

How to choose between questions and scales

Choosing between questions and scales

Deciding which question or scale to use can be difficult. Hopefully some of these tips will make it easier for you to choose:

- Read *all* the questions in a scale to see if they are relevant to your program.
- Try not to choose two scales as this will probably lead to a very long survey for your participants. Choose the scale with the best questions for your program, and then supplement with additional questions as they are needed. Remember that there are abbreviated versions of some of the scales available as well!
- If you have chosen a scale, make sure that you are not choosing repetitive questions to add! Limit the number of questions you ask your participants so that you don't overwhelm them.
- Does the question refer to a timeline like 'in the last 12 months'? If so, would that timeline work for your program? For example, if your program is only six months, you should probably steer clear of those 12 month questions. Remember, once you change the wording of the questions, they are no longer considered to be tested questions.

Consider the following when you have many similar sounding questions to choose from:

- Which question makes the most sense to you? These questions come from tested instruments, so you can't really go wrong choosing any of them.
- The literacy level of your participants. Do you think they will be able to understand the question you are reading? If not, try to choose a different question that they would understand more easily or consider reading the questions out loud.
- Any cultural sensitivities your participants may have. Although there are not currently any questions that have been developed for specific communities, like First Nations, there may be some questions that are more relevant than others for the community you work with.

Remember – you are the expert on your program, not us! Read through the questions and scales and choose the ones that make the most sense to you.

Please feel free to provide us with feedback on the feedback page about questions you wish were included – we would love to hear your thoughts!