

THE SOCIAL NORMS EXPLORATION GUIDE & TOOLKIT (SNET) AT A GLANCE

THE SNET HELPS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTERS:

- ✓ Understand social norms theory and concepts
- ✓ Prepare staff to identify and investigate norms
- ✓ Engage community members using participatory learning exercises to 1) identify reference groups, and 2) explore social norms influencing behaviors
- ✓ Analyze information with project team and communities
- ✓ Use findings to inform the design of norms-shifting activities and develop good evaluation tools

The Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, with support from the USAID-funded Passages project and members from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change, **developed the Social Norms Exploration Guide & Toolkit (SNET), a participatory guide and set of tools to translate theory into practical guidance. Using the SNET can help you identify the social norms that hold relevant behaviors in place and design norms-shifting strategies.**

The SNET provides step-by-step guidance, exercises, and templates to explore the norms that drive behaviors of interest within a specific context and offers guidance to interpret findings to inform intervention design and guide monitoring and evaluation.



The SNET is divided into four phases:

- 1. PLAN & PREPARE:** Reflect on norms that may influence behavioral outcomes of interest, then define the exploration objectives, choose and prepare participatory exercises.
- 2. EXPLORE SOCIAL NORMS:** Explore norms in two rounds – identify reference groups, then ask participants *and* reference group members about factors influencing specific behaviors, unpacking norms and their relative influence.
- 3. FURTHER COMPILER & ANALYZE FINDINGS:** Conduct participatory analysis exercises, identifying the norms that influence behaviors of interest, their relative influence and consequences of following or violating norms.
- 4. APPLY FINDINGS TO PROGRAM:** Apply findings to design or refine programs for action, ideally together with communities.

WHY IS EFFECTIVE SOCIAL NORMS DIAGNOSIS IMPORTANT FOR PROGRAMS?

Social norms are beliefs about which behaviors are typical and appropriate within a given group; they are informal, and often implicit, rules that most people accept and abide by. Norms are influenced by community beliefs and held in place by influential people and perceived social rewards and sanctions.

Social norms matter because they influence behavior.

Some norms may perpetuate harmful practices and reinforce gender and other inequities. With a clear understanding of existing social norms in a specific community, who maintains (or is perceived to maintain) these norms, and how they relate to behaviors, practitioners can design more relevant and effective programs and improve program evaluation, contributing to best practices.

Historically, development programmers have focused on increasing knowledge and awareness, while improving service quality and access. Often unidentified and unaddressed norms continue, perpetuating unhealthy behaviors and limiting sustained program impact.

As interest in social norms has grown, so has **the need for simple, practical tools to identify key influencers and diagnose the norms driving behaviors.**



Are you interested in using or learning more about the SNET?
Contact us at [info@passagesproject.org!](mailto:info@passagesproject.org)



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