

Planning for safe delivery

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

Planning for safe delivery¹

Learning objectives

The objective of this session is to enable the trainee to:

- understand the importance of having a skilled attendant present at birth in planning for safe delivery;
- be aware of appropriate care-seeking behaviour throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period for women and newborn babies;
- understand the different elements of planning for safe birth and dealing with complications in order to be able to provide support to pregnant women and their families;
- recognize the signs of labour and the danger signs during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period for the mother and the newborn baby;
- discuss the possible roles of the community in supporting families during normal birth and obstetric emergencies.

Expected outcomes

After completion of this session trainees will be able to:

- support pregnant women and their families in planning for safe delivery;
- build community support in planning for safe birth and complications, for skilled care at birth and for appropriate care-seeking behaviour;
- increase community knowledge of danger signs during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period for the mother and newborn baby;
- discuss with the community the barriers to seeking care with skilled attendants;
- work with different community groups to address those barriers.

Training methodology

Reading and group discussion and role playing are the tools to be used to train cluster representatives and health volunteers. Material needed to conduct the training sessions includes:

- the CBI manual for cluster representatives and health volunteers;
- flip charts;
- overhead projector/multimedia projector, if available;
- information and counselling sheets from the *Pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum and newborn care guide for essential practice*;

¹ This session has been adapted from sessions 7 and 8 of the WHO publication "A handbook for building skills: counselling for maternal and newborn health", (unpublished data).

- Planning for safe delivery card.

Table 1. Training session lesson plan

Activity	Methodology	Time	Materials required
Introduction Presentation of participants Presentation of the objectives		30 minutes	Flip chart with objectives
Introduction to the need for a skilled attendant at birth	Plenary discussions	30 minutes	Flip chart, markers
Planning for safe birth and complications	Group work	60 minutes	Flip chart, markers Planning for safe birth and complications card
Break			
Signs of labour and danger signs during pregnancy	Group work	60 minutes	Flip chart, markers List of signs of labour and danger signs during pregnancy CBI manual for cluster representatives and health volunteers
Support planning for safe delivery	Work in pairs	60 minutes	Instructions for discussion in pairs
Break			
Role play	Role play	60 minutes	Role play guide Planning for safe birth and complications card
Role playing the preparation of a birth plan	Role play	60 minutes	
Mobilizing community support in planning for safe delivery	Plenary	50 minutes	Flip chart, markers
Next steps	Plenary discussions	10 minutes	

Introduction to the need for a skilled attendant at birth (30 minutes)

Explain to participants that the WHO recommendation is for a skilled attendant to be present at all births in order that they can provide safe care for a normal labour and birth or to be able to refer complications. According to the WHO definition, a skilled attendant is a "health professional, such as a midwife, doctor or nurse, who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and in the identification, management and referral of complications in women and newborn babies."²

Ask participants to identify all skilled attendants in their catchment area. Do women use their services for pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care? What are some of the problems women and their families in their area face in ensuring the presence of a skilled attendant at birth?

Tell participants that during antenatal visits the health worker should discuss with the pregnant woman, and if the woman agrees, with her family, where it would be best to give birth based on the woman's health status and needs. The health worker should also help them to identify which skilled attendant will assist them with the birth. The woman and her family may select the most convenient place for them, but all births should be assisted by a skilled attendant, whether at home or at the health facility.

Conclude the session by explaining that in order to ensure that a birth is assisted by a skilled attendant, it should be planned in advance. In the same way the pregnant woman and her family must be prepared and plan, and in the case of any complications during pregnancy, childbirth or after the birth, they must plan where they will go for appropriate care.

Planning for safe birth and complications (60 minutes)

Explain to participants that cluster representatives and health volunteers have an important role in advising and supporting the woman and her family to seek the help of a skilled attendant during birth and for any complications. They can either help the woman and her family to follow the plan prepared with the health worker, or if no plans have been prepared, they can provide support to prepare a safe delivery plan.

² Making pregnancy safer: the critical role of the skilled attendant: a joint statement by WHO, the International Federation of Midwives (ICM) and the International Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (FIGO) (2004).

Group work (25 minutes)

Divide the participants into two groups.

Group 1

Ask the participants to identify what the woman and her family need in order to prepare for birth. The facilitator should use elicit the following:

- the place of birth;
- a skilled attendant to attend the birth (if birth at home);
- transportation;
- necessary funds;
- necessary supplies (list which supplies are needed for birth);
- birth companion;³
- support person for care of the home and any other children;
- a compatible blood donor.

Write down all the comments on a flip chart.

Group 2

Ask the participants to identify what the woman and her family need to prepare or be aware of in case of an emergency for the mother or for the newborn baby? The facilitator should elicit the following:

- the location of the nearest health facility;
- transportation to this facility;
- necessary funds;
- necessary supplies;
- accompanying person;
- support person for care of the home and any other children;
- a compatible blood donor.

Write down all the comments on a flip chart.

The two groups present their findings. Ask the groups if they have any questions or comments. Distribute one copy of the planning for safe birth and complications card to all the participants. Review all the elements of the card with them (20 minutes).

In plenary, tell the participants that the card will initially be discussed in detail during the first antenatal visit with the health care professional at the health centre. Ask participants:

³ The woman has a person her choice with her for support throughout labour and childbirth. This person may be the husband, the mother-in-law, a friend, the trained birth attendant or a health worker. The programme must consider if the health facility allows for this, and if not, to discuss the possibility with them so that they will consider the benefits.

- who else in the household may need to be involved in preparing the plan?
- will women need support in discussing their plans with the family?
- what is the role of the cluster representative and health volunteer in preparing the plan? (10 minutes).

Signs of labour and danger signs during pregnancy (60 minutes)

Ask participants to look into the CBI manual for cluster representative and health volunteers manual and review what are the: signs of labour; danger signs during pregnancy; danger signs during childbirth; danger signs after birth for the woman; and danger signs after birth for the newborn baby.

Divide the participants into five groups, one for each category above. For each group the participants should discuss:

- What problems do women and families have in identifying the signs?
- Are there local terms that are used for any of them? Are there any local beliefs, explanations, or ways of handling dangers signs that stop people seeking care in a timely manner?
- How do women and families prioritize the main signs? Are there certain signs that they feel need more urgent attention than others?

Ask each group to present their findings. Ask the other group whether they have questions or comments.

What can cluster representative and health volunteers do to better support women and families in identifying the signs?

Support in planning for safe delivery (60 minutes)

Tell the participants that when preparing the plan for safe birth and complications the woman and her family may have several options and decisions to make. The cluster representatives and health volunteers can support them in identifying the different options and then weighing the options by looking at benefits and disadvantages of each and considering which ones best meet the woman's, baby's and family's needs. (5 minutes).

Role play

Ask the participants to sit in pairs 'A' and 'B'. Ask each pair to role play a discussion between a pregnant woman and a cluster representative. Give them the following instructions on paper:

'A' is playing the part of a pregnant woman who has had a headache for two days and who would like to go to the health centre situated 3 kilometres away to see a health worker. She can take the local bus but will need to pay. She cannot leave her children alone at home.

'B' is the cluster representative who asks questions to the pregnant woman in order to understand her situation and to help her to think through the problems that may arise by going to the health centre and to find possible solutions to these problems.

Ask each pair to read their instructions and to think for a few minutes about how they will play their part. Then ask them to act out the scenario described, for 15 minutes.

At the end of the role play in plenary ask the participants:

- How did 'B' proceed to find out what is the situation of 'A'?
- How did 'B' help 'A' to think out the possible solutions to solve the problems that may arise by going to the health centre? (30 minutes)

The facilitator probes by questioning, exploring various feasible options, weighing advantages and disadvantages for each solution and selecting the most appropriate.

Highlight the importance of questioning, of defining problems, exploring solutions to solve the identified problem and generating alternatives based on individual situations. Highlight that it is important that the woman herself identify the best solution in her situation and that it is not for the cluster representative to decide (5 minutes).

Role playing the preparation of a birth plan (60 minutes)

Preparation: 10 minutes

Role play: 20 minutes

Feedback: 30 minutes

Divide the participants into two groups: one group of four participants prepare and demonstrate the role play, one group with the other participants observe the role play in order to give feedback.

Group 1

- One participant plays the part of the cluster representative
- One participant plays the part of the pregnant woman
- One participant plays the part of the friend/husband of the pregnant woman
- One participant plays the part of the mother-in-law of the pregnant woman

The cluster representative helps the pregnant women and her family to prepare a plan for birth using the planning for safe birth and complications card. The pregnant woman is due to give birth in 3 months. The woman decides to give birth in the health centre situated 12 km from her home. In the health centre there are two skilled attendants. They are present in the health centre from 8 a.m to 3 p.m. from Monday to Friday. For other hours, they are on call in turns and live 10 minutes from the health centre.

Group 2 uses the planning for safe birth and complications card as a checklist in order to see if all the points have been covered.

At the end of the role play, Group 1 should present the difficulties they encountered in developing the plan and Group 2 should comment on the situation and present their views on whether the cluster representative helped the family to explore the different options and the best solutions for their particular situation.

Mobilizing community support in planning for safe birth (50 minutes)

Discuss with the participants the importance of building community support for maternal and newborn health and the important role others in the community can play in supporting planning for safe birth and complications. Cluster representatives and health volunteers play an important role in establishing links, in sharing key information on maternal and neonatal health, in discussing these issues and the ways to address them with community members and other stakeholders at community level. Community members, nongovernmental organizations and women's groups together with the health care facility staff can discuss solutions to these problems and develop a plan to address them. Cluster representatives can also help to disseminate information on danger signs so that community members can support families in recognizing signs and in seeking care.

Ask participants to brainstorm on what kind of support the community can provide to pregnant women so that they reach appropriate care in a timely fashion for safe birth and emergencies during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period for mothers and newborn babies in their area.

The facilitator probes for the following: support in finding solutions for transport; support in addressing barriers to use of care, including if costs prevent the woman and her family from seeking care; mechanisms for community support for any costs to be incurred; and to help identify danger signs.

Write down the points on a flip chart.

Ask participants to brainstorm on what are the possible resources (human, financial, others) available in the community to support safe birth and emergencies based on the above elements. Write down the points on a flip chart.

Discuss the role of the cluster representative in mobilizing community support in planning for safe birth and complications and what actions they can take to discuss this theme with others in the community and mobilize support.

Next steps (10 minutes)

Based on the above discussion, the participants should propose some next steps for moving forward with planning for safe delivery. Each should reflect on how they can help pregnant women in their community to prepare a plan for safe birth and complications and they should reflect on how the CBI programme can better incorporate planning for safe birth and complications.

List on a flip chart some of the key activities that should happen over the next two months.

- List the pregnant women in the area, in collaboration with the health centre.
- Coordinate with the health centre to see the planning for safe birth and complications card that is used by the health workers, if any, and to get the list of women with whom the planning for safe birth and complications card has been prepared.
- If a planning for safe birth and complications card has been used by the health centre visit the pregnant women and their families to review the planning for safe birth and complications card.
- In the event that no planning for safe birth and complications card has been used visit the pregnant women and their families and use the planning for safe birth and complications card from the manual for CBI cluster representatives and health volunteers.
- Review the card after some time with the pregnant women and their families.
- Establish links with the community and plan actions to discuss the issues around planning for safe birth and complications and to mobilize support for pregnant women and their families.

Tell the participants that during two months they will put into practice what they have been learning during this training session and they will review implementation and possible challenges. Some follow-up and support will be provided during the following two months.

Annex 1. Pre- and post-test questionnaire

A. What does a pregnant woman and her family need to think about before birth?

Indicate all possible responses

1. Who will be the skilled attendant that assists with the birth?
2. Which health centre to go to for birth
3. What materials she should prepare
4. How will they arrange her transport to the health centre?
5. Are the necessary funds available?
6. What are the supplies necessary for the birth?
7. Who will be her birth companion?

B. What are the danger signs during pregnancy?

Indicate all possible responses

1. Unusually swollen face, fingers and legs
2. Vaginal bleeding
3. Convulsions, fits
4. Severe and continued headache
5. Blurred vision
6. Severe lower abdominal pain
7. Fast or difficult breathing
8. Fever (over 38.5° C) and too weak to get out of bed
9. Water breaks and no onset of labour within 6 hours

C. What is the role of the cluster representatives/health volunteers?

Indicate all possible responses

1. To help the pregnant woman and her family to review the plan for birth and Complications
2. To reinforce information on danger signs
3. To support them in identifying different solutions to prepare for birth or an eventual complications
4. To support the pregnant woman and her family in putting the plan into action
5. To establish links with the community