General Interviewing Techniques
Things to Consider When Administering Interviewer-administered CRFs
SSP Section 13.5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Completed at:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics (woman)</td>
<td>Screening and Enrollment Visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic Screening History (woman)</td>
<td>Screening and Enrollment Visit &amp; updated at each follow-up visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Harms Assessment Log (woman and infant)</td>
<td>When indicated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MTN-016
Interviewer-administered CRFs

• For simplicity, none of the interviewer-administered CRFs are translated

• When interviewing participants, the interviewer will not read the items word for word, but must ask about each item on the CRFs using appropriate language
Overview

- Tasks to complete before the interview
- Basic interviewing skills
- Minimizing bias
- Considerations during the interview
- Review at the end of the interview
Before the interview ...

• Familiarize yourself with the interviewer-administered forms
  – Read through each question
  – Read through form instructions
  – Learn wording, definitions, skip patterns

• Review SSP Section 13.5
Basic Interviewing Skills

When a new participant arrives at the clinic, everything about the study is new. Help make the participant feel comfortable.

- Introduce yourself.
- In general, create rapport (connection) between yourself and the participant to help her feel comfortable during the interview.
Important Considerations:

• Privacy

• Interview pace

• Interviewer comfort asking personal and sensitive questions

• Interviewer’s encouragement
  - no “right” or “wrong” answers

• Interviewer’s assurance of confidentiality
Basic Interviewing Skills

Important Considerations (cont.):

• Monitoring participant cues (verbal and non-verbal)

• Interviewer’s response to participant feedback, such as:
  • negative reactions
  • questions
  • requests for information
  • sharing of information requiring follow-up, such as counseling or referral
Listening is key. However ...

As a general rule, interviewer should not offer feedback during the interview. He/she should defer general questions, information requests, and referrals until after completion of the interview.
• Conduct interviews with a non-biased, non-judgmental approach.

• Help a participant feel comfortable sharing personal information and opinions while asking the study questions in a consistent manner.

Why is this important?
Minimizing Bias

• Interviewer should limit his/her influence on participant responses to avoid
  • “socially desirable reporting”
  • collecting inaccurate data
  • missing data
  • possibly enrolling an ineligible participant
During the interview ...

- When clarification is needed, repeat the item and/or response categories.
- Do not read response categories unless form instructions state otherwise.
- Select category that best fits the participant’s response.
During the interview ...

- Choose “other, specify” if available and response does not match existing category
  - provide English translation of the participant’s response

3. Does the participant earn an income of her own? ........................................
3a. How does she earn her income? Mark all that apply.
  - 3a1. formal employment
  - 3a2. self-employed
  - 3a3. other, specify: ____________________________

For items requiring a description, record the description in English

11. Has the participant had any illnesses (including fever/rashes) during this pregnancy? .................................................................
    yes   no
    □     □  If no, go to item 4.
    Describe: _________________________________________
    _________________________________________
    _________________________________________

Record response in English here
Probing is a technique used to help participants:

• remember an answer
• clarify a response
• decide between two similar, but different answers
• report something more precisely
Effective probing should not:

- bias a participant’s responses
- judge a participant’s responses

Therefore, all probes must be neutral.
Interviewing Probes cont.

**Repeat Probe**

The repeat probe is used by repeating the item...

*Let me repeat the question ...*

*So what you are saying is...*

**Echo Probe**

The echo probe is usually used by repeating back to the participant exactly what she says to you.
Interviewing Probes cont.

**Silent Probe**

The silent probe is used by pausing briefly after a participant gives what seems to be an uncertain answer.

*If I am quiet I can give her extra time to think about her response.*

**Non-verbal Probe**

The non-verbal probe is used by giving hand or facial gestures that may help the participant with a response.
Interviewing Probes cont.

**Specification Probe**

The specification probe is used by asking the participant to give a more precise answer. Can you be more specific?

**Historical Probe**

The historical probe is used by asking whether the event in question occurred anytime around major holidays or personal events. This helps with recall of dates (e.g., when capturing medical history and medication use). Let’s look at a calendar.
• Watch for skip patterns - It is **extremely** important for the interviewers to be very familiar with these forms **before** conducting his/her first interview.

6. Has the participant ever drunk alcoholic beverages regularly (three or more drinks each week)? .................................................................

6a. During this pregnancy, did/does the participant drink alcoholic beverages?

6b. During this pregnancy, how often did/does the participant drink alcoholic beverages?

6c. During this pregnancy, how often did/does the participant drink five or more alcoholic beverages in one day? ...........

7. Has the participant ever smoked cigarettes regularly (one or more cigarettes per week)?
During the interview ... 

• When possible, clarify inconsistent responses during the interview

- Each interviewer should be familiar with responses requiring consistency before conducting his/her first interview.
At the end of the interview ... 

- Review completed questionnaires while participant is still with the interviewer. This way, errors and inconsistencies can be addressed with the participant.

- Each questionnaire is a source document