

Quick guide to asking REALD questions

Race and ethnic identity

Do not read each of the 39 categories. Instead say, ***We are going to ask you a few questions about race and ethnicity starting with, “Which of these categories do you think reflects your racial or ethnic identity?”***

For in-person interviews, show them the list of categories. **For phone or virtual (e.g., Zoom) interviews**, read the categories out loud:

- American Indian and/or Alaska Native
- Indigenous Mexican, Central and/or South American
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino, Latina, Latinx
- Middle Eastern and/or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White

Based on the person’s choices, read out the appropriate subcategories.

For “Other” or “I don’t know” responses:

- “It’s OK to have more than one racial or ethnic identity. Is there one you relate more closely to? If not, you can choose to say multiracial or unknown.”
- “It’s OK not to know how to identify yourself. Do you want to choose “I Don’t Know” as your response?”

This list of countries by category on the next page may also help. It is important to let the person self-identify. For example, if someone said they are Nepali, but was unsure of their category, you could say, “Well, South Asian includes Nepal. You can choose that category if you wish.”

If they identify as Caucasian:

This is not a choice on the form. Refer to the list of countries by category for help. Often people who identify as Caucasian are Western or Eastern European.

If they have difficulty answering a question:

Find out where the confusion is. You can rephrase most questions to see if that helps.¹

Try using a different word for the question asked). For example, for interpreter needs:

- “Do you need a translator when speaking with us?”
- “If you were to visit our office, would you want us to get an interpreter so that our communications are clear?”

¹ See the full [Response Guide/Matrix](#) for more information about how to help people answer the disability questions.

List of countries by race/ethnicity category

Eastern European ²	Slavic	Western European	Middle Eastern ³
Albania	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Andorra	Bahrain
Armenia	Bulgaria	Austria	Cyprus
Azerbaijan	Belarus	Belgium	Iran
Estonia	Czech Republic	Denmark	Iraq
Georgia	Croatia	England	Israel
Hungary	Macedonia	Finland	Jordan
Latvia	Montenegro	France	Kuwait
Lithuania	Poland	Germany	Lebanon
Moldova	Russia	Greece	Oman
Romania	Serbia	Iceland	Palestine
	Slovakia	Ireland	Qatar
	Slovenia	Italy	Saudi Arabia
	Ukraine	Liechtenstein	Syria
		Luxembourg	Turkey
		Malta	United Arab Emirates
		Monaco	Yemen
		Netherlands	
		Norway	
		Portugal	
		San Marina	
		Spain	
		Sweden	
		Switzerland	
		United Kingdom	

North African	Asian Indian	South Asian ⁴	Communities of Micronesia Region:
Algeria	India	Bangladesh	Federated States of Micronesia:
Egypt		Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yap • Chuuk • Pohnpei • Kosrae
Libya		Maldives	Palau
Morocco		Nepal	Marshall Islands ⁵
Tunisia		Pakistan	
		Sri Lanka	

² Afghanistan is also considered part of Eastern Europe by some.

³ Afghanistan and Azerbaijan are also considered in the Middle East by some.

⁴ Afghanistan is also considered South Asian by some.

⁵ Marshallese has its own category.

Functional limitations

Do not use the word “disability” unless the other person brings it up first.

If the person is unsure if they should say yes to a question containing the words “serious difficulty,” ask if the condition causes serious difficulty. Example:

- **Interviewer:** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- **Respondent:** Well, my son has Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- **Interviewer:** Does that cause him serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?

See the full [Response Guide/Matrix](#) for more information about how to help people answer the disability questions.

Activated concerns

If any question causes a person to express concern about the privacy of the information, how it will be used, or how it affects their eligibility for health care, disability or other services, be reassuring.

The recommended message for all health care settings is, ***“We ask everyone about their race, ethnicity, abilities, preferred language and interpreter needs. We do so to ensure that everyone receives the highest quality of care.”***

Other support statements:

- We collect the same information from everyone.
- You can always choose to decline to answer.
- We want to provide you information in a language that best meets your needs.
- This information helps us identify and address avoidable differences in access and services.
- What you tell us is protected by law. Your responses will not negatively impact your services or ability to receive benefits in any way.
- It will be used for reporting and research purposes only. Your name, date of birth or other personal information are not used for reporting and research.

Activated emotions

If any question triggers an emotional reaction, acknowledge the person’s feelings or experiences, then refocus, explain and restate; or come back to the question later. Examples of things you might say:

- **Reflect:** “You’re really not happy that we’re asking these questions.” Or, “It doesn’t make sense to you why we’d ask these types of questions.” (and then explain)
- **Affirm:** “I think I may have asked a question you’re not comfortable with. It’s 100% your choice to answer it or not; we ask everyone the same questions.”
- **Refocus:** “I understand these questions may bring up some questions/concerns for you. I encourage you to discuss your concerns with (person who can address the concern).”
- **Shift topic:** “Let’s move on to some other questions; we can come back to this later.”

If they continue to react emotionally to the questions, you can say, “Is that your way of saying that you don’t want to answer the question? If so, I can just put that you don’t want to answer.”

More detailed example responses and answers to consider are in the full [Response Guide/Matrix](#).

Flowchart for asking REALD questions

