

Asking the Tough Questions: RVCT and Sensitive Demographic Data

Report of Verified Case of Tuberculosis (RVCT)

- Data collection form for TB surveillance data
- California RVCT form

RVCT 2020 - Tuberculosis

Description: Report of Verified Case of Tuberculosis (RVCT) - 2020 Revision
Patient: Romanoff, Natasha
Record ID: 10003350

+ REPORT OF VERIFIED CASE OF TUBERCULOSIS

+ ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

+ DEMOGRAPHICS & INITIAL EVALUATION

+ OCCUPATION/INDUSTRY INFORMATION

+ RISK FACTORS

+ LAB RESULTS REQUIRED

+ TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST AND ALL NON-DST TB LABORATORY TEST RESULTS [CDC #21]

+ CHEST RADIOGRAPH OR OTHER CHEST IMAGING STUDY RESULTS [CDC #22]

+ PREVIOUS DIAGNOSIS

+ CLINICAL HISTORY & FINDINGS

+ EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATION

+ LINK CASES [CDC #29]

+ INITIAL TREATMENT INFORMATION

+ GENOTYPING & DRUG SUSCEPTIBILITY TESTING

+ DRUG SUSCEPTIBILITY TESTING: PHENOTYPIC

+ CASE OUTCOME

+ NOTES

Save Print

Overview: RVCT Questions

- Gender Identity
- Sex at Birth
- Sexual Orientation
- Race and Ethnicity
- Social/behavioral risk factors

Introducing demographic questions to clients

Next, I have a list of questions for you about how you identify.



Telling the client what's coming next

We ask everyone the same questions...



Normalizes the question, everyone is asked

We ask to better understand which communities [this disease] is impacting.



Provide the rationale

What **NOT** to do when introducing demographic questions to clients

DO NOT:

- Tell the client, “these questions may make you feel uncomfortable”
- Tell the client they can decline the questions at the start of this section (unless you do that throughout)
- Treat this section different than any other section
 - Tone of voice
 - Cadence



Putting it all together:

“I’m going to move on to ask you a series of questions about how you identify. Your responses help us ensure we know who is being affected by TB in our community and helps us provide the best services to all members of our communities. We ask these questions of everyone we interview. Please know all of your responses are kept confidential and are only used for the purposes of understanding the big picture of how TB is affecting our community.”

Asking Tough Questions



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Gender

▼

Declined to answer

Female

Genderqueer or non-binary

Identity not listed

Male

Trans female/Transwoman

Trans male/Transman

Unknown

CA RVCT Question: Gender

Reflects a person's current self-identity

Sex at Birth [CDC #8]

Male

Female

Unknown

RVCT Question: Sex at Birth

Establish the biological sex recorded for the person at birth

Poll

Question

#1: Gender Identity

Of the options below, which is the best way to ask a patient about their gender identity?

- a. “Are you male or female?”
- b. “What is the sex listed on your original birth certificate?”
- c. “What is your gender identity?”
- d. “Are you a man or a woman?”

Poll

Question

#1: Gender Identity

Of the options below, which is the best way to ask a patient about their gender identity?

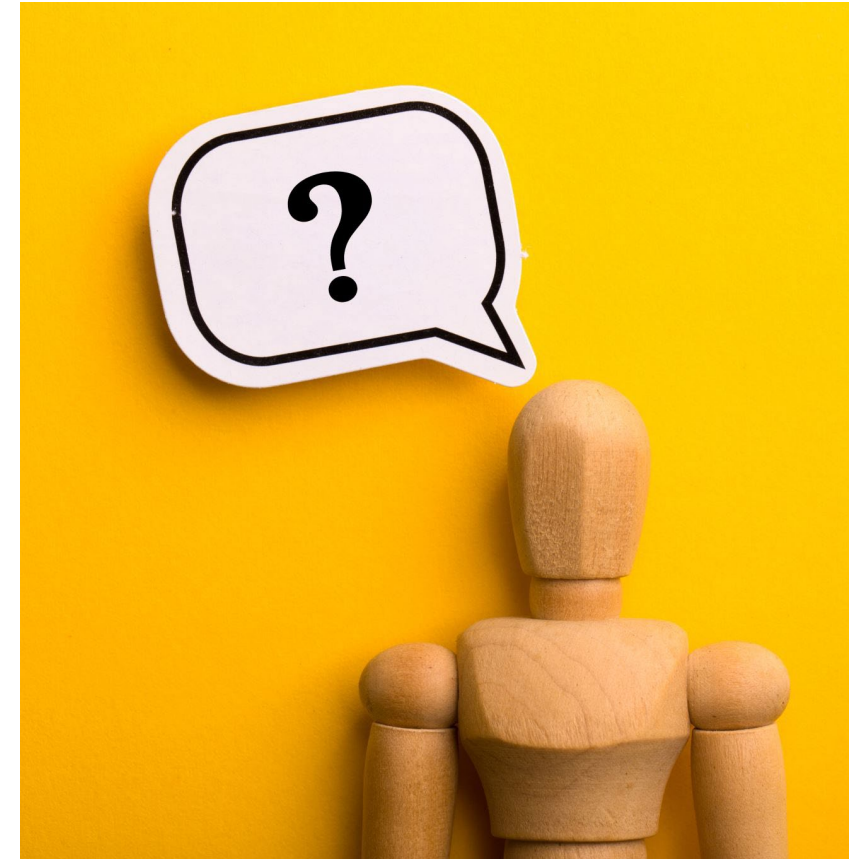
- a. “Are you male or female?”
- b. “What is the sex listed on your original birth certificate?”
- c. “What is your gender identity?”**
- d. “Are you a man or a woman?”

HELPFUL TIP

If someone does not know how to answer your questions, list out their options. For ex:

For gender identity, the options are:

- *Female*
- *Genderqueer or non-binary*
- *Male*
- *Trans female/Transwoman*
- *Trans male/Transman*
- *Identity not listed*



Poll
Question
#2:
Assuming
Gender
Identity

True or False:

You can guess someone's gender identity based on what they wear, or how they sound, look or act.

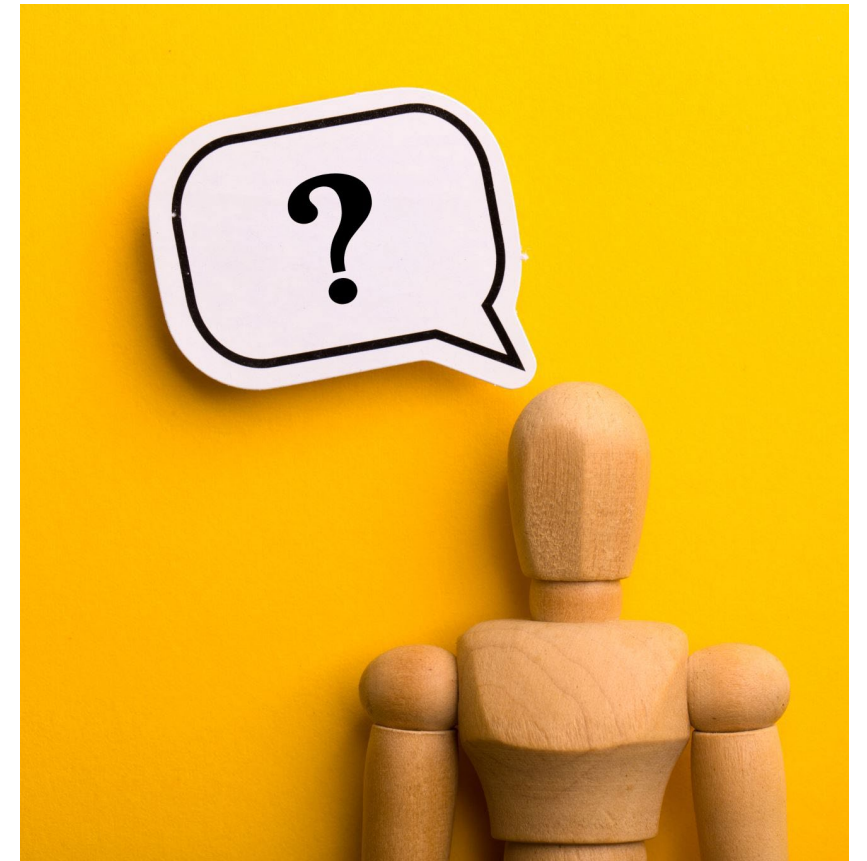
Poll
Question
#2:
Assuming
Gender
Identity

False:

You can guess someone's gender identity based on what they wear, or how they sound, look or act.

Tips for Asking About Sex at Birth

- Ask using an open-ended question
- Be ready to provide a simple, short and concise definition of sex at birth (or sex assigned at birth) in case they ask you to define it.
- If you receive pushback:
 - Acknowledge their concern
 - Explain the purpose of the question again
 - Remind them that you ask this question of everyone



Poll Question #3: Sex at Birth

Of the options below, which is the best way to ask a patient about their sex at birth?

- a. “This is going to be an awkward question, I’m sorry I HAVE to ask. Are you male or female?”
- b. “What is the sex listed on your original birth certificate?”
- c. “Are you a man or a woman?”
- d. A and C are correct.

Poll

Question

#3: Sex at Birth

Of the options below, which is the best way to ask a patient about their sex at birth?

- a. “This is going to be an awkward question, I’m sorry I HAVE to ask. Are you male or female?”
- b. “What is the sex listed on your original birth certificate?”**
- c. “Are you a man or a woman?”
- d. A and C are correct.

Sex (Assigned) at Birth and Gender Identity

Sex (Assigned) at Birth

- Determined by healthcare provider at birth
- Complex combination of biological and anatomic markers
- Sex assignment is typically binary
- Our bodies are NOT binary

Gender Identity

- Self-determined by person
- Internal sense of self, not correlated with anatomy or biological markers
- Gender identity can be binary (man, woman) but there are non-binary gender identities

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual or straight

Gay, lesbian, or same-gender loving

Bisexual

Orientation not listed

Questioning, unsure, or patient doesn't know

Declined to answer

Unknown

CA RVCT Question: Sexual Orientation

Reflects a person's self-identity

Poll

Question

#4: Sexual Orientation

Which of the following statements is true about sexual orientation?

- a. Sexual orientation is a combination of attraction, behavior, and identity.
- b. Sexual orientation is static and does not change.
- c. Identity and behaviors are **always** linked. Ex: if you identify as a heterosexual man, you only have sex with women.
- d. Both B and C are True.

Poll

Question

#4: Sexual Orientation

Which of the following statements is true about sexual orientation?

- a. **Sexual orientation is a combination of attraction, behavior, and identity.**
- b. Sexual orientation is static and does not change.
- c. Identity and behaviors are **always** linked. Ex: if you identify as a heterosexual man, you only have sex with women.
- d. Both B and C are True.

Tips for asking about sexual orientation



- **You can ask:** “What is your sexual orientation?”
- **You can explain (if asked):** “Sexual orientation is about who people are attracted to romantically, emotionally and sexually.”
- You can list the orientation options and **ask them to choose** the option that best fits them.

Ex: Of the following options, which one describes your sexual orientation:

- *Heterosexual or straight*
- *Gay, lesbian, or same-gender loving*
- *Bisexual*
- *Orientation not listed*
- *Declined to answer*
- *Unknown*

Poll #5: Identity not listed

*During your interview you ask someone about their sexual orientation, they respond that they identify as "Queer." Your data collection tool does not include "Queer." **Choose how you would respond:***

- a) You know "Queer" is similar to "Gay," so you choose "Gay."
- b) You let them know "Queer" is an insult and you hang up the phone.
- c) Your data collection tool lists "Other" so you choose "Other."
- d) You let the person know "Queer" is not listed, you read out the options in your list and ask them to choose from those options.

Poll #5: Identity not listed

*During your interview you ask someone about their sexual orientation, they respond that they identify as "Queer." Your data collection tool does not include "Queer." **Choose how you would respond:***

- a) You know "Queer" is similar to "Gay," so you choose "Gay."
- b) You let them know "Queer" is an insult and you hang up the phone.
- c) Your data collection tool lists "Other" so you choose "Other."
- d) **You let the person know "Queer" is not listed, you read out the options in your list and ask them to choose from those options.**

Asking Tough Questions



Race and Ethnicity

Ethnicity [CDC #9]

▼

Hispanic or Latino

Not Hispanic or Latino

Unknown

Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Central American, other Latin American culture or origin

RVCT Question: Ethnicity

Should be based on a person's self-identity or self-reporting

Race [CDC #10]

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native | ☒ Asian | ☒ Black or African American |
| ☐ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | ☐ Other | ☐ Unknown |
| ☐ White | | |

RVCT Question: Race

Should be based on a person's self-identity or self-reporting

Ethnicity [CDC #9]

Race [CDC #10]

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
 ☐ Asian
 ☐ Black or African American

☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 ☐ Other
 ☐ Unknown

☐ White

Asian Specify

☐ Asian Indian	☐ Bangladeshi	☐ Bhutanese	☐ Burmese	☐ Cambodian	☐ Chinese
☐ Filipino	☐ Hmong	☐ Indonesian	☐ Iwo Jiman	☐ Japanese	☐ Korean
☐ Laotian	☐ Madagascar	☐ Malaysian	☐ Maldivian	☐ Nepalese	☐ Okinawan
☐ Pakistani	☐ Singaporean	☐ Sri Lankan	☐ Taiwanese	☐ Thai	☐ Vietnamese

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Specify

☐ Carolinian	☐ Chamorro	☐ Chuukese	☐ Fijian	☐ Guamanian	☐ Kiribati
☐ Kosraean	☐ Mariana Islander	☐ Marshallese	☐ Melanesian	☐ Micronesian	☐ Native Hawaiian
☐ New Hebrides	☐ Other Pacific Islander	☐ Palauan	☐ Papua New Guinean	☐ Pohnpeian	☐ Polynesian
☐ Saipanese	☐ Samoan	☐ Solomon Islander	☐ Tahitian	☐ Tokelauan	☐ Tongan
☐ Yapese					

Other Race Specify

RVCT Question: Detailed Race

Should be based on a person's self-identity or self-reporting



Poll #6: Race and Ethnicity

Which of the following statements is true about race and ethnicity?

- a. Race is biological and genetic.
- b. Race and ethnicity are interchangeable concepts.
- c. Race is socially constructed, and it changes across place and time.
- d. The terms Hispanic and Latinx/a/o/e are the same and are interchangeable.

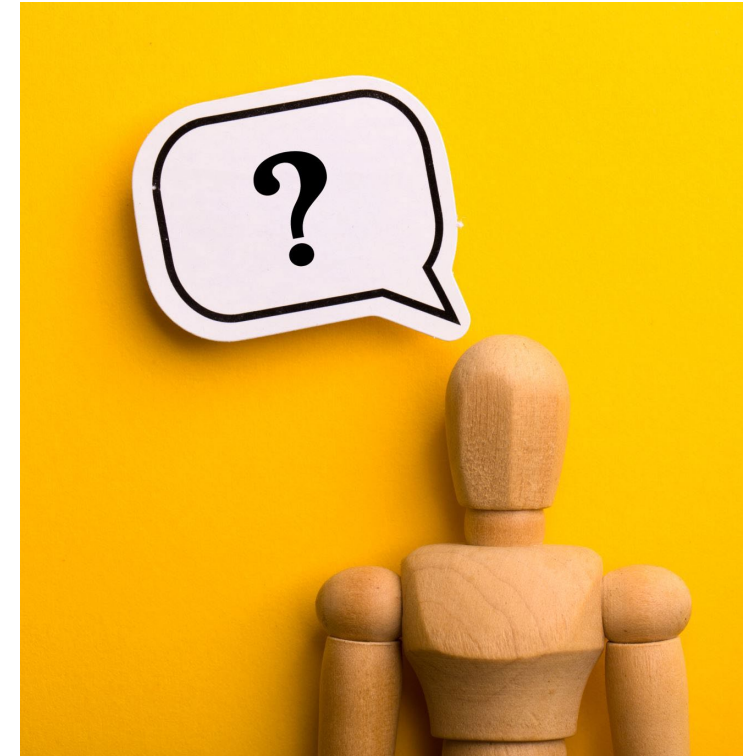
Poll #6: Race and Ethnicity

Which of the following statements is true about race and ethnicity?

- a. Race is biological and genetic.
- b. Race and ethnicity are interchangeable concepts.
- c. **Race is socially constructed, and it changes across place and time.**
- d. The terms Hispanic and Latinx/a/o/e are the same and are interchangeable.

HELPFUL TIP

- Always ensure that ALL patients have the choice of how they want to be identified
- NEVER make a choice on their behalf
- For Latinx, the race question can be difficult to answer. Let them know:
 - They can select more than one race category (this is true for ALL)
 - “American Indian” category encompasses **all of** the Americas (North, Central and South)
 - They can choose “Other” or “Identity not listed”



Asking Tough Questions

Other RVCT questions

(resident of correctional facility, homeless, drug/alcohol use)

Resident of Correctional Facility Ever?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

Resident of Correctional Facility at Diagnostic Evaluation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

RVCT Question: Resident of Correctional Facility

Evaluates potential TB risk involving incarceration at any point in lifetime and at TB evaluation

Homeless Ever

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

Homeless in the Past 12 Months?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

RVCT Question: Homeless

Evaluates potential TB risk involving homelessness at any point in lifetime and within 12 months of TB evaluation

Injecting Drug Use in the Past 12 Months

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

RVCT Question: Injecting Drug use

Evaluates potential TB risk involving injecting drug use in the past 12 months

Non-Injecting Drug Use in the Past 12 Months

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unknown

RVCT Question: Non-Injecting Drug Use

Evaluates potential TB risk involving non-injecting drug use in the past 12 months

Heavy Alcohol Use in the Past 12 Months

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

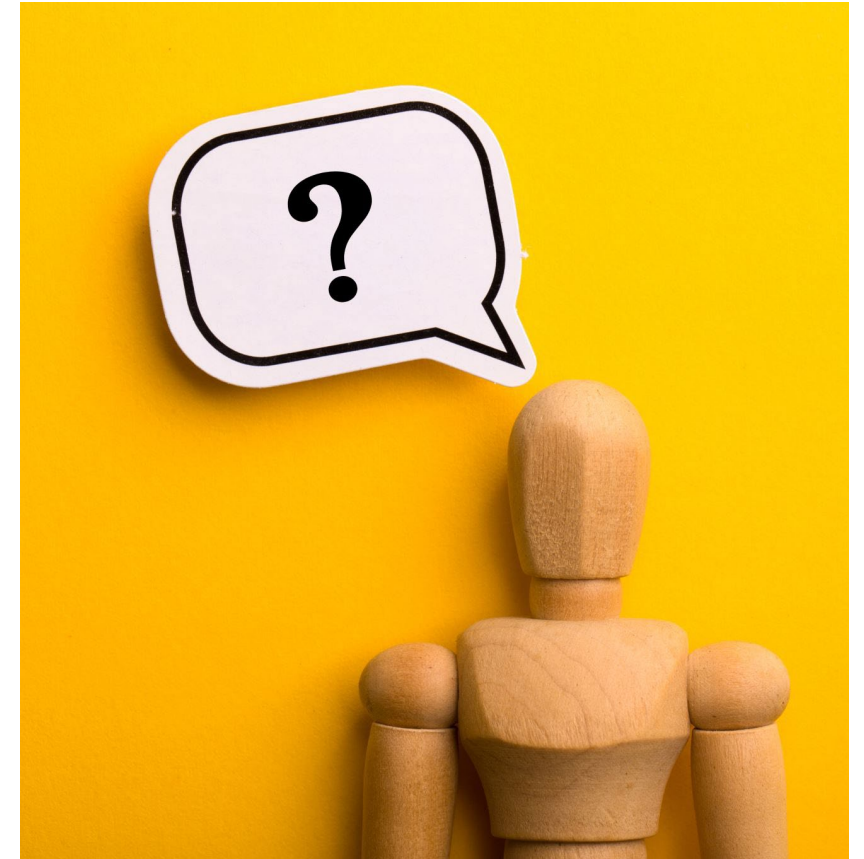
Unknown

RVCT Question: Heavy Alcohol Use

Evaluates potential TB risk involving heavy alcohol use in the past 12 months

HELPFUL TIP: Other Risk Factors

- Share why these questions are asked
- Let the person know you ask these questions of everyone
- For questions to do with **substance use**, **incarceration** or immigration status, let the person know you do NOT work for and do NOT report their information to law enforcement or immigration.



Asking the Questions Open-Endedly

- Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
- How do you describe your race?
- How do you describe your gender identity?
- What is the sex listed on your original birth certificate?
- How do you describe your sexual orientation?



Dealing with Emotional Reactions

HEAR Technique Pt. I

Technique	Definition	Example	Tips
Hear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask open ended questions to invite the person to share their thoughts and feelings.• Reflect back their words so they know they have been heard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "It sounds like you are concerned about confidentiality. "• "Tell me more about your experience/thoughts."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When someone is frustrated, angry, or upset, a good first step is to let them express their thoughts and opinions. Having their voice heard can help reduce their stress.• Remember, the frustration is not a personal attach.• Our instinct is often to match the tone of voice of the person to whom we are talking. Maintaining a calm, gentle tone of voice may help bring the level down a notch.
Express Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the person for sharing their thoughts openly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Thank you for sharing that with me."• "I appreciate your willingness to talk with me today."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple thank you at any point in a challenging conversation can disarm those who are angered.• You can express understanding of the person's viewpoint without agreeing with them or making unreasonable concessions.

HEAR Technique Pt. II

Technique	Definition	Example	Tips
Answer and Ask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer any questions the person has.• Ask permission to share your own knowledge and perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "What questions do you have for me? "• "Would it be ok if I share some information about how this information is used?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes frustration comes from the not knowing the whole story. Inviting questions can make up for that.• Asking permission to share information gets the person's buy-in and creates space to share your knowledge and perspectives.
Respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share key information.• Discuss next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Let's talk about how your responses to our demographic questions are used and how that information is protected and kept confidential."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is where you actually get to share information and talk about what next steps might be helpful in this situation.• Provide guidance without arguing or commanding. Be creative in responding to individual needs.

Case Scenario

- Dre was named as a close contact to a person who was diagnosed with active pulmonary TB.
- A disease intervention professional is interviewing Dre.
- The disease intervention professional is collecting demographic data during Dre's interview.



DI professional:

Dre, like I mentioned earlier, the questions I am asking in this section of our interview help us ensure we provide the best services to ALL of our communities. How does that sound?

DI professional:

Thank you again for sharing your responses, Dre. I hear you when you say it can be uncomfortable to answer these questions.

DI professional:

Thanks, Dre. I'm going to start with discussing substance use. In the past 12 months, have you used drugs?

Dre:

That's fine, I didn't love talking about my sexual orientation with you, but it wasn't that bad.

Dre:

No problem.

Dre:

Whoa! I don't want to answer that.

Poll #7: Handling Dre's Concerns

What should the DI professional do?

- a. Apologize to Dre and end the interview.
- b. Not make it more awkward and ask the next question.
- c. The DI should apply the HEAR technique to seek understanding about Dre's concerns and try to answer any questions Dre may have.
- d. The DI should ask "Why don't you want to answer this questions?"

Poll #7: Handling Dre's Concerns

What should the DI professional do?

- a. Apologize to Dre and end the interview.
- b. Not make it more awkward and ask the next question.
- c. **The DI should apply the HEAR technique to seek understanding about Dre's concerns and try to answer any questions Dre may have.**
- d. The DI should ask "Why don't you want to answer this questions?"

DI professional:

Dre, it sounds like you have concerns about answering this question. Please, tell me more about that.

Dre:

That's just real personal, it makes me uncomfortable.

DI professional:

Dre, thank you so much for sharing your concern. It sounds like discussing this with someone you don't know is making you feel uncomfortable. I apologize for making you feel uncomfortable. To help me prevent from making you feel this way again, what concerns you about discussing this with me.

Dre:

Like I said, I don't know you and I'm not sure what you will do with my private information. You work for the government and I don't want that to be in my record.

DI professional:

Thank you for sharing with me more about your concerns. Can I share some information to address your concerns?

Dre:

Sure.

Poll #8: How should the DI Respond to Dre's concerns?

What should the DI professional respond next?

- a. Let Dre know the importance of demographic data, highlight the need for this data to achieve health equity.
- b. Share with Dre how this data is protected and describe how it will be used.
- c. Let Dre know that if they don't answer the question, people in their community may not receive adequate services.

Poll #8: How should the DI Respond to Dre's concerns?

What should the DI professional respond next?

- a. Let Dre know the importance of demographic data, highlight the need for this data to achieve health equity.
- b. **Share with Dre how this data is protected and describe how it will be used.**
- c. Let Dre know that if they don't answer the question, people in their community may not receive adequate services.

DI professional:

Dre, first I want to let you know that I ask these questions of everyone. Your responses are confidential and are NOT shared with law enforcement, including parole officers, and immigration. How does that sound?

DI professional:

What we discuss is protected under local, state, and federal confidentiality laws, including HIPAA. Which makes it illegal for me to share your medical information without your consent.

DI professional:

Maintaining your private information confidential is really important to us, thank you for letting me address your concern. I'll ask again, in the past 12 months, have you used drugs?

Dre:

Really, even if I talk about illegal drugs?

Dre:

Ok, I guess it's cool.

Dre:

Yes.

Demographic Data Collection Recommendations



Do ask every question of every client

Do remain non-judgmental

Do say the response options if clients are unsure

Do practice until this feels comfortable for you

Do know how to quickly state the rationale for these questions

Demographic Data Collection Recommendations



Don't say, "These questions may make you feel uncomfortable."

Don't assume a response option

Don't import data from clinical records

Don't take it personally if a client gets upset

Resources

[Report of Verified Case of Tuberculosis Instruction Manual \(RVCT\) Instruction Manual \(CDC\)](#)

[Essential Interviewing Skills for Disease Intervention Asynchronous Modules \(California Prevention Training Center\)](#)

[Working with People Who Use Drugs: Effective Strategies for Disease Intervention Professionals \(National Network of Disease Intervention Training Centers\)](#)

[Demystifying Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity for Disease Intervention Professionals \(National Network of Disease Intervention Training Centers\)](#)

[Gender Inclusive Recommendations for Disease Intervention Professionals \(National Network of Disease Intervention Training Centers\)](#)

[Ready, Set, Go! Guidelines and Tips For Collecting Patient Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(Fenway Institute\)](#)

[Senate Bill 957 – SOGI Data Fact Sheet \(CA LGBTQ Health\)](#)

Q&A



THANK YOU!

