

# **Key Informant Interviews**

## **Recording and Summarizing Results**

### **1. During the Interview:**

#### **A. Taking Notes**

It's important to keep track of what you learned from the interview. You will want to take notes during the interview. Generally, folks being interviewed find note taking a compliment. It communicates that you value what they have to say.

#### **B. Tape Recording the Interview**

Sometimes the interviews are taped so the results can be reviewed. Don't let the tape recorder become a crutch. Most interviewers need to take notes to do a good job of interviewing. These notes are used to remind them what comments to follow up on for clarification or more information. Also, mechanical equipment like tape recorders can break down or jam at the darndest times. You may need your notes to fall back on. Near the end of the interview, be sure to allow time for turning the recorder off and giving the respondent the opportunity to talk without their comments being recorded.

#### **C. Using Two Interviewers**

Sometimes it's helpful to have two folks conducting the interview. One asks the questions while the other takes notes. The questioner will still need to take notes on points to follow up on with additional questions or probes. Near the end of the interview the interviewer asking the questions should invite the note taker to ask any questions they may have.

There are disadvantages to "teaming up". Some respondents may be shy and "double teaming" them will be intimidating. Also, using two persons to conduct a single interview is expensive. Not as many interviews can be conducted by the same number of persons.

#### **D. End of Interview Summary**

At the conclusion of the interview, take a moment to go over your notes. Then, using the notes, give the respondent a 2 to 3 minute summary of what you've heard them say. This gives you a chance to make sure that you have understood what the respondent has said.

### **2. Immediately After the Interview Review Your Notes**

Take a few minutes as soon after the interview as possible to carefully review your notes. This is the best time to clarify your notes and add comments which you did not have time to add during the interview. If time allows, it is also a good time to prepare your summary for discussion by your program planning group.

### **3. Strategies for Presenting Results to Your Program Planning Group**

There's no one best way to present results.. .often a combination of strategies will work best. It is helpful to decide on strategies in advance.

## A. Oral Reports

One approach is for each interviewer to present a brief oral summary of each interview they have conducted. This can get tedious if each person presents several interview results in succession. One way to deal with this would be to use a round robin approach where each interviewer presents the results of one interview which is followed by every other interviewer in turn. This approach works especially well if the round of interviews tend to have something in common. For example, if there are several area schools and several interviewers interviewed school personnel, it might make sense to present all of the “school” interviews in succession.

## B. Written Reports

Brief written summaries can also be used. They’re especially helpful when the planning group members can receive these in advance of a group meeting. **Group members will need to make a commitment to review this information in advance.** It does little good to send out summaries in advance if group members don’t take the responsibility to review this information prior to the meeting!

## C. Index Cards

For years researchers have used index cards to capture the main points of open-ended interviews like key informant interviews. The value of the cards is they can be sorted so that similar interview results can be put together. One approach which has worked well with planning groups is to post cards with similar results or common themes on the wall. Then all of the members of the group can circulate around the room and get a sense of the total findings from the interviews.

An approach similar to index cards is to use summary forms like the one shown below:

Question asked:

Person Interviewed:

Interviewer:

Brief Summary of Major Points: (Put direct quotes in quotation marks)