AP Statistics Service Project
3rd Survey Draft and Proposal (Due 12/11)

For the third draft of your survey and the project proposal, you are going to work in the same groups as before to continue refining your survey based on feedback from a sociology professor at UT, Dr. Pam Paxton.

Remember that our over-arching aim to provide an answer to this question:

Is MLF's approach to treating homelessness successfully improving the quality of life of the people it serves, as compared to their life on the streets?

Here is a condensed summary of Dr. Paxton's comments (included fully on the back of this page) and how you should address them in your next draft:

1. Separating questions temporarily. Arrange questions so that the first half of the survey addresses questions about their life on the streets and the second half addresses questions about life at Community First. Each before question still needs a corresponding after question with similar wording; just now those questions will be separated in spacing on the survey. Refine question order. Place demographic questions at the end of the survey (age, gender, veteran status, etc.). Continue to check that questions start less personal and the move toward more personal.

2. Refine Likert Scale phrasing. If numbers are provided then you don't need a descriptor as well (like 'moderately,' or 'often').

3. Format the survey as you think it should be in the final version. Make sure that is in understandable and easy to follow for any student as they read it to a Community First resident. Be sure there is space to record free response answers and make any other necessary comments.

Please be sure to review the posted rubric for the 3rd survey draft prior to submitting your survey. The rubric follows very closely with Dr. Paxton's suggestions. Her comments should be the primary thing you work to address on this survey draft.

You should also take advantage of being able to view other group submissions. On this survey draft you must incorporate one positive aspect from each of the other four group's surveys into yours. This may be modifying your answer selections, adjusting formatting, or even borrowing an entire question. Be sure that on your survey you indicate what items are borrowed from other groups.

Be sure that every group member's name is included at the beginning of your survey. Email your survey as a word document or Google doc to Mr. Wilkerson by the end of school on Friday, 12/11.

Pamela Paxton is professor of sociology and public affairs and the Christine and Stanley E. Adams, Jr. Centennial Professor in the Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Austin.

The students have done a great job! I've provided some comments for them below.

1.   Separate questions temporally – so that the questions about when they were homeless are separated from those now that they are in Community First. That will help them cognitively place themselves at a particular place in time and also prevent them from patterning based on the prior question.

2.   Be consistent in whether numbers are provided for their reference (e.g., 1-5) and also don't put a descriptor (moderately) along with an actual number (twice). If you want counts just ask for counts.

3.   I think the alcohol and drug questions could be more fine-grained. For individuals struggling with addictions you may want to know more about the number of drinks a day or week.

4.   Use simple language where possible (e.g., thrice is probably not simple enough)

5.   When you get to analysis, having more fine-grained data is better. As an example, asking their age is better than asking their age in categories. If they have trouble with any of them you might see clumping on round numbers (this used to happen quite a bit in developing countries if you asked about age – answers would clump on 30, 40, etc.). But that is still better than starting out by asking in categories (categories can always be recreated if necessary from the finer-grained data). Income is a bit of an exception because Americans are so uncomfortable talking about income (see below)

6.   Are respondents taking these as pen and pencil surveys? If so then the answer categories that are numbered 1-5 but that correspond to other numbers (1-3, 3-6, etc.) may be confusing. Better to either label as a-e or just have them circle their answer and you can code into a number when you are inputting the data. A modified version of what Block E, group 4 did for some of their questions might be a good way to present if this is being filled out by the individuals themselves.

7.   Typically income is the very last question asked on U.S. surveys because it makes Americans so uncomfortable talking about income and they will sometimes stop the survey. That may not be true of this population but it is still worth thinking about question ordering.

8.   Also, demographic questions are usually asked at the end of surveys since they are less cognitively demanding.

I love the prized possession question.

In any case, I'm very impressed with their drafts and I think they have a good start to a survey!