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 Tool (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.

**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!