
Case Study

Measuring Violent Victimizations

To assess whether respondents have experienced a victimization, the U.S. Department of Justice–sponsored NCVS asks a number of questions about experiences within the past six months. The primary screening questions of violent victimizations are displayed in Exhibit 7.1. As you can see, these questions are fairly specific and help respondents think about many different contexts, including those instances that may not be considered as victimizations, such as those committed by family and friends.

Compare the questions from the NCVS in Exhibit 7.1 with the screening questions for sexual violence from the CDC–sponsored NISVS that are displayed in Exhibit 7.2. Both surveys estimate prevalence rates of sexual violence, but as you can see, the questions from which their estimates are based are very different indeed. In the next section, we will provide you with some specific guidelines for writing questions and you will see that the answer to this question is not so clear-cut.
