

# Gender and Quality of Care: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Health Providers

## Vignette A: Antenatal Care

Imagine Josephine is 30 years old and lives in this community. She is not a real person who lives here; this is just an example. Josephine is married and a mother of two. She works as a nurse at a health center, where she does antenatal care consultations.

Yesterday, Josephine was working and received a twenty-one year old woman named Ernestine for her first antenatal care consultation. Ernestine is pregnant with her first child and was accompanied by her husband, Claude.

- How should Josephine interact with or behave toward Ernestine at this first visit?
  - Probe: what emotions might she express; does she do anything to make Ernestine comfortable; does she allow Ernestine to ask questions/listen to her concerns; express care or sympathy, etc.
- Do you think Josephine is likely to interact with or behave any differently toward Claude, compared to Ernestine? If so, how and why?
  - Probe: would she make eye contact with Claude; would she provide him with information; enable him to ask questions; encourage his involvement in the pregnancy, etc.
- Do you think Josephine should interact any differently towards either Ernestine or Claude?
- Do you think Josephine should involve Claude in any of the decisions about his wife's care? If so, what types of decisions?
- Do you think Claude's presence impacts the care that Josephine provides to Ernestine in any way? If so, how and why?
  - Probe: improves the care; makes Josephine's job easier or harder; etc.
- Do you think the interactions between health providers, like Josephine, and female clients like Ernestine differ between visits where men are present and the ones where men are not present? If so, how and why?
- Do you think the way that Josephine interacts with Ernestine and Claude would be any different if it was Ernestine's fourth pregnancy, not her first?
  - What if Ernestine and Claude were adolescents/unmarried?
  - If Josephine were likely to interact with Ernestine and Claude differently in either of these situations, do you think these differences are fair?

**That same day, Josephine received a 25-year old woman named Yvonne, who was not accompanied by her husband to her first ANC visit.**

- What do you think Josephine would have done in this situation? Would she have been treated the same as Ernestine?
  - Would Yvonne have been turned away?
  - Would Yvonne have had to wait longer to be seen?

- What do you think Josephine would have done if Yvonne explained that she did not want her partner to be involved in her pregnancy?
  - If Yvonne was 17 and unmarried?
- What do you think should happen in these situations?

## **Vignette B: Labor and Delivery Services**

Imagine Claudine is a 55-year-old woman in this community. She is not a real person who lives here; this is just an example. Claudine is married and a mother of four children. She is a midwife working in the maternity ward at the local hospital.

Last week, Claudine assisted Beatrice, a 26 year-old woman who was in labor with her third child. Beatrice's husband and mother accompanied her to the facility. During her labor, Beatrice was in a lot of pain and screamed loudly.

- Do you think Claudine or the health providers would do anything during this time to encourage Beatrice or to show her care or sympathy? If yes, how?
  - Probe: reasons why (to support her, make a positive birth experience) or why not (e.g. lack of time, in a rush, not the most important priority)
  - Is showing care or sympathy a priority for health providers? Why or why not?
- Do you think Claudine or the other health providers would have behaved any differently towards Beatrice if her husband and mother were not present? If yes, how?
  - Do you think Claudine would have behaved any differently toward Claudine if she had delayed to come in for delivery and had arrived in a critical situation? If yes, why and how?

### **After an hour or two, Claudine assists Beatrice into the delivery room.**

- Do you think Josephine was allowed to have a companion in the delivery room? If no, should she be allowed to have a companion with her in the delivery room?
- Do you think Beatrice and the other health providers explained to Claudine what was happening, or consulted her in decisions about her care during this time?
  - Do you think that they should have done so?
- Do you think Claudine updated Beatrice's husband or consulted him on decisions about his wife's care, during this time?
  - Do you think that she should have done so?
- How do you think Claudine or the other health providers would have reacted if Beatrice wanted to decide the position in which should would give birth?
  - Do you think a woman should be able to decide in which position to give birth?
- Is it likely that Beatrice had any privacy in the delivery room?

**Eventually, Beatrice gave birth to a healthy baby boy. During the delivery, one of the other nurses slapped Beatrice and yelled at her to start pushing.**

- Why do you think the other nurse slapped and shouted at Beatrice?
- How do you think Josephine reacted when the other nurse slapped Beatrice?

- How do you think Beatrice felt, or reacted, to being slapped and shouted at?
- Is this type of experience common?
  - Is it more or less likely to occur with certain types of female clients? Probe: women who are unaccompanied; younger or older women; etc.
- Do health providers ever tease or make fun of women who are giving birth?
  - Probe: for example, if a woman has not undergone *gukuna imishimo*; if she screams a lot; etc.
  - If yes, why do you think this is?
  - If yes, do you think this teasing has any impact on the client or on the quality of care she receives?
  - Do you think Beatrice will have positive or negative memories from her birth experience?
- What do you think would happen if Beatrice had been unable to pay the medical fees after giving birth?
  - What do you think should happen in this situation?

## Additional Discussion Questions

1. For those of you who provide care to both women and men, what is the biggest difference between interacting with and providing care to women as opposed to men?
2. Are there differences in the way that different types of providers interact with female clients at reproductive and maternal health services?
 

Probes:

  - Doctors compared to nurses or midwives?
  - Female providers compared to male providers?
3. Do you think men's presence at reproductive and maternal health services changes the way that health providers interact with or behave towards female clients? Or the quality of the care that women receive?
4. In your experience, are different types of clients treated differently or receive different quality of care when attending reproductive or maternal health services?
 

Probes:

  - Married compared to unmarried?
  - Adolescents compared to adults?
  - Educated compared to uneducated?
  - Rich compared to poor?
5. In your opinion, do women's experiences of the quality of care, level of respect, and information and services they receive at family planning or services for pregnancy and childbirth impact their decisions to seek care at these services in the future?
  - Or decisions to seek care for their children or other family members in the future?
6. Are there things that could be done to improve the quality of reproductive and maternal health care in this district?

We have now reached the end of our discussion. Thank you very much for your participation today. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please remember that your responses will be kept confidential. We also ask that you not share the details of this discussion with anyone outside of this group. Thank you!