TIP SHEET: Comparing Survey Types for Measuring Youth Skills and Beliefs

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Survey Type** | **What it is** | **Pros** | **Cons** |
| **End of Program/Post- Only Surveys** | Participants are asked questions at the end of a program only**Sample item:** “Doing well in school is important to me (Not true at all – Somewhat true – Mostly true – Completely true)” | * Simplest to administer
* Least intrusive as it is usually anonymous
* Can provide an overall snapshot of program participants
 | * Cannot capture change unless pre-program status is known
* Not considered a rigorous design
 |
| **Pre-/Post- Surveys** | Asks about a topic at the beginning of a program (pre-program) and the end (post-program); responses of individual participants are matched**Sample item:** “Doing well in school is important to me (Not true at all – Somewhat true – Mostly true – Completely true),” asked at the beginning and end of a program or intervention | * Considered most rigorous design
* Capable of capturing change in participants’ skills, attitudes, or behaviors
 | * Can underestimate program effects due to response shift bias
* Matching requires non-anonymous surveying
* Can be hard to have enough “matches” due to attrition
* Most resource-intensive
 |
| **Retrospective Pre-/Post- Surveys** | Asks about a topic “then” (pre-program) and “now” (post-program); administered at the end of a program only**Sample item:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Before this program | After this program |
| I can handle stress | \_Not true at all\_Somewhat true\_ Mostly true\_Completely True | \_Not true at all\_Somewhat true\_ Mostly true\_Completely True |

 | * Allows for participant reflection
* Measures participant perceived change due to program attendance
* Addresses response-shift bias
 | * Can overestimate program effects
* Complex; can be hard for younger participants to understand
* Not considered as rigorous as matched pre-/post-
 |
| **Reflective Post- Program Surveys** | Asks participants to reflect on the effect that a program has had on their skills, beliefs or behaviors**Sample item:** “This program has helped me to do a better job on my homework (Not true at all – Somewhat true – Mostly true – Completely true)” | * Simplest way to get at perceived program impact
* May be more appropriate for young people than retrospective pre-/post- designs
 | * Will not *quantify* or show the magnitude of changes in skills, beliefs or behaviors
* Not considered rigorous (not “hard” data)
 |