

Undertaking a Situation Analysis of Sexual Assault Services

To follow are some basic steps you can take in preparing for and undertaking a situation analysis of sexual violence services.

STEP 1:

Preparing for a Baseline Survey

Before you start data collection you may need the following:

- Proposal
- Ethics approval
- Funds
- Partnerships with key stakeholders
- Approval to access services
- Multidisciplinary research team

Proposal: The proposal is a critical first step in any research project as it provides an overall plan for the research process. A proposal will include the background and rationale for the study and why it is important. The research objectives, research methods, data collection, strategy and analysis plan and the timeline for the research are also carefully described. The proposal may also accompany your application to an ethics committee for ethical approval to conduct the study and can be used as the basis for a funding proposal that can be sent to donors to solicit donor funds.

Ethics Approval: Ethics approval is an essential part of the research process. Once you have developed your proposal and adapted the tools to your setting, you need to submit this to an ethics committee. These are usually located in universities, national research institutes and sometimes in departments of health. Ethics approval processes will differ by country and even by institution. You will need to contact the relevant ethics committee directly for information on how to apply for ethics approval in your setting.

Funds: You may need funds to conduct the study, especially if travel to different parts of the country is required. There may be creative ways to minimise travel through collaborating with organisations located in different parts of the country. Thus the fieldwork may be conducted by various partners. If this is done, it is essential to put in place measures to ensure that data is collected in a standardised manner across sites. There may be personnel costs which would need to be covered. If resources are not available locally for this study, you may need to send your proposal to various funders.

For information on possible sources of funds for sexual violence research visit:
<http://www.svri.org/en/funding.htm>

Partnerships with Key Stakeholders: One way of ensuring that your research recommendations find their way into policy is to involve policy and decision makers in the research process. This may be achieved by establishing a stakeholder reference group at the beginning of the research project. Depending on your context, this may involve government officials, service managers and providers, non-government organisations and community representatives. This reference group may be able to assist you in obtaining the relevant approvals needed to access the services and health care providers you need to gather your data.

Approvals to Access Services: In order to conduct research in health care facilities, you will need to obtain access. Usually a letter is required from the overarching body that manages the health care facilities. This may be the department/ministry of health. You will need to negotiate access at the health care facility as well. Usually it is appropriate to approach the superintendent of the facility.

Multidisciplinary Research Team: When doing this type of research, different perspectives can be very useful. Creating a multi-disciplinary team will enhance the quality and utility of the research. If you are from a non-governmental organisation and want to conduct the research to inform an advocacy campaign for better health services for rape survivors, you may want to team up with a researcher or an organisation that does research. Alternatively, if you are a researcher, it can be useful to build relationships with organisations that can help with the dissemination of findings and advocacy.

A researcher who has experience in conducting quantitative research and who is skilled in statistical analysis skills is essential.