

**U.S. Department of Labor**

**Evaluating Getting to Work: A Training Curriculum  
for HIV/AIDS Service Providers and Housing  
Providers**

***Focus Group Moderator's Guide***

U.S. Department of Labor  
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**EVALUATION OF GETTING TO WORK: A TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR HIV/AIDS  
SERVICE PROVIDERS AND HOUSING PROVIDERS  
FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE  
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# EVALUATION OF GETTING TO WORK: A TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR HIV/AIDS SERVICE PROVIDERS AND HOUSING PROVIDERS

## DRAFT FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

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### 1. Focus Group Overview

As part of the broader study being conducted to assess *Getting to Work: A Training Curriculum for HIV/AIDS Service Providers and Housing Providers* (Getting to Work or GTW), the IMPAQ team will conduct focus groups at 8 housing provider facilities. An overview of the focus groups to be conducted is presented below.

#### 1.1 Purpose of the Focus Group Sessions

The purpose of the focus group sessions is to learn about the perspectives of staff and managers who work for housing providers on the subject of employment and training for people living with (or at risk of) HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). We will ask focus group participants questions about their work experiences after participating in the GTW training. Specifically, we will ask about any changes (or emerging change) in facility operations or in the provider organization's expectations about working with PLWHA.

#### 1.2 Focus Group Participants

To the extent possible and practical, each focus group will include 8-10 participants representing both housing provider staff and management.

#### 1.3 Participant Selection

We will work closely with the 8 providers selected to host focus groups to identify potential participants for the focus group sessions. We will seek to identify staff who completed the GTW training at least 4 months prior to the focus group date. We will also attempt to include both new and veteran staff. We will provide any needed communication aids or supports for focus group participants (e.g., sign language interpreter).

### 2. Moderator and Note Taker Roles and Responsibilities

The IMPAQ team conducting the focus group will include a moderator who will lead the discussion and a note-taker who will support the focus group session logistics and be responsible for capturing the key points and detailed discussion. Below we provide an overview of the roles of the moderator and the note-taker.

#### 2.1 Role of the Moderator

The moderator's role includes:

- Ensure room arrangements are made and that participants are invited with sufficient notice
- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to focus group to ensure room is arranged appropriately
- Greet participants
- Explain study and purpose of the focus group to participants
- Moderate pacing of the focus group to ensure that all topics are covered as thoroughly as possible
- Facilitate the discussion to ensure the group stays on topic and that all participants have a chance to give their input
- Thank participants at the end of the focus group.

## **2.2 Role of the Note Taker**

The note taker's role includes:

- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the focus group to set-up room
- Help to greet participants
- Distribute and collect Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate forms
- Take notes and operate the recorder during the focus group (if applicable)
- Ensure comments are accurately captured

## **3. Focus Group Preparation**

We will work closely with the host provider to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for the focus group sessions and that the facilities will be arranged in a way suitable for the sessions.

### **3.1 Room Arrangements**

Below is a list of requirements for the rooms where the focus group sessions will be held:

- Focus group sessions should be held in a conference / training room provided by the host provider that allows for confidential conversations to take place
- The room should be easily accessible to focus group participants
- Any necessary communication aids or services should have been arranged for in advance of the focus group session and should be ready to be used at the start of the focus group session

- The room should be large enough to accommodate 8-10 individuals comfortably
- To facilitate conversation, participants should be seated around a conference table, in a U-shape, or chairs in a circle
- Each room should have at least one flip chart and markers.

### 3.2 Pre-Group Logistics

The Moderator and the Note Taker should greet participants as they arrive and ask them to take a seat and make themselves comfortable. If there are refreshments, encourage participants to help themselves.

The Note Taker should distribute the ***Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate Form*** (pink form) to each participant and ask him or her to complete the form while waiting for the focus group to begin. This document

- Describes the meeting format
- Discusses remuneration for participation
- Details the privacy protections that will be provided to participants
- Gives the potential participant an opportunity to decline to participate.

The Moderator and the Note Taker should ask participants if they need any help in completing the forms.

## 4. Focus Group Protocol

The Moderator should formally welcome the focus group participants to the discussion and explain the purpose of the focus group and standard procedures (see below):

### 4.1 Opening and Introduction

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Thank you for coming today. My name is [MODERATOR NAME] and this is [NOTE TAKER NAME]. We work for IMPAQ International. We have been contracted by the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor to lead this session.*

*My role, for the most part, is to make sure that we get through our agenda, keep to the time frame and make sure that you all have a chance to share your experiences. [NOTE TAKER NAME] will help me do these things, and will also be taking notes. In addition, we will be audio-taping the session, which will ensure that we record the discussion accurately. The discussion session today will last for about 1.5 hours.*

*The purpose of this focus group is to obtain input from staff and managers about their experiences as housing providers after having completed the Getting to Work training. We are conducting focus groups at 8 facilities like this one. The results of these group discussions will be included in a report which will explain whether or not there have been changes in how providers work with PLWHA. This report will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor.*

*It is important that we hear what has worked for you and what has not so that future training on this subject can be as effective as possible.*

*I know that some of you have gone out of your way to be here, and we genuinely appreciate your interest and willingness to share your experiences. We are eager to learn about your work experiences as well as your recommendations for any improvements to the Getting to Work training.*

## **4.2 Participant Privacy**

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Privacy and anonymity means that we will not share or use your name, address, or any other identifying information in reports or other materials related to this study. We will not identify any of the participants by name. All of the information we collect here today is private to the extent permitted by law. In all reports, data will be pooled with data from similar sessions with participants in other focus groups and published in aggregate form only.*

## **4.3 Participant Consent and Agreement**

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*The Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate form will be our record that you have agreed to participate in the focus group and that you have agreed to be tape-recorded. Do you have any additional questions about the focus group or about the consent and participation form? If you do not have any further questions and have not signed and dated the consent form, please do so now.*

*Please pass the signed Informed Consent form forward.*

After all participants have signed and turned in the Informed Consent Form, hand out name tags (first name only) to all participants.

## **4.4 Focus Group Definition and Working Procedures**

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Let me begin our discussion by reviewing a few ground rules about how we will conduct the session.*

*This focus group is a way for us to listen to people and learn from them. During this discussion, we would like you to focus on topics that are of particular interest to us. We are interested in what everyone has to say about our discussion topics. If someone throws out an idea that you want to expand on, or if you have a different point of view, please feel free to speak up. Occasionally, I may have to interrupt the discussion in order to bring us back to a particular topic to make sure that we cover everything on our agenda.*

*There are a couple of common-sense guidelines that we will follow during this session:*

- 1. In this type of group setting, it is important for everyone to get involved and express their opinions openly. We want all of you to express your honest opinions about the discussion topics – we are interested in multiple points of view on the topics. There may be differences of opinion, but there are no right or wrong answers and we are not here to resolve any issues you may bring up.*
- 2. Please do not hold “side conversations” – don’t talk individually to other participants during the session. We want to be able to hear from everyone, and we want you to hear what everyone else has to say. Because we are also recording the session, it would really help us if you could speak up so that everyone can hear you. I would also very much appreciate it if you would state your first name the first couple of times you speak.*

*If there are no other questions, let’s begin the discussion.*

## **4.5 Focus Group Discussion Questions**

### **I. Participant Introductions**

Ask each participant to introduce him or herself and to briefly tell the group something about themselves, such as a favorite activity. The Moderator should start with his or her own introduction and favorite activity.

During this process, the Note Taker should make sure that the recording equipment is working appropriately and that the microphone is picking up all voices in the room.

### **II. Before the Getting to Work Training**

*This first set of questions is focused on the time before you began the Getting to Work training.*

1. How did you first learn about the Getting to Work training?
  - What did you think about being asked to do this training?
2. Tell me about what sort of employment or training opportunities <provider> offered before the Getting to Work training.
  - Were any services offered directly?
  - Did you refer clients to other providers?
  - Did you have any employment/training community partners?
  - Would you talk to your clients about employment/training opportunities? When?

### **III. During the Getting to Work Training**

*Now we would like you to think about your initial response to the training.*

1. What did you think about the training as you were completing it?
  - Did it seem relevant to your work? Why or why not?
  - Could you imagine pulling anything from the training into your day-to-day work at <provider>?
2. Did you talk with any of your colleagues about the topic of the training?
  - What did they have to say about it? Were they also completing the training?
3. When you finished the training, did you think you would apply anything that you learned?
  - Did you think about learning more about employment/training resources in your community?
  - Did you think you might reach out to a potential employment/training provider?



#### IV. After the Getting to Work Training

The next set of questions is focused on the time since you completed the Getting to Work training.

1. Did you talk to anyone at work about the training after you had finished it? If no, why? If yes:
  - What did you talk to them about?
  - What did they think?
  - Did you have more than one conversation with them?
2. Has the subject of employment opportunities and PLWHA ever been discussed at a staff meeting? If yes:
  - What was the discussion about?
  - What did other staff members have to say?
3. When you “intake” a new client, do you think about talking to them about employment or training opportunities? If no, why? If yes:
  - Do you actually talk to them?
  - How does that conversation go?
  - What kinds of responses do you get?
4. Do you know whether other staff members discuss employment or training when they do intake?
  - What about at other points in their relationship with their clients?
5. Do you make referrals, or suggest that clients visit an employment/training provider?
  - Under what circumstances? How do you decide when, and where to send a client?
  - Do you colleagues do the same thing?
6. Does <provider> support efforts to connect clients with employment/training opportunities?
  - Why or why not?
  - Since the Getting to Work training, do you think there has there been any change in how <provider> expects you to work with PLWHA? Can you describe this?
7. In the months after the Getting to Work training, have you thought about talking to a local employment/training provider?

- Have you contacted any providers? If no, why? If yes, tell me about that.
- Do you know whether anyone else at <provider> has contacted any employment/training places?

#### **IV. Plans for the future**

*The final area we want to ask about is <provider's> plans for the future, in terms of connecting PLWHA with employment/training resources.*

1. Does <provider> have any plans related to connecting PLWHA with employment/training opportunities? If no, why not? If yes, are there any plans to change:
  - How you talk about employment and training opportunities with clients?
  - The staff's knowledge about employment/training providers in your area?
  - <provider> interaction with local employment/training providers?

#### **V. Closing**

1. Would you recommend the training to others who do what you do? Why or why not?
2. Are there any other topics related to <provider> and changes since the Getting to Work training that we have not covered?

#### **5. Post-Focus Group Activities**

1. Thank the group for their participation and remind the group that this information will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws and individual names will not be used in any reports.
2. Explain to participants that everyone will receive a gift card for participating in the focus group session and how use of the gift card works.
  - Hand out pre-paid gift cards to focus group participants
  - Ask participant to sign the Gift Card Receipt Form
3. Coordinate with the provider regarding any final issues related to the focus group.