

# Attachment F

## Student Focus Group Guide

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ID# \_\_\_\_\_

## **Effectiveness and Implementation Trial of the Safe Dates Program**

### **Student Information**

Please answer the following questions. They will help us describe the group of teens who participate in our focus groups. Your name will not be attached to any of your answers.

**1. Are you male or female?**

- Male
- Female

**2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Which best describes your ethnicity?**

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

**Which of the following best describes your race? You may check one or more.**

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

5. When did you receive the Safe Dates program during the 2008-2009 school year? (Check one)  1<sup>st</sup> Trimester  2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester  3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

6. Who taught your Safe Dates classes? \_\_\_\_\_

7. In what class was the Safe Dates program taught? (for example, was it taught in your health class, science class, English class or other class?)

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# Effectiveness and Implementation Trial of the Safe Dates Program

## Student Focus Group Guide

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### 1. Introduction

#### a. Study Description and Background

Welcome, and thank you for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I will lead our discussion today; \_\_\_\_\_ will take notes. We both work for RTI International, a non-profit research company that is conducting this study for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This focus group is part of a study to learn more about the Safe Dates program to prevent dating violence. We particularly want to know what you think about the program. As part of this study, we will talk with groups of male and female students and teachers who taught Safe Dates. The kinds of things we are interested in are:

- Opinions about the Safe Dates program from students living in cities such as [SCHOOL CITY NAME]
- Do students in cities believe the Safe Dates program is relevant to their community?
- Do you recommend changes?

There are no right or wrong answers, so be honest and open with us. We are interested in hearing about your thoughts and opinions because **you** are the experts. You do not have to share anything personal about yourself during this focus group.

#### b. Consent and Confidentiality

- We are audio recording this session as a backup to our written notes. Please make sure not to say your name or anyone else's name during the group discussion. We do not want to have any information that identifies you or anyone else in the group on these recordings. Only the research team will use these audio recordings. If anyone prefers that we do not record something you want to say, you may choose not to say those things or you may choose to leave the group.
- Let me remind you that the Safe Dates program addresses the sensitive issue of teen dating violence. But we are not asking to discuss your own behavior today--- just to give us your opinion about the Safe Dates program. You can refuse to answer questions or discuss issues that make you feel uncomfortable. To protect everyone's privacy, we remind you not to reveal what you hear during today's discussion group to anyone outside of this group. You all signed a pledge agreeing to this. We understand your time is valuable. We will limit today's discussion to no more than 90 minutes.

### c. Logistics

In the discussion today, I will ask questions about your opinions. Again, there are no right or wrong answers.

There is no need to raise your hand to speak, but if someone else is talking, let him or her finish before you speak. We have a lot of questions for you, and part of my job will be to keep the discussion moving along so we can cover them all. However, I hope you will be doing most of the talking. Feel free to help yourselves to more snacks and drinks during the discussion.

Are there any questions on anything I've told you so far?

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**Start Audio Recorder!**

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## 2. Ice Breaker

We would like to start out with some introductions. Please tell us your first name and what you like to do for fun during your free time. **[staff should participate and take a turn]**

## 3. Relevance/Fit

We value your opinions, both positive and negative. So just be honest.

- a. What do you remember from the Safe Dates program? [REMINDER: Please do not mention any names.]

*Probe:* Dating bingo? Friends wheel? Role plays?

- b. Overall, what did you think about the Safe Dates program?

*Probe:* Did you like it/hate it? What did you like/dislike about it? Why?

- c. What, if anything, made it difficult for you to relate to what was taught?

*Probe:* In general, would you say that Safe Dates is relevant to what happens here in (NAME CITY)? [REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences or names.] Why? Why not?

*Probe:* Did the topics/activities sound like what happens here in (NAME CITY)?  
[REMINDER: Remember that we don't want you to talk about your personal experiences with dating violence, only about what you think about how much the topics and activities in Safe Dates sound like what happens here.] Why/why not?

- d. Which sections or activities made the most sense to you?

*Probe:* What was helpful to you? That is, were there any parts that you thought were a good use of time? Which parts? Why?

- e. How well do you think the scenarios and role plays showed the kinds of things that happen here in [NAME CITY]? Why? How is dating violence, as described in Safe Dates, different from what happens here? [REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences or names.]

*Probe:* What was not addressed right about teen dating violence?

*Probe:* When you think about dating violence that happens here versus the examples and activities listed in the Safe Dates program, would you say the examples in the program are typically what happen here or are they more/less serious? Why?  
[REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences or names.]

- f. Was the program a good fit for your school? Why/why not?

#### **4. Adaptation**

- a. Is there anything that you would change about Safe Dates for schools in cities? If so, what? Why?
- b. What could we do to make it easier for teens to relate to the topics and program?

*Probe:* How could we make it more meaningful to you or other teens your age?

- c. What should be added or removed?

#### **5. Specific Activities**

**Now, let's talk about the specific activities in Session 2: Defining Dating Abuse. This session is the one where you read scenarios that described physical harm and emotional harm.**

**I'm passing out the handout so you can look at it. Can I have a volunteer read the first scenario about Jason and Megan?**

- a. What do you think about the way the scenarios addressed dating abuse in teen relationships? Do you feel like this scenario is realistic for you and teens your age here in [NAME CITY]? Why/why not? [REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences or names]

*Probe:* What do you think of the names that were used? What do you think about the way the teens were talking? What do you think about the things the teens were doing? What do you think about where the teens were hanging out?

- b. Would you change the story in any way? Why/why not? How?

**Now think back to Session 4: How to Help Friends. This is the one where you learned resources who can help teens with abusive relationship situations. I'm passing out the handout to help you remember it.**

- c. Who are the people in [NAME CITY] who can help when it comes to helping teens in abusive relationships? [REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences]
- d. Are there folks or services that are not helpful?

*Probe:* What about health professionals (doctors, nurses, clinics)? Are mental health professionals (counselors) helpful or not helpful? If problems noted, ask: Should the Safe Dates program do anything differently to address community resources in light of these problems?

**In Session 7, you learned the eight skills for effective communication. I'm passing out the handout so you can look at it. Can I have a volunteer read the part of Tanya and another volunteer read Serena's part?**

- e. What do you think about the way this role-play addressed dealing with problems in teen relationships? Do you feel like this role-play is realistic for teens your age here in [NAME CITY]? Why/why not? [REMINDER: Do not share any personal experiences or names]

*Probe:* What do you think about the way the teens were talking? What do you think about the things the teens were doing? What do you think about where the teens were hanging out?

- f. Would you change the role-play in any way? Why/why not? How?

**Let's move on to Session 9. Session 9 was about preventing sexual assault. I'm passing out the handout so you can look at it. Can I have a volunteer read the scenario about Lisa and Matt?**

- g. What do you think about the way the session addressed alcohol and dating violence? [REMINDER: Remember that we don't want you to talk about your personal experiences with alcohol, only about what you think about the way Safe Dates addressed alcohol and dating violence.] Did you think this scenario was realistic for teens your age here in [NAME CITY]? Why/why not?

*Probe:* Would you change anything about how Safe Dates deals with alcohol and dating violence? If yes, why? What would you change? If not, why not?

*Probe:* Is there anything you would remove that doesn't make sense for teens in [NAME COMMUNITY]? If yes, why? What would you remove?

*Probe:* Is there anything that you feel is left out or could be added to the Safe Dates program about alcohol and dating violence? If yes, why? What would you add?

*Probe:* What about other drugs? Do you think that Safe Dates should address other drugs besides alcohol? [REMINDER: Do not share personal experiences or names] If yes, why? How do you think it should address other drugs? If not, why not?

## **6. Electronic Aggression**

We have heard that teens may use electronic communication a lot, like cell phones, text messaging, computers, the Internet, Facebook, or MySpace. We have also heard that some teens use electronic communication to perpetrate psychological abuse against a dating partner, by harassing them, embarrassing them, insulting them, threatening them or something else. How well do you think the Safe Dates program prevents or reduces this type of psychological dating abuse? [REMINDER: Remember that we don't want you to talk about your personal experiences with electronic communication and psychological dating abuse, only about what you think about how well the Safe Dates program prevents or reduces this type of dating abuse.] Why or why not?

## **7. Stranger Victimization**

- a. Some violence is caused by people you don't know, not just dating partners. This could be when a person you don't know, or a stranger, does something violent to someone else, like a robbery or mugging or some other type of violence. Do you think that having experienced violence by a stranger would make a difference in how teens feel about dating violence? [REMINDER: Remember that we don't want you to talk about your personal experiences with violence by a stranger, only about what you think about whether this would make a difference in how teens feel about dating violence.] If yes, how would this make a difference?



- b. Do you think the Safe Dates program should add anything to address having experienced violence by a stranger? If yes, what should the program add about violence by a stranger that would help teens avoid or reduce dating violence that would make sense for teens in [NAME CITY]? If no, why not?

## **8. Gang Activity**

- a. Some areas have gangs. Do you think that having gangs in an area makes any difference in how teens feel about dating violence? [REMINDER: Remember that we don't want you to talk about your personal experiences with gangs, only about whether the presence of gangs makes any difference in how teens feel about dating violence.] If yes, why? How does it make a difference?
- b. Do you think the Safe Dates program should add anything to address having gangs in an area? If yes, what should the program add about gangs that would help teens avoid or reduce dating violence that would make sense for teens in [NAME CITY]? If no, why not?

## **9. Closing**

Is there anything else you'd like to add that we didn't ask about? (Ask notetaker whether there are additional questions.)

Thank you so much for coming today and for all your helpful comments. Please remember that we would like for what was said here should stay here and for you not to repeat what others said.