Training Interviewers to Implement the Household Relations Section (Section 10) of the NFHS-3 Woman's Questionnaire

ADDENDUM TO THE NFHS-3 INTERVIEWER'S TRAINING GUIDELINES*

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The purpose of this addendum to the NFHS-3 Interviewer's Training Guidelines is to provide additional guidance for training field staff in the implementation of the Household Relations section of the Woman's Questionnaire of NFHS-3. Because this section of the questionnaire collects information which can be particularly sensitive, additional guidance is provided for interviewer training, including general background to the issue and additional safety and ethical considerations. The manual is designed to be used together with the NFHS-3 Interviewer's Manual.

Domestic violence is a very sensitive issue, and many women are reluctant to disclose experiences of violence, often because of shame and fear of negative consequences. Experience has shown that disclosure rates of violence are highly sensitive to the level of skill and empathy of interviewers, as well as to the amount of privacy at the time of interview. Therefore, these training guidelines give particular emphasis to developing the necessary awareness and skills for maximizing disclosure, without placing respondents or staff at risk. The Appendix provides additional exercises for sensitizing staff to issues of gender and violence.

GOALS OF THE TRAINING

The main goals of the training session are:

- To sensitize field staff to issues of gender and violence;
- To instruct staff on interviewing techniques and on the implementation of the Household Relations Section; and
- To instruct staff on how to manage safety and ethical concerns that are specific to domestic violence data collection.

TRAINERS

Domestic violence experts from local or state NGOs, research institutions or other organizations who are conducting research in domestic violence, have experience in assisting domestic violence victims, provide services for abused women, or are designing policies or laws related to gender violence should be invited to participate in the training and provide additional information.

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING COURSE

THE AGENDA FOR INTERVIEWER TRAINING

GENERAL GUIDELINES Following is an illustrative agenda for the DV Module interviewer training. The training should last a minimum of 4-6 hours. However, if more time is available, it should be used both for additional sensitization exercises (see Appendix I) and practice interviews.

Minutes	Morning	Minutes	Afternoon
15'	Objectives of the Household Relations Section	45'	Safety and ethical considerations
90'	Introduction to Gender and Violence	90'	Practice in groups (mock interviews) of DV Module.
	 Exercise # 1, 2, 3 (Appendix I) Power point presentation (Appendix III) 	30'	Debriefing
90'	 Explanation of Household Relations Section (See Interviewer's Manual) Selecting one eligible respondent per sample household Question by question explanation 		

I. Overview of Gender-Based Violence

The objective of this section should be to make field staff understand a) the purpose of collecting information on domestic violence; b) the importance of including domestic violence in NFHS-3, and c) the specific issues that will be addressed. Exercises 1 and 2 in Appendix I are designed to open discussion among participants about the different kinds of violence against women that commonly occur in their setting, and to examine common myths about violence. An overview to gender-based violence, its prevalence, and causes and characteristics is provided in Appendix II and in the training notes to the PowerPoint presentation (Appendix III). All trainers should familiarize themselves with the material in the Appenices II and III before starting the training.

The included exercises will help the field staff examine their own attitudes and beliefs around violence, rape and other forms of gender-based violence. Interviewers frequently share many of the same stereotypes and biases about victims that are dominant in the society at large, (for example, that some women deserve to be beaten or that men have the right to demand sex from their wives whenever they want.) Left unchallenged, these beliefs can lead to victim-blaming and other destructive attitudes that can undermine both the respondent's self esteem and the interviewer's ability to obtain quality data. A set of ground rules are suggested to help create an open environment conducive to learning, although no participants should be required to talk about personal experiences unless they choose to.

II. Purpose of the Household Relations Section

The goal of the Household Relations Section of the NFHS-3 Woman's Questionnaire is to provide information regarding violence against women by intimate partners and others. Specifically, the information being collected in this section will be used to determine, among other things:

- How many women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from a current or former intimate partner at any point in their lives, and how many have experienced such violence in the last 12 months?
- What are the immediate consequences (for example, injuries) and longerterm consequences (e.g., reproductive health problems) of domestic violence for women?
- How many women have experienced physical or sexual violence from individuals other than an intimate partner any time in their lives?
- How do women in India respond to violence? Who do they turn to for help?

Further, the data from this section in combination with information from other sections of NFHS-3 will provide insight into:

• demographic and health consequences for women as well as for their children.

These data will be very useful for national policy makers and will contribute to improving laws and programs to prevent violence against women and to benefit victims of domestic violence. It will also make an important contribution to international knowledge in this field, and to exploring what aspects of domestic violence are similar across settings, and what are unique to a specific country.

III. How is the Household Relations Section different from other sections of the NFHS-3 Woman's Questionnaire?

The Household Relations Section is similar in many ways to other NFHS-3 sections, particularly in the way that questions are asked and responses recorded. However,

because of the nature of the questions, there are some important differences that interviewers should be aware of:

- **Disclosing violence is a very difficult thing for many women**. It is a very intimate part of their lives, and a woman who has experienced violence often feels ashamed or guilty about her situation. She might be afraid that someone hearing about the violence will think that it is her fault or that she is a bad woman or mother. Therefore, women are often reluctant to talk about violence unless they feel comfortable with the interviewer and believe that they can trust her. That is why it is so important for the interviewer to build rapport with the respondent and to listen in a sympathetic, non-judgmental way.
- **Disclosing violence may be dangerous for some women.** If an abusive husband finds out that his wife has told others about the violence, he could become angry and abuse her even more. If he suspects that she is talking about this during an interview, he might become abusive to the interviewer as well. Therefore, it is very important to follow the rules about privacy strictly, making sure that no one else is present during the interview, and changing the subject or suspending the interview for a while if someone else comes into the room. For the same reason the Household Relations Section is only administered to one woman per household, and men in the same households are not questioned about domestic violence.
- **Discussing experiences of violence may be very distressing for respondents**, even if the violence took place many years ago. Women may become upset or even cry as they recall experiences, and they may ask interviewers for help or advice. It is important for the interviewer to know how to respond if this happens.
- Listening to women's stories of abuse can also be upsetting for interviewers and supervisors. Consequently, ways for team members to provide emotional support for each other should be developed. Notably, in countries where the prevalence of violence is high, it is very likely that some of the interviewers will have experienced violence at some point in their lives. Stories of abuse can be particularly emotionally draining; nonetheless, these women also tend often to be excellent interviewers.

During the training session we will come back to these issues, and suggest ways to overcome difficulties that may arise.

IV. Explanation of the Household Relations Section

During this part of the training, interviewers will learn (or if they have already learned it, review) how to select the eligible respondent for administering the Household Relations Section, and will be given a question by question explanation of the section using the NFHS-3 Interviewer's Manual as a guide.

Demonstration interviews will be used in order to illustrate how questions should be asked and how information should be recorded. For the interview exercises, it is useful to assign different characteristics to the 'respondent' to ensure that trainees have practice covering different parts of the questionnaire and are exposed to different situations. Below are some examples of combinations of respondent characteristics to use in these exercises:

- Separated from partner, slapped, beaten, kicked at some point, no violence in last 12 months
- Currently married, no violence with current partner but was slapped and beaten by a former partner (more than 10 years ago)
- Never married, has a boyfriend, never lived with him
- Never married, no partner violence, but raped by a stranger when she was 14
- Currently married, never physically abused
- Divorced, physically and sexually abused by ex-husband, last time was 4 months ago
- Currently married, 2 former husbands, no violence by anyone
- Married, gauna not performed, forced to have sex during last 12 months by her husband

V. Safety and Ethical Considerations

General considerations

Earlier in the training some of the ways that the Household Relations Section is different from other sections of NFHS-3 have been discussed. In this section we will talk about specific measures that should be implemented in order to protect the safety of both respondents and interviewers. 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 project that involves discussions of domestic violence can be extremely taxing, and it is important—both for ethical reasons and to ensure the quality of the data—that active steps are taken to protect the emotional well-being of field staff.

For safety reasons, when discussing the survey with community or other household members, it is important to refer to the survey in general terms—such as a study on women's health or life experiences—rather than mention violence or abuse directly. If it becomes well known in the community that women are being questioned about violence, men may prohibit their partners from participating or may retaliate against them for their participation. In addition to potentially jeopardizing the safety of respondents, this could also undermine the survey objectives and data quality.

Although trainees may worry that women will be offended by such sensitive questions, experience has shown that women rarely refuse to answer questions on violence unless they feel that it is not safe to do so. In fact, there is ample evidence that most women

welcome the opportunity to tell their stories if they are asked in a sympathetic, nonjudgmental way.

However, it should be recognized that participating in research interviews on sensitive topics can provoke powerful emotional responses in some participants. The interview may cause a woman to relive painful and frightening events, and this in itself can be distressing if she does not have a supportive social environment. Interviewers therefore need to be trained to be aware of the effects that the questions may have on informants and how best to respond, based on a woman's level of distress.

Most women who become emotional during an interview actively choose to proceed, after being given a moment to collect themselves. The interviewer training should include practice sessions on how to identify and respond appropriately to symptoms of distress as well as how to terminate an interview if the impact of the questions becomes too negative.

When women suffering violence are identified, the World Health Organization's Recommendations for Research on Violence against Women suggest that researchers should provide respondents with information or services that can help their situation. This may not always be feasible particularly in rural areas where no services for abused women are available. NFHS-3 rules require that every Research Organization prepare a list of organizations (non-governmental, governmental, and charitable organizations), that provide help to abused women with addresses and contact information. The following guidelines are provided on how this list is to be used:

- Each female interviewer must be provided with this list with the organizations sorted by region.
- Interviewers must be instructed on how to use this list to identify which organization is closest to each of the primary sampling units (PSUs) they are going to be working in.
- This list is to be used <u>only if</u> a respondent asks the interviewer or any other team member for assistance in stopping the abuse.
- To assist a respondent who has asked for help, the interviewer should consult the list and identify one or more organizations where abused women can seek shelter, counselling or any other kind of help which is closest to the PSU in which the respondent resides. She must provide the name, address and any other contact information where the respondent may be able to receive advice and help. The information on sources of help must be given only if the woman asks for it and only after the interview is complete. If a woman asks for the information during the interview, interviewers must be trained to explain to the woman that they can answer all her questions once the interview is over.

Another issue that should be considered is the field staff's own experiences with violence. Given the high prevalence of gender-based violence nationally, it is likely that a substantial proportion of interviewers will have experienced violence themselves at some point. These experiences need to be taken into consideration. Most people learn to cope

with painful past experiences, and usually do not dwell on them in their everyday lives. However, when trainees are confronted with the subject matter, the information may awaken disturbing images and or emotions. For many trainees, simply acknowledging the fact 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 too overwhelming, trainees should be supported in their decision to withdraw from the survey.

Maintaining confidentiality

Much of the information provided by respondents will be extremely personal. The act of revealing details of abuse to someone outside the family can expose respondents to further risk. For these reasons, it is critical to maintain the confidentiality of information collected during the interview. A number of mechanisms should be used to protect the confidentiality of the information collected, including:

- **Interviewer emphasis on confidentiality.** All interviewers should receive strict instructions about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. No interviewers should conduct interviews in their own community or with persons that they know.
- **Privacy of interviews.** Interviews should only be conducted in a private setting. The participant should be free to reschedule (or relocate) the interview to a time that may be more safe or convenient for her. Other field staff (editors, supervisors) may be enlisted to help distract spouses and other family members if it is difficult to achieve privacy.
- **Training on how to handle interruptions.** Interviewers should be trained to terminate or change the subject of discussion if an interview is interrupted by anyone. The interviewer can forewarn the respondent that she will turn to an already competed section of the questionnaire (breastfeeding, family planning, etc.) if the interview is interrupted. One way of handling such situations is for the interviewer to appear to check with the respondent the data on her the birth history, antenatal care or child health. For women who have no children, the interviewer could go back to the questions on education or employment.
- One interview per household. Only one woman per household is to be interviewed about her experiences of violence. This is done to protect the confidentiality of the interview. The respondent who is selected for this section is informed that she has been randomly selected so that she fully understands that no one else will know that she has been asked this section.
- The logistics of safety. Logistics planning should include consideration of respondent and interviewer safety. This will require that sufficient time is budgeted to accommodate the possible need to reschedule interviews. It may also

be necessary to find a safer place to conduct the interview. It is also a good idea to schedule the interview of the woman selected for the Household Relations section at a time when there are likely to be few people in the household, such as during the late morning when children are often at school and husbands are at work.

• **Information or referrals for respondents.** Although most women interviewed will not require any special help after participating in the interview, some women may be particularly distressed, or may ask the interviewer for help in overcoming their situation. As discussed above, in NFHS-3 an interviewer can provide a respondent who asks for help contact information for an organization that she can assist her. If the information is provided in written form, it is very important that the respondent be told to keep the information in a safe place. It is important that no one else knows that she has been provided with information on services for abused women. This may put her in danger of further abuse.

Emotional support for field staff

Listening day in and day out to stories of abuse can have emotional and personal consequences for interviewers. A common occurrence recounted by researchers on violence is that feelings evoked during the research begin to invade other areas of staff members' lives. For example, it is not unusual for team members involved in violence research to begin to have problems in their own relationships, either because they start to recognize aspects of their own relationships as abusive, or because the anger they feel towards male perpetrators begins to generalize to the men in their own life.

Emotional support for team members is essential. Not only does it help interviewers withstand the physical and emotional demands of intense fieldwork, but it also contributes to the quality of the data collection process. One strategy is to schedule periodic "decompression sessions" or de-briefings for field staff to discuss how the emotional impact of the research experience is affecting them. These meetings can be led by team supervisors and editors and should be separate from meetings for reviewing technical aspects of the survey. In these sessions, maintaining the confidentiality of both respondents and field staff is a primary consideration. What is said in these meetings should not be repeated to anyone else. The purpose of the debriefing sessions is to create an opportunity for the interviewers to discuss the content of the interviews and their feelings about the work. The goal is to reduce the stress of the fieldwork and prevent any negative consequences. Scheduling weekly sessions should meet the needs of most survey teams.

Supervisors should be on the lookout for signs of "burn out" among field staff and to take immediate steps to reduce their exposure to potentially upsetting situations. A single day's rest can often be enough to allow team members to recuperate from stress.

Appendix I

Exercises for Sensitizing Interviewers on Violence

Activity 1: What is gender-based violence? (30 minutes)

Goal: To encourage participants to think about different kinds of acts that can constitute violence, and to recognize that violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and economic.

Step 1. Ask the participants to mention all the different kinds of violence that are common in their community and write the answers on the flipchart or blackboard. An alternative is to hand out cards for participants to write down their answers and then stick them up on the wall.

Step 2. Ask the group "Are all these acts of violence the same?" "What kinds of differences are there between them?" "What kinds of violence are more likely to happen to women and girls than to men and boys?" What do you think are the effects on the health of women and girls of this kind of violence?" If cards are used, they can be grouped together, according to the types of violence (emotional, verbal, economic, sexual, or physical), or according to which types of violence are suffered primarily by women and girls, which are mostly experienced by men and boys, and which are suffered equally by men and women.

Step 3. Show overheads and distribute handouts on the definitions and characteristics of gender-based violence, wife abuse and sexual coercion.

Activity 2: Myths and truths about violence (30 minutes)

Goal: To challenge existing beliefs about violence and to identify areas of consensus and disagreement within the group.

Step 1. Place three signs up around the room with the words "I AGREE," "I DISAGREE," and "DON'T KNOW."

Step 2. Read out loud the following statements and ask participants to move to the sign that represents their opinion about the statement. Ask a few participants on each side to explain their opinion. The facilitator may ask questions to stimulate discussion, but it is not necessary to provide "correct" answers, as these will be discussed in greater depth later on. On a flipchart the facilitator can write down the number of people agreeing and disagreeing with each statement.

- > Men are violent by nature
- > Violence is usually due to alcohol consumption
- Sometimes violence is a way of showing affection
- Boys who witness their father's violence towards their mothers are more likely to be violent when they grow up
- A woman should put up with violence in order to keep her family together
- > Some women like to be beaten
- > Violence against women exists in every society in the world
- Violence is never justified
- Girls who are sexually abused in childhood are more likely to drink and use drugs when they are older
- Nobody deserves to be beaten. Violence is always the responsibility of the person who uses it.

Activity 3: Why doesn't she just leave? (45 minutes)

Goal: To understand some of the reasons that women stay in abusive relationships, and the barriers that they face in seeking help.

Step 1. Show the group a small bird cage and ask them to imagine that inside is a women living with violence. The bars on the cage represent the different barriers that women confront when trying to overcome abuse. Ask, "What are some of the different reasons that keep women in abusive relationships?" Write the different answers on the flipchart.

Step 2. The participants read the story Candies in Hell in small groups of 3-4 and discuss the following questions:

- Is Rani's story familiar to you? Has something like this ever happened to any one you know?
- Why do you think that Rani stayed in the marriage after her husband began to beat her?
- What do you think about the reactions of Rani's family and the police?
- What do you think that the expression "Candies in Hell" means?"
- What advice would you give Ana Cristina if she were your friend?

Step 2. Have participants discuss in the larger group what they have learned and summarize their discussion. Present overheads on women's experiences of violence, and the stages of violent relationships.

Candies in Hell – Rani's Story

Rani was married at the age of 15 to a man in his late thirties. Her husband was a soldier and that quickly earned him the respect and approval of Rani's mother. Shortly after the marriage, he began to beat Rani savagely and continued to do so regularly throughout the subsequent ten years. She learned to listen for him at night and be ready to escape if necessary, with the children.

... I had to sleep in other people's houses to avoid getting beaten when he came home. I would have to climb over the back wall with my daughters when he arrived, and he would shoot at me with his army rifle. I escaped many times from his bullets. I don't know why I'm still alive...

...When I didn't want to have sex with my husband he simply took me by force... When he came home drunk he would beat me, and do what he wanted with me. Then I fought with him, but what could I do against a man who was stronger than me? I couldn't do anything, so I had to put up with it and suffer

...He used to tell me, "you're an animal, an idiot, you are worthless". That made me feel even more stupid. I couldn't raise my head. I think I still have scars from this, and I have always been insecure ...I would think, could it be that I really am stupid? I accepted it, because after a point ... he had destroyed me by blows and psychologically.....When he beat me, my daughters would get involved in the fight. Then he would throw them around in his fury and this hurt me, it hurt me more than when he beat me...

...Once, when I was recovering, because he had beaten me and he had left my eyes swollen and black, my daughter came up to me and said, "Mommy, you look like a monster" and she began to cry... It hurt me so much. It wasn't so much the blows I had, but what really hurt me were her sobbing and the bitterness that she was feeling.

...He was so jealous, my grandmother used to say, "if you stay with him he's going to put blinders on you like the horses that pull carriages." I couldn't look at anyone on the street, nor have even women friends, nor greet anyone. And if a man looked at me, he would smack me right there on the street.

...My mother would say to me "Do you think you're the only one to live through this?" She told me not to leave, and my mother-in-law also told me that I should put up with it."You have to maintain your marriage, remember that you are his wife and he is the father of your children."

...Once I went to the police for help, but since he was in the military they let him go right away and gave him a ride back to my house. That time he kicked down my door...

... After that, I didn't know what to do. I felt trapped, a prisoner and I couldn't escape...

...After the blows he always came back to court me, bought me clothes and afterwards he always said, forgive me, I won't do it again, but then he always did the same afterwards. And then my grandmother would say to me 'Child what are you going to do with candies in hell?"

Appendix II Introduction to Gender-based Violence

Violence against women is the most pervasive yet under-recognized human rights violation in the world. It is also a profound health problem that saps women's energy, compromises their physical and mental health, and erodes their self-esteem. In addition to causing injury, violence increases women's long-term risk of a number of other health problems, including chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, and depression. Women with a history of physical or sexual abuse are also more likely to have unwanted or mistimed pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, miscarriages, and abortions. Their children are more likely to be born with low birth weight, and are more likely to die before reaching their first birthday. Despite the high costs of violence against women, social institutions in almost every society in the world legitimize, obscure, and deny abuse. The same acts that would be punished if directed at an employer, a neighbor, or an acquaintance, often go unchallenged when men direct them at women, especially within the family.

There is much more awareness these days about domestic violence, and it is recognized as a human rights and a public health issue. After the International Meetings organized by the United Nations in Beijing and Cairo about 10 years ago, governments recognized their responsibility to prevent violence and to punish abusers, and laws have been passed in most countries against violence against women. This is an important first step, but there still remains much to be done to reduce the number of women and girls being beaten and abused. Many of the laws put in place to protect women and girls are not enforced, either because of lack of resources, or because many people, including police and judges, do not really believe that it is wrong. In many countries, a majority of men and women believe that a husband has a right to beat his wife if she "misbehaves," for example, by talking back, by not doing the housework properly, or by refusing to have sex with him. In many countries, people believe that a husband should be able to have sex with his wife whenever he wants, and if she does not want it, he has the right to force her. Therefore, it is important to change not only laws and programs, but also attitudes towards women and violence in order to make a difference.

Indian and international research consistently demonstrates that a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a current or former husband or partner than by any other person. A review of nearly 80 population-based studies carried out in more than 50 countries has shown that between 10 percent and 60 percent of women who have ever been married or partnered have experienced at least one incident of physical violence from a current or former intimate partner. Most studies estimate a lifetime prevalence of partner violence between 20 percent and 50 percent. Although women can also be violent, and abuse exists in some same-sex relationships, the vast majority of partner abuse, or domestic violence, is perpetrated by men against their female partners.

Researchers find considerable variation in the prevalence of partner violence from country to country, and among studies within a country. This is mostly due to differences in the ways that violence is measured in different studies.

The National Family Health Survey can contribute to changing attitudes and policies around domestic violence by providing accurate information about what women experience in a particular country. Because women so rarely talk about violence, most countries do not have accurate information, and policymakers often do not realize what a common problem it is. The NFHS-3 information therefore, may be the only information available for policy makers to rely on. That is why it is so important to make sure that we collect as accurate information as possible, and that we do everything possible to enable women to share their experiences, and to make sure that neither she nor the interviewer are placed at risk.

The impact of domestic violence on women's health

Gender-based violence is associated with serious health problems affecting both women and children, including injuries, gynecological disorders, mental health disorders, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and sexually transmitted diseases. Violence can have *direct* consequences for women's health, and it can increase women's risk of *future* ill health. Therefore, victimization, like tobacco or alcohol use, can best be viewed as a risk factor for a variety of diseases and conditions as well as a health problem in and of itself.

Why don't women just leave?

Often, people believe that if a woman stays in a violent relationship, she deserves to be beaten, and that she must like being abused. Most abused women are not passive victims, but use active strategies to maximize their safety and that of their children. Some women resist, others flee, and still others attempt to keep the peace by capitulating to their husband's demands. What may seem to an observer to be a lack of response to living with violence may in fact be a woman's strategic assessment of what it takes to survive and to protect herself and her children.

A woman's response to abuse is often limited by the options available to her. Women consistently cite similar reasons for remaining in abusive relationships: fear of retribution, lack of other means of economic support, concern for the children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, and an abiding hope that "he will change." In some countries, women say that the social unacceptability of being single or divorced poses an additional barrier that keeps them from leaving destructive marriages.

At the same time, denial and fear of social stigma often prevent women from reaching out for help. In numerous surveys, for example, from 22 percent to almost 70 percent of abused women say that until the interview, they never told anyone about their abuse. Those who reach out do so primarily to family members and friends. Few have ever contacted the police.

Despite the obstacles, many women eventually do leave violent partners—even if after many years. Studies suggest a consistent set of factors that propel a woman to leave an abusive relationship: The violence gets more severe and triggers a realization that her partner is not going to change, or the violence begins to take a toll on the children. Women also cite emotional and logistical support from family or friends as pivotal in their decision to leave.

Leaving an abusive relationship is a multistage process. The process often includes periods of denial, self-blame, and endurance before women recognize the abuse as a pattern and identify with other women in the same situation, thereby beginning to disengage and recover. Most women leave and return several times before they finally leave once and for all. Leaving does not necessarily guarantee a woman's safety, however, because violence may continue even after a woman leaves. In fact, a woman's risk of being murdered by her abuser is often greatest immediately after separation.

Appendix III

PowerPoint Presentation for Interviewer Training on Domestic Violence