



Happening in SRO

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If you have items for the newsletter, please let Ann Vernier or your unit director know.

Survey Research Operations – Clinical Contact Program (SRO-CCP) Reflections and Directions for 2018

(Lisa Lewandowski-Romps, Maureen O'Brien and Aimee Miller)

The primary mission of SRO-CCP is to perform a resource needs assessment and provide appropriate referrals to distressed and at-risk research respondents. Since its inception as an in-house program in October, 2015, SRO-CCP has provided follow up calls to over 1,000 research respondents. In 2018, SRO-CCP will continue to refine program processes and further expand staff roles to flexibly accommodate SRO project and organizational needs.

Primary Mission: Support for Distressed and at-risk Research Respondents

For a majority of survey research projects, respondent safety is rarely a concern. Unexpected incidents that raise safety concerns include respondent distress during interviews about sensitive topics or respondent comments and/or behaviors that suggest he/she may be at risk of harm to self or others. Studies that sample vulnerable or high risk populations, and ask sensitive survey questions, may implement IRB approved safety protocols such as the use of pre-programmed survey response algorithms to identify at-risk respondents.

SRO-CCP performs brief assessments and provides resource contact information to distressed and at-risk research respondents referred to the program by SRO/project staff. Table 1 contains the number of respondent referrals SRO-CCP received, by project, from October 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017. During this reporting period, the program had an average (mean) of 42 referrals a month. For the 2017 calendar year, the program averaged (mean) 76 referrals a month. The median time spent by staff, per referral, was 30 minutes. Most referrals require 20 minutes to 2 hours to complete. Resource intensive referrals (e.g., 8 to 20 hours to complete) are relatively rare, such as those requiring collaboration with the SRO mandated reporting team.

Table 1
SRO-CCP Referral Counts by Project (Oct 1, 2015 through Dec 31, 2017)

Project Name	Referral Counts
Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers	1,083
Health and Retirement Study	23
Panel Study of Income Dynamics – Transition to Adulthood	5
Harmonized Cognitive Assessment Protocol	3
Surveys of Consumer Attitudes	3
National Survey of Family Growth	2
Unspecified or cross-project concern	2
Social Networks and Well Being	1
Total	1,122

SRO-CCP staff achieved successful telephone contact with 66% of all referred respondents. Table 2 lists services provided to respondents who were reached by program staff. Erroneous contact information and respondent non-response precluded SRO-CCP staff's ability to reach 34% of referred respondents

Table 2
SRO-CCP Services (Oct 1, 2015 through Dec 31, 2017)

60%	Brief Telephone Assessment of Resource Needs
26%	Brief Telephone Assessment of Resource Needs & Resource Referral
14%	Other

Sample= 735 respondents reached by program staff

For respondents in need of resources, 78% required mental health services. Other resource requests included VA benefits and services (25%), medical services (21%), financial assistance (19%), and employment/vocational rehabilitation (16%).

SRO-CCP Roles and Processes

Growth in SRO-CCP service demands has prompted program resource expansion. The SRO-CCP team is now comprised of a newly hired, licensed social worker, Aimee Miller, and program co-leads Maureen O'Brien and Lisa Lewandowski-Romps. The team performs all follow up calls with referred respondents, participates in interviewer trainings, provides safety plan consultation to project staff, and serves as members of the SRO mandated reporting team. Moreover, SRO-CCP is starting to work with DCO to develop activities that will encourage a positive work environment for interviewers.

To improve program efficiency, SRO-CCP implemented a standardized protocol for documenting referral resources in February of 2017. This effort resulted in the development of an information database that currently houses 259 confirmed referral resources covering 32 states and 37 national referral resources. Additionally, SRO-CCP continues to explore ways to increase SRO staff awareness of the program's referral process and services. Electronic referral form links and basic program information are located on the SRC Interviewer Website. Moreover, SRO-CCP staff are increasing their involvement in SSL and field interviewer meetings, project specific trainings, and SRO staff meetings to present program service data, answer questions, outline the referral process, and provide reference documents containing program contact information. Finally, SRO-CCP will work with TSG to further improve service data collection tools. The SRO-CCP case log database is currently used to generate monthly call reports that are posted to the SRO Intranet (<http://isr-wp.isr.umich.edu/srointranet/home/data-collection/>). Making refinements to this system's data entry interface will facilitate collection of information that is useful for program planning and decision-making.

Contacting SRO-CCP

To make a referral to the SRO- CCP program, complete and submit an electronic referral form, accessible in the following locations:

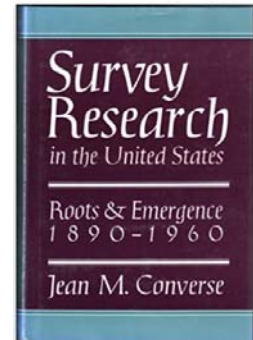
- 1) Use the direct URL: <https://src-interviewers.isr.umich.edu/ccp-referral-form>
- 2) Go to the SRC Interviewer Website. The "CCP referral form" link is located under "Quick Links" on the main webpage. The "CCP Referral form" link can also be found in the distressed respondent section.

What Are You Reading, Grant Benson?

Jean M. Converse. 1987. *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence 1890-1960*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

As I've been thinking about where we are going as an industry, I've been wanting to get a better understanding of where we've come from, and Jean Converse's book is an excellent start. This volume not only provides an exhaustive and engaging overview of the development of survey research, but also has a chapter dedicated to the early years of SRC.

Jean Converse is a former researcher at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, the former director of the Detroit Area Studies, and author or coauthor of numerous books and articles on survey research.



One of the many things that I found really interesting in this book is that survey research had its genesis in trying to understand and hear from people who were either marginalized or had opinions considered to be worthless, or both. In England, this was exemplified by Charles Booth's enormous study of the poor in the 1880s. In the U.S., W.E.B. DuBois was inspired by Booth's work and conducted a study of African Americans in Philadelphia. It seems to me that this motivation to understand the lives and communities of people whose voice is not otherwise heard continues to be our driving mission.

I found it fascinating how quickly polls and academic research diverged. The federal government began leveraging social scientists as early as 1929 to better understand national and social trends, while opinion pollsters sought to get a handle on changing attitudes and behavioral indicators, particularly with respect to local political areas. Where pollsters increasingly focused on written surveys rather than in-person interviews to eliminate interviewer effects, market researchers (who provided the intellectual foundation for subsequent academic researchers emerging after WWII) dismissed the mailed questionnaires due to low return rates and experimented with panels, quota samples, and question construction to better appreciate consumer preferences.

SRC actively worked to distinguish itself from polls at the very outset by emphasizing probability sampling techniques. After several polls picked Dewey to defeat Truman in 1948, SRC's Rensis Likert somewhat stingingly demonstrated that he was able to predict the outcome accurately with two throw-away questions¹ on a tiny sample size of 600 respondents. Unsurprisingly, this deepened the divide between pollsters and academic researchers.

There are definitely many trends that have persisted over time. These include wanting interviewing staff who are "bright with ability and energy who are willing to work for rather drab wages". White's list of qualities desirable in an interviewer [included]... intelligence, perseverance, judgment, honesty, personableness, courteousness, physical stamina, and so on" (pp. 96-97), and also making painful methodological compromises in order to be cost competitive. Interestingly, it appears that the decision at SRC to move away from keeping the majority of questions open-ended was because "closed questions were cheaper – they took less interviewer time to ask and record in the field, less investigator time to construct code categories, and less coder time" (p. 370). Overall, they were simply cheaper, even if the resulting data were less informative.

Another interesting aspect of the founding of SRC was the academic diversity. Unlike some other survey organizations, SRC was not solely rooted in sociology. The interdisciplinary approach included social psychologists, economists, statisticians, and a political scientist. SRC has largely maintained that decentralized, "democratic" approach to the organization, encouraging research from a broad spectrum of disciplines.

Among the less consequential nuggets in the book was Converse's description of the first SRC office at the University of Michigan. This was in the basement of the elementary school of the School of Education (who knew the School of Ed had an elementary school?!). Here, "the tallest of the new SRC staffers had to be careful not to crack their heads on the exposed heating pipes" (p. 341). Sound familiar, Lloyd and Russ?

Looking to the present from the perspective of Converse's book, I found it stunning that there was no mention of the legal environment constraints at any point in the book. This strikes me as a fundamental difference, a fundamental change in everything we do. This really points to the lasting impact of the 1973 Health, Education, and Welfare

¹ "In the presidential elections next month, are you almost certain to vote, uncertain, or won't you vote?"
(If certain or uncertain) "Do you plan to vote Republican, Democratic, or something else?"

Report, the 1974 Privacy Act, and the 1978 Belmont Report. I am convinced that this is for the good, but it undoubtedly continues to add to our administrative burden.

This really was an excellent read that I highly recommend, even just to gain perspective on where so many of our policies, GIT principles, sampling approaches, and overall structure came from.

Note: "What Are You Reading" is a new and periodically reoccurring column in the SRO Happenings. In this column, a SRO staff member will reflect on a book, article, website, presentation, etc., that they read recently and provide some insights for our work. It can be material that is directly relevant such as a survey methodology article or project report or indirectly, say an article on a new technology and how it might fit into our work procedures or a summary of a time management technique or meeting management tips recently read. Anyone can submit an article. These don't need to be long – a paragraph or two. It is an opportunity to share interesting material with your colleagues. Contact Kirsten Alcser if you have a topic you would like to contribute to this column or any submission for our SRO Happenings.

Tips and Tricks (Kelly Chatain)

Data Breach at Washington State University:

The circumstances and severe impact of this data breach is a reminder to all of us to be vigilant in our handling and storage of data. In this situation, a hard drive that stored backed-up files from a server used by the Social & Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University, was stolen from a self-storage facility. See details in links below.

The data breach by WSU's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center:

<http://www.govtech.com/opinion/Washington-State-University-Data-Breach-Teaches-Valuable-Cybersecurity-Lesson.html>

And WSU's statement:

<https://wsu.edu/security-incident/>