

Maternal Home Interviews: Value in the Valley



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Community Advantage

“Maternal interviews give a voice to the disenfranchised in my community, those without clout or power. FIMR provides a rare opportunity for the ‘providers’ in a community to hear from the ‘consumers.’”

—Patt Young, FIMR Interviewer
Alameda/Contra Costa Counties, CA

Fetal and Infant Mortality Review:



A Guide for Home Interviewers

NFIMR



A Guide for Home Interviewers

- The FIMR Process
- Conducting the FIMR interview
- Understanding the grief experience
- FIMR interviewer skills and training
- Summarizing the FIMR interview
- Self-care for the FIMR interviewer



Purpose of FIMR Maternal Interview

- To learn about mother experiences
- To identify community assets & deficits
- To convey mother's story to FIMR team
- To assess family's needs & referrals
- To facilitate bereavement process



Interviewer should:

- Track, contact, & engage mothers/families
- Review & explain consent form
- Prepare to conduct interview
- Provide culturally sensitive bereavement support during the interview
- **Listen and record, not interpret**



Interviewer should know how to: (con't)

- Maintain confidentiality
- Comply with public health & safety codes including reporting requirements
- Handle difficult encounters & maintain personal safety
- Screen for mental health risks
- Resist finger pointing
- **Refer to needed services**



Qualities of a Successful Interviewer

- Culturally sensitive
- Supportive listener
- Believes in the FIMR methodology
- Comprehends Program's role in changing and improving systems of care in the community
- Does not attempt to assign blame



Case Identification

Your Health Jurisdiction or Program Will
Determine

Fetal, neonatal and/or post neonatal

Zip code, census tract, referrals

Those not to interview

Race and ethnicity



The art of being prepared

- Know your community's resources
- Mental preparation
- Your program goals
- Hints before and after



Why is it so hard?

Challenges of the first call & home visit

Families want to talk...

To tell the story of their
child's life and death.




Interview Topics

- Prenatal Care
- Nutrition, Weight Gain & Health Habits
- Delivery of Baby
- Other Babies
- Information on Mother
- Information on Father
- Living Situation
- Life Changes/Social Support



Understanding the Grief Experience

- Factors Affecting Grief Experience
- Expressions of Grief
- Health Care Provider Responses at Time of Death
- Social and economic status framed by ethnicity



Any death of an infant or child is **sudden and unexpected**

- Pregnancies are supposed to be carried to term
- Children are not supposed to die before their parents.



Tasks for Bereaved

- Understand
- Grieve
- Commemorate



Interviewer Helps Navigate Bereavement

- Interviewer may be the only/initial source of support
- Interview provides opportunity for grief support and education, grief is normal and personal



Support

- Offer words of comfort and compassion in the family's own language.
 - Translators may be needed.
- Refer parents to support systems, such as faith community
- Maintain clear communication with all family members, respect family communication pattern
- Reassure parents that their expressions of grief and the intense feelings are accepted.

Questions Providers Can Ask to Assist the Bereaved

- I am so sorry for your loss. How can I help you?
- What are your traditions when an infant dies?
- Is there someone I can call for you?
- Has your family ever had this experience before? How did they handle it?
- Did you have a funeral service? Was it helpful?

Loss of Dreams by...

- Early miscarriage, fetal death
- Relinquish for adoption
- Birth defects, neonatal loss
- Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID)
- Chronic disease
- Unintentional injury/homicide



Factors Affecting a Families' Grief Response

- Age of deceased and survivors
- Relationship to survivors
- Prior experience with death
- Faith foundation
- Family traditions and customs
- Historical background of cultural group
- Education
- Economic status
- Geographic region

Normal Grief Response

- Hostility and anger
- Depression
- Guilt
- Anxiety and fear
- Sadness, crying
- Mood swings
- Physical symptoms
- Disorganization, difficulties making decisions
- Anniversary reactions



‘Words’ from Compassionate Friends

The do’s and don’ts in working with bereaved families

- Don't try to find magic words that will take away the pain; there aren't any.
- A hug, a touch, and a simple *"I'm so sorry"* offer sincere comfort and support.
- The easy/hard job of listening to the bereaved.



Phrases to avoid

- **Avoid saying, "*I know how you feel.*"**
Appropriate only if you also have had a child die.
- **Avoid saying "*It was God's will*" and using other clichés that attempt to minimize or explain the death.**
- **Don't try to find something positive in the child's death, such as, "*At least you have other children.*"** There are no words that make it all right that a child has died.



'Words' from Compassionate Friends

The do's and don'ts in working with bereaved families

- **Parents with religious convictions may struggle with God's role in this event.**
- **Listen! Let them express anger, questions, pain, disbelief, and the guilt they may be experiencing**
- **There is no standard timetable for grief**



Hidden Victims of Grief

- Siblings
- Grandparents
- Absent Fathers
 - Providers
- Extended Family


What is Personal Contact?

- Text




- Social Media

- Let family define




Summarizing the home interview

- Methods are customized to your program and community
- Remember this is the voice of the mother and family, a community member and a consumer



Take Care of Yourself

- Support each other as home interviewers
- Know your strengths and limitations
- Be aware of your reactions
- Take responsibility for your own needs
- Learn to receive as well as give



“May You be strengthened
by yesterday’s rain,
walk straight in tomorrow’s wind
and cherish each moment
of the sun today.”

Ojibiwa Prayer