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Building Your Research Team

Topics covered in this chapter:

What is special about research on gender-based violence?

Building the research field team

Training fieldworkers

Remuneration of interviewers

Building and training your research team is particularly important when researching violence against women. The value of good fieldworkers, interviewers, transcribers, and data processors that have been sensitized to the issues cannot be overstated. Experiences worldwide consistently indicate that a key to getting reliable, valid, timely data is making sure that field personnel are appropriately selected and trained.¹

In many ways, the process of selecting and training interviewers for gender-based violence research is similar to that for other research projects. Training workshops are designed to improve interviewing skills, explain the research protocol, detail the sampling procedures, and practice applying the research instruments. Nevertheless, there are several issues that set violence research apart, most notably the need to deal explicitly with violence and gender during the interviewer-training program and the need to provide emotional support to project staff throughout the research process. This chapter will deal with both the issues common to most research proj-

ects and the challenges unique to gender-based violence research.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT RESEARCH ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Just as violence research raises special issues around respondent safety, the emotional sensitivity of the topic raises special issues for building and sustaining your field team. Working on a violence project can be extremely taxing, and it is important—both for ethical reasons and to ensure the quality of the data—that researchers take active steps to protect the emotional well-being of team members. This means that research plans and budgets need to include specific measures for addressing the emotional consequences of doing gender-based violence research. Chapter 11 describes in much greater detail the kinds of issues that need to be addressed to protect the safety and well-being of both respondents and interviewers during fieldwork.

**BOX 10.1 BUILDING A RESEARCH TEAM**

- Don't skimp on field workers. Look for skills you can't teach: intelligence, reliability, imagination, curiosity, and sensitivity.
- Hire people who have a personal and intellectual interest in your study subject. Don't hire people if they are not committed to the issue of violence prevention.
- Look for field workers everywhere. Don't assume that people who make their living doing interviews can perform well, or even adequately. Conversely, don't assume that people with little or no experience will not perform well.
- Do not ask any field worker to conduct more than 100 standardized interviews (including pilot interviews). Interview quality deteriorates rapidly after 100.
- Anticipate a significant trainee dropout rate. Begin training sessions with many more field workers than you want to hire.
- Building a research team should be the goal of your field worker training, not just imparting information or skills. Explain the project and its goals as "our" project and goals; actively solicit the views of team members and use their insights. Include team-building exercises and group dynamics in the training session.
- Pay your field workers well. Pay them more than they usually receive for equivalent work.
- Distinguish pay during the training period, which merely compensates for their time, from pay for carrying out interviews. Pay for specific work produced. Allow for incentive payments for exceptional work.
- Make sure that field workers know when they perform well; when they don't, don't accept their work. But don't blame people when they make a mistake. Solve problems in ways that teach new skills.
- Do everything you can to show your field workers how valuable they are. Have team dinners. Celebrate birthdays or research milestones.
- When field workers begin collecting data, spend a day or half day with each. See the problems that your field workers encounter from their perspective, and solve them.
- Tell your field workers your findings. Ask for their critique. Pursue leads that they suggest.

(Adapted from Handwerker, 2001.³)

Another reality that all projects on violence must confront is the fact that many members of the research team themselves may have unresolved issues around abuse. The worldwide prevalence of gender-based abuse means that, almost without exception, any research team will have one or more members who have been a direct target of violence or come from a family where violence was common. Some researchers have argued that this personal history will bias the quality of data. They therefore conclude that screening questions for hiring should include past history of abuse. However, several international experiences suggest that these issues,

when appropriately addressed, do not adversely affect data quality.^{1, 2}

The reality of researchers' own history of abuse has several implications for gender-based violence research. First, it reinforces the importance of providing emotional support to team members throughout the study. Second, it has implications for the training of interviewers. Many researchers have found that it is extremely helpful to raise this issue explicitly during interviewer training and to provide an opportunity for women to acknowledge their own experiences of abuse. Most people learn ways of coping with painful past experiences, and usually do not dwell on them in their everyday lives. However, discussion of violence during training sessions may awaken disturbing images and/or emotions. For many trainees, simply acknowledging that these reactions are normal, and providing timely opportunities to discuss them, will be sufficient to help them complete the training and participate successfully in fieldwork. In those rare cases where feelings become overwhelming, trainees will have an opportunity to withdraw from the project.

Whereas personal experience with abuse may prove problematic for some women, for others it will *improve* their skill and empathy as interviewers. In fact, women who have experienced violence themselves often make very good interviewers. Women frequently find that participating in a research project on violence can be empowering and an important route to healing. An interviewer from the León study in Nicaragua described her experience this way:

... What helped me the most [in my own life] was working on this study. It helped me to be who I am today because I have been able to help others. I felt that I could help them because I had lived through it myself, and I didn't like it, and I wouldn't like for anyone, anyone to live through what I have



lived through in my life ever. And when a woman told these things, I could understand what she was going through... When I was carrying out the interviews, I lived through each experience as if it were my own, and I could say to them, "Yes, I lived through this also, I know what this is."²

BUILDING THE FIELD TEAM

Building a good field team involves finding the right people, preparing them well, and sustaining them throughout the research process. This means building personal as well as professional relationships with field staff. A committed and loyal research team is the surest insurance for a successful research project. See Box 10.1 for some team-building tips by a seasoned researcher.

Size and composition of the field team

The number of fieldworkers needed will depend on several factors, such as how many and what type of interviews are planned, how spread out geographically the study region is, how many different languages are needed, and whether the fieldwork needs to be completed during a certain period (for example before the rainy season begins).

Generally, studies relying on qualitative research methods utilize fewer interviewers than surveys. For a population-based survey, you will probably need at least two to three field teams with four to six interviewers per team, as well as a supervisor. Depending on the length and complexity of the questionnaire, it may also be necessary to hire a field editor to check questionnaires for errors as they are completed. In many settings, particularly in rural areas where transportation is not readily available, each team will also need a driver. The drivers may also escort female interviewers in unsafe areas. Depending on how emotional follow-up for respondents

BOX 10.2 THE ORGANIZATION OF FIELDWORK IN BRAZIL

The São Paulo research team for the WHO VAW study hired 34 staff members to perform and supervise fieldwork and data entry for a survey of 1 500 women.

In addition to the three principal investigators, the research team included the following members:

Central team

- 1 general field coordinator
- 3 office editors
- 3 counselors

Data entry team

- 1 data entry coordinator
- 2 typists for the first entry (double entry was used)
- 1 typist for the second entry

Fieldwork

- 4 teams were created, each consisting of 7 members:
 - 1 supervisor
 - 1 editor
 - 5 interviewers

and interviewers will be addressed, it may make sense to add a psychologist and/or women's advocate to the overall team.

Box 10.2 gives an example of the composition of the research team for a survey performed in Brazil.

Selecting interviewers

There are few "rules" that can be applied to the selection of interviewers, except that generally speaking, women should interview women and men should interview men. An exception to this rule is when women's mobility is so socially constrained that it is not feasible for female interviewers to be out in public. It might also be necessary to use men to interview women when the research requires bilingual interviewers, and few women from the research area are bilingual. This situation occurs frequently among indigenous populations where women are less likely to have received education in the dominant language.

If the characteristics of your study population require using men to interview women, you will need to plan for additional



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Research training in Namibia

training and extra time for them to absorb information and acquire appropriate interview techniques. If, due to budget or time constraints, additional training is not possible, you should seriously reconsider conducting the research in this particular population. Other criteria—such as whether respondents would be more trusting of individuals from the community or from outside of it—are best explored during formative research.

Interviewers for violence research have generally been drawn from four groups: professional interviewers, community women, health workers, and women’s advocates. Each group has strengths and drawbacks that should be assessed prior to conducting the workshop. If possible, an ideal team would consist of individuals

TABLE 10.1 WHO ARE THE BEST INTERVIEWERS FOR SURVEY RESEARCH?

<i>Type of Experience</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Professional interviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prior experience in conducting interviews and use of questionnaires ■ Skill in gaining confidence of respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May not be available to work in remote areas ■ May require higher pay ■ May be resistant to special procedures for violence research or collaboration with community groups
Community women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Familiarity with local community customs and language ■ May help in gaining access to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respondents may be reluctant to talk to someone from the community for fear of gossip ■ May not have necessary literacy or interviewing skills
Health workers (nurses, psychologists, social workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skills in gaining confidence and asking questions; comfortable with sensitive issues ■ Knowledge of health issues (an asset if this is included in the study aims) ■ Used to confidentiality concerns ■ May be more respected by respondents ■ May have knowledge of the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May have a hard time managing the difference between counseling and research ■ May have a less skills in coding interviews
Women’s advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience and knowledge on violence issues ■ Good rapport with respondents ■ May have good ties with community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May have less skill in interviewing and coding ■ May have a hard time managing the difference between counseling and research



with varied backgrounds so that they can exchange experiences, learn from one another, and complement one another's abilities.

Table 10.1 discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of interviewers according to past experiences that may affect the selection process and fieldwork. In Box 10.3 we describe how fieldworkers were selected in the WHO study in Peru.

TRAINING FIELDWORKERS

There are at least three important goals to accomplish in the fieldworker training sessions:

- To sensitize your team to issues of gender and violence.
- To instruct them in the use of the research protocol and interviewing techniques.
- To build a team spirit that motivates field staff.

At minimum, consider including the following six topics in the training sessions: gender-based violence, stress management, review of the research protocol, employment expectations, interviewing techniques, and ethics in gender-based violence research.

In this section we outline what should be covered in each topic. A summary of the program and exercises used in the WHO training workshops is included in Appendix II of this manual.

Orientation to gender and violence

Toward the beginning of the training, you will need to devote a significant amount of time to sensitizing the research team to gender-based violence issues. These exercises are part public education, part support

BOX 10.3 SELECTION OF FIELDWORKERS IN PERU

Interviewers for the WHO VAW study in Peru were selected in two stages. Out of over 100 women who applied for the job, 27 women were chosen to participate in the training program. The criteria and points used for the initial selection were:

- Relevant academic training (0–3 pts)
- Age (between 25–50) (0–3 pts)
- Experience as an interviewer (0–3 pts)
- Experience in women's health (0–3 pts)
- Experience with gender-based violence (0–3 pts)
- Gender training/experience (0–3 pts)
- Interview (0–10 pts)

During the two-week training program, participants were scored on their performance on tests and practice interviews, as well as other skills. All participants were asked to nominate three people they felt would make good supervisors, and their preferences were also taken into account. In the end, 18 women were selected as interviewers and six as supervisors/field editors. The criteria for the final selection were the following:

- Communication skills (0–4 pts)
- Nonverbal communication (0–4 pts)
- Appearance (0–4 pts)
- Drives (0–2 pts)
- Works well under pressure (0–2 pts)
- Works well in teams (0–3 pts)
- Views on violence (0–3 pts)
- Speaks Quechua
- Score on CV (0–10 pts)
- Interview (0–10 pts)

group work, and part crisis intervention training. It is a good idea to invite local women's organizations to present or facilitate these sessions.

Begin with the basics. Define the topic and discuss why it is important and include exercises that help reveal the cultural biases and attitudes commonly held about victims of rape or domestic assault. Discuss the physical, psychological, and societal ramifications of abusive relationships, as well as underlying causes. Talk about the myths surrounding victimization and the reasons why women might be reluctant to talk or seek assistance. The use of participatory exercises encourages



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Interviewer training in Bangladesh and Thailand

participants to examine their own experiences and attitudes about violence, although the open sharing of this information should never be required. Mention that virtually all people involved in violence research have had some experience with abuse, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or background. Interviewers need to be aware of how their personal histories and potential reactions may affect their work.

Finally, you will want to conduct a brief training in crisis intervention techniques. These skills may be used with respondents as well as members of the research staff. Prior to the workshop, it is wise to develop a protocol for dealing with crises, including a list of community resources, structured

meetings for staff, and what to do in case a woman is in immediate danger. Emphasize that the interviewers are part of a research team, not a counseling team, but that nonetheless they have an ethical obligation to provide assistance when it is called for. You will want to role-play potential situations and conduct group discussions analyzing the dynamics of abuse.

Employment expectations

Early on in the recruitment of interviewers (and other research team members), candidates should be given a job description that outlines the responsibilities and remuneration of field staff. The job description should also include a description of the evaluation criteria that will be used to select final candidates and to evaluate performance.

Trainees should understand that participating in the training does not ensure employment with the project. Only the best, most competent interviewers will be hired after the training. All trainees, however, should be compensated for their time during training, even if they are not hired for the project. Interviewers hired at the end of training should have employment contracts or terms of reference. Sample job descriptions for survey interviewers, supervisors, and field editors are provided in Box 10.4.

Review the research protocol and instrument

A principal training objective is to familiarize the participants with the key elements of the research protocol. When they finish

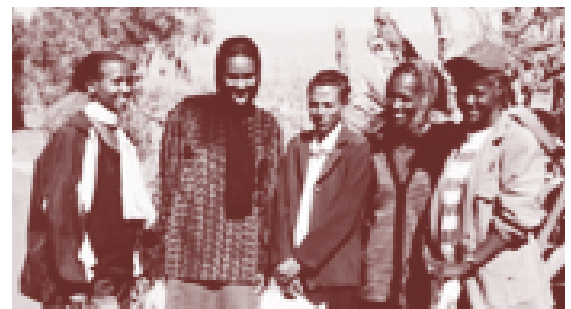


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Interviewers in Ethiopia



BOX 10.4 THE ROLES OF FIELD STAFF IN THE WHO MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY ON WOMEN'S HEALTH AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The following job descriptions were used by the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women in the training of interviewers, supervisors, and field editors:

THE INTERVIEWER

The interviewer plays a central role in the study since she is the one who collects information from respondents. Therefore, the success of the study depends on the quality of each interviewer's work.

In general, the responsibilities of the interviewer include:

1. Locating the households in the sample that are assigned to her and completing the Household Selection Form and Household Questionnaire.
2. Identifying all eligible women in those households.
3. Randomly selecting one eligible woman for interview.
4. Interviewing one eligible woman in the household in private, using the Individual Questionnaire.
5. Checking completed interviews to be sure that all questions were asked and the responses are neatly and legibly recorded.
6. Returning to households to interview women that could not be contacted during her initial visits.

THE FIELD SUPERVISOR

The supervisor is the senior member of the field team. She is responsible for the wellbeing and safety of team members, as well as the completion of the assigned workload and the maintenance of data quality. The supervisor receives her assignments from and reports to the field coordinator. The specific responsibilities of the field supervisor are to make the necessary preparations for the fieldwork, to organize and direct the fieldwork, and to spotcheck the data collected using the questionnaire.

Preparation for fieldwork

Preparing for fieldwork requires that the field supervisor:

1. Obtain sample household lists and/or maps for each area in which her team will be working and discuss any special problems with the field coordinator.
2. Become familiar with the area where the team will be working and determine the best arrangements for travel and accommodations.
3. Contact local authorities to inform them about the survey and to gain their support and cooperation.
4. Obtain all monetary advances, supplies, and equipment necessary for the team to complete its assigned interviews.

Careful preparation by the supervisor is important for facilitating the work of the team in the field, for maintaining interviewer morale, and for ensuring contact with the central office throughout the fieldwork.

Organization of fieldwork

Organizing fieldwork requires that the field supervisor:

1. Assign work to interviewers, taking into account the linguistic competence of individual interviewers and ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of the workload.
2. Maintain fieldwork control sheets and make sure that assignments are carried out.
3. Maintain a fieldwork diary, keeping a record of the main events and issues arising.
4. Regularly send completed questionnaires and progress reports to the field coordinator and keep headquarters informed of the team's location.
5. Communicate any problems to the field coordinator/project director.
6. Take charge of the team vehicle, ensuring that it is kept in good repair and that it is used only for project work.
7. Be responsible for coordinating the referral and/or support of respondents identified as requiring support during the survey.
8. Manage the finances provided to cover fieldwork expenses, including keeping receipts for all expenditures.
9. Support the interviewers as they carry out their work, including holding a daily team meeting with interviewers.
10. Make an effort to develop a positive team spirit. A congenial work atmosphere, along with careful planning of field activities, contributes to the overall quality of the survey.

THE FIELD EDITOR

The specific duties of the field editor are to monitor interviewer performance. Close supervision of interviewers and editing of completed interviews is essential to ensure that accurate and complete data are collected. As the collection of high quality data is crucial to the success of the survey, the study will seek to recruit mature responsible women to act as field editors. It is important that those who are selected execute their duties with care and precision. This is especially important during the initial phases of fieldwork when it is possible to address interviewer mistakes before they become habit.

Monitoring interviewer performance requires that the field editor:

1. Observe the first part of several interviews every day.
2. Edit all completed questionnaires in the field. Editing must be completed prior to leaving the sample area. As far as possible, the field supervisor should assist the editor in performing this task so that all interviews are field-edited while still in the sample area.
3. Conduct regular review sessions with interviewers and advise them of any problems found in their questionnaires.
4. Arrange the completed questionnaires and monitoring forms from a sample area (cluster) in order, and pack them to be sent to the central office.

(From WHO, 2004.)



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Interviewer training in Bangladesh and Tanzania

the training, participants should be conversant in the protocol's contents and be able to use it as a reference tool throughout the fieldwork.

In reviewing the protocol, it is important to emphasize the importance of accuracy and rigor in identifying and randomizing respondents and collecting data. You will also need to review strategies for glitches in fieldwork. For example, the team will have to develop strategies about what to do in household sampling when no one is home or if there are no eligible respondents. Other important topics are how to

approach the household and how to obtain informed consent. (Examples of exercises for establishing contact with the household are presented in Box 10.5.)

Depending on the degree of flexibility in the research timetable and the level of expertise of your trainees, you may want to use the training workshop as a chance to “pilot test” the protocol instrument. You can solicit suggestions and recommendations for improving the questionnaire from the trainees, thereby creating a research product from a group effort.

Practice interviews

The qualities of a good interviewer include the ability to:

- Establish rapport with the interview subject in a short period.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, directly, and simply.
- Apply the research instrument in such a way that it sounds like a conversation.
- Listen to the respondent without being judgmental.
- Guide the respondent in the interview process without pushing her unnaturally or being rude by cutting her off or ignoring her answers.

Interviewing is more of an art than a science, requiring skill and, to a certain extent, innate talent and empathy. The objective of the training workshop is to enhance natural skills and talents, through role-plays and pilot testing of instruments. Box 10.6 presents some guidelines for interviewing that were used in a qualitative study on violence in Sri Lanka.

After you have reviewed the research protocol, you will want to practice the application of the research instruments



using different techniques. Assigning trainees to the roles of interviewer and respondent is a useful exercise. The respondent may improvise her answers, or you can provide her with an outline “script” to follow. You may also want to assign roles of other members of the household or allow other trainees to observe the exercise. Be sure to allow enough time for an interview from start to finish, as well as time for all participants to evaluate the exercise through verbal feedback. When survey instruments are being used, another good exercise is to have one person interview a “respondent” while a second person observes the interview and also records responses to the questions. Afterwards the sets of answers are reviewed by the team together.

As trainees become more comfortable with the instrument itself, it may be useful to practice with people outside the research team, for example, with family members or friends. It is particularly helpful to include interviews with women who have experienced violence. Often,



PHOTO BY HAFM JANSSEN

women’s centers can identify women who have attended their centers and who are willing to be interviewed.

Trainees may also pilot test the instruments under more realistic conditions by visiting a community with characteristics similar to those of the research community and applying the questionnaire or other interview schedule, using the same criteria for sampling and respondent selection as will be used in the study protocol.

Practice interviews in Bangladesh

BOX 10.5 TRAINING EXERCISES FOR GAINING ACCESS TO A HOUSEHOLD

Gaining access to a household in order to talk to the respondent can be very challenging. In this exercise, trainees are divided into small groups and each is given a situation that might be encountered by a fieldworker. They should discuss how they would handle this situation and then present their conclusions to the plenary group for discussion.

Case 1: Maria arrives at a large apartment building where she is supposed to conduct an interview. There is no doorman so she uses the intercom to talk to someone in the household. The person who answers says they do not want to be interviewed and refuses to open the door.

Case 2. Elli needs to interview a respondent living in a compound where the watchman informs her that he is not authorized to let her enter and cannot give her any information about the household.

Case 3. Wassana goes to a small house in a poor neighborhood. A woman answers the door accompanied by several small children. She looks at Wassana suspiciously and as soon as Wassana starts to explain why she is there, the woman interrupts her and says she has no time to talk.

Case 4. Mieko knocks on the door of a house and a man opens the door. As she begins to explain the purpose of her visit, he interrupts and starts to interrogate her with the following questions:

- What are you here for?
- What is this study about?
- Who sent you?
- What do you want to know?
- What are you going to do with the results?

**BOX 10.6 INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

(Notes for interviewers taken from a qualitative study carried out in Sri Lanka)

In this research, we are asking women to talk about a subject that is embarrassing and painful to them. Your job is to:

- Create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.
- Collect the information in an unbiased way.
- Make the experience as empowering for the woman as possible.

Create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

To help the woman relax, you must be relaxed and confident yourself:

- Check your preparations: interview checklist, notepad and pen, working tape recorder with extra tapes and batteries (and an extension cord if there is a power source), a watch for keeping track of time.
- Calm yourself by deep breathing, if necessary.
- Spend a few moments remembering the purpose of the research and your own personal motivations.

Arranging the space:

- Choose a place where you will have privacy and will not be interrupted.
- Sit facing the woman, on the same level.
- Put the tape recorder between you and the respondent where you can see it, but to one side, if possible, so she does not need to look directly at it. (ALWAYS DO A TEST TO MAKE SURE IT IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO RECORD HER VOICE CLEARLY.)

Your behavior and appearance:

- Dress in a way that conforms as closely as possible to local conservative standards. Consider also your hairstyle, jewelry, and make up. Avoid fashionable or expensive items, or anything transparent.
- Act respectfully: She is the expert on the subject for discussion. Avoid acting as if you are an authority figure, even if she seems to expect that.
- Smile when you meet her for the first time.
- Do not rush into the interview. Take your time explaining the purpose of the research, why her experiences and views are important, what will happen in the interview, and what confidentiality means.
- Answer any questions she may have. (BE CAREFUL NOT TO IMPLY THAT SHE WILL RECEIVE DIRECT PERSONAL HELP IN HER OWN CASE BECAUSE OF DOING THE INTERVIEW.)
- Ask if she is willing to participate in the study.
- Ask her permission to begin.

Your manner of speaking and questioning:

- Speak calmly and gently, in a pleasant tone of voice.
- Appear interested in everything she has to say; keep your eyes and attention focused on her while she is speaking.
- Use words that are easily understood.
- Don't fiddle with your pen, tap your foot, or exhibit other nervous mannerisms.
- Use active listening:
 1. Encourage her to keep talking by giving verbal and visual cues (e.g., nodding, saying "hmm," mirroring her facial expressions).

2. Show you have understood both the content and her feelings about it by rephrasing what she said ("So you felt...because...").
3. Watch her facial expressions and body language for clues about how she is feeling.

Collect the information in an unbiased way.

- Be thoroughly familiar with the checklists, and use them systematically.
- Use open-ended questions that encourage the woman to talk, not closed-ended questions that can be answered with one word.
- Be prepared to reword the question if necessary.
- Don't use "leading questions" that imply a certain answer.
- Avoid using questions beginning with "why." These tend to make people feel defensive.
- Be patient; don't be afraid of silences.
- Avoid showing by your tone or facial expression that you are shocked by, or don't approve of, something she says.
- Never interrupt while she is speaking. If there is piece of information you need to check and think you might forget, jot it on your pad as she speaks and ask her when she has finished.
- If the woman strays off the subject, wait for a pause, then ask a question from the checklist.
- Don't finish her sentences, or put words in her mouth.
- Don't attempt to do any "consciousness raising" during the information-gathering part of the interview. Even remarks intended to encourage her, such as "you didn't deserve that treatment," can bias her responses to later questions.

Make the experience as empowering for the woman as possible.

- Encourage the woman to tell her story in her own way, even if it involves a lot of repetition. Often the process of telling her own story to a sympathetic listener brings relief.
- Avoid the temptation to give advice, even if she asks you to. But you can "brainstorm" with her to help her come up with her own solutions, if she really wants some input from you.
- Make sure you are able to answer any of her requests for information (as opposed to advice) in a way that is locally relevant.
- If she starts to cry during the interview, don't try to stop her. Crying may provide her with some relief. Acknowledge her distress, and express sympathy for her feelings. There is no need to end the interview unless she requests it.
- After the interview, thank her and remind her that by sharing her views and experiences, she is helping to prevent other women from having to suffer as she did/does.

What to do after the interview?

- Review the session in your mind, and make a written list of:
 1. Problems that arose, or items missed.
 2. New insights.
 3. Matters you need to follow up.
- Spend a few moments getting in touch with your own feelings. If you are feeling upset, don't brush it off. Make sure you discuss it with your colleagues and supervisor.
- PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK!!! Your efforts are helping to make your community a safer place for women.

(From Bradley, 1999.⁵)



When trainees become more skilled with the interview scenario, it is time to focus on specific challenges that may arise during the fieldwork. For example, you might have role-playing exercises where there are frequent interruptions or where the respondent wants to discontinue the interview because she is crying. It is important to stress the importance of leaving enough time during the interview to meet respondent's needs while maintaining rigor in the research methodology.

Ethics in gender-based violence research

Because ethical issues arise throughout every stage of the research project, they merit a specific section in the training workshop. It is important to highlight their significance, not only for data collection but also for fieldwork preparation, analysis, and dissemination.

The research protocol should include a section on the ethics of gender-based violence research, outlining the specific ways that these issues will be addressed by the study. During the training workshop, you will need to reiterate the importance of informed consent and confidentiality, as well as protocols for dealing with crises during interviews with informants, protocols for dealing with safety/security issues for fieldworkers, and other pertinent ethical considerations.

Stress management

It is important to address stress-related symptoms among fieldworkers and discuss coping mechanisms for research staff.

As you plan your training workshop, keep in mind the varying strengths and training needs of different members of the research team. Your team may include interviewers; transcribers (in qualitative studies); field supervisors; and administrative and support personnel such as drivers, translators, interpreters, or representatives

BOX 10.7 IN THE FIELD: BELIZE

A qualitative study of battered women in Belize generated hours of taped interviews from 24 in-depth interviews and three focus groups. A transcriber was hired to produce transcripts of interviews conducted in the study's three languages of Creole, Spanish, and English.

During the first few weeks of fieldwork, the transcriber's turnaround time was excellent, and the categorization and analysis of the data went smoothly. However, by the third week the transcriber began to make excuses as to why she wasn't finishing the tapes. She complained of feeling under the weather and occasionally would not return phone calls from the supervisor. Eventually, the delayed transcriptions began to hinder progress in the research, and the supervisor confronted the transcriber with this problem. She revealed that the taped interviews were affecting her deeply, particularly listening to the women's voices describe the horrors of their married life. Weeping uncontrollably, many times she had to stop transcribing and each day she found it increasingly difficult to turn on the tape recorder. From this experience, the researchers realized the importance of including all team members, not only in the training on violence, but also in stress management activities.

(From Shrader, 2000.⁶)



from collaborating institutions. Each position entails different responsibilities, skills, and training needs. The training workshop should be a team-building effort in which everyone is aware of the role he or she plays and its importance to the study.

It may seem that some personnel, such as data processors or transcribers, do not need training or sensitization in gender-based violence issues. However, experience has shown that even members one or two steps removed from direct contact with respondents may be deeply affected by the subject matter (see Box 10.7). Stress

Practice interviews in Ethiopia



PHOTO BY M. ELISBERG

Ethiopian fieldworkers organized a traditional coffee ceremony to celebrate the end of the training workshop.

may show up in a number of ways, including headaches, malaise, reluctance to work, conflictive relationships at home, and so forth. As with fieldworkers, supervisors need to be aware of the signs of stress among research staff and intervene accordingly. If resources allow, the ideal workshop would train all members of the research team, at least in the basics of violence against women, stress management, and the contributions of action research to violence prevention.

REMUNERATION OF INTERVIEWERS

The system for paying field staff can have important implications, not only for the research budget, but also for data quality.

The most commonly used approaches are payment per completed interview and payment for time.

Per completed interview

With this system, interviewers are paid a fixed amount for each questionnaire or set of notes that they complete. This approach tends to maximize the number of questionnaires turned in and creates an incentive for reducing the duration of fieldwork. However, it can also create an incentive to turn in incomplete or poor quality questionnaires. Of greater concern is that it may lead unscrupulous employees to falsify interview data. Because women who have been abused usually take longer to interview, a per-interview approach risks creating a situation where interviewers consciously or unconsciously discourage disclosure.

Daily or weekly rate of pay

This strategy involves remunerating interviewers by time worked rather than by product delivered. Because there is no built-in incentive to work quickly, interviewers are encouraged to take the time that they need to do quality interviews. This is especially important in studies that collect data on sensitive topics. The primary disadvantage of this system is that the likelihood of running over budget and overtime is greater. One way to offset this risk is to offer individual or group incentives to meet project timelines and that reward good work.

Based on our field experiences, we recommend that interviewers be paid on a daily or weekly basis, with monetary incentives for quality work. Additionally, you should consider creating mechanisms for public recognition of work well done to ensure that interviewers feel valued.

Trainees in Tanzania visited the local shelter for abused women to learn about violence in their community.

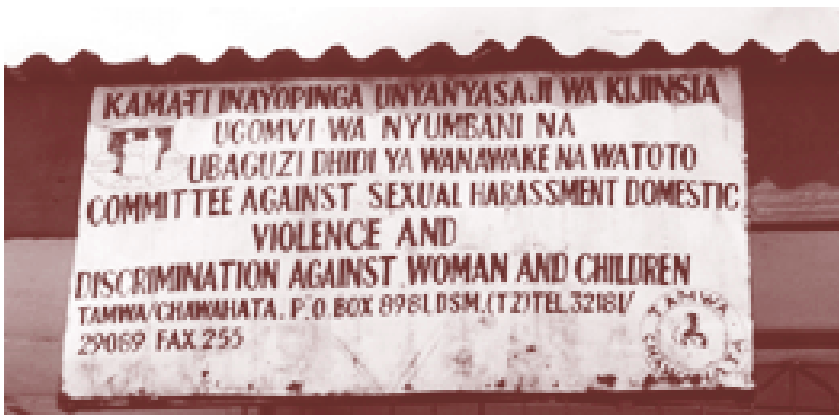


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