



Sexual Assault
DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE
 Enhancing Sexual Assault Services

LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Tools for Measurement

This overview is part of the *National Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative Toolkit* on community assessment approaches to support the growth of sexual assault services within multi-service programs. Provided below is a summary of key measurement tools that can be used in assessment work. The most important factor determining which type of measure you use is what type of measure will give you the richest information for the questions you are asking.

4 MAIN TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO MEASURE THE EFFECTS OF YOUR PROGRAM

TOOL	MEASURES	ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge • Attitudes • Intentions • Behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + • A quick and inexpensive way to get information from a large number of people • It's easy to be consistent in how you administer the surveys • Analyzing surveys is relatively straight forward - • Writing a good survey is harder than many people realize • It's easy to get flooded with surveys and imputing data could take longer than expected • Behaviors are self-reported

4 MAIN TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO MEASURE THE EFFECTS OF YOUR PROGRAM - CONTINUED

TOOL	MEASURES	ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES
Focus groups*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes • Opinions • Interpretations 	<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps you get more in-depth information • Discussion among a diverse group of people can lead to insights that you would not get from individuals • Relatively low-cost and low-time investment <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results will be influenced by group dynamics; requires skill in group facilitation • How to interpret the group discussions is not always self-evident
Interviews*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes • Opinions • Interpretations • Motives • Experiences 	<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps you get in-depth information • Participants may disclose information and details that they would not write about on a survey <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time intensive • Being consistent across interviews is challenging • Requires good interviewing skills
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviors • Environments 	<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record actual behaviors versus self-reports • Gives insight into interactions between individuals and their physical and social settings <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have clear definitions of what you are looking for • Requires good observation skills • Difficult to be consistent across observations

*For more information on these topics, see the guides included in the *National Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative Toolkit*



What type of measure?

In selecting the type of measure you want to use, keep in mind the following:

1. The type of measure you use must match the goals and objectives of your program. In some cases this leads to more than one option. For example, three of these methods are good for assessing attitudes.

2. There are options. When you have more than one option, the type of measure you use will depend on weighing the advantages and disadvantages as well as determining the skills, time and other resources you have available.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

When thinking about which measures you might want to use, consider:

- The time it takes to use a particular measure.
- Whether your staff has the skills to use it.
- How receptive will participants be to the measure.

3. The most common types of measures used by community-based programs are surveys. However, they are not the only option. Carefully consider the kind of assessment questions you want to answer, the resources

you have available, and your audience. Then decide if surveys are the best option for your assessment.

4. Focus groups are too often overlooked as a useful and very feasible approach. Focus groups are small group discussions that get in-depth information on specific topics. Although they are facilitated, the goal is to get participants talking with one another. The facilitator's role is primarily to get conversation going and to keep it going. You may want to consider using focus groups as either a replacement for or a supplement to surveys if you are finding that surveys aren't giving you the rich details you want, you are left with too many unanswered questions, or the process of administering surveys and entering the data

into a computer is too time-consuming for your staff and you don't have outside evaluation help available to you.

5. You may want to use different types of measures to answer different evaluation questions. For example, you may want to use surveys to answer questions about changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This could be augmented with focus groups to explore how different parts of the program impacted people in different ways.

This publication was supported by Grant No. 2009-TA-AX-K011 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

