

## Obtaining a Measure—*Find, Modify, or Write*

There are three main ways to obtain a measure: (1) find a pre-validated measure, (2) modify a pre-validated measure, or (3) write a measure from scratch. To decide how to approach this task, circle the items in the table below that best correspond to the needs of the evaluation. Consider the tradeoffs before beginning to nail down measures. Note your choices and the reasons behind them for later use in reporting results.

	Find <sup>1</sup>	Modify <sup>2</sup>	Write <sup>3</sup>
<b>Best choice when</b>	Want a measure pre-screened for validity and reliability	Want as many of the benefits of a pre-screened measure as possible	Benefits of feasibility and customization outweigh need for pre-screened for validity & reliability
	EQ implies a strong claim about effectiveness	EQ implies moderate claims about effectiveness	EQ does not imply a strong claim about effectiveness
	EQ is based on a complex or contended construct	EQ construct (or target population) almost but doesn't quite match pre-screened measures available	EQ is based on a simple, non-controversial construct
	EQ calls for comparing results to those for similar programs using the same measure	Want or need at least loose comparison with results for similar programs	Close fit to program as delivered is more important than comparing results to similar programs
	Finding a measure that closely fits the program, context and target population is likely (because common, etc.)	Relatively few adjustments are needed to modify pre-screened measure	If simple measure, doesn't require much time
	Search costs likely to be low because measure is readily available from system	Costs of modifying likely to be less than cost of writing new measure	Costs of writing own measure likely to be less than costs of finding, modifying.
<b>Drawbacks</b>	If unusual measure, may be more time consuming than other ways to obtain a measure	If multiple or complex modifications are needed, may be more time consuming than other ways to obtain a measure	If complex measure, may be more time consuming than other ways to obtain a measure
	Cost to get permission to use may outweigh value of added validity	Some of the validity and reliability of the pre-screened measure is lost	Difficult to write in accord with best practices, so may introduce measurement bias
	May not closely fit desired construct or target population	May still not adequately capture desired construct or adequately fit target population	No pre-established validity or reliability, so claims may be weaker

**1. Find:** Look for a pre-validated measure using peers, the larger system in which the program sits, professional groups delivering similar programs, government agencies providing oversight, and, if all else fails, an online search.

**2. Modify:** Adjust wording of pre-validated measure (or assemble desired scales from multiple pre-validated measures) in order to more closely fit outcome construct of interest, target population, or context.

**3. Write:** Construct your own survey, knowledge test, interview, focus group or observation protocols in accord with best practices for writing measures.