

Tip Sheet on Data Types and Transformation

Types of Data

- Quantitative: measured in quantities as numbers
 - Discrete or categorical, e.g.,
 - Gender
 - Eligibility reason
 - Exit reason
 - Continuous, e.g.,
 - Age at enrollment
 - Income
 - Hours of service
- Qualitative: not numerical in nature, e.g., from:
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups
 - Document review
 - Observation

Data Transformation

- Convert continuous into discrete
 - Continuous (measured on a continuum or scale):
 - Age as 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14, 36 months
 - Discrete:
 - Categories of age, e.g., 0-12 months, 13-24 months, 25-36 months
- Convert large number of categories into a smaller number
 - Collapse a larger number of race/ethnicity categories or exit reasons into the federal/618 categories
- Combine two or more variables to create another variable
 - Combine family income and family size to create a variable for Federal Poverty Level

It's always helpful to examine the distribution of the data *first* to help make decisions on data transformations.