

QUALITATIVE DATA

Diagnostics



Qualitative data

Qualitative data is not directly measurable, but rather a narrative that provides a deeper human insight into the experience of the issue. The data are collected to describe a problem, usually from the perspective of the staff and consumer.

Diagnostics

The purpose of this phase is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state from different perspectives. Once you know the issues you can prioritise them and establish the root causes, so you develop the right solutions.

Key points

1. The qualitative approach

This data collection approach is used to gain better understanding around subjective meanings, attitudes and values. Qualitative data helps us gain insight into why people do what they do, their experience, what motivates them and how they feel (their attitude). These subjective data are useful when trying to understand complex situations. The data should support, explain and enhance the quantitative data you have gathered.

2. Collect qualitative data

You can collect data through interviews, surveys, focus groups or observational studies. Interviews are resource heavy but offer a deep insight with the ability to expand on an answer then and there. Small focus groups allow this to a slightly lesser extent. Ideally 6-12 people are involved over 1-2 sessions, for more perspectives in less time. Surveys can be anonymous and are ideal for shorter responses from many people.

3. Seek depth and breadth

Consider the options that are most appropriate and feasible for your project. The aim is to get depth of information (details) through interviews and focus groups, and breadth (a wide range of opinions) via survey or questionnaire. Surveys may highlight areas to 'drill down' in interviews or focus groups. Don't forget to capture information from minority groups.

4. Capturing information

Recording interviews enables you to capture the information for later review and theming. Make sure you get consent and access the right equipment. If this isn't possible, bring 1-2 scribes who can capture information and key quotes, allowing you to focus on the and the audience. In focus groups, you may choose to use butchers paper so the group can see and validate what is being captured.

Considerations and tips

It takes skill and patience to collect quantitative data. Consider the necessary resources and timing, so you can get the most from your consumers and staff groups.

Validity and reliability

Validity is about how appropriate the tools, processes and data are. For example, one consideration is how the questions relate to the problem being explored, or how appropriate the technique and sample size are for your needs. Reliability is about how repeatable are the processes and the results, particularly in observational data.

Ethics and consent

The use of qualitative data (and quantitative data) must be governed by sound ethical practice. Consider ethics in collection, analysis, use and storage whether the project is or is not registered with local ethics committees. Be sure you are familiar with requirements.

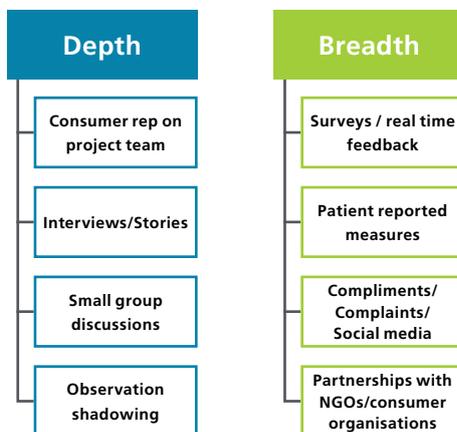
Resources

Collecting quantitative data can be resource intensive and takes planning. You will need skilled interviewers or facilitators who know what to do if sensitive situations arise. Survey questions need to be fit for purpose and have easy access for people to complete and collate, consider online platforms available to you.

Be open minded

Your task is to capture the personal perspectives of your subjects to inform the diagnostic. Listen to understand, not to respond. Use prompting phrases like 'tell me a little more...' and ask open-ended questions that prompt replies but are not leading. Remain open minded – there are no right or wrong responses.

Depth and breadth



Ethics and consent

Collecting data with consumers



Further information

[My Health Learning Log in Form](#) – Redesign Diagnostics (202464432): Data Collection
Staff interviews
Patient and carer interviews

Patient Experience Resources – www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/patient-experience

Next steps

Now that you have gathered qualitative data, you may like to use mapping to support and enrich your findings and bring your data story together. Triangulating your qualitative, quantitative and mapping data will lead to robust analysis.