**Exercise on variables’ search for assignment 1.**

Imagine that student John Doe comes to you in desperate need for help to do a term assignment with secondary data on family conflict, parental divorce, and their effects on children’s emotional health.

Believe me, there are horrible professors who ask young fellows to do that!

You start by telling John to search for the survey documentation. Very wise move. However, while you hope John is gone for good, he comes back to you in 10 minutes begging for help. He does not know what to do and where to start from....

Let’s role play from here...

Find the documentation for Cycle 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY).

Select cycle 1 codebook/user’s guide and search for the following terms:

-divorce🡪 check what you obtained and see whether this can be a good marker of parental divorce.

-conflict🡪 what did you obtain? Is this a good measure of parental conflict or family conflict?

What do you?

-try with “fight” or other words that may indicate tension and conflict between partners.

-try “functioning” as a general term to indicate how the family works:

Under the parenting functioning index, select the variables that explicitly capture conflict

Try looking for more variables (John is still there crying for help)

-sex🡪 how many variables did you find?

-age🡪 how many variables did you find?

-anxiety🡪 what do you get if you type anxiety? What if you want the individual variables and not the already made scale? What about the age range?

SEARCHING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES (from Siobhan lecture in SOCI3100)

John is back, two days later, and says that he has to do more work on children mental health and parental divorce.

You want to lock him in a storage room and throw the keys away, but you end up helping him again.

Using Statistics Canada’s site <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca>>, find three products which talk about the effects of children and divorce. Please indicate the source of the data, the years covered, the population surveyed (if possible).

What are the surveys from which these products originate, both Record Number and Name?

To be able to familiarize John to the available tools at your university/library, do the same search in Equinox <<http://equinox.uwo.ca>> and find three surveys which deal with children and divorce.

What about youth and divorce?

Using the Advanced Search, let’s re-create the same searches. How many hits do you get with:

* 1. Children and divorce (File):
  2. Youth and divorce (File):
  3. Children or youth and divorce (File):
  4. Children and divorce (Variable):
  5. Youth and divorce (Variable):
  6. Children or youth and divorce (Variable):

DECODING

Once you found the survey you want to work with, you want to check the target population and potential restriction in the population coverage.

This has to do with what we discussed before: population, sample, and validity issues.

What is the target population of the NLSCY and when was it first administered?

What is the unit of analysis of the survey and who provides information on the unit of analysis?

Congratulations. You made John Doe a more skillful and capable student. Or at least he is locked somewhere and won’t bother librarians for another while...