

INTERVIEWER TRAINING MANUAL

AIDSCAP/GPA/WHO Voluntary Counseling and Testing Efficacy Study

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I. BACKGROUND AND THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the efficacy of counseling and testing in reducing the risk of unprotected intercourse among persons who seek such services at counseling and testing centers in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, Nairobi, Kenya, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, WI, and Jakarta, Indonesia.

Voluntary HIV testing and counseling programs are now a major component of AIDS control programs in industrialized countries, and are increasingly being advocated and implemented in developing country settings. The major reasons currently put forward for promoting the widespread availability of voluntary counseling and testing are the following:

- (1) that early detection of HIV can lead to referral to clinical care, and social support;
- (2) that knowledge of serostatus can relieve anxiety associated with uncertainty and assist decision-making and planning for the future;
- (3) that persons have the right to know their HIV status if they so wish; and
- (4) that counseling with HIV serostatus information can provide enhanced motivation for risk reduction, and allows a more informed choice concerning personal risk reduction strategies.

It is generally accepted that voluntary counseling and testing can be of benefit in the care and support of individuals. It may therefore have an important role to play within a comprehensive program for the care and support of persons with HIV/AIDS, in settings where preventive measures (e.g., condoms) and supportive measures (e.g., referral services for clinical, social and psychological care and support) are available, and where the social environment does not discriminate against persons with HIV or AIDS. However, the role of voluntary counseling and testing activities in public health programs for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, at least in developing countries, is still under debate.

The proposed multicenter study would provide information regarding the potential contribution of counseling and testing programs to behavior change, and this would serve to guide public health practice, particularly in settings with limited resources.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

II.A. Where to Address Questions, Office Hours, and Telephone Numbers

1. The office is located at [site-specific]. Office hours are from [site-specific] to [site-specific], Monday through [site-specific].
2. All questions should be brought to the attention of the Research Coordinator, [site-specific name 1]. If s/he is not available, please ask for [site-specific name 2], the Social Scientist. If you cannot reach [site-specific name 2], call [site-specific name 3]. They can be reached at the following numbers:

	<u>Office</u>	<u>Home</u>
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[site-specific name 1]		
[site-specific name 2]		
[site-specific name 3]		

3. If a respondent has a question you can't answer and s/he asks for the number of someone to call, tell her/him to call [site-specific name] at [site-specific phone number] during office hours, or s/he can leave a message on [site-specific phone number] in the evenings or on the weekend. These are the only numbers used on correspondence with respondents, and are the only numbers you should give to study participants.

II.B. How to Prepare for Your Interview

1. Read all this material, familiarize with all the forms and their use, and prepare the introduction you plan to use in beginning the interview.
2. Interview yourself, answering as if you were the respondent, and record your answers just as if someone else were conducting the interview. Take your time and make sure you get a feeling for the skip directions.
3. Conduct a practice interview with a friend. The purpose of the practice interview is to accustom you to asking the questions in the interview, to help you recognize inadequate responses, to indicate to you which parts of the instructions need more review, to suggest problems that occur to you which these instructions do not cover adequately, and to show us that problems we need to cover in future instructions for all interviewers.
4. Jot down notes of anything that is unclear or any questions that you want further instruction on.

II.C. Materials You Will Need on This Study

The following is a list of materials designed for this study and a brief description of how to use them. Detailed instructions on how to use all forms appear later in this manual.

1. Interviewer Training Manual. Read this manual carefully and consult it whenever you have a question about administrative matters, filling out forms, or the interview itself.
2. Survey Questionnaire. You will use this form to interview respondents.

II.D. What Is Expected of You

1. You will meet with your supervisor every week. We need to know what appointments you have had and about any changes in your availability for work, as well as give you new assignments and review the status of each case you have been assigned.
2. Organize your materials for the weekly meeting with your supervisor. Bring in all questionnaires each week and have them arranged in ID order. At the meeting, your supervisor will review your completed work as well as go over those cases you have not yet completed.

II.E. Asking for Help

1. Ask for help before major problems develop. Almost every interviewer will need individual help with some aspects of the study. If there is anything you don't understand about the study or the interview procedure, please don't hesitate to ask questions. We want to help you do the very best job you can when interviewing the respondents.

II.F. Your Most Important Jobs

1. To persuade people to cooperate in our study by giving them the necessary time and answering our questions honestly.
2. To get a clear, complete, and unambiguous statement of a person's responses. To do this you should (a) help the respondent feel relaxed enough to answer all the questions, regardless of the popularity of the answer, and (b) allow the respondent to answer the question without suggesting answers, even subtly. Therefore, do not appear shocked, pleased, or upset by anything respondents

say. Do not contaminate the interview with your own opinions. Instructions will be given later in this manual about how to use neutral probes in interviewing.

3. To record the respondent's ideas in a form which will give someone else (such as the Research Coordinator and Data Manager) a clear picture of what happened in the interview. The best interview in the world is worthless if what happened is a secret between the interviewer and the respondent.

III. General Point of Interviewing

III.A. Introducing Yourself

1. Some General Rules

- a. Know roughly what you will say before the interview. Try not to sound anxious or hesitant when you talk to the respondent. Know in advance what you want to say, but don't use a "canned" speech that will sound phony. Say it in an easy, relaxed manner.
- b. Don't say more than necessary. Your introduction should be done in the shortest way possible. You should not spend much time giving explanations that the respondent did not ask for because this may cause the respondent to not want to be interviewed.
- c. Be business-like, yet friendly.

2. Suggested Instruction

"Hello. My name is _____. I'm from _____. We are conducting a health survey for _____. Thank you for your interest in participating. As you may know, this study is to look at whether HIV counseling and testing is helping people reduce risk behaviors so that they would not get the AIDS virus. I would really appreciate your cooperation in sharing your knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to AIDS"

III.B. How to Answer General Questions and Complaints

Try to answer all questions simply and don't go out of your way to offer long detailed explanations that are not needed. Any complaints by respondents should be noted, given to the Project Director when you turn in your questionnaires, and the respondent should be told that s/he can call in any complaint to the Research Coordinator or Project Director if s/he would like. Below are some questions you may be asked and our suggested answers (but, you should try to put the answers in your own words). Be familiar with the answers so that you can respond in a smooth and comfortable manner if you are asked any of these questions. However, don't try to say too much because you may lose your respondent or find yourself answering many more questions and wasting valuable time.

1. "What is this all about?"

"As you probably know, AIDS has become a major health problem in [site location]. We are conducting this study to know whether HIV counseling

and testing help people to reduce their risk behaviors so that they would not get sick.”

2. “Do you know my name?”

“No, I don’t know your name or any other information such as your address or telephone number, and no interviewers will ever know this information. After your contact with the Project Office, the Research Coordinator only gives me an ID number in order to talk to you. You are free to use a fake first name or nickname to make the interview more casual rather than only using ID number.”

3. “Can I refuse to answer any question in this interview?”

“Yes, the interview is totally voluntary. But I would appreciate any help you can give us. I might add that if you would rather not answer certain questions, all you have to do is say so, and I will skip them.”

4. “I don’t want to be a part of your data bank.”

“I want to assure you that everything you say is completely confidential. When I turn the interview into the office, it is kept completely separate from your name and any other identifying information. Then the information is put into statistical form, and no one can ever tell what you told me.”

5. “How long will the interview take?”

“That’s hard to say because it varies depending on how many answers you tell us, but it usually takes about 30 minutes.”

6. “Who’s funding this study?”

“The funding comes from Family Health International/AIDSCAP in Washington, DC, USA and The Global Programme on AIDS at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.”

III.C. How to Maintain Confidentiality

You are bound by strict ethical procedures which prevent you from ever revealing what any respondent has said. While the respondents will be answering many questions about their private lives, they will confide in you because you can promise them strict confidentiality -- this we mean the luxury of being totally open and honest without fear of being censured or quoted personally. This is very important if respondents have questions about confidentiality. Explain to them that their names will never be connected with

what they tell you. When you get an interview assignment, the respondents' name will not be divulged to you so that even you are blinded to who the respondent is and to his responses on the questionnaire after the interview.

IV. BASIC TECHNIQUES FOR INTERVIEWING

IV.A. How to Read Questions

1. All questions should be read in a natural conversational rhythm in a normal tone of voice. We tried to write the questions in the everyday language that people use in conversation, you must learn to read them exactly as written but should as though you are talking rather than reading. Do not read a question too fast. a respondent may not feel free to ask you to repeat it and may guess at what the question was. If the respondent does not understand a question, repeat it exactly as written. No unusual emphasis should be used unless (a) it is clear that the respondent did not understand certain words, in which case you may want to emphasize the words that were missed, or (b) the words are underlined in the question, indicating that they should be emphasized.
2. What your tone of voice and facial expressions. How you ask a question or probe can be just as important as the wording of the question. Be careful that a tone of censure or criticism does not creep into your voice. Also your face may give you away. The best way to avoid such problems is to remember that your job is not to get people to agree with you, but to try to understand how people feel and think and what they do.
3. Reading Verbatim. Ask the questions exactly as they are worded and in the same order as in questionnaire. Even minor changes in the questionnaire wording can completely change the meaning of a question. So every interviewer must ask the questions just as worded or the responses are meaningless. Also you must follow the order of the questions and never ask questions out of order **UNLESS** there are special instructions to do so, such as in Question X. In this case, follow the skip instructions just as printed.
4. Read only those parts of the questions which are not in brackets/parentheses and not capitalized. All instructions to the interviewer are in brackets and/or in capital letters, and are never read to the respondent. The words such as [**SKIP to Q1B**], (**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.**), and [**Interviewer: Ask MEN ONLY; IF WOMEN SKIP to Q4.**] are instructions to you, the interviewer, and never should be read to the respondent.

IV.B. How to Get Adequate Answers

1. General Guidelines
 - a. Learn the purpose of each question. In order to do a good job of interviewing, you must understand the kind of information we are trying to get by asking a question. Unless you understand its purpose, you will not be

able to judge when a response is adequate and you must probe for clarity or for more information.

- b. Don't try to explain the question. Be neutral. As mentioned before, if a respondent does not understand a question, repeat the question slowly and clearly. Give the respondent time to think about the question. Unless you have other information about handling specific questions, the only acceptable answer for a respondent who wants to know what a question means is "Whatever it means to you." **Never explain the meaning or purpose of a question unless the interviewer instructions tell you to do so.**
- c. Don't define terms used in questions. Some respondents may ask you what we mean by a word used in a question. Leave the definition to the respondent, except where the written instructions give you a definition or alternate wording. Instead of giving your own definition, just say "**Whatever _____ means to you**" or "**However you use the term _____.**" The only exception to this rule is that for certain factual questions you will be given specific instructions on how to probe for accurate information, such as Question X.
- d. Don't leave a question until you have an adequate answer or find that a respondent can't give a clearer answer.
- e. Don't accept a "don't know" without probing at least once. When you ask a question, people often say "I don't know" just to give themselves time to collect their thoughts. If anyone says "don't know," then probe by saying "**Well, what do you think?**" or "**I just want your opinion**" (if the question asks for opinions rather than facts). Or, if the question asks for facts, we prefer if you probe further by saying "**What's your best guess?**" or "**Approximately?**" to indicate that 100% accuracy is not required.
- f. Be sure that the respondent understands the time frame of the question being asked. While the majority of the sexual behavior questions ask the respondent to recall the past 2 months, there are two questions that require recall over the past 6 months (#13A or #13B and 21T only). You can facilitate the respondent's recall by asking them to think back 2 months (or 6 months) to a specific date, season or event to 'anchor' their recall. Then ask, for example, "**Since (date, season or event), how often have you _____?**" .
- g. Respondents may have difficulty with questions having multiple response options (e.g. #16-19). Please note that there are four types of multiple response option questions and that all of these questions have four response categories. For these questions, you will be provided with response cards showing the response options in writing, as well as a visual representation of the response options. Place the response card corresponding to the question

you are asking facing the respondent, pointing to the response options on the card as you read them. Leave the card facing the respondent until you have completed that question. As there are four different types of response cards, be sure that you are using the response card that corresponds to the question you are asking.

2. Probing

In most interviews, you will have to ask additional questions in order to clarify the respondent's response. This is called probing. There are several issues to keep in mind when probing for clarification:

- a. Use neutral probes that do not suggest answers. Probes are needed to get more complete and detailed answers. All probes must not be "leading" -- that is, your probe must not suggest any particular answer to the respondent. Probes should be used whenever the respondent is hesitant to answer a question; when s/he seems to have trouble expressing her/himself; when s/he seems to shy to speak; whenever there is any reason for the interviewer to think that the respondent has not given a complete report of her/his thinking; and, finally, when reassuring is needed because a respondent seems to lack confidence.
- b. Many interviewers forget to use two of the most effective neutral probes: (1) **silence** and (2) **repeating the original question**. The interviewer who can wait patiently and quietly will soon find that 15 seconds of silence is more than most respondents can take, and the respondent will often expand or clarify a previously inadequate answer if you simply wait. And repeating the question is another neutral way of probing. Be sure to repeat only the question as it is written in the questionnaire.
- c. Avoid "depends" or "qualified" answers. Never accept a "depends" or "qualified" answer the first time it is given as a response to a question. Respondents often use phrases such as "Well, that depends." When the respondent gives a qualified answer, we advise one of the following probes: **Repeat the question** (unless this response will sound like you are not listening). Preface the question with a phrase like "**Well, in general**" or "**On the whole**." Remind the respondent that we want to know which code comes closest to her/his views; use an introductory phrase such as "**Well, if you had to choose**" or "**Even though you are somewhere in the middle, which way do you lean?**" and repeat the question. If the respondent insists upon answering in qualified terms after probed enough, simply record verbatim her/his entire response, alone with your probes.

IV.B. How to Record Answers

1. General Guidelines

- a. Be ready to write. Have your pen or pencil ready as you ask your question.
- b. Learn to look up at your respondent and to look interested while you are interviewing.
- c. Never erase. If you make a mistake, cross out the wrong part instead of erasing. It's faster and often easier to read.

2. How to Handle Precoded Questions

Nearly all the questions in the questionnaire are precoded. For most questions, you will simply circle a number or fill in a box with a number the respondent gives you. Keep the following in mind when asking precoded questions.

- a. Show corrections if you need to change a code. If you give the wrong precoded response by mistake, or the respondent changes her/his mind about an answer, cross it out and make the correction.
- b. Be sure to record any comments the respondent volunteers in answering a precoded question whenever you have any doubt about whether you entered the right code.

3. How to Record Verbatim Responses

When asking the few open-ended questions, you must record exactly what the respondent tells you. Use the following guidelines when recording responses word for word.

- a. Don't hesitate to ask the respondent to "Please slow down." Many times respondents will talk much more quickly than you can write. So asking them to talk slower is understandable in order for you to take their comments down correctly.
- b. Always use a person's own language. Quote your respondent directly. Don't polish what the respondent says even if s/he uses slang language or profane language.
- c. If there's not enough space for the respondent's answer, use the margins (top, side, or bottom) but be sure to label the continuation of your notes clearly.

V. HOW TO ADMINISTER THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This section is to be written after the questionnaire is finalized.

VI. STEPS FOR THE PRACTICE INTERVIEW

As part of your interviewer training, you are required to complete one practice interview. Below are the steps you should follow.

- Step 1. Introduce yourself and briefly answer the respondent's questions as suggested in Section III.A and B of this manual.
- Step 2. Follow the directions as shown on each page of the interview until the questionnaire is completed.
- Step 3. After you have finished asking all the questions, thank the respondent.
- Step 4. Put the completed questionnaire in the envelope and seal it. Then you should sign your name on the back of the sealed envelope. Tell the respondent that you only receive one of these envelopes with each respondent's ID number per interview and you **MUST** turn in this envelope just the way the respondent last saw it or you will not be paid for your work and you will be in violation of her/his legal confidentiality rights.