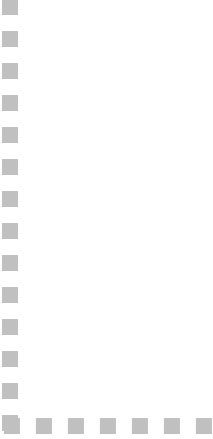


RAPID POLICY ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE



Module III: Qualitative Data

Training Materials

Key Informants

Purpose and Intended Products

Purpose

To learn qualitative data about key domains:

- Police behavior towards IDUs (injection drug users), people with HIV, CSWs (commercial sex workers) and MSM-IDUs (men who have sex with men and inject drugs).
- Perceptions
- Access to drug treatment and harm reduction services
- Social stigma
- Social risk
- Social attitudes

Intended products:

1. Qualitative data regarding knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about police behavior toward IDUs, people with HIV, CSWs, and MSM-IDUs.
2. Qualitative data on access to drug treatment and harm reduction services, including what structural barriers, if any that prevent IDUs, people with HIV, CSWs, and MSM-IDUs from accessing those services.
3. Qualitative data on stigma, social risk, and social attitudes as it applies to IDUs, people with HIV, CSWs, and MSM-IDUs.

After the interview:

- Organize the data you collected in the attached data organization form
- Label and date the tape and any notes
- Summarize key findings for the RPAR

Steps to Conducting Key Informant Interviews

Step 1: Understand Key Informant Interviews

Step 2: Identify Appropriate Key Informants

Step 3: Coordinate Logistics of Interviews

Step 4: Define and Tailor Interview Structure

Step 5: Develop Interview Guide

Step 6: Conduct the Interview

Step 7: Recording Data from Key Informant Interviews

AT A GLANCE

Key Informant Interviews

An interview involves systematically talking and listening to people because they *already have had* the experiences and knowledge that researchers want to study or they *already know* about local meanings and understandings of risk behaviors and health consequences but often wouldn't be consulted or listened to by policy makers and planners

Interviews can either try to

- *explore* this knowledge and understanding through unstructured questioning
- *target* specific topics and ask particular pre-defined questions through structured interviews

Interviews will be held with

- specific individuals – individual interviews are suited to collecting in-depth information about sensitive issues

Researchers will need

- good communication, facilitation and rapport building skills
- the ability to ask effective questions and use probes and prompts where necessary
- An interview guides. This is a list of the categories, areas, topics or questions that a researcher wishes to investigate.

Interviews may require

- discussion with other researchers and key informants to help select and recruit participants
- a location that is as neutral, comfortable, accessible and free of interruption as possible
- a tape recorder to record the discussion, and extra batteries and labels

Interviewing skills are needed for

- collecting background data on a topic that a researcher has little knowledge of
- taking advantage of informal or casual conversations that relate to the rapid assessment

Interviews can be affected by

- *interviewer bias* - the interests, experience and expectations of the researcher can affect an interview
- *informant bias* - informants may give answers that they think the researcher wants to hear rather than their own opinions. Respondents may exaggerate about behavior within a group. Alternatively, they may not give details of behaviors they are ashamed or embarrassed about.

Step 1: Understand Key Informant Interviews

What are interviews?

Often, the most effective way to collect data in a rapid assessment is to simply *ask* someone a question. The collection of data through systematically asking questions and carefully listening to the answers given is called *interviewing*. Interviews are useful as they:

- *Provide access to information* - interviews offer indirect access to a range of experiences, situations and knowledge that researchers would not be able to study otherwise. Informants may describe private or sensitive behaviors, events that happened before the rapid assessment began, or key locations inaccessible to outsiders.
- *Uncover meanings* - interviews allow the meanings and definitions that individuals give to events and activities to be explored and understood. This is particularly useful for understanding what individuals think 'risk' behaviors are.
- *Facilitate interventions* - local problems usually have local solutions. Talking and listening to local people is important for highlighting the constraining and facilitating factors that an intervention may face.

Interviews can take place in any location, at any time, and with different individuals or groups of people.

Step 2: Identify Appropriate Key Informants

Who should be interviewed during a rapid assessment?

You are going to interview Key Informants who are the *types* of key informants specified in Tables A and B but there are no fixed rules about which *people* who should and should not be interviewed during a rapid assessment.

Given the short time available for study, researchers should try to adopt a systematic and pragmatic approach to selecting informants. This can be useful in ensuring that interviews are conducted with a wide range of key people, rather than reflecting the attitudes of only a few individuals or groups. Researchers should always try to build diverse samples.

In the RPAR the primary source of potential key informants for the systems and interactor interviews will be:

- Community Action Board and Focus Groups
- Power Mapping Exercise

Other ways to identify potential key informants, particularly for IDU interviews include:

- NGO and government agencies,
- “snowballing,”
- being present in drug using neighborhoods,
- recognizing icons/signs (clothing, badges, insignia),
- through doctors and hospitals

Types of Sampling

The systematic selection of informants is called *sampling*. Sampling techniques useful for deciding who to interview include:

- Purposive sampling - individuals are interviewed on the assumption that they will provide the best information. This can quickly improve the existing understanding of complex topics, such as risk behavior; highlight new directions for research, and crosscheck findings from other methods.
- Quota sampling - certain types and numbers of informant are targeted for interview. This can ensure that key individuals and groups are included or consulted during the rapid assessment. In this assessment we are using quota sampling with the hope that researchers will also be purposive in selecting the individuals with the best information within each category of key informant.
- Network sampling - this is useful for undertaking interviews with members of 'difficult to reach' populations. Key informants (individuals with special access or knowledge) are used to contact members from these populations to interview. After the interview, these members are asked to introduce the researcher to other people in the group. This continues until no new data or insights are produced.

However, there will be times during a rapid assessment, when a researcher will not know or will be unsure which informants to interview. In such cases, it may be helpful to consider:

What information needs to be collected? The more *specific* a researcher can be about the data they want to collect, the easier it is to identify potential informants. One way of doing this is for the rapid assessment team to reduce larger topic areas (such as risk behavior) into smaller, more manageable items (*see Box below*). Discussion with colleagues and key informants can be used to suggest which informants could be contacted.

Can 'mapping exercises' help locate informants? Mapping is particularly useful in the early stages of a rapid assessment, as it allows a researcher to identify potential informants in the local area. You can ask your early IDU key informants to indicate on a map of the city key street locations to find IDUs.

Are key informants able to help? Key informants can often suggest and arrange access to other individuals and groups that a researcher may be able to interview.

Is the researcher ready to conduct interviews on the spot? Researchers should be aware that interviews could occur spontaneously. This often happens when a researcher is conducting an observation and has a chance or casual conversation with someone interesting or relevant to the rapid assessment. Similarly, the researcher may suddenly find that individuals who previously refused interviews change their mind when they see other people talking to researchers. In both

cases, the researcher will not need to deliberately target or select individuals for interview. Particularly when conducting interviews with IDUs, the researcher should always have their “field bag” with all the materials needed to conduct an interview on the spot, in case an appropriate individual is discovered spontaneously.

In our assessment, we are interviewing three types of key informants:

- 1) Systems
- 2) Interactors
- 3) Street Key Informants

(1) Systems Interviews: A systems key informant is someone who has an overview of a whole system such as a judge, a project director, a police chief. The central goal of the systems is to understand the system in its entirety. While individuals interviewed at a system level may not have had very direct contact with IDUs, they will have access to general indicator information about IDUs, the policy environment within each system, and the nature of how laws and policy are formally or informally put into practice. Moreover, prior experience with this procedure has demonstrated that early contact with persons in these positions can be instrumental in rapidly acquiring institutional information from highly bureaucratized systems.

(2) Interactor Interviews: An interactor key informant is someone who is on “the front lines” in systems that affect injection drug users. These are people who have daily direct contact with IDUs. They could be police officers that work on the street, narcological staff members, or prison guards. Prior experience with these kinds of interviews has demonstrated that these individuals can provide very practical on-the-ground information about the implementation of policy and conduct. The interview numbers and types of people for both Systems and Interactor interviews are summarized in Table A below.

(3) IDU Interviews: In addition to Systems and Interactor interviews, a sample of 14 IDUs will be recruited by the research team for participation in semi-structured, qualitative interviews. Efforts will be made to recruit a diverse sample of IDUs with respect to gender, gender of sexual partners, participation in commercial sex work, minority group status, and length of participation in injection as outlined in Table B below. The sample of IDUs must be diverse because laws, policies, and law enforcement practices may vary considerably as they are applied to IDUs with these different characteristics. The interviews will be focused on acquiring the respondent’s knowledge of the social and local meaning of risk behaviors, law enforcement practices, formal and informal policies, and health consequences of those practices on the street. From the IDU data we anticipate gaining information about policing practices, attitudes towards police and the legal system, knowledge of drug use and drug risks, and attitudes towards public health interventions, specifically harm reduction and drug treatment efforts.

Numbers of Interviews

A. System and Interactor Interviews

System/Interactor	Number in each city
Legal systems	
Prison officials	1
Judges	1
Legal academics	1
Policy-makers or local authorities	1
Legal interactors	
Police	2
Prosecutors	2
Prison guards	2
Public health systems	
Public health authorities	2
Narcological facilities: officials	2
Public health interactors	
Public health clinicians	2
Emergency/casualty department physicians	2
Harm reduction workers	2
Narcological facilities: staff	2
Advocacy interactors	
NGO staff working with IDUs	2
NGO staff working in HIV	2
Total	26

We are also interviewing 14 “street” informants, that is, active IDUs who can provide information about issues that affect the health of IDUs. In order to do this, the terms used (such as IDU) must be defined carefully and individuals selected on the basis of those definitions. While these terms can be defined in many ways, in this rapid assessment we are using the following:

IDU: A person who has injected any non-prescribed drug at least twice in the last three months

CSW-IDU: A person who has injected at least twice AND exchanged sex for money at least twice in the last three months

MSM-IDU: A person who has injected at least twice AND had sex with a man at least twice in the last three months

New Injector: A person who has injected a non-prescribed drug at least twice in the last three months AND injected a non-prescribed for the first time in the last year.

B. Street Informant Interviews

IDUs	Number in each city
Men	2
Women	2
Commercial Sex Workers-Men	2
Commercial Sex Workers-Women	2
New injectors	2
MSM-IDUs	2
Locally significant minorities	2
Total	14

Step 3: Coordinate Logistics of Interviews

When will interviews be conducted during this rapid assessment?

In this rapid assessment, you will be conducting key informant interviews for eight weeks starting about week 14 and ending about week 22. This is a relatively short period of time to conduct interviews so to maximize efficiency interview activities should be well planned out. The following are some tips for coordinating logistics.

- *Systems and interactor key informants* - System and interactor key informants are very busy and researchers should start attempting to schedule interviews for these informants as soon as they are chosen or from day 1 of the qualitative research period. It is useful to assign responsibility for obtaining interviews from particular people to one researcher so that there is no duplication of efforts.
- *IDU key informants* - As we have specified particular types of IDUs to interview, these may also be difficult to schedule. Start trying to interview IDUs from day 1. *Guides*, such as local drug users, can take the researcher to key locations and answer questions about what is going on in particular venues.
- *Don't wait* – Don't try to "save" certain kinds of key informants for the end of the data collection period. There may be unknown difficulties in scheduling and if you wait, you may not complete the interviews on time.
- *Timing* -- Interviews may take longer to schedule, prepare for, conduct and complete than the researcher may think. As a general rule, plan on each researcher being able to conduct two interviews a day and plan accordingly.
- *Field bag* -- Researchers should always be prepared to conduct an interview on the spot. It is really useful to have a small backpack or field bag packed with everything needed to conduct an interview. Contents should include a tape recorder, tapes, pens, extra batteries and tapes, paper, interview guides, consent forms and anything else needed for interviews.
- *Confidentiality* -- After an interview is completed, tapes and paperwork should be taken to the office. Used tapes and other materials should not be left where other people might see them.

How to organize an interview

Researchers will have to interview specific people (such as regional and national AIDS coordinators, known drug dealers or police officers) and contact should be made with them *as soon as possible*. These individuals will often be busy or difficult to contact. Once an informant is contacted, the researcher should:

- *Explain* why the researcher wants to talk to the informant. Try to stimulate the informant's interest in the study by mentioning its importance or the personal benefits to the individual. If the individual is interested in participating, engage in the Informed Consent Process.
- *Correct* any misconceptions that the informant may have. Informants may distrust strangers who want to ask them questions.
- *Assure* informants that all the information they provide will be confidential
- Mention any *incentives* offered to participants to take part. These may include gifts, money, or refreshments. Check with key informants concerning locally appropriate incentives.
- *Negotiate* at what time, and if necessary, on what date the interview will take place. The researcher should clearly state how long the interview will take
- *Collect contact details* from the participant. The researcher could also give the informant a telephone number or address where they can be contacted. This allows interviews to be rearranged if unexpected circumstances arise.

Interviews should be conducted in a location that facilitates discussion. This should be neutral, free from interruptions (such as people who could distract or influence the informants responses), and as comfortable as possible. If a number of interviews are being conducted over the course of a few days, the researcher could consider hiring a local school classroom or using a room in a health center. The location should be accessible. Researchers could visit informants in their own home, relocate from busy town squares into quieter side-streets, or simply ask anyone not involved in an interview to move away or be quiet.

Step 4: Develop Interview Guide

How to prepare for an interview

Before undertaking an interview the researcher should use the interview guides attached. In this assessment there are separate interview guides for system/interactor interviews and IDU interviews. We will be using these already developed interview guides. In general, *structured* interviews require a more detailed or instructive guide than *unstructured* interviews. The interviews for this assessment are designed as structured interviews.

Definition

An *interview guide* is a list of all the questions, topics and issues that a researcher wants to address during the interview. It can also include instructions on how to respond to certain answers, the order that and wording that questions should be asked in, and any useful *probes* and *prompts*. These are methods of encouraging the respondent to produce more information or talk about certain topics.

Although we have supplied interview guides to be used in the assessment, it is useful to know how they are designed for future use. There are five main steps to devising an interview guide:

1. *Identify appropriate topics and questions* – Sample guides are attached but researchers should also discuss other areas to include with colleagues and key informants. Researchers should select topics and questions that will help triangulate or fill any ‘gaps’ in existing knowledge.
2. *Decide on the level of detail* - The guide can range from broad topics which act as reminders, to specific questions which the researcher must ask in a precise order. As mentioned above, this partly depends on the interviewing technique used.
3. *Draft the questions* - Researchers will need to think carefully about the questions they are going to include in the interview guide. Badly phrased questions will usually produce poor quality data. If there is time, it is often useful to discuss the draft with a key informant to identify any problems with language.
4. *Order the questions* - interviews normally produce better data when questions are grouped into a logical order. For example, researchers may find it useful to ask a series of questions or concentrate discussion on a single topic, rather than jumping from subject to subject. Additionally, *culturally sensitive* questions may need to be addressed towards the end of an interview to allow sufficient *rapport* to be built up.
5. *List any probes or prompts* - if inexperienced interviewers are used then it may be useful to offer instructions on how to encourage respondents to give answers.

Questions

Interview guides should avoid questions that are:

Complex or technical - use clear and simple language which will be easy to understand and unlikely to be misinterpreted

Long or multiple - these can confuse informants and result in participants only responding to the parts of the question that they can remember. e.g. 'what do you feel about the risks involved in sharing syringes now as opposed to five years ago?'

Leading - these questions that result in participants coming to conclusions that they would not have otherwise considered. e.g. 'why is there so *much* prostitution in this area?' is perhaps better rephrased as 'is there any prostitution in this area?' or 'tell me about prostitution around here'

During a rapid assessment, interview guides should be modified to take into account new developments and data. Researchers will need to be familiar with the interview guide. Although this does not mean memorizing its contents, participants can lose interest in a discussion where a researcher is unconfident, poorly prepared, or disorganized. Conducting several practice interviews with friends will help the interview become more proficient at using the interview guide.

TIP: Practice makes perfect!

Step 5: Define and Tailor Interview Structure

What interview techniques can be used in a rapid assessment?

In this assessment we are using a “structured” interview approach. Interview guides have been developed and appended to the materials. While we expect that all the areas on the interview guide will be covered in each interview, the interviewer is free to pursue in more depth new topics that may come up or add questions submitted by the CAB.

While you will use this approach and cover areas specified in the attached interview guide, for future reference, the following information is included about interview structure.

There are three main interview techniques that can be used: *unstructured*, *structured* and *group*. These are not mutually exclusive: it is often useful to use a *combination* of these interviewing techniques. For example, although a researcher may wish to spend time in an interview focusing on specific issues and in a certain order, it may be useful to conclude the interview by exploring topics not on the interview guide that have emerged.

Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews are where the range of topics covered and the responses given by a respondent are not constrained by a detailed interview guide. Although researchers may still cover key topics, they will also encourage a respondent to discuss (often in depth) any *relevant* areas or subjects not on the interview guide. This flexible approach means that the exact order and wording of questions in each interview will vary from respondent to respondent.

The aim of unstructured interviews is to get informants to freely offer their opinions, knowledge and experience. The researcher should encourage the respondent to provide as much detail and be as frank as possible. The key to this is thinking carefully about which questions to ask, how they are phrased and when to use probes and prompts.

Unstructured interviews require good communication and facilitation skills. A researcher must listen carefully to respondents and be aware of any new or interesting information. However, they should not let informants discuss irrelevant issues in too much detail. Politely, but firmly change the subject.

- No restrictions on what can be discussed. Useful for collecting background data in the early stages of a rapid assessment, when a researcher has little knowledge of a topic
- Flexible enough to allow the interviewer to modify their line of inquiry, follow up interesting responses and investigate underlying motives.
- Inexperienced researchers may introduce *bias* by using poorly worded questions.

- Can encourage the respondent to talk about irrelevant and unimportant issues. This can make the interview quite lengthy if the researcher is not assertive enough.
- As there is no set format, each interview tends to be unique. This can make it difficult to code and analyze the data.

Structured interviews

Structured interviews are used when a researcher wants more control over the topics discussed and the format of an interview. These often use a detailed interview guide that outlines areas and questions to cover and sometimes the order in which they should be asked. It may also suggest a precise wording for questions that the researcher has to adhere to.

Structured interviews are often undertaken after some *exploratory* research has already been conducted. This allows findings from other methods or existing information sources to identify topics that the researcher wishes to investigate further.

- The common format across each interview makes it easier to code, analyze and compare data.
- The interview guide allows the researcher to decide how long should be spent discussing each question or topic. This can ensure that interviews do not over-run, or be used to prioritize questions when only a short amount of time is available.
- Detailed interview guides allow inexperienced researchers to undertake interviews
- Strict adherence to the guide may prevent the collection of unexpected but relevant information.
- Although a standard format is used, informants may hear and understand the questions in different ways. This can affect comparison between respondents.

Group interviews

Group interviews involve a researcher asking several informants a question at the same time, with participants providing answers individually. Unlike a focus group, the researcher will usually not encourage the informants to discuss the question amongst themselves. Group interviews can use unstructured and structured interviewing techniques. Information from group interviews cannot be treated like data from individual interviews. The researcher should be aware that answers could be influenced by *group dynamics*. Prominent individuals or subgroups can dominate an interview, sensitive issues may be suppressed, or group pressure to express a 'common' view can stop other views being expressed.

Step 6: Conduct the Interview

Eleven Tips on Conducting Interviews

1. *Arrive early* at the location where the interview is to take place. Try and ensure that the location is as quiet and as free of interruptions as possible.
2. *Translators* should be briefed on what is going to happen. If a tape recorder is used it should have an external microphone, and you should have extra batteries and tapes.
3. *Introduce anyone present* to the participant. Introduce people in a non-threatening way. This means referring to a researcher present as Anand, rather than Dr Singh. Assure participants that everything discussed will be confidential. Engage in the Informed Consent Process.
4. *Assure* informants that, if specifically requested, the identity of the respondent will be kept confidential. *Inform* the respondent that unless they request anonymity, the respondent's identity will be noted and information or opinions may be attributed to the respondent by name.
5. *Use clear and simple language* when introducing topics or questions. Allow participants time to think and speak.
6. *Sensitive subjects* can be introduced by asking what 'other' people are said to do, and then inviting critical comment.
7. *Reflecting participants' answers* back in their own words is a good way of checking that you understand what they are trying to say.
8. *Be a good listener and ask why and how*.
9. *Check with the respondent* that it is acceptable to continue an interview if it looks as though it may last longer than expected.
10. *Always collect demographic information* such as age, ethnicity, type of drug use, source of income, and status. This will be useful in speculating about the link between certain types of people and specific behaviors.
11. *Summarize the key issues and opinions* when the interview is finished. Ask if participants have anything to add or any questions. It is important that the researcher *does not* give advice or answers that they are not in a position to offer. It is often useful to carry health promotion leaflets or the address of local treatment clinics.

In the training and on the interview guides we have specified different ways to ask questions and different interviewing approaches. The box below summarizes interviewing question types.

Types of Interview Questions

- *Factual* - specify, confirm or refute a fact. These are normally closed questions.
Ex: 'Do you use condoms when you have sex with clients?'
 - *Opinion* - open ended questions which encourage the informant to elicit ideas and beliefs
Ex: 'Tell me about using syringes your friends use first?'
 - *Clarification* - used to check that the researcher understands or to gain additional information
Ex: 'And you were the only person there at the time?' or
'Are there any other reasons why you think a syringe exchange program wouldn't work here?'
 - *Representativeness* - to check whether an event is typical of the persons experience or common to other people in the community
Ex: 'Do you see the same doctor every time you visit the clinic?' or
'Do other people that you know also rinse their syringes with urine?'
 - *Hypothetical questions* - allows the researcher to explore situations that the individual has not yet experience or are perhaps too 'sensitive' or 'shameful' to directly explore
Ex: 'Let us say that you were able to obtain free condoms, would this change your behavior?' or
'Imagine that a man needs to buy heroin, where would he go first?'
 - *Ordering questions* -allows the researcher to check the importance or significance of certain factors
Ex: 'In order of importance, which risk behaviors are most common among amphetamine users?'
- Probes* - To encourage a person to provide more information or continue speaking. May be silent, as simple as "Tell me more..." or a specific additional question.
- Prompts* - Encourages informants to raise issues that have not spontaneously arising. One example used when talking about buying syringes – "Tell me how much the syringe cost"

Maximizing the Interview Process

The RPAR uses structured interviews. Other rapid assessments can include related exercises to gather similar information from subjects. Two of these methods are described below: *mapping and free listing*. Although mapping may be useful for interviews involving questions about the spatial distribution of certain activities, such as: drug treatment centers, drug use, sex work, or drug markets, the RPAR will not specifically require mapping or free listing.

These activities, as well as some strengths and weaknesses, are described for your information.

- *Mapping* - individuals are asked to help draw maps of the local area or indicate on a map the central locations where IDUs or IDUs of a particular type may be found.
- *Free listing* - individuals are asked to write down or mention everything they can think of that is related to a particular topic. When informants cannot think of any more examples, the researcher starts another list by asking about a related topic. In the early stages of research, such lists can be useful for collecting local terminology, drug types and locations where sex work is conducted.

Case Study

During a rapid assessment, a researcher used free listing to identify the types of drug available in the local area, their slang names, and if home-produced, the different types of production methods. By asking the question "Tell me all the different names for heroin" and then asking about the differences between the names, the researcher discovered two sets of slang names for heroin. One set of five names referred to heroin produced by the user from opium poppies and the other set of three names referred to heroin made somewhere and purchased from local dealers. After talking about the names of the drug, the researcher was able to ask more informed questions about the home production of heroin.

Such exercises can be useful for:

- Making participants feel involved in the research process
- Building rapport and trust
- Retaining the attention of younger informants such as street children
- They can however take time to explain, arrange and analyze the findings
- They also require good facilitation skills

Step 7: Recording Data from Key Informant Interviews

Many interviewers feel that it may be challenging to elicit long, open, reflection on the interview topics from participants. To the contrary, it is often difficult to terminate the interviews especially when the participant is at the “street level” like police officers that are in the community or injection drug users are very eager to tell their story. They have rarely, if ever, been asked to participate in research and are enthusiastic about being asked to reflect on their lives. In the training, we have covered many ways of eliciting conversation such as using prompts and asking open-ended questions. The following box contains a brief summary of things to remember about interviewing, recording and data organization.

During the interview

- *Be aware of sources of bias while asking questions:* For example, the interests and expectations of the researcher can affect an interview (also known as *interviewer bias*). For example, if an interviewer is very interested in proving that harm reduction works to reduce risk, they may ask numerous and detailed questions about harm reduction and downplay or completely skip questions about drug treatment programs. Be aware of your biases and work to remain open and unbiased during an interview. If you tell participants your bias, they may try to answer desirably, conceal their actual experience or lie about their experience (sometimes known as *informant bias*).
- *Be aware of who you are in the interview.* If the researcher discloses his or her own history or tries to identify with the respondent by presenting themselves as “knowledgeable” the respondent may assume the researcher doesn’t want to hear basic information. For example, if the researcher self-discloses their own drug use history to an IDU informant, the informant may skip important information about buying drugs, assuming the researcher knows all about it. The researcher may or may not know all about it, but we are interested only in what the informant knows. Limit self-disclosure or attempts to identify with the informant. If the informant believes the researcher to be naïve and says so, there is no need for the researcher to correct that impression. In fact, the best stance that a researcher can take is one of “student” to the informants “teacher”. Start each interview fresh with an open mind, even if you have heard the same information from other informants.
- *Translation:* Address informants as if you were talking directly to them. Have the translator stand to the side or behind you but never in front. The translator will get tired and this can affect communication.

While recording data

- *Recording:* In this assessment we are stressing the use of tape recorders. If an informant insists on not using a tape recorder (which rarely happens, even among IDUs) the researcher will have to take notes. Unless a colleague is available to do this, the interview will take longer to conduct. Try to note the most important points and do not be afraid to ask informants to talk more slowly or repeat things. It is very important to use the tape recorder wherever you can as interviews conducted without taping lose some of their value.
- *Spares:* Always carry spare batteries and extra tapes. Some interviewers carry an extra tape recorder. Without fail, test the recorder before conducting the interview. It is very frustrating to conduct a great interview and then find that the recorder had malfunctioned.

Immediately after the interview

- *Label and date* any materials: This includes any notes, maps or other items. This will make it easier to identify and locate them at a later date.
- *Reflection and Notes:* immediately after the interview reflect on what happened. Review notes and ask yourself: Are there any weaknesses in the way the interview was conducted? Were any topics of discussion missed? What useful issues arose that hadn’t been previously considered? Make brief notes on the interview itself. This must happen immediately after the interview. Make notes about where the interview was conducted, how the participant responding, his or her mood, and anything else that is relevant. In addition, start organizing the day using the included form. These tasks may require repeated listening to the tape.