The Value of a Maternal Interview

• Provides a broader picture of the case
  • Captures information not documented in medical records
  • Introduces a personal perspective of the mother’s experience

• Provides support for the mother
  • Interviewer serves as a non-judgmental listener
  • Provides validation for mother’s feelings of loss and grief
  • Opportunity to provide mother with follow-up grief counseling and/or resources
Preparing for Maternal Interviews

• FIMR committees may review all fetal and infant mortality cases for the county or focus on priority reviews

• If not conducting case reviews for all fetal and infant mortality cases, determine type of cases that your FIMR team wants to review
  • VLBW Deaths in non-tertiary medical facilities, Congenital Syphilis, Multiple birth deaths…
Preparing for Maternal Interviews

• Investigate individual hospital procedures for discharging mothers with bereavement packages
  • What type of bereavement services has the mother already received?
  • What type of bereavement services might she need?
  • Has the mother received information regarding the possibility of being contacted for an interview?
Requesting a Maternal Interview

• Identify cases from Vital Statistics birth and death certificates or through other source

• Contact mother requesting an interview
  • Within six months after loss to provide mother enough time to resolve immediate grieving without forgetting the details of her experience
  • Sending letter requesting interview enables mother to choose to participate

• Allow mother to choose location for interview to maximize her level of comfort
Tips on Conducting a Maternal Interview

• Most important tip is to show empathy when talking to the mother
• Respond quickly when interview is granted
• If using informed consent make sure it is signed at the beginning of the interview
• Prepare carefully
• Conduct interview in private when possible
• Avoid leading questions, allow mother to answer in her own time, respond in her own way.
• Use your discretion in asking certain questions – may not be appropriate to the situation
Beginning the Interview

• If applicable, read the consent form to the mother and have her sign it
• Before beginning remind the mother that some questions may be emotional and/or uncomfortable and that she can choose to answer or not answer
• Let the mother know about the important role that her perspective will play in promoting health care systems improvement
• Begin the interview with general questions about her background
  • Makes mother comfortable with talking about her experiences
  • Provides a picture of the environment in which the mother was pregnant
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Socio-economic background – Provides info about pregnancy environment and creates initial rapport with mother
  • E.g. In the year before you got pregnant tell me about your life
  • Probes
    • Where were you living?
    • How did you afford this living arrangement?
    • Were you working?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Health and Pregnancy History
  • E.g. Can you tell me about your experiences during this and previous pregnancies.

• Probes
  • Have you ever been pregnant before?
  • Can you tell me about your experiences?
  • Did you have someone in your life to provide you with emotional support during the pregnancies?
  • What type of things did they do to make you feel supported?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Socio-economic factors during pregnancy
  • E.g. Can you tell me how you felt when you realized that you were pregnant?

• Probes
  • How many weeks were you when you realized you were pregnant?
  • What did the father of the baby, family and friends say when they learned you were pregnant?
  • Did you feel you had someone to go to for information or questions?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Health Insurance / Benefits
  • E.g. What was your experience with medical insurance during your pregnancy?
• Probes
  • Did you have medical insurance during your pregnancy?
  • If yes, what kind? Medicaid? Medicare? Private Insurance?
  • Did you encounter problems with the insurance? What type of problems? Were they resolved?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Relationship with baby’s father during pregnancy
  • Tell me about your relationship with your baby’s father.
  • Probes
    • What were the best things about your relationship?
    • What were some of the problems you two experienced?
    • Did his behavior change as your pregnancy progressed? How
    • What were things he did to help you?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Social / Health Services
  • E.g. What were your experiences with health care services like during your pregnancy?
  • Probes
    • Did you receive PNC? Where?
    • When did you start? Did you get PNC as early as you wanted? What influenced the start of your PNC visits?
    • Did you miss any visits? If yes, why?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Labor and Delivery
  • E.g. Tell me about your experience with your delivery

• Probes
  • How did you feel about the medical staff’s communication with you about what was happening during the delivery?
  • Did the medical staff or anyone else (Who?) provide you with emotional support during the delivery? How?
  • What else could have been done to make the experience easier?
Maternal Interview Topic Areas

• Loss and Post–Loss
  • E.g. Tell me about your experiences with post-loss services
• Probes
  • Did you go for a post-partum visit?
  • If yes, what type of things were discussed during the visit?
  • If no, why not?
  • What else could have been done to encourage a visit?
Interview Guides

- Four different guides for different reviews
  - Fetal Loss
  - Infant Loss (Infant went home)
  - Infant Loss (Infant never went home from the hospital)
  - Congenital Syphilis birth
- Adapt the guide to address the needs of the case being reviewed
- Use probes to guide the interview, but do not limit the discussion to topics addressed in the guides
Interview Tips

• Try to have the interview in a private setting
  • Other people at the interview can either inhibit and/or bias the mother’s answers or they can provide comfort that will encourage her answers

• Use open-ended questions to allow the mother to describe the experience in her own words

• Observe the environment, especially if the interview is at the mother’s house

• Observe the mother’s body language to gauge the mother’s comfort with the discussion
Interview Cautions

• Be prepared for an emotional discussion
  • Bringing tissues to the interview is a good idea

• The interviewer’s job is to ask questions and listen
  • Be careful of casting judgment regarding a case
  • Be careful of providing case management services

• If the mother requests services or answers to questions regarding her loss, refer her to her physician or to the resource list
Incorporating the Interview into the FIMR Case History

• Interviewers record their impressions of the interview

• Excerpt key information / quotes to augment the substance of the case history form or

• Provide verbatim excerpts from the interview at the end or the beginning of the case history form to preserve the voice of the mother