



Gender-related barriers to RMNCH: Open-ended stories for use with Women

Estimated time: 1.75 hours

Overview and Purpose of Tool

Open-ended stories are useful for exploring people’s beliefs and opinions, and for identifying problems or solutions while developing a program. In an open-ended story, the beginning, middle, or ending of a relevant story is purposely left out. Participants discuss what might happen in the part of the story that is missing. Usually, the beginning tells a story about a problem, the middle tells a story about a solution, and the end tells a story of an outcome.

The objective of the activity is to learn participant’s perspectives of pregnancy and childbirth in their communities, and the health of women and children, with a focus on the gender-related barriers to RMNCH services.

Set-up

Participants should first assemble in one large group so they can hear and see the storyteller and facilitator. After the stories are read, smaller groups will be formed.

Materials

- Stories to read
- Blank paper for participant groups to use to draw the endings to the stories
- Cards printed with questions for each group

Implementation steps and instructions

Explain that in this activity we want to learn about common experiences of pregnancy and childbirth among women in Myanmar.

Step 1

Tell participants that they will now dive deeper into the stories of 4 of the imaginary persons from the community. (Facilitator: Choose 4 of the stories from among the stories that are listed below; eg, the

stories of Nan, Victoria, Su, and Pann). Explain that part of each person's story will be incomplete and that you will ask them to complete the stories in groups.

Nan lives in Myanaung Township, Myanmar, with her husband, Winston, who she married when she was 25 years old. Nan is pregnant with their first baby. A community health worker (CHW) meets with Nan and explains that she should attend four antenatal care visits (ANC) for optimal health for her and her baby. She attends all four ANC visits.

1. Who does Nan speak to about antenatal care (ANC), other than the CHW?
2. Who decides if Nan goes to an ANC visit?
3. Does Nan go to an ANC visit?
4. If Nan goes to an ANC visit:
 - Who goes with her, if anyone? Does her husband go with her? If, not why not?
 - How does Nan get to an ANC visit?
 - How does Nan pay to get to an ANC visit?
5. If Nan does not go to an ANC visit, why not?

Su is 35 years old and she lives in Thandaunggyi Township, Myanmar, with her husband Oon Keow. She goes into labor at 39 weeks, and is now ready to deliver her baby.

1. Where is Sue delivering her baby?
2. Who decided where Sue is delivering her baby?
3. Who is delivering Sue's baby? How is this person treating her?
4. Are there financial costs associated with her delivery? Who is paying?

Victoria lives with her husband and their 5-year old son in Pantanaw Township, Myanmar. Victoria is pregnant with a second child, and she attends no antenatal care visits in the course of her pregnancy. At 32 weeks, Victoria is at home when she experiences excessive bleeding. Hours later, Victoria and her unborn baby die.

1. What happened in between when Victoria experienced bleeding and her death?
2. Was there anyone Victoria could turn to for help?
3. Did Victoria or others around her know what might be causing the excessive bleeding?
4. Where was she when she died (at home, at a facility)?
5. Who was with her when she died?

A girl, 2 years old, suffered from fever, cough, and tightness of chest. Pann, 45 years old, is her mother, and Pann's husband, Zaw, is a fisherman in Kyangin Township, Myanmar. The girl's illness gets worse over the course of a week.

1. Who does the mother talk to about her child's illness, if anyone?
2. Who takes care of the child?
3. What do they do to take care of the child?
4. Who decides if the girl goes to a healthcare provider? Who pays?

5. How does the girl get to a healthcare provider, if she does go?
6. Now, think back to the scenario, and answer the questions if the sick child is a boy. Is anything different?

Hla is 13 years old and lives in Kyain Seikgyi Township, Myanmar. She lives with her mother and father, and her brother who is 15 years old. What is Hla's and her brother's life like in 10 years from now?

1. What are the major life events in Hla's life from now until the next 10 years when she is 23 years old? (Examples of major life events include education, marriage, childbearing, and career.)
2. Who contributes to and makes the decisions about these major life events?
3. What are the major events in Hla's brother's life from now until the next 10 years when he is 25 years old?
4. Who makes the decisions about these major life events?

Step 2

Divide the group into four subgroups, and give a different story to each. Ask the group to consider the questions, and then to complete the story. Explain that group's have the option of completing their stories verbally or by drawing a cartoon. Give groups markers and large pieces of paper to make their cartoons, or to record key points of their story.

Discussion questions/guide

Group One – Nan

- 1.

Group Two – Sue

- 1.

Group Three- Victoria

- 1.

Group Four - Pann

- 1.

Group Five- Hla

Step 3

Ask each group to present their story and/or drawing to the large group. After all groups have presented, facilitate a final discussion:

- What impacted you most about the different groups' stories?
- What were supports for the person in accessing help? What were the barriers that s/he faced? (Be sure to record the barriers and supports on a flipchart for future reference)
- Are these stories realistic in showing what happens when a woman is pregnant or after she gives birth? What seems realistic? What does not?

- If not already mentioned by the group: Explain that it is recommended by the WHO for women to attend 4 antenatal care visits. *Would these women attend all 4 antenatal care visits? What particular barriers or supports would the women face?* (Be sure to record these on a flipchart for future reference)
- Are there additional or different barriers that other women and children might face if they were: in an urban vs rural area; older or younger; an ethnic minority; divorced or widowed? What are these? (Be sure to record these on a flipchart for future reference)
- What does this tell us about the current situation of responding to community members who are pregnant or have recently had children? What supports exist? What barriers exist? What changes need made? By whom?

Report

The report must include:

- A synthesis of the endings that different groups give to the story
- Responses to questions for “Completing Stories”
- Responses to questions formulated in the plenary session

Sources

https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Myanmar/country%20profile_MMR.pdf

https://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Kayin_State_Profile_Final.pdf

https://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Ayeyarwaddy_Region_Profile_Final.pdf

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5073954/>

https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Myanmar_Situation_Analysis.pdf