

INTERVIEW WITH P&A STAFF

[Interviewer]: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [interviewer's name] and this is [second interviewer's name]. We both work for _____, a private research company in _____.

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) is conducting an independent evaluation of Developmental Disabilities Network programs and collaboration among them. The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the impact of the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Network programs on the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. This evaluation is intended to provide feedback to ADD to help improve the effectiveness of its programs and policies, to serve as a decision-making tool for ADD, and promote accountability to the public.

Your program is one of ____ P&A programs in ____ states that have been randomly selected to participate in the evaluation. As a P&A staff member, you are an important source of information regarding some of the operations of this program. In particular, we would like to ask you some questions on the intake process [individual advocacy, community education] at the P&A. The interview should last approximately ½ hour to 45 minutes.

Before we begin, we would like to ask your permission to record this interview so that we do not miss any of your responses to our questions. The recording is for _____ use only and will not be given to anyone else. Do we have your permission to record?

Do you have any questions before we start?

PART I. P&A STAFF BACKGROUND

We would like to begin this interview by asking you some questions about yourself. Specifically, we would like to know about your formal background and training, and the experiences that have prepared you for your work at the P&A,.

Staff qualifications, background, experience

1. First, we'd like to understand what you do at the P&A. Please describe.

- a. What is your current position?
- b. What do you do? Please describe.

Probe:

- Intake
- Individual advocacy
- Community education
- Other _____

c. How long have you been working in your current position? At the P&A?

2. Next, please talk about your background and experience.

Probe:

- Formal education and training
- Relevant work or volunteer experience
- Personal experience with a disability

3. Please describe your background with regard to addressing issues and providing services to people from diverse backgrounds.

Probe:

- Race/ethnicity
- Languages spoken
- Personal relationship with disability
- Previous jobs
- Volunteer experience
- Other _____

PART II. INTAKE *

* Questions pertain only to staff involved in intake

The next section of this interview has to do with the intake process. We will ask questions about the P&A's intake process, training required to facilitate the intake process, and the effectiveness of the intake process in meeting the needs of people who contact the P&A.

Intake policy and procedures

4. Does the P&A have written intake procedures? Please describe.

a. What is included?

Probe:

- Requirements on the collection of basic intake information
- Criteria for determining how much of the intake form must be completed for each client
- Maximum response times
- Other requirements _____

b. Are you able to meet the requirements that are in the policy and procedures? Please explain.

Probe:

- Extent to which you meet the requirements
- Reasons for not meeting the requirements

6. Please describe the process your P&A uses for intake.

a. How is intake conducted? Please give examples (e.g., information and referral, further assistance).

b. Besides you, how many staff conduct intake? Which staff?

c. How do you determine the appropriate needs of the person contacting the P&A?

d. How do you handle a caller who speaks little or no English?

e. How do you handle a caller who has difficulty explaining to you why s/he is calling?

7. Describe the process and system for keeping track of information on people who contact the P&A. Do you use special forms? Please describe.

Probe:

- Information collected
- Circumstances under which data are collected

Training

8. Please describe the training you went through in order to be able to conduct intake.

Probe:

- Content of training
- Process
- Duration of training
- Training on cultural competence
- Frequency of training, including supplemental or refresher training

9. When was the last time you received intake training?

Effectiveness of Intake Process

10. How would you describe an effective intake process?

11. Is anything done at the P&A to determine whether the P&A intake process is effective? Please describe.

Probe:

- Monitoring individual performance
- Looking at statistics
- Other _____

PART III. INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY*

Next we would like to talk about Individual Advocacy.

Examples of cases

12. How do you determine which cases to take on? Please describe the process.
13. Let's take two examples from two cases you handled that closed within the past year. We would like you to walk us through the individual advocacy process with these examples. Please have the case file in front of you as you answer these questions.

[Interviewer: Work through one example at a time.]

[See following table.]

- a. What was the major issue?
- b. What objectives did the client want to achieve?
- c. What did P&A staff do to achieve those objectives?
- d. For how long did the case go on?
- e. What was the outcome?

*Questions pertain only to staff involved in individual advocacy activities.

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Individual advocacy cases

Issue (Q. 13a)	Client’s Objective (Q. 13b)	Activities to Meet Objectives (Q. 13c)	Dates (From Opening to Closing) (Q. 13d)	Outcome (Q. 13e)

[INTERVIEWER: REPEAT QUESTION 12 FOR ONE MORE INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY EXAMPLE.]

Let's talk about some of your other cases.

14. How many open cases do you now have?

15. I'd like to go through each of them briefly and ask you to describe them.¹ Please tell me about:

- Objectives of each client
- Steps expected to meet the objectives
- Status of each case

[Interviewer: Staff member can have case files in front of him/her.]

High quality, professional representation

16. What do you do to ensure that you are providing your clients with high quality, professional representation?

a. In the past year, did you meet with other individual advocacy staff to share case experiences?
Please describe.

Probe:

- Frequency
- Participants
- Examples of cases that were shared
- Outcome
- Other

b. Are your cases typically reviewed by a more senior legal staff member? Please describe.

Probe:

- Process
- Who reviews
- Frequency
- Outcomes
- Example of most recent review
- Other _____

¹ If caseload contains more than 10 open cases, sample. Total number of cases should be 10.

c. How do you maintain confidentiality for your individual advocacy clients? Please describe.

Probe:

- Policy
- Procedures (use of private offices or rooms, password protection of electronic files, secure storage of files that contain personal/confidential information)
- Penalty for infringement of policy
- Other _____

d. How often do you typically talk to your clients regarding their case to provide them with information on progress? Please explain.

[Ask staff member to walk through one of the case files.]

e. How often do you typically update case files? Please explain.

[Ask staff member to walk through one of the case files.]

Meeting client objectives

17. What do you do to facilitate meeting clients' objectives?

a. Do you use a client representation agreement or a similar document so you can keep track of the client's objective(s) determined at intake? Please describe.

Probe:

- Content
 - c. Issues the P&A will address for the client
 - d. Client's objectives
 - e. Description of process by which P&A will attempt to meet the client's objectives
 - f. Provision of an estimated timeframe for the process
- Circumstances of use
- Format

[Ask staff member to walk through the client representation agreement in two of the case files to identify content.]

- b. Please give some examples of ways in which you have accommodated or made arrangements for clients so your legal advice would be accessible and understandable.

Probe:

- Arranged for an interpreter (including a sign language interpreter) for in-person meetings
- Arranged for personal assistance for those with a cognitive disability
- Had written communications translated into Braille
- Talked in person about the closing letter
- Other _____

- c. How do you go about making sure that you are using the client's chosen mode of communication? Please give examples.

- d. Do you provide a closing letter in client files that describes the process and outcomes of the assistance provided? Please describe.

Probe:

- Content
- Timing
- Circumstances under which closing letter is written
- Accommodation

- e. Have you ever been grieved against? Please describe.

Probe:

- Issue
- Resolution
- Management/Board (Commissioners) involvement
- Other _____

PART IV. COMMUNITY EDUCATION*

This next section covers P&A-sponsored community education activities and your role in these activities.

We consider community education to be informing the public at large and people with developmental disabilities about the rights and value of people with developmental disabilities in their community and empowering people with developmental disabilities to advocate for themselves and others.

Community education activities

18. Were you involved in community education activities in the past year?

[See following table.]

- a. Please describe.
- b. How were these activities initiated? Please describe.
- c. Who were the target audiences?

Probe:

- People with developmental disabilities
- Family members of people with developmental disabilities
- Media
- Policy makers
- Service providers
- Disability-related organizations
- Employers
- Clinical groups or individuals
- Others _____

d. What type of format did you use? What was the setting like? Please describe.

* Questions pertain only to staff involved in community education activities.

Community Education Activities

Activity (Q. 18a)	Initiation (Q. 18b)	Target Audience (Q. 18c)	Format/Setting (Q. 18d)	Content (Q. 18e)

[INTERVIEWER: REPEAT QUESTION 15a-e FOR ONE MORE COMMUNITY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

e. What did you talk about?

Probe:

- Legal rights of people with developmental disabilities (e.g., under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Workforce Investment Act)
- Services and resources available
- Gaps in supports and services
- Accommodations and ways to obtain them
- Other _____

Use of Information

17. Did you get any sense of how the recipients of the information you provided might be able to use the information? Provide examples.

Probe:

- Will advocate for themselves to obtain needed supports and services
- Will become a client of the P&A
- Will provide accommodations for employees
- Will apply for tax incentives for assistive technology for employees
- Will hire more people with developmental disabilities
- Will institute company hiring policies that ensure there is no discrimination against a person with a developmental disability
- Will interact more often or more effectively with people with developmental disabilities to whom they provide services
- Will contact service providers
- Other _____

16. Do you or the P&A do any followup to find out? Please describe.

That ends all of our questions. Do you have any questions yourself?

Again, we would like to thank you for taking the time to answer our questions.