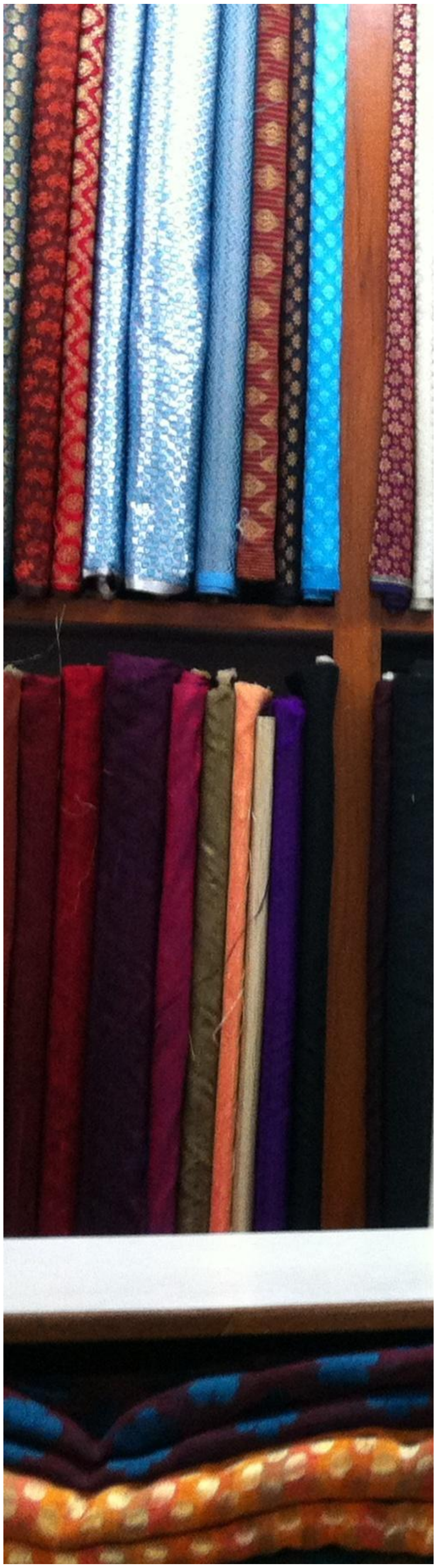
Determine Health Needs



Overview

This document explores how to develop a training that meets the unique health needs of the workforce. The HERproject curriculum includes the core content for a series of health trainings. Ideally all these topics will be implemented as a comprehensive women's health program. The core curriculum reflects global and factory-specific research on the unmet health needs of female factory and farmworkers.

We strongly recommend that your workplace training program include most if not all of the health modules included in the HERproject curriculum. Each of these modules provides key health messages that can promote better health and healthy behaviors among workers and therefore a more productive workplace.

We also recognize that workplace constraints may require trainers to choose which modules to include in the training program. If this is necessary, it is best to focus on the topics that are most relevant to the workers in the factory.

Whether your program will cover all of the HERproject modules or only a few of them, you should conduct an assessment so that you better understand the health needs of the workers you will be training.

This document provides guidance for how you can assess the unique needs of a target group of people and then design your training program contents around their needs.

Why Should You Assess the Health Needs of Your Workforce?

It is both an important principle and a best practice to ask people what they see as their needs and concerns before you design and implement a program for their benefit.

The assessment process serves several functions for your workplace program:

- It identifies workers' health needs and priorities.
- It defines a baseline for workers' basic health knowledge in the factory so that you can measure changes at the end of your program and thereby measure the training's effect.
- It shows how workers view the effect of health on their productivity at work and their employment decisions.
- It provides data on workers' perceptions of existing onsite health services and if the factory has a health clinic at the beginning and end of the project.

What Does a Health Needs Assessment Measure?

We recommend evaluating factory workers' needs through a health needs assessment, which should seek to obtain the following information:

- Demographic information of workers (e.g., age, marital status, number of years in the factory, etc.)
- Health status (e.g., how often workers become ill)

- Level of health knowledge on HERproject curriculum topics, including:
  - *Family planning:* Name some family planning methods.
  - *Nutrition:* Name some vegetables that are rich in vitamin A.
  - *Waterborne diseases:* Name one way that water can be safer to drink.
  - *HIV, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs):* How can you protect yourself from contracting STIs?
- Health behavior as relates to HERproject curriculum topics, such as:
  - *Personal hygiene:* What do you use during your menstrual cycles to manage your monthly bleeding?
  - *Reproductive health:* For which risk factors would you visit a doctor or seek medical help during pregnancy?
  - *Nutrition:* How often do you eat breakfast?
  - *Noncommunicable diseases:* How often do you do a breast self-exam?
- Knowledge of existing on-site or off-site health services

Obtaining the above information will help a trainer to understand the specific health needs and training needs of the workforce. In many instances a worker may have information (e.g., how to wash his or her hands) but may not be practicing healthy behaviors (e.g., washing his or her hands before eating, before cooking, and after using the toilet). In other instances a worker may have particular health needs (e.g., caring for and preventing back pain) but may not have know how to address this issue (e.g., practice healthy back exercises or see a doctor). By conducting a thorough assessment, the trainer can tailor the training content to fill the workers' knowledge gaps and promote healthy behavior.

What Method Should I Use to Conduct the Assessment?

The assessment should use one or more of the methods below:

- Survey of workers and management (either through a written questionnaire or one-on-one interviews)
- Focus group discussions with workers and management
- Participatory focus group activity with workers and management

In the best case, the assessment would use more than one or all of these approaches. However, if that would be too time consuming, you may elect to use only one method. Each method is explained in more detail below.

Survey of Workers and Management | Written Questionnaire
Surveying workers is one of the most effective methods of determining any population's health needs, knowledge, and behavior. The length of the survey can vary, but it should ask questions that relate to the workers' health needs, knowledge, and behavior, as well as access to health services.

In places where workers are literate, HERproject trainers have found it beneficial for respondents to complete the survey at home. This approach ensures that there is not any pressure from the workplace (either by peers or management) to answer questions in a particular way or within a certain amount of time. Workers may also feel more comfortable and thus be more honest. All surveys should be anonymous, meaning that the surveyor should never ask for the respondent's name.

Approximately 10 percent of the workers (although the size of the workforce and practical considerations may influence the sample size) should be surveyed in order to gain an accurate portrayal of the broader workforce. It is very important to make sure that respondents are selected at random instead of chosen on purpose. If they are chosen on purpose, by either the worksite management or by an external organization, the information that is gathered will be less credible.

Benefits	Constraints
» Surveyers can obtain a broad range of information by adding questions. » It is efficient. A limited time is required to survey a large portion of the workforce. » The data is easy to analyze (if the questions are not open-ended). » It can be conducted outside work hours.	» Answers generally lack depth because the questions are close-ended. » It requires a high degree of literacy. » It is time consuming for the worker.

Survey of Workers and Management | One-on-One Interview

In-person interviews are based on the same concept as a written questionnaire except that participants are asked questions out loud one-on-one. Interviews allow for follow-up questions and thus greater clarity.

Approximately 10 percent of the workers (although the size of the workforce and practical considerations may influence the sample size) should be interviewed in order to gain an accurate portrayal of the broader workforce. It is very important to make sure that respondents are selected at random instead of chosen on purpose. If they are chosen on purpose, by either the workplace management or by an external organization, the information that is gathered will be less credible.

To promote confidentiality and trust, the interviewer should not belong to worksite management; however, if there is a strong human resources department with confidentiality policies that the workforce trusts, then a representative(s) of that department could conduct the interviews.

Benefits	Constraints
» It can obtain a broad range of information (e.g., health status, health knowledge, and health behavior). » It makes it possible to gain in-depth answers (i.e., the interviewer can probe further). » It allows you to build a safe, trusting environment for	» It is time consuming for the worker and trainer. » Data can be difficult to codify and analyze. » It likely needs to be conducted during working hours. » The quality of the data depends upon the interviewer.

discussing sensitive issues. » Workers do not have to be literate.	

Focus Groups Discussions
Focus groups are used to probe more deeply into issues that arise from the randomized survey (either a written questionnaire or one-on-one interview). When a survey is not administered, focus groups can also fulfill the objectives of the health needs assessment (determine current health status, knowledge, and behavior).

Focus group discussions should involve 10 people or fewer at a time and should be conducted by a trusted person. A minimum of two different groups with 10 different people in each should be conducted simultaneously. Groups should be gender-segregated, i.e., only women or only men should participate in each group. To encourage honest discussion, workers and supervisors should not be involved in the same focus group. See Appendix 1 (page 6) for more information about how to conduct a traditional focus group.

Benefits	Constraints
» It has the potential to gain in-depth answers (i.e., the interviewer can probe further). » It does not require workers to be literate. » It compliments one-on-one interviews. » It creates a community where workers are more likely to feel comfortable sharing more sensitive information.	» It is time consuming for the worker and trainer. » Data can be difficult to codify and analyze. » Reliability is challenged by the "group-think" environment (e.g., people who speak a lot may influence those who speak less). » The quality of the data depends upon the interviewer.

Participatory Focus Group
Like a traditional focus group, a participatory focus group can probe more deeply into issues that arise from the randomized survey. This type of focus group is best if it focuses on only one aspect of the health needs assessment (health status, knowledge, *or* behavior), instead of all of them.

Where the traditional focus group is a discussion between the facilitator and workers, the participatory focus group includes an activity (such as games, role-playing, or drawing) that encourages participants to discuss issues as a group. The participatory methods have often been proven to bring about more in-depth understanding of a particular topic (e.g., health knowledge of workers).

This focus group should involve no more than 10 people at one time and should be conducted by a trusted person. A minimum of two different groups with 10 different people in each should be conducted simultaneously. Groups should be gender-segregated, i.e., only women or only men should participate in each group. To encourage honest discussion, workers and supervisors should not be involved in the same focus group.

What Do I Do with the Health Needs Data I Collect?

Once you have completed the health needs assessment, use the data to determine which health needs are most critical in your workplace. Below is a very basic methodology for doing this.

Review the data to determine the following:

» What does the target audience already know?
» What misinformation (incorrect understandings) do they have?
» Why do they behave the way they do?
» What do they want to know?
» What do they need to know?
» What challenges to changing their awareness or behavior might exist?

Summarize major findings for the major questions asked. Emerging patterns and trends can be stated in the following way:

» Most of the participants said or wrote _____________________.
» Some of the participants said or wrote _____________________.
» A few of the participants said or wrote _____________________.
» Survey data can be quantified by counting and creating percentages for similar responses.
» Focus group discussions cannot be quantified.

Using the above exercise, you can select the health modules that address the greatest health needs, lack of knowledge, or poor health behavior of the workers who will participate in the training program.

Appendix 1: Conducting a Focus Group Discussion

Preparing to Conduct Focus Group Discussions

Determine the profile of focus group discussion (FGD) participants

» Determine the characteristics of your target population, including sex, age, profession, geographic location (home district, division, etc.), and education.

» Group FGD participants according to characteristics they have in common.

Invite suitable participants who know each other

» Aim to establish a high comfort level. The comfort level must be high for the factory workers to open up, especially since they will be discussing family planning and reproductive health issues in front of colleagues.

Select an appropriate FGD facilitator

Select a good note-taker

Select a quiet and comfortable FGD site

Develop FGD discussion guide. Most guidelines include:

» Introduction of the facilitator and participants

» Explanation of how the FGD will be run

» General topics to open up discussion

» Specific topics to reveal participants' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions

» Reminder to ask probing questions to reveal more in-depth information or to help clarify earlier statements

Prepare the recording device, if using one (N/A for most factory settings).

» Purchase enough cassette tapes.

» Make sure the tape recorder works.

» Buy extra batteries for use during the FGD.

Conducting Focus Group Discussions

Begin the FGD session

» Introduce yourself and the note-taker.

» Explain the purpose of tape recorder, and ask permission before turning on the tape recorder.

» Explain the general purpose of the discussion.

» Establish ground rules, such as:

- Setting a time frame
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Stressing that participants' input is very valuable
- Respecting the opinions of others
- Noting that questions will be answered after the session

» Begin to develop dialogue and commonality with participants.

- Greet everyone.

- Make eye contact with everyone.
- Have participants introduce themselves using their name or alias.
- Initiate general conversation to create a relaxed environment.

Initiate the warm-up discussion

- » Use the FGD guide to initiate the warm-up discussion.
- » Begin by asking neutral questions, and then proceed to general questions.
- » Allow participants to talk uninterrupted.
- » Be supportive of the participants' interpretations and comments, even if the information presented is incorrect.
- » Try to establish trends and explore those in more depth.

Probe more on the topic of discussion

- » Use open-ended questions to probe about key issues mentioned by participants.
- » Allow for debate among group participants.
- » If participants ask questions, encourage the group to answer them.
- » Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to talk; encourage quieter participants to talk by calling on them directly.
- » Be supportive of respondents' comments. Do *not* correct misinformation or wrong perceptions.
- » If information is not forthcoming, consider using creative approaches, such as:
    - Describing a scene and getting participants' reactions
    - Asking participants to imagine something (like the ideal factory-based health worker, service, or program) and then describe it to you
    - Role-playing
    - Sharing what other people have said about a topic and getting the group's reaction
- » Note verbal responses and nonverbal cues in your record.

Wrap up the session

- » Review and summarize main points arising in the discussion.
- » Clarify conclusions and the relative importance of responses with participants.
- » Identify differences of perspectives, contrasting opinions, and areas of agreement.
- » Invite a round of final comments and insights.
- » Thank participants for their time and participation, and explain how valuable their comments have been.
- » Invite participants to refreshments if any are available.

Take advantage of post-session discussions

- » Answer participants' questions and clarify any misinformation provided by participants.
- » Leave the tape recorder running as participants disburse to capture any additional comments.

Immediately after each FGD session, meet with the note-taker to review notes, and if necessary, add information that he or she may have missed.

Analyzing FGDs and In-depth Interviews

Organize the notes from all the FGD sessions

Review the FGD data to determine the following:

» What does the target audience already know?
» What misinformation do they have?
» Why do they behave the way they do?
» What do they believe, and why?
» What do they want to know?
» What do they need to know?
» What are the barriers to change?

C. Summarize major findings for the major questions asked during the FGDs. Emerging patterns and trends can be stated in the following way:

» Most of the participants said ______________________________.
» Some of the participants said _____________________________.
» A few of the participants said _____________________________.
» Do *not* quantify FGD data by counting or creating percentages for a number of similar responses.

D. Include some participant quotes to support your findings

E. Write a report that summarizes all of the findings. Key elements of a report should include:

» Number of FGDs and/or in-depth interviews (IDIs) conducted for each category of participant
» Location of each FGD or IDI (factory, city, clinic, shop, home, etc.)
» Length of time for each interview or FGD
» Major findings, including key points from and patterns (or trends) in the data
» Suggestions for messages and materials
» Next steps