

Sharing Your Impact Resource Series

CREATING SURVEYS & COLLECTING NUMERIC INFORMATION

In this resource you will learn about numerical information and how to create a survey. The resource includes the following sections:

Step 1: Decide whether a survey is right for you: Surveys are best for getting broad information from people who are easy to reach.

Step 2: Determine your purpose and audience: Figure out what you want to learn and who you want to hear from.

Step 3: Create your questions: Determine what questions you'll ask, when you'll ask them, and how you'll ask to make sure you aren't creating bias.

Step 4: Choose your method: Decide whether to ask questions in-person or online.

Step 5: Compile and analyze your information: Summarize your data in useful ways.

Example Survey: A rural community created and analyzed a survey to evaluate their wellness fair.

Other Example Survey Questions: A variety of questions to try on a survey.

Click to jump to the section

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About the series:

An important part of community projects is **sharing their impact**, or the change they create in the community. Sharing impact celebrates your hard work, gets people excited about your project, and shows funders the outcomes you achieved. **Evaluation** is the process of measuring the impacts of your project. <u>Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division</u> and <u>Centre for Suicide Prevention</u> and <u>PolicyWise for Children & Families</u> collaborated to create a resource series to support rural community members in evaluating their mental health projects. To see the entire series, check out its <u>web page</u>.







CREATING SURVEYS & COLLECTING NUMERIC INFORMATION

Numerical information, also known as quantitative data, provides clear and measurable facts that help you assess your project's success. Numerical information relates to things that can be counted such as the number of participants, the percentage of participants who agree with a statement, or the number of resources distributed throughout the project. Numerical information helps you make comparisons, track progress over time, and support decision making. This type of data helps show trends, measure impact, and identify potential gaps.

Surveys are one of the most common methods to collect numerical information. Surveying, which can take on many different forms, is a way to gather information by asking people questions about themselves. Based on information gathered from surveying a small group of people, you can make educated guesses about what the wider community might be experiencing.

In community projects, surveys can be used to:

- Collect information about participants' demographics.
- Identify community needs to shape a new project.
- Measure changes in attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour.
- Determine participants' satisfaction with a project.
- · Gather feedback on where to improve.

Step I: Decide whether a survey is right for you

Surveys are convenient and allow you to gather broad information quickly. Surveys work well if:



Participants are easy to reach:

Participants are available and easy to recruit. Surveys can be distributed in different ways to increase the likelihood participants will complete them.

Example: to get feedback about an event, you hand out paper surveys and ask people to fill them out before they leave.



Participants' personal information or context isn't crucial: Surveys can help collect participants' own impressions of themselves. They collect information without much detail about the context around why a person feels a particular way.

Example: to understand whether people learned more about mental health at your event, you don't need detail about how this knowledge will impact their life long-term.

Step 2: Determine your purpose and audience

Think about the reason you're collecting numerical information to help guide the questions you ask. To help maintain the trust of your participants, you can communicate the survey's purpose to them, so they know why you are collecting information. Without a clear purpose you might not ask the right questions. It helps to consider the following:

What do I want to learn or understand?

Am I trying to measure changes in behaviour, gather opinions, or understand community needs?

Who is my audience?

What questions are appropriate? Will they have any difficulties reading or accessing the survey?

Will this survey inform my decisions?

Will this information guide my plans for future projects or improve existing ones?

What specific information do I need to collect from participants?

Do I need general feedback, demographic details, or detailed stories about people's experiences?

Step 3: Create your questions

Designing your questions is the most important step in the process. Clear questions will encourage participants to respond openly and directly. Here are some tips to consider when writing survey questions:

Indicators

As a starting point, you can think about the change you want to cause in your community through your project and which questions can help measure this change. Indicators show you whether an outcome, or a change in the community, is happening. Survey questions can collect information on an indicator that you want to measure. For more information about outcomes and indicators, check out Getting Started with Evaluation.

It's important to write survey questions in a way that makes sense for your participants. You can use different wording depending on your audience. For example, you picked improved social connection as an outcome for your project. In your survey for adults, you could ask, "Do you feel more connected to your community after the event?" For youth, you could ask, "Did you make new friends at the event?" to get similar information in an age-appropriate way.

Timing

You can phrase your questions differently depending on when participants fill out the survey. One approach is to ask similar questions before and after a project activity to measure changes in participants' opinions. beliefs, or knowledge. If you use this approach, you can phrase questions in the present tense.

Example: Rate your knowledge of the mental health programs and resources in your community.

Another approach is to only give out the survey after the project activity. You can write questions that focus on measuring changes, but you can phrase them in the past tense.

Example: Since attending the fair, has your knowledge of available mental health programs and resources changed?



Bias

Sometimes the way you phrase questions can influence participants' answers. If this happens, participants' responses do not reflect how they actually feel. This is known as bias. Because you may use survey responses to guide your decision making, it's important they're as accurate as possible.

Bias can come up in several ways, including:



Leading Questions: Questions signaling for or against a specific answer.

Example: you can ask participants, 'How does exercise impact your stress levels?' instead of 'Research shows that exercise reduces stress. Do you agree that exercise helps reduce your stress?'



Desirability Bias: When participants give responses that they think will make them look better to others, especially in situations where their identity is known to the person analyzing the survey.

Example: In surveys related to mental health, participants might not report feelings of anxiety because they want to appear emotionally well. To prevent this from happening, you can reassure participants that their identity won't be connected to their responses and the information they share is confidential.



Nonresponses: Sometimes certain people will not answer survey questions, leading to inaccurate conclusions.

Example: A survey about self-care activities contained many questions about gardening. People who don't garden did not answer these questions, so the results represented gardeners and not nongardeners. To be more inclusive, the survey questions could list more self-care activities and include an 'other' option for those who don't identify with the given options in the list.

Response Types

Surveys can include different types of questions. By giving participants different ways to respond, you can capture a wide range of information and accommodate different preferences. This can allow us to collect more accurate information, leading to better insights. Explore the table below to learn more about different types of survey responses.

Response Type	Strengths & Weaknesses	Example	Analysis
Open-ended: People don't have response options to choose from. They can write in anything they'd like.	Strengths: • Allows for more detailed responses • Encourages participants to reflect deeply Weaknesses: • Time-consuming to complete • Can be misinterpreted • Participants often skip	What are some key lessons you learned from the workshop?	See our Analyzing & Sharing Stories of Impact resource for more information Link
Dichotomous: People have two response options to choose from. They can only select one option.	Strengths: Participants don't have to read a long list of options so responding is simple Weaknesses: Don't capture detailed feelings or experiences, particularly if someone felt neutral Don't allow for nuance. If someone relates to elements of both options, they may have difficulty choosing one over the other	Did you find the workshop helpful? a) Yes b) No	Count the number of responses for each option. You can do this manually or using spreadsheet software. Calculate the percentages for each answer: divide the number of responses for each option by the total number of responses and multiply by 100 to get a percentage. For example: Yes = 15 yes responses = 0.3 50 total responses = 0.3 50 total responses = 0.3 x 100% = 30% of participants responded yes
Ranking: People have several response options that they put in order based on preference or importance.	Strengths: • Helps identify which options participants value most • Participants have to consider options carefully, leading to thoughtful answers Weaknesses: • If overused, participants can get tired, stop paying attention to their responses, or give up on the rest of the survey • No information about why someone ranked things the way they did	Please rank which topics you would like to see in a community planning circle next year. Rate your favourite topic from '1' and your least favourite as '5': Winter Fair Medicinal plant workshop Harvest Dinner Seed Swap Session Community garden	Make a table showing how each person ranked the options. Count how many times each option was ranked 1st, 2nd, and so on. Look at which options were the highest ranked and lowest ranked.

Response Type	Strengths & Weaknesses	Example	Analysis
Checklist: People have several answers to choose from. They can select as many answers as they want.	Strengths: Since participants can choose multiple options, you can capture a range of different feelings Simple and quick Weaknesses: Having too many options can be overwhelming for participants Participants might feel like their choices are limited by predefined options	Which upcoming events are you interested in attending? Select as many as you want. Wighter Winter Fair Medicinal plant workshop Harvest Dinner Seed Swap Session	Count how many participants selected each option. You can do this manually or using spreadsheet software. List each option and count how many times it appears across all responses. Calculate the percentage for each response option. For example: The survey received 50 responses in total. 30 Winter Wellness Fair responses. = 60% of participants selected the Winter Wellness Fair 47 Harvest Dinner responses. = 0.94 x 100% 50 total responses = 94% of participants selected the Harvest Dinner
Multiple choice: People have several response options to choose from. They can only select one option. Some multiple-choice questions have responses that are along a scale, such as from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree.' For some helpful examples of scales you can use, check out this webpage. Can include options: • "neither agree nor disagree" for participants who don't have a strong opinion on a statement. • "I don't know" if a participant is unfamiliar with the topic of the question. • "other, please specify" if you know that some participants might have other answers outside of the choices you provide.	Strengths: Participants understand what they're being asked because there are a few clear choices to pick from Easy to analyze because responses are limited Weaknesses: If there aren't any answer choices that align with their opinion, participants might choose the most convenient option, not one that reflects their true feelings Poorly worded questions can leave participants feeling confused, leading to less accurate information	How comfortable would you feel accessing mental health supports if you needed them? a) Very uncomfortable b) Somewhat uncomfortable c) Neutral d) Somewhat comfortable What is your age? a) Under 18 b) 18 - 34 c) 35 - 49 d) 50 - 64 e) 65+	Count how many people chose each option. For example: The survey received a total of 16 responses. Under 18: 2 participants 18 - 34: 1 participant 35 - 49: 10 participants 50 - 64: 3 participants 65+: 0 participants Calculate the percentage for each option. For example: Under 2 particiants = 0.13 x 100% 16 total responses = 13% of participant were under 18. 18 - 24 = 1 participant = 0.06 x 100% 16 total responses = 6% of participants were under between 18 and 34 years old. Look for trends in which option was chosen the most.

Step 4: Choose your method

The way you share your survey with participants depends on the situation and the people you're collecting information from. Some ways of collecting numerical information include:

In-Person

At in-person events or programs, you have the opportunity to ask your questions in creative ways:



Paper surveys: participants fill out paper surveys at a table or station at the event.



Online surveys: participants fill out an online survey using a provided iPad. tablet, or laptop or their smartphone.



Live polling: participants can answer questions and see the poll results live using online platforms like **Mentimeter**.



Dot Voting: participants can vote on options or statements displayed on a poster board by placing a dot or sticker next to their preferred option.



Token Voting: participants place tokens into labelled boxes to vote on options or statements.

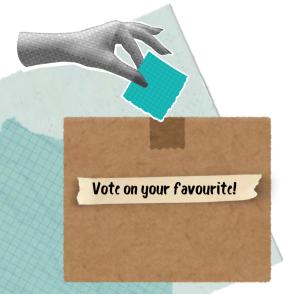
Online

You can collect numerical data online using a variety of survey platforms, such as:

- SurveyMonkey
- Google Forms
- TypeForm

With online survey platforms, you can share the link to complete the survey with participants by e-mail. You can also create a QR code that participants can scan with the camera on their smartphone. Another option is to embed a survey into an e-mail.







Survey Design Considerations



Are the questions clear?

Will the participants understand the questions? Is the phrasing confusing?

- To make questions clear, use simple words. Only ask one question at a time. Provide clear instructions for how to respond.
- It can be helpful to get someone else to read your questions to make sure they makes sense to other people.
- Include an "I don't know" or "prefer not to say" option to prevent bias.



Are the questions complete?

Do the questions cover everything you hope to learn from participants?

• To be thorough, think about what information you need. Write down the topics you need to cover. Make sure you have a question for each topic.



Are the questions respectful?

Do the questions use neutral words? Do they invade participants' privacy?

- To keep language neutral, avoid using overly technical language or strong words that could evoke emotion. For example, instead of asking, "Do you feel that support groups have completely transformed your mental well-being?" You could ask, "How helpful have the support groups been in supporting your mental well-being?"
- Ask specific questions to prevent misinterpretation. For example, instead of using a prompt like, "Share about your mental health," you could ask, "How would you rate your overall mental health at this time?"



Is the survey too long?

Is the survey appropriate given the project activity it is evaluating? For example, if a survey is too long, participants will give up and not complete the entire survey. For short experiences, like viewing a piece of art or interacting with a community garden, you don't want the evaluation activity to take longer than the experience itself. Each question should serve a purpose, and you should only include questions that will give you information you'll use.



Should it be anonymous?

Consider whether participants would feel more comfortable answering your questions using private or anonymous methods. You can make your methods anonymous by limiting the personal information collected:

- For example, you can ask people to tell you their age or pick an age category rather than giving you their date of birth, which can be linked to their identity.
- Be mindful of how the information you collect and share can reveal who participants are. For example, one woman attended your event. If you share your survey results back to the community, you wouldn't want to show how different genders responded to the survey because everyone who was at the event would know how the woman responded.
- In cases where it's easy to link participants to their responses, be careful not to ask questions that could harm someone if their identity was known, such as questions about mental health, drug use, crime, or sex.

Step 5: Compile and analyze your information

The way you share your survey with participants depends on the situation and the people you're collecting information from. Some ways of collecting numerical information include:

Compiling Information



Paper surveys: gather all your surveys together and create a table either on paper or in an excel spreadsheet with each question as a different column. Add each survey as a new row, adding each of their responses for all the questions. For more on how to enter a paper survey into a spreadsheet watch this video.



Online surveys: follow the steps on your survey platform to export the survey results data as a spreadsheet.



Live polling: export the results from your polling session into a spreadsheet, for Mentimeter follow these steps.

Example table for compiling survey responses

Participant #	Q1. How old are you?	Q2. What activity are you interested in?
#1	18 - 34	Winter Gathering
#2	60+	Garden Plots
#3	18 - 34	Garden Plots



Dot Voting: take a picture of the dot voting poster for your records. Add up the number of dots on each option on paper or in an excel spreadsheet.



Token Voting: add up the number of tokens in each of the containers on paper or in an excel spreadsheet.

Example table for counting token or dot voting responses

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0	1	3	7	3

Analyzing Information

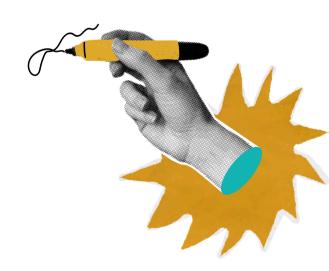
You'll analyze each type of question differently - check out the table on pages 4 and 5 for information about how to analyze vour results.

When you are looking at the results there are a few trends that you can look for:

- What option got the most responses? What were the top options?
- Were there any options with no responses?
- Has there been any change in responses? (if you have used this question before)

You can use these trends to help inform your future project activities or share your findings in reports.

Example: The majority (67%) of participants who attended the kick-off event were interested in the Garden Plot activity.



Example Survey

Context: A project in Ritcher organized a winter wellness fair where organizations set up information booths to share their programs supporting mental well-being. Eight organizations came out to the wellness fair and 40 people attended. On their way out, participants filled out a paper survey to be entered into a prize draw for a winter wellness kit. To protect the anonymity of the survey responses, participants submitted their emails on a different slip of paper.

The Survey

Thank you for attending our Winter Wellness Fair!

The Fair is a part of a larger project creating more opportunities to talk about mental health and well-being in Ritcher.

This survey will help us understand your experience at the Winter Wellness Fair, how it impacted you, and whether there's anything we should change for future events. Your responses won't be linked back to your identity and will only be shared grouped with responses from other participants. For example, we will only share average responses, not responses from individual people. If you have any questions, please reach out to the project organizer, Jane Doe at jane@gmail.com.

- 1. How satisfied are you with the information that was presented at the booths?
 - a) Very dissatisfied
 - b) Dissatisfied
 - c) Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
 - d) Satisfied
 - e) Very satisfied
 - f) I don't know
- 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: At the wellness fair, I learned about a new service in the community that can support my mental well-being?
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neither agree nor disagree
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
 - f) I don't know
- 3. Did attending the fair change your willingness to access mental health supports if you needed them?
 - a) I am much less willing to access mental health supports
 - b) I am somewhat less willing to access mental health supports
 - c) My willingness to access mental health supports didn't change
 - d) I am somewhat more willing to access mental health supports
 - e) I am much more willing to access mental health supports
 - f) I don't know

Compiling Responses

The organizers gathered 25 completed paper surveys and entered the following responses into a spreadsheet on the computer:

Response #	Q1. Booth information satisfaction	Q2. Level of agreement on learning about new services at the event	Q3.Level of willingness to access supports
1	Satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing
2	Very satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
3	Neither	Disagree	No change
4	Dissatisfied	Agree	Somewhat less willing
5	Very satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing
6	Satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
7	Very dissatisfied	Strongly disagree	Much less willing
8	Satisfied	Agree	No change
9	Very satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing
10	Neither	Agree	No change
11	Satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
12	Very satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing
13	Dissatisfied	Disagree	Somewhat less willing
14	Very satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
15	Satisfied	Agree	No change
16	Very dissatisfied	Agree	Much less willing
17	Satisfied	Strongly agree	Somewhat more willing
18	Very satisfied	Agree	Much more willing
19	Neither	Strongly disagree	No change
20	Satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing
21	Very satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
22	Dissatisfied	Agree	Somewhat less willing
23	Satisfied	Agree	No change
24	Very satisfied	Strongly agree	Much more willing
25	Satisfied	Agree	Somewhat more willing

Analysis

Once in the spreadsheet, the survey questions were analyzed one-by-one to find which options got the most responses to help inform the following year's activities. After reviewing the survey results, the event organizers decided to implement a personal approach to the fair next year. They decided they would include intake forms to match individuals with resources that meet their needs. Additionally, they considered including additional booths and workshops that are dedicated to community building and peer support.

Q1. How satisfied are you with the information that was presented at the booths?

Response #	Count	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	2	8%
Dissatisfied	3	12%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	3	12%
Satisfied	9	36%
Very satisfied	8	32%
l don't know	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Results:

68% of participants (17 out of 25) were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of information that was presented at the booths.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: At the wellness fair, I learned about a new service in the community that can support my mental well-being?

Response #	Count	Percentage
Strongly disagree	1	4%
Disagree	3	12%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Agree	14	56%
Strongly agree	7	28%
l don't know	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Results:

84% of participants (21 out of 25) agreed or strongly agreed that they were made aware of a new mental health support available in the community through the wellness fair.

Q3. Did attending the fair change your willingness to access mental health supports if you needed them?

Response #	Count	Percentage
I am much less willing	2	8%
I am somewhat less willing	2	8%
My willingness didn't change	7	28%
I am somewhat more willing	9	36%
I am much more willing	5	20%
l don't know	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Results:

56% of participants (14 out of 25) were somewhat or much more willing to access mental health supports after the fair.

Other Example Survey Questions

Here are some extra questions you can try out in your project. Note, not all the questions will be relevant to your project or will resonate with you. Pick only those that make sense for your community and for your project.

Participant Characteristics

What is your gender? a) Woman/girl b) Man/boy c) Non-binary d) Another gender not listed, please specify e) Prefer not to answer What is your age?
 a) Under 18 b) 18 to 34 c) 35 to 49 d) 50 to 64 e) 65+ f) Prefer not to answer
What ethnicity, or ethnicities, best describes you? Select all that apply. Black East Asian First Nations, Métis, or Inuit Latin American Multiple ethnicities Southeast Asian South Asian West Asian White Another ethnicity or ethnicities not listed, please specify: Prefer not to answer
What is your immigration or citizenship status? a) Canadian Citizen b) Permanent Resident c) Work Permit d) Refugee Claimant e) Temporary resident visa f) International student g) Another immigration or citizenship status not listed, please specify: h) Prefer not to answer

Overall Mental Well-being

- a) Very poor
- b) Poor
- c) Fair
- d) Good
- e) Very good

Did your participation in this project's menta	al health activities	improve your	mental well	-being?
f so, how?				

Overall, how would you rate your connection to the community?

- a) Very disconnected
- b) Disconnected
- c) Neither connected nor disconnected
- d) Connected
- e) Very connected

Overall, how would you rate your life satisfaction?

- a) Very poor
- b) Poor
- c) Acceptable
- d) Good
- e) Very good

Availability of Mental Health Activities and Supports

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The project has increased the availability of mental health activities and supports in our community"?

a)	Strong	ly disa	gree
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- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

How has this event or activity impacted the availability of mental health activities or supports ir
the community?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The mental health activities and supports created through this project met my needs"?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

What mental health needs do you have	that are not currently being met?
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Understanding of Mental Health and Well-being

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Participating in the event or activity improved my understanding of mental health and well-being"?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Willingness to Access Mental Health Supports

After participating in the event or activity, are you more likely to ask other people in your community for mental health support if you need it?

- a) Not at all more likely
- b) Slightly more likely
- c) Somewhat more likely
- d) Moderately more likely
- e) Much more likely

How has this project changed your comfort asking for support from people in your community, if at all?

After participating in the event or activity, how willing are you to access community-based mental health supports?

- a) Very unwilling
- b) Unwilling
- c) Neither willing nor unwilling
- d) Willing
- e) Very willing

To what extent has participating in the event or activity increased your willingness to access mental health supports if you need them?

- a) Not at all
- b) Slightly
- c) Somewhat
- d) Moderately
- e) Greatly

Awareness of Mental Health Supports

To what extent has participating in the activity or event increased your awareness of mental health supports available in the community?

- a) Not at all
- b) Slightly
- c) Somewhat
- d) Moderately
- e) Greatly

Mental Illness Stigma

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Participating in the event or activity decreased stigma towards people living with mental illnesses"?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Participating in the event or activity made me feel more comfortable interacting with people living with mental illnesses"?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Participating in the event or activity made me feel more comfortable talking about mental illness"?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Since this project started, stigma about mental illness in the community has....

- a) Greatly decreased
- b) Somewhat decreased
- c) Not changed
- d) Somewhat increased
- e) Greatly increased