**Common Outcomes & Indicators – Common Tool Questions (December, 2013)**

**Public Education**

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**PREAMBLE**

***What Are the Common Tool Questions?***

We have developed a collection of questions that address:

* A mix of questions that will suit a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.
* Flexibility of how questions can be asked (such as survey or interview, some questions also allow for staff observation, creative methods, group discussion/reflection) – so you can decide what the best fit is for you and the people in your program.
* Language and format that will work across program areas and populations
* Feasibility in terms of response time for participants and staff

For each indicator, we have presented at least one closed question and at least one open-ended question.

Each question is written at a ‘mid-level’ of specificity, so that it can apply across multiple program areas that use the same common indicator for which the question is written.

For a particular common indicator, you may wish to choose the question(s) for that indicator that is (are) most relevant to your program. This would be similar to what you now do when you choose the most relevant indicators for a common outcome. Not all questions will be relevant to all agencies/programs.

***Where Do the Questions Come From?***

All questions have at least ‘face validity’ – they appear to measure the intent of the indicator. In some cases, we drew from agencies’ existing tools for content.

Many questions come from other sources (such as existing tools); others were developed ‘from scratch’ using general principles of writing evaluation questions.

Some questions/tools come from research literature or population surveys, and have had further reliability and validity testing done. Some of the more ‘formal’ questions/tools from literature are public domain (Nobody’s Perfect Parenting Program, Community Capacity Building Tool – both from Public Health Agency of Canada), but others are copyrighted. In the latter cases, we used broad dimensions from these tools in our questions and refer to the copyrighted tool. If agencies or their funders wish to order these tools, there would be a fee to purchase. (We understand that some agencies may already be using some of these measures for their own evaluation purposes.)

We made some trade-off decisions for some questions, with regard to how direct & specific versus how familiar a format is (to participants) and quick to use.

***How Can You Use These Questions with Your Existing Agency Tools?***

These questions are intended to strengthen your already existing data collection methods and tools (not replace them). That is, questions can be embedded within tools you are already using.

We have created a sample ‘mock survey’ that demonstrates how questions can be selected and inserted into an existing tool. This type of process will allow agencies to insert ‘common questions’ into their existing tools (surveys, interviews, etc), so agency staff can include some of these common tools with their own agency-specific questions.

The instructions and informed consent information in the ‘mock survey’ tool can be adapted to other methods (such as one-to-one or group interviews, creative methods, staff observation).

If you use any of these questions, please keep the wording provided, so as not to change the measurement intent of the question. However, do feel free to make minor changes to fit your context; for example substitute the word “client” or “user” for “participant”, if you wish. For many questions, you will need to insert the name of your program in the question – where you see [program] in brackets. For some questions, you can choose words that make the most sense for your program (for example, choosing among “program”, “service”, “resource” or some other term that fits).

***Do You Have to Use These Questions?***

Your funding liaison person will let you know if there are certain questions that may be especially useful to ask your participants, and if there is any expectation about reporting on particular questions.

Try out the questions that you like best for your program, and let your funder know which of those questions work well and which ones may still need some work or change. Agency feedback has been integral to the whole process of developing the common outcomes, common indicators, and now the common tool questions. You or someone in your agency may have participated in some of those discussions. Your feedback is valued.

***When Would You Ask These Questions?***

We are aware that there will likely be variation in the times at which agencies can ask questions or make observations of participants. For some agencies pre (BEFORE) and post (AFTER) measurement is feasible, but for others, it is not. Some agencies may decide to slightly modify BEFORE and AFTER to early-program and late-program (we still consider that BEFORE-AFTER). For some agencies, it may work best to ask questions or make observations at one point in time, at/near the end of the program – either because participants would not be able to provide an accurate BEFORE-program measure (e.g., when self-rating their own skills), or because of concerns about resource limitations for staff, response burden for participants, or participant life circumstances that limit multiple measures (e.g., transience). In some cases, it may be feasible to ask participants AFTER to reflect back on how they were doing BEFORE the program; in other cases only an AFTER measure may be practical to gather. We considered these challenges when we were developing and revising these questions, and our NOTES throughout the document suggest options (and in some cases, limitations).

***What Are the Supplementary Questions?***

While we were going through the process of developing these questions, we sometimes thought of other questions that did not quite measure the indicator, or that went beyond the indicator. We have included these questions as Supplementary Questions (under green headings, and in a different font), because agencies may find them of interest for their purposes, beyond COG reporting.

***How to Navigate This Document?***

The main part of each question in bolded blue, as is each question number. Response categories, prompts, and other instructions or comment are in black type. Any notes we have about a question begin with NOTE: in red. To avoid repetition of notes within an outcome section, we often refer you back to an earlier note in that section.

The questions you have received are for the common outcomes/indicators for your program area, as determined with your funder. Please note that because there are often multiple program areas that report on the same outcome, you may see questions that do not seem relevant to your program, That is OK; those questions will be more relevant to another program area that reports on the same outcomes/indicators.

If you are interested in also using some of the questions that go with other common outcomes/indicators outside your program area, please ask your funder for the version(s) of this document that covers the other outcomes/indicators of interest to you.

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| L | L. Participants have knowledge of community resources*(Information and referral, Parent Link Centres, Public education)* | a) Participants identify one or more specific community resources that address their information or service needs (e.g., could be for parenting, relationships, mental health, physical health, basic needs, abuse, community connections, or other issues) | **NOTE:** Because the questions in this section are about supports they are likely to learn about once they are in the program, retrospective (AFTER) questions are likely most relevant and feasible. You may also decide to also use it partway through the program, if that would be useful and feasible.  **NOTE:** You can shorten the chart below by only including the checklist categories that are relevant to your program. The chart could be done in survey or interview format. (If interview, omit the “Please check all that apply….”  **NOTE:** For questions that refer to programs/services/ resources, use the word (or something similar) that is most familiar to your participants.  **(Survey or interview with participant):**  **(a.1) Which, if any, community programs/services/resources did you learn about at [program] – that you did not know about before you started [program]? (Please check all that apply, in the shaded box to the right of each type of resource)[[1]](#footnote-2)**   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | | Aboriginal services |  | Abuse - Safety and prevention related to abuse/violence (such as intimate partner violence, child abuse, elder abuse) |  | Citizenship and Immigration |  | | Community social connections (such as coffee groups, community social gathering events, group social outings) |  | Disability Supports (such as AISH, PDD, assistance with activities of daily living) |  | Early childhood programs/services (such as child care, preschool, services for special needs) |  | | Emergency services (ambulance, fire, police) |  | Employment –related (such as such as assessment for employment capabilities, career counselling, job search/referral, training (education or on-the-job) |  | Ethno-cultural services (such as support for new Canadians with language, employment, community connections; activities to connect people with same cultural background, cross-cultural activities) |  | | Financial counselling/money management (such as budgeting, banking) |  | Food (multiple food groups – including fruits and vegetables – from sources such as food bank, community kitchen, good food box, community garden) |  | Functional assessments (such as development, skills, behaviours) |  | | Health (such as family doctor, dental care, eye care, public health centre, health information health benefits/coverage available for people with low incomes) |  | Housing supports (such as affordable housing options, rent supplements, landlord-tenant information) |  | Income Supports (such as SFI) |  | | Legal or protective services (such as Legal Aid, child protection, restraining orders ) |  | Libraries |  | Mental health/emotional support (such as counselling, practical supports for daily living as needed) |  | | Parenting programs or information (such as child growth and development, healthy parenting strategies, dealing with child behaviour issues, family functioning) |  | Places of worship/spiritual support |  | Recreation/leisure (facilities, programs, groups for people with common hobbies or interests, sports or physical activity groups) |  | | Relationship support (such as counseling, healthy decision making) |  | Schools |  | Shopping assistance/advice (such as sources of affordable food, clothing, household goods, toys) |  | | Transportation |  | Other (please specify) |  | None of these |  |   **NOTE:** The question below is retrospective (AFTER). You may also decide to also use it partway through the program, if that would be useful and feasible.  **(Open-ended elaboration or alternative):**  **(a.2)** **Please tell us the specific resources, if any, that you learned about through [the program], that you did not know about before you started [program]?**  ***Prompts*** (as needed): People? Places? Community resources?  **NOTE:** Code responses according to the above categories in a.1, plus any other types of resources mentioned.  **Supplementary Question**: This goes beyond the indicator, but may be of interest to agencies.  **More specifically, how do you think the resources you just listed (mentioned) will help you?**  More general questions, if it is not feasible to ask participants to identify specific resources (as per the indicator).  **Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, by checking the column under the number that best describes your experience.**   | **Statement** | **1**  **Strongly disagree** | **2**  **Disagree** | **3**  **Neither agree nor disagree** | **4**  **Agree** | **5**  **Strongly agree** | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | I know who to contact in the community when I need help |  |  |  |  |  | | I know where I can get answers to my parenting questions |  |  |  |  |  | |
|  |  | b) Participants ask for information about or referral to one or more community resources that address their information or service needs. | **NOTE:** Questions for this indicator are retrospective (AFTER) due to the nature of the indicator (referral). You may also decide to also use them partway through the program, if that would be useful and feasible.  **NOTE:** Data for the questions below could be collected through program administrative data, based on staff observation and recorded in log books or facilitator notes.  **NOTE:** Format below is adapted from PALS regarding tutor observations of students. The nature of the indicator requires staff to keep track of proactive requests from participant.  **NOTE:** Please base responses to the following questions on (1) your own record of conversations with each participant, and /or (2) checking with other staff or trained volunteers who also work with this participant – as appropriate to your agency’s way or working with participants.  **(From program admin data documented by staff, based on proactive inquires by participants):**  **(b.1) This program participant has requested information about at least one community resource.**  \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A  **- Please specify the type(s) of resource(s)about which information was requested**  **(b.2) This program participant has requested at least one referral to a community resource**  \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A  **- Please specify type(s) of referral(s) requested**  **NOTE:** Code responses to the open-ended follow-up questions by types of information and referrals mentioned under b.1 and b.2, and by categories in the Table for b.3 and b.4 below.  **NOTE:** Please read the first of the four notes that precedes a.1, as it applies here as well.  **(Survey or interview with participant):**  **Which kinds of programs/services/resources have you used in the [insert timeframe of interest]? Which ones were helpful to your needs?)[[2]](#footnote-3)**  **(b.3) Which kinds of programs/services/resources, if any, have you asked [program] staff about? Which ones, if any, have you asked [program] staff to refer you to?**  **(Please check all the kinds of programs/services/resources you asked staff about, in the light gray shaded box to the right of each type of resource. Please check which kinds you asked staff to refer you to, in the dark gray shaded box.)**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if asked** | **√ if ask refer** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if asked** | **√ if ask**  **refer** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if asked** | **√ if ask refer** | | Aboriginal services |  |  | Abuse - Safety and prevention related to abuse/violence (such as intimate partner violence, child abuse, elder abuse) |  |  | Citizenship and Immigration |  |  | | Community social connections (such as coffee groups, community social gathering events, group social outings) |  |  | Disability Supports (such as AISH, PDD, assistance with activities of daily living) |  |  | Early childhood programs/services (such as child care, preschool, services for special needs) |  |  | | Emergency services (ambulance, fire, police) |  |  | Employment –related (such as such as assessment for employment capabilities, career counselling, job search/referral, training (education or on-the-job) |  |  | Ethno-cultural services (such as support for new Canadians with language, employment, community connections; activities to connect people with same cultural background, cross-cultural activities) |  |  | | Financial counselling/money management (such as budgeting, banking) |  |  | Food (multiple food groups – including fruits and vegetables – from sources such as food bank, community kitchen, good food box, community garden) |  |  | Functional assessments (such as development, skills, behaviours) |  |  | | Health (such as family doctor, dental care, eye care, public health centre, health information health benefits/coverage available for people with low incomes) |  |  | Housing supports (such as affordable housing options, rent supplements, landlord-tenant information) |  |  | Income Supports (such as SFI) |  |  | | Legal or protective services (such as Legal Aid, child protection, restraining orders ) |  |  | Libraries |  |  | Mental health/emotional support (such as counselling, practical supports for daily living as needed) |  |  | | Parenting programs or information (such as child growth and development, healthy parenting strategies, dealing with child behaviour issues, family functioning) |  |  | Places of worship/spiritual support |  |  | Recreation/leisure (facilities, programs, groups for people with common hobbies or interests, sports or physical activity groups) |  |  | | Relationship support (such as counseling, healthy decision making) |  |  | Schools |  |  | Shopping assistance/advice (such as sources of affordable food, clothing, household goods, toys) |  |  | | Transportation |  |  | Other (please specify) |  |  | None of these |  |  |   **(b.4) The second question within the overall Question b.3 above covers this (b.4) - i.e., “Which ones, if any, have you asked [program] staff to refer you to?” (Participant checks dark gray shaded boxes that apply.)** |

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| P | P. Participants are educated about social issues *(Public education)* | (a) Participants identify one or more factors that contribute to a particular social issue that impacts personal and/or community quality of life in their neighbourhood/geographic area (e.g., family violence, bullying, broader personal safety, crime, addictions, mental health, sexual health, healthy relationships, homelessness, physical disabilities/chronic health conditions) | **NOTE:** Community could be the participant’s own neighbourhood. Or, it could be a community made up of people who share similar interests or concerns, even if they are not in the same neighbourhood. Depending on your program, you may want to define community – e.g., if your work is all neighbourhood-focused, you could just use the word ‘neighbourhood’. If your program defines community more broadly, then use ‘community’ or some other word that is appropriate for your focus.  **NOTE:** The following questions could be asked at the beginning of your work with each participant (BEFORE, or pre, measure), and again at the end of your work with the participant (AFTER, or post, measure). If that is not possible, you may wish to ask them to do two ratings AFTER. In this case, you could ask the question above at the end of the program (AFTER measure), then ask them to answer it again, as they think they would have responded BEFORE the program. It is best to ask the BEFORE response without them being able to see their AFTER response, and to ask them an unrelated question or take a break in between their ratings. That way, their AFTER response is less likely to influence their BEFORE response.  **(a.1) Which of the following factors do you think affect the quality of life in your community? (Please check all that apply)**  **\_\_** Addictions  **\_\_** Bullying  **\_\_** Broader personal safety  **\_\_** Crime  **\_\_** Family violence  **\_\_** Healthy relationships  **\_\_** Homelessness  **\_\_** Mental health  **\_\_** Physical disabilities/chronic health conditions  \_\_ Sexual health-related violence  **\_\_** Other (please describe)  **NOTE:** Question a.2 below is a simpler alternative for AFTER the program, but provides less information than Question a.1. It may not capture change as accurately asking participants to consider their BEFORE and AFTER responses separately. But it may be easier to ask quickly. If feasible, you may also decide to ask this question at some other earlier point, partway through the program.  **(a.2) Which of the following factors do you think affect the quality of life in your community – that you had not thought about before you started [program]? (Please check all that apply)**  **\_\_** Addictions  **\_\_** Bullying  **\_\_** Broader personal safety  **\_\_** Crime  **\_\_** Family violence  **\_\_** Healthy relationships  **\_\_** Homelessness  **\_\_** Mental health  **\_\_** Physical disabilities/chronic health conditions  \_\_ Sexual health-related violence  **\_\_** Other (please describe)  **NOTE:** The following questions could be asked BEFORE and AFTER, or AFTER only (if AFTER only, add “that you did not consider before starting [program]?” You may also decide to ask a.3 partway through the program, if that would be useful and feasible.  **(Open-ended elaboration or alternative):**  **(a.3)** **In your view, what are the main factors that enhance the quality of life in your community/neighbourhood?**  **NOTE:** Code responses by positive responses, including any factors from the above list in a.1 that are described in a positive way (e.g., no bullying).  **(a.4) In your view, what are the main factors that detract from quality of life in your community/neighbourhood?**  **NOTE:** Code responses by negative responses, including any factors from the above list in a.1 that are described in a negative way. |
|  |  | (b) Participants identify at least one type of community resource to address one or more of the above issues (as relevant to their concern or interest) | **NOTE:** Please read the first of the two notes that precede a.1, as it applies here as well.  **NOTE:** Because the questions in this section are about supports they are likely to learn about once they are in the program, retrospective questions (AFTER) are likely most relevant and feasible. You may also decide to also use it partway through the program, if that would be useful and feasible.  **NOTE:** You can shorten the chart below by only including the checklist categories that are relevant to your program. The chart could be done in survey or interview format. (If interview, omit the “Please check all that apply….”  **NOTE:** For questions that refer to programs/services/ resources, use the one word (or something similar) that is most familiar to your participants.  **(b.1) In your view, which types of programs/services/resources deal with social issues in your community? (Please check all that apply, in the shaded box to the right of each type of resource.)**   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | **Program/Service/Resource** | **√ if Yes** | | Aboriginal services |  | Abuse - Safety and prevention related to abuse/violence (such as intimate partner violence, child abuse, elder abuse) |  | Citizenship and Immigration |  | | Community social connections (such as coffee groups, community social gathering events, group social outings) |  | Disability Supports (such as AISH, PDD, assistance with activities of daily living) |  | Early childhood programs/services (such as child care, preschool, services for special needs) |  | | Emergency services (ambulance, fire, police) |  | Employment –related (such as such as assessment for employment capabilities, career counselling, job search/referral, training (education or on-the-job) |  | Ethno-cultural services (such as support for new Canadians with language, employment, community connections; activities to connect people with same cultural background, cross-cultural activities) |  | | Financial counselling/money management (such as budgeting, banking) |  | Food (multiple food groups – including fruits and vegetables – from sources such as food bank, community kitchen, good food box, community garden) |  | Functional assessments (such as development, skills, behaviours) |  | | Health (such as family doctor, dental care, eye care, public health centre, health information health benefits/coverage available for people with low incomes) |  | Housing supports (such as affordable housing options, rent supplements, landlord-tenant information) |  | Income Supports (such as SFI) |  | | Legal or protective services (such as Legal Aid, child protection, restraining orders ) |  | Libraries |  | Mental health/emotional support (such as counselling, practical supports for daily living as needed) |  | | Parenting programs or information (such as child growth and development, healthy parenting strategies, dealing with child behaviour issues, family functioning) |  | Places of worship/spiritual support |  | Recreation/leisure (facilities, programs, groups for people with common hobbies or interests, sports or physical activity groups) |  | | Relationship support (such as counseling, healthy decision making) |  | Schools |  | Shopping assistance/advice (such as sources of affordable food, clothing, household goods, toys) |  | | Transportation |  | Other (please specify) |  | None of these |  | |
|  |  | (c) Participants identify ways they could get involved in addressing one or more of the above issues, if interested (e.g., volunteering for or organizing events/activities, advocacy in areas like respect for human rights, policy changes to support or protect people, specific types of programs/services to fill gaps). | **NOTE:** The two notes that precede a.1 apply here as well.  **(Open-ended survey or interview with participant) –** itmay be best to start with open-ended question here  **(c.1) In what ways, if any, could you get involved in addressing social issues in your community?**  **NOTE:** Code responses by ways people suggest that they could get involved.  **(Survey or interview with participant)**  **(c.2) How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following ways to get involved in addressing social issues in your community? (Please check the column that best reflects what you think.)**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Strategy** | **1**  **Strongly disagree** | **2**  **Disagree** | **3**  **Neither agree nor disagree** | **4**  **Agree** | **5**  **Strongly agree** | **Not applicable** | | Volunteering for or organizing events/activities |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Advocacy (for example human rights of participants or community members more broadly) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Policy changes to support or protect people(participants, people in broader community) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Specific types of programs/services to fill gaps |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 1 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 2 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 3 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  |   **Supplementary Question:** This does not directly pertain to the indicator, but could be useful as an optional process-oriented question.)  **How interested are you in getting involved in the following ways to take action on the social issues in your community/neighbourhood?**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Strategy | 1  Not at all interested | 2  Not very interested | 3  Somewhat interested | 4  Quite interested | 5  Very interested | Not applicable | | Volunteering for or organizing events/activities |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Advocacy (for example human rights of participants or community members more broadly) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Policy changes to support or protect people(participants, people in broader community) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Specific types of programs/services to fill gaps |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 1 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 2 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other 3 (please describe) |  |  |  |  |  |  | |

1. Adapted from tools from Amity, Candora, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Adapted from tools from Amity, Candora, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association [↑](#footnote-ref-3)