



## Basic question formats & clear and ethical answer options:

Open-ended questions	Closed-ended questions*	Partially opened-ended questions
<i>Requires respondents to use their own words.</i>	<i>Has pre-selected response categories.</i>	<i>Leaves room for unanticipated responses while still providing typical responses.</i>
How can you reduce your risk of becoming infected with HIV? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	In sexual relationships, how often do you find that men pay more attention to your race or ethnicity than to who you are as a person?  1. Many times 2. A few times 3. Once or twice 4. Never 98. Don't know 99. Decline to answer	How do you identify in terms of your ethnic /racial / cultural group?  1. Latino 2. Hispanic 3. Spanish 4. Chicano 5. Latin American nationality: _____ 6. Other Latino identification: _____ 7. Non-Latino: _____ 8. Other: _____ 98. Don't know 99. Decline to answer

**\*Tip:** Consider providing respondents with answer options printed separately when the same close-ended responses repeat for several questions. Providing a response sheet is also helpful when there is a long list of answer options for a particular question.

## Questions and their answer options are also described by the following:

Categorical Responses	Ordinal Responses	Numerical Responses
<i>When responses are simply the names of the categories created for the question.</i>	<i>When responses have an order but are not a number.</i>	<i>When the responses are legitimate numbers.</i>
<b>Example: Gender:</b> Responses could be male, female, transgendered.	<b>Example: Health Status:</b> Responses could be very good, good, fair, poor.	<b>Example: Age:</b> Responses could be 15, 39, 52, etc.

## Arranging questions on the page:

1. The questionnaire should be pleasing to the eye (lots of white space).
2. The order needs to make sense (related questions should be grouped together).
3. Decide whether demographics (age, income, housing, immigration status, etc.) work best at the beginning or the end of your survey.

### Instructions for respondents and data collectors:

1. Include a brief explanation of the purpose of the survey.
2. Explain the conditions of confidentiality; this is especially important when working with immigrant and other marginalized communities.
3. Make available the questionnaire, instructions and answer option cards in the languages of all potential respondents.
4. Include a clear explanation of how to complete the questionnaire.
5. Include transitional instructions between topics to help respondents change the focus of their thinking.
6. In using skip patterns – be sure to provide clear visual instructions, for example:

**17. How difficult do you think it would be for an individual who only spoke Spanish to access services from your organization?**

1. Not Difficult

2. Somewhat difficult

3. Difficult (go to 17a)

97. Not applicable

98. Don't know

99. Decline to answer

**17a. If "Difficult," please explain why:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. If self-administered, include directions about where to send the completed questionnaire.
8. Make sure to thank the respondents at the end of the questionnaire.

The information in this technical bulletin was supported by the expertise at APLA & CCI and also adapted from The Survey Handbook, Arlene Fink, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2003.

If you are interested in Acción Mutua's "Survey Development" training or other information, please contact [www.accionmutua.org](http://www.accionmutua.org) or 213-201-XXXX