

A Simple Assessment Tool to help you develop your “reduction of Weapons” Intervention

1. Introduction

This simple assessment tool provides you with two things:

- It helps you create a **baseline** to establish the **frequency** and **impact** of weapons in your healthcare facility before you start work to reduce weapons from the health facility. This will provide you with the means to calculate whether your “Reduction of Weapons” intervention is successful, by measuring the decrease in the number of weapons over time
- A comprehensive understanding of the issues that are stopping people leaving their weapons outside the health facility. The tool also explores some of the actions you can take to help support people leave to their weapons outside the health facility.

2. Creating a baseline - what is happening now

The first thing you have to do is create a baseline the section below tells you how to do this

2.1 How to collect the frequency of weapons presence in the health facility?

Choose a typical day (not a public holiday or a day that is likely to be extraordinarily busy or quiet).

Make a plan of all entrances and exits to the health facility.

Have one or two people on all entrances and exit points

For one day, collect the following information below:

(For your own safety you should count people who are openly carrying weapons)

Question 1. Is it a man or a women carrying the weapon?

Question 2. Which type of person is carrying a weapon?

- I. Armed Forces
- II. Police
- III. Other authority
- IV. Armed groups (member of a non-state armed group, criminal or organized group)
- V. Other armed group (ex: private security company)
- VI. Members of tribal groups
- VII. Unknown armed group (members of a group of armed men the affiliation of which is unknown)
- VIII. Civilians (Patient or carer)
- IX. Other - specify

Question 3. What type of weapon is being carried?

1. Gun or firearm
2. Knife/machete
3. Other - specify

2.2 How to collect the frequency of actual incidents where a weapon was threatened, used or discharged accidentally.

Question 1.

If you are working in an ICRC [supported facility](#) /, or a MSF facility [or a facility where the ICRC/MSF are working in a MOH facility](#) then this data [should](#) ~~may~~ already be collected. If possible, you should use this data collected to find out:

- The number of incidents that occurred
- What weapon was used and by whom?
- What was the impact of the incident on healthcare?

Commented [JR1]: Not always. In the sentence you mention it was discharged accidentally so these cases may not be collected if there are no protection follow-up required

2.3 How to assess the IMPACT of weapons presence in your health facility?

This tool includes some [short questions to collect information from staff and patients](#). This data helps answer questions around...

Commented [JR2]: It would be good to include here the consent forms for questionnaires with staff and patients

1. What are the impacts of weapons being brought into the healthcare facility from the perspective of patients?
2. What is the impact of weapons being brought into the healthcare facility from the perspective of health workers?

The questions have been developed so that you are able to get more than Yes or No answers. Treat your interviews more like conversation and ask follow-up questions (Probes) if you think they will give you useful extra information.

2.4 How to assess the IMPACT of weapons on staff working in the facility

Question 1.

Do people visiting the healthcare facility often carry weapons?

What are these weapons?

Question 2.

Over the last year have you witnessed or heard of a situation where a weapon has been threatened or used in the healthcare facility where you work?

If yes

- What impact did it have on your work and the work of the section of the health facility you were working in?
Possible probes: Closure of facility, delays to treatment, damage to facilities.

- How did you feel when this happened?
Possible probes: Fear, anger, stress that I take home with me, difficulty sleeping?

3. Getting an understanding of why people are bringing in weapons to the health facility

The most important thing is to ask questions of the people and communities you are trying to directly influence. This could be local people, the police, armed groups, and the army.

There are a number of behaviours that these people could do with their weapons:

- Leave them at home or at their base.
- Leave them with a colleague or friend outside the facility.
- Store them in a secure place outside the facility.

To get them to do these behaviours we need to know the answers to two questions:

1. Why do they feel they need to bring weapons into the facility?
2. What can we do to support these people to stop them bringing weapons into the health facility?

3.1 How to carry out the assessment

It is important that you do the assessment with the communities that are bringing in weapons and you should already know who they are from the results of your baseline survey. If it is difficult to carry out the assessment, then you can ask others who may understand why people are bring weapons into the healthcare centre. These could be staff at the health centre, humanitarian workers or local people living in the area.

When people come to a hospital, emotions are often high, and it will probably not be suitable to ask them questions about weapons at this time. So, it is better to speak to people outside of the facility when treatment has been completed, or in another neutral location.

It is also important to remember your own safety, so only ask people you feel comfortable asking questions about weapons. Note that the suggested research questions do not directly ask the people you are interviewing why they carry weapons. Instead, we use the third person only, to make the questions less personal and improve your safety. Therefore, we ask: "Why do you think people carry weapons?" and **not** "Why are you carrying a weapon today?".

If you can, you should have a colleague with you so that they can write the answers to the questions you ask. If not, try to right down the main points as they are made. You will find it difficult to remember what was said if you leave until after the interview to write down your notes.

Before starting any interview, assure the participant that their comments are confidential to the person carrying out the assessment and will be made anonymous before sharing or analysing. It is not even necessary to take a participant's names when asking the questions.

There may be many reasons why people bring in weapons into the facility and the following questions will help you to discover this. The questions are broken into two sections. The first section is for the local community and the second the questions for the police or army. Finally, note that the questions listed below are not exhaustive and if there are other issues that come up that are interesting, then probe them.

3.2 Questions for the local population

1. Do you think that there is a problem with weapons being brought into the health facility?
2. Did you see a weapon in the health facility when you last visited?
3. Why do you think people bring weapons into the health facility?
4. If there was somewhere to store the weapon at the entrance of the facility, do you think people would leave it there? Why do you think this?
5. What do you think needs to be in place to ensure people feel comfortable storing their weapons outside the facility?
6. Are there any other things that might help stop people bringing weapons inside this health facility?
7. Did you know that weapons are banned from the health facility?
8. Did you see any posters or signs that said weapons should not be brought into the health facility?

You should ask people from the local community these questions until you receive no new information. Usually this happens after 10-15 interviews.

3.3 Section 2: Questions for the army or police.

1. Do the police/army bring weapons into health facilities at any time?
2. Why do you think it is necessary to bring in weapons to the health facility?
3. Do you think the police/army could leave weapons behind and not bring them into the health facility? (If No, what are the reasons?)
4. Can you think of a way to reduce the number of weapons in health facilities?

5. Did you know that weapons are not allowed in this health facility?

You should ask people from the police/army these questions until you receive no new information. Usually this happens after 10-15 interviews.

4. Analysing the research

Try to read the answers at least twice

- If it is possible, try to identify a colleague that you can discuss the responses with.
- Treat each question and answers separately – write out the key issues and concerns for each question.
- Try to identify any general themes that keep coming up in the interviews? If so, list them.
- Identify the key barriers that stop people leaving weapons outside the health facility?
- Did the people you interviewed have some good ideas that you think may work? If so, list them
- Do you think that the people you interviewed treat the issue of weapons in health facilities seriously and if not, why not?
- Is there anything else you heard that you think is important?

Remember to summarise your conclusions in a short research note.