

Developing CASPER Questionnaires

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

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

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)