As an epidemiologist from the CDC, you have been asked to help a local health officer in Yourtown solve a problem. When you arrive at the town, the local health officer relates the following story:

Over the last few days, 46 people reported an acute episode of gastrointestinal illness characterized by watery, sometime bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, listlessness, and vomiting. All 46 people say that they attended the same school picnic before becoming ill. Their family members who did not attend the picnic did not become ill. A total of 80 people were at the picnic.

You confirm the finding of the local health officer and suspect that something at the picnic was responsible for all these cases of illness. You also know from recent National Health Survey data that, on average, a person experiences approximately two episodes of acute gastrointestinal illness per year.

1. **Would you declare the situation in Yourtown an outbreak? Why or why not.**
2. List the steps of an outbreak investigation.

3. Will you use a cohort or case-control study to investigate the Yourtown outbreak? Why? What measure of association is most appropriate to compute for this type of study?

4. Group Activity: You plan to interview the people who attended the picnic. What information will you want to collect?