The Purpose
The Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) is a rapid needs assessment tool that enables public health officials and emergency managers to quickly assess the needs of their community. The focus of the CASPER is at the household-level. Development of the survey should include input from response partners. Please see the CASPER toolkit, 3rd Edition for complete instructions on developing a CASPER questionnaire.

The Basics
- Determine your objectives! Objectives will help determine if CASPER is the appropriate methodology, identify the sampling frame, and focus your questionnaire
- Define the scope and nature of key questions: Why ask the question? What do you already know?
- Identify the critical information needed: Is the question necessary? What ACTION will be taken?
- Consider the design: paper takes less time on the “front-end”. Electronic (e.g., smartphones) takes more time to develop and requires training, expertise, and electricity. You may use both!

The Structure
- Introduction: provide background information and gain consent. Verbal consent is all you need for CASPER! Follow your local IRB guidance
- Body: keep it short and begin with easy, non-intrusive questions
  - Be culturally sensitive
  - Use a logical order with appropriate transitions
  - Consider the best ways to facilitate recall
- Closing: thank for participation and offer how and when results will be available

The Questionnaire Items

Use existing items (if possible)
- Saves time and allows for comparison with other data
- CASPER resources:
  - CASPER toolkit
  - Previously used questionnaires (just ask!)
  - CSTE Disaster Epi Subcommittee
  - Disaster Epi Community of Practice (DECoP)
  - NIH Disaster Research Response Project (DR2)
- CDC resources: for example the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) or National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)
  - Remember! These will have to be modified to be household based

Use as few questions as possible
- Keep it short and begin with easy, non-intrusive questions
- Outline your basic analysis (i.e., table shells). This will help keep your questionnaire focused
- Pre-test! Even if it’s just a coworker or friend
- Always have a "Don’t know" and "Refused" option for each question

Use closed-ended questions whenever possible
- Open-ended questions do not have one definite answer and response categories are unknown, require elaboration, and are difficult to standardize and analyze in a timely manner
- Closed-ended questions have a finite set of answers from which to choose
- Consider the wording of each question for the appropriate reading/comprehension level and the ease of administration (and response)

Remember: CASPER questions should be asked at the HOUSEHOLD level!!!!

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