SAFE SPACES

Toolkit 2

Community Safety Surveys

Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on a disciplined social and cultural order that has sustained 60,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the significant disruptions to social and cultural order and the ongoing hurt caused by colonisation.

The Safe Spaces team acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our universities are located and where we conduct our research. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. We acknowledge the ongoing effects of colonisation on Indigenous and First Nations people in Australia and elsewhere and the harmful ways research has further marginalised people who had their lands, their families and their lives stolen. We commit to being better researchers and allies to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This toolkit is one of three designed by the Safe Spaces team to assist local councils and related organisations in understanding safety and inclusion for women in public places.

What is included in each toolkit?

- A **blueprint** with general principles to bear in mind when engaging with diverse groups of women.
- **A set of practices** to support local councils and stakeholders in collecting useful data about women's experiences in public places.

These three toolkits represent the outputs from the *Safe Spaces: Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women* report developed for the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Welcoming Cities, local councils, community members and related organisations.

'Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women' is a collaboration between Monash University, Griffith University, University of Sydney, Wyndham City Council, Melton City Council, Monash City Council and Welcoming Cities.

RESEARCH LEAD
Professor Rebecca Wickes
CO-DESIGN LEAD
Associate Professor Nicole Kalms
CHIEF INVESTIGATORS
Dr Charishma Ratnam, Professor Murray Lee, Dr Gill Matthewson and Professor Silke Meyer
PROJECT MANAGER
Rebecca Powell
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Isabella Webb

PROJECT PARTNERS
Aleem Ali and Bel Schenk from Welcoming Australia
Rayna Berg and Elizabeth Johnston from Melton City Council
Colin Bostock, Tracey Egan and Fee Harrison from City of Monash
Holly Claridge, Clifford Eberley, Paula Hearnden, Cheree Hunter and Lexi King from Wyndham City Council

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
Rebbecca Grime from Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victorian Government
Chelsea Waylen and Isabella Webb from Monash University XYXLab
Prabhapriya Boogoda Arachchige, Lindsey Desmons, Claire Moran, Danielle Taylor, Rose Unal Wynn and Nuri Veronika from Monash University Faculty of Arts

DEDICATION
The Safe Spaces team dedicates this research and the resultant toolkits to the women from Wyndham, Melton and Monash communities who participated in this project. Over the course of this project, the Safe Spaces team engaged and collaborated with nearly 200 women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with a range of abilities. This project has only been possible thanks to their generosity, intelligence, curiosity and time.

Contents

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A1 Key definitions

CO-DESIGN

Co-design brings together diverse participants using design principles and practices to solve real-world problems. It is a mode for shared decision-making and actively involves various stakeholders. The objective is not solely to achieve an outcome, but also to build meaningful collaboration into the design process and between participants. Co-design ideally engages a range of people – including those with 'lived experience' of the issues – to explore and test possible solutions. As a participatory process it is a form of community engagement that can be used for a range of disciplines, including policy development, planning practice and design more broadly.

INCLUSION

In the context of this toolkit, inclusion refers to the feeling of belonging to a community and/or place and the ability to participate fully in social life free from discrimination or disadvantage.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to how different aspects of a person's identity can result in overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Social identities that might contribute to intersectionality can include Indigeneity, ethnicity, race, sex, sexuality, gender identity, parent or carer status, disability, mental health, religion, migrant and/or refugee status and experience, age, socioeconomic status and background, cultural background, educational background and community background. It is important to note that some intersectional criteria change over time, meaning that a woman's identity, needs and priorities may change across her life course.

PUBLIC PLACES

Public places are those that community members can access without payment or membership. Examples of public places include green spaces, walking/cycling trails, local parks, libraries, community centres and the areas adjacent to public transport hubs.

SAFETY

We refer to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of safety as 'the state of being protected from or guarded against hurt or injury; freedom from danger'.[1] However, safety means different things to different people, and it will likely vary across places and time. Women's safety is place-based and subjective. The social and behavioural elements of places and spaces cannot be separated from the built environment.

WOMEN

This project has undertaken research with women in all their diversity. Women are not a homogenous group and differ in terms of their cultural background, socioeconomic status, sexuality, disability and age and where they live. Work in communities is about gender-diverse people too. The Research Team encourages communities to work with a wide range of women and across the breadth of gender in their communities.

1 OED Online, 2023.

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Introduction

Communal public places, such as parks, nature reserves and community hubs, are important spaces for developing social networks. They can support social inclusion and create a sense of belonging for local residents. Equally, they can generate feelings of social exclusion and concerns about safety.

Background

Public places differ in their capacity to offer and support safety and inclusion. For example, a park in one neighbourhood may not evoke the same feelings of safety as a park located elsewhere. Moreover, different users of the same park might experience it as 'safe' or 'unsafe'. Adding to this dynamic, impressions of safety may change as day turns to night. Parks can function as a crime generator, a crime attractor or a crime detractor at different times of the day.[2]

We know that some groups do not feel safe in their community and actively avoid some public places out of concern for their safety or the safety of their families. This is particularly true for women, especially women from non-English-speaking backgrounds.[3]

Understanding the specific physical and social elements of public places that lead to feelings of concern and exclusion (including self-exclusion) is foundational to developing strategies that support inclusion and safety for women.

2 Corcoran et al., 2021.
3 Fanghanel, 2015; Neal et al., 2015; Rishbeth et al., 2019; Nagaraj Naik, 2020.

Aims

The Safe Spaces project was developed to build local council capability to better understand why some public places are viewed as 'unsafe' and to provide local councils and other community-focused organisations with engagement strategies to connect with women and ultimately improve women's perceptions of safety in public places. The project involved collaborations with women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with a range of abilities living in the Melton, Monash and Wyndham Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The project worked with known problems faced by each of the councils. **This baseline knowledge of crime and safety in the three council areas underpinned the Project Team's approach to:**

- identifying women's awareness of both the problems in public places and approaches needed to address them
- understanding women's experiences in and around these places and the specific physical and social cues that are present, or absent, in public places that lead women to feel unsafe
- examining different strategies to improve safety in public places that emerge through a co-design process.

Methodology

The Project Team developed a multi-pronged research design that involved a series of engagements with women from the community, local council staff, Welcoming Cities staff and crime prevention experts from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. All those involved in the project participated in the co-design workshop, which developed a shared understanding of safety and inclusion issues and their possible solutions.

The evidence accumulated from the research activities reveals why some public places are seen as 'unsafe' or not inclusive. It provides critical insights that can be harnessed by local councils to engage women to improve safety and inclusion in public places. These insights also allow for strengthened partnerships within and across local councils and the development of socially and culturally relevant strategies that target safety and inclusion for diverse groups of women.

A3

Engaging safety and inclusion in public places for women: A blueprint for local councils

In this section, we provide a blueprint for local councils and other organisations to enhance engagement with women regarding their safety and inclusion in public places. It draws from the Safe Spaces project and the wider literature. The blueprint provides core principles to keep in mind when engaging women and assists in identifying the core goals that underpin the project/engagement.

This blueprint is the precursor to all three engagement toolkits developed through the Safe Spaces project. Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion in public places for women requires a gender-sensitive approach that includes partnerships within and across local councils, state governments and other relevant organisations. Most importantly, it requires partnerships with women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with diverse abilities and sexual and gender identities because women are not a homogenous group. Enhancing safety and inclusion in public places is therefore dependent on approaches that acknowledge the differences between women and other users of public places. It requires an ongoing process of engagement, monitoring and development.

Respectful engagement

The people in our cities are diverse, but those who control the public spaces and places of the city have typically been men. Consequently, women predominantly live and work in environments built and made by men that cater to men's needs, wants and interests. When public space planning does not account for gender, as Caroline Criado Perez states, public spaces 'become male spaces by default'.[4] Unsurprisingly, women from all walks of life share similar experiences of harassment in public places. Yet women are not always at the table to design the strategies needed to enhance their safety and inclusion.

Women have diverse histories, resulting in different experiences and needs relating to engagement on issues of safety and inclusion.

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT REQUIRES:

1. An approach that is sensitive to women's:

AGE **SEXUALITY** **GENDER IDENTITY** **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**
PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE ABILITIES **LITERACY** **CHILD/FAMILY CARE NEEDS**
CULTURAL NEEDS

2. An awareness of access requirements including

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY **SAFE CAR PARKING OPTIONS**
ACCESS FOR MOBILITY AIDS **AMENITIES FOR WOMEN** EG TOILETS, PARENTS' ROOMS AND PRAYER SPACES

3. Facilitators who

ARE TRAINED TO ENGAGE WITH WOMEN FROM A RANGE OF BACKGROUNDS
UNDERSTAND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC PLACES
ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE MATERIALS/CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A MANNER THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

4 Criado Perez, 2019.

Understanding the purpose of the engagement

Knowing when and how to engage women in the community is the first step to improving their perceptions of safety and inclusion. Local councils must first understand where and why women feel unsafe and excluded to enhance safety and inclusion in public places. This requires gathering information from various sources. Depending on the availability of time and resources and the type of information needed, there are different approaches that can be used.

APPROACH	WHAT IT REVEALS	WHAT IT DOES NOT REVEAL
Environmental Scan **What it involves:** An analysis of publicly available information such as police crime reports, media reports, community Facebook posts and local council surveys	Where the known problems are occurring How problems are reported through formal (news media) and informal (social media) channels The potential targets and perpetrators of the problem	How problems are understood by women If the problems are heightening women's fear and feelings of unsafety If women have changed their behaviours/mobility as a consequence of the problems
Surveys, focus groups or one-on-one interviews **What it involves:** Asking questions about local problems and feelings of safety and inclusion across a diverse range of women in the local council area	What the known problems are and where they are occurring How women from different backgrounds perceive the problems If the problems are heightening women's fear and feelings of unsafety If women have changed their behaviours/mobility as a consequence of the problems	How problems present on different days or at different times of the day and night Information on different users of the public places of interest Information on the potential guardianship/place management of the area Safety strategies that might influence the use of public places for different user groups
Walking interviews **What it involves:** Walking with women in those public places where they feel unsafe or excluded	The attributes of the public places that create feelings of unsafety or exclusion Insights from women about how places change at different times of the day or night Information on the potential guardianship/place management of the area Insights on strategies that women feel may improve the safety and inclusion of the area	How other users may experience the place Safety strategies that might influence the use of the public place for different user groups

If the goal is to ***change*** **the social and/or physical infrastructure of public places where women feel unsafe or excluded**, active engagement with a diverse range of women is needed and co-design strategies are particularly useful. To ensure that the ambitions of the co-design engagement are appropriate, one or more of the types of engagement shown in the table above should be deployed.

APPROACH	WHAT IT ACHIEVES	WHAT IT DOES NOT REVEAL
Co-design **What it involves:** Active collaboration between designers and stakeholders throughout the design process that utilises bespoke probes and tools	Challenges the imbalance of power between users and those who determine public spaces and places Supports strong empathy Encourages capacity of participants	Immediate steps forward

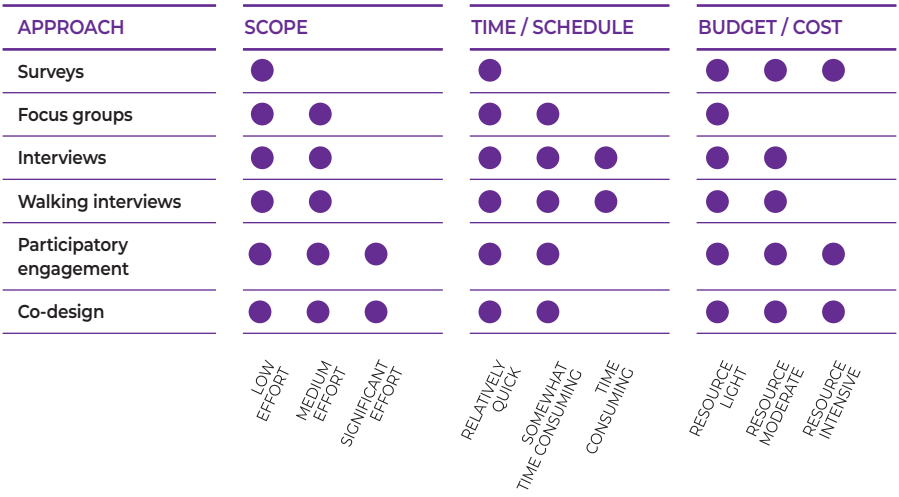
Time and resource limitations

Engagement approaches will vary in both the time they take and the resources needed.

SCOPE
The effort required to fulfil the approach, which includes staffing requirements, inclusion of external stakeholders, project complexity and level of detail required

TIME/ SCHEDULE
The time required for each approach in the project's overarching schedule, which includes planning and strategy, internal calendars, number of occurrences in project phases and hours required

BUDGET/ COST
The financial constraints of the project, which include financial budget, number of team members, external stakeholders, and materials and facilities



Who to engage

Regardless of method, the goal is to understand what makes women feel safe/unsafe and included/excluded. This requires engaging with women across different age groups, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual and gender identities as well as cognitive, physical and psychological abilities. It is also important to understand women's relationship to the public places you wish to improve. Do they frequently or infrequently engage with the place in question? Do they actively avoid the place? Are there physical and/or cultural barriers that hinder their engagement with the place?

Depending on the place of concern, there may be other groups whose voices and experiences should be incorporated into any change to the social and physical structure.

Consider engagement opportunities with groups such as:

- local businesses or community groups and organisations that are situated near to the place of concern
- state government agencies, with whom partnerships may be needed to make changes to certain places (for example, public transport stations)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, because placemaking takes place on their unceded lands
- young people, who also benefit from having access to public spaces but may not feel included in these places.

Supporting women to engage

Women are busy people! They often have primary caring responsibilities for children and extended family members. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, the vast majority of women in Australia are in paid employment.[5] Women are also more likely to engage in volunteering than men. Women's time is valuable, and their ideas are critically important. To encourage women's participation, local councils need to:

- consider times and timelines for engagement. The 9–5, Monday to Friday working schedule may not suit all women and weekends or weeknights might be more amenable.
- offer women compensation for their time, depending on what is asked of them. Stipends or honorariums are appropriate when asking women to go beyond participating in a short survey.
- provide childcare or child-friendly engagements, because women are very often the primary caregivers of children.
- provide the right support for women with disabilities to encourage their engagement – accessibility is key.

5 Volunteering Australia, 2023.

One size does not fit all. Multiple engagement strategies may be needed to connect with a diverse range of women. This may include targeting approaches to community leaders, developing recruitment flyers in different languages, attending relevant events or activities where women are likely to be present, and being clear about expectations.

Communicating outcomes to women

Communicating the actionable outcomes of your engagement with women in your local council area is crucial. It signals respect for those who have given up their time to engage with the project. Moreover, it allows women to validate or challenge the conclusions or decisions that flow from the engagement. The Centre for Global Development provides useful tips to help you decide how to share the results of your engagement. Remember, women are not a homogenous group so, again, accessibility is key. You will likely need to communicate the outcomes of your engagement using different audio and visual materials, and you may need to consider translating the outcomes into the main languages spoken by your women participants. Straightforward language is essential.

How do you know you are doing it right?

Engagement with the women in your local community should not be a one-off experience. As discussed in the report that accompanies these toolkits, improving safety and inclusion is an ongoing process that involves maintaining relationships with women in your community. Monitoring and evaluating a new strategy is the only way to ensure you have the design fit for purpose.

Photo by Liza Summer on Pexels

B

Engaging women using community safety surveys

This section of the toolkit provides a set of practices developed by the Safe Spaces team to assist local councils and related organisations with collecting data about women's safety and inclusion in public places using community safety surveys. Community safety surveys are particularly useful for understanding the prevalence of community attitudes, sentiments and feelings at one point in time and can be repeated each year to track changes over time. If designed well, community safety surveys can be an effective tool to understand perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion for women from all backgrounds.

Summary

Nature and purpose	• A community safety survey is a quantitative research method that explores people's perceptions and experiences of and attitudes towards safety in their residential community. • Community safety surveys provide important information on the known problems in the community, how they are perceived and experienced by people living in the community, and the consequences of these problems for people's sense of safety and belonging. • Community safety surveys can be used to examine differences in safety and belonging between different groups of women and between women and men. • Community safety surveys can provide meaningful explanations about the mechanisms that lead people to feel unsafe or excluded.
Advantages	• Community safety surveys can be used to understand safety and inclusion for the whole community and for smaller groups within the community. • Community safety surveys can be implemented face to face, online, over the phone or through mail-outs. • Community safety surveys can be designed to be accessible to people from different language and age groups and with different abilities. • Community safety surveys can include a range of questions about safety and inclusion to allow for rich and detailed data analysis.
Challenges	• A well-designed and implemented community safety survey can be costly. • Understanding the context of where community problems occur can be limited when using surveys alone. • Community safety surveys are highly structured and lack the flexibility of other engagements. • Interviewer characteristics may influence participants' responses to survey questions.
Ethical considerations	• Community safety surveys must be accessible to all community residents. Literacy, hearing/vision impairments, translation and cultural appropriateness must be considered. • An explanatory statement must be provided to all potential participants. • Appropriate consent must be obtained from each participant. • Data will need to be de-identified and safely stored.

CONSIDER THE SAMPLE

A sample that accurately reflects the population from which it is drawn is referred to as a '**representative sample**'.[6] A recurring problem for community safety surveys is the lack of representation of women's intersectionality. As discussed in the Safe Spaces report, local council community surveys usually report on differences in perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion between men and women, but rarely do they compare these perceptions and experiences across different groups of women. Women are not a homogenous group. To truly understand how women perceive and experience community safety and inclusion, survey data is needed from sufficiently large samples of women from different age groups, sexual orientations and identities, ethnic and racial backgrounds, and abilities.

Surveys rely on either probability or non-probability sampling techniques.[7] Both techniques can allow for a rich examination of safety and inclusion across diverse groups of women.

Probability sampling is the approach used to generate data that can generalise to the population you are interested in knowing more about. Probability samples are those for which all members of a particular group/population are known and can be potentially selected for inclusion in the sample. Community safety surveys that use **simple random sampling** approaches would generate a representative sample of women, given that women represent approximately 50% of the general population.

However, simple random samples may not result in sufficient numbers of women that differ in meaningful ways. If the goal of the research is to understand how women might differ in their perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion, a **stratified probability sampling** approach is needed. This approach draws a sample from smaller groups from within the larger population of interest. In this case, it would result in a sample that allows for a comparison of women across age and ethnicity groups, for example.

In contrast to probability samples, **non-probability samples** cannot be generalised beyond the individuals who have participated in the survey. Yet they are useful when probability samples are too difficult or costly to obtain or when investigating new and emerging problems experienced by smaller groups in the community. For example, one might be interested in safety and inclusion for recently arrived migrant women, yet there is no sampling frame available for this group. In this case, to gain access to recently arrived migrant women, trusting partnerships with non-government organisations who provide specialist services to migrant communities would be needed. By drawing on the connections of these organisations to the community, one could develop a purposive sample of newly arrived migrant women who may be willing to participate in a survey. While the results of this survey might not generalise to all recently arrived migrant women, if well-designed, such a survey will elicit information that is informative and useful for building strategies to enhance safety and inclusion.

Another important point to consider when designing community safety surveys is the geographical capture of the survey. If the goal is to understand women's perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion across the entire local council area, a sampling approach

6 De Vaus, 2013.
7 De Vaus, 2013.

that allows for all women in the Local Government Area (LGA) to participate is sufficient. However, if the goal is to compare geographical communities (for example, SA1s, SA2s or suburbs) across the LGA, a **clustered sampling approach**[8] is needed. A clustered sampling approach would involve sampling women from each of the geographical units that comprise the LGA. It is important to determine which geographical unit is needed for the research at the outset of the design process.

Determining 'how many' people you need to recruit is another step in the sampling process. There is no magic number or rule of thumb that can guide your sampling process and more people does not necessarily mean a better outcome. For any survey, it is important to have some sense of the size of the population you are interested in.

There are publicly available resources that can be used to determine the sample size you need, but most sample size calculators are designed for probability sampling. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has a free sample size calculator, as does Qualtrics. As an example, if there are 10,000 people in your local community and you know that 50% are female, the population from which you would like to sample is 5,000. In this case, you would need a sample of 370 women. Perhaps the goal is to understand safety for women in different age groups. For simplicity, let us assume that there are 1,000 women aged between birth and 17 years of age, 1,500 women aged between 18 and 35 years, 1,500 women aged between 36 and 50, and 1,000 women aged 51 and over. If you are interested in knowing something about each age group, you must sample from each of these age groups so would need a much larger sample size.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT

An advantage of doing a community safety survey is that a range of questions about women's perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion in their community can be asked. By collecting additional socio-demographic data on women's age, sexuality/gender, ethnic background, previous victimisation and available social supports, one can examine what might explain the differences across diverse groups of women. Further, these kinds of data can be analysed to identify protective and mitigating factors. For example, it may be possible to identify whether women with strong support in the community feel more included in the community, even if they have previously experienced victimisation.

The quality of the data from community safety surveys is dependent on the kinds of questions asked. Clear research questions are needed to develop well-defined indicators. Without a rigorous and systematic approach to the development of indicators that measure abstract concepts like safety and inclusion, the data returned will be of limited value.

Some community safety surveys rely on one or two single items to capture safety. The most frequently used is 'How safe do you feel in your community after dark?' Many women do not feel particularly safe after dark, even in safe neighbourhoods; but to really understand women's experiences of safety and inclusion, a more expansive approach is necessary. For example, the above question does not allow us to know whether women would walk after dark even if they did feel safe; does not define what 'community' means geographically; and does not provide information on how often women feel unsafe or whether feeling unsafe is related to previous victimisation. Fortunately, Australian and international researchers have

8 De Vaus, 2013.

developed a number of reliable and valid indicators of safety and inclusion that are available for wide use.[9]

ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

Another important step in survey design is deciding how the survey will be administered. There are various ways to administer a survey and all of them come with strengths and limitations. When administering a survey on safety and inclusion for women, a range of approaches might be needed to accommodate differences in literacy and English language proficiency. Accessibility for those with visual, audio or cognitive impairments must also be considered. The strengths and limitations of each approach are listed below.[10]

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION	PROS	CONS
Face-to-face	• Good response rates • Can lead to a representative sample • Can incorporate complex questions • Minimises item non-response • Good for open- and closed-ended questions • Can be administered in different languages if multilingual interviewers are available • Can be administered using Auslan if interviewers are available • Good for people with low literacy • Can easily generate a geographically bounded sample	• Expensive • Can be difficult to find skilled people to deliver the survey • Can heighten interviewer bias • Can encourage socially desirable responses • Takes longer to administer than mail-out or online surveys
Mobile telephone	• Good response rates • Can lead to a representative sample • Can incorporate complex questions • Minimises item non-response • Good for open- and closed-ended questions • Can be administered in different languages if multilingual interviewers are available • Good for people with low literacy	• Expensive • Can be difficult to find skilled people to deliver the survey • Can heighten interviewer bias • Can encourage socially desirable responses • Takes longer to administer than mail-out or online surveys • Accessibility limitations for people with hearing impairments • Difficult to generate a geographically bounded sample

9 Lee et al., 2020; Hart et al., 2022; Jackson, 2004; Farrall et al., 2009.
10 De Vaus, 2013; Wu et al., 2022; Wright, 2005.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION	PROS	CONS
Mail-out	• Can get good response rates if implemented well • Not as expensive as face-to-face or telephone surveys • Minimises interviewer bias • Minimises socially desirable responses • Time-efficient • Can easily generate a geographically bounded sample	• Increased item non-response • Cannot incorporate complex questions as well as face-to-face or telephone surveys • No control over who completes the survey • No control over the influence of others on item responses • Difficult to provide surveys in languages other than English • Can be difficult to complete for people with vision impairments • Can be difficult for people with low levels of literacy
Online	• Cost-effective • Time-efficient • Minimises interviewer bias • Minimises socially desirable responses • Can control for item non-response • Can easily provide alternative language options • Programs are available for people who are vision impaired	• May miss populations who are less familiar with technology • Response rates lower, but can be enhanced if used with other modes of survey delivery • No control over the influence of others on item responses • Does not handle complex questions as well as face-to-face or telephone surveys • Cannot control who answers the survey or the influence of others on item responses • Can be difficult for people with low language and digital literacy • Difficult to generate a geographically bounded sample

Advantages of community safety surveys with women

Community safety surveys give local councils the capacity to capture a wide range of data from women on their perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion in their community. Given the breadth of a community survey, it is possible to obtain a range of socio-demographic information that allows for a rigorous examination of how women, as a heterogenous group, might differ in their responses. Such surveys provide reliable data as the same questions are asked, in the same way, of every person who participates. Community safety surveys can also be administered via a range of approaches, which makes them accessible to all women.

Challenges of community safety surveys with women

Designing a good community safety survey takes time, expertise and resources. Though they can generate rich, useful data about crime and safety, community safety surveys only capture perceptions and experiences at one time point and survey questions tend to ask about abstract experiences and imagined scenarios. On their own, they do not provide important contextual information about the public places where women may experience threats to their safety or feel excluded, about other users of these places or about how problems in these places present at different times of the day and night. While survey data can be used to develop initial strategies to enhance women's perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion, women must be active collaborators in making the necessary changes to the social and physical infrastructure rather than simply research subjects. Finally, if the goal is not only to understand why women feel unsafe and/or excluded but also to change the conditions that create these responses, community safety surveys should be one of several engagement tools used.

Ethical considerations of community safety surveys with women

It is important for local councils to consider the ethical implications of conducting surveys. Though local councils may not be obligated to follow the same processes as a university, an ethically responsible approach is important.

All survey participants, for any research, must give full and complete consent. Providing participants with an explanatory statement outlining the project is also important for any survey. This statement should include information on how long the survey will take, how the data will be used, the risks and benefits of participating, how participants will be de-identified in the reporting of the results and the contact details of the project leader. The explanatory statement can be widely distributed alongside a consent form or it can be made available on a dedicated page on the council's website.

Surveys contain a significant amount of information about participants. Communicating how the data will be stored and who will have access to it is also important. A number of organisations provide guidelines for conducting ethical human survey research.[11]

11 For example, Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018; AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research.

Getting ready for community safety surveys with women

Decide on your geographical unit of interest	• Are you interested in a whole-of-community approach? • Do you want to focus on differences across smaller communities within the larger council area?	☐
Decide how you will administer your survey	• How will you accommodate language, audio, visual or cultural needs in the survey collection process? • Do you have the right people on staff to conduct the survey or do you need to contract a specialist? • How will you ensure the survey is accessible for women at different life stages, from different cultural backgrounds and with diverse sexuality/gender identities and different cognitive and physical abilities. Do you need multiple approaches? • If you are providing an honorarium, how will you do this?	☐
Decide on the sampling method for your community survey	• Do you wish to generalise beyond the sample you will recruit for your survey? If so, you will need to employ probability sampling. • Will you have a large enough sample to adequately represent women's diversity? If not, do you need to recruit additional women? Should you use a stratified sampling approach? • Are there women for whom a sampling frame would be difficult to obtain? Do you need to incorporate non-probability sampling methods to capture smaller community groups?	☐
Rigorously develop your survey instrument	• What are your core questions? • What concepts are central to your survey? • Are your indicators reliable and valid? • Are there items used in similar community safety surveys that you could use? • Are you interested in descriptive data only or do you want to make inferences about women's perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion? • What other items might be useful to you in understanding women's perceptions and experiences of safety and inclusion? • How do you wish to analyse the data you collect? • Are responses categories for closed-ended questions mutually exclusive? • Have you piloted your survey questions with a small group of women before going into the field? • How will you visually display the data so it is easy to understand?	☐
Create a straightforward ethical procedure	• Have you created an explanatory statement? How will you share this with participants if you are doing a telephone survey? • Have you prepared an outline of the participation requirements and the processes around consent, confidentiality and data storage? • How will you capture participants' consent?	☐
Share the data with participants	• How will you share the findings with your participants? Consider clear and concise communications. • Will you need a designer to assist you with infographics? • Where will you make the results of the study available? Can this information be shared on a project webpage?	☐

C References

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SUGGESTED CITATION
Safe Spaces, 2023, Toolkit 2: Community Safety Surveys – Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women. (Monash University, Griffith University, University of Sydney).

CONTACTS
For more information about this resource or to share feedback, please contact:

Professor Rebecca Wickes,
Griffith University Criminology Institute
r.wickes@griffith.edu.au

Associate Professor Nicole Kalms,
Monash University XYX Lab
nicole.kalms@monash.edu