

Verbal Autopsy Training Agenda and Instructions for Trainers

Day	Time	Agenda
Day 1	Morning	SRS VA overview
		Cardinal symptoms
		Cardinal symptoms exercise
		5 interview steps
	Afternoon	Critique sample VA narratives (FROM WHERE- Manual or from screen)
		Mock VA interviews
Critique of mock interviews		
Day 2	Morning	VA fieldwork- complete 3-4 actual deaths in the field
	Afternoon	Peer critique of fieldwork VA narratives
Day 3 (For trainers training only)	Morning	CME module
		Quality checks on VA
		How to use CGHR training materials

List of Training Materials

- 1) Online training modules (including VA introduction, cardinal symptoms, 5 interview steps, live interview videos, narrative critiques)
- 2) VA manual (also includes cardinal symptoms lists, 5 steps list, VA workbook)
- 3) SRS VA intro PPT
- 4) SRS RHIME forms

Description of Activities

Day 1

SRS Verbal Autopsy (Million Death Study) and Verbal Autopsy Overview

- *Overview:* A presentation describing the current gaps in mortality and cause of death statistics in India, the methodology and results of the MDS, and the role of verbal autopsy as an important tool for obtaining cause of death data
- *Materials:* SRS VA intro PPT, VA Introduction animation

Cardinal Symptoms

- *Overview:* An explanation of the important role of cardinal symptoms (CS) in the verbal autopsy narrative, and their use by physicians in diagnosis. CS and probing questions are explained, including contents of the CS list and how to use it.
- *Materials:* Cardinal Symptoms List, CS animation

Cardinal Symptoms Exercise

- *Overview:* This exercise will make participants familiar with the contents of the CS list, including the various probing questions for each CS. Split participants into groups of 2 and ask them to recall a relative or friend's death, or if not possible, make up a scenario. Taking turns, the participants should first ask each other what CS were present before the death, and for any positive CS recorded, to ask each and every probing question.
- *The Key goal is to become familiar with all the cardinal symptoms*
- *Materials:* CS lists for adult and children (should be printed and available to all participants).

5 Interview Steps

- *Overview:* Participants will learn the 5 simple steps used to obtain a complete and detailed narrative. It is important to stress a complete narrative is vital to the work of physicians and to the success of the MDS, and that anyone can conduct a good verbal autopsy interview if they follow the 5 steps. While showing the 5 steps animation, pause the video between the steps and explain each section in more detail. Allow discussion after each of 5 steps have been explained.
- *Materials:* 5 steps animation, CS lists, 5 steps list

Narrative Critique Exercise

- *Overview:* Participants will critique past narratives (included in the VA manual) based on whether the 5 steps were followed. First discuss what constitutes a complete and incomplete narrative in light of the 4 requirements of positive symptoms, probing questions, negative symptoms, medical information, and chronology. Show 5-10 example narratives to the class, and as a group, classify each of the narratives according to whether it was complete or incomplete, and the reasons why. Critique guidelines for each narrative are provided in the VA workbook.
- *Materials:* VA manual, CS list, 5 steps list video

Mock VA Interviews Exercise

- *Overview:* In small groups of 3 or 4, one person will be selected to be an interviewer, and another a respondent, who will share a personal story of the death of a friend or family member (make one up, or ask the families to recall the death of their grandmother or grandfather or any other relative). The interviewer must follow the 5 steps, and write out a full narrative at the end of the interview. The others in the group can offer tips to the interviewer. Groups will be supervised by a trainer/CGHR staff member. Each person will have to complete at least 2 such narratives after mock interviews.
- *Materials:* CS lists, 5 steps list (review video again as needed, including on laptops for each of the small groups).

Critique of mock interviews

- *Overview:* One narrative from each of the small groups in the previous exercise will be critiqued by the entire class. To prepare this, ask the groups to quickly type up one narrative from each group, and show this through the projector or to read this in front of the class. Discuss whether each of the 5 steps was properly conducted in the narrative. This session will be guided by the trainer/CGHR staff.
- *Materials:* CS list, 5 steps list

Day 2

Verbal autopsy fieldwork (AM)

- Overview: Each surveyor will spend the morning conducting VA interviews with real respondents (taking the whole VA form, but the questions on SRS ID numbers, unique ID no may be skipped), and each surveyor should complete 3-4 narratives. Focus should be on properly going through the 5 interview steps, and using the cardinal symptoms list and probing questions.
- Materials: SRS VA (RHIME) forms, CS list, 5 steps list

Critique field verbal autopsies (PM)

- Overview: In Groups of 3-4, critique of verbal autopsies completed in the field. All verbal autopsies will be reviewed and the team leader will ensure at least one form per surveyor is included for peer review. Critique by peers should focus should be on whether the 5 interview steps were properly conducted, including a list of cardinal symptoms, and appropriate probing questions for each cardinal symptom, negative symptom list, and additional medical information and time sequence.
- Materials: CS list, 5 steps list

Day 3 (Note: Only applicable for “trainer’s training”, not for training RGI supervisors)

CME coding application

- A CGHR physician will guide the trainers trainers through the CME coding process on a selection of 5-10 complete and incomplete narratives. This will highlight how the details collected from the 5 interview steps are necessary in the diagnosis process and how they are used by physicians, as well as showcase the problems in coding incomplete narratives.
- Materials: CS list, 5 steps list

RGI Validity checks

- Explain the checklist needed **prior** to field work for each Half yearly SRS 1. Half day refresher training using video materials, focusing on 5 steps; 2. Meet to review again the full cardinal symptom list).
- Explain the checks done by the field staff to be done after field workers have come in (checklist review by senior DCO staff of all forms, focusing on: 1. Completeness of all questions (no missing, or incomplete fields); 2. Ensure that the narrative is of adequate length and quality.

How to use CGHR training materials

- Trainers will be given an overview of how to reproduce the given training in their state DCO offices, and how to use each of the materials, including the animation videos, presentation slides, VA workbooks.