

Interviewer Training Manual

for use in

Diabetes Risk reduction through Eat, walk, sleep And Medication therapy management in depressed Cambodians (DREAM)



Source: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-health-cambodian-americans.html>

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This manual was developed with funding from the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, MD005879-02, PI Wagner

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This manual is based on The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Interviewer Training Module.

Accessed on April 21, 2011 from:
<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/training/index.htm>

Additional content was obtained from PROYECTO PREHCO. *Manual del Entrevistador*. 2/4/2003. Accessed on May, 2011 from:
<http://prehco.rcm.upr.edu/docs/en1.pdf>

Content and How to Use this Manual

This manual was developed for the interviewers collecting data in the Diabetes Risk reduction through Eat, walk, sleep And Medication therapy management (DREAM) research study. The purpose of this manual is to standardize the procedures during data collection. The manual was also developed to help and support the interviewers working in the field. This manual describes the objectives of the DREAM research study and the important concepts the field interviewer should know during data collection. This manual will help you learn the skills to be an effective interviewer for the DREAM research study.

The Main Objectives of this Manual are:

- To ensure standardized data collection across interviewers and within an interviewer across multiple interviews.
- For the interviewers to learn and understand the general characteristics of the DREAM research study and the methodology used during the process of data collection.
- To inform the interviewers of their important role/function, responsibilities and procedures to follow during field work.
- For the interviewers to understand details of the surveys for the DREAM research study and the procedure to follow to complete the questions in the survey.
- The manual is divided into 8 sessions.
- The first section is an introduction to the DREAM research study, including the importance of the study, objectives, and methods, as well as characteristics of the people who will be interviewed.
- The second section is about the qualities of an interviewer, the tasks, safety measures and criteria for study dismissal.
- The third section is about the importance of interviewers, how the data you collect are used and can improve the health of Cambodians in the future.
- The fourth section will detail interviewer responsibilities. These responsibilities should be met every single time you conduct an interview.
- In the fifth section you will learn about the interviewing process, of what you will be doing as a DREAM interviewer. You will first be introduced to the entire

DREAM process. Lastly, you will learn about the measures that are taken to assure the quality of DREAM data.

- The sixth section will provide tips and interviewer techniques about several aspects of conducting surveys in participants' homes.

Throughout the manual, you will see dialogue in italics. When the dialogue demonstrates an interviewer following the protocol correctly it is using *suggested language*, so it appears in **green for “go”**. When the dialogue is demonstrating an interviewer not following the protocol, it is giving an example of *language to avoid*, it **appears in red for “stop”**.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE DREAM RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Overview

This section offers general information about the DREAM research study: project description, general objectives, methods, description of study sample and the importance of collecting this data and the results obtained.

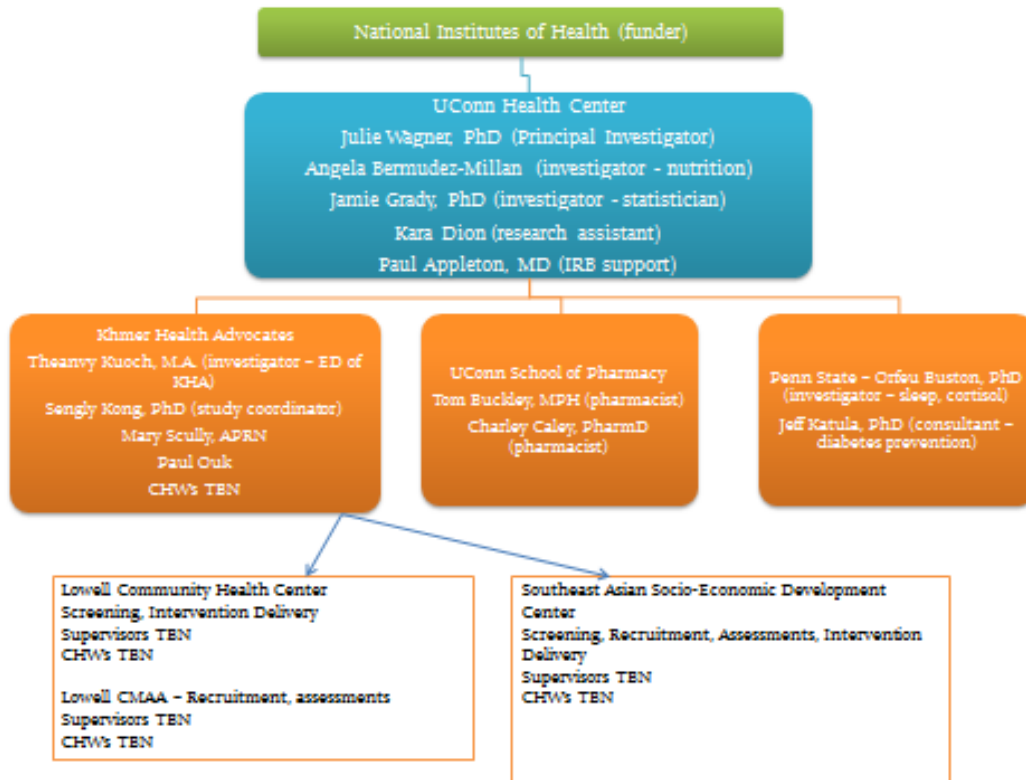
After completing Section 1, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain why the study is important to the health of Cambodians
- List the members of the study team
- Describe the study design
- State the research question that the study will answer

1.2 Project Description and Organization

The DREAM study (Dibetes Risk Reduction through Eat, Walk, Sleep And Medication Therapy Management in Depressed Cambodians) is a research study funded by National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK – MD005879-02). The study personnel are listed below.





As with any working group, the participation of each member is important. Each member has its specific responsibilities, and when part of a group, contributes significantly to achieving the main objectives for the study.

1.3 The Importance of the Study

The Importance of the Study

A. Diabetes Risk and Depression

- Diabetes and depression are two of the biggest public health issues facing the world today.
- Cambodians who came to the United States as refugees and torture survivors suffer from both depression and diabetes at rates higher than the US general population.
- Diabetes risk can be measured by biological risk factors such as weight and blood pressure.



- Blood samples can provide levels of glucose, cholesterol and insulin. A hormone called cortisol can be tested as a way to measure mental stress.
- Major studies in westerners and east Asians have shown that diabetes onset can be delayed or prevented by improving lifestyle factors including exercise, nutrition, and sleep quality. Lifestyle improvement is MORE effective than medication for preventing diabetes. And there are no harmful side effects!

ជំងឺទឹកនោមផ្អែម

chomngu tuknomphaem



- Depression also increases a person’s risk for diabetes. In part, this is because depressed patients often have more sedentary lifestyles, less healthy diets, and more sleep problems than people without depression.
- In addition, Cambodian-Americans suffer from high rates of chronic diseases that require medication. The combination of many medications may cause side effects that can lead to increased risk for diabetes. So, medications need to be managed very carefully in people who are at risk for diabetes.
- Racial/ethnic minority groups with mental illness face many barriers to receiving effective healthcare. They face issues with insurance, cultural beliefs towards Western medicine, and healthcare providers who cannot meet their needs.
- Community Health Educators are known to help improve health outcomes of the communities that they serve. However, not many studies have been done regarding the effectiveness of community health educators in mental health interventions.



B. Lifestyle intervention, Medication Therapy Management, and Diabetes

- Lifestyle interventions have been shown to improve risk factors for diabetes. *Eat, Walk, Sleep* is a lifestyle intervention created specifically to decrease diabetes risk in Cambodians.
- Medication Therapy Management (MTM) involves pharmacy specialists and physicians who review and adjust a patient’s medication plan to improve clinical outcomes, including diabetes risk.
- Studies have shown how community health educators (CHEs) help medically underserved communities.
- To date, CHEs have delivered few psychosocial interventions. Showing that they

can do so could increase the community's access to psychosocial treatment.

This study will test the effects of a lifestyle intervention and medication therapy management on lifestyle and biological diabetes risk factors in underserved Cambodian-Americans with depression.



1.5 Study Design

The study will compare:

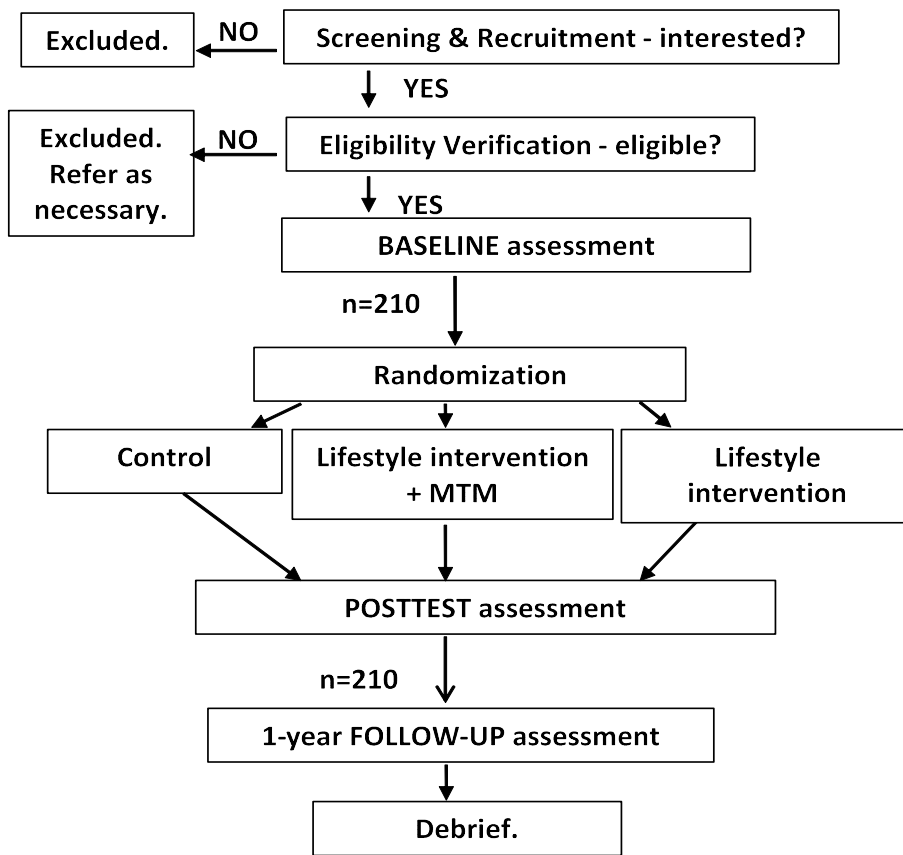
The effectiveness of CHE led Eat, Walk, Sleep sessions
Versus
CHE led Eat, Walk, Sleep sessions PLUS Medication Therapy Management
Versus
Enhanced standard care

The study is a randomized, controlled trial. Randomized means that a person has equal chances of getting one treatment or the other. What group a person is assigned to is up to chance like the roll of a dice or toss of a coin. In this study, the decision about which treatment each participant gets will be made by a computer.

The researchers are testing their belief that people who participate in Eat, Walk, Sleep sessions will show more improvement in their lifestyle diabetes risk than those who receive enhanced standard care only. They are also testing their belief that people who participate in the lifestyle intervention sessions PLUS Medication Therapy Management sessions will show more improvement in their biological diabetes risk factors than the other groups.

People who participate in the study are called “participants”. There will be 210 participants in the DREAM study.

This is a diagram of the study design:



1.6 Study Methods

The study will recruit 210 Cambodian-Americans with depression who have high risk for diabetes. Each place that runs participants through the study is called a “site”. There are 3 sites for the DREAM study. The sites are Khmer Health Advocates in West Hartford, CT, the Lowell Community Health Center and Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Lowell in Lowell, MA, and the Socio-Economic Development Center in Providence, RI.

Participants will be:

- Age 35-65
- Self-identified as Cambodian or Cambodian-American
- Both male and female
- Khmer speaking
- Score ≥ 5 on the ADA Diabetes Risk Test (indicating elevated diabetes risk)

- Score ≥ 1.75 on the Khmer version of the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (indicating depressive symptoms)

Based on previous work with Cambodian participants from Khmer Health Advocates, we expect that many participants will have a low level of education, will have low literacy (not be able to read and write well), and low numeracy (not be able to do math well). Therefore, the research team has designed the intervention so that virtually all participants can learn strategies for living a balanced lifestyle, regardless of their education, and their reading, writing, and math skills.

Interviewers will complete all assessments during home visits. Each assessment will include surveys. Each assessment also includes collecting hair samples, blood pressure, heart rate, height, weight, and waist measurements. You will also put *actigraphy* monitors on the participant. These are monitors that record activity and sleep. You will give the participant an incentive (gift card) for this visit. One week later, you will collect the actigraphy monitors and transport the participant to a local blood draw center. You will give the participant an incentive for this visit and then mail the actigraphy monitors to the researchers so they can download the data on the monitors.



All participants will complete these assessments at:

1. Baseline (the beginning of the study before any treatment begins)
2. Post treatment (one year post baseline), and
3. One year follow-up (2 years post baseline).

Tork Tork Penh Bampong	Do thing step by step; small things (saving) will be accumulated to a big one.
Drop by drop fills the (bamboo) container	(Direct meaning came from Cambodian countryside while people produce palm sugar)

The study allows 32 months (2 $\frac{2}{3}$ years) for recruitment, and an additional 16 months (1 $\frac{1}{3}$ years), or 4 years total, to deliver the intervention and to complete all data collection. 4 years is not a lot of time to work with 210 people multiple times! Therefore, it is

important that the you be extremely organized and efficient.

If you are having trouble meeting your weekly and monthly responsibilities, let a supervisor know so that we can help you work more efficiently and give you more support.

As a Community Health Educator, you will be responsible for completing all data collection. The remainder of the manual covers your role.



SECTION 2

THE WORK OF A FIELD INTERVIEWER

2.1 Overview

This section highlights the qualities of an interviewer, their tasks, and safety measures.

After completing Section 2, you will be able to:

- Describe the qualities and tasks of an interviewer
- State specific measures an interviewer can take to stay safe in the field
- List some behaviors that are unacceptable for interviewers

2.2 Qualities of an Interviewer

The nature of your job as an interviewer allows for some flexibility regarding the organization of your job and the time you will need to spend to be able to accomplish it. However, the job of an interviewer requires a lot of effort since obtaining the information in the proper way can be more complicated than it appears.

In order to make sure that the activities for data collection are done efficiently, a field work interviewer should possess the qualities listed in Table 1.



Table 1. Qualities of a Field Work Interviewer លក្ខណៈសម្បត្តិ	
Interest in the research project	ការស្រាវជ្រាវ Research អត្រាការប្រាក់ Interest
Available to complete the trainings	វគ្គបណ្តុះបណ្តាល Training
Available to complete data collection	ការប្រមូលទិន្នន័យ Data Collection
Effective communicator	ការទំនាក់ទំនង Communication
Ability to work as a member of a team	ក្រុមការងារ Team
Motivator, able to motivate participants	លើកទឹកចិត្ត Motivate
Punctuality	ទៀងទាត់ Punctual
Ability to maintain study information confidential	ជាការសម្ងាត់ Confidential
Responsible with the management of monetary incentives, receipts, research equipment	ការទទួលខុសត្រូវ Responsible
Available to work before and after hours, including occasional weekends	អាចរកបាន Availability
A car to drive to participants home or Quest laboratories	រថយន្ត Car
Demonstrate ability to work with the field work supervisor, following instructions and meeting the deadlines of the work	សមត្ថភាពក្នុងការ Ability
Organization at work	ការរៀបចំ Organize
Can pay attention to details	សេចក្តីចំណុះ Detail

2.3 General Tasks of the Interviewer

- ✓ Localize the home address.
- ✓ Make first contact with the participant.
- ✓ Complete the survey instrument, all parts as indicated in the manual and during training.
- ✓ Complete body measurements such as blood pressure, height, and weight.
- ✓ Help participants wear research equipment that measures their walking and sleeping.
- ✓ Take participant to a Quest Lab for a blood draw.
- ✓ Meet the established deadlines for data collection.
- ✓ Keep the study coordinator or field work supervisor informed of the work completed.

2.4 Specific Tasks of the Interviewer

- Complete the full training.
- Review the manual with the trainer and complete any assigned tasks, such as practicing the surveys.
- Dedicate the required hours per week in data collection.
- Understand the study objectives.
- Become very familiar with the surveys. This does not require memorizing it, but rather comprehending what each instrument is assessing and what each question is asking.
- Become very familiar with the body measurements.
- Become very familiar with using the equipment to measure activity and sleep.
- Plan workflow appropriately.
- Coordinate the interviews with the participant. The interview should be scheduled at the convenience of the participant, not the interviewer.
- Return to the home as necessary for data collection.
- Follow to the key the questions in the interview. The conceptual design of the questions is crucial. If the interviewer formulates the questions in a different way, the validity of the survey is lost.
- Motivate participants to complete the survey without coercion.
- Coordinate the blood draw.
- Pay the monetary incentive to the participant.

- Complete required documentation.
- Attend supervision meetings

2.5 Safety Measures

Participants will be given the option to complete interviews at their home, or at the community sites. Our past experience is that most participants will choose a home visit. Due to the nature of the job of an interviewer conducting interviews in the field it is important to take into consideration several security measures. Some safety measures are:

- Always call the participant and make sure she will be at the home for the visit.
- *“Hi ____, this is [name] from the DREAM study. I am calling you to confirm our visit at _____. Is it still ok for us to do the home visit?”*
- *“Will anyone be at your household during our visit, so that we can bring enough information/handouts for family members, or coloring books and crayons to entertain children?”*
- This can lead participant to let you know who will be there during the time of the visit.
- Prepare the materials needed for the home visit in advance and carry them with you.
- If possible put them in your back seat and avoid entering the trunk of a car.
- Dress modestly and professionally to protect yourself, wear shoes and clothes that make it easy for you to move quickly. No tank tops or flip flops, please.
- Leave jewelry at home.
- Leave purse at work if you can.
- Avoid areas with poor visibility.
- If you are entering a building with multiple units, make some noise (shake your keys) when walking in the hallway or the stairs. This prevents someone being startled or surprised by your presence.
- Check your surroundings. If something does not look right, come back later or on another day.

Kloun tirp kom toung dey kley kom choung sra war aub phnom	Do not try to do anything beyond your abilities and available resources.
Do not try to grasp the mountain with your short body and short arms	

- Trust your instinct/judgement. If the actions of anyone in the home you are visiting set off alarm bells, trust your intuition and position yourself for an easy exit. Always respect your ‘gut feelings’. Please note that this situation is most unlikely to arise, but it is better to err on the side of safety.
- Never assume the role of protector.
- If you have to, consider a neutral meeting location (e.g., the community health center or other private community site) if visit cannot be made at a safe environment.
- Report all incidents to your supervisor.
- Let her know the day, time and the location of your visit.
- If you are worried about visiting the client on your own, or in the dark, or in a particular area, discuss your concerns as soon as possible with your supervisor. When needed, the study coordinator can do the home visit with you.
- Always remove yourself from dangerous situations.
- Whenever possible, conduct home visits during daylight hours. Never be at a participant’s home past 8:00pm.

2.6 Criteria for Dismissal

You were selected as an interviewer based on your skills, abilities, and experience. Therefore, the study team is pleased that you will be performing interviews. We do not anticipate any problems. Nonetheless, it is helpful to review some criteria for removal from this research study. They include but are not limited to:

- Violating the confidentiality of the participant.
- Interviewing people that you know personally, such as friend, family members, neighbors.
- Submitting false information in the interview.
- Failing to meet the number of working hours per week.
- Using your identification for other purposes that are not related to the research study.
- Submitting false receipts from monetary incentives paid to participants.
- Using the computer tablet for personal purposes.



As an interviewer you should know how important your job is and understand your role in the research project. The next two sections will discuss this in greater detail.

SECTION 3 THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERVIEWERS

3.1 Overview

There is a saying, “*What gets measured gets done.*” Research works this way, too. But before we can improve the community’s health and save lives, we need information from participants—we need to collect it, analyze it, and measure it. Only then can we do something about it.

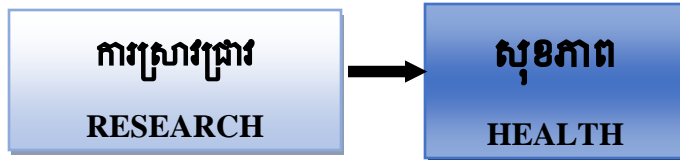
As a research interviewer, you will be on the front lines to improve health because you are handling the first step: collecting information. This training module will show you how to do this and will help you improve your skills as an interviewer.

After completing Section 3, you will be able to:

- Give specific reasons that an interviewer’s job is so important
- Describe several ways that the data you collect are used
- List positive changes that health data have made for the health of individuals and the nation

3.2 Your Job as an Interviewer

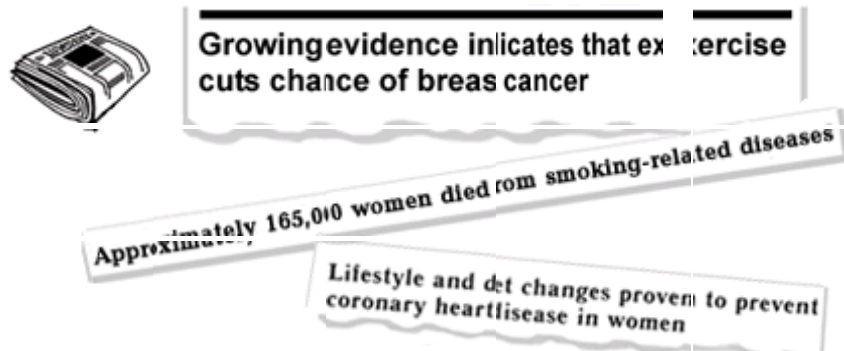
“As an interviewer, you could be considered the most important part of the entire research process. Because you are the one that scientists count on to collect accurate data. Crucial health decisions are made based on the information you collect.”



Why is Your Work as an Interviewer Important?

When you perform an interview, you will be asking people about factors that affect health, some of which even contribute to the death of thousands of people each year.

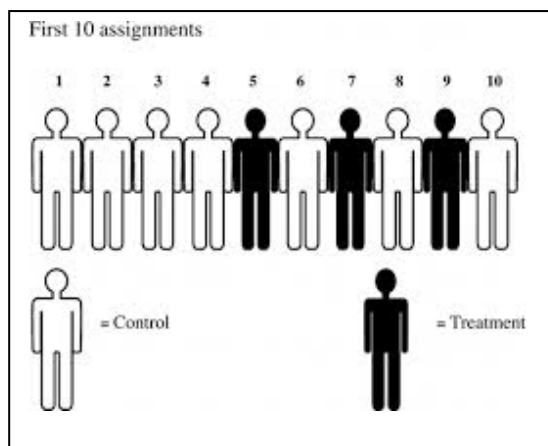
The information gathered by interviewers is eventually used by many organizations to help persuade people to adopt healthier lifestyles. If you watch the evening news or read the daily newspaper, you probably hear this type of information, on a regular basis. This information comes from interviewers like you. Do these headlines sound familiar?



Your Role Is Critical

Because interviewing every person in your community is not possible, the people you will be interviewing are among a small, scientifically selected group called a sample. The information obtained from the sample can be used to apply results to the larger community.

Numbers that have been collected and analyzed are called statistics. The most accurate health statistics come straight from the source—real people. Therefore, one of the most important jobs in helping the community is yours—the interviewer. It is you, after all, who will play a pivotal role by recording information from the people you talk to during interviews.



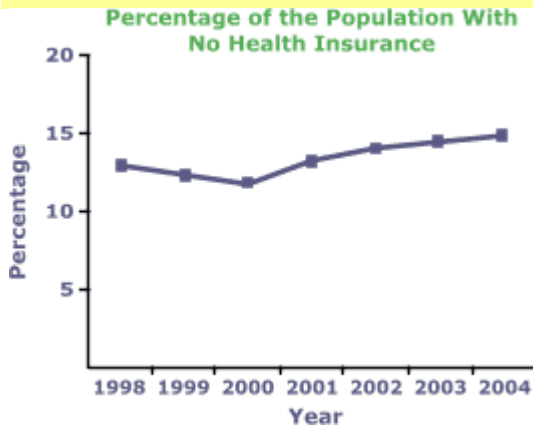
3.3 How the Data Are Used

After you have collected information, your data are analyzed by health scientists. Your data will be used to help determine if the DREAM interventions actually prevent diabetes. Also, in addition to educating policymakers and the public, scientists can use the data, in many ways, including:

- Tracking trends over time
- Categorizing the data into subgroups
- Guiding state health policies
- Advocating for better healthcare for your community
- Advocating for policies that would increase the use of CHEs

We know the following things because of the data collected by research interviewers like you:

In recent years the percentage of the population without health insurance has been increasing (tracking trends over time). This type of data can be used to change policies so that more people have access to health insurance. The recent healthcare reform law, called the “Affordable Care Act”, came about because of data like you are collecting.



People who participated in an exercise program are less likely to develop diabetes than those who just got health education. This type of data let healthcare providers know which treatments work best.

Studies of interpreter services show that people who speak English as a second language get better health care when an interpreter helps doctors and patients understand each other. This type of data can be used to change laws. In the US, federally funded healthcare agencies now **MUST** provide interpreter services – and this law came about because of data like you are collecting.

Did You Know?

Answers not entered by the interviewer can't be analyzed, and that may mean people don't get the help they need. Answers that were entered incorrectly will lead to incorrect data, and that may mean people will never hear the message that they need to hear to stay healthy. Incorrect data could lead to a waste of millions of dollars spent trying to solve the wrong problems. So, it's we, the interviewers, who have the awesome responsibility to do our best in getting the information the right way.

SECTION 4 THE ROLE OF INTERVIEWERS

4.1 Overview

This section will detail the role and responsibilities of interviewers. These responsibilities should be upheld every single time you conduct an interview.

After completing Section 4, you will be able to:

- Describe the primary interviewer responsibilities
- List the 8 rules of “following the protocol”
- State specific steps to assure confidentiality and privacy
- Maintain quality data collection procedures
- List strategies for handling common interview problems

4.2 Your Responsibilities as an Interviewer

The five primary interviewer responsibilities are listed below, and will be discussed in detail over the next several pages:

- A. Follow the protocol
- B. Ensure participants' confidentiality
- C. Make quality a priority in all aspects of interviewing
- D. Maintain a courteous and friendly manner
- E. Manage interview problems appropriately

“Being an interviewer takes a lot of skill...it's a job full of responsibilities. You were chosen for this job not only because you can collect accurate data, but also because you're able to listen to people and deal with their questions and concerns.”



A. Follow the Protocol.

Following the protocol means doing things by the rules. **There are 7 rules to remember.**

Rule #1: All Interviewers Must Ask The Questions Exactly As They Are, Without Modification

You will administer the surveys with a computer tablet that ‘reads’ the questions and response options to the participant.

One word can change the meaning of a question drastically. Trying to interpret a question for the participant can also have the same effect.

If the participant asks: “*what does that mean?*” you should point out that there is an “I don’t know” response, if there is one.

Some other phrases that you can use to help you if the participant asks: “*what does that mean?*”

“What it means to you.”

“Let me repeat the question for you...”

“I apologize, but I am not allowed to interpret any question.”

“I will record the concerns you have expressed to me so that they take them into account during the analysis of the data.”

Additionally, the interviewer has the option to administer the survey in English or Khmer. The decision about which language to use is based solely on participant preference. If a participant does not understand a particular question or response option, the interviewer should ask the participant if she would like it read in the other language. The interviewer should avoid jumping back and forth too much, but should feel free to offer the other language if it enhances the participant’s understanding.

Rule #2: Read the Whole Question.

It is your responsibility to expose the person that is being interviewed to each question exactly how it is intended, even if the participant interrupts you. The objective of this is to harmonize the procedure of the interview for each participant.

Some phrases that you can use when the participant interrupts are:

“I apologize, I need to play the question to you one more time.”

“I am sorry, I need to play the question one more time to make sure that the information I am collecting is correct.”

“It is important that I play the full question so that you can answer completely and precisely.”

“I would like to play the question again to make sure that we record it correctly.”

It is possible that at the beginning of the interview the participant interrupts you and/or elaborates when you are reading a question. As you obtain more experience you will notice that after making a few reminders to the participant about how important it is for you to play the question, the participant will cease from making interruptions and/or comments that are not relevant to the interview. This is called training the participant.

Rule #3: Only Ask the Questions to the Recruited Participant.

If the participant decides that is ok to have someone else present while you conduct the interview, sometimes the participant might ask for advice about how to answer a question to the family member that is present. It is important that you interview the participant directly. Letting a family member reply on the participant’s behalf can lead to inaccurate responses.

Rule #4: Keep Your Reactions Neutral.

When a participant responds to a survey, you may have thoughts or feelings about what they are saying. However, you need to keep your reactions neutral. You also need to watch for non verbal expressions, such as tone of voice or your face expression that can reveal:

- Surprise
- Approval or disapproval
- Amazement
- Worry
- Sadness or anger

It is important to have empathy for the participant. You do not need to sound cold or uncaring. However, over-reacting to the living conditions of the participant and the surroundings is another way of losing neutrality. Both ways can result in incorrect data

collection or incomplete data or refusal from the participant to participate in the research study.

Another way of losing the neutrality of the interview is how you react - positively or negatively - to the participants' answers with your own opinions, experiences or histories. You need to avoid judging or expressing your personal opinions with respect to any topic.

More of this is discussed in section 5.

Rule #5: Be Objective.

You need to be objective in what you say or do when you are in contact with a participant. This will help make sure that the information is reliable and impartial. For example, if a participant gives you an ambiguous or unclear answer, you need to ask for clarification. You should not assume or infer the responses.

Rule #6: Speak Slowly and Clearly.

Communicate effectively with the appropriate voice and tone. Use a normal tone of voice. Do not chew gum or any other food. Pronounce clearly. Read slowly and clearly making sure that each word is heard, but making sure that you are moving forward with the interview.

Rule #7: Stick to the Script.

It is good and even necessary to chat with participants before the survey begins in order to establish trust and build rapport. But, some participants like to talk, so they will try to engage you in conversation during the interview. This is a problem because it can change their answer to the question being asked, alter the flow of the interview, and take up time you should be spending on the interview.

If a patient wants to discuss a particular question, you might respond by saying:

“I see. Now let me repeat the question for you...”

“I understand. So for this question, would you say that your response is...”

If the participant is difficult to keep on track, you might like to say something like:

“I don’t want to be rude or cut you off, but we have a lot of material to cover today and only a short time to do it. So I’m going to try to keep us on track. Therefore, I’m going to return our attention to the survey now.”

Considering that the interviews will be conducted with adults, there is a probability that some of them might ask you for advice or recommendations about medications that the participant is taking, or what to do about a particular ailment he/she is suffering with. It is important NOT to give advice about this. If there is a serious problem happening or a cause for concern, you should recommend that the participant call the doctor and you should inform your supervisor about this case. Prescribing, advising or recommending what to do can lead to severe ethical and even legal problems for you and other members of the study team.

There’s probably the chance that the participant might worry about a family situation or about a specific family member. She might ask your opinion or confirmation about it, for example: *“My son never comes to visit, he is a bad son, don’t you think?”* or *“Do you see how bad they treat me? What can I do?”* These situations can place the interviewer in a delicate position, because you cannot ignore the participant or switch the subject very easily. You should avoid taking sides, making judgments, or give advice about it. Some ways to get out of those difficult situations are:

- *“I understand that you feel bad about that situation.”*
- *“It must worry you that your son does not come regularly.”*
- *“Sometimes is difficult to know what to do in certain situations.”*

Your role as an interviewer is not to try to solve the problems of the participant, but rather to collect information that can contribute to the health of the whole community of Cambodians at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

B: Ensure Participant Confidentiality

Some Interview Questions May Be Perceived as Sensitive or Highly Personal

Questions such as:

- “Have you ever gone hungry because you just couldn’t get any food?”

Protecting confidentiality is of the utmost importance. Be careful what you say. You may be thinking that you would never violate a participant's confidentiality, even if you had the chance. But it’s easy to slip.

Reasons for Confidentiality

It is essential to collect the most accurate data possible, so you want participants to give you truthful answers. The best way to ensure truthful answers is for you to guarantee that the information they provide will be kept completely confidential.

Gaining someone's trust by assuring confidentiality will improve the quality of the information you gather. Violating a participant's confidentiality has serious consequences. Violating confidentiality could cause you to lose your job.

How to Assure Confidentiality

Here are several ways you can guarantee your participants' confidentiality and help them understand that you won't misuse the information.

1. Assure the person that anything identifying them like their name is separated from the record of your interview. This includes any personal information like their telephone number.
2. Explain that the data you are collecting will be combined with information collected in interviews of other people. Individual information is further protected because the data are combined and reports only include aggregate figures. For example, a report might say that 10% of the population has a household income of less than \$10,000, not that Mr. Kong earns less than \$10,000.
3. Don't discuss details of your interviews outside of the work environment. Although discussion of participant information among staff is a necessary part of the research process, do not disclose interview information with family, friends, or anyone else not involved with the study.
4. Store your materials in a locked (or secure) area when you aren't at work. Don't leave confidential materials on desks or tables overnight.

If you notice the participant is worried about how the information will be used, offer reassurance about the confidentiality for the study by saying: *“I assure you that all your answers will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your answers will be separated from any information that can identify you directly. The results from this study are presented as a summary and only the research team has access to the data.”*

Another way to assure confidentiality is to provide privacy. Privacy refers to the setting in which the data is collected. Sensitive questions are more likely to be answered honestly if the interview is conducted in a private setting.

How to Protect Privacy

It is important to tell the participant that the interview preferably should be conducted in private. If some else decide to stay, with respect, tact and ingenuity, you should try different ways for the other person to leave so that you can be alone with participant.

There are several other ways to protect privacy.

When calling to confirm your appointment, you can explain to the participant the necessity of conducting the interview in private, because some of the questions are personal.

The day of the interview, if someone else is there, you can ask the participant to support you and ask the other person to leave herself.

Another way is to explain the questions of one of the sections in the interview to the participant and the other curious person in the household, you can say: *“Some of the questions require personal opinions, in order to express them honestly, it is necessary for the participant and me to be alone.”*

C. Make Quality a Priority

A lot of people are counting on you to do the best job you possibly can. These people include the participants, researchers, health professionals, the media, state and local health departments, and anyone whose health will benefit from the data you collect. Here are several ways you can be sure that you are making quality a priority in your work. Each will be discussed in detail in the next few pages.

- Understand the nature and content of the questions so you can be comfortable with the interview process
- Interview the correct participant
- Record responses and code dispositions properly
- Conduct interviews as efficiently as you can

How to Make Quality a Priority

One Way to Make Quality a Priority is to Understand The Questions

Obtain a copy of the questionnaires and read them thoroughly. Then discuss with your supervisor and other interviewers any topics or questions that make you uncomfortable or are unclear. Here are three reasons for discomfort with questions, and what you can do.

1. Unfamiliar terms

If you've never heard terms like "hemoglobin A one C" or "cortisol" chances are good that some of your participants won't know those words either. When they ask you, "what does that mean?" it doesn't inspire much confidence if you say, *"I don't know; I'm just an interviewer."* Instead, ask a supervisor for guidance.

Along with your supervisor and other interviewers, go through the questionnaires and define any terms that might be unfamiliar or difficult for you to explain to a participant. Additionally, make sure you understand what each question means, not just the isolated words. If a participant asks you to explain the question, read any explanatory information shown on the questionnaire. If there is no explanatory information, simply say, *"Let me repeat the question."* Then if they still can't answer the question, select "Don't know/not sure" as their response. Be sure to document the questions you get from people that you interview and share this information with your supervisor so that any problems can be addressed in future versions of the questionnaire.

2. Sensitive questions

Sometimes participants get very emotional describing events of their lives. For example, questions about depression may be difficult for someone who is suffering from depressive symptoms.

Acknowledge that the interview seems difficult for the person and ask them if they would like to continue or reschedule it. If the person decides to continue, remain as neutral as possible during the interview. It is certainly appropriate to express concern at the end of the interview, and to apologize for triggering the upset.

3. Intimidating question wording

Some participants may view the questions as some kind of test for which their answers are either right or wrong. For example, most people know that they should exercise regularly, but don't always do so for one reason or another. Reassure them this is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Some participants, fearful about how the information will be used, may not give you an honest answer. For example, most people know that drinking a lot of alcohol is not good, so they might not want to admit to doing it. Reassure them the information you collect is strictly confidential, and that their answers will be combined with thousands of others.

Another way to Make Quality a Priority is to Interview the Correct Participant

Always interview the person selected; this is the only way to ensure that the sample is correct. Often the person selected is hard to reach or isn't home, and another person suggests you simply conduct the interview with him or her instead. Don't be tempted by this "easy complete." Instead say something like, *"No, I'm sorry. I have to interview the right person. The accuracy of the study depends on it."*

Another way to Make Quality a Priority is to Properly Record Responses

As with any type of science, some errors are an inevitable part of survey research. However, you can reduce or eliminate error in your data by being careful to choose the correct codes for responses.

The data for DREAM will be collected on a computer tablet. Instructions for using the tablet can be found in the tablet protocol.

A tablet is a small, touchscreen computer similar to an i-Phone. It uses cell phone waves to automatically transfer the data you enter from the tablet to a database at Khmer Health Advocates. The benefits of using the tablet include: no need for paper and pencil assessment; no need for hand data entry; fewer data collection and data entry errors. However, the tablets only work if you handle them correctly, and if there is cell phone service available. Cell phone service is very reliable in the places you will be working. However, if you are inside an apartment building, the thick walls may prevent the cell phone waves from entering the room you are conducting the interview in.

For this reason, it is imperative that you ALWAYS carry a back-up paper copy of the interview. If there is any problem with the tablet, you should spend only a minute or two trying to solve the problem, and then switch to the paper survey. Details of the tablet protocol can be found in Section 9 of this manual.

D. Maintain a Courteous and Friendly Tone

You will soon learn more about putting "personality" in your voice and how to respond to unkind words. For now, here are a few tips about using your voice to encourage participants to participate in the interview:

- Practice reading all the questions. If you have questions about how to pronounce unfamiliar terms or how to emphasize particular words, ask your supervisor. Even though the tablet will “read” the questions, you will need to be able to pronounce all the words in case the participant asks for clarification or cannot hear the tablet.
- Speak directly to the participant.
- Use a normal pitch of your voice.
- Speak at a moderate pace, deliberately and distinctly.
- Put a smile in your face.
- Put the participant at ease by reading the questions in a natural, calm, and friendly manner.

E. Deal Appropriately with Interview Problems

An entire section of this training is devoted to interviewing techniques, which includes dealing with difficult participants. You will be given a list of statements and questions that are common among people who participate, along with suggested responses. Here are some basic concepts to keep in mind:

- Be kind, no matter what a participant says to you.
- Emphasize the participant's importance to the study.
- Explain the reasons for the study.
- Find a convenient time to conduct the interview.
- Emphasize that the survey is completely confidential.

Did You Know?

One interviewer told us: "It takes a while to get the hang of being a good interviewer. At first it was a bit overwhelming, but you start to figure out why things need to be done a certain way. Then it just comes naturally, and it gets to be really fun and challenging."

SECTION 5 THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

5.1 Overview

In this section, you will learn about the interviewing process, the "nuts and bolts" of what you will be doing as an interviewer.

After completing this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand how data collection fits into the entire research process.
- List and describe the measures taken to ensure quality and minimize error.

5.2 Process

"Many years of experience are incorporated into the interview and procedures. Understanding the process and why things are done a certain way should help interviewers properly handle any situation."

Although you as an interviewer are involved only in the data collection aspects of the survey, you should be familiar with all the steps in the process. The content and structure of the questionnaire is determined jointly by a group of researchers and are used without modification.

Here are the 3 steps of the process:

1. **Questionnaire construction.** A working group composed of a group of researchers develops the questionnaire.
2. **Sample selection and screening.** Sampling methodology is determined with a statistician to make sure data collection procedures are in place to follow the methodology. The sample is recruited from Hartford Hospital.
3. **Data collection.** You conduct interviews with a prescribed protocol into a computer tablet. The researchers receive, edit and correct the data on a regular basis.

5.3 Quality Assurance

A. Sources of Error

As you've learned, the goal is to collect information from a small group of people in order to learn more about the population as a whole. There would not be enough time or money to interview everyone. This is why it's very important that the small group of people

interviewed is representative of the larger group to which they belong. If we strictly apply the following procedures, it's more likely that the small group will truly reflect the entire population.

- Perform each interview well. Each one is very important.
- Interview the selected participant, not just the person who is available.
- Do what you can to encourage selected participants to participate in the survey. (See section 4 for ideas.)
- Ask each participant the questions exactly as written, including all the response choices (except as noted).
- Persuade as many people to cooperate as possible.
- Encourage participants to answer *every* question.
- Record the responses accurately.

When these measures aren't taken, it's easy for the survey to become *biased*. Bias is a systematic distortion of survey data. There are several different types of bias for which an interviewer could be responsible.

B. Bias from "cherry-picking"

You can bias the survey data if you don't follow the participant selection rules. For example, if you "cherry-pick" only the "easy" interviews--people who are comfortable to talk with, you will exclude an entire group of people. This excluded group probably has different characteristics

than the "easy" group, which means you'll end up with interviews that aren't representative of the population as a whole.

Don't reject the crooked road and don't take the straight one, instead take the one traveled by the ancestors. Cambodian Proverb

"Completing interviews is not the most important thing for an interviewer; getting the correct answers from the right person is the most important thing. Hard-to-get people have different opinions than easy-to-get people and it's important to include them."

C. Bias from Your Tone of Voice

Another way your data can be biased is if you ask questions incorrectly.

Recall from the last section how important it is to read all the possible responses to each question. If a participant doesn't hear all the possible answers, you may not get an accurate response. Your tone of voice is also important for getting accurate responses.

Participants should feel there is no wrong answer to your questions. If you sound judgmental or patronizing, participants may feel uncomfortable telling you the truth. Imagine asking the following question with a judgmental or patronizing tone:

"Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times during the past 30 days did you have 5 or more drinks on an occasion?"

If the true answer is more than the participant feels would be acceptable to you because of your tone of voice, you may receive and record an inaccurate answer.

D. Interviewer Monitoring

Study staff will occasionally sit on your interviews. This procedure is called interviewer monitoring. The purpose of interviewer monitoring is to ensure the interviewer is not accidentally introducing bias into the survey by tone of voice, not reading the question as written, or not completing a question. Having someone listen to the interviews you conduct is a valuable tool for your continued training and for achieving uniform questionnaire administration.

"I like to emphasize that interviewer monitoring is a two-way street. The supervisor learns about potential problems with the survey, and at the same time may be able to teach interviewers a few tricks to help with specific situations. Almost all interviewers have areas where they excel and areas where they could improve their skills...monitoring allows the sharing of good techniques across all the interviewers."



While monitoring, supervisors will be paying attention to the following things:

- Questions being asked as written and in the correct order
- Accurate coding of responses
- Professional attitude and a positive voice
- Participants' reactions

E. Conclusion

"Our emphasis is on following the protocol, not on completed interviews. This means the interviewers don't feel pressure, and they can focus on quality."

People give, but don't be in a hurry to take.
Cambodian Proverb

SECTION 6 INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

6.1 Overview

Knowing how to conduct successful interviews doesn't happen overnight. It is something that you will get better and better at doing each time you try. The following section will provide tips and techniques about several aspects of interviewing.

After you finish this section, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand an interviewer's most important tasks
- Identify ways to establish rapport with participants
- Describe the meaning of voice personality and pacing within the context of interviewing technique
- Get more accurate answers using probing techniques
- Convince reluctant participants to complete an interview by using standard responses to refusals

6.2 Reading Questions to the Participant

Think of the survey as if it were a movie script. Movie actors with a very strict director stick to the script and say their lines exactly as the screenwriter wrote them. The dialogue seems so natural when we see the movie later, it's hard to believe it was scripted, and that the actors probably said those exact lines hundreds of times in rehearsal! The reason it seems so natural is because talented actors use *voice personality*, and they take advantage of techniques known as *rapport and pace*. You can use these same techniques to become a talented interviewer.

Adherence to the Questionnaire

There will be times when you can "improvise your lines," such as when you are answering common questions about the survey. However, when you are playing the survey, **you must use the exact wording provided for each question.** The questionnaire has been carefully prepared, and each question has a specific purpose. Interviewers can't change or substitute any words, because even slight changes in wording can affect the

answers given. If questions aren't played exactly as they are written, the integrity of the entire survey could come into question.

You must ask every question on the survey that is appropriate for the participant. In answering one question, a participant may sometimes answer another question that appears later in the interview. If this happens, you still have to ask the partially answered question. You can show the participant that you haven't forgotten what was said earlier by saying something like: *"I know we touched on this a few minutes ago, but I'm required to ask this next question."*

Questions must be read in the exact order in which they appear. Just as a movie script is structured to make each scene understandable to the audience and to foreshadow important events, the survey questions are ordered to achieve a desired effect. A question asked out of order can influence replies to the questions that follow.

- With the questionnaire, you can't skip questions, even if the answer seems obvious. The question may be intended to verify information. Also, an answer received in the context of one line of questioning may not be the same as an answer received in another group of questions.
- Pay close attention to the timeframe of the questions. Some questions refer to the past 2 weeks, while others refer to the past month, the past year, or the participant's entire lifetime. Clearly state the timeframe for the question, and repeat as necessary.

Response options must be played exactly as they appear. All response options should be played at least once. They should also be re-played in their entirety if a participant is unclear about the possible answers. See Section 7 for more about response options.

6.3 Voice Personality

"Any line can be said a thousand ways." This important acting advice is just as relevant for an interviewer. Your tone of voice, attentiveness, and receptive manner can make the difference between a participant completing the interview and one refusing to finish.

Interviewers can put participants at ease by doing the following:

- reading the questions in a friendly, natural manner speaking at a moderate rate of speed, and sounding interested
- You should strive for appropriate eye contact, low-pitched voice, professional dress, professional relaxed posture. This will help you exude a sense of calmness and authority.

- Don't let your voice trail off at the end of a sentence. Instead, speak clearly and deliberately. Complete all sentences.

6.4 Establishing Rapport

Rapport can be defined as a *harmonious relation*. To establish rapport, introduce yourself and emphasize that you are from the study. If the participant seems hesitant, you should 1) assure them their responses are completely anonymous, 2) take time to convince him or her of the importance of the study, and 3) project confidence and professionalism.

The full survey was designed to follow a particular pattern – a pattern that must not change. It was designed so that easy to answer questions are in the beginning, such as age and marital status. These questions help to establish some rapport and put the participant at ease. The middle section asks more difficult questions, like emotional problems. By the time you reach this section, you will probably have established enough rapport with the participant that she feels okay – even if not totally comfortable – answering these questions. The final section asks about easier topics, such as positive emotions, so that you can end the interview on a positive note.

Do not change the order of the questions unless you absolutely must. In that case, let your supervisor know about the change and why you made it.

6.5 Being Non-Judgmental

While you are "in character" as an interviewer, you are to be nonjudgmental, noncommittal, and objective. You should act neutral so that the participant feels comfortable answering the questions truthfully and completely. The questionnaire is designed to elicit a free flow of ideas and opinions. Participants need the freedom to say what they feel and think, without being influenced by anything the interviewers might say. Always avoid responses such as—

"Oh, really?"

"Wow!"

"Oh, boy."

"You've got to be kidding."

"Great answer."

Remember, nothing in your words or manner should imply criticism, surprise, approval, or disapproval of either the questions or the answers. Even positive reinforcements can seem judgmental, as you can see from this example when a participant is asked if they smoke:

Interviewer: "Have you smoked 100 cigarettes or more in your life?"

Participant: "No."

Interviewer: "Good for you!"

Similarly, avoid any response or even a sound that could be mistaken for a judgment call. For example:

Interviewer: "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?"

Participant: "Every day."

Interviewer: "Hmmm..."

Responses such as these should not be used because they may influence the participant to answer questions in such a way as to meet the approval of the interviewer rather than in an honest way. If you feel you need to say something, use a nonjudgmental word like "okay." This can be used just to acknowledge you have received the answer and are ready to move on.

A really good strategy – and one that is recommended for DREAM - is to simply repeat the answer that the participant provides. This allows you to acknowledge that you heard and understood the participant's response, without any judgment. It also provides an opportunity for the respondent to change her answer, or to correct you if you misheard her.

For example:

Interviewer: "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?"

Participant: "Every day."

Interviewer: "Every day."

Monitoring can also help identify if you are being judgmental with your reinforcements. If you have a chance to listen to other interviewers, note what reinforcements they use and decide if you feel they may imply approval or disapproval of a response.

6.6 Pacing an Interview

Pace, the mode or rate of progressing, can be a powerful tool. In general, you want an even pace throughout the interview. However, sometimes you will need to increase the pace while other times you'll want to decrease it. The overall pace has to match the needs of the participant. Some participants, like those who have difficulty hearing, need you to speak slowly. On the other hand, people in an active urban environment may become bored with a slower pace, and may want you to speak a little faster. You can usually get the sense of pace for the survey with the participant by the way they speak. If they seem impatient, try to speed it up.

Based on practice surveys that we conducted, we anticipate that the average interview should take no more than 2 hours.

A. When to Go Quickly:

There are some places in the survey where you will want to adjust your pace for maximum results. One effective interviewer technique involves reading the introduction section a little quicker. Never speak so fast that you may be misunderstood.

B. When to Go Slowly:

A mistake made by some interviewers is to speed up at the end of an interview because they are getting tired and no longer have the patience they had in the beginning. Participants can feel this and often interpret it as a lack of caring. They can feel your restlessness and will often just quit or simply go through the motions.

There are other times where you may ask the participant a question that needs some thought to give an answer. In this case you may need to slow it down to get a good response. Sometimes you simply need to wait for a response from the participant.

C. When to Take a Break:

The survey was designed with planned breaks. As the interviewer, you should be alert to signs that the respondent needs an additional break. Things to look for include the following respondent behaviors:

- Not paying attention
- Easily distracted
- Answering the phone or texting
- Appears tired or bored
- Agitated, frustrated, fidgeting, or angry

- Crying

6.7 Probing Techniques

Probing—using words and techniques to get more accurate information—is one of the most challenging and important aspects of interviewing. Probes are used in two situations:

1. A participant's answer is irrelevant.
2. A participant's answer is unclear.

Here are some examples of responses requiring probing:

Interviewer: *"In general, do you eat meals and snacks on time?"*

Irrelevant answer: *"My husband is on a diet."*

Unclear answer: *"People are always telling me I need to eat better."*

Probing Techniques: Use only neutral probes that provide the participant with the full range of response options

The most important thing to keep in mind when you are probing for answers is to use only neutral probes that don't suggest answers. Here are some examples of other neutral probes:

"If you had to choose, which would you pick?"
"So would you say...[list all response options]"

Never "lead" a participant to a particular answer. This is difficult because it would seem natural to do so in ordinary conversation. Consider this "leading" probe:

Interviewer: *"In the last 12 months, how many times did you go to a doctor's office or clinic to get care for yourself? Would you say:"*

- A. None**
- B. Once**
- C. Twice**
- D. 3 times**
- E. 4 times**
- F. 5 to 9 times**
- G. 10 times or more**

Participant: *"Oh, gosh, I don't go very often... in last year, just a few times."*

Interviewer: *"So, would you say twice, or three times?"*

Participant: *(Thinking to herself, "that must mean that 'a few' means only two or three times a year. I know I've gone more than four times, but I said I didn't go that often, and I don't want to sound stupid.") "I guess I'd say three times."*

Rather than suggesting an actual number or numbers, the proper probe would be a neutral probe like the ones suggested above:

"What's your best guess?" or "Which would you pick?"

Other leading probes to avoid are *"Do you mean _____?"* or *"Then you feel _____?"* Some people tend to say "yes" to any suggestion either because it's easy or because they think it's the "right" answer.

If you need to repeat any of the response options to the participant, make sure you repeat ALL the response options.

Interviewer: *"In the last 2 weeks, how often did you cry? Would you say:"*

- A. Never
- B. Once
- C. Twice
- D. 3 or more times

Participant: *"I usually cry a lot. What were the possible answers?"*

Interviewer: *(thinking to herself "this person cries a lot, so I don't need to repeat the 'never' option) "Once, twice, or three or more times."*

Participant: *(thinking to herself that she did not cry this week, so listening for the lowest possible answer) "I guess I'd say once."*

Instead, the interviewer should repeat ALL the possible answers.

Interviewer: *"In the last 2 weeks, how often did you cry? Would you say:"*

- A. Never
- B. Once

- C. Twice
- D. 3 or more times

Participant: *"I usually cry a lot. What were the possible answers?"*

Interviewer: *"Never, once, twice, or three or more times."*

Participant: *"I've been feeling good lately, Never in the last 2 weeks."*

Here are a few things that will help you master the art of probing:

A. Do not try to explain the question or define any terms. If a participant does not seem to understand a question, repeat it slowly and clearly. Give the participant time to think about the question. If different participants ask you to define the same term over and over, bring this to the attention of your supervisor.

B. Remind the participant that the questions and the response options are available in both Khmer and English. Ideally, the entire interview will be conducted in one language. However, if a respondent is struggling to understand a word or concept, offering the translated equivalent – which you can find directly on the i-Tablet and the pictographs – is acceptable. Try to avoid jumping back and forth between Spanish and English a lot.

C. Don't leave a question until you have an adequate answer, unless you realize the participant is getting very annoyed. Sometimes a participant will give a general answer instead of the specific one you need. Probing can help the participant give you an adequate answer, as in the following example:

Interviewer: *"How many bowls of rice do you eat at a typical dinner?"*

Participant: *"I'm not sure."*

Interviewer: *"What's your best guess?"*

Participant: *"Somewhere between 2 and 3."*

Interviewer: *"What number between 2 and 3 would you like me to record as your answer?"*

Participant: *"I guess I usually eat 3."*

D. Don't accept "I don't know" as an answer without probing at least once unless “I don't know” is one of the response options. When you ask a question, people often say "I don't know" just to give themselves time to formulate their ideas. A good probe for this situation would be to say, *"Well, what do you think?" or "What is your opinion?"* If the question deals with facts, an approximation is better than no answer at all, so you might say, *"What's your best guess?" or "Approximately...?"* to convey the notion that 100% accuracy is not required.

E. Watch for irrelevant answers. Some people talk a lot, but not about the topic at hand. Irrelevant answers can be interesting, but interviewers must make sure the participant deals with the question that was asked. Consider this example:

Interviewer: *"How often do you eat green salad? Never, daily, weekly, or monthly?"*

Participant: *"A lot. I used to hate salads, but I've learned to like them."*

Interviewer: *"Well, since you've learned to like them, how often do you eat green salad?"*

Participant: *"I eat them weekly."*

F. Watch for vague answers. Some participants find it hard to verbalize and may have difficulty expressing their ideas. You can help them say what they mean with probes such as these:

"Tell me what you have in mind."

"Could you be a little more specific?"

"Can you tell me what you mean by that?"

G. Give the participant the time they need. There is great value in silence during an interview. You may find that by keeping quiet and letting the participant ramble, he or she will be able to think about the question longer and give a more accurate answer. That period of silence may also allow the participant to expand upon or clarify a previously inadequate answer. Here is an example:

Interviewer: *"About how long has it been since you last smoked cigarettes daily?"*

Participant: *"Well, let's see...it was my New Year's resolution, but I started smoking again in the spring...[Interviewer is silent] Then I decided to stop again on my son's birthday [silence continues while participant is searching his memory] I never really*

did start smoking on a daily basis again after that, and I haven't smoked at all in over a month."

Interviewer: *"Let me repeat the question now that you've had time to think about it. About how long has it been since you last smoked cigarettes daily?"*

Participant: *"My son's birthday is in July, so it's been four months."*

H. Know when to stop probing. You should stop probing when—

- You have obtained the necessary information
- You have encouraged the participant to clarify the meaning of his/her own words so that we know exactly what he/she had in mind
- The participant becomes irritated or annoyed
- The participant has nothing more to say

6.8 Summary: Basic Interviewing Rules

Here are the top interviewing rules:

- Be sure that you speak to the correct participant.
- Play all questions verbatim.
- Never explain, interpret, or add to a question.
- Always play all the available answers.
- Play all questions in the exact order in which they appear.
- Do not skip any questions even if you feel you know the answer.
- Never hurry an interview unless the participant is under time pressure—match your pace to the needs of the participant.
- Keep an even pace.
- Remain objective—do not indicate surprise, pleasure, or disapproval at any participant's answers.
- Be prepared to probe when necessary.
- Be courteous and polite, even if the participant is rude to you.
- Put a "smile" in your voice.

6.9 Difficult Situations during Face to Face Interviews

Although some of the interviews can be easy and they do not present any complication, the usual is that you encounter some problem or a complex situation during an interview. Usually, these problems are minor and they are easy to solve. Below, we will discuss some examples of these situations:

A. Questions that are misinterpreted

Interviewing a person is not just reading the questions and recording the participants' answers. There are occasions in which the question does not produce an immediate response; she answers don't know, gives you vague response, the answer does not make sense; or simply the participant says she already answered that question and refuses to answer it again.

Many of these difficult situations are about the question and its relationship with the private life of the person. If you perceive this is the case, the first thing to do is re-assure the participant about the confidentiality of the information and quickly establish an environment of trust.

It is very easy for the participant to miss one or two words which are crucial to the meaning of the question. Sometimes, a participant may feel embarrassed to admit that she did not understand the question. If you suspect that one of the questions was misinterpreted, do not tell the participant that he/she did not understand the question. Instead, use any of the following phrases or repeat the question in a clear manner and a slower pace.

- *“I would like to read the question and the response I recorded just to make sure that I have everything and that I did not miss what you wanted to say.”*
- *“I think that I read the question wrong, I would like to ask it again.”*

B. Answers that are NOT part of the response options

If the participant mentions something that is relevant to the question, you should record this in the “notes” section of the tablet and on the paper copy of the interview. If the answer is different to the response options available and you have tried without any success for the participant to select from one of the response options available, write this as a comment in your hard copy of the interview. If the question has the option of other, please record the participants answer there. Make sure that you enter the information exactly how the participant is telling you.

If you find that different participants all have trouble understanding a given question or response option, tell your supervisor. The research team may need to find a better way to ask the question. However, do not alter how you ask the question yourself – this will lead to bad data.

C. Control over the interview

In some situations, it can happen that the participant is providing you with irrelevant responses or too much detail or gets diverted and start talking about past experiences or

personal problems. This usually happens when interviewing older adults, because they usually have time to talk and may not have anyone else to talk to. If this happens to you, avoid interrupting the participant abruptly, try to briefly listen to what the participant is saying but find your way to the questions in the interview. The interviewer should be the one controlling the time and the course of the interview, otherwise there is the risk that the interview lasts longer than the expected time, that the participant gets tired and is unable to finish the interview, or that the length of time interferes with another scheduled interview.

D. Participant with a difficult character

If the participant is upset or uses inappropriate language - be kind! Do not end the interview. Keep it calm. Imagine that the person might have had a bad day.

It is unlikely that you encounter this situation, but if it happens, be patient. Some responses that you can use depending in the situation are:

- *“Yes, I see.”*
- *“Yes, I understand that your opinion is strong about this, so we really need this information from you.”*

If this fails, wait for an opportunity and then say:

- *“I am sorry but I have problems with the computer. I can visit you another time to finish the interview.”*
- *“I understand how you feel and that you do not want to finish the interview. Thank you very much for your time.”*

E. Participant refuses to finish the interview

It's important to put attention to the participant from the start, middle or almost ending the interview. Stimulate the participant to finish the interview once it is initiated. If you are only half way in the interview and the participant tries to stop, you can say the following phrases:

- *“I know this is long. You're doing great. Hang in there.”*
- *“We can take a break right now.”*
- *“If we don't finish the interview today, we would have to come back to finish it another day.”*
- *“It's important to complete the full interview. It is the only way we can use the results. If we do not finish the interview, we can't use the results and we want to*

make sure that we have all your comments and worries and consider these in the study.”

- *“If we can’t complete the interview now, with pleasure I can come back at a different date and time to finish it. Whenever is more convenient for you.”*

Thank you for completing the Interviewer Training Module



SECTION 9
PROTOCOLS FOR DREAM DATA COLLECTION