Diversity Report Summary:

Tips for Collecting Demographic Data

December 2022

In recent years, there has been a growing need and desire for organizations to prioritize diversity and inclusion[1]. An increasingly common strategy to advance diversity, equity and inclusion efforts – within and beyond sport – is through data collection. In a 2022 viaSport sector survey, when asked what types of data collection would be helpful to them, the majority of sport organizations identified demographic data related to under-represented groups[2]. This demonstrates the B.C. sport sector's desire to use data collection to support their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies. Drawing on resources from the sport sector, business, government, healthcare, and consulting firms, this toolkit offers tips for sport organizations to inform demographic data collection among the organization's membership. The tips included in this toolkit focus on respectful data collection and appropriate language, designed for basic demographic data collection. For data collection associated with broad DEI initiatives or program design, we recommend reviewing the Tracking Diversity in the B.C Sport Sector report.

What is Demographic Data?

The process of collecting demographic information is referred to as disaggregated data collection. Disaggregated data is defined as ''data that is separated into subcategories of information (e.g., First Nations, Metis Nation, Inuit, Black, etc.) from more general categories (e.g., race, ethnicity)''[3]. This type of data collection is often used to identify an individual's gender identity, racial or ethnic identity, and/or sexual orientation, to name a few. Collecting demographic data can help an organization to identify where gaps exist in diversity efforts and where to focus their diversity and inclusion strategies.

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Tips for Collecting Disaggregated Demographic Data

1. Ensure that the demographic information being gathered is necessary and appropriate. When deciding what type of data to collect, consider how each selected question might impact members of the community[3,4].

2. Be intentional and specific in the language surrounding the organization's selected questions[5,6]. Use the following guidelines when developing questions related to demographic data:

    a. Wherever possible, provide participants with the option to self-identify when asking identity-related questions such as gender and racial identity[6,7,8,9].

    b. When asking participants to disclose sex or gender , ensure that you understand the difference and choose based on need for the information. Standards for gender classifications as used by the Province of British Columbia are outlined below[10].

Table 1   Standards for Gender Classification

Classification	Marker	Description
Man/Boy	M	Cisgender and transgender persons who self-identify as man or boy.
Non-Binary person	X	Persons who self-identify as non-binary (i.e., not exclusively man or woman), this includes but is not limited to Two Spirit, agender, gender fluid as examples.
Woman/Girl	W/F*	Cisgender and transgender persons who self-identify as a woman or girl.
Prefer not to answer / Unknown	U	Persons whose gender is not known at the time of data collection because the person: • prefers not to answer • is unable to answer • is unsure • data is missing

*The "F" marker may be needed to accommodate legacy system integration but, when possible, should be replaced by "W".

    c. Avoid using 'other' as an option. This can be very harmful to gender diverse individuals as it is literally 'othering' them and it does not provide specific information to the organization. Provide a space to self-identify and/or the choice to not answer[17]

    d. If data collection requires that the participant provide their legal name, include a box for preferred name for any participants who do not go by their legal name.

    e. Be careful not to conflate distinct identity categories. Identity factors that should be considered separately but are often mistaken as interchangeable are race and ethnicity, and gender identity and sexual orientation. When collecting this demographic information, make sure to ask about these identity factors separately.

    f. The following figures provide best practice examples of collecting demographic data related to race and Indigeneity[2]. These standards were developed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information and can act as a starting point for organizations to collect this type of data.

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g.   The following figures provide best practice examples of collecting demographic data related to race and Indigeneity[2]. These standards were developed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information and can act as a starting point for organizations to collect this type of data.

Race-based data standard

Table 2   Race-based data standard

Question: In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. These are not based in science, but our race may influence the way we are treated by individuals and institutions, and this may affect our health. Which category(ies) best describes you? Check all that apply:†

Response category	Examples
Black	African, African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean descent
East Asian	Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent
Indigenous (First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis)‡	First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis descent
Latin American	Hispanic or Latin American descent
Middle Eastern	Arab, Persian, West Asian descent (e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Kurdish, Lebanese, Turkish)
South Asian	South Asian descent (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
Southeast Asian	Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, or other Southeast Asian descent
White	European descent
Another race category Optional — please specify: [open text]	Includes values not described above
Do not know	Not applicable
Prefer not to answer	Not applicable

Notes
* The collection of race-based and Indigenous data should involve community engagement to mitigate the risk of harm to individuals and communities, and to ensure the safe and appropriate use of the data.
† Individuals who identify as mixed race can select all categories that apply.
‡ Distinctions-based approaches — that is, separately identifying First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples — may be preferred.
Sources
Government of Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.
Updated November 2021.
Upstream Lab. Screening for poverty and related social determinants and intervening to improve knowledge of and links to resources (SPARK) study. Accessed January 27, 2020.

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Indigenous identity data standard

Table 3 Indigenous identity question and responses*

Question: Do you identify as First Nations, Inuk/Inuit and/or Métis?

Response categories (select all that apply)
Yes, First Nations
Yes, Inuk/Inuit
Yes, Métis
No
Do not know
Prefer not to answer

Notes
The implementation of the Indigenous identity data standard should include data governance agreements, engagement with Indigenous groups, and processes related to culturally safe and appropriate data collection.

3.   It is the organization's responsibility to ensure systems are in place to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality[8,9]. All individuals who take part in data collection activities should have confidence that their data will remain confidential and that they will not be identifiable in any results shared back to the community.

4.   Organizations should schedule regular and consistent data collection to measure the organization's progress and change over time6[6,11].

[1] Sex and gender are separate but related concepts. Sex refers to an individual's biological (physical and physiological) features. Sex is usually categorized as male or female, although the variation in an individual's biological attributes does not always fit within these two categories. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, expressions and identities attributed to girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse individuals. Gender expression and identity can be fluid and is not confined to the binary of girl/woman or boy/man. For a full description of these concepts, see the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

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5. When collecting demographic data, clearly communicate the purpose of the specific data being collected and what the organization will do with it[8,9,12]. Consider addressing the following questions:

   a. Why is the organization asking about this?

   b. How will data be used?

   c. Where will it be stored?

   d. Who will have access?

6. Use plain language when developing questions. This provides clarity to the participant and ensures that they understand the questions being asked[3].

7. Clearly indicate if and when questions are optional. When it comes to collecting disaggregated demographic data, it is best practice to make these questions optional by including 'prefer not to say' as one of the options[3,7].

Endnotes

[1] Stacia Sherman Garr, Karen Shellenback, and Jackie Scales, "Diversity and Inclusion in Canada: The Current State," Bersin by Deloitte, August 2014. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/human-capital/ca-en-human-capital-diversity-and-Inclusion-in-canada.pdf

[2] "Sector Impact Survey", viaSport British Columbia, Summer 2022.

[3] "Race-Based (Disaggregated) Data Collection Guidelines," Anti-Racism in Sport. https://antiracisminsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Disaggregated-Demographic-Data-Collection.pdf

[4] "Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport: Guidance for Sport Organizations," Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2018. https://cces.ca/sites/default/files/content/docs/pdf/cces-transinclusionpolicyguidance-e.pdf

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[5] "Gender Data Limitation of M / F: How to Address them with Five Steps," TransFocus Consulting Inc. https://www.transfocus.ca/blog/gender-data-limitations-of-m-f-how-to-address-them-with-five-steps [6] Deanna Matzanke and Sheena Prasad, "How & Why to Measure Diversity & Inclusion," Webinar from CCDI Consulting, October 25, 2022. https://idea.ccdiconsulting.ca/en-ca/diversity-meter?utm_campaign=Diversity%20Meter&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=231641716&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--Pt5CSi8PIbNgdGmrgzUGHUwPpPG2ragu-5Hr51VE3AFSXcVNy427vtSpUQUKkvZnSc7-U8yfB45cuBFlsJn_vxr7jxw&utm_content=231641716&utm_source=hs_email

[7] "Do Ask, Do Tell," Stonewall UK, 2016. https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/do_ask_do_tell_guide_2016.pdf

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[9] "Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport: Guidance for Sport Organizations," Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2018. https://cces.ca/sites/default/files/content/docs/pdf/cces-transinclusionpolicyguidance-e.pdf

[10] "Gender and Sex Data Standard," Province of British Columbia, 2023. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/services-for-government-and-broader-public-sector/information-technology-services/standards-files/312_gender_and_sex_data_standard.pdf

[11] "Gender Data Limitations of M / F: What are the Common Pitfalls to Avoid?" TransFocus Consulting Inc. https://www.transfocus.ca/blog/gender-data-limitations-of-m-f-what-are-the-common-pitfalls-to-avoid

[12] "Final Report of the Task Force on Race and Indigeneity," University of Toronto, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, December 4, 2018. https://kpe.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/kpe_task_force_on_race_and_indigeneity_-_final_report.pdf

[13] Bryan Heal, Marika Warner, and Jackie Robinson, "Data for Change: Embracing Demographics to Advance Equity in Sport," Sport Information Resource Centre, April 22, 2022. https://sirc.ca/blog/embracing-demographics-to-advance-equity-in-sport/

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