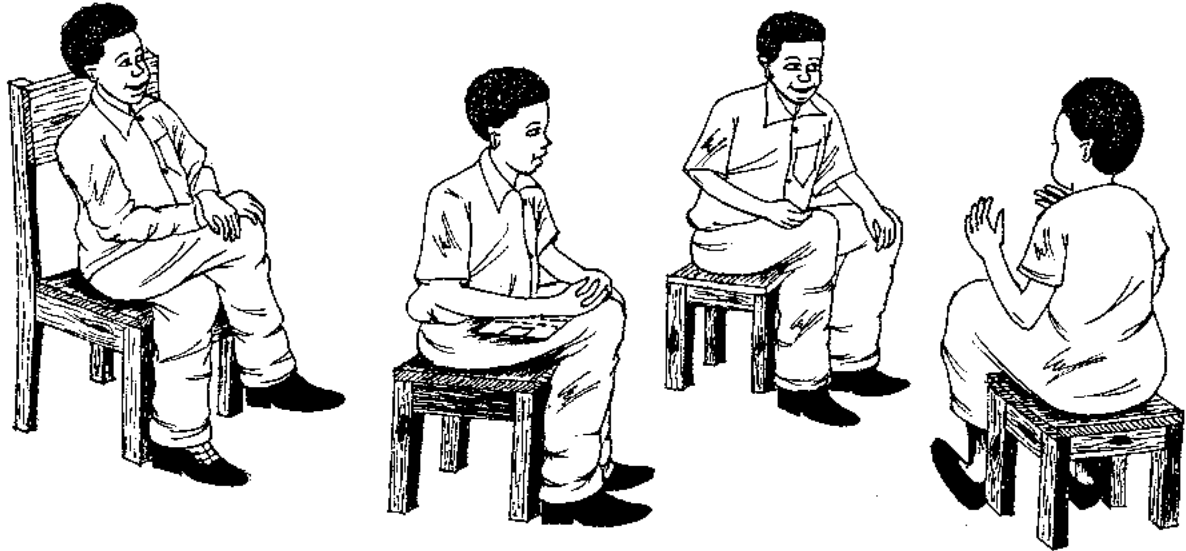


Handout H

Role-plays



Divide participants into groups of 3 (or 4) and ask them to decide who plays the field worker, who plays the respondent, and who is the observer. Make sure the roles change from one role play to the next, to give everybody practice in all roles.

When giving out the roles, inform the field worker and respondent to just read their own role. The observer(s) should read all three roles.

Role-play 1: Finding hidden information

Instructions for the field worker

You visit a home to find out about health-seeking behaviour for malaria in children, and also to follow up on the purchase of anti-malaria tablets for a child two days ago (observation from the ¹SHOP STUDY). You need to find out how the medicine was given, and the present status of the child.

When you arrive, you find that the father is a community leader, and is just finishing a meeting with two elders.

You should record a summary of the information you receive.

¹ The Shops Study was an intervention research study to assess shopkeepers' actions and behaviour when selling malaria drugs for children, and to teach the shopkeepers why and how to sell such drugs correctly (giving a full course), and give clear advice to the customers.

Instructions for the respondent

You are a community leader, and have completed high school. Your son had fever two days ago, and your wife went to the shop to get some medicine. Your son is still sick. You know your wife gave him the medicine, but not exactly when she gave the medicine, or how much.

You don't want to admit that you don't know, and you don't want to ask the field worker (or accept his suggestion) to talk to your wife – **unless the field worker behaves in a very sensitive way that makes you trust him. If the field worker gains your confidence and you feel you can admit your "ignorance" without losing face, you will tell him to talk to your wife.**

You will try to impress the field worker with your knowledge to divert his attention from the medicines, and talk about malaria as a problem because of all the stagnant water and mosquitoes in the area. You will also assert your status, and show that talking about these tablets is not very important. You do not feel you have much time for this.

Notes for observer: general points

**** these notes are relevant for the observer in all other role plays**

Observe what the interviewer/field worker and the respondent are doing.

a. Interviewer: Observe specifically how the interviewer/field worker does the following

- **Creating rapport/setting the scene for the interview:** How is s/he greeting the respondent and/or the family? Is s/he showing respect?
- **verbal communication skills** WHAT is the field worker saying to the respondent, what method is the field worker using to ask questions, is the field worker using appropriate probes?
- **nonverbal communication skills** HOW does the field worker ask the questions (mood created?), what are the gestures the field worker uses?

Observer's conclusion: How well did the field worker communicate? How successful was his/her method? What could he/she have done differently?

b. Respondent: Observe specifically how the respondent does the following

- **verbal:** how does the respondent react to what the interviewer/field worker says and does, how relevant are the arguments to the respondent (what he/she feels is important)?
- **nonverbal:** how is the respondent's mood initially, how is it at the end, what makes it change?

Observer's conclusion: Is the respondent satisfied with the results of the interview/interaction? Why/why not?

Points for discussion: What was important? Why?

a. Discuss the roleplay in the small group

First, let the interviewer assess his/her skills to obtain information, and the effects on the respondent: What did s/he do well? What could be improved?

Second, let the respondent give feedback: How did s/he feel about how the field worker met/respected him/her, and how s/he communicated? How did the field worker's behaviour influence his/her feelings, and communication?

b. The observer can provide feedback - REMEMBER to start the feedback with commenting on the positive things they did, and be constructive and specific in your comments. The aim: they should know exactly what it is they have to improve, and how to improve it, and feel OK about having exposed their skills – and weaknesses – to the group. Cover all the points mentioned above.

c. Ask group members to discuss what they learnt from doing the role-play.

d. Key points to bring up in discussion:

VERBAL communication

- giving a good introduction – this gives the interviewee a clear understanding of what the purpose of the interview is.
- respecting the right of the individual to refuse to do the interview
- asking open-ended questions, to get a clearer picture of the person's understanding of and interest in participating in the process.
- what happens when you ask a "WHY" question: they can trigger a respondent's emotions
- how to correct a mistake/apologize for what you said – do not be afraid to apologize, even if you did not mean to hurt or annoy; e.g. use antennae to see that the person is annoyed, and choose the right strategy to solve the problem (don't get stuck on trying to justify yourself, or showing you were "right"!)
- showing concern for the individual's needs.

NONVERBAL communication

- keeping your antennae up and your attention focused outwards – on reading the mood of the person being interviewed, and responding to what s/he says and feels; this ability can help you pick up on possible "hidden reasons" for the person's behaviour during the interview.

Sum up: What were some of the specific questions asked? This could be summarized in a table. As a group identify what type of questions they were, how they were asked, and what the effect was on the respondent. What did interviewers (and respondents) learn from this role play?

Remember: you cannot change what the respondent says or does – you can only change what you – the field worker – do.

*** Note to trainer - if appropriate within the role play activity stop the action mid-way and have a pause to give space for the actors to pause and reflect on what is occurring within the scenario. This may be suitable when this role play is done a second time. DO NOT use it the first time they play it, as everybody will be nervous and afraid of making mistakes: Stopping the role-play can really disturb their willingness to continue, and disturb their learning.*

Role-play 2: Hidden information (2)

Instructions for field worker

You are a field worker. You have come to interview a mother about breast-feeding as part of a study on child health. You are interested in finding out whether mothers know about the importance of breast-feeding and how often they do it.

You have information that breast-feeding rates are very low in the area.

Start by asking: What food do you give to your baby?

Instructions for the mother

You are a mother of two children aged 4 years and 8 months. You are a teacher in the local primary school. A field worker comes to interview you on **breast-feeding**. **You stopped breast-feeding early** for your own reasons. However, you **would want to show the field worker that you know more about breast-feeding** if he/she approaches you in a proper way. You ask the field worker to make sure she jots down all the points you mention. You prefer to deal with the field worker fast because **you have a lot of work** to do at home in addition to your school obligations. If s/he behaves in a respectful way and pays attention to what you have to say, you may decide to give him/her more time.

Points for discussion after role-play

Note: see points for role-play 1, on how to manage the discussion:

The observer should ask the field worker to first assess his/her own interview, then the respondent should add, and only then the observer should comment on what happened. Be sure to include reflections on what they all learnt.

- Managing the interview, e.g. recording skills, time management, taking care of the respondent's needs
- Active listening and asking questions, using the Meta Model
- Personal factors that influence outcome– attitudes
- Discovering and understanding the full picture
- Taking action

**** Note to trainer** - if appropriate within the role play activity stop the action mid-way and have a pause to give space for the actors to pause and reflect on what is occurring within the scenario. This may be suitable when this role play is done a second time. **DO NOT** use it the first time they play it, as everybody will be nervous and afraid of making mistakes: Stopping the role-play can really disturb their willingness to continue, and disturb their learning.

Role-play 3. A difficult mother?

Instructions for field workers

You are a field worker conducting a census. You have come to interview a **pregnant mother expecting her sixth baby**. You are interested in **finding out the number of children and their dates of birth**. You believe that **pregnant women are very difficult** to handle.

Start by asking the mother the number of children she has.

Instructions for the mother

You are a **mother of five children and expecting the sixth one**. You **dropped out of school** in class 6 due to pregnancy and got married.

A field worker comes to interview you. You feel tired, and you feel ashamed that you do not know the dates of birth of your children. You are **undecided whether to admit this or not**. You have also heard that they **ask too many questions**. You feel insecure and wonder why the field worker wants to know this information. At last you say that your husband does not want anything to do with KEMRI.



If the field worker behaves very friendly and understanding, you may, after some time, decide to talk to him/her and simply admit you do not know the dates. But you know how old they are, approximately, and will tell him/her this.

Feedback and discussion: See Role-play no 1.

**** Note to trainer** - if appropriate within the role play activity stop the action mid-way and have a pause to give space for the actors to pause and reflect on what is occurring within the scenario. This may be suitable when this role play is done a second time. **DO NOT** use it the first time they play it, as everybody will be nervous and afraid of making mistakes: Stopping the role-play can really disturb their willingness to continue, and disturb their learning.

Role-play 4. Negotiation skills practice

Explain the role-play SCENE (in plenary, before giving out the instructions)

The field worker walks into a house, mother is standing on the other side of the room, field worker greets mother. Mother replies. The field worker introduces the reason why he/she is there, and asks mother:

Field worker: Is it OK if I do this interview with you now?

Mother: I am in the middle of cooking.

Task: Use negotiation skills to meet both people's needs.

Divide participants into groups of 3-5 members (see introduction). Give each person the paper for their role, and the observer(s) get all three roles.

Task for interviewer/field worker

(can be given verbally, rather than on a piece of paper)

Negotiate with the mother, balancing the needs of the mother with your need to do your job.

Instruction for respondent

You will always be aware of your own needs to take care of your family, which is now the food you are cooking. You will not allow the interview to proceed until you know how long a time it will take. You will not be satisfied with the answer if you think the field worker is not being straight with you. You may want to ask the field worker also to talk to your husband/mother-in-law to make sure it is OK for them that you delay their food.

You may also decide you want to ask him/her to come back at another time. If the field worker is friendly and respectful, you will find time for the interview. If s/he does not want to see your needs, you may simply say no to the whole thing and ask him/her to leave.

Feedback and discussion: See Role-play no 1.

** Note to trainer - if appropriate within the role play activity stop the action mid-way and have a pause to give space for the actors to pause and reflect on what is occurring within the scenario. This may be suitable when this role play is done a second time. DO NOT use it the first time they play it, as everybody will be nervous and afraid of making mistakes: Stopping the role-play can really disturb their willingness to continue, and disturb their learning.