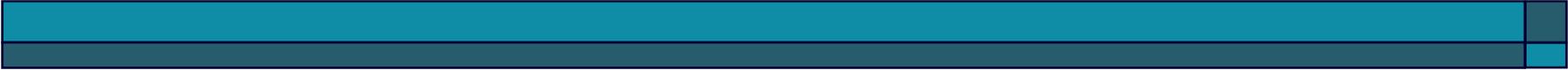


Developing a Survey

Created by:

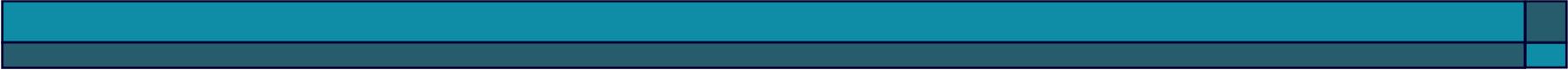
Leah Coughlin & Sylvia Hubbard

Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS
Evaluation Consortium Members



What is a Survey?

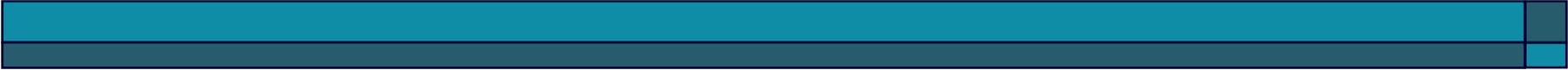
- A survey is a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes, practices, or behavior.
- The purpose, topics, and length of surveys may vary. However, similar steps are followed in their planning, development, and implementation.



What is Required for a Survey?

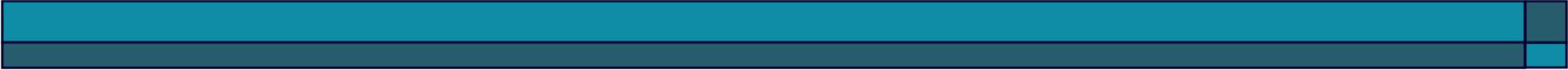
- Planning, planning, planning!
 - What you want to ask
 - How to ask it
 - How many people to survey
 - How to reach them

Note: surveys are a great way of learning about a population but you must remember that the information you learn may not always be a representative view of the population that you are trying to access.



What is Required for a Survey?

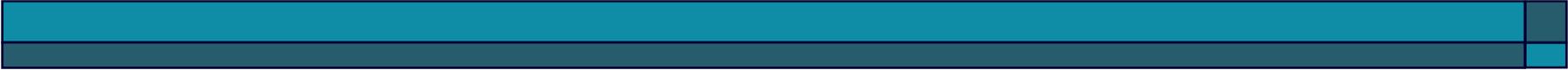
- Ask yourself:
 - Why?
 - Why are you choosing to do a survey?
 - What?
 - What information are you collecting (and for what purpose)?
 - Who?
 - Who is your target population?



Identifying the Purpose

- First, define the objectives
 - What information is wanted or needed?
 - Is there a problem that needs solving?
 - What actions are you prepared to implement based on the results?

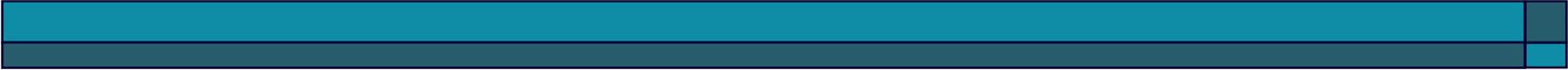
- Surveys can help to:
 - Describe a population or program
 - Plan a new program
 - Evaluate an existing program



Choosing the Target Population

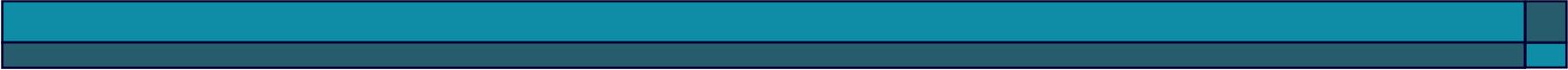
- The target population is the group of people to whom you want the survey findings to apply

- Ask yourself:
 - Who are you currently serving?
 - Who have you historically worked with?
 - What are you looking to implement, and with whom?



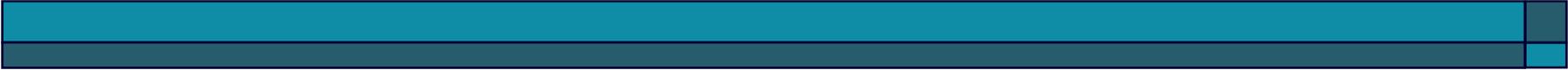
Choosing the Target Population

- Information may be obtained from:
 - A specific group (e.g., participants in a community program, high school students in a city, women of childbearing age in a state)
 - A broader group (e.g., adults in the United States)
- The population of interest can be identified in
 - a country, state, city, or local area.



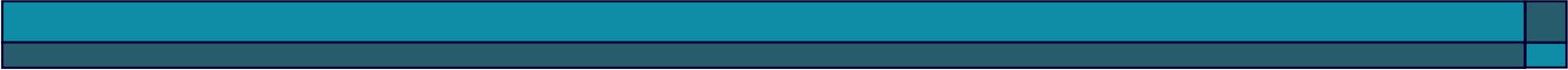
Developing Survey Questions

- Using focus groups from your target population is a helpful way to begin developing your survey questions.
- Meet with members of the target population to brainstorm the best way to obtain the information that you desire, as well as the questions to ask.



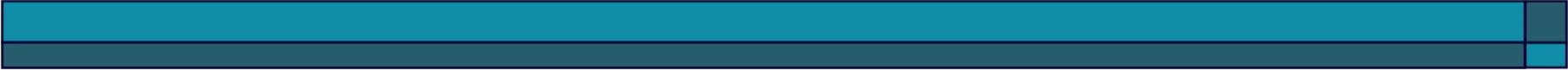
Developing Survey Questions

- Once your objectives and target population have been identified, you will be able to determine what types of questions you will need.
- It is important to remember to ask only necessary questions and to use wording that is appropriate for your target population.



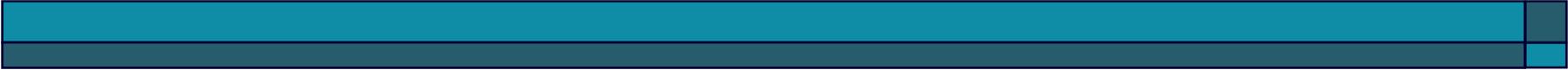
Developing Survey Questions

- Survey questions might address:
 - Scientific issues (e.g., “What is the prevalence of cigarette smoking in the United States?”)
 - Social marketing issues (e.g., “How do adolescents respond to a new public service announcement?”)
 - Broad public opinion (e.g., “Should schools teach sex education?”)
 - Program issues (e.g., “Do clients feel that program staff are culturally sensitive?”)



Developing Survey Questions

- When developing a survey, you can either develop your own questions or use pre-existing questions.
 - One advantage of using pre-existing questions is that they have already been used and tested.
 - Consider your target population. Think about how they will interpret and react to each question.



Types of Survey Questions

□ There are 2 overarching types of survey questions:

■ Open-ended

Allows respondents to answer any way they choose.

Example: What is your favorite color?

■ Closed-ended

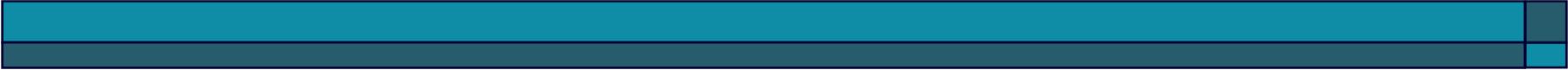
Requires participants to choose from a limited number of responses. These are sometimes called “multiple choice questions.” Analysis of closed-ended questions tends to be easier.

Example: What is your favorite color?

a) blue

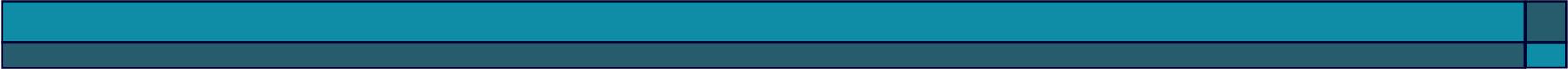
b) green

c) yellow



Closed-Ended Questions

- There are 4 types of closed-ended questions.
 - Categorical
 - Likert Scale
 - Numerical
 - Ordinal



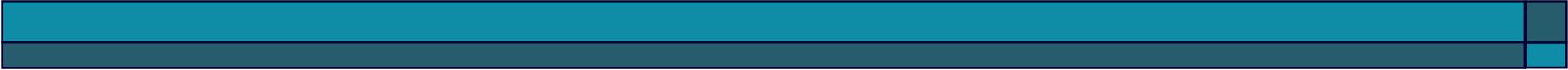
Closed-Ended Questions

Categorical

This type of question is used when the possible answers are categories, and the respondent must belong to one category.

Example: What is your gender? (Select one)

- Male
- Female
- Transgender (M-F)
- Transgender (F-M)



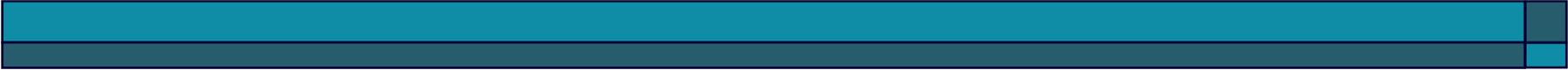
Closed-Ended Questions

□ Likert-Scale

This type of question is used when you are trying to determine the respondents' attitudes or feelings about something.

Example: How important do you think SAT scores are to a college student's success?

Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 Not Important



Closed-Ended Questions

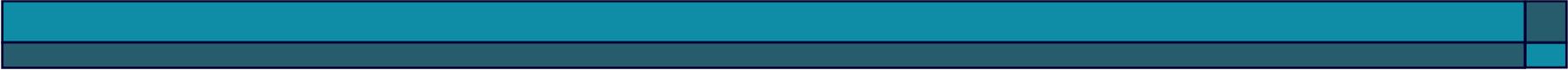
Numerical

This type of question is used when the answer must be a number.

Example: What is your current age? (Select one)

- Less than 18
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 or older

Note: make sure your choices do not overlap i.e. include the same age within 2 choices



Closed-Ended Questions

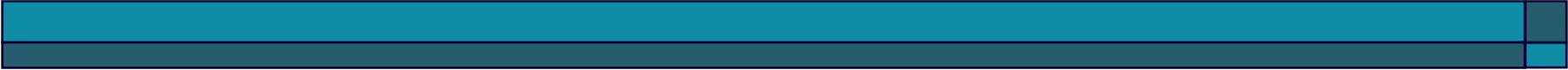
Ordinal

This type of question is used when the answer must be ranked.

Example: How well organized was this training?

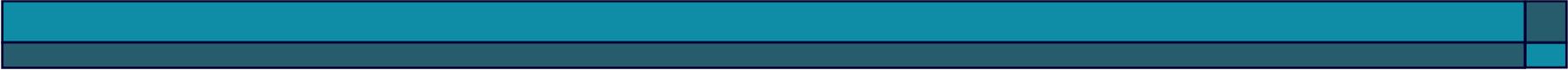
(Select one)

- Not well organized
- Somewhat organized
- Very organized



Survey Format

- The format of the survey refers to how the survey is laid out and how the information is organized and presented.
- A well-formatted survey makes it easier for the respondent to read and complete it.



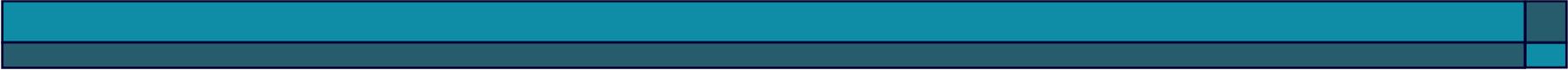
Survey Format

□ **Purpose and directions**

- This includes the purpose of the survey and how to complete it.

□ **Questions**

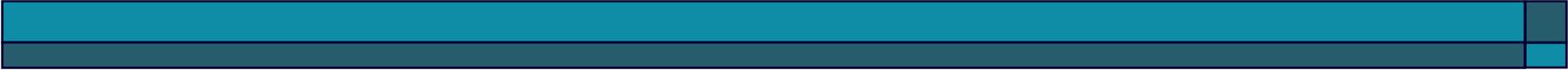
- The order of the questions matter. The first question set should be general and pertain to the purpose of the survey.
- The rest of the questions should be in order of importance. Be sure to group similar categories or types of questions. Logical flow is key.



Final Tips

- **Only collect the data you need**
 - You may be tempted to ask what you would like to know or what you think would be interesting. Know that you are asking only relevant questions by checking that each question in your survey is justified.

- **Know how long it will take**
 - Be sure to respect those who are providing the information. Know their time is valuable. Long surveys may result in poor participation and/or incomplete data.



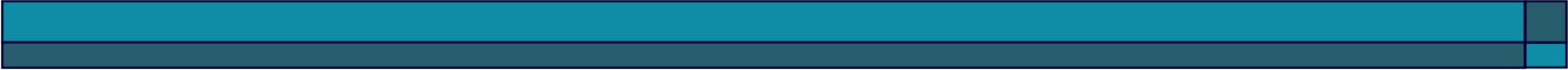
Final Tips

□ **Formatting is important**

- You may need to spread questions out in order to leave room for answers or make the survey more attractive or easy to read. Err on the side of visual appeal, not amount of pages used.

□ **Use appropriate language**

- Keep the reading level at or below the reading level of the people who will be filling out the survey. Avoid abbreviations and jargon.



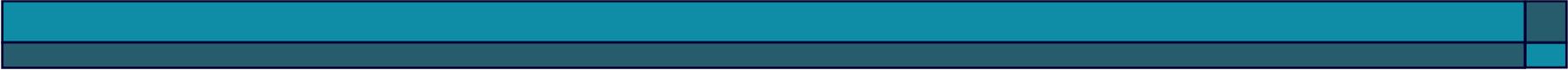
Final Tips

□ **Be culturally appropriate**

- Cultural considerations should not be limited to race/ethnicity. Also consider demographics such as rural vs. urban, religion, income level, and geographic region. Give culturally appropriate response options. Example: Assessing a respondent's relationship to a child should include response options such as parent, foster parent, grandparent, other relative, and other (instead of just “parent or guardian”)

□ **Be mindful of assumptions**

- Don't ask questions that assume respondents had certain experiences.



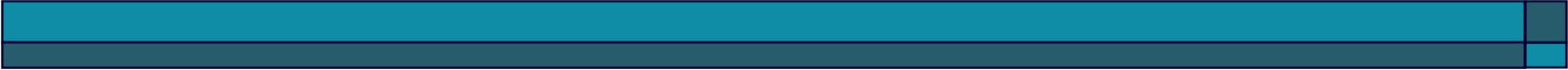
Final Tips

□ **Avoid biased questions**

- Questions should not lead a person to answer in a particular way. Examine questions ahead of time to be sure that answers don't appear “more accepted” or “better” than another.

□ **Ask questions one at a time**

- Asking more than one question at a time can confuse the respondent or lead to only one of the questions being answered. Space out questions to give respondents the opportunity to answer each survey question.



Final Tips

- **Avoid objectionable questions**
 - Think about whether the person will feel comfortable answering the question. If the question is relevant, think of the best way to ask without making the person uncomfortable. Assure respondents that the survey is voluntary, and state whether their responses will be anonymous or confidential.

- **Be specific**
 - Questions that are too general can be difficult to answer accurately.