

Tips for Designing Qualitative Questions

DO frame questions as openly but clearly as possible

Consider whether the question can be worded using one of the following frames:

- **Experience and Behavior:**
 - > To elicit behaviors, experiences, actions, and activities observable if the interviewer had been present
 - > e.g., If I followed you through the program, what would I have seen you doing?
- **Opinion and Values:**
 - > To understand what was going on in a participant's head—what they think about some experience/issue
 - > e.g., What do you think about the presentation on immigration status?
- **Feeling:**
 - > To elicit emotional responses to experiences
 - > e.g., How do you feel about that? – Often a follow-up to an experience or sensory question
- **Knowledge:**
 - > To understand what a participant knows about something—factual information
 - > e.g., What services does the FIRC provide?
- **Sensory:**
 - > To elicit a participant's sensory experience, including what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled
 - > e.g., What does the home visitor say when she arrives?
- **Background:**
 - > Characteristics of the participant; helps to locate the participant in relation to other people, but using self description rather than closed categories
 - > e.g., Where did you grow up?

DO probe for more information

e.g., Can you tell me more about that? In what ways was it difficult? When you say you eat healthier, what does healthier mean to you?

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DON'T ask questions with implied categories

e.g., How satisfied are you with this program? (Implies a Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied scale)

Has the food you eat changed since you participated in this program? (Implies a yes/no)

DON'T ask leading questions

e.g., So finding housing in Summit county is really hard, right?

DO frame questions as specifically as possible

Practice splitting questions that ask about multiple topics, e.g., tell me about the strengths and weaknesses of the program

DO pay attention to question order

Start easy with warm up questions about background, etc, then progress to sensitive subjects