**Question 1:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV, COVID-19, or TB vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #1:

**“What exactly is the difference between the phases of trials? Which phases will be tested here locally?”**

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline:

HIV Vaccines to be Tested in High-Risk Participants: Local site set to recruit commercial sex workers and drug addicts

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…and a Phase III trial will include high-risk participants, such as commercial sex workers and intravenous drug users.”



*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*The interviewee’s response is not inaccurate, but the title is likely to create controversy. An article with a headline like the one shown in the box may deter healthy participants with low vulnerability for HIV exposure from participating because of the stigma of joining a trial. The use of “high-risk” and “low-risk” categories stigmatize trial participation. It can also foster ugly comments about people “deserving” to get HIV because of their behavior.*

**Question 2:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #2:

**“When will an HIV vaccine be ready and why do you think that?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: HIV Vaccine Likely to be Ready in 7 to 10 Years: Effective vaccine right around the corner

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…an HIV vaccine will probably be ready sometime within the next decade or so.”



*The problem with this headline is that it may raise false expectations and gives a potentially an unfounded rationale for why the interviewee believes that “an HIV vaccine will probably be ready sometime in the next decade.”*

**Question 3:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #3:

**“I have heard a little bit about the use of a placebo. Will participants know if they are receiving the vaccine?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: All for Nothing? Some HIV vaccine trial participants will not even be given the vaccine

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…a sub-group of volunteers will be randomly selected to receive placebo. Participants receiving the placebo form the control group of the trial.”



*While the quote is accurate, the headline implies that placebo recipients are not useful participants in the trial. Obviously, no ethically conducted HIV vaccine trial could be completed without this highly important placebo group. However, this headline may discourage trial participation.*

**Question 4:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #4:

**“Can anyone join a study?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: Want to Save the World: Everyone invited to participate in HIV vaccine research

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…anyone who is interested can come to the clinic for a screening to find out if they are eligible for participation.”



*The quote is accurate but the headline is not. The problem with the headline is that it may give the impression that these trials are for HIV-positive people as well. It isn’t a big problem if HIV-positive people attempt to join the trial but this is not the message that we are trying to give out.*

**Question 5:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #5:

**“How long do these studies last?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: Committed to the Cause: HIV vaccine trials may require 5 years of clinic visits

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…certain trials may ask participants to come into the clinic for up to 5 years after completing the study.”



*While some studies do follow-up work for up to five years, it may be one visit per year after year one. This headline suggests that clinic visits are commonplace and that trial participation is a huge time commitment, which may discourage readers from participating in the study.*

**Question 6:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #6:

**“How much do you compensate volunteers?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: Make $$ and Save the World: Local HIV vaccine trials site looking for trial participants

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…trial participants will receive money for their time and transportation to and from the clinic. I think it is around $30 dollars a visit.”



*The problem with this headline is that it appears as though trial participation is a moneymaking opportunity. This is exactly what we are trying to avoid. Plus, never say, “I think” because it will be published as if it is truth. If you don’t know the answer, just say you don’t know, no matter how hard the interviewer pushes to get the answer. Additionally, being too specific about the amount of compensation has a tendency to attract volunteers who are only interested in the money, and not in the study itself. Historically, these volunteers are hard to retain and do not make the best trial participants.*

**Question 7:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #7:

**“Once enrolled in a trial, is there anything that a participant can do to get out of the study?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: Give It a Try: Vaccine trial looking for volunteers and no time commitment required

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…a volunteer is free to withdraw from the study at any time.”



*The problem with this headline is that it suggests that participants are not required to commit to fulfilling their enrollment obligation. It is true that participants can leave at any time, however, the idea is not that participants get one injection and then decide if they want to continue. Sites strive to have a 90% or higher retention rate and that would be impossible if all participants just tried out trial participation and then decided whether or not to continue. Again, an accurate statement, but not the correct message to be giving out to the general public.*

**Question 8:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #8:

**“Why do you think that the vaccine being tested locally is the most promising candidate in the field?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: Trial and Error: HIV vaccines being tested all over the world to find out which work and which do not

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “…there are vaccine products being tested at sites all over the world. We simply do not know which vaccines will work and which will not until they have been tested.”



*The problem with this headline is that it suggests that scientists see participants as guinea pigs. Clinical trials are very complicated and only the very best vaccines from pre-clinical, or animal, studies are moved forward into human beings. It is true that we will not know how effective a vaccine is until it is tested in humans. However, that doesn’t mean that scientists randomly test every possible vaccine concept they think of.*

**Question 9:**

In this exercise, you will have the chance to practice being interviewed by a reporter. Below is the question that the reporter will ask you. Over the next 15 minutes, compose an accurate, simple, direct response to the question. As you make notes for your response, think about the message you are trying to communicate about HIV vaccine research and your clinical trial site. Also, think about your audience and how they might perceive your response.

Lastly, review the example sensationalist headline that could be created based on a response to the interview question. Use this example and your knowledge of existing myths and misperceptions in your community as guides to help you figure out what NOT to say when responding to reporters.

If there is time left, practice presenting your response to your partner so that you’ll be better prepared to answer the mock interviewers’ questions.

Mock Interview question #9:

**“Before we begin, can you just tell me off the record if you would join a vaccine trial. I have done some research on this stuff and it seems pretty scary. Would you join a trial?”**

*The newspaper heading from their response may read:*

*Name of Local Newspaper*

Headline: If She’s Scared…: Local site staff says that she would not participate in an HIV vaccine trial

According to HIV vaccine expert (*insert name*), “No. I don’t think I would participate.”



*Note that when dealing with the media,* ***nothing*** *is “off the record.” And site staff should not talk about their interest in trial participation with the media. This is a private matter and no one should feel obligated to talk to the media about their own participation. Additionally, the HVTN Manual of Operations prohibits site staff from participating in HVTN trials because of the potential for coercion.*