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| **What to Cover in a Data** **Collection Training** | Text, logo  Description automatically generated |

1. Convey the purpose of data collection. What is the policy or objective the project is trying to achieve and how will the data be used to support that? This will help the team understand that their efforts will contribute to a larger purpose.
2. Explain why data quality is important. Talk about how policy decisions aimed at improving people’s lives will depend on this data. Discuss what could happen if the data is unreliable (e.g., the project won’t have a true picture of where things stand or how/when to proceed; critical decisionmakers and opponents could criticize or dismiss the results as insufficient or unreliable; the project could lose credibility; may have to collect data over again).
3. Outline the components of the data collection process and parameters of the activity (e.g., timeframe, locations, sampling strategy, how to approach respondents, introductions to explain the survey, or observation boundaries, etc.).
4. Provide a written copy of the protocol and instruct trainees to make notes on it that will be useful to refer to once in the field.
5. Section by section, read through the instrument aloud. Explain what the question is getting at and how it will be used. Discuss the meaning of each question and response choice or data field. Define terms and concepts.
6. (If the survey will be spoken rather than self-administered) Role play how to ask the question and state the response choices. Instruct data collectors to pay attention to your pacing, pauses, emphasis on certain words, volume, and modulation of your voice, where to wait for responses, when to repeat the question, etc.—all of which is designed to help respondents understand what you are asking them.
7. Then let pairs practice conducting that section of the survey. Encourage them to give feedback to each other on how they did. Observe and use what you see to debrief with the group afterward. Have one pair demonstrate while the rest watch and provide feedback.
8. Demonstrate how to record responses and other data fields.
9. Talk about how to handle potential problems, questions from respondents, ambiguous answers and common mistakes. Specify when data collectors can provide specifically worded clarification and when they should only repeat the question. Repeatedly remind them of the importance of sticking to the script to minimize variability across data collectors!! Have various scenarios and unclear responses prepared as examples and for mock demonstrations. Ask data collectors how they would code or handle such responses.
10. Have data collectors practice asking questions and recording data until they reach a high accuracy rate. Prepare scripts with problematic answers for respondents to use which cover likely problems data collectors may face in the field.
11. Toward the end of the training (or on a subsequent day) take the team out for field practice with sites/people who are NOT part of your actual sample. If possible, monitor team members to observe accuracy and difficulties. Afterward, thoroughly debrief the team and correct any incorrect trends you noticed. Explain that data collection will gradually go faster as they get more familiar with the protocol.
12. Before letting everyone go, discuss data collection logistics. Identify roles within the data collection team (e.g., team leads, drivers vs. data collectors, etc.), collect permission forms, set a data collection schedule and make route assignments, establish a line of communication (who should data collectors call with questions, problems, check-ins?), set goals and deadlines (number of observations or surveys per day/week, when to check in, when to finish, etc.).
13. Reiterate the important contribution they are making to the policy progress of the project and community. Emphasize the importance of sticking to the protocol so the data will be reliable. Encourage them to take their notes with them into the field and contact the lead with ANY questions, concerns, uncertainties. Set the expectation that the team lead will periodically monitor their efforts and retrain them on any problem areas to make sure data collectors continue to interpret data accurately. Thank them for their commitment to this work!!!
14. Celebrate their progress by giving out certificates of training completion to validate and honor their efforts.

## References

World Health Organization. 2008. “Measuring medicine prices, availability, affordability and price components,”

2nd ed., p.55 <https://haiweb.org/publication/measuring-medicine-prices-availability-affordability-and-price-components-2nd-ed/>

<http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/node/17592>