

## Chapter 23

# Interviewer Training

Judith T. Lessler  
*Chatham Research Consultancy, LLC*

Joe Eyerman  
*RTI International*

Kevin Wang  
*RTI International*

Field interviewers are required to employ sophisticated and complex planning and negotiation skills in order to meet the diverse and dynamic requirements of their work assignments. However, most field interviewer training programs focus on the delivery of information about study protocols and methods, not on the acquisition of skills required to successfully locate, contact, and interview respondents in the field. This chapter articulates a learning model that can be useful in helping to understand the requirements for teaching adaptive skills. The chapter also provides an evaluation tool for assessing existing training programs in order to identify areas for increased training emphasis on adaptive behaviors.

### GLOSSARY OF KEY CONCEPTS

**Tailoring.** The practice of adapting behavior to the respondent's expressed concerns as well as other cues about the sample dwelling unit or the potential respondent in order to provide feedback to the respondent that addresses the respondent's reasons for not wanting to participate.

**Conversational interviewing.** Interviewing style in which interviewers read questions as they are worded but are then allowed to use their own words to clarify the meaning of the question and resolve the respondent's uncertainty regarding how to answer the question.

**Declarative knowledge.** Knowledge of factual information or of what is true, which can be communicated directly to others.

**Procedural knowledge.** Knowledge about how to do something, which involves a degree of skill that increases through repetition or practice. Not easily communicated directly from one individual to another.

**Prescribed behaviors.** Interviewer behaviors that must be carried out exactly as specified by a standard protocol.

**Adaptive behaviors.** Behaviors that are tailored to the actual situations encountered.