Structuring Your Question

Before you start searching, be clear on what you're searching for. There are a variety of methods that can help structure your question. See the links below. (If conducting a Systematic Review, please see this guide)

PICO (clinical - prognosis, diagnosis, etc)	SPIDER (qualitative/mixed methods)
SPICE (evaluating projects or interventions)	ECLIPSE (evaluating services)

PICO

The PICO structure is most commonly used in the health professions to research prognoses, diagnoses and therapies. It is mostly used to compare one intervention with another.

This video explains in more detail.

PICO clinical question example:

"In patients with cellulitis, does once-daily intravenous cephazolin and oral Probenecid, compared with twice daily intravenous Cephazolin, result in shorter time to recovery?"

Population/Patient Problem	patients with cellulitis
Intervention (or exposure)	once-daily IV cephazolin and oral probenecid
Comparison	twice-daily IV Cephazolin
Outcome	shorter recovery time

SPICE

SPICE can be used to evaluate the outcomes of a service, project, or intervention.

For more information, please see Booth, A. (2006). Clear and present questions: Formulating questions for evidence based practice. *Library Hi Tech*, *24*(3), 355-368. doi:10.1108/07378830610692127

SPICE question example:

"In hospital waiting rooms, do therapy dog visits (as opposed to no therapy dog visits), reduce anxiety in outpatients?"

Setting	Hospital waiting rooms
Perspective/Population	Hospital outpatients
Intervention	Therapy dog visits
Comparison	No therapy dog visits
Evaluation	Reduced anxiety

SPIDER

The SPIDER tool is designed to structure qualitative research questions, focusing less on interventions and more on study design, and "samples" rather than populations.

The SPIDER question: "What are young parents' experiences of attending antenatal education?"

Sample	young parents
Phenomenon of **I**nterest	antenatal education
Design	survey
Evaluation	experiences
Research Type	qualitative

Cooke, A., Smith, D., & Booth, A. (2012). Beyond PICO: The SPIDER tool for qualitative evidence synthesis. *Qualitative Health Research*, *22*(10), 1435-1443. doi:10.1177/1049732312452938

ECLIPSE

ECLIPSE is useful for investigating the outcomes of a policy or service.

ECLIPSE question example: "How can I increase access to wireless internet for hospital patients?"

Expectation (what are you looking to improve/change?)	To increase access to wireless internet in the hospital
Client Group	patients and families
Location	hospitals
Impact	clients have easy access to free internet
Professionals (who is involved in improving the service?)	IT, hospital administration
SErvice (what kind of service is this?)	provision of free wireless internet to patients.