



Timeline Follow Back

Amanda Moore and Liz Buttrey



Introductory Information

- **The target audience**
 - Research staff responsible for using the Timeline Follow Back (TLFB) method to collect participant information for CTN protocols
- **Training materials**
 - PowerPoint handouts
 - Mock TLFB interview
 - Mock source calendars



TLFB Training Outline

- **Definition of Terms**
- **Phase 1: Preparation**
- **Phase 2: Introduction**
- **Phase 3: Interview and data collection**
- **Demonstration and practice**



Training Objectives

- **Learn the purpose of the TLFB method**
- **Be able to describe the benefits of the TLFB**
- **Learn how to prepare, define, introduce, and productively guide participants through the TLFB**
- **Become skilled at completing a source calendar**
- **Comprehend general CTN TLFB training issues**
- **Gain techniques and confidence for communicating with the participants**



Terms

- **Timeline Follow Back (TLFB) Procedure**
 - A method for collecting recent days of substance use
 - Administered by trained interviewer facilitating participant self-report
 - Involves guiding and supporting participants through retrospectively recalling their daily substance use over the protocol specified time period
 - Sometimes referred to as the Substance Use Calendar (SUC)
- **Validated procedure**
 - A procedure corroborated by scientific research



Terms

- **Source Document**
 - Documentation containing the first capture (notation) of research records and/or data
- **Electronic Data Capture (EDC)**
 - A computer system used to collect data provided during a research study
- **Anchor dates**
 - Holidays and personal events noted on typical calendar
 - Personal events include birthdays, anniversaries, death or hospitalization of a loved one, menstrual cycle
 - Any events the participant feels are significant



Phase 1: Preparation



- **Confirm time period for data collection**
- **Print paper source calendar**
- **Blue or black pen**
 - GCP
- **Note standard holidays**
- **Secure a private, quiet location**



March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 START
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter	24 Easter Monday	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 STOP					



Phase 2: The Introduction

- **Explain TLFB and confidentiality**

The Timeline Follow Back process uses a regular calendar to help people remember what substances were used on each day over a specified time period. All information collected is confidential

- **Information collected**

During this assessment we will document days when you used substances in the month of March.

- **Benefit to participant**

The techniques I've learned by using this process have helped me personally when I have to remember events. This process aids accurate recollection of information needed for successful research.



Phase 3: The Interview

- All information is collected directly on the calendar
 - Holidays/Personal events
 - Treatment
 - Self-help meeting attendance
 - Inpatient/Outpatient
 - Detox
 - Days of abstinence and use
- Complete each day individually
 - Do not use a line, ditto marks or anything else on subsequent days with the same information





Phase 3: The Interview

- **List the participant's personal events on the calendar**
 - Birthdays, starting a new job, moving to a new house, vacation, beginning or end of a school semester, a new birth or anniversary of a death, etc.

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Kicked out of motel
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14 Stayed at mom's house	15 Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter	24 Easter Monday	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Phase 3: The Interview

- **List treatment episodes. This could include 12-step meetings, detox, outpatient care, etc.**

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Kicked out of motel
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14 Stayed at mom's house	15 Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter	24 Easter Monday	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Began Treatment					



Phase 3: The Interview

- **List long periods of abstinence or use on the calendar**
 - **Be aware of blanket statements**
 - **Anchor dates work**

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Kicked out of motel
2 Abstinence	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14 Stayed at mom's house	15 Abstinence Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter	24 Easter Monday	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Began Treatment					



Phase 3: The Interview

- **Ask the participant if they prefer to start with the first or last day of the specified time period on the calendar**
- **Use the listed holidays and other events to help the participant remember substances used for each day**

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Cocaine Alcohol Heroin Kicked out of motel
2 Abstinence	3 Cocaine Alcohol	4 Cocaine Alcohol	5 Cocaine Alcohol	6 Cocaine Alcohol	7 Cocaine Alcohol	8 Cocaine Alcohol
9 Daylight Savings Time begins Cocaine Alcohol	10 Cocaine Alcohol	11 Cocaine Alcohol	12 Cocaine Alcohol	13 Cocaine Alcohol	14 Cocaine Stayed at mom's house	15 Abstinence Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday Cocaine Alcohol	17 St. Patrick's Day Marijuana Cocaine Alcohol	18 Cocaine Alcohol	19 Cocaine Alcohol	20 Cocaine Alcohol	21 Good Friday Cocaine Alcohol	22 Cocaine Alcohol
23 Easter Cocaine Marijuana Heroin	24 Easter Monday Cocaine Alcohol	25 Cocaine Alcohol	26 Cocaine Alcohol	27 Cocaine Alcohol	28 Cocaine Alcohol	29 Cocaine Alcohol Marijuana Valium
30 Cocaine Alcohol	31 Began Treatment					



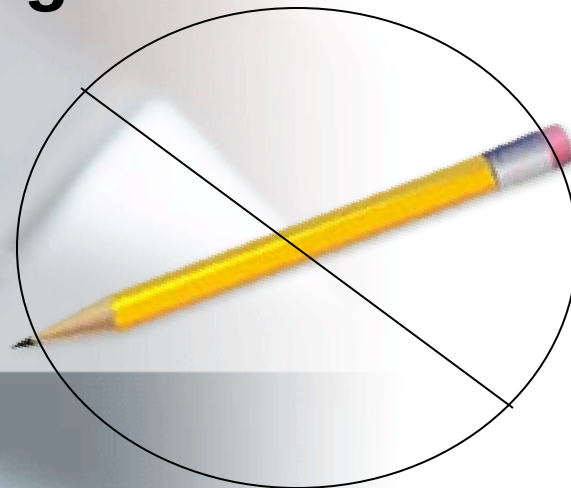
Data Collection

- **After meeting with the participant, data entry into an EDC system (like InForm™) may be required**
- **The source calendar should be stored with the participant's source documents**



Common Errors

- **Wrong time period collected**
- **Pencil used instead of pen**
- **Forget a step in the process**
- **Illegible hand writing**
- **Incorrect/incomplete drug names**





Techniques

- **Rapport building**
 - Genuine empathy
 - Match tone and affect
- **Encouragement**
 - Let them know they will be supported through the process
 - “we’ll work through this together”
- **Refocusing**
 - Recollection may elicit emotional memories
 - Acknowledge emotion and refocus on TLFB



Demonstration and Practice

- **Now we will demonstrate the TLFB assessment taking place on March 31**
- **We invite you to practice collecting information on the source calendar provided in your training materials.**
- **Correct data collection will be demonstrated on screen**

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Kicked out of motel
2 Abstinence	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14 Stayed at mom's house	15 Abstinence Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter Cocaine Marijuana Cocaine Heroine	24 Easter Monday Cocaine Alcohol	25 Cocaine Alcohol	26 Cocaine Alcohol	27 Cocaine Alcohol	28 Cocaine Alcohol	29 Cocaine Alcohol Marijuana Valium
30 Cocaine Alcohol	31 Began Treatment					

Demonstration TLFB

- INTERVIEWER: Now we are going to go through the Timeline Follow Back. This is a process that helps people remember what substances were used on each day over a specified time period. During this assessment we will document days when you used substances in the month of March. The techniques I've learned by using this process have helped me personally when I have to remember stuff. This process aids accurate recollection of information needed for successful research.
- PARTICIPANT: You expect me to remember everything I've used over the past month???
- INTERVIEWER: I don't expect you to recall everything all at once. We will break the last month up into smaller time periods that may help you remember.
- PARTICIPANT: Well, I don't know – I guess I'll try.
- INTERVIEWER: Ok, first we already have St. Patrick's Day and Easter Sunday documented. Are there any other holidays that you usually celebrate in March?
- PARTICIPANT: No
- INTERVIEWER: Do you carry a personal calendar or planner that may have important dates documented?
- PARTICIPANT: No – not since I lost my job last year.
- INTERVIEWER: Did you or anyone you know have a birthday in March?
- PARTICIPANT: Yes, my son's birthday is on March 15th.

Demonstration TLFB

Part 2 of 4

- INTERVIEWER: Any other birthdays?
- PARTICIPANT: No
- INTERVIEWER: Were there any other days that had personal events – maybe an anniversary, starting or ending a job, moving to a new home?
- PARTICIPANT: (sigh in irritation) I don't know.
- INTERVIEWER: We're going to work through this together and by taking a minute to think of any personal events over the past month, recalling days of substance use will be easier.
- PARTICIPANT: Well, I did stay at my mom's house the night before my son's birthday – that's where he lives. And I remember I got kicked out of the motel on the 1st of March, that's why I had to stay at my Mom's on the 14th. And that's all I can remember. This month really sucked...that's why I got into rehab.
- INTERVIEWER: I understand, so when did you enter rehab?

Demonstration TLFB

Part 3 of 4

- **PARTICIPANT:** I came in here today.
- **INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so treatment began March 31st, today. Did you attend any 12-step meetings or other treatment options prior to the 31st.
- **PARTICIPANT:** No.
- **INTERVIEWER:** Next, can your recall if there were any days where you didn't use any substances at all?
- **PARTICIPANT:** No – I think I used everyday.
- **INTERVIEWER:** Okay, let's start documenting the substances used each day.
- **PARTICIPANT:** Ya know, I didn't use anything on my Son's birthday and I didn't use the day after I got kicked out of the hotel because some jerk stole money I had stashed in the room. That day really sucked!
- **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, it sounds like it, would it be easier for you to start with the first day of March or do ya want to start with yesterday?
- **PARTICIPANT:** Yesterday.

Demonstration TLFB

Part 4 of 4

- INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what you used yesterday?
- PARTICIPANT: Coke and I drank – the usual.
- INTERVIEWER: How about the day before that – it was a Saturday.
- PARTICIPANT: ha ha, That was my going into treatment party. I used coke, drank every kind of liquor, smoked weed, and took some downers at the end of the night.
- INTERVIEWER: Do you recall what the downers were?
- PARTICIPANT: Valium
- INTERVIEWER: And the day before your party – the 28th?
- PARTICIPANT: Coke and alcohol
- INTERVIEWER: Now we're looking at the week between Easter Sunday and your party– On that Thursday, do you recall your use?
- PARTICIPANT: Coke and alcohol – everyday the 24th to the 27th.
- INTERVIEWER: And on Easter?
- PARTICIPANT: Coke and weed and we did some speed balls
- INTERVIEWER: Was the speedball coke and heroin?
- PARTICIPANT: yep.



End of Demonstration



Demonstration Review

- **Compare calendars**
- **Questions**

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Kicked out of motel
2 Abstinence	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time begins	10	11	12	13	14 Stayed at mom's house	15 Abstinence Son's Birthday
16 Palm Sunday	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter Cocaine Marijuana Cocaine Heroin	24 Easter Monday Cocaine Alcohol	25 Cocaine Alcohol	26 Cocaine Alcohol	27 Cocaine Alcohol	28 Cocaine Alcohol	29 Cocaine Alcohol Marijuana Valium
30 Cocaine Alcohol	31 Began Treatment					



Summary of TLFB Training

- **Phase 1: Preparation**
 - Confirm time period for data collection
 - Print source calendar, Note standard holidays
 - Secure a private, quiet location
- **Phase 2: Introduction**
 - Explain TLFB, Information collected, Benefit to participant
- **Phase 3: Interview and data collection**
 - All information is collected directly on the calendar
 - Complete each day individually
- **Practice using TLFB method and calendars provided**



Resources

- **Sobell L. & Sobell M. (1996). Timeline Follow Back Manual. Ontario: Addiction Research Foundation**