




➤ Safety Climate Survey

Organizations working to develop or improve a culture of safety need a reliable measure to monitor the success of their initiatives. Using this survey tool, an organization can gain information about the perceptions of front-line clinical staff about safety in their clinical area and management's commitment to safety. The survey also provides information about how perceptions vary across different departments and disciplines. As the team tests and implements changes to improve the culture, such as Safety Briefings and Patient Safety Leadership WalkRounds™, it can repeat this survey periodically to assess the impact of those changes.

This tool contains:

-  Overview
-  Instructions
-  Survey Form

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Safety Climate Survey

Overview

Organizations working to develop or improve a culture of safety need a reliable measure to monitor the success of their initiatives. Using the Safety Climate Survey, an organization can gain information about the perceptions of front-line clinical staff about safety in their clinical area and management's commitment to safety. The survey also provides information about how perceptions vary across different departments and disciplines. As the team tests and implements changes to improve the culture, it can repeat this survey periodically to assess the impact of those changes.

A group of researchers led by Bryan Sexton and Robert Helmreich at the University of Texas developed this survey tool. It has been well tested by many hospitals in several countries, in both the United States and Europe. Organizations using this tool successfully first collect a baseline measurement and then re-survey periodically (semi-annually or annually) to assess the impact of changes they are making. Improvement in staff perceptions of the safety climate has been linked to decreases in actual errors, patient length of stay, and employee turnover.

Safety Climate Survey

Instructions

Step 1: Select Units for Survey

When first using the Safety Climate Survey, you may want to survey the staff on just one or two pilot units, rather than the entire organization. This will help you learn how to use the survey, interpret the results, and test changes on a small scale first to see if they result in an improvement. Select pilot units that are already testing changes to improve patient safety, and measure the safety climate there over time to assess the impact of the changes.

Step 2: Identify Staff to Participate in the Survey

The safety climate in a patient care unit is affected by and experienced by everyone who works on that unit. This includes employees from various disciplines who may be frequently assigned to that unit, such as pharmacists, respiratory therapists, and dieticians. It also includes physicians who frequently care for patients on that unit, whether they are employees, members of a voluntary medical staff, or participants in teaching programs. All individuals who regularly work on or are assigned to the patient care unit should be included in the survey.

Here are some general guidelines for determining which staff members to include:

- Select staff members who regularly work at least 20 hours per week on that unit. Do not include staff members who work there only occasionally.
- Select staff members from other departments who are assigned either primarily to that unit or who are assigned there at least three days per week.
- Select physicians who treat, on average, at least three patients per week on the unit. If there are many physicians in this category, as may be the case on large units, consider including the 10 or 20 physicians who treat the most patients on the unit.
- Make sure all survey participants (staff and physicians) have worked in the unit for at least six weeks.

Step 3: Number and Track the Surveys

- Print one survey form for each person to be surveyed. Preserving anonymity is essential with surveys, but it is helpful to number and group the surveys in order to compare responses between disciplines. Here are some suggestions for numbering the surveys:

Develop a numbering system so you can track the results. You may want your tracking number to incorporate the month and year of the survey, which will be helpful in keeping data organized if you conduct the survey multiple times.
- Don't use codes that obviously identify the units or disciplines (e.g., "RN100" or "MD310"), as people may fear being identified.

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Example of numbering surveys:

ABC Hospital is conducting a safety climate survey on one patient care unit.

Using the criteria described in Step 2 above, the hospital determined that the unit required 120 surveys. The hospital is conducting the survey in January 2003, so the surveys are numbered sequentially as 0103-001 through 0103-120. The ranges of the surveys are as follows:

0103-001 through 0103-050	Nurses
0103-051 through 0103-065	Physicians
0103-066 through 0103-070	Pharmacists
0103-071 through 0103-075	Respiratory Therapists
0103-076 through 0103-080	Dieticians
0103-081 through 0103-090	Case Managers and Social Workers
0103-091 through 0103-115	Unit Clerks and Nursing Aides
0103-116 through 0103-120	Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapists

If you use a numbering system with ranges like the ones above, don't write down anywhere which survey number corresponds with each staff member. That would eliminate anonymity and risk compromising the results. Just be sure to give each participant a survey from the range that corresponds to his or her job.

Step 4: Track Response Rates

A good response rate is essential for meaningful results. It is recommended that you have a response rate of at least 65 percent before analyzing and using the results. If you use a numbering system with ranges, you can see which disciplines have returned surveys. Explaining the survey's purpose and analysis methods before you distribute the surveys may help you achieve a high response rate.

Use the ranges from the numbering system to keep track of how many people in each job category return a survey. This will help ensure that the same numbers of people are re-surveyed in each category in the future (and will help you compensate for respondent attrition as people leave the organization). For example, if 12 physicians and three pharmacists respond to the first survey, you will want to get roughly the same number of responses from each in future surveys.

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Step 5: Calculate Results

You can calculate the Overall Mean, Safety Climate Mean, Safety Climate Score, and Percent of Respondents Reporting a Positive Safety Climate by following these steps:

Assign a numeric value to the response to each question (except for #18) as follows:

DISAGREE STRONGLY	= 1
DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	= 2
NEUTRAL	= 3
AGREE SLIGHTLY	= 4
AGREE STRONGLY	= 5
NOT APPLICABLE	No Score
No Response	No Score

Reverse the scoring for Question #18 only, due to the wording of the question, as follows:

DISAGREE STRONGLY	= 5
DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	= 4
NEUTRAL	= 3
AGREE SLIGHTLY	= 2
AGREE STRONGLY	= 1
NOT APPLICABLE	No Score
No Response	No Score

To calculate the Overall Mean:

1. Add the scores from each question answered.
2. Divide the total by the number of questions answered. If any questions were answered as "Not Applicable" or were left blank, do not count them in the denominator.
3. The result is the Overall Mean for that individual respondent and will be between 1 and 5.
4. Add the Overall Means from all surveys returned and divide by the number of respondents. This provides the Overall Mean for the group, which will also be between 1 and 5.

To calculate the Safety Climate Mean:

5. Add the numbers *only* from the following questions, if answered: Questions 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 18.
6. Divide the total by the number of these questions answered. If any of them were answered as "Not Applicable" or were left blank, do not count them in the denominator.
7. The result is the Safety Climate Mean for that individual respondent and will be between 1 and 5.

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8. Add the Safety Climate Means from all surveys returned and divide by the number of respondents (exclude any respondents who did not answer all seven of these questions). This provides the Safety Climate Mean for the group, which will also be between 1 and 5.

To calculate the Safety Climate Scores:

9. Subtract 1 from the Safety Climate Mean on an individual survey.
10. Multiply the result by 25 to convert to a 100-point scale.
11. The result is the Safety Climate Score for that respondent, which will be between 1 and 100.
12. Calculate Safety Climate Scores for the rest of the surveys.

To calculate the Percent of Respondents Reporting a Positive Safety Climate:

13. Count the number of respondents with a Safety Climate Score of 75 or greater.
14. Divide by the total number of respondents.
15. The result is the Percent of Respondents Reporting a Positive Safety Climate.

Step 6: Monitor the Results Over Time

The two results that should be tracked over time are the Safety Climate Mean of all respondents, step (d) above, and the Percent of Respondents Reporting a Positive Safety Climate, step (f) above. The mean scores for individual questions can help you analyze the areas of your organization that need improvement. It may also be helpful to compare results across disciplines or from different units.

Step 7: Conduct Repeat Surveys

Remember that changing the climate of an organization takes a long time. Do not re-survey too frequently. Results don't change quickly. Moreover, if staff members are surveyed too often, they will become desensitized to the process and the results will be affected. A good plan might be to obtain a baseline safety climate measure, and then conduct follow-up surveys at 6 months and 12 months.

Date: _____

Survey Number: _____

Safety Climate Survey

Please answer the following items with respect to your specific unit or clinical area. Choose your responses using the scale below:

	A	B	C	D	E	X
	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Slightly	Neutral	Agree Slightly	Agree Strongly	Not Applicable
1. The culture of this clinical area makes it easy to learn from the mistakes of others.						
2. Medical errors are handled appropriately in this clinical area.						
3. The senior leaders in my hospital listen to me and care about my concerns.						
4. The physician and nurse leaders in my areas listen to me and care about my concerns.						
5. Leadership is driving us to be a safety-centered institution.						
6. My suggestions about safety would be acted upon if I expressed them to management.						
7. Management/leadership does not knowingly compromise safety concerns for productivity.						
8. I am encouraged by my colleagues to report any safety concerns I may have.						
9. I know the proper channels to direct questions regarding patient safety.						
10. I receive appropriate feedback about my performance.						
11. I would feel safe being treated here as a patient.						
12. Briefing personnel before the start of a shift (i.e., to plan for possible contingencies) is an important part of safety.						
13. Briefings are common here.						
14. I am satisfied with the availability of clinical leadership (please respond to all three):						
Physician						
Nursing						
Pharmacy						
15. This institution is doing more for patient safety now, than it did one year ago.						
16. I believe that most adverse events occur as a result of multiple system failures, and are not attributable to one individual's actions.						
17. The personnel in this clinical area take responsibility for patient safety.						
18. Personnel frequently disregard rules or guidelines that are established for this clinical area.						
19. Patient safety is constantly reinforced as the priority in this clinical area.						

Have you ever completed this survey before?

- Yes No Don't Know

Experience in Position:

- < 6 months 6 to 11 months 1 to 2 yrs 3 to 7 yrs
 8 to 12 yrs 13 to 20 yrs 21 yrs or over

Job Position: (mark only one)

- Attending/Staff Physician
 Physician in Training
 Pharmacist
 Technician (e.g., EKG, Lab, Radiology)
 Staff Nurse
 Nurse Manager/Charge Nurse
 Respiratory Therapist
 Physical, Occupational, or Speech Therapist
 Dietician
 Support Associate
 Administrator
 Other

Experience in Specialty:

- < 6 months 6 to 11 months 1 to 2 yrs 3 to 7 yrs
 8 to 12 yrs 13 to 20 yrs 21 yrs or over

Experience in Organization:

- < 6 months 6 to 11 months 1 to 2 yrs 3 to 7 yrs
 8 to 12 yrs 13 to 20 yrs 21 yrs or over

Age:

- < 30 30 to 34 35 to 39 40 to 44 45 or over

Unit (please write in title and/or location): _____

Thank you for completing the survey. Your time and participation are greatly appreciated.