



FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

1. Does your organization conduct interviewer training? If so, how is the training done? If not, do you think it should (why or why not)?

Discussion Cues: One way to train interviewers is to have the primary investigator go through the questionnaire with interviewers in a workshop-style format. This allows interviewers to become familiar with the questions on the survey and to seek clarification. Training should cover standard protocols for dealing with participant questions, refusals, those who reschedule, and language barriers. Those being trained should pair up and interview each other to check for clarity of speech and pace. A small pilot study to test the questionnaire or to train interviewers can also be conducted.

2. In your experience conducting telephone or face-to-face interviews, what kinds of questions have participants asked during the interview? Were you able to answer them?

Discussion Cues: It is always good to learn from the experience of others. If some members of the group have not conducted interviews, it is helpful for others to talk about their experiences and give an idea of the kinds of responses to expect from participants. Were people suspicious? Did they ask questions that you did not anticipate when developing the questionnaire and training interviewers? How did you handle these situations?

The general rule for interviewing is to be informative but stick to pre-determined explanations. Be friendly but professional, and if you cannot answer the participant's questions, tell the person where to find the answers.



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