

Guide to Asking the REALD Questions

“We ask everyone about their race, ethnicity, disability, preferred language and interpreter needs. We do so to ensure that everyone receives the highest quality of care. Therefore, we ask about your race, ethnicity, language and disability.”

(Recommended messaging for health care settings).

Guidelines for answers to questions from participants:

- Use common sense.
- Allow people to respond and use as much of their own descriptions as possible.
- Respect their descriptions (or choices if you provide categories).
- Avoid words that may be considered confrontational.
- If a person does not want to answer these questions, move on.



What *not* to say:

- “I’m asking you these questions because the government says I have to.”
- “This will help us hire staff to better meet your needs.”
- “This will help us make sure you get the best possible care (or services).”

What to say:

- “This will help us make sure that everyone receives the highest quality of care (or services)”



Office of
Equity & Inclusion

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Office of Equity & Inclusion at 971-673-3390 or email marjorie.g.mcgee@dhsola.state.or.us. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

General questions and responses to REALD questions being asked in person

Activated concerns

How should I answer this question?

I can't tell you how to answer the question. Answer however you are most comfortable answering, or however you identify. If you are uncomfortable answering the question, you may decline to answer. If you don't know, you can choose "I Don't Know".

Activated emotions

The participant's responses indicate the person is triggered by the questions (e.g. becoming emotional). Acknowledge their feelings or experiences, then refocus on what is happening in the here and now. Also, you can shift to factual questions or take a break. Examples of things you might say:

Reflections: *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 & message: *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 question may bring up some questions/concerns for you. I encourage you to discuss your concerns with (x person depending on the type of concern mentioned).*

Shift topic: *Let's move on to some other questions and later we can come back to these questions...*



Respondent: Why are you asking me all these questions?

These questions were designed to help us identify and address disparities in social services and health. We collect the same information from everyone. You can always have the choice to decline to answer.



Respondent: How should I answer this question?

I can't tell you how to answer the question. You should answer however you are most comfortable answering or however you identify. If you are uncomfortable answering the question, you may decline to answer. If you don't know, you can to choose "I Don't Know".



Respondent: I don't know.

It's OK not to know. Do you want to choose "I Don't Know" as your response?



Respondent: It's none of your business

I understand why you might feel that way. I am required to ask each individual question. You do have opportunity to answer or decline to answer each individual question. It is important that we have the opportunity to hear from you.



Respondent: Will my answers to these questions affect my ability to get services?

Absolutely not! Your responses will not negatively impact your services or ability to receive benefits in any way. They can only help you.



Race and ethnic identity: Open-ended question, how do you identify your race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, country of origin or ancestry?



Respondent: How should I answer this question?

I can't tell you how to answer the question. Answer however you are most comfortable answering, or however you identify. If you are uncomfortable answering the question, you may decline to answer. If you don't know, you can to choose "I Don't Know".



Race and ethnic identity - format of asking these questions in person

If you are asking these questions in person - **DO NOT** read each of the 39 racial or ethnic identity category.

Say: We are going to ask you a few questions about race and ethnicity, but before we get into the specific categories – we ask everyone a general question first:

Which one or more of the following would you say is your/PERSONS's race?



Respondent: American Indian or Alaska Native

If say yes – read the subcategories associated with main group

Respondent: Indigenous Mexican, Central or South American

(note...this is read to everyone to make sure they know this category exists as an option)

Respondent: Black or African American

If say yes – read the subcategories associated with main group

Respondent: Hispanic or Latino Latina Latinx

If say yes – read the subcategories associated with main group

Respondent: Middle Eastern or North African

If yes, find out which (or both)

Respondent: Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (if say yes – read the subcategories)

If say yes – read the subcategories associated with main group

Respondent: White (if say yes – read the subcategories)

If say yes – read the subcategories associated with this main group (do not include Middle Eastern or North African)

Respondent: If say “other” race or ethnic identity

Probe and find out what the ‘other’ is



Race and ethnic identity



Respondent: Are you trying to find out if I'm a US citizen?

No. Definitely not!! Also, you should know that confidentiality of what you say is protected by law. We do not share this information with anyone.



Respondent: I was born in X (e.g. Nigeria), but I've really lived here all my life. What should I say?

That is up to you. You can use any term you want. It is fine to say that you are X (e.g. Nigerian).



Respondent: I'm American.

Would you like to use an additional term, or would you like me to just put American?



Respondent: Can't you tell by looking at me?

We find it is better to let people tell us. We don't want to assume anything about how people identify or how they want to describe themselves. If you don't identify with any of the choices, you can choose "Other" or "Decline to Answer".

Respondent: Why do you care? We're all human beings.

*Thank you, I understand that you feel that way. There is a lot of evidence that people are treated differently based on race or ethnicity. Your responses will help us make sure everyone is treated fairly. *pausing to allow individual to respond.*



Respondent: I'm human.

Yes, I can understand your feelings. Did you want to choose one of the existing categories, fill something in as Other, or decline to answer? As a reminder, you are welcome to choose multiple categories as well.





Respondent: Why do you care?

We want to make sure this doesn't happen here. So, we use this information to check and make sure that everyone gets the best care possible. If we find a problem, we fix it.



Respondent: We are all human beings.

If they continue to say, "I am human" or similar 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.



Respondent: Who looks at this information?

This 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. It will not impact your services or ability to receive benefits in any way.

Respondent: Will this keep me from getting health coverage if protections for people with pre-existing conditions go away in the future?

No. Because of privacy protections. Also, pre-existing conditions have never affected eligibility for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).



List of countries by race/ethnicity category

While ancestry or country of origin do not necessarily equal identities, see below of a list of the more unfamiliar racial/ethnic identity categories with associated countries. It is important however to let the person self-identify. For example, if someone said they are Nepali, but was unsure of which category they would identify as—you can say that “Well, South Asian includes Nepal - you can choose that category if you wish.”

Asian Indian: *Includes those who identify as from India.*

South Asian: *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan is also considered South Asian by some.*

Communities of Micronesian Region: *This includes the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae), Palau and the Marshall Islands. (Note that however Marshallese has its own category).*

Middle Eastern: *Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Afghanistan and Azerbaijan is also considered in the Middle East by some.*

North African: *Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.*

Eastern European: *Armenia, Azerbaijan, after Albania, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Romania.*

Slavic: *Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.*

Western European: *Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marina, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.*

Primary racial or ethnic identity - If you have more than one primary racial or ethnic identity



Respondent: I really can't choose.

It's okay 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 "I Don't Know"...



Respondent: Why are you asking me to choose?

We ask this question so that if you do have a primary identity we can indicate that; otherwise we will use the multiracial category.

Preferred Spoken/Written Language (age 5 and older unless you need to communicate with the young child directly)



Respondent: Why are you asking me about preferred language?

We want to provide you information in a language that best meets your needs. It is essential to fair services and is required by law that every individual be offered language assistance.



Interpreter Needs (age 5 and older unless you need to communicate with the young person directly) (ask ONLY if preferred language is NOT English and or if the person also uses SIGN language)



Respondent: I don't know

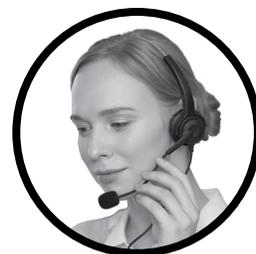
Probe - find out where the confusion is. Rephrase to see if that helps...

Check for comprehension (maybe they use the word translator instead)

Do you need a translator when speaking with us?

May need to clarify more - example: If you were to visit our office, would you want us to get an interpreter so that our communications are clear?

If yes, ask what kind of interpreter (spoken or sign)



Respondent: I don't need an interpreter but would want one

That is perfectly ok, we can arrange that for you. We want you to be completely comfortable with the process.



Respondent: I don't want to bother you (or) Will it cost me? Etc

It is important to all of us that we serve you well. There is no cost to you for an interpreter



Respondent: I decided, I don't want an interpreter.

It's OK to change your mind. Do you want to choose "I don't want to answer," as your response?

Language - English Proficiency (age 5 and older)



Respondent: Why are you asking me how well I speak English?

We ask this question to ensure everyone receives the best level of service. These questions help us identify and address inconsistencies in social services. It also helps us address inconsistencies in health services and outcomes. It is okay to choose not to answer.



Respondent: Are you trying to find out if I am a U.S. citizen?

No. Definitely not! Also, you should know that confidentiality of what you say is protected by law.

Respondent: Note; Person said no to interpreter needs but said “Not well” or “Not at all” to English proficiency:

Probe - Restate that can provide an interpreter for free when talking with us - do you want an interpreter?

General questions - functional limitations (do not use the word ‘disability’ unless the other person brings it up first)



Respondent: Why are you asking me about disability? I am not applying for disability services.

We ask everyone the same questions to assess whether or not someone has a disability. This information helps us identify and address avoidable differences in access and services.





Respondent: Why are you asking me about disability again?

These disability-related questions were designed to determine who has a disability as a demographic. These questions are broad. They are not used for eligibility purposes.



Respondent: Will my answers to these questions affect my ability to continue collecting disability benefits?

No. Your responses will have no affect on your ability, or anyone else’s ability, to qualify for disability benefits.

Respondent: Respondent mentions the word “disability” within their description of their condition.

Example: My daughter and I both have a learning disability.

Code as yes (in this example - yes for “serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.” (if age 5 and older)



Respondent: The respondent 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?*

Respondent: Response is not clear. Example: Well, my brother never takes a bath.

Ask “Is it a physical, mental or emotional condition that causes your brother difficulty with bathing?” (Refer to the specific question where the confusion arose.)





Respondent: Other respondent's characteristics is associated with the limitation. Example: My mother is old and forgets to take her medicine sometimes (this example is based on this question: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?)

Refer to the question at hand (e.g. Would you say that your mother has serious difficulty remembering?)



Are you deaf or have serious difficulty hearing? (all ages)



Respondent: Yes, when I don't pay attention...

I have a hearing loss but it's not a problem with my hearing aids.

Probe to see if the hearing aids corrects serious difficulty hearing

Example: *Even with the hearing aid, do you have serious difficulty hearing, in big meetings or noisy environment? Or*

With hearing aids can you hear well when there is a lot of background noise or when someone is speaking softly?

Respondent: Sometimes I can't hear when it's noisy...

Probe to see if this is specific to certain settings such as rock concerts...(where everyone would have the same difficulty hearing...)



Are you blind or have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses? (all ages)



Respondent: I can see well enough to do X (e.g. drive a car, read a normal sized newspaper, book or magazine).

With my glasses or contacts I don't have a problem seeing.

Code as no if they indicate they can see well with glasses or contact lens.



Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have serious difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions? (age 5+)



Respondent: Yes, when I am under a lot of stress (or high workload, or because of current substance abuse)

(they mention the word disability in response) My daughter and I both have a learning disability.

My mother is old and forgets to take her medicine sometimes. (or someone other person in the family, etc)

Refer to the question at hand (e.g. Would you say that your mother has serious difficulty remembering?)



Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? (age 5+)



Respondent: I get around fine with my wheelchair (or with my crutches, or other mobility devices)

Code as yes (Anyone who has a prosthetic body part or needs to use an assistive device such as a wheelchair or walker should respond “yes” to this question. This is regardless of how much their difficulty is eased by assistive devices.)



Do you have difficulty bathing or dressing (age 5+) (Self-care question- washing and dressing represent tasks that occur each day)



Respondent: Response is not clear.

Example: Well, my brother never takes a bath.

Ask “Is it a physical, mental or emotional condition that causes your brother difficulty with bathing?” (Refer to the question where the confusion arose.)



Respondent: “Why do you ask about difficulty dressing or bathing?”

This question helps to identify anyone who has a long-lasting condition that causes serious difficulty with performing ordinary self-care activities by yourself. Difficulty with self-care can include activities such as eating or getting around inside your home.



Respondent: I have someone help me with bathing (or dressing, brushing my teeth, or some other self-care activity)

Code as yes.

Respondent: I have a broken leg (in response to question about serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs).

These questions don't include disabilities that may be temporary, or last for only a few months.



Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping (age 15+)

For teenagers age 15+, you could substitute different wording such as: "Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have difficulty going to the mall?" (One should consider the actual errands a person typically does (as opposed to the listed activities of shopping or going to the doctor's office).



Respondent: "Why do you ask about errands or shopping?"

This question helps to determine if there is a long-lasting condition that causes serious difficulty with performing necessary tasks outside the home by yourself. The type of errands may differ such going to the mall or getting a haircut.



Respondent: I have difficulty with errands (or shopping) because I don't have a car (or access to public transportation).

This question is not to identify people who have transportation difficulties, such as the lack of a car or access to public transportation. Repeat the question. Stress that it's not about transportation.

If the person says yes to having a functional limitation ask “At what age did this condition begin?”



Respondent: Why are asking me about age?

These questions were designed to help us identify and address inconsistencies in social services and health - in this case - differences that may be due to when the condition began



Respondent: I don't know when exactly

Your best guess is fine.



Respondent: I was born with this condition

Code as 0 (zero) to indicate acquired condition at birth

Respondent: Last year

How old were you last year?



Optional Questions: Alternate Formats



Respondent: I don't know

Probe - find out where the confusion is. Rephrase to see if that helps...

Example: *We provide you with important written information. What works best for you? Do you need an accessible format such as large font, audio files, oral presentation, Braille or others not mentioned? If these are needed, they are provided at no cost to you.*



Respondent: I don't want to answer that.

You have concerns? Can I help you with those? We have found that answering this question helps us make sure you get written materials in other formats if needed.



Flowchart for asking REALD questions

