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, 2nd Edition for complete instructions on developing a CASPER survey.

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? How will data be used?
- **Consider the design:** paper (recommended) takes less time on the "front-end". Electronic (e.g., smartphones) takes more time to develop and requires training, expertise, and electricity

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 Survey 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: f**or 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, spouse, neighbor, or friend

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)

National Center for Environmental Health
Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects

Question Wording Examples

How can you re-word these questions to improve them?	Rewording options
Have you ever used drugs? ___Yes ___No	Have you or a member of your household ever used any of the following ___Alcohol ___Marijuana ___Methamphetamine (speed, crystal meth)
Do you plan to move and buy a house within the next year? ___Yes ___No	Does your household plan to move within the next year? ___Yes ___No ___DK ___Ref Does your household plan to buy a house within the next year? ___Yes ___No ___DK ___Ref
Does your household not have adequate drinking water for the next 3 days? ___Yes ___No	Does your household have adequate drinking water for the next 3 days (1 gal/person/day)? ___Yes ___No ___DK ___Ref
Have you ever been diagnosed with herpes zoster? ___Yes ___No	Has a doctor or other healthcare provider ever told you or a member of your household that you had shingles? ___Yes ___No ___DK ___Ref
How many times have you visited a doctor in your lifetime? ___ # times	Have you or a member of your household visited a doctor in the last 6 months? ___Yes ___No ___DK ___Ref

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

National Center for Environmental Health
Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects