice about how they participate encourages more people to participate and allows you to collect feedback from a broader group of consumers. Remember to include information about your approach in your survey report.

Make it as easy as possible for people to participate

Make sure your survey is visually appealing, easy to read and flows logically. Also consider opportunistic times to ask consumers to complete surveys (e.g. while waiting for appointments, as part of a program or immediately following appointments).

Provide a small incentive as a token of your appreciation

When posting out surveys, you could include a tea bag with a note, encouraging people to have a 'cuppa' while they fill out your survey.



Introduce the survey to consumers

Consider how you can engage clients during everyday interactions to let them know when and why you are completing the survey. Involve other staff/stakeholders and ask them to encourage consumers to participate formally or informally. Provide them with information about what the next steps are and how they can find out more. Personalise correspondence and hand sign letters wherever possible. It's important not to pressure consumers to participate, but a friendly reminder often helps!

Only ask consumers questions that are relevant to them

Consumers are more likely to engage in your survey if the questions are about topics that interest and concern them (i.e. targeted to their interests and needs). You can achieve this by adopting a range of strategies, such as:

- Including screening questions or skip-logic in your survey.
- Developing multiple versions of your survey so that they can be tailored to the needs of specific groups within your broader target group (e.g. create different versions of your survey for clients and carers, or current and previous clients).

Example:

As part of their upcoming satisfaction survey, the team at Healthyville Hospital want to understand how satisfied consumers are with the Patient Transport Bus they provide to and from outpatient clinic appointments. A screening question therefore needs to be included to ensure that they only collect this feedback from consumers who use the bus. Parameters may also need to be set around how often, or how recently they have used the bus service.



Short and sharp paper based surveys

Instead of completing one long paper based survey, break it down and create surveys with just 1 or 2 questions that can be conducted throughout the year. This is a quick and easy way for people to provide feedback and allows you to spread your workload ... making it a less arduous task for everyone!

One way to do this is to provide consumers with a 'satisfaction slip' that asks them to rate one or two key elements of your service.

Points to remember

- Each survey will collect feedback about one specific interaction/issue. Responses can therefore be highly variable, depending on the circumstances on the day (e.g. if a staff member was running late one day, the client was feeling particularly unwell or you had a challenging conversation that day, it is likely that the person's feedback will be more negative). If you want to generalise the results to people's overall satisfaction with your survey, you need to collect a large number of forms.
- To promote anonymity and encourage honest feedback, satisfaction slips are most effective when they are filled in away from staff who are directly involved in their care (e.g. given out by a receptionist while the consumer is scheduling their next appointment or placed in a secure box near entrance).
- If your service delivers multiple services, colour code your surveys (or include a discrete marker) so that when you collate your responses, you can easily identify which service a consumer has provided feedback about.
- As they are usually anonymous, any concerns or unmet needs cannot be clarified or followed up. It can be useful to include a space (e.g. on the back of the form) that people can write their name and contact details, if they would like to discuss their feedback with a member of staff. This can also be used to gauge people's interest in participating in other activities (e.g. participating in a focus group, sitting on a consumer advisory panel etc.).

Examples:

How would you rate the quality of the food provided today?

(please circle the number of stars that represents your answer)



How would you rate the amount of time you waited to see the Dentist today?

(please circle your answer)



I waited far too long

I waited a bit too long

I was happy with the amount of time I waited

When making healthcare appointments, which of the following features is most important to you?

(please tick one option)

Having appointments available outside business hours
(e.g. evenings and/or weekends)

Being able to drop in and be seen without making an appointment

That I can attend appointments without consent from my parents

Knowing that I can choose to see a male or female worker

Something else (please describe):

Survey posters

Create posters with key survey questions and ask people to respond by placing stickers next to their answer. Because the tool is so visual, you can quickly identify trends in responses and it creates a useful point of discussion.

Example:

Which part of today's session was the MOST VALUABLE for you?

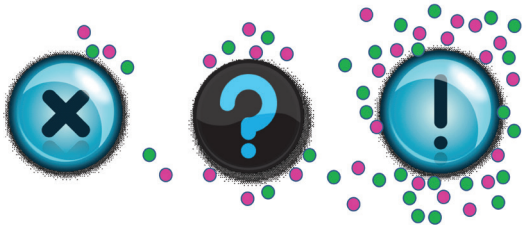


This poster was used to collect feedback from participants at the end of a multidisciplinary workshop.

The group leaders then used the completed poster as a prompt to facilitate ongoing discussion about the group's priorities for subsequent workshops.

Example:

How important is it to you, to have a choice about whether you work with a male or female nurse?



This poster was hung in the waiting room of a youth service. As people checked in for their appointments, the receptionist provided women with a pink sticker and men with a green sticker and directed the clients to the poster.

Colour coding the stickers allowed us to quickly understand whether there were differences in the way young men and women responded to the question.

Using survey posters in a group setting

- Using survey posters at the beginning of a session can be a fun and interesting way to collect consumer's initial thoughts and ideas. It also helps people focus on your topic and often promotes discussion between group members.
- Asking the group the same questions at the beginning and end of a session can be an easy way to track whether the participants opinions or knowledge have changed.
- Remember that participants will be able to see each other's answers, so this is not an appropriate way to collect highly sensitive or personal information.
- Some people's answers may be biased by the way that other people have already answered. It's important to reinforce that there are no right or wrong answers and that everyone's opinion is valuable.

Electronic surveys

Electronic, or online surveys can be a cost efficient and effective way to collect information from large groups of people. There are lots of ways to distribute electronic surveys. You can:

- **Email the survey out to consumers.** People are more likely to respond to surveys from a known source, so sending out personalised emails and reminders can encourage higher response rates. If necessary, you can also track who has responded.
- **Upload the survey on your website.** This allows you to reach a broad group of people who you don't have contact details for (i.e. potential consumers).
- **Post a weblink** to the survey on your website or social media.
- **Load the survey on publically available computers** (e.g. in a local library).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fast and inexpensive to distribute as the costs of printing, postage, collation and data entry are eliminated/reduced.• Survey logic can be embedded so that surveys are automatically tailored to the individual. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Skips built in to ensure that each participant only views questions that are relevant to them.– Reminders embedded within questionnaire for missed or incomplete responses.• A range of question and answer formats can be included (e.g. drop down lists) which make the survey appear shorter and make it quicker and easier to complete.• Visual information/cues can be integrated into the survey.• Participants are more likely to provide candid responses electronically.• Convenient for people to complete as they can fill in the survey in their own time.• Responses are received immediately as they are completed.• Electronic data can be collated and sorted efficiently.• Typed responses remove the risk of illegible handwriting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants need the ability, skills and literacy level to complete an online survey (therefore biasing which of your consumers will respond).• Within any written survey, you don't have the opportunity to clarify questions or provide prompts.• Unable to reach consumers who do not have access to a computer (or appropriate device) and/or the internet. Individuals who have access to personal computers, modems and the internet may not be representative of your consumer group.• Email contact can be treated as 'junk mail'/SPAM and easily disregarded.• Unable to guarantee who has filled out the survey.• Some consumers report concerns about confidentiality of online responses and the ability for their responses to be tracked.

Setting up for success with electronic surveys

Designing the survey

- Make sure that every question has a specific purpose.
- Consider what type of technology your consumers will use to complete the survey. Where relevant, test the survey on a computer, tablet and smart phone to make sure it remains easy to use on all devices.
- Structure your questions carefully. Tools such as dropdown lists can make the survey fast and easy to complete, but always consider the technical skills and confidence of your participants first.
- Utilise skip logic to tailor your survey to each participant. For example:
 - Skips built in to ensure that each participant only views questions that are relevant to them. This helps keep people focused and improves the survey experience.
 - Reminders for missed or incomplete responses to improve the completion accuracy.



Please refer to the following tools within **'Consumer survey tools and templates'** for additional information:

- Detailed information about survey design, including recommendations about layout, structure and question design is available in the **'Survey design Guide'**.
- The **'Survey checklist'** provides a detailed list of the key elements of a well designed survey. The checklist can be used to evaluate an existing survey and/or to review a new survey before it is piloted.

Collecting responses

- Always inform people about how personal information is collected or tracked (e.g. whether you will link people's responses to their email address).
- Send a friendly reminder email to consumers who haven't responded. Include information about how and why the survey is being used and attach a second copy of your survey (or hyperlink). The literature suggests that three follow up letters are adequate, and two to three weeks should be allowed between each reminder.
- Store the surveys securely and ensure that consumer confidentiality is maintained.

Online survey tools

A number of companies provide online surveys tools and services (such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, SurveyLegend and Typeform). These sites generally include a range of templates and guides to assist you to set up your online surveys. Many of these sites also provide automated basic data analysis. While this can be very helpful, the automated tools don't always analyse or present the information in a useful format. Always review the analysis approach and data presentation for every question, to make sure that it matches your needs.

Get creative with technology



Online surveys are not the only way to collect feedback electronically, and new technology is constantly emerging in this space. Strategies that are growing popularity in health and community services include:

SMS surveys

Send a question via SMS and ask consumers to provide a Yes/No response. This is a very fast and simple way to connect to people and the technology required is inexpensive and easy to use.

Structure your questions carefully and consider what is most appropriate for your consumers. Single Yes/No or multiple choice questions work best and generally achieve very high response rates. Programs are also available to create more complex surveys that can be administered via SMS.

Social media

Polls can be created on Facebook, other social media sites and/or your website to allow consumers to 'vote'.

One limitation of these polls is that it's very difficult to track who is responding, so you need to be thoughtful about whether the results will provide you with information that will meet your objectives.

iPads, tablets or computers in the waiting area

Upload simple surveys onto an iPad, tablet or computer that consumers can complete while they're waiting for their appointment. This is a great way to access a captive audience and people are often happy to participate to help 'pass the time'.

Given that waiting times can be unpredictable, people can be interrupted, or need to stop at any time so they may not complete an entire survey. Make sure each question is relatively fast to answer. Rotating the order of questions can also be a useful way to collect an even distribution of responses (rather than everyone answering Questions 1-3 and then very few people making it to question 10).

Consider how you could use your existing technology to collect feedback in new and different ways!



Phone surveys

Phone based surveys use a structured set of questions to collect specific information about clearly defined topics. Any prompts or probing questions must therefore be developed in advance to ensure that the survey is delivered consistently to each participant.



If you collect feedback using a more flexible, open style of conversation, this is considered an in-depth interview. In-depth interviews are useful when you need to collect more detailed and thorough information about people's opinions or experiences. Please refer to '**Conducting in-depth Interviews**' for further information about this approach.

Phone surveys can be a more personal way to collect survey feedback than a written or electronic survey. They are useful to collect information from existing consumers and when a fast turnaround time is important.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher response rates than paper based or online surveys particularly for known consumers and when conducting surveys about a topic that consumers have a vested interest in.• Can be interpreted as less formal than a written survey as staff can adopt a more conversational tone.• Can include prompts or checks to ensure that the responses are appropriate and complete (i.e. the person is answering the question correctly).• Can be tailored to the individual (i.e. skips and prompts can be built in to ensure that participants are only asked questions that are relevant to them).• Inclusive of consumers with low levels of literacy and those who have difficulty reading or writing (e.g. due to limited English, physical and/or vision impairment).• Can be completed in multiple languages when appropriately skilled staff or interviewers are available.• Surveys can be completed quickly (i.e. fast turnaround time) and if using computer based system, data can be entered at the same time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More difficult to reach some consumers, particularly those who may not have access to a phone or find it difficult to communicate over the phone.• Cannot be completed anonymously, therefore it can be difficult to collect highly sensitive or personal information. The reliability of survey results will be reduced if participants do not feel able to provide negative or critical feedback.• Time consuming and labour intensive to complete (includes time required to educate staff, contact participants, complete the survey, record and analyse responses).• When completing your questionnaire with an interpreter, it can be challenging to maintain the flow of conversation over the phone.• The type of questions you can ask is limited (e.g. it is very difficult to remember rating scales and complex multiple choice options without a visual reminder).• Many people have a negative attitude towards phone based surveys and consider phone calls an annoyance.

Setting up for success with phone surveys

Selecting the interviewer/s

Phone based surveys can be completed by staff who work with the consumers, a staff member who isn't regularly involved with the consumers or an external person. When deciding who should conduct your surveys, consider:

- **Who is most likely to make the consumer feel comfortable to provide feedback about your key issues?**

While evidence suggests that clients are less likely to discuss 'negative' feedback with their own worker, for some clients, it may be inappropriate to introduce unknown staff for the purpose of the evaluation.

- **What information does the interviewer need to complete the survey effectively?**

If the survey is going to be completed by another member of the team, the staff member must have adequate knowledge of your program to ensure that client/carer questions and concerns can be adequately addressed.

Designing the survey

- **Limit the length of the survey to a maximum of 10 - 15 minutes.**

Allow adequate time to ensure the person has time to complete the survey effectively. Remember to factor in time to introduce the survey and answer any questions or concerns the person may have.

- **Minimise the use of rating scales and multiple choice questions.**

These can be very difficult and tedious to complete over the phone. If absolute necessary, ensure that all scales are very simple and logical (e.g. 3 or 10 point scales).

- **Set clear guidelines about what information is required.**

Consider the level of detail you require from participants, when and how you will prompt people for more information.

- **Consider whether it's appropriate to ask personal, sensitive or demographic questions.**

This will depend on your target audience so be thoughtful about how comfortable your consumers will be providing these details.

Recruiting participants

- Let people know in advance that you will be completing a phone based survey.
- Consider how and when you need to gain consent from consumers to participate. In some circumstances, you should collect consent prior to including their number on the call list (especially when the survey is being completed by an external agency).



Please refer to '*Collecting and using consumer feedback effectively: Designing your approach*' for additional information about sampling, participant recruitment and consent processes.

Developing systems to structure and track calls

- Set clear guidelines about how many times people will be called.
- Develop systems to manage callbacks to ensure that you only set call back times when you're sure that an interviewer will be available to complete the survey.
- Design a call sheet to track the outcome of your calls (see example below).

A call sheet allows you to record information about the outcome of your calls and keep track of your ongoing work. This is particularly useful if multiple people are completing surveys or you have a large number of surveys to complete.

Example Call Sheet Design:

Consumer Name:		Bob		
Phone Number:		1234 5678		
Contact Attempt	Staff Initials	Date	Time	Outcome
1	KP	10/9	11:15am	No answer
2	LD	11/9	3:30pm	Spoke to Bob's wife, Mary. Request Call back 4pm 12/9
3	DP	12/9	4pm	Survey complete
4				
5				

Completing the surveys

- Be prepared – make sure you have all of the information you need before making the call.
- Consider how you will take notes and record answers ... and practice in advance.
- The introduction is key! The most challenging part of phone surveys is encouraging people to start the survey. Make sure you identify yourself and your organisation as soon as possible and emphasise the purpose and importance of the survey.
- Clearly explain to consumers that they have the option to opt out of completing the survey at any time.
- Allow time directly after the survey is completed to review your notes and ensure that all responses have been recorded as accurately, legibly and completely as possible. If a question has been missed, you should call the person back as soon as possible, apologise for the oversight and ask the remaining question.

Face-to-face surveys

Completing surveys face-to-face can be a very efficient way to collect feedback from existing consumers, particularly when survey questions are integrated into existing contacts. This can include asking questions within client's scheduled appointment or program times.

Face-to-face surveys can also be a useful way to collect feedback from people who do not currently access your service and you don't have contact details for.

Example:

Frank is hoping to develop a new respite program for local teenagers with physical disabilities. He thinks most of his referrals will come from the local high school. Frank has conducted a focus group with key staff from the school and now he wants to collect information from local families. Given that he does not have any contact with these families, conducting brief, face-to-face surveys with students and families at the school could be a useful way for him to reach this group, introduce the program and collect relevant feedback to inform the development of the service.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest response rates for all types of surveys as the personal contact encourages people to participate.• Can be tailored to the individual (i.e. skips and prompts managed by staff so that participants are only asked questions that are relevant to them).• Can use visual prompts and tools to support consumers to understand the questions and stay focused.• Can include prompts and probing questions to ensure that the responses are appropriate and complete (i.e. the person is answering the question correctly).• Inclusive of consumers with low levels of literacy and those who have difficulty reading or writing (e.g. due to limited English, cognitive, intellectual and/or vision impairment).• Most effective way to complete surveys when an interpreter is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time consuming and labour intensive to complete (includes time required to educate staff, complete the survey, record and analyse responses).• Cannot be completed anonymously, therefore it can be difficult to collect highly sensitive or personal information. The reliability of survey results will be reduced if participants do not feel able to provide negative or critical feedback. It is essential to clearly describe how confidentiality will be managed.• The person conducting the survey can bias participation and/or responses (e.g. someone may be unwilling to disclose personal information or views if they feel that the interviewer is not supportive or accepting of them).• Interviewers may adopt different approaches which will limit the reliability of results.• Interviewer safety can be a concern if face-to-face surveys are being conducted in the community and/or with unknown consumers.

Setting up for success with face-to-face surveys

Designing the survey

Set clear guidelines about what information is required (and the level of detail), when and how you will prompt people for more information.

Consider whether visual aids or prompts may be useful to assist consumers answer survey questions and stay focussed (e.g. providing the participant with a print out of your rating scale to minimize the need for repetition).

Selecting the interviewer/s

Face-to-face surveys can be completed by staff who work with the consumers, a staff member who isn't regularly involved with the consumers or an external person. When deciding who should conduct your surveys, consider:

- **Who is most likely to make the consumer feel comfortable to provide feedback about your key issues?**

While evidence suggests that clients are less likely to discuss 'negative' feedback with their own worker, for some clients, it may be inappropriate to introduce unknown staff for the purpose of the evaluation.

- **What information does the surveyor need, to be able to complete the survey effectively?**

If the survey is going to be completed by another member of the team, the staff member must have adequate knowledge of your program to ensure that client/carer questions and concerns can be adequately addressed.

When several surveyors will be completing surveys, everyone should be trained as a group to promote a consistent approach.

Recruiting participants

When feedback is being collected for any reason other than to direct that person's individual service, you must gain consent from the consumer to use that information for your evaluation or quality improvement processes.

Completing the surveys

- Make sure you are very familiar with the survey questions and have practiced in advance.
- The presentation and preparation of the interviewer/s is very important. Take care to dress and act in accordance with community standards. Consider what is culturally appropriate for your consumers.
- Clearly explain to consumers that they can opt out of completing the survey at any time.
- Practice how you will take notes and record answers.



Please refer to *'Collecting and using consumer feedback effectively: Designing your approach'* for additional information about sampling, participant recruitment and consent processes.

Activity based surveys

There is no need to stick to paper and pens! You can ask questions in a whole range of ways and turn your surveys into activities. Think about how you can engage consumers in the process and set up activities that are fun and easy to complete. Here are a few examples.

Take a verbal poll/ballot

With a simple 'hands up' style question, you can ask a group multiple choice questions quickly and easily. This works best when asking questions that your consumers will feel confident to make a decision about, so that they won't be swayed by everyone else's response. Just remember to write down your responses at the time. You can always follow up with an open ended question to prompt further discussion and understand the reasons behind people's answers.



Game show style questions

Host a game show and ask participants to answer a range of questions for points, prizes, or just the glory! You can ask people to come up to the front and answer questions as a competition, but this will only identify whether someone knows the answer. If you need to understand how many people know the answer to your question, then ask people to write their answer down and then reveal them to the group. Everyone who has answered correctly then gets a point.

This works well for knowledge based questions (where there is a correct and incorrect answer) and should be conducted within an established group, where consumers feel comfortable answering questions in front of each other.

Stamp it out

Create a 'passport' for each participant and ask them a range of questions that test their knowledge or skills. For each correct response, provide them with a stamp or sticker in their passport.

You can set up this up by asking questions at different stations around an event, or if you have an ongoing group, ask new questions each session so that people can collect stamps over a period of time.

It's nice to include a small prize at the end for the person with the most stamps etc. but remember that this can bring out people's competitive side, so keep it fun and make sure everyone has the opportunity for success.

You don't have to stick to stamps. You could also provide people with puzzle pieces, clues or other rewards as they go.



Token jars

Label a set of jars so that each jar represents a possible answer to your question. Provide everyone with a token and ask them to place their token in the jar that matches their response.

Points to remember

- This works well for a wide range of closed questions, including demographic questions, preferences, opinions and knowledge based questions. Just remember that you cannot have an 'other' category in this activity, so this is only appropriate for questions that you can clearly identify all of the possible answers to.
- While you can set up multiple 'stations' around a room, this often works best when you just ask one question at a time. If you want to include multiple questions (or you have limited space) set up one jar for each question and use different colour tokens to represent the different answer choices.
- Read questions aloud and use pictures or images to label each jar if written information is a potential barrier.
- If you would like people's responses to be confidential, use money boxes or covered containers so that people can't see where others have placed their token.

Example:



This simple 'true or false' question was asked at the beginning and end of a community based education session, to evaluate whether people's knowledge had changed.

Example:



High school students were asked this question as they arrived for a session that aimed to increase their awareness and understanding of mental health issues. The facilitator then used the results within the presentation to start a discussion about common myths.

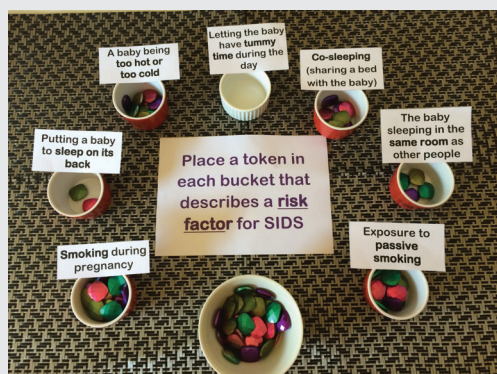


Example:



Twice a year, the leaders of a Social Support group set up these jars beside each of their regular activities. Group members then move around the room and rate each activity. This information is collated and used to inform activity planning for the following term. The leaders report that this approach has resulted in far better information than their old paper based surveys as the group members can see and try each activity as they complete their ratings and the members find it fun.

Example:



This activity was set up as part of a child safety seminar for a young parents group. The parents-to-be were asked to answer the question as they went out for a morning tea break.

It is obviously very important to ensure that families understand the risk factors for SIDS. Therefore, after everyone had completed this activity, the midwife ran through the correct answers and provided the group with a SIDS fact sheet to take home.

References

The following resources contain a whole range of fantastic ideas about creative evaluation approaches. While they were originally designed for work with children and young people, many of the strategies can be effectively adapted to work with people of all ages and abilities.

Participation Works (2008) *Involving Children and Young People in Evaluation*.

Public Profit (2012) *Creative ways to solicit youth input: A hands-on guide for youth practitioners*.

NE-CF and Katalyst Tales (2008) *The Evaluator's Cookbook: Participatory Evaluation Exercises. A resource for work with children and young people*.

A more comprehensive version of this resource is available in hardcopy:

McCabe, A & Horsley, K. (2008) *The Evaluator's Cookbook: Exercises for Participatory Evaluation with Children and Young People. Exercises. A resource for work with children and young people*. Routledge, UK

Piloting the survey

A key feature of surveys is that they collect feedback via a standard set of questions. The structure and format of your survey questions, should be the same for everyone. Once you start distributing surveys, you don't have an opportunity to clarify questions, probe for more information or modify your tool. Even when conducting a survey over the phone or face-to-face, you need to ask the questions in a consistent way. Any prompts or probing questions should already be agreed and included as part of your tool.

Piloting your survey tools is therefore your only opportunity to identify opportunities for improvement. It can help you understand:

- Whether the content is appropriate (to meet the needs of your consumers and to achieve the objectives of your survey).
- How easy the survey tool is to read, understand and complete.
- How long it takes to complete the survey.
- Whether you can collate and analyse the data in a meaningful way.



Piloting your survey tool is essential.

Outlined below are a summary of different ways to pilot your survey tools. Each strategy will provide you with feedback on different aspects of your tool, so it's best to apply a range of strategies to test the overall quality and appropriateness of your tool.

Audit your survey using the 'Survey checklist'

The *Survey checklist* includes a detailed list of the key elements of a well designed survey. It will provide you with information about the strengths and weaknesses of your survey and highlight areas for improvement.

While it's important to review your own surveys, it is often challenging to identify flaws in your own work. Therefore, once you are satisfied that you have addressed all of the checklist criteria, ask a second person to complete the final review (ideally someone that hasn't been involved in the survey development).



The '**Survey checklist**' is included '**Consumer survey tools and templates**'. PDF and Microsoft Word versions are available online at <http://kpassoc.com.au> so it can be completed electronically.

Trial the survey with colleagues

Asking colleagues to pilot your survey allows you to pick up errors or inconsistencies in your survey tool before it goes out to any consumers. It will also provide you with an opportunity to discuss whether you've included the information required to meet your objectives. Ideally, you should collect feedback from colleagues who were not involved in the survey design.

Ask your colleagues to complete the survey

Even if staff need to make up their answers, going through the process of completing the survey will give you insight into the way that they have interpreted each question and the type of response they think is required.

Ask your colleagues for feedback

Discuss their experience of completing the survey and look for opportunities for improvement. Some key points for discussion are included in the table below.

Area of interest	Questions to consider
The alignment of your survey tool and its objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the survey tool collect the information you need to address the purpose of your survey?• Are there any questions that you already know the answers to?
Any questions that are confusing or unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the meaning of each question interpreted in the way you intended?• Is it clear how to answer each question and how the completed survey should be returned?
The appropriateness of the content to your target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the questions culturally appropriate, inclusive of everyone in your target group and pitched at an appropriate level?
The overall flow of the survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the questions in a logical order?• Are the questions introduced so that the reader understands their context and purpose?• Does each section flow?
Errors or inconsistencies in language, format or structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any spelling or grammatical errors? Is the format appropriate, consistent and easy to read?
Survey logic (primarily for phone or online surveys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have built in skip patterns, do they go to the right places?• If you have made it compulsory to answer some questions, do the prompts and reminders work correctly?

While your colleagues have a solid understanding of your program and your consumer group, their perspective, skills and familiarity with surveys is often very different from your consumers. **Testing a survey with staff, does not replace the need to pilot your tool directly with consumers.**



Pilot the survey with consumers

Once you are confident that the survey is ready to distribute, trial the survey with a small group of consumers and collect feedback about their experience.

Ask consumers to complete the survey

When completing your pilot, try and replicate your proposed approach from start to finish. That includes recruiting people, providing them with the introductory information and asking them to complete the survey in the same way you intend to administer it.

When selecting people to participate in the pilot, it's important to ensure that they are representative of your target group. In some circumstances, you may pilot the survey with a small group of your actual target group, or you may select participants that match key attributes of your target group, but are not the specific group of consumers that you will ultimately be collecting feedback from. Your approach will also be determined by your access to the participants and the amount of time available to complete the pilot. If you have access to a group of appropriate consumers and need feedback quickly, completing the pilot in a group setting can be much faster.

If you're unsure about the best way to present a question, you can present your pilot group with the question laid out in several formats. When you review and compare their responses, you will often identify one option that provides you with better information. If several options provide the same quality of feedback, ask the consumers to vote on which option they prefer. Make sure that you tell your consumers that you are doing this, otherwise they may get frustrated about being asked the same question multiple times and lose interest in completing the survey.

Analyse the pilot data

It's important to collate and analyse your pilot data to confirm that you are collecting the information that is required to meet your objectives. This will also alert you to potential challenges in data collation and analysis and ensure that you can present the results in a meaningful way.

Common issues that are identified at this point include:

- Questions are being misinterpreted or answered inconsistently.
- Scales are not sensitive enough (or overly complicated).
- Multiple choice lists are missing common response options.





Ask for feedback from your consumers

Discuss their experience of completing the survey and opportunities for improvement. Feedback can be collected one-on-one or in a small group setting. As always, your approach should be determined by what is most appropriate for your consumers. Discussing feedback in a group setting can be a useful way to promote discussion and identify any differences in the way questions were interpreted.

In addition to the points included above (see table re discussion with colleagues) consumers will also be able to provide you with feedback about the following:

Area of interest	Questions to consider
Recruitment strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were they comfortable with the information provided to them when they were recruited to participate in the pilot? • Do they have suggestions about how to recruit other consumers to participate?
The clarity and persuasiveness of the introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they clear about the purpose of the survey and how the information will be used? • After reading the introduction, were they motivated to complete the survey?
The relevance of each question and the survey overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they have the information required to answer each question? • Did the survey provide them with an opportunity to provide feedback about the issues that are important to them? <p><i>NB: If you've used questions from another survey, don't assume they make sense! The way that people read and interpret questions is heavily impacted by the context in which they are asked.</i></p>
Consumer confidence and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they feel comfortable answering all of the questions? • Was it clear why sensitive or personal questions were being asked?
Task difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the format and structure easy to read and follow? • Was there any language that was unclear? • Did they have all of the information required to answer each question? • Were the instructions about how to complete each question clear? • Did they know how to return their completed survey?
Opportunities for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would they do differently?



Avoiding common mistakes

Well-written surveys make it easy for consumers to participate and provide you with useful information. Surveys that are poorly designed can be frustrating or confusing to complete particularly when:

- The questions do not focus on the consumer's areas of interest.
- The answer choices do not match their opinion or experience.

This affects the quality of data you receive, your analysis will be less meaningful and the evaluation may be useless or harmful.

The table below provides a summary of common mistakes that people make when writing survey questions and provides recommendations about how these can be avoided. Once you are clear about the purpose of the survey and the information you require, use this guide to assist you to write effective and targeted survey questions.

Common mistake: Using technical terms or abbreviations		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>How often do you complete your HEP?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> At least once a day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 -3 times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never, I don't do my HEP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple language that is appropriate and meaningful to your consumers. • Avoid using jargon, technical terms or abbreviations. If you need to use technical terms, clearly define them. 	<p>How often do you complete the home exercise program that your physiotherapist gave you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> At least once a day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never, I don't do my exercise program</p>

Common mistake: Writing incomplete sentences		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>Please tick appropriate box:</p> <p>Falls prevention program:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions should be written as complete sentences to ensure they are easy to read. • Read each question out loud and be sure that it makes sense as a stand alone sentence. • Keep grammar and language simple. 	<p>How would you rate the quality of the information provided to you in the falls prevention program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor</p>



Common mistakes – structuring questions

Common mistake: Asking double-barrelled questions		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>During the assessment interview did the staff listen to you and find out what was important to you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partly <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><i>NB: In this example, the consumer may have felt that the staff member listened to them during the assessment, but may not feel that they took the appropriate steps to find out about what was important to them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double-barrelled questions ask people to answer multiple questions at once. People may have different opinions about each aspect or may only answer part of the question. This makes it difficult for consumers to provide you with reliable information. • Be sure that each question asks for feedback about one clear issue. • Double-barrelled questions often have 'and' in them to link multiple issues. 	<p>During the assessment interview, did you feel the staff listened to you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partly <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>During the assessment interview did the staff ask about what was important to you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partly <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Common mistake: Asking leading questions		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>We often get feedback that people find a home visit by an Occupational Therapist really valuable. Did you find the Occupational Therapist home visit valuable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading questions can encourage people to answer questions a certain way or imply that there is a correct answer. • Keep questions objective and clear. • Avoid strong or emotive language. 	<p>Did you find the Occupational Therapist home visit valuable?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes I found the visit very valuable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I found the visit some what valuable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, the visit was not valuable</p> <p>Why/why not?</p>
<p>Since seeing the dietitian, how much has your diet improved?</p> <p><i>NB This question assumes there has been improvement.</i></p>		<p>After seeing the dietitian, how has your diet changed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have made all of the changes to my diet that the dietitian suggested</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have made some of the changes to my diet that the dietitian suggested</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have made none of the changes that the dietitian suggested</p>

Common mistake: Asking questions that consumers don't have enough information to answer

Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>Would you be interested in having multiple meals delivered on fewer days?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you provide enough information in your survey so that the consumer can make an informed choice. • If consumers don't know how to answer the question it's likely they will skip the question or guess the answer. 	<p>We are considering providing a new delivery option for our meals. You would receive one fresh meal and one frozen meal, delivered every second day.</p> <p>Would you be interested in having two meals delivered every second day?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Common mistake: Asking vague open-ended questions

Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>What do you think about our facilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vague questions are challenging to answer and can be difficult to analyse because people interpret questions differently and provide a broad variety of answers. • Ensure that your questions ask for specific and concrete feedback about key issues. • When asking open ended questions it is important to give the respondent an indication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The type of information you are expecting. – The amount of information you are expecting. 	<p>How would you describe the cleanliness of our activity room?</p>
<p>When did you last have a drink?</p>		<p>When was the last time you had an alcoholic drink?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Today</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 days ago</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 days ago</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More than one week ago</p>



Common mistakes – developing response options

Common mistake: Providing multiple choice responses that don't match the questions		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>How satisfied were you with the size of the meal servings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very appropriate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the multiple-choice options you provide clearly answer the question posed. • Read the entire question and each answer out loud, to ensure the answer options you have provided are sensible and appropriate responses to the question. • Ensure that you provide enough options to capture people's experience. 	<p>How would you rate the size of the meal servings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too much food</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Just the right amount of food</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not enough food</p>
<p>When you contact the staff with requests or problems, do you find the staff helpful?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p> <p><i>NB: Limiting the scale to absolute terms (e.g. 'always' or 'never') can be challenging and will lead the majority of respondents to select 'sometimes'.</i></p>		<p>When you contact the staff with requests or problems, do you find the staff helpful?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rarely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>

Common mistake: Providing scales that are biased or unbalanced.		
Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>Overall how satisfied were you with today's session?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Satisfied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied</p> <p><i>NB There are 2 positive responses and 1 negative response in this example.</i></p> <p><i>It can also be it is difficult for consumers to differentiate between 'Extremely Satisfied' and 'Satisfied'.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your scale provides an equal number of positive and negative answers. • When scales have an even number of answers, it forces a consumer to make a decision one way or the other about a statement. • When scales have an odd number of answers, the middle answer is usually a 'neutral' response, such as 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. This allows consumers to opt out of having to make a decision about the statement. 	<p>Overall how satisfied were you with today's session?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Completely Satisfied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partly Satisfied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied</p> <p>Why/Why not?</p> <p><i>NB: Adding 'why/why not' will give consumers the opportunity to further explain their answer.</i></p>



Common mistake: Setting up response options so that clients could fit into more than one group

Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>What age demographic do you belong to?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Under 40</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 40-55</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 55-70</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 70-80</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 80+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the options provided are mutually exclusive of each other. • Distribute groups/ranges. 	<p>Which of the following age ranges do you belong in?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 40 or under</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 41-50</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 51-60</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 61-70</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 71-80</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Above 81</p>

Common mistake: Creating scales that are unclear or undefined

Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>How often do you do attend our community walking program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Seldom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Frequently</p> <p><i>NB: Consumers will have to subjectively interpret what each of these options means in order to respond. Consumers will interpret the terms differently and therefore it is difficult to compare the results</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid terms that are open to interpretation. • Clearly define all terms to reduce ambiguity. 	<p>How often do you attend our community walking program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Every fortnight</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Once a week</p>
<p>On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate our Nursing Service?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep scales consistent throughout the survey. • Clearly define/describe the 'anchor' points on a scale, this includes the highest and lowest points. Be clear if the midpoint is a 'neutral' answer or 'I don't know'. • The lowest number on the scale should be on the far left and the highest number on the far right. 	<p>On the following scale, how satisfied are you with our Nursing Service?</p> <p>Not at all satisfied Neither satisfied or dissatisfied Completely satisfied</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>



Common mistake: Providing an incomplete list of multiple choice response options

Example	Recommendation	Alternative question:
<p>Please circle the aspect of our carer support program that you value.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff visit me at home</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Having the opportunity to focus on my own needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing my experience with other carers</p> <p><i>NB: There are lots of other aspects of the program that the consumer may value. It is also unclear whether consumers should circle one or more of the options</i></p>	<p>For multiple choice questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about whether the consumer can provide one answer or multiple answers to the question. • You should aim to cover at least 90% of responses within your listed options. Piloting your survey helps you to identify if your list of answers is exhaustive. • Include 'other' at the end of the list (and only ask consumer to specify if you have the capacity to analyse that information). • If the list of answers is too long, consider using open ended questions instead. • Sometimes consumers may not want to, or be able to answer a question. Consider need for "Don't Know", 'Unsure', 'Maybe', 'Not applicable' or 'Prefer not to say'. • Pilot your survey first with a small number of consumers to ensure you have the right response options. 	<p>What aspects of our carer support program do you value? (please tick all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff visiting me at home</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Having the opportunity to focus on my own needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing my experience with other carers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>What do you value the most about our carer support program? (open ended question).</p>



Please refer to the following tools within **'Consumer survey tools and templates'** for additional information:

- Detailed information about survey design, including recommendations about layout, structure and question design is available in the **'Survey design guide'**.
- The **'Survey checklist'** provides a detailed list of the key elements of a well designed survey. The checklist can be used to evaluate an existing survey and/or to review a new survey before it is piloted.

