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ARE THERE MRS Xs IN OUR COMMUNITY?

SESSION 2

ARE THERE MRS Xs IN OUR COMMUNITY

Aims

- To enable students to discover what community members think about safe motherhood.
- To begin, or further develop a meaningful relationship between midwives and the community.

Objectives

On completion of Session 2, students will be able to:

- Identify which factors, in the opinion and experience of community members, enable women to achieve safe motherhood.
- Identify which factors, in the opinion and experience of community members, prevent women achieving safe motherhood.

Plan

Short briefing of students before community visit.

Community visit (1 day).

INTRODUCTION

In this session, the first of a number of community visits associated with this module will be carried out. Sessions 7, 8 and 11 also include community visits and it is important to review the purpose of these visits before following the steps listed below.

In order for the community visits to be successful, it is essential that they are planned well in advance. Depending on the structure of the health system in your county, and the lines of authority, the planning process may vary somewhat but should include the following activities.

- 1. Select one or more communities (the number of communities selected will depend on the number of students in your class) where the activities described in this session, as well as Sessions 7, 8 and 11, can be undertaken.*
- 2. Inform the relevant authorities regarding the purpose of the first and subsequent visits, obtain approval from them to carry out the visits, and request assistance to identify a key person in the community who could facilitate the implementation of student activities.*
- 3. Make sure that transportation is available for students to go to the community for each of the planned visits.*
- 4. Remind students to bring their lunch if it will not be possible for them to obtain food in the community.*
- 5. Make sure that students have enough time in the community to do what is expected of them for each of the planned visits (this is particularly important for Session 11).*
- 6. Accompany the students on their first visit to the community and, if possible, on subsequent visits and take with you some basic medical supplies to provide care, if needed, to the persons/families interviewed.*

MAKING THE VISIT

*Make sure that students are able to explain the meaning of safe motherhood. For example, it involves ensuring that women have the information and services to plan the timing, number and spacing of pregnancies; access to good, reliable and appropriate antenatal care, thereby preventing complications, where possible, and ensuring that when they do occur they are detected early and treated appropriately; ensuring that women have access to the care required for a clean and safe delivery; and ensuring that essential care, including life-saving skills, is, available for all women who experience complications.**

Give students few but clear instructions, such as:

- *show respect*
- *listen*
- *show genuine interest and concern*
- *if you come across a problem where you are not qualified to help, refer to someone who can.*

Explain to the students that they must ask two important questions:

1. *What in this community promotes safe motherhood?*
2. *What in this community prevents safe motherhood?*

If community members have difficulty understanding the questions, advise students on how to make the questions more simple.

Students should listen carefully to the answers given by a range of people in the community, including women of childbearing age, older women, mothers-in-law, TBAs, men, village and religious leaders. It may not be appropriate to write down their answers during the interviews as this may intimidate some people. However, responses should be written up as soon as possible.

Make sure the students understand the purpose of the visit. That is:

1. *To discover what the people in the community think about safe motherhood.*
2. *To begin or further develop a meaningful relationship between midwives and the community.*

No more than two students should visit one home.

Remember:

Students are going out into the community early in their studies because in order to work as midwives in the community:

- *it is important to listen to people in the community*
- *it is important to understand people in the community.*

Remember to praise students when they are doing something right, such as:

* *Mother-baby package: implementing safe motherhood in countries.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1994 (WHO/FHE/MSM/94.11).
Pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum and newborn care: a guide for essential practice. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.

- *they dressed appropriately*
- *they greeted the villagers correctly*
- *they addressed the village elders with respect*
- *they made it easy for a family to talk about a difficult subject*
- *they showed understanding or concern for all the family.*

Let them know what you liked. You could start by saying:

“I liked it when you ...”.

Tell students to think about their discussions and write down the important points to remember. They will need this information in the next session.

Be ready to provide health care, if needed, to those interviewed. Remember, students are expecting help from community members. They should be prepared to give help in return.

At the end of the visit, organize a short debriefing session with the students and ask them to record in a diary what they learnt, for future reference. Debriefing is a method of helping students to make sense of what they experienced. One way to help them with this is to ask some questions such as:

- *what did you enjoy most about the day/visit?*
- *what surprised you the most?*

You can ask other questions such as why they enjoyed the visit. Try to end on a positive note. Be aware of students who may have had a bad experience, or may have been upset by something they saw or encountered during the visit. Offer such students private time to discuss their experiences or feelings in a secure environment, or alternatively, if they wish, arrangements can be made to speak with a student counsellor where they exist.

