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Survey Proposal

Meeting with people from the statistics department was incredibly helpful in expanding my previous knowledge (or lack-there-of) of surveys and statistics. I had imagined during a survey of census tract 505 before, but one thing mentioned in our meeting that I hadn’t thought of was where the survey would be conducted. Places like churches and schools would be somewhat biased and too specific to certain demographics. Football games, festivals, and other more diverse events are the optimal place for us to gather our survey data. The location of our survey will also help with our sample size, which was suggested to be around 250 people.

One of my favorite points from our meeting was having an incentive for taking our survey. People will be much more willing if they know they’re being rewarded after. They’ll most likely answer more honestly as well instead of just breezing through the survey so they can move on.

Using my previous knowledge about Census Tract 505, statistics & surveys, and the information I’ve learned in class and from our meeting Friday, I believe the best way to conduct our survey would be at a high school football game. There are many different demographics that we could reach this way and avoid bias in our study. We should ask every 10th person to come by a booth we set up either inside or outside the stadium to take our survey in order to get, what the professor on Friday calls, systematic samples. It’s also important to make sure the participant is a resident of 505, preferably for at least a year and a half. Using a census tract map and just asking where in the city they live will help keep it anonymous while proving their residency. Having an incentive, such as candy or keychain, isn’t crucial but it could be very useful to our endeavor.

When it comes to the actual survey, I think we should stick very closely to the way we described a good survey on Friday. Asking questions with a Likert Scale, without a middle ground (“indifferent”, “no preference”, etc.), will help use receive more useful data and help the participants when understanding how to answer the questions. Keeping a positive connotation to the questions is another important part of the survey questions. When you come at people with negative sounding vocabulary, they’re likely to take a defensive attitude and answer biasedly and based on emotion. An example from Friday is “Have you felt unsafe?” vs. “Do you feel safe?” People can be put off by the first example because of the negativity behind “unsafe”. However, when put in a more direct, positively connoted sense, it is easier to answer honestly.

Conducting our survey in this manner will help to maximize our sample size and demographic, receive honest answers and feelings, and draw accurate conclusions about the mental well-being of census tract 505.