

Methods for gathering information

Method	How it is used	Used for	Pros	Cons	When to use
Surveys <i>(See page 22)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be completed on paper or online • can be done in an interview situation if a respondent needs support with the language • can use mostly closed or multiple-choice questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting responses from a large number of people • asking “how many” and “how often” questions • finding out about attitudes and behaviour (e.g., by using scales or multiple-choice questions) • gathering data you can quantify and compare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides data that can be counted and generalised • can be anonymous • can include visual material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses aren’t in-depth • the results may be biased if participants volunteer. 	<p>Gathering information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide initial baseline data (It’s especially helpful if you’re at the beginning stage on the continuum.) <p>Evaluating progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat to measure progress towards goals and to help review goals.
Focus groups <i>(See page 25)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a facilitator and a small group of people discuss a small number of questions on a topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking “why” and “how” questions • learning about feelings, attitudes, ideas, past experiences • finding out more information about ideas or behaviours (such as those shown by responses to survey questions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participants develop and build on ideas through the group interaction • the facilitator can elicit more information about responses • gives richer data than surveys, for example, about why the participants think or behave the way they do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires a skilled facilitator • some participants may dominate or influence others in the group • may not be representative of the wider group. 	<p>Gathering information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to find out more about a group <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when brainstorming ideas about projects to use in your initiative • when trying out ideas • when testing reactions to proposed approaches or materials.
One-to-one interviews <i>(See page 27)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face to face or by telephone • usually includes a smaller number of questions to structure the interview, then the interviewer can dig deeper if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting responses from a small number of key people • gathering specific information quickly • gaining in-depth information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participants can arrange a time and place to suit them • can be carried out quickly (perhaps 15–20 mins each) • the interviewer can use follow-up questions to get more information about responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interviewers may need training • the results are not representative • may not be appropriate for sensitive issues • takes time to gather data from a large number of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be used at any time during the initiative, depending on the purpose (e.g., to gain information relevant to a specific concept, group, issue, or aspect of the process).
Classroom discussions <i>(See page 28)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informally with a specific group (e.g., young children) • must be done with sensitivity and awareness (e.g., of leading questions and family privacy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finding out about attitudes • talking with people who may respond best in small-group discussions (e.g., children in years 1–3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can gain information from people who may not respond in other settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may not yield usable information • information may be very general • some areas are too sensitive to explore in this type of discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before or during implementation of an initiative or of a specific project that involves the group (e.g., young children).