

Staff Programme Quality Survey

Manual and guide

March 2022



Staff Programme Quality Survey (SPQS)

About the SPQS

The Staff Programme Quality Survey (SPQS) is a staff self-report survey measurement instrument that was designed to allow programme staff to generate and use self-assessment data on the quality of staff *instructional practices* during provision, build a quality-focused programme culture, develop programme improvement goals, identify staff training needs, and provide information about how specific aspects of programme quality relate to specific aspects of young people's engagement at the point of interaction and SEL skill growth. Each of the 14 items on the SPQS (2021 version) describes a high-quality instructional practice, prefaced by the phrase "Did you..." and followed by a three-level response scale, where 1 indicates "Not in any session," 3 indicates "In some sessions," and 5 indicates "In all sessions." These items are arranged to produce four domain scores: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interactive Environment, and Engaging Environment. In addition, each item also includes a corresponding open-ended response box, in which respondents record "supporting evidence" that reflects specific ways they enacted the item content.

The SPQS was developed by the Centre for Youth Impact, in collaboration with QTurn, in response to COVID-19 conditions (e.g., the more frequent use of virtual and one-to-one provision). The item content on the SPQS was adapted mainly from items on the 2019 version of the Social and Emotional Learning Programme Quality Assessment (SEL PQA). Information about the reliability and validity of the SPQS is pending. However, previous experience with using staff surveys in out-of-school time settings suggests that SPQS scores will provide reliable and valid information for both programme evaluation and continuous quality improvement purposes.

After calculating the four SPQS domain scores, this information can be used to inform decisions about future provision planning or training decisions (e.g., organizations with especially low scores in a domain may decide to provide youth workers with training opportunities, or other professional development activities, focused on that domain). If the SPQS is also used as both a baseline and follow-up measure, changes in SPQS domain scores can be used to assess improvement in provision quality (e.g., by comparing baseline domain scores to follow-up domain scores). Finding evidence of improved SPQS scores can support conclusions like (a) our professional development activities appear to have been a good use of our time and, potentially, (b) the reason our provision quality improved is because our staff took advantage of the training opportunities we provided.

How and When to Use

The SPQS should be used by programme staff as a self-assessment instrument. Ideally, staff in a youth organisation will form a self-assessment team that will meet to discuss the use and results of their self-assessments. After each of the participating instructional staff complete the SPQS, the self-assessment team discusses the scores to identify areas in which they are doing well and areas in which there is room for improvement. The self-assessment team should include the site manager and at least two instructional staff.

The SPQS self-assessment process can be done at any time during the course of provision. For example, it can be completed once, in the middle of a programme period, to get a general idea

about how well staff are implementing best practices. It can be completed twice: once at the beginning of a programme period, to inform improvement goals and training priorities, and once at the end of a programme period to assess improvements in the quality of instructional practices. It can also be used several times over the course of a programme period to get a more reliable estimate of the instructional quality across the entire programme period. The timing of the SPQS process should be determined by the goals of the organisation (e.g., continuous quality improvement, program evaluation, or both).

The SPQS can be used to assess the quality of staff instructional practices with young people ages 5 and up, but it was designed to be most applicable to older children and adolescents (ages 10 and older) who are in the process of developing their full range of SEL skills. The SPQS was designed specifically for use in one-to-one provision contexts but can also be used within the context of group-based provision. The SPQS self-assessment scoring process should take about 20 minutes to complete.

Administration and Scoring

This section provides:

- **SPQS items** – these are the statements against which you will rate your behaviour.
- **Item response scale** – this contains the response options that you will use to indicate how frequently you engage in each kind of behaviour.
- **The procedure for calculating the SPQS domain scores** – this is the scoring process used to calculate each of the four domains scores from the individual item scores.
- **The protocol for administration** – this is how you use the measure to ensure you get the most honest and reflective ratings.

Items

The SPQS includes 14 core items, all of which use the following response scale options:

1	3	5
Not in any session	In some sessions	In all sessions

I. Safe Environment

1. Did you create a safe space for sharing thoughts, feelings, or work?
2. Did you discuss, or tell young people about, guidelines for holding both of you accountable to ground rules or consequences?
3. Did you respond to biases expressed by young people (e.g., about religion, culture, race/ethnicity, class, gender, ability, appearance, or sexual orientation) by addressing them directly?
4. Did you practice mutual respect and active inclusion?

II. Supportive Environment

5. Did you ask young people to name their emotions?

6. Did you ask young people describe the causes of their emotions?
7. Did you verbally attribute young people's success to their effort or persistence?

III. Interactive Environment

8. Did you provide explicit opportunities for young people to affirm, appreciate, or show kindness to others (including yourself)?
9. Did you provide young people opportunities to learn and practice collaboration skills?
10. Did you provide young people opportunities to listen, understand, and acknowledge the personal stories, experiences, feelings, culture, or viewpoints of *others*?

IV. Engaging Environment

11. Did you ask young people to make connections between session activities and their previous knowledge?
12. Did you guide young people in discovering an answer to a problem or taking more initiative in learning?
13. Did you provide opportunities for young people to set goals or make plans?
14. Did you ask young people to monitor progress toward goals that they set for themselves?

Scoring

1. There are no SPQS items that require being reverse scored prior to calculating the domain scores.
2. The mean of the response values for the items within each domain should be calculated to yield four corresponding domain scores. If some item responses are missing, domain scores can still be calculated. (We recommend requiring two thirds of the items for each domain to create a domain score.) Each of the four resulting domain scores should range from 1 to 5.

Protocol

- Allow about 20 mins to complete the SPQS self-assessment scoring process.
- Reflect on the sessions you've had with young people over the past *two* weeks and score on the basis of how you actually interacted with young people during these sessions (as opposed to how you would have liked to have interacted or how you intend to interact with them in the future). The more accurate your responses are, the more valuable they will be for continuous quality improvement.

It is recognised that it would be difficult to use every one of the outlined practices in any single session, some may never have been used or only very occasionally. Please score these very infrequently used practices as "not in any session" (i.e., "1").



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