

VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER TRAINING GUIDE

SAVVY

Sample Vital Registration with Verbal Autopsy



MEASURE Evaluation

U.S. Census Bureau

Verbal Autopsy Interviewer Training Guide

SAVVY

Sample Vital Registration with Verbal Autopsy



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ABOUT THIS TRAINING GUIDE

Training is one of the most important parts of preparation for verbal autopsy (VA) data collection. The purpose of this guidebook is to ensure that trainers are prepared to train competent verbal autopsy interviewers (VAIs). Generally, training of interviewers will be done by VA supervisors, who are usually senior members of the district- or province-level health management team.

It is assumed that, initially, participants in the training sessions will not have a good working knowledge of the operations of the Sample Vital Registration with Very Autopsy (SAVVY) mortality surveillance system; that is, they will not have read the *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual* and *Key Informant's Manual* before arriving at training.

This training guide is designed to provide an outline for training people with limited knowledge about the SAVVY mortality surveillance system to become VA interviewers. The duration of the VA interviewer's initial training course should be about four consecutive days, and training should come just before VA data collection is scheduled to begin.

The trainings will consist of class work as well as field practice. The focus of the training is to make sure that VAIs collect complete and reliable information on circumstances, events, signs, and symptoms leading to the death of an individual in the community. At the end of training, all VAIs are expected to be competent and confident in their ability to complete the VA interviews during the actual fieldwork.

As new VA interviewers are needed, an annual training should be scheduled to account for expansion of the SAVVY system and attrition of current VA interviewers. Annual retraining of current VAIs may also be necessary, as VA forms or data collection procedures may change over time.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRAINER

This training guide will help you teach all the skills necessary for a person to become a trainer of SAVVY VAIs. In addition, there are some guidelines provided in this manual that you should follow to help training progress smoothly.

The key to an effective training session is preparation. If you are prepared in advance, your confidence will be apparent to the trainees. No amount of classroom technique or speaking skill can overcome the handicap of not knowing your subject matter.

Always treat your trainees with respect and courtesy. Remember, they will be working for you.

Study the Training Materials in Advance of the Session

Read and study all the training materials well in advance of the session, including this training guide, the SAVVY *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual* and *Key Informant's Manual*, and all materials that will be used in the training session. Do not be concerned about your presentation during your initial reading of these materials; concentrate instead on understanding the concepts and operations that are covered. If you do not understand a particular part, reread the portion that covers that part or search for added information in the manuals. If necessary, ask your supervisor for assistance. Before training begins, be certain that you understand every phase of the VA interviewer's role in the SAVVY system.

Practice

Read all the materials several days before the training begins, including this training guide. At this point, read portions of the materials aloud following the schedule in the training guide and begin to concentrate on your presentation and the types of questions the trainees are likely to ask. You may find it useful to make notations and marks in the interviewer's manual to help you during the actual training.

If possible, conduct a small dry run presentation on your own. A dry run is a practice presentation in front of a mirror or a small group of friends, with a clock. The dry run gives you a chance both to find out if you are speaking loudly and clearly, and to assess how long it takes you to cover certain parts of the training. This will also give you a chance to practice referring to the materials as you speak. Using the materials during this live practice will keep you from fumbling during the training. It is embarrassing and time consuming for you to have to interrupt training to find a page or form. It is even worse when you do not know which form to use or when to use it.

It is important to try and think about possible questions that may be asked during training and try to prepare for them in advance as much as possible by noting important sections in your materials and knowing the topics covered. However, there will always be some questions that are unexpected. In these situations, your answers must be the same as would be given by any other trainer in the country. In order to ensure that answers are consistent, you should contact your supervisor with any unusual or difficult questions that you receive during training so that the supervisor can share the answers with all the other trainers.

Classroom Preparation

Preparing the classroom for training is as important as preparing yourself to conduct the training. Locate and inspect a training site.

If a training site has been selected for you — If a site has already been selected, do the following:

- ☒ Meet with the person in charge of the training site.
- ☒ Confirm the earlier agreement.
- ☒ Verify that the space will be available and ready on the days you need it.
- ☒ Inspect the space to make sure it meets the basic requirements for the training site. (See the list below on this page, “A training site should meet the following requirements.”)
- ☒ Notify your supervisor when you are satisfied with the site and have confirmed the earlier arrangements. Discuss any problems with your supervisor.

If a training site has not already been selected for you — If a site has not been selected, visit potential sites until you locate one with adequate space that is available during the scheduled training. Use the following suggestions as potential sites:

- ☒ schools, including colleges or vocational training centers
- ☒ churches, synagogues, or mosques
- ☒ community or recreation centers
- ☒ clubs or lodge meeting halls
- ☒ libraries
- ☒ post offices
- ☒ military centers
- ☒ other government offices

A training site should meet the following requirements. It should be:

- ☒ rent-free (if free space is not available, **DO NOT** make a commitment to rent training space, contact your supervisor for help);
- ☒ quiet and free of distractions;
- ☒ large enough to accommodate all of your trainees, but not too large;
- ☒ equipped with sufficient desk or table space, and seating for all the trainees;
- ☒ well ventilated, as weather requires;
- ☒ have some type of restroom facilities, either on-site or nearby and available for use during training;
- ☒ have eating facilities nearby, or you must tell trainees to bring a lunch; and

- ☒ centrally located, to limit travel by all trainees.

Once the training site is set and your trainees have been selected, you will receive a partially prepared list of trainees, with each trainee's name and where they come from (contact address). If it has not already been done by your supervisor or another SAVVY officer, notify your trainees of the date, time, and place of training.

Prepare the Training Room for the Training Session

Arrange the seats and tables so that each trainee can easily see and hear you and see any materials that you'll be using during training. Provide enough space so that each trainee has room to spread out his/her training materials or take notes.

A list of materials needed both by you and your trainees can be found near the end of this chapter. Several days before the training session, make sure you have all the needed materials. Before trainees arrive on the first day of training:

- ☒ Place a *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual* at each trainee's seat, along with a notebook and pen or pencil.
- ☒ See that lighting and ventilation are adequate.
- ☒ Check the locations of water fountains, rest rooms, and lunch facilities.

If available, name cards are very useful for yourself and each trainee, especially the first few days of training. At the first training session, have each trainee write his or her name on a name card using the black marker found in your training package. Make a quick seating chart for your own reference once everyone is seated. The seating chart will help you to call on trainees during training and help you remember their names. Ask the class to keep their seats for the rest of the training session.

Do not allow trainees to smoke or eat in the training room during training sessions. Request that all cell phones be turned off during training. Advise trainees of the time and duration of training breaks and the location of nearby bathrooms and dining facilities, and any necessary emergency procedures.

How to Use a Training Guide

Why we use training guides —Training guides are used for the following reasons:

- ☒ Training guides ensure **uniform training**. If all trainers use the same training materials, then all trainees receive the same training. All trainees need to receive the same instructions so they will perform their duties in the same manner.
- ☒ Training guides control the **cost and time of training**. The length of time for training is limited, and having a training guide helps trainers to emphasize the most important topics during the set training period. You should make every effort to keep to the training schedule provided. Uniform training keeps the costs of training within the budget.

- ✘ Most supervisors do not have the time or resources to design and prepare a training program. The training guide **frees the supervisor** from the burden of preparing his or her own training program, allowing him or her to concentrate on working with the trainees.

Classroom Training Techniques

Keep training upbeat — This training guide will instruct you in which topics you should cover and in what order during training. However, merely reading a manual or form aloud does not make for an effective training session. The trainer must keep the session upbeat. Only you, the trainer, can make the session effective. You must watch for signs that reflect how well the trainees are learning and how well you're holding their attention. Signs to watch for include trainees' classroom participation, their answers to your questions, and their own questions to you.

If trainees show signs of boredom or fatigue, take a short break, ask questions, or find other ways to keep trainees involved in the training session.

Techniques to use — If you follow the training techniques listed below, you'll be able to manage the attention of the class and guide the trainees through an effective learning experience:

Study this guide. Be able to deliver training efficiently and accurately. Know the materials so well that when trainees ask questions that will be covered later in the training, you can tell them so and move on without taking time to answer a question that will be covered later.

Know the other training materials. Have copies of the manuals and materials referenced in this training guide available for your reference and put them in order so that they are easy to locate.

Stand up when you conduct training. In doing so, you will gain in two ways. First, you will have better control of the class, because you can see each trainee and the signals of frustration (hearing difficulty, doubt, or other problem) that a trainee's face may reflect. Second, your voice will carry better with less effort on your part.

Maintain eye contact with your trainees. Look up from your reading whenever you reach the end of an important topic and at the end of each paragraph. Look at the trainees' expressions. If someone looks confused or troubled, stop to ask if anyone has a question. Make a mental note to watch persons who look confused during exercises to see if their performance during the exercises demonstrates an understanding of the material. As you gain experience, you will master keeping eye contact while reading. When you look up, be sure to keep your place by using your finger or a pencil to point at where you left off.

Guard against distracting habits. These include jingling coins, twirling a pencil, etc. You do not need to remain completely still, but remember that you want your trainees to pay attention to what you are saying, not what you are doing.

Speak clearly and convincingly. Make sure everyone in the room can hear you without difficulty. Read at a normal rate of speed. Reading too quickly or slowly will lose the attention of the class.

Vary your tone of voice. If your tone of voice is too level, trainees will have a hard time staying focused on what you are saying. Identify the key words in each sentence and try to emphasize them when reading. For example, in the following sentence:

Keep your interviewer manual with you at all times when working in the field.

The words in boldface could be emphasized to underline the meaning of the sentence:

*Keep your **interviewer manual** with you at **all** times, when working in the field.*

If you do not know an answer, admit it. Do not fumble around for an answer or, still worse, give the wrong one. Never bluff. Look up the answer with the help of the class. If the question is not covered in your materials, tell the class that you will give them the answer after you speak to your supervisor. Then be sure that you do.

Read the manual exactly as it is written. Do not omit anything unless you are instructed to do so by your field office manager (FOM). This ensures that all trainees throughout the country will receive the same training.

Limit discussions. Class participation is a key to effective training, but it must be used wisely. Do not let the trainees' eagerness throw the session too far off schedule. The following techniques will help you to control the class without destroying the trainees' willingness to participate in class discussions:

- ✘ If a trainee asks a question about a point covered later in the guide, tell him or her to hold the question since you will be covering it later. Sometimes you should ask the trainee to make a note and hold a question even if you don't know if it's covered later. If the question is not covered, go back to it at the end of training and try to find the answer in the training materials or get the answer from your supervisor.
- ✘ If a discussion gets out of hand, interrupt the discussion. Tell the trainees that you must end the discussion because there is still a lot of material to cover and continue with the guide. If a trainee persists in pursuing a point, ask him or her to see you during a break, lunch, or after class. Remember that you are working on a schedule. You must make every effort to complete the training in the time allotted.

Do not call on the eager trainees all the time. Try to bring your more reserved trainees into discussions, to see if they are following the material. Some people do not speak in class because they are shy, while others may not speak up because they do not understand the material. It is your job to try and draw out those who do not understand so that you can clarify the topics that are confusing them.

Encourage the trainees to learn. Acknowledge incorrect answers by being tactful. Do not embarrass a trainee, but try to lead him or her to the correct answer. Repeat whatever part of the answer is correct to be supportive and try to rephrase the question to give hints. Sometimes, calling directly on a person who looks confused may cause them embarrassment and they may deny that there is any problem. It is often better to try and speak to trainees individually during breaks or during exercises.

Guidelines for calling on trainees — It can be very difficult for people to stay focused when sitting in a room and listening to one person for several hours. This type of instruction-only exchange also does not allow the trainer to gauge whether the trainees are following the instruction or understanding the material presented.

In order to keep the trainees' attention and reinforce the instruction, it is recommended that you call on trainees and ask a question related to each topic after it has been presented. Be sure to call on trainees by name and try not to call on the same trainees. Often a trainee will not speak up if he or she does not understand a topic, for fear of ridicule. Therefore, try to call on each trainee during the training.

Use the APC method of asking questions: **A**sk, **P**ause, **C**all. Ask a question; pause while all the trainees think about the answer; then call on a trainee by name to give his or her answer.

Always acknowledge a correct answer by saying something positive such as, "right," "good," or "okay," etc. If an answer is more than a few words long or is complicated, repeat the correct answer, referencing your materials, after you acknowledge the answer given by the trainee.

If the trainee does not answer correctly, try to lead the trainee to the correct answer by re-asking the question, by asking additional questions, or by referring the trainee to the manual or training materials. Never embarrass him or her by simply saying, "You're wrong."

Remember that the trainees may not always answer exactly as worded in the manual, but the answer should contain the most important information. An answer worded slightly differently than the manual's wording is not incorrect, and you should encourage trainees not to resort to reading answers directly from the manual. Having trainees express concepts in the manual in their own words increases their understanding.

Using the List of Trainees

Use the list of trainees provided by your office during and after class. Use the list of trainees as an attendance sheet during class. Mark the list to indicate which trainees did and did not attend the training each day.

If a trainee is no longer interested in the job, print, "will not attend" next to the name of that trainee, including any reason given for the trainee's departure, and notify your supervisor. Your supervisor may be able to have a replacement trainee hired in time for training. If a replacement trainee is selected at the beginning of training, add the name of the replacement trainee to the bottom of your list.

At the end of training, forward to the central office the list of trainees and attendance record, along with what supervisory area was given to each trainee.

Training Materials

You must obtain all training and supply items listed on these pages for you and your trainees, as prearranged with the central office. Materials provided to trainers **PRIOR TO FIRST TRAINING** include:

- ✘ **SAVVY *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Training Guide*** (this publication)
- ✘ **SAVVY *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual*** for each trainee (bring your copy with you to every training session for reference)
- ✘ **VA forms** (more than enough of all forms for the class to review and practice)
- ✘ **appendices** to the *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual*, at least one for each trainee
- ✘ **SAVVY tote-bag** for each trainee (to carry all materials in the field)
- ✘ **map** for each trainee (to practice map-reading skills)
- ✘ **notebooks** (at least one for each trainee)
- ✘ **pencils and pens** (at least one for each trainee)

Materials useful for conducting training, if available, include:

- ✘ name cards
- ✘ black markers
- ✘ yellow highlighter
- ✘ flip chart, large paper, or blackboard and appropriate writing instruments
- ✘ letter to thank donor for space

Materials distributed to trainers also include:

- ✘ list of trainees
- ✘ official VA interviewer's identification card (one for each trainee)
- ✘ additional instructions and information from your office, as needed

Using the materials in class — Put a *SAVVY Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual*, map, notebook, and pen or pencil at each trainee's place at the training site prior to his or her arrival. Use this training guide to ensure that you are covering all the topics in the manual. Read the manual sections indicated aloud to the class, or ask for a trainee volunteer to read selected sections. After some sections, the training guide will list notes for you to follow. Be sure and follow all notes in the training guide.

You may receive some basic administrative paperwork that must be completed at the beginning of training. Either you or an administrative officer will administer this paperwork once the trainees have arrived, brief introductions have been made, and attendance has been taken.

You will receive additional instructions and information from your office. These include:

- ✘ trainees' employee identification codes, contact information, and maps of the SAVVY verbal autopsy supervisory areas (you will provide trainees with this information at the end of the training session), and;
- ✘ the SAVVY office may provide other information during training either in the form of additional materials, or written or verbal instructions.

You will pass out identification cards at the beginning of the training session. If there are more trainees than identification cards, you will need to obtain more cards from the central office. If you have more cards than trainees, return the excess cards to the central office at the end of training.

You will receive an assignment for each trainee that you will hand out upon the successful completion of training. These assignments include the trainee's specific assignment area maps and materials listed in the *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual*, as needed for the interview process. You may need to make some choices about which VA interviewers to retain if you have more successful trainees than assignments.

TRAINING OUTLINE (BEGINNING OF CLASSROOM TRAINING)

Welcome trainees and ask them to sign their names next to their printed name in your notebook. If you have name cards, ask the trainees to write their names on the cards and use them.

When everyone has arrived, introduce yourself and explain that this training is for SAVVY verbal autopsy interviewers. Inform trainees how many days the training will last and be sure that no one is at the wrong training center.

Ask trainees to introduce themselves one by one.

Inform trainees of the following point:

- ☒ daily start time of training
- ☒ morning break time and duration
- ☒ lunch break time and duration
- ☒ dining arrangements available
- ☒ afternoon break and duration
- ☒ daily training ending time

Ask trainees to please respect the following rules:

- ☒ required attendance every day of training
- ☒ be at the training center before the starting time each day, and return promptly from breaks
- ☒ cell phones should be turned off during training
- ☒ no smoking or eating during training sessions

Ask trainees to open their *Verbal Autopsy Interviewer's Manual* to the table of contents. Inform them that you will be covering each of these chapters during the training session.

Ask the trainees to turn to the beginning of chapter 1 on page 1.

CHAPTER 1 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: WHAT IS SAVVY?

Explain that chapter 1 provides a general overview of the SAVVY system. Details about the trainees' specific roles in the SAVVY system will become clear during training.

Take 10 minutes and have the class read chapter 1.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ☒ What kind of information can a SAVVY system generate?
- ☒ Name the four components in the SAVVY system.
- ☒ Why is community participation important to SAVVY?

CHAPTER 2 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SAVVY VA INTERVIEWER

Read aloud the overview paragraphs at the beginning of this chapter. Focus on the following topics:

- ✘ **Paragraph 1:** Ask what a key informant is, and how a KI ascertains deaths in the community. Ask how a key informant is chosen, and by whom.
- ✘ **Paragraph 2:** Ask the class how births and deaths get registered in the SAVVY system, and by whom.

Responsibilities — Go through the list of bullet points in the manual. Emphasize that each of these responsibilities will be discussed individually later in the manual. To ensure that participants are paying attention, ask questions to reinforce the material being presented, as well as information about the KI and VAI roles.

Overview of Activities and Tasks — This is the cycle of activities and tasks for which each VA interviewer is responsible. Go through all the bullet points and explain why each is important.

Confidentiality — Lockable storage cabinets (or other secure location) will need to be available at the SAVVY field office.

Honesty — Discuss the importance of turning in data that have been properly collected. Turning in falsified data will result in immediate dismissal.

Quality Assurance — VA forms will be checked on many levels; they should first be double-checked by the VA interviewer, then the VA supervisor will review the forms when they are turned in. Also, the VA supervisor will select about 10% of completed VA forms for re-interview to verify that the interview took place and the information collected is correct. Finally, the forms will be checked at the SAVVY central office. If, at any point, the forms are found to be incomplete or incorrect, they will be returned to the VA interviewer for correction. It is therefore very important to be thorough and accurate when completing a VA form the first time.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ From whom do you obtain information about deaths in an assigned area?
- ✘ What can you do to ensure that all eligible deaths have been reported and VA interviews have been performed?
- ✘ How often do you need to communicate with the KI?

- ✘ Can you have somebody else fill out the VA forms?
- ✘ Why is that important NOT to take any “shortcuts” in completing VA forms?
- ✘ What do you do when you realize or are shown that you have made mistakes in filling out the VA forms?

CHAPTER 3 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: VA INTERVIEWER MATERIALS

Go through the list of materials that each VA interviewer is required to have — hold them up as you introduce each item. These materials should be at each trainee's seat during training.

- ☒ Emphasize that these materials should be kept with the VAI whenever he/she is in the field conducting VA interviews.
- ☒ Be certain that everyone has a VAI identification card, and that the information is correct.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ☒ What material can you refer to when you are trying to assess whether a death is eligible for SAVVY system?
- ☒ What can you do when deceased person's exact year of birth is unknown?

CHAPTER 4 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER’S MANUAL: DEFINITIONS AND RULES

This section clarifies two very important definitions within the SAVVY system: the definition of a “resident” for VA purposes; and the definition of a “respondent” for the VA interviews.

Take 15 minutes for the trainees to read this chapter to ensure they understand the meaning of these terms “resident” and “respondent.”

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ What is the difference between a “resident” in a SAVVY census and in the SAVVY VA interview process?
- ✘ What is the difference between a “respondent” in a SAVVY census and the SAVVY VA interview process?
- ✘ If there is a question about the residency status of a person, who decides if a VA should be performed — the KI or VAI?
- ✘ Should the KI report a death to the VAI if he or she is certain that the person was not a resident?
- ✘ What do you do when you are unable to identify a suitable respondent?

CHAPTER 5 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER’S MANUAL: HOW TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This chapter explains the importance of community participation in the SAVVY system, and different ways to ease the concerns of community members and encourage them to become stakeholders in the SAVVY system.

Take 20 minutes for the trainees to read this chapter.

Emphasize the importance of having a positive, friendly attitude when contacting families. The VA interview can be very difficult and emotional for respondents, so it is extremely important that the VAI has established a level of trust and confidentiality from the moment of first contact.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ What should you do if the household of the deceased initially refuses to participate in the VA interview, even if the KI scheduled an appointment originally?
- ✘ What should you do if you do not speak the language of the respondent very well?
- ✘ If the deceased was a visitor to the household, how should you explain to that household that no VA should be performed?
- ✘ Ask the participants to respond to some of the questions in the “Responding to Concerns about the SAVVY System” section, but alter the wording slightly. For example, try asking “Why won’t you pay me to participate, my time is valuable?”
- ✘ Consider situations where a community refuses to collaborate with SAVVY system staffs (KIs or VAIs) and consider possible actions that VAIs can do to improve participation and cooperation of community.

CHAPTER 6 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: HOW TO WORK WITH THE KEY INFORMANTS

This chapter describes the different roles and responsibilities that the VAI and the KI share, outlines a schedule for establishing regular meetings, and discusses problems that might arise. Take 10 minutes for the trainees to read the chapter.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ What does a KI do?
- ✘ What should the KI do when the VAI is performing the VA interview? Why?
- ✘ How often should the VAI and KI meet? Why every month?
- ✘ What can you do when you hear negative feedback about the relationship between a KI and the community?

CHAPTER 7 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: VERBAL AUTOPSY FORMS

Chapter 7 of the manual introduces the basic structure of all three age-specific VA forms. While the forms are different from each other, they share a similar structure. This chapter describes the common structure, and describes the basic design.

Take 15 minutes for the trainees to read the chapter.

Ask the class to turn to the three VA forms near the back of the VAI manual and review them briefly. Tell the class to look for differences in the forms, and ask them to think about why these forms are different?

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ Ask if trainees have any questions about the forms with regard to how to fill out, order of questions etc.
- ✘ Why is it necessary to have three VA forms — why not just use one for everyone?
- ✘ What is a “skip pattern” and why is it used?
- ✘ What are some differences between form 1 and form 2? Between form 2 and form 3?

CHAPTER 8 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER’S MANUAL: HOW TO CONDUCT VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWS

Chapter 8 in the VAI’s manual is very important — it describes the general procedures to be taken when performing a verbal autopsy interview, and presents the common sections of all three VA forms.

First, have the trainees take 10 minutes to read “Check your Materials” and “General Instructions for Completing Verbal Autopsy Forms” sections of the manual, and then ask if there are any questions.

Have the participants split into pairs, and practice their introduction to a household with each other. It is important for VAIs to present themselves very clearly and positively at the very start of the encounter.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ What should a VAI do if a mistake is made on the VA form? Why do you think this is the case?
- ✘ What can a VAI do to receive truthful and objective answers?

Provide some suggestions on how to handle a respondent’s emotions that may surface during an interview.

Now it is time to present the forms. The next section of the manual is “Common Sections of the Verbal Autopsy Forms.” Ask the class to look at the entire International Core Verbal Autopsy Form 1: Death of Child under Age 28 Days in the “Forms” section of the manual. Have the class look over the form for about 5 minutes, then ask them to take 20 minutes and read the “Common Sections of the Verbal Autopsy Forms” (and to stop reading when they get to “Residency Decision Tree” section on page 39).

Then go through each question on the form, one by one. Make special note about the following fields:

- ✘ Discuss what a “field site” is in this application of the SAVVY system. What will the VAIs be entering in their fieldwork?
- ✘ Explain how a “Household number” is created, and why it is so important that this number is entered correctly. Explain when a household number should not be entered.
- ✘ Location identifiers are the only information that another member of the SAVVY system can use to relocate a household, so it is crucial that this information is entered correctly. Explain the difference between “Location identifier 1” and “Location identifier 2.”
- ✘ Emphasize the difference between “reference person” and “respondent.”

- ✘ Show the trainees the “Historic Events Calendar” in appendix D and “Year-of-Birth Calculator” in appendix E in the back of the manual, and explain how to use them.
- ✘ “Usual residence” is an extremely important concept in the SAVVY system. Make sure the class understands why each of the examples given is or is not a “usual resident.” (For their reference, the “Glossary of Terms” contains a definition of “Usual residence,” including many examples of how to characterize usual residence.)

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ When should a VA be performed for a person who was not a “usual resident”?
- ✘ If a respondent is unable to provide answers to certain questions or sections in VA forms, is it acceptable for a VAI to seek answers from other members of the household?
- ✘ Under what circumstance should VA be conducted for stillbirth of an infant? In some areas, stillbirths do not always necessitate funerals. Will VA be administered in those cases?

Ask trainees if they have any questions or comments as they go through examples of what is considered “usual residence” and what is not. Also ask the class if they think of any instances that are not covered in this chapter but may be encountered in the field. Have the class assess these cases together to determine SAVVY residential status.

Have the class take 20 minutes to read the rest of the chapter, starting with the “Residency Decision Tree.” Explain to the class that the “Residential Status Criteria” found in appendix B is another reference that they can use to determine residency.

When asking about the respondent’s opinion of the cause of death and the history of events leading to death, write down the response verbatim. Write very legibly in this section, but do not summarize.

Emphasize that the respondents must ask about health services used in the period before death, but then must also ask the order that the deceased used these health services, and whether or not medication was obtained.

Under the forms’ common heading for “Other Evidence and Summary of Details,” emphasize that a VA must be performed even if there is evidence of a cause of death.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ Ask the class if they have any questions on the “Residency Decision Tree”.
- ✘ When does the KI distribute the medical information envelope to the family of the deceased?
- ✘ If the respondent shows you some supporting documents (for example medical records), what do you do with them?
- ✘ Should you summarize or rephrase what respondents say about the cause of deaths of the deceased?

- ✘ If the respondent says that she or he has the medical certificate of the deceased with cause of death indicated, should you proceed with VA?

Now have the trainees work in pairs again. Have each of the trainees pretend that he or she is performing a VA interview for a child who died at the age of 15 days, and have each trainee fill in common sections portion of form 1 (the sections covered in Chapter 8).

CHAPTER 9 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER’S MANUAL: CHECKLIST QUESTIONS FOR “INTERNATIONAL VERBAL AUTOPSY QUESTIONNAIRE 1: DEATH OF CHILD UNDER 4 WEEKS”

Chapter 9 focuses on form 1, which is used for death of a child under four weeks. A copy of this form should be made available to each trainee. Make sure that trainees have the correct form and hold them up as you introduce the form.

Take 10 minutes for the class to look over the form. Explain what a “filter question” is and how to recognize them in the form. Then have the class read chapter 9 in the next 20 minutes.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ☒ Ask if the class has any questions as they read through the checklist questions for VA form 1.
- ☒ Many questions refer to medical phenomena and respondents may not understand them. Should these questions be read and asked as they appear and the form? Should a VAI provide explanations in non-medical language to respondents? Discuss this issue.
- ☒ If a baby was born dead, should a VA be administered?

CHAPTER 10 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: CHECKLIST QUESTIONS FOR "INTERNATIONAL VERBAL AUTOPSY QUESTIONNAIRE 2: DEATH OF CHILD AGED 4 WEEKS TO 14 YEARS"

Chapter 10 refers to VA form 2, which is used for death of a child aged four weeks to 14 years. A copy of this form should be made available to each trainee. Each trainee should have a copy of this form with them during the training.

Take 10 minutes for the class to look over the form. Then have trainees work in pairs to conduct a mock interview using this form.

Once the class finishes with this exercise, ask each group whether they have any questions or concerns after doing the interview. Have the class discuss questions.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ☒ How is "duration" defined when using form 2? How does this differ from form 1?
- ☒ If a child were bitten by a mosquito in the period before death, should this be recorded anywhere on the form? If so, where?

CHAPTER 11 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: CHECKLIST QUESTIONS FOR "INTERNATIONAL VERBAL AUTOPSY QUESTIONNAIRE 3: DEATH OF PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS AND ABOVE"

As with the previous chapter, similar exercises are used for chapter 11, which discusses form 3, used for death a person 15 years of age or older. Have the class look over the form and do interviews in pairs for an adult's death. Following this exercise, ask the group members to share observations during the interview.

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ If a respondent believes the deceased had cancer, but a doctor never diagnosed the deceased, should this be recorded in the "History of Previously Diagnosed Medical Conditions" section? Why or why not?
- ✘ How is "duration" defined in form 3? Is this similar to form 1 or form 2?
- ✘ If a 35-year-old woman drowns, is it required to ask all the questions about symptoms and their duration? Why?

CHAPTER 12 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: HOW TO COMPLETE THE VA REPORTING LOG BOOK

Chapter 12 introduces the VA reporting log book and provides instruction on how to complete it. Ask the trainees to review the sample VA reporting log book page, found in appendix A.

Take 15 minutes for the class to read chapter 12, followed by questions

Questions for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ What log books do you compare the VA reporting log book with?
- ✘ How can you show your supervisor that VA works assigned to you have been completed?
- ✘ When do you think it is appropriate to fill out the VA reporting log book — right after the interview in front of the respondent or after returning from fieldwork?

Discuss possible solutions in the event of discrepancies between the number of deaths reported by a SAVVY census and the KIs.

CHAPTER 13 OF THE VERBAL AUTOPSY INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL: SUPERVISOR REVIEW OF YOUR WORK

Chapter 13 describes typical monitoring and review activities performed on a VAI's work. It is important for VAI trainees to keep in mind that they will be accountable for the quality of data collected with verbal autopsy. Note that a VA's supervisor is available to help a VAI improve his or her performance, so recommend contacting the supervisor when encountering difficulties in the field.

Stop and ask if there are any questions.

Question for the class — Ask the following:

- ✘ You will always be informed in advance about visits by your supervisors to sample areas as she or he verifies your works. True or false?

TRAINING PROGRAM AND TIMETABLE

The training program and timetable will help you organize your training. If you need more time to deal with a particular subject, you should plan for it to make sure that VAIs understand their work. Typically, the training takes four days for new trainees. Subsequent re-training should take less time — about two or three days. For new VAIs, an additional day of training is important to familiarize them with the SAVVY system and its various main fieldwork activities and basics on data processing. Also, the extra day will provide trainees more time to sharpen their fieldwork techniques and interviewing skills.

A typical training day would begin around 8 AM and end at about 5 PM. Below is a typical four-day training program for new VA interviewers.

Day One

Registration of participants, introductions and opening of the workshop

Introduction to SAVVY and objectives (chapter 1 of the manual)

Overview of the **roles and responsibilities** of a VAI (chapter 2)

Morning Break

Working with the **community** and **key informants** (chapters 5 and 6)

Lunch Break

Introduction to VAI **working materials** (chapter 3)

Introduction to and **definitions of important concepts** used in mortality surveillance and verbal autopsy, such as “usual residence,” “household,” “respondent,” and “verbal autopsy interview,” and introduce SAVVY VA questionnaire forms, mortality register, residency decision tree, etc. (chapter 4 and part of chapter 8)

Wrap up day one

Day Two

Highlights of day one by a volunteer

Clarification and emphasis on important **SAVVY concepts, rules and definitions** (if required)

Go through VA **forms 1 and 2** for children: review of variables and their meaning

Morning Break

How to **conduct VAIs** and **fill in forms 1 and 2** (chapter 7, 9 and 10)

Lunch Break

Continue filling in the VA forms 1 and 2

Wrap up day 2 with question and answer session, and introduction to day 3

Day Three

Highlights of the previous day given by a volunteer

Go through VA **form 3**: review of variables and their meaning (chapter 11).

How to **conduct an interview and fill in the VA form 3**, including use of job aids provided

Morning Break

Drama Session: Trainers and supervisors demonstrate how to conduct VA interviews

Feedback and comments from the demonstration.

Lunch Break

Drama Session: Trainees practice and participate among themselves in conducting interviews

Afternoon Break

Feedback from the drama sessions

Question and answer session

Evaluation of the day's training.

Selection of **volunteer** for the next day who will provide highlights of the day

Day Four

Highlights of the previous day given by a volunteer

Division into groups for fieldwork training

Fieldwork exercise

Lunch Break

Feedback from fieldwork exercise from each group

Assessment on the field performance as observed by supervisors

Question and answer session, with additional drama session if needed

Distribution of VA forms and other materials to trainees

Closing

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