

Data Collection Tip Sheet

Aging by Design is a multi-year initiative by the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to see what is possible when we create solutions with vulnerable older adults and caregivers rather than for them.

Thank you for helping in the collection of data—it is an important part of the design process.

Who should fill these out?

We are looking to understand the experiences of vulnerable older adults and their caregivers. Vulnerable older adults are people age 60 or older that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- are at greater risk for one of more [triggers of decline](#) (e.g. events that precipitate a decline in physical, cognitive, or mental health for otherwise healthy older adults living in the community)
- are living in poverty;
- are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

Caregivers are people of any age caring for vulnerable older adults.

How can I help them do it?

Initially we are using two tools to collect data from vulnerable older adults and caregivers: Empathy Mapping and Postcards.

- These tools are intentionally open-ended and allow participants to tell us about their lives without constraints. As long as you're talking to a vulnerable older adult or a caregiver for a vulnerable older adult, there are no wrong answers.
- Ideally you will have a conversation with someone to complete an Empathy Map or a Postcard. If that's not possible, participants can also fill them out on their own.
- If you're working with someone to complete an Empathy Map or Postcard, think of these tools as an interview guide, with you asking questions and recording their answers (as verbatim as possible) directly on the worksheets.
- For some, the font size might be difficult to read. If they'd like to answer privately, the interviewer can offer to read the questions for them while they write their responses.

- If they tire or decide they are done, thank them and reassure them that their time is valuable. Please send us all worksheets and postcards with complete or incomplete responses as all input is important to us.

Empathy Map Tips

Our goal with Empathy Maps is to gain insights into the respondent's experiences, joys and/or struggles.

- Start on the front of the sheet (with the image of a head with lines coming out of it) and move from left to right. Then, move to the back of the sheet.
- Their 'biggest challenge' can be any event or task in which they struggle (small struggles can add up into big challenges).
- If you are interviewing, try to write as much of the participant's actual words as possible.

Postcard Tips

Our goal with Postcards is to gain insights into the respondent's life in an open-ended way. The question is intentionally vague to provoke individual experiences and freedom to answer the way they see fit. There is no wrong answer.

- Please start on the left side of the postcard (with the prompt 'If you really knew me...') as this builds trust before launching into demographic information.
- Their 'biggest challenge' can be any event or task in which they struggle (small struggles can add up into big challenges).
- If you are interviewing, try to write as much of the participant's actual words as possible.

Remember, there are no wrong answers!