

Take two children

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage participants to examine some of the reasons for ill health and to identify practices that will protect or promote their children's health.

The causes of ill health are varied and include not only individual unhealthy practices but also underlying and structural factors such as conflict, gender relations, national and international policies. This activity can be carried out without reference to political factors but is enhanced if people are given the opportunity to explore this important issue more widely.

By the end of the session participants will be able to identify factors which are likely to cause disease and some methods for preventing disease. The activity can be carried out as part of the training of community mobilisers or with groups of mothers who have young children.

- Place two pictures in front of the participants – one is of a healthy baby/child and the other of a sick baby/child.
- Divide the participants into small groups. Then present each group with a set of randomly selected “unhealthy” and “healthy” pictures.
- Ask the groups to decide which practices lead to an unhealthy baby or child and which to a healthy one.
- In plenary ask for volunteers to describe a particular picture and to place the picture under the appropriate baby/child.
- Ask participants how common these practices are in their community and whether they can think of any others that could be added to the list.
- Ask the participants to reflect on whether they could do more to protect the health of their children and what changes they could make at home.

NB – Ideally the facilitator should have identified practices that are specific to the situation during the baseline survey and selected appropriate pictures prior to the session.

