

## **Disaster Epidemiology Interviewing Training Guide**

**Purpose:** This 30 minute training video is intended for volunteers and public health practitioners, experienced and inexperienced alike, who need to interview people in an outbreak setting. This video is intended to prepare interviewers as part of their daily work or for deployment of volunteers during a large public health emergency such as an outbreak or epidemic when day-to-day resources aren't sufficient for timely response.

**Methods:** The training video has 2 parts:

- 1) The ten cardinal rules for conducting interviews;
- 2) "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" review section.

Suggested materials for classroom facilitation: "Bill Keene's Keys to Interviewing Success" and "Ten Cardinal Rules for Conducting Interviews" handout (Appendix 1), "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" facilitator answer key (Appendix 2), a white board or flip chart for classroom discussion, pens for notes and observation (The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly section), and Outbreak Interview Practice (Appendix 3).

### **Facilitator Instructions:**

1. Play the DVD or internet version of the video. Available: <http://vimeo.com/42796185>.
2. Instruct attendees to pay close attention during "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" and to be sure to write down their observations. Make sure that they realize there will be a discussion about their findings at the end of "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly".
3. Following the conclusion to the video, have attendees discuss and share (on white board or flip chart) what went well and not so-well during the interview scenes in "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly".
4. Have attendees break into groups of 2-4 and practice interviewing each other with the Shotgun questionnaire (Appendix 3).

## **Appendix 1**

### **Bill Keene's Keys to Interviewing Success and Ten Cardinal Rules for Conducting Interviews**

#### Bill Keene's Keys to Interviewing Success

- Keep the interview as conversational and as natural as possible while staying in the confines of the questionnaire.
- Show empathy to the interviewee.
- Explain what you're doing and why you're doing it.

#### Ten Cardinal Rules for Conducting Interviews

1. Do a practice run until you're comfortable with the questionnaire
2. Find a quiet place to conduct your interviews
3. Be non-judgmental
4. Avoid leading the witness
5. Accurately record what people say
6. Ensure confidentiality, beginning with conducting interviews in a private location
7. Gently re-direct, as needed
8. Probe if answers are vague, particularly about time of symptom onset
9. Work with epidemiology staff to provide language interpretation, if needed
10. Thank interviewee at closing and explain how info will be used

## Appendix 2

### The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Instructor Key

#### Scene 1

##### *The Good* (What went well):

- Introduction and explanation of why interviewer is collecting information;
- Clearly specified the exposure time period;
- Conversational, interactive and natural with interviewee;
- Closing explanation of how the information will be used;
- Asked for best number to contact the interviewee if additional follow-up was necessary;
- Thanked the interviewee.

##### *The Bad* (What went not-so-well):

- Request for cookies *and* coffee during the interview? Come on!
- Mispronunciation of items from questionnaire (Sashimi, Ceviche);
- Not value neutral; judgmental about mice and snakes (although this was still conversational which, in some ways, is good);
- The owner of the snake mentioned he purchased mice at a pet store but during the interview question about pet stores, he responded “No” without the interviewer probing further.

#### Scene 2

##### *The Good* (What went well):

- Introduction and explanation of why interviewer is collecting this information;
- Pinning down the onset to a specific time;
- Gently redirected the interviewee;
- Conversational, interactive and natural with interviewee;
- Closing explanation;
- Thanked the interviewee;
- Expressed empathy to the case’s illness.

##### *The Bad* (What went not-so-well):

- Leading the witness (about homegrown vegetables);
- Not value neutral; judgmental about having a regular health care provider;
- Could have periodically reminded respondent of the dates of the week before illness.

## Appendix 3

### Outbreak Interview Practice, page 4 of 2      Case ID or Name \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent was...  self     parent     spouse     \_\_\_\_\_      Interviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ on m\_\_\_\_/d\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_      Sex  M     F      State of Residence \_\_\_\_\_      County \_\_\_\_\_  
 First positive specimen collected m\_\_\_\_/d\_\_\_\_/yy\_\_\_\_      Source  stool     urine     blood     \_\_\_\_\_

*Get precise answers for onset times if at all possible. Without a date **and time**, it's hard to make a decent epi curve or to calculate incubation times. Estimates are OK. Prompt as needed: "What is your best guess of the time?" Don't let them get away with vague stuff like "morning" or "some time after midnight." Be careful with times such as "midnight" or early morning hours—which day do they mean? By "2 am Friday night," for example, do they really mean Saturday morning? Keep probing until it is unambiguous, and then write down what they mean—not just what they say. Midnight will be considered as the **end** of the day (e.g., 11:59 pm).*

Onset of first symptoms      m\_\_\_\_/d\_\_\_\_/yy\_\_\_\_      Time of first onset    \_\_\_\_ am     noon    \_\_\_\_ pm     midnight  
 Onset of first vomiting or diarrhea    m\_\_\_\_/d\_\_\_\_/yy\_\_\_\_      Time of first V or D    \_\_\_\_ am     noon    \_\_\_\_ pm     midnight

Is there any reason to suggest that this person might be a secondary case (e.g., known exposure to sick person <onset)?     yes     no

**Y ? N LEAD-IN QUESTIONS**

A    Was anyone else in your household sick with diarrhea or vomiting in the week before you got sick?     single person in HH  
     *If yes, when did they first get sick?      m\_\_\_\_/d\_\_\_\_/yy\_\_\_\_*

B    Did you spend any time out of your home state in the 7 days before you got sick?  
     *If yes, which other states or countries did you visit?*

C    Did you visit an emergency room because of your illness?

D    Were you formally admitted to the hospital overnight? (*Distinguish admission from short stay observation*)      \_\_\_\_ days

E    Do you make a point to select mostly "organic" produce when you shop?

F    Are you a vegetarian or vegan?

G    Before you got sick, were you on any kind of special or restricted diet for medical, weight loss, religious, or any other reasons?  
     *If yes, describe...*

H    Do you keep any kind of food diary—any regular record of what you eat? (*If yes, use to help answer questions.*)

*Now I'd like to ask you about a long list of food items, and for each one my question will be "Did you eat it in that same 7- day period before you got sick?" For each item, give me a "yes" or "no" if you remember eating or even tasting it in those 7 days before you got sick. Some of the questions might seem a little repetitive, but try and answer each question individually, even if you think it was already covered. Unless I say otherwise, I'm interested in whether you ate these items at home or away from home—either one, OK?*

**Y ? N MISCELLANY 1**

A    raisins

B    any other commercial dried fruit (*specify*)

C    any pre-made pudding or custard (not a mix)

D    applesauce

E    chips (potato, corn, Fritos, etc); pretzels

F    other packaged snack food and treats (e.g., Pirate's Booty)

G    salsa    *if yes,*     red     green     cooked     fresh

H    commercial tomato sauce

I    any other kind of store-bought, packaged sauce or dip

J    flavored oils

K    taco shells

L    tortillas

Finally, I'll ask a few questions about pets and animal contact. During the 7 days before you got sick, did you have any contact with...

[#]	Y	?	N	LIVE ANIMAL CONTACT, PETS, and PET FOOD
A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	dogs or puppies
B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	cats or kittens
C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	baby chicks or other baby poultry
D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	chickens, turkeys, other poultry
E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	other pet birds of any kind
F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	cows, cattle, calves
G	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	goats, sheep, pigs, horses
H	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	llamas, alpacas, ...
I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles and tortoises)
J	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders, ...)
K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	goldfish or other aquarium fish
L	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	rats, mice, gerbils, including those used to feed snakes
M	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any "exotic" pets or "pocket pets" (e.g., ferrets, pygmy hedgehogs; sugar gliders,...[specify])
N	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any visits to a petting zoo or farm with livestock
O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any visits to animal feed stores
P	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any visits to pet stores, swap meets, or other places where animals or birds were sold or shown
Q	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any county or state fair, 4-H event, or similar event where animals were present
R	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any contact with animals or pets at school, birthday parties, or similar events
S	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any exposure to dried animal droppings or pellets (e.g., owl pellets for science projects)
T	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any contact or household use of pet treats or chews (e.g., pig ears, pizzles, rawhide chews, package treats...)
U	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	dry dog or cat food (e.g., kibble)
V	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any commercial type of fresh or frozen pet food (i.e., not dry or canned)
Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	frozen mice, rats, or similar pet food (typically used as food for snakes)

Believe it or not, that's the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your time. These interviews are extremely valuable in helping us solve the mystery of why people are getting sick. Depending on what we find out when we put these interviews together, we may need to follow up about a few details. Are there any other numbers I should have in case I need to reach you quickly?

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**THE END**

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