



SCRIPT AND STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL DATA COLLECTION OF THE TBIMS HOUSEHOLD INCOME VARIABLE (HHINC)

Recommended Script:

“I understand that you may feel that this is a rather personal question. I want you to know that this information is confidential and not attached to your name. Income information is important because it can help describe what happened to you and your family after your brain injury. If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can pick your income out from these income ranges.”

Strategies that have facilitated successful collection of earnings/income have five overlapping themes:

1. Data collectors and subjects/proxies having trusting, mutually beneficial relationships
2. Data collectors informing subjects/proxies of the need for earnings /income info ahead of when actually requesting it;
3. Data collectors being comfortable and having confidence requesting this info;
4. Data collectors providing the subjects/proxies with visual aides to help them answer the annual earnings question; and
5. Data collectors contacting involved proxies for earnings/income info when subjects aren't able to provide it.

The specific strategies reported data collectors are:

1. Establishing and maintaining a trusting relationship with each subject is an invaluable way to help obtain this data. Help subjects/proxies feel that their study participation is of mutual benefit by referring them to support groups and other community resources/services that would be appropriate/useful to them at the time of each data point;
2. Explain to the subject that the annual earnings info helps the TBIMS to better characterize our patient population and to better understand how brain injury impacts all aspects of a person's life;



3. Remind the subject/proxy that the requested annual earnings/income info is confidential, that the subject's name is not in the TBIMS database, and that your Model System is not connected to the hospital's Billing Department;
4. When a person is being consented, be sure to say to that person that each subject is asked their total annual income;
5. At the beginning of each quarter, mail each subject scheduled for follow-up during that quarter a pre-interview packet that includes a questionnaire that the subject completes and then mails back to you prior to the follow-up phone call; this provides an opportunity for subjects to obtain the earnings/income info that they may not know spontaneously;
6. Subjects and families can smell data collector fear and discomfort! If you are scared or uncomfortable asking a question, they will be scared/reluctant to answer it. Ask the annual earnings question as casually as possible. Emphasize that the answer doesn't have to be exact: offer one earning/income category and proceed from there;
7. Write out the earning/income categories on a laminated card in large font and hand it to the subject, explaining that you are asking for a range of income, not their specific income;
8. When a subject simply does not know this information, ask if there is someone who is at home at the moment or that you can call (parent, spouse, etc.), whom the two of you might call to help the subject answer this question. If you reach the person on the phone, establish who they are in relation to the subject and whether or not they are willing to answer for the subject. If no one is at home, code the info as temporarily missing and call again later to obtain it.