

HOW TO ASK THE WASHINGTON GROUP QUESTIONS

FOR ENUMERATORS



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Key messages

1. Ask with respect

All interviewees should be treated with respect, and the questions should be asked with dignity. Enumerators should feel comfortable asking the questions, and interviewing persons with disabilities. Take a look at the 'accommodations consideration' below for more guidance.

2. Don't use the word disability

Ensure that the word disability is never mentioned – especially to introduce the questions. Research has shown that this may bias the responses and thus affect the quality of the data collected.

3. Read the questions exactly

While the questions are simple, it is essential that the questions are asked exactly as they are written, including the response categories. Read the response options aloud, at least until the respondent comes familiar with the answer categories. It is better to move past the question if it is not understood than to influence the data by interpreting it incorrectly.

4. Don't change the questions

Any adaptations that can be made to the questions, including the examples given in the questions, will have been made prior to data collection. During data collection, the questions should not be changed in any way.

5. Don't give examples

Apart from the questions with examples built in, do not give or make up examples of the questions as this will

affect the quality of the data. Repeat the questions if needed, and move on to the next question if the person does not understand.

6. Don't make observations

Data should not be recorded based on observation, or assumptions made about what a respondent can or cannot do as only they know their level of difficulties in their everyday environment. For example, upon seeing a wheelchair, do not infer that the respondent can't walk - this might not be the case. If the respondent has difficulty hearing the questions, but states they do not have any difficulties hearing, do not change their answer.

However, be sensitive to the situation. It may be necessary to acknowledge what you observe. For example, "*I can see you are in a wheelchair, but can you tell me to what extent you have difficulty walking*" (followed up with the response categories).

7. Don't translate on the go

Translations should have been agreed upon before data collection. Translation should not be done on the go. If translation on the go is necessary, comprehensive training on the meaning of the questions must be provided to avoid errors.

8. Asking the questions to a proxy

Sometimes you will not be able to ask the questions directly to the respondent (either due to language issues or other difficulties in communicating) and so you will have to use a proxy respondent. In this case, first opt for interpretation proxies, who can liaise between you and the respondent. If not possible, and in such cases as asking the child functioning module, a real proxy should be used. Consider carefully the relationship of the proxy to the respondent.

Note – the child functioning module should always be administered to the mother or the primary caregiver.





Do's and Don'ts

Do – treat all respondents with respect and dignity

Do – read the response options aloud, at least until the respondent becomes familiar with the answer categories

Do – record the answers given by the respondent exactly

Do – be sensitive to the situation of the person

Don't – use the word disability when asking the questions

Don't – change the questions, or add your own interpretation

Don't – give examples observations

Don't – try to 'diagnose' or go beyond the question

Don't – translate as you go

When interviewing persons with disabilities

- Use people first language – for example, don't say disabled person, but person with disabilities.
- Treat persons with disabilities with the same respect as any other respondent.
- Speak directly to the person with disabilities, not to the third person (caregiver, parents), even if there is a translator or an interpreter present.
- Do not make assumptions about a person's capabilities.
- Be close to the person but keep an appropriate distance.

Accommodation considerations for:

Persons with physical disabilities

- If the person is in a wheelchair, situate yourself at the same level so they do not have to be looking up at you.
- Don't lean on or touch a person's wheelchair or move someone's assistive device without permission.
- Arrange the space to provide for movement in a wheelchair or with assistive devices.

Persons with hearing disabilities

- Find a quiet, well-lit space, and use a sign language interpreter if needed.
- It may be useful to show the person the written questions.
- Speak slowly and clearly, don't shout.

Persons with vision disabilities

- Make it clear when you are addressing the respondent, use their name.
- Identify / introduce yourself.
- Speak directly to the person in a normal tone.
- Clearly indicate when the interview is over.
- Don't touch the person without asking, even to support them moving.

Persons with speech and language disabilities

- Speak slowly, if necessary, and speak clearly.
- Be prepared to repeat questions or answer categories if needed.
- Be encouraging and patient. Don't put words in the person's mouth.
- Don't pretend to understand if you don't - ask the person to tell you again, if necessary.
- Do not assume communication difficulties are always associated with intellectual difficulties

Persons with intellectual disabilities

- Make sure the respondent understands you, repeating questions and answer categories if necessary, and being patient and respectful.
- Listen carefully to what the person is saying, not how it is being said.
- Do not treat the respondent like a child.

- Often people with cognitive difficulties are concerned about answering "incorrectly" and do not want to provide an answer the interviewer does not agree with. Don't change your tone or gestures as this might imply that a certain response option is the obvious choice.
- Be patient and give people time to respond.

Don't forget

Try not to feel shy about asking the questions. The research showed that persons with disabilities tend to prefer these questions to questions asking directly about disability.

It is better to move past the question if it is not understood than to falsify the data by interpreting it wrong.

The responses are not for diagnosis, nor will they lead to one. The responses of the person are to reflect how they feel about their level of difficulty – don't try to change that.

