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| Method | What is it? | Strengths | Weaknesses | Things to consider |
| Questionnaire | A list of questions that participants respond to, usually with a written response. Question responses can be categorical, scaled, or text-based. | * These can be easily adapted from project to project, making them quick to develop * Can be administered in a number of ways including: online, in person and telephone * Not limited by geography * Can get a range of in-depth data for your project | * Closed questions may lead to less validity and therefore less clear data * Respondents may not be able to articulate their feelings as they may find the answer choices limiting * Respondents may feel that there is a correct and incorrect answer and may not respond accurately | * How will you distribute the survey? Will this be via a survey building tool such as SurveyMonkey or Google Forms? * How will you analyse the data? |
| Focus Groups | A group discussion facilitated by a researcher relating to a  specific topic. Structured or semi-structured questions are used to gather information on perceptions, opinions, beliefs or attitudes. | * Topics can be explored in depth and discussion can lead to different perspectives being discussed * Can be conducted online or in person, which allows for geographical flexibility | * Some participants may not feel comfortable in a group setting, especially when discussing mental health stigma and discrimination * Analysis can be time consuming | * Facilitators need to be aware of group dynamics * Will you need a translator? |
| Depth Interviews | A one to one discussion facilitated by a researcher and guided by questions relating to a specific topic. Questions can be structured or semi-structured to elicit similar information as focus groups. | * Can be carried out online, by phone or in person * The researcher can gain more detailed and in-depth information through follow up questions * More personal and sensitive topics can be explored as there is more checks in place to allow for confidentiality (than focus groups) * Findings can be highly valuable | * Can be time consuming to conduct and analyse | * Will you need a translator? |
| Case studies | Multiple data sources are used to build an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a single case and its context. | * Case studies can be useful for illustrating or exploring the outcomes of a project, particularly when several case studies are presented, covering a range of experiences/ outcomes. | * Findings cannot be applied to other circumstances |  |
| Stickies wall | Used at group events, participants are asked to write their feedback/comments on stickies and add them to a wall under different headings. | * Stickies walls give participants a chance to interact with others at group events * They can be a good way for more quiet people to participate if they do not want to discuss in front of the group * The sticky notes can be collected at the end and analysed after the session * Online options are available, making it more accessible | * This may be limiting for some people if they have lots to say on an issue * If the wall will be part of the discussion, some people may not feel confident taking part |  |
| Reflection | A reflective log or journal is essentially a log or diary that contains regular entries by an individual, detailing their experiences and emotions regarding the project. | * Good for capturing detailed accounts of lived experience * This method can be adapted to include video, audio or written blogs | * May take time to analyse as it can result in a lot of data * Some people may not feel comfortable taking part in work that feels so personal |  |
| Existing Data | Information that has already been recorded is analysed afresh for the purposes of the evaluation. | * Provides lots of information in a relatively short time * Makes use of already gathered  information​ * Involves minimum data collection effort, and no impact on stakeholders. | * Information can be out of date * May not address specific questions of concern​ * Inflexible – data restricted to what already exists.​ * No control over quality of information recorded * Data protection legislation must be consulted before you engage in analysis – you may need to get permission from individuals to use their data |  |
| Concept Map | To gather information about someone’s understanding of and attitudes toward a complex subject or topic. | * Offers a comprehensive and complex view of someone’s thinking * A visual data tool * Can gather qualitative or quantitative data * Useful for adults and children * This can help teams to reflect on issues together | * Takes training to administer and complete properly​ * Can be challenging and time-consuming to analyse and interpret. |  |
| Photovoice | By utilising photographs taken and selected by participants, respondents can reflect upon and explore the reasons, emotions and experiences that have guided their chosen images. | * Participants can feel empowered * Participants can gain new skills by taking part in the analysis * The images can help participants feel able to take part in the discussion * A good way to capture lived experience * Themes can appear quite clearly making analysis quicker * A good tool when working with people from different cultural backgrounds or who are not confident when communicating in English | * Can be time consuming * May need ethical approval * This can be an expensive method as it may require providing equipment |  |
| Creative writing | Poems or narrative could be the result of group work focusing on a specific theme or issue, or it could be personal reflection. | * Gaining a rich insight into someone’s personal lived experience * Getting a sense of story or journey * Serves as a therapeutic activity as well as an evaluation method * If interpreters are available, this can be a way for people to communicate their experiences if they are not confident communicators in English | * Some participants may not feel comfortable taking part if they are not confident writers * Can be challenging to analyse * Not a good method when working with people who struggle with written work | * It is important to consider the group of people that you are working with |
| Observation | The Observation technique is when you observe people interacting with the environment that you wish to study. For example this could be used by observing people when they are using a service or programme that you may be delivering. | * Can be carried out on many different sites by different individuals. * Can use professional expertise of staff * Allows evaluation over time rather than snapshot | * This is a difficult method to carry out if the observer is not able to concentrate as some things may be missed * Having the observer present may impact how people interact with the environment you wish to study |  |
| Capturing casual  moments | Staff record supported people’s comments in non-formal circumstances, and use a set of pre-determined indicators (e.g. See Me indicators) to help map the comments to personal or project outcomes. | * Gaining honest responses when the pressure is off​ * Following up in a more formal setting e.g. one to one support session​ * Contributing to a good mix of evidence​ * Getting the attention of your audience | * There may be inconsistencies between staff members in terms of what they record, resulting in data that is not complete or difficult to analyse | * Do staff members have the time and resources to do this well? * Do staff feel confident to carry this out? * Will you need to provide staff with any extra training? |
| Body Map | Body maps can be used as a creative way of evaluating your project. Traditionally used in health and social research, and with popularised in African countries, body maps can use a number of different creative techniques (painting, drawing, scrapbooking) to gain knowledge and understand experiences. | * Useful for working with people with limited literacy or language differences * Involving people while exploring complex processes (which helps create a more participatory approach) * Captures many opinions and views easily * Gathering general impressions of progress or outcomes * Providing evidence of unexpected outcomes * Due to its roots in research relating to education, health and activism it can be a good fit for projects relating to mental health stigma and discrimination | * May not suit people who find creative techniques challenging * May be difficult to analyse |  |
| Social Media | Responses on social media can be used as a way to gather opinions on campaigns and resources. If evidence is captured then it can be used as part of an evaluation. This method can be both qualitative and quantitative, depending on the information that you choose to gather. | * Can get quick responses from a wide variety of people. * A good way to access people from all over, giving an opportunity to work with people in more remote areas. | * If reach is poor then there may not be much data to work with. * Social media changes quickly, meaning that data could disappear before it has been recorded. |  |