

Family Member Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: To gather information about their experiences with [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME] and other agencies they have received services from/
 - Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: 1) the focus group is voluntary; 2) they can decline to answer any questions, or they can stop participating at any time; 3) the information will be held in confidence, except for imminent danger to self or other; and 4) only evaluation staff will have access to the focus group tape and notes; and 5) focus group participants must not repeat what others have said outside of this focus group.
- Ensure that they know that no one from the agency will be able to see what is said during the focus group.
- Please remember to ask permission to tape record the focus group. They can decline, and if any one person declines, the group will not be tape recorded.
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin.

Background

Today, we're going to talk mostly about your experience with [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME], and how it has worked with you and your family.

1. How long has your family been involved with [AGENCY NAME]?

Probe: Can you give the approximate dates of your involvement?
Was there any time in the past that you were involved with [Child Welfare Agency] ? *(If yes, ask them to focus their answers on their current or MOST recent involvement with child welfare.)*

2. Are you still involved with [AGENCY NAME]?
3. How many caseworkers have you had during this time?

Overall experience

4. Overall, how satisfied have you been with your experience with [AGENCY NAME]?

- a. Probe: Have you found them helpful? Difficult? Were you kept informed of what was happening with you or with your child/ren?
- 5. What was your most positive experience with [AGENCY NAME]? What was the least positive?

Respect and cultural competence

- 6. Did/do you feel that your [AGENCY NAME] caseworker/s valued your ideas about how best to help your child and your family?

Probes:

Did he/she ask what you wanted for your family? About your hopes for the future?

Did he/ she ask you about what sort of things were going on in your life at the moment and consider how those things might affect your family?

- 7. Did you feel that he or she made sure you understood what he/she was trying to communicate?
- 8. How frequently did/do you hear from your caseworker? How frequently did/does he/she visit you? How frequently did/does he/she visit your child?
- 9. Did/do you feel that your caseworker focused on positive things about you and your family or only talked about the negative?

Probes

Did he/she assess your family's strengths?

Did he/she consider your family's achievements?

- 10. Did/do you feel that your caseworker understood or tried to understand your culture? Did/does he or she make attempts to identify services that took into account your cultural needs (e.g., language needs, religious affiliation, cultural beliefs and values)?

Service coordination and receipt

- 11. Let's talk more about the services that [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME] identified for you and your family.
 - a. What types of services did/has[CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME] recommend/ed?
 - b. Were these services located within your community?
 - c. Were you able to receive these services?
 - i. If so, did/do you find these services helpful to your family? Were the service providers respectful of you and your family?

ii. If not, why not?

12. During the time you have been involved with [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME], what other agencies were you also involved with?

13. How much did/does your caseworker from [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME] know about services you were receiving from other agencies?

Probe: Were you ever given the same services from two different agencies?

14. Did you ever participate in a [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY TERM FOR CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETING]?

i. If so, can you describe what that was like for you?

Probe:

Did you feel that your opinion was respected?

Did you feel that everyone that needed to be there was there (i.e. service providers, family members, other supports)?

Did you feel that everyone was in agreement with the service plan for your family?

15. That's almost all the questions I have for you today. I'd like to finish with one last question: How would you like to see [CHILD WELFARE AGENCY NAME] or other agencies change to better serve families like yours? What would a good system look like?

15. Do you have any questions for me?