Your Experience of Service (YES) Survey

Implementation Guidelines

These guidelines acknowledge the multiple queries which may emerge as organisations consider the process to implement the YES survey. Further, they have been written to offer providers points for consideration, and guidance, to support the successful implementation of the survey.

1. Approach to sampling consumers

Providers are advised to offer the survey to all consumers routinely or at the regular intervals as agreed with the PHN. This approach has been selected to maintain a process of consistency across multiple providers.

2. When should they survey be offered?

Given the varying lengths of time to service provision in community settings, organisations are advised to offer the survey to consumers either at discharge or after receiving services for a period of 3 months, whichever occurs first. Following this protocol is needed to maintain consistency of process across organisations.

3. How should consumers be invited to complete the survey?

Response rate is known to be particularly improved by the extent to which consumers feel the organisation values their feedback. More impersonal methods such as a mail out approach or leaving forms on a front desk counter have been shown to yield low response rates. A more personalised approach where the service provider offers the survey to the consumer during face-to-face contact, and has the opportunity to explain the requirements and address any concerns raised is strongly recommended, and is also known to have a positive influence on the response rate.

During the process of offering the survey, the organisational representative should ensure the following:

- Provision of the Consumer Information Sheet
- Emphasise the voluntary nature of the survey
- Maintain a willingness to answer any questions and indicate the value placed by the organisation in receiving responses to the survey.
- Assure consumers that the confidentiality of responses will be maintained. This will be attained by emphasising to consumers that completion of the survey is on an anonymous basis; and that any staff involved in their care will NOT be able to review their individual responses to the survey.
4. What should be said to consumers?

Organisations may prepare a standard set of words which staff can use when offering the survey to consumers. An example is provided below:

“I’d like to invite you to complete a survey that asks your views about the quality of the services and care provided by this organisation. Your feedback will be highly valued.

Your Experience of Service is a new survey that has been developed with lots of input from mental health consumers. It is about your experiences of care in this service. By completing the survey you can provide feedback on what’s been good and what’s not been so good about your experience. Your experiences are important. The information obtained from the survey will be used to help us work together to improve services.

It’s voluntary and completely confidential. No one, including staff at this service, will know whether or not you completed the survey. They will only get overall results based on all the responses to the survey. The service will only get the survey results so that they can improve this service based on your feedback.

This form explains a bit more about the survey [give information sheet]. You can keep this, and take some time to read it now or take it with you to read later if you like. It includes more information about why we’re doing the survey, and has some contact numbers if you want to ask questions later on”.

If the consumer agrees to complete the survey, then clearly explain to the person what they should do with their completed survey, if completing the paper based form. Alternatively provide information to access and complete the survey online.

5. Can assistance be provided?

While assistance can be provided to consumers to complete the survey, certain limitations apply.

- Limited to reading out the questions, explaining unfamiliar words to consumers and/or writing responses.
- None of the questions should be rephrased.
- The surveyor should not influence the answers on provided by the consumer.
- Where such assistance is required, if possible, it is recommended that the staff member involved, should be someone who has not been involved in the direct care of the patient.

6. Should some consumers be excluded?

While organisations are urged to offer the survey to all consumers at the proposed timelines within the cycle of care, care should always be exercised to not cause
distress to the consumer. A small number of circumstances have been identified in previous work where offering the survey may be counterproductive. These are:

- Consumers who are too distressed or unwell at the time the survey would be offered.
- Consumers who are too cognitively impaired to be able to complete the survey.

Judgement will need to be exercised by those offering the survey to consumers to determine whether either of these circumstances applies.

7. Is formal consent required?

Completion of the survey represents the granting of implicit consent by the consumer for the organisation to use the information being provided. As the YES survey in this instance is being used for the purposes of internal quality assurance and service improvement rather than research, the formal consent requirements stipulated in the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines for human research are not required.

8. Mode of administration

The survey has been designed as an instrument to be visually presented to consumers. This mode allows consumers to see their options and record their responses. The survey can be offered by paper based forms or via electronic means (i.e. completion online which will require access to an internet connection for 5-10 minutes).

If the consumer selects to complete a paper based form, the completed survey should be placed in the reply paid envelope provided, and handed back to the organisational representative or posted.

The YES survey does not need to be printed in colour, unless you wish to do so. If a large batch of printed surveys and reply paid envelopes is required, these can be provided by SEMPHN upon request.

9. Maximising response rate

Response rate is the term used to describe the relative number of completed surveys received as a proportion of those that were expected to have been offered. This information is critical to interpreting how representative the results are when comparing to the performance of similar organisations. Some suggestions to increase the response rate follows:

- coordinate and monitor the progress of the survey internally
- inclusion of consumer peer workers (where available) and other organisational staff in the process of administration to promote ownership.
- establish an organisation wide process to promote the survey through staff briefings.
- utilisation of a brochure and promotional material to raise awareness of the survey and its aims
- ensure the survey is made available to all consumers in paper based form or via information containing the link to the online survey.

10. Managing risk

At times, consumers may use the survey as a mode to raise significant issues that have legal or safety implications. Each organisation should establish appropriate governance arrangements to manage such occurrences. The consumer information sheet should emphasise that the survey is not for lodging complaints or raising allegations. It should ensure consumers are alerted to the existing complaint management mechanisms in place.