

Appendix A: Protocols for focus groups and telephone and in-person interviews¹

Program Clients/Families Protocol

DRAFT Facilitation Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this <focus group or interview>. Your insights are a really important part of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project. The goal of the project is to explore ways that we can apply principles of the behavioral sciences—that uses psychology and economics-- to help serve families like yours better. Insights from these fields have successfully been used to help people increase their savings rate or reduce their energy use, and we hope to identify areas in human services programs where they can be applied as well. We want to talk about how this program works, and any ideas you have that might improve how you find out about the [PROGRAM] and the experience of the program for families. Please read through and sign the consent form and we can get started. The conversation will be audio-recorded, but you will have the opportunity to tell us if you do not want any comments repeated. You are also welcome to share any comments to any one of us privately. *As is stated in the consent form that I'll be handing out, participation is voluntary and the focus group should take about an hour of your time.* According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this collection is 0970-0356 and the expiration date is 01/31/2015.

Please go around and quickly introduce yourself.
How long have you lived in this area?
Do you have children, how old are they?

Finding out about and enrolling in Services

Please walk us through the process that you went through to receive services?
What were your first impressions of the program when you first heard about it?
How did you learn about the program? What kinds of materials did you see?
When did you decide to apply for services?
How did you apply?
What was your first contact with [PROGRAM]?

Probe: How are clients' experiences similar/dissimilar? What accounts for the differences?

¹ Note: There are three protocols in Appendix A: (1) ACF Program Staff, (2) ACF Program Administrators and (3) ACF Program Clients/Families. The appropriate protocol will be used for focus groups and telephone and in-person interviews.

Service Receipt and Maintenance

What did you want out of this program when you first heard about it?

Is it what you expected?

How often do you have contact with the program? Who do you speak to?

Are there services you wish were provided here? How do you go about getting questions answered about the services? Are all of the services you receive located here or do you have to go elsewhere?

What were the aspects of the application process that you thought were easiest/hardest?

What did staff/administration do that was helpful? What are examples of things that might have been done to make this easier for you?

Probe: Discuss any broad themes or specific examples that have arisen that are especially relevant to BIAS. Can they be discussed in behavioral terms like social norms, channel factors, construal, foot-in-the-door effects, plan-making, or choice overload? How might they lead to implementation studies?

Conclusion

Are you happy with [PROGRAM]? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

Thank you again for your participation. Nothing said today will be personally attributed to you. But, if there is anything you've said that you do not want to be anonymously quoted, please let us know so we can mark it as private. We will also be available if you have any comments you would like to make to us privately. Have a good day.