# Standard Operating Procedure:

# Conducting Focus Group Discussions, Family & Friendship Interviews

1. Test the battery level of your voice recorder before you leave for the community and put new batteries in if the battery level is low. Always pack spare batteries
2. Conduct the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Friendship Interviews (FSI) in a neutral place that is quiet, easy for participants to get to and is not too hot. Invite people in advance.
3. Six is the optimal number for an FGD to allow maximum interaction; you may need to invite 8 people to ensure 6 come. The FSI will be conducted with the new mother and one close friend – selected by the mother. The father FGDs should be smaller and ideally exist of 3-4 participants.
4. Arrive in the FGD/FSI location early, arrange the chairs in a circle and find a good place for the voice recorder. Test whether the recorder can record well from the chosen location.
5. Before the FGD decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the note taker. FSIs should be conducted by one research assistant.
6. At the start of the FGD/FSI introduce yourself, briefly explain the aim and procedures of the discussion and ask participants to introduce themselves. If you did not complete informed consent when you recruited the participants follow the consent procedure. Set ground rules and use an icebreaker to put people at ease if needed.
7. Conduct the FGD/FSI in the preferred language of the participants. Use translators where necessary. Explain to the participant that they can ask the translator for clarifications.
8. Avoid a question and answer session, for example, by using one person’s response to involve others.
9. Record the FGD/FSI using the voice recorder. Note the recording number in your note book. The note taker should take notes of the discussion, and of non-verbal communication and interactions between participants. They should also map the participants and give them an interview number.
10. The facilitator should be enthusiastic, show interest and use techniques that encourage participants to talk, make them feel at ease and deals with dominant and reluctant participants.
11. Address all topics listed in the interview guide. The interview guide should not be completed as a questionnaire and you:
* Should ask questions that encourage discussion between participants.
* May need to re-phrase questions to get detailed responses.
* Keep questions short and simple and avoid asking multiple questions at the same time
* Avoid leading questions.
* May change the order of topics if it makes sense to do so.
* Encourage respondents to talk with indirect probes
* Should probe for further information and follow up on interesting leads.
* Should use your knowledge from one FGD to feed into the next.
* May try out or “practice” exercises that are unfamiliar to the participants with a (funny) example to encourage immediate reactions.
1. At the end of the FGD/FSI ask the participants if they have any comments about the process. If you are providing refreshments listen for additional discussions that occur when these are being consumed.
2. Thank the participants for their time and give them the token of appreciation.
3. Listen to the recording immediately after the interview. FGD and FSIs will be transcribed in full by the team (note taker, facilitator and (where necessary) translator) together.