Community Assessment for School Health

Session 2

December 10, 2025

Accreditation Information

Target Audience

CSHS grantees and school health professionals who are interested in this topic

Educational Objectives

Participants at the conclusion of this webinar will be able to:

1. Identify and prioritize gaps in information required by school health stakeholders/partners.
2. Develop an equity-oriented data collection tool to supplement existing needs assessment data sources.
3. Plan and execute data analysis using descriptive statistics.

Speakers and Planning Committee

Candice Belanoff, ScD, MPH – Clinical Associate Professor at Boston University (Planner, Speaker)

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Beverly Heinze-Lacey, MPH, BSN, RN – Transitional Director at SHIELD (Nurse Planner, Speaker)

Karen Robitaille, MBA, MSN, RN, NCSN – Director of MDPH School Health Services (Reviewer, Speaker)

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By reviewing the course content and completing the evaluation, nurses are entitled to receive 2.75 CNE contact hours, none of which is eligible for pharmacology credit.
In order to successfully complete this activity, you are required to attend the entire program and complete the evaluation. You will receive an email with a link to complete the evaluation after attending the program to claim credit and receive your certificate.

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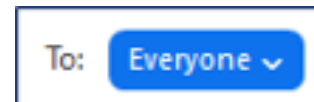Your controls are at the bottom of your screen:
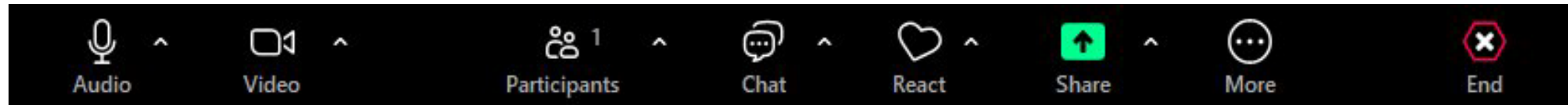
Click on the chat icon to open the chat box.
Direct technical questions to BU SHIELD.
Raise your hand to be unmuted to speak to the group.

Please rename yourself for this session.
Go to rename and add your school district to your name.

Type any questions or comments you have for the instructor into the chat box. We will address as many as we can.

Today's Agenda

Topic(s)	Time
Opening Remarks and Overview of Today's Session	10 mins.
Identifying and Prioritizing Gaps in the Information	25 mins.
Descriptive Statistics & Data Collection Tools	45 mins.
Break	5 mins.
Working With Data Story	25 mins.
Breakout Room Activity	20 mins.
Review of CSHS Expectations and Requirements	15 mins.
Next Steps and Wrap-up	5 mins.

Welcome from School Health Services

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Director, School Health Services

karen.robitaille3@mass.gov

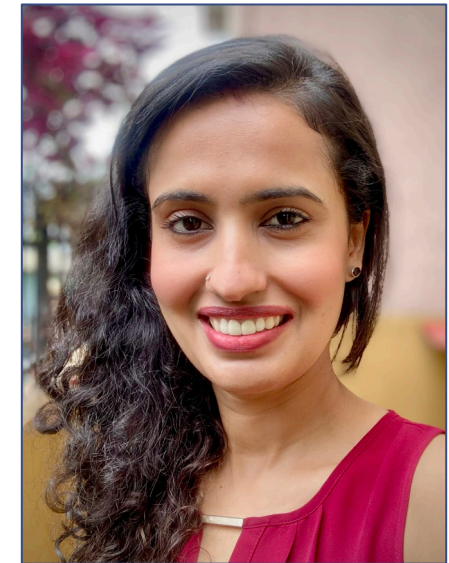(781) 675-0463

Session 2 Learning Objectives

After completing this session, you will be able to:

1. Identify and prioritize gaps in information required by school health stakeholders/partners.

2. Plan and execute data analysis using descriptive statistics.

3. Develop an equity-oriented data collection tool to supplement existing needs assessment data sources.

Our Speakers

Beverly Heinze-Lacey, MPH, BSN, RN
SHIELD Transitional Director / Senior Advisor
Boston University School of Public Health

Rashmi Paudel, MPH, BSc Nursing, DrPH(c)
SHIELD Evaluation Coordinator
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Our Speakers

Candice Belanoff, ScD, MPH
Clinical Associate Professor
Boston University School of Public Health

Karen Robitaille, MBA, MSN, RN, NCSN
Director, School Health Services
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

SHIELD: Community Assessment for School Health
Part II:

Candice Belanoff, ScD, MPH
Boston University School of Public Health
December 10, 2025

Learning Objectives for CASH Part II

01

Identify and prioritize gaps in information required by school health stakeholders/partners

02

Plan and execute data analysis using descriptive statistics
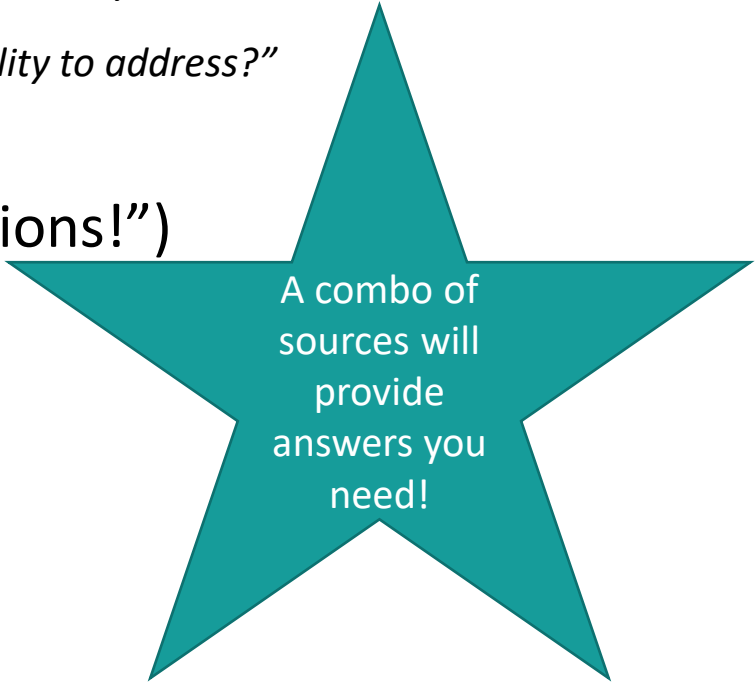
03

Develop an equity-oriented data collection tool to supplement existing needs assessment data sources

PART 1: Identify and prioritize gaps in information required by school health stakeholders/partners

What do you want/need to know?

- What do you *already* know about the health & wellbeing of your community/school district?

  - Recall from your worksheet:

    - *"What do you believe are the top three (3) health issues that children and families are facing in your school community?"*

    - *"What types of health issues do you believe school nursing professionals <u>can</u> most effectively address?"*

    - *"What types of health issues are <u>not</u> things school nursing professionals have the ability to address?"*

- What do you wish you knew? (These are your "research questions!")

  - Examples:

    - *"What are the most important health issues to address in this school/district?"*

    - *"What are the top health priorities of families in this district?"*

    - *"What strategies would be most acceptable to community members?"*

A combo of sources will provide answers you need!

Two types of data we will talk about:

Data that exist online already (secondary)?

Data you might need to collect yourself (primary)?

As mentioned last time:

- Lots of online, publicly available data on health at the state, county and community level.*

- Even school-level data (to an extent)

- Sometimes we can make inferences from state-level trends.

- Sometimes we really need to go out and ask people!

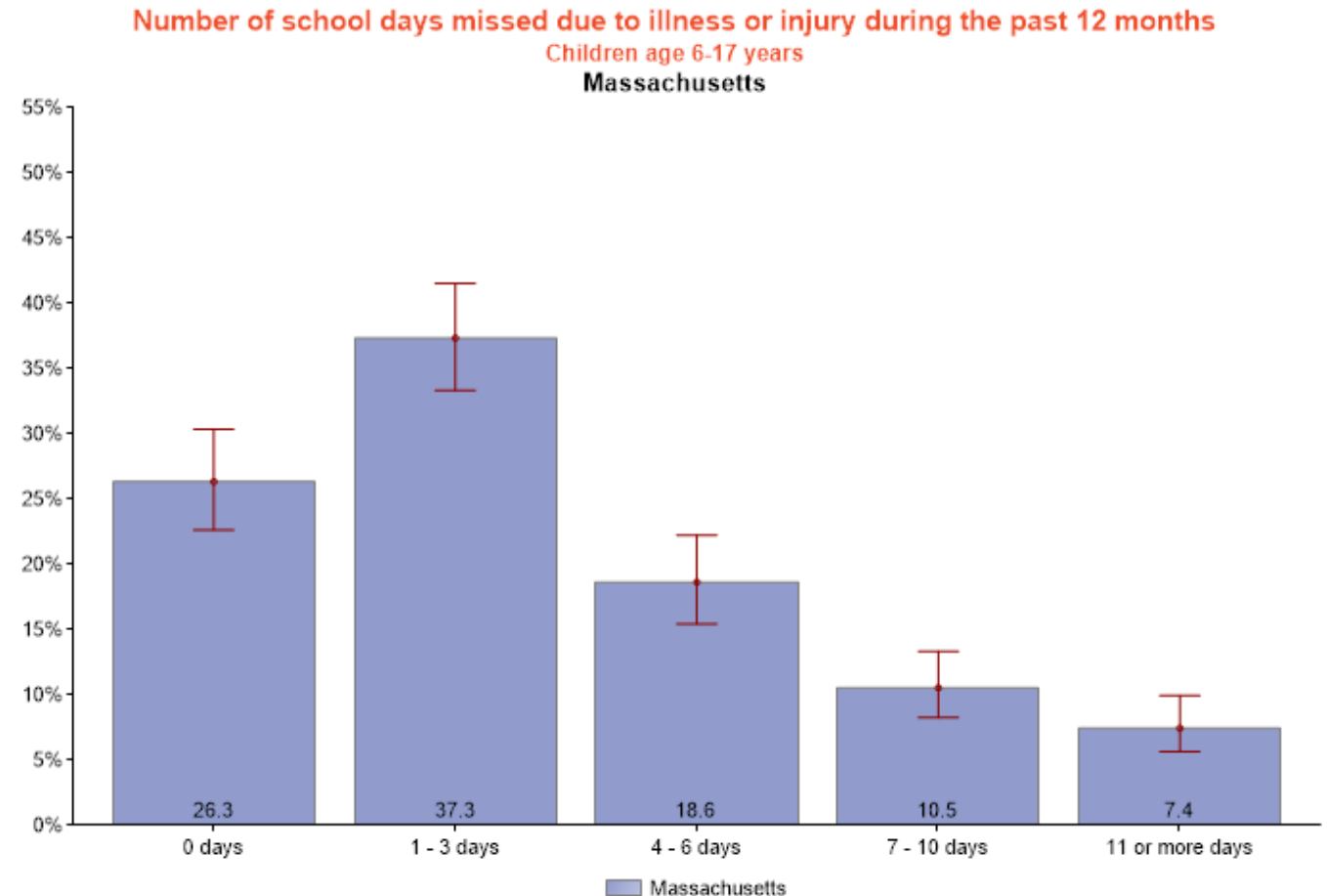 - Opinions; preferences; lived-experiences; top priorities; values….

Data resources slide from last time also at the end of these slides.
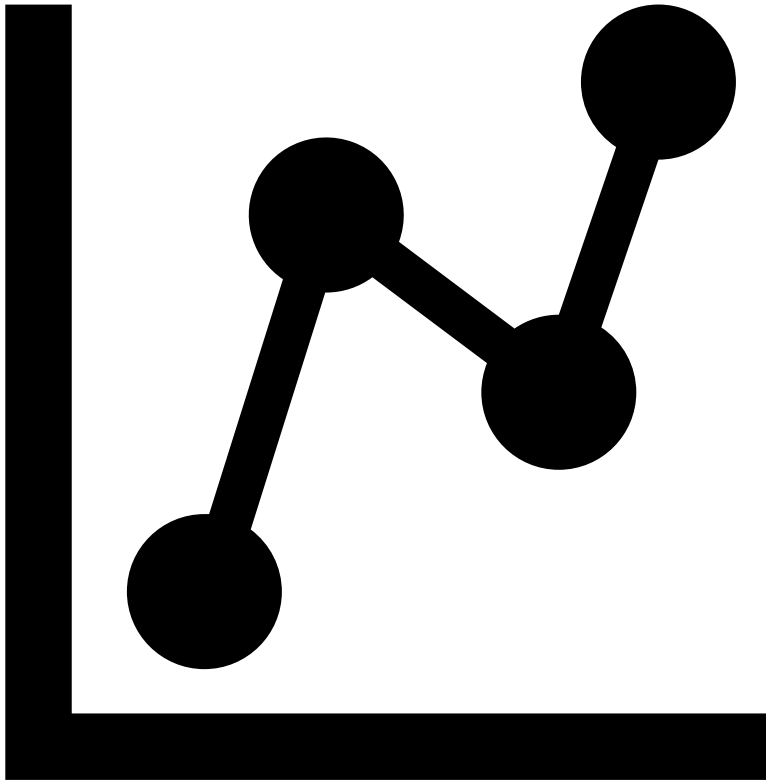
PART 2: Plan and execute data analysis using descriptive statistics.

What are descriptive statistics?

- ***Describe*** "the state of things" (without necessarily trying to demonstrate that one factor drives another):

- For instance:
  - Descriptive – "What proportion of children ages 6 – 17 in the state miss 11 or more days of school?"

Number of school days missed due to illness or injury during the past 12 months
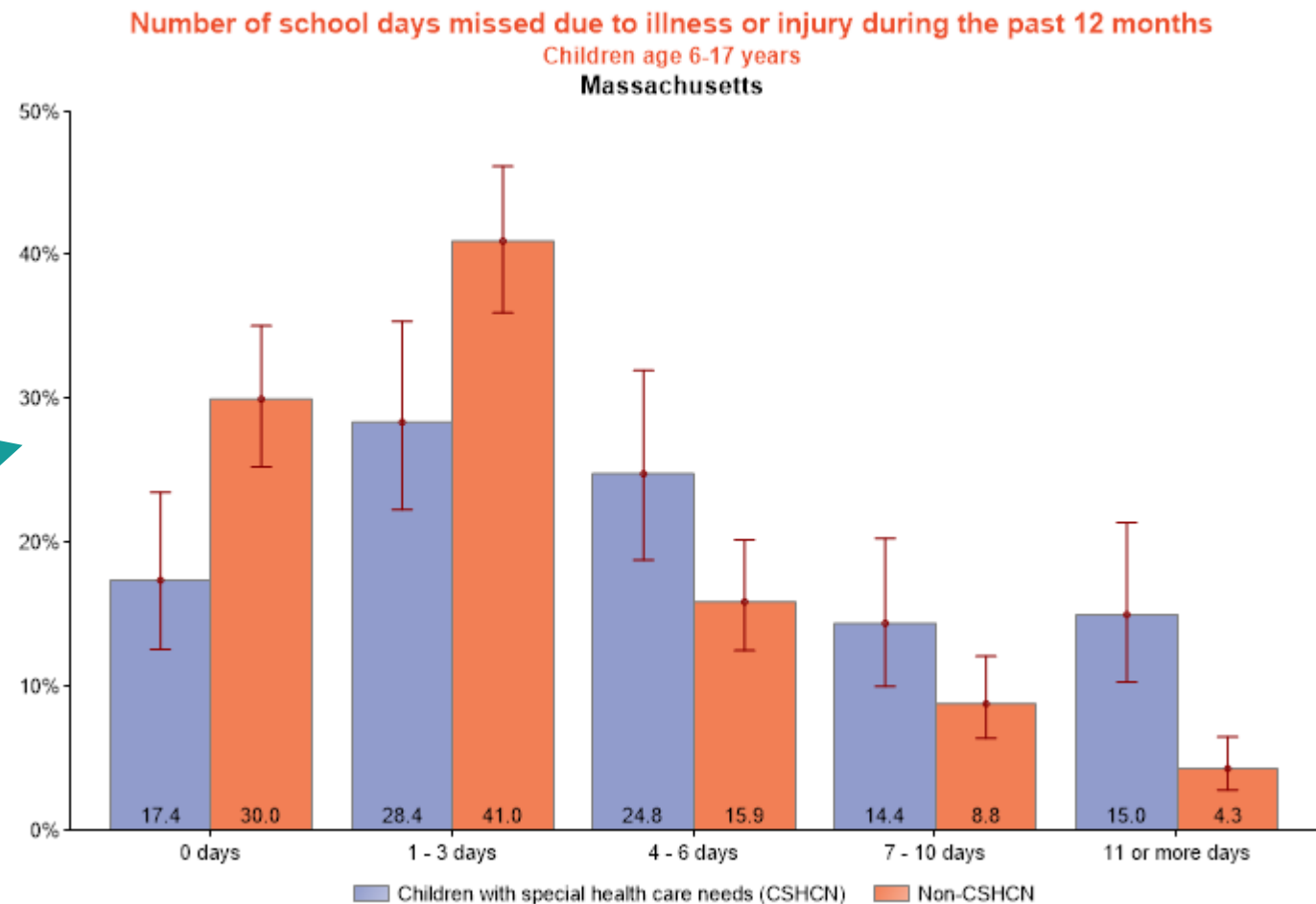Children age 6-17 years
Massachusetts

What are descriptive statistics?

- ***Describe*** "the state of things" (without necessarily trying to demonstrate that one factor drives another):

- For instance:
  - <u>Descriptive</u> – "What proportion of children ages 6 – 17 in the state miss 11 or more days of school?"

  - <u>Stratified</u> – "What proportion of children ages 6 – 17 in the state miss11 or more days of school, by CSHCN status?"

Number of school days missed due to illness or injury during the past 12 months
Children age 6-17 years
Massachusetts

|	0 days	1 - 3 days	4 - 6 days	7 - 10 days	11 or more days
Children with special health care needs (CSHCN)	17.4	28.4	24.8	14.4	15.0
Non-CSHCN	30.0	41.0	15.9	8.8	4.3

From last session's worksheet: Descriptive data

ADVANCED OPTION:

Try populating the following data table with data from the Massachusetts Health Data Tool for your community:

Characteristic	Town (Cummington, MA)		State (MA)	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Race (Total Population)	916	100.0	6,992,395	100.0
Non-Hispanic Asian	0	0.0	491,861	7.0
Non-Hispanic Black	4	0.4	455,145	6.5
Hispanic	26	2.8	904,679	12.9
Non-Hispanic Some other race	6	0.6	80,134	1.2
Non-Hispanic Two or more races	55	6.2	313,927	4.5
Non-Hispanic White	825	90.1	4,738,848	67.8
Median Household Income	$101,250		$101,341	
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.3		4.8	
Smoking Prevalence of Adults (%)	9.1		12.3	
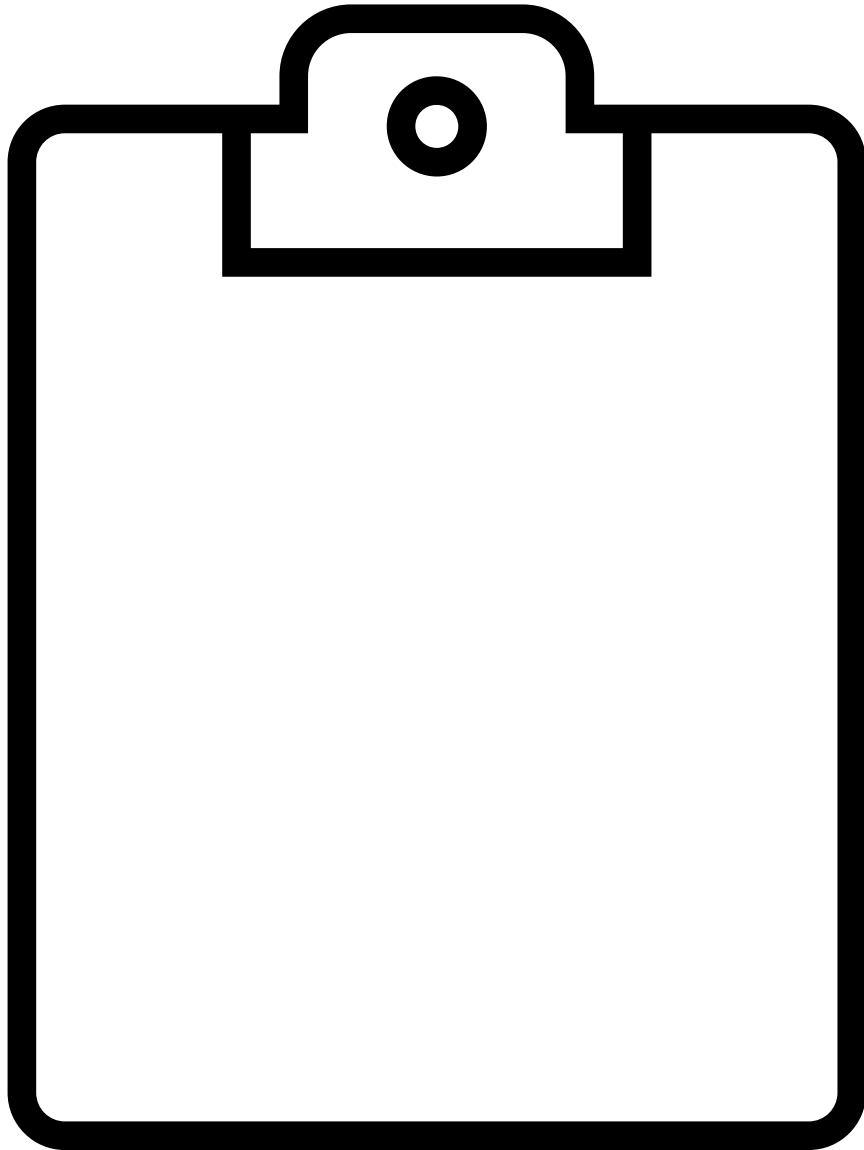
PART 3:
Develop an equity-oriented data collection tool to supplement existing needs assessment data sources.

What are my options for collecting my own data?

- Survey?
- Interviews?
- Focus groups?
- Direct observations?

Designing an effective survey or interview question.

Some foundational principles

- Many principles of "questions asking" apply across methods:
  - clarity; simplicity;
  - concrete terminology;
  - measuring what you THINK you're measuring;
  - test-driving (piloting)

- Also:
  - Some interviews or surveys are "front-loaded" in the CHNA process (i.e. exploratory)
  - Others could "back-fill" (fill gaps we've identified in secondary data, etc)
  - Could be somewhere in the middle....

- **VERY IMPORTANT:** Consider what you'll make of the answers to a question once you get them! (Will they help you take next steps?)

Common pitfalls in writing survey or interview questions....

- **Ambiguity** (interpretation up for grabs)
  - "Is this a good school?"

- **Unfamiliar terminology**
  - "Is this school high-key lit?"

- **Unnecessary questions** - be sure to ask yourself:
  - Why are you collecting this info?
  - How does it inform your larger question?
  - Is it too personal?
  - Could it jeopardize safety of respondent?
  - Is it making this unnecessarily loonnnnnnnnnnggggg?

- **Potentially problematic questions** (esp. in interview)
  - Sensitive health/social questions
  - (Less problematic if anonymous/in survey, but still...)

"Community Needs/Concerns" Surveys:
(An _ideal_ process)

1. Start with and advisory board if you can!

2. Develop list of potential themes/issues to ask about

3. Try it out/pilot, revise as needed

4. Get a good, representative sample

5. Present back to the community!

What makes a good survey question?

Clear, easily understood by anyone who might be a survey respondent

#1: What's wrong here?

- **Accessible reading level (~6th grade)**
  - *"Ought institutions of pedagogy to implement constraints on the ingestion of high-saccharide foodstuffs in the periods between the morning and midday mealtimes?"*

- **No double/triple-barreled questions**
  - e.g. *"Do you think teenagers should have access to condoms without parent permission so they can avoid unwanted pregnancy?"*

- **No double negatives**
  - e.g. *"Do you disagree that teenagers shouldn't have access to birth control?"*

What makes a good survey question?

Avoid bias in questions

- No leading – Phrasing to maintain <u>neutrality</u>.
  - (e.g. *"Would you agree that it's bad to feed your kids soda?"*)

- Social desirability/acceptability – Phrasing to elicit <u>true answers</u>;
  - (e.g. *"Did you feel sadness, regret, fear or other negative emotions when you first brought your new baby home?"*)
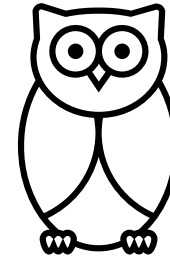
Response options

- **Fence-sitting & Floating -** "Don't know/Can't remember" option?

  - Q: When should you offer the "don't know" option?

  - Appropriate when <u>you want to count the don't-knows</u>
    - "Did you get an HIV test while you were pregnant?"
      - Yes, No, Unsure

  - May want to <u>encourage a response</u> when you believe there really is one
    - "How often have you felt down, blue, depressed in the past two weeks?"
      - Always, Often, Sometimes, Never

- **Can respondents be expected to remember the answer?**

  - <u>Is it a reasonable question</u>? If not, you may get a lot of "don't knows"
    - "What time was it when you felt your very first contraction during labor?"

Response options

- **Make sure: all possible/reasonable responses** to your question are available (i.e. can all respondents find appropriate choice?)

- **Be mindful of "anchors"** – the <u>meaning</u> of top and bottom ends can be influential
  - People choose their responses relative to "anchors"
  - Many avoid "extremes"

If you were rating a hotel, and the prompt was, **"The property met my expectations"** *which scale is more likely to produce a "5 star" average?*

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Completely Disagree				Completely Agree
1	2	3	4	5

More response options….

- **Response options**
  - Response formats
    - **Scale**
      - **Likert**
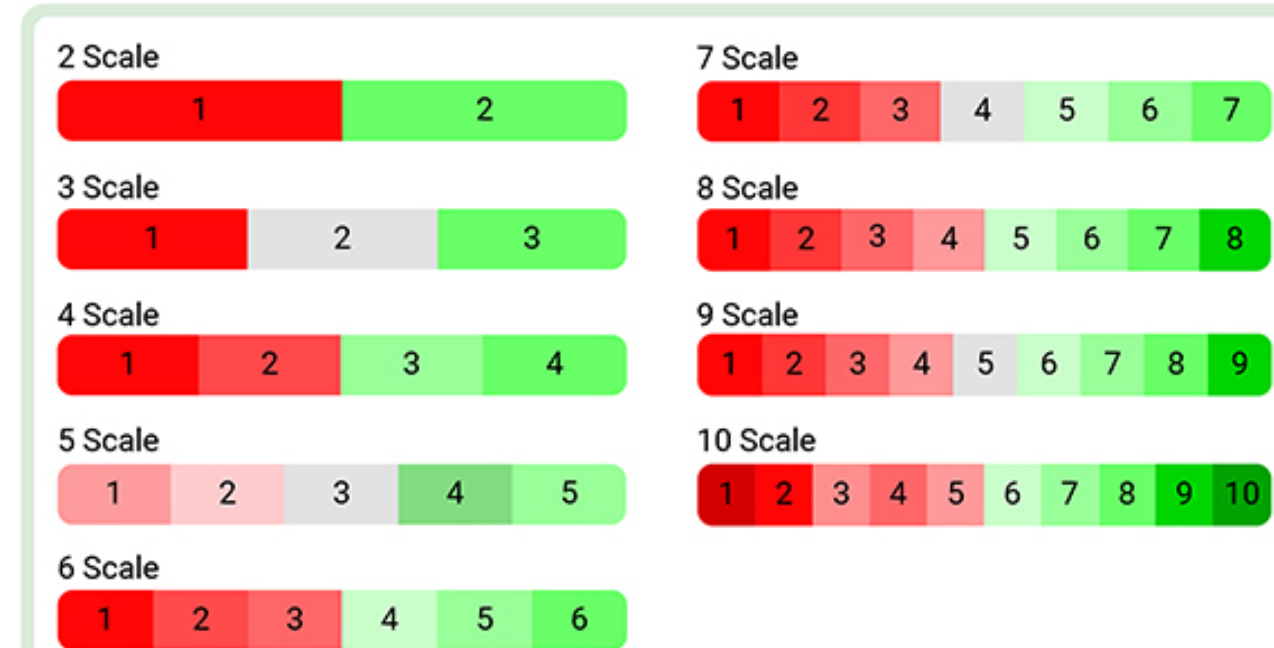   - 1—2—3—4—5
      - 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
  - **Yes/no**
  - **Check one** best answer (multiple choice)
  - **Check all** that apply
  - **Write-in** (qualitative/open response)

  - **Value ranges** (shouldn't overlap) – *e.g. "What is your age? 30-49, 49-57, 57+"*

Q: "On a scale of 1 to ___, how much do you feel your nursing education prepared you for the workforce?"

#4: What would be the best scale for this question? Why?

Other principles of survey design?

Hot Tips!

- Save **sensitive questions** for later (if you really must ask them at all)

- Beware of survey **fatigue**!

- Make your survey....

  - *Attractive*

  - Easy to read & answer

    - consider **font**, s p a c i n g , *layout*

Supermarket Survey!

1) What is your current weight? _____

2) What is your age? _____

3) What did you come to the store to purchase today? (Check all that apply)
   - ❑ Produce (fruits and vegetables)
   - ❑ Dairy/eggs
   - ❑ Meat/fish
   - ❑ Cereal/bread
   - ❑ Snacks

4) How often do you shop at this store?
   - ❑ Every day
   - ❑ Once a week
   - ❑ Once a month

5) What is your gender?
   - ❑ Male
   - ❑ Female

Setting up a survey & collecting responses

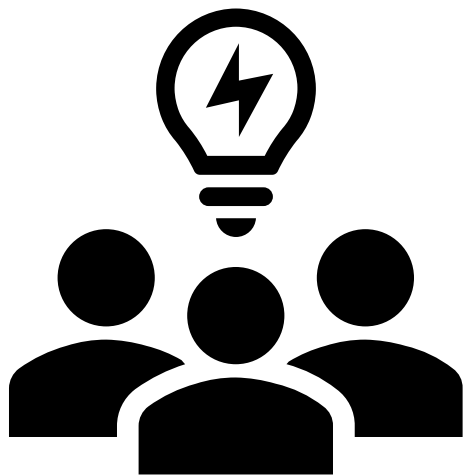**Free survey platforms**

- Google Forms

- Survey Monkey

There are others....

How do you get people to participate in your survey??

- Offer incentives (raffles, gifts)
- Direct solicitation (e.g. hanging out at the supermarket)
- Fliers with QR codes
- Attending a PTA meeting
- Social media posts
- Others?

Brainstorm!

The Task:

Please brainstorm and put in the chat any "pitfalls" for the following survey question and response options.

Also chat any edits would you suggest to create a more effective survey question (if you wanted to know what the community thinks are the top health issues for kids?)

Survey Question:

"What have been the most pressing health concerns faced by children in this community over the past 10 years? (Check up to 3)"
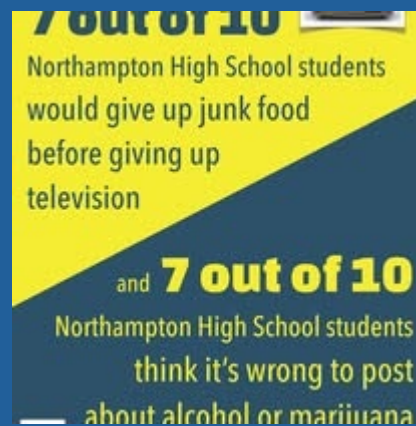
☐	Social Media	☐	Weight
☐	Mental Health	☐	STIs/STDs
☐	Food	☐	Pregnancy
☐	Bullying	☐	Substance Use Disorder
☐	Pediatric Diabetes Mellitus	☐	Video Games

BREAK (5 minutes)

School Health Institute for Education and Leadership Development

Working With Data Story

Karen Robitaille, MBA, MSN, RN, NCSN

Director of School Health Services, MDPH

LEARN MORE AT:

https://northamptonma.gov/2477/Division-of-Substance-Use-Prevention

https://www.facebook.com/NorthamptonYHC

Breakout Room Activity (10 minutes)

You'll be randomly assigned to a breakout room. Please discuss these two questions with each other! (You don't have to have all the answers but see how far you can get with some brief brainstorming!)

1) What is one thing you would love to know more about if you could ask members of your school/district community?

2) How would you write (at least) one question to get the answers you seek?

Breakout Debrief (10 minutes)

Review of CSHS Expectations and Requirements

Karen Robitaille, MBA, MSN, RN, NCSN

Director of School Health Services, MDPH

Next Sessions:

- Refer back to your data worksheets as needed

- CSHS Session 3 Topic: Storytelling

  - We will share resources in preparation for Session 3 after the winter holidays

- We welcome school nurse presenters for Session 4 in May!

Resources to explore (repeat from last session)

Please note that certain data sources may not be available related to federal administration orders. (Content from some surveys has been removed and sometimes entire data systems may be offline.) Ask us if you're having difficulty finding data!

- General information on planning Community Health Needs Assessments:
  - University of Kansas, Community Toolbox. (n.d.). Chapter 3, Section 1. *Developing a plan for assessing local needs and resources*. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/develop-a-plan/main

- Links to specific health and community data resources:
  - **Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Community Health Data site:** https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-health-data
  - **National Survey of Children's Health** (2022-present) Interactive Data Query: https://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey
  - **Youth Risk Behavior Survey:** (Two portals – different visualizations of the data): **YRBS Data Explorer:** https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/ and **YRBS Youth Online:** https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx
  - **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):** https://www.doe.mass.edu/
    - DESE District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/analysis/state.aspx
    - DESE School and District Data: https://www.doe.mass.edu/SchDistrictData.html
    - DESE School and District Performance Summary: Click here
    - DESE Data & Accountability page: https://www.doe.mass.edu/DataAccountability.html
  - **US Department of Education. Civil Rights Data Collection:** https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/
  - **CDC PLACES interactive map:** https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/22c7182a162d45788dd52a2362f8ed65
  - **Diversity Data Kids** – Child Opportunity Maps 3.0: https://www.diversitydatakids.org/maps/
  - **Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking:** https://matracking.ehs.state.ma.us/index.html

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