

6 Easy Steps to Get Great Returns on Your FVPSAⁱ Outcome Surveys

Step 1

Check your own attitude.



If you're feeling "no pain" about gathering survivor feedback, great! Go to step 2.

If, on the other hand, you experience some version of pain when you think about client surveys: ***no worries***.

You are in good company and for good reason. Service providers have long been burdened by demands from funders for data, data, and more data. A lot of times, the reports you generate do not do a good job of illuminating either the problem or the solution. It can feel like a big waste of everyone's time.

Well...things really *are* different with the FVPSA outcomes.

Take a deep breath and try to adopt (or at least fake) a positive attitude. Let's check in on the things about FVPSA outcomes that you can genuinely feel good about.

Such as:

- **[There are only two questions](#)**. Not 10, not 20. Just two.
- They ask questions that we are actually interested in. Survivor safety and knowledge of resources are pretty core to our work.
- And they are based on hard core, **[longitudinal research](#)**ⁱⁱ—research that proves that women who know how to plan for their safety and have a working knowledge of community resources have ***improved long-term outcomes***.

Step 2

There. Feeling betterⁱⁱⁱ? Then it's time to focus on your co-workers—the advocates who are collecting and compiling the FVPSA outcomes.

Gather your staff to check in with *them* about *their* attitudes.

Try to help everyone adopt an open mind.

Make sure they:

- have their facts straight about what data you are asking them to collect,
- know who collects the data,
- understand how often to collect, and from whom.

Step 3

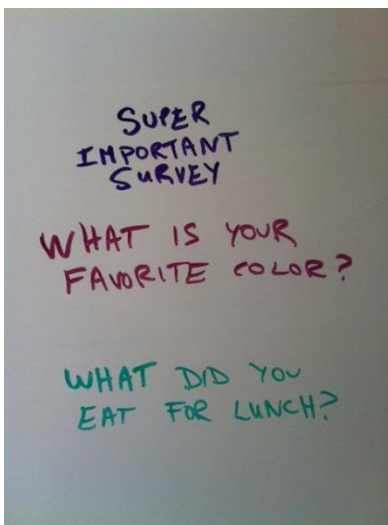
Make sure everyone understands that best practice includes:

- Never collecting data from people when they are in crisis. There are no FVPSA outcomes for crisis services because it is inappropriate to ask people in crisis to answer unnecessary questions.
- Collecting data often enough that you don't miss those people who receive short-term services, BUT not so often that it becomes a burden to survivors.

“OH NO!! Please don’t ask me to fill out the polka dotted form again!!!”




- Ideally, ask every shelter resident to fill out one (**and only one**) FVPSA survey *as they get close* to shelter exit. Not when they are packing or walking out the door. Nobody *ever* fills one out then!
- Make your form neat and approachable. And think about how many questions you ask. It’s kind of silly to hand someone a survey that only has 2 short questions. (If I got something like that I might think “this doesn’t look very important.”) On the other hand, multi-page forms can be daunting – especially for busy folks or people who struggle to read.



VS.



Will you please take a moment to fill out this short survey

- The two FVPSA questions can be folded in with other funders' questions, as well as the questions that *you* want to know the answers to, in a form that is inviting in both length and design.
- Don't ask support group members for feedback every week. *Sample* them. This means, every 3-5 weeks, pass out forms and ask people to fill them out. Mix it up. Always include the two FVPSA questions, but rotate in a few additional questions that ***you want to ask***. 
- Sample people who use your advocacy services. After a couple of contacts with an advocate, a survivor is actually in a position to judge how helpful the service was. And as with the support group surveys, mix it up a bit. Always ask the two FVPSA questions, but rotate in other questions you'd like to ask for your own planning or evaluation purposes.

Step 4

Revisit your process for tabulating survey results.

Is what you are doing the most efficient way to do this? Gab with other programs to find out how they do it. Maybe someone else has a better idea that you just haven't thought of.

Step 5

Revisit your process for letting all staff know the results of your surveys.

Who in their right mind can get excited about gathering data that never sees the light of day? If your staff never hears back about what survivors say, they have no reason to care about collecting the information.

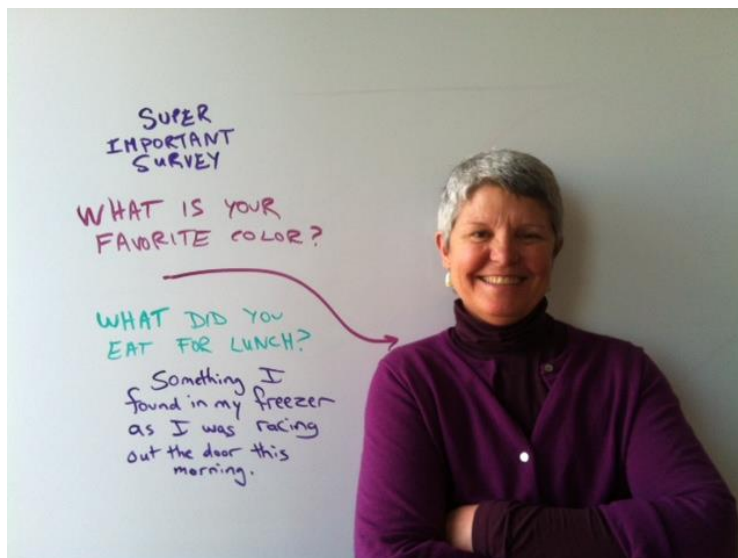
Find ways to report, *celebrate*, problem solve, change things up, learn, and grow.

Step 6

Report your FVPSA outcomes – once per year – in InfoNet.

Look at your data. Are you satisfied with the return rates? Are you satisfied with the percentage of “yes” responses? How do you plan to feed this information back to staff?

Need a cheerleader or some problem solving?
Give me a call **360-586-1022 ext. 303** or email Tyra@wscadv.org



ⁱ FVPSA Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (the federal funds that come through DSHS for DV services)

ⁱⁱ <http://www.dvevidenceproject.org/focus-areas/services-to-victims/research-summary-advocacy-introduction/>

ⁱⁱⁱ If not, call me.