

INSTRUMENT 3

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

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OMB #  
EXPIRATION:

STREAMS  
PROCESS STUDY  
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR PROGRAMS SERVING YOUTH IN SCHOOLS

**NOTE:** This is a guide, not a script. The guide has been developed to apply to HMRE programs serving youth in schools. Moderators will need to tailor questions to specific programs and add probes to further explore the experiences recounted by group members.

## INTRODUCTION

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### Moderator and co-facilitator introductions

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are from Mathematica Policy Research, an independent research firm; and we are here to learn about experiences with the [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]. My name is [NAME] and my colleague is [NAME].

### Explanation of project and purpose of group discussion

We are doing a study on classes/programs like [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]. We are interested in hearing about your experiences as part of a bigger study that is looking at how classes/programs like [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] are designed, put into place, and operated. We are talking to staff who offer this class/program and other organizations that work with the school/program, and holding discussion groups with youth like yourselves to ask about your experiences with the class/program. A discussion group, also called a focus group, is a way to find out what people think through group discussion. We are interested in learning about your ideas, feelings, and opinions. We also are interested in learning about how you came to be involved in this class/program; what activities you have participated in; what you find helpful about this class/program; and what you think should be improved. We will use the information you share with us to write a summary of what we have learned, but we will not use any of your names in our final report, so please feel free to talk openly about your opinions.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to examine the effectiveness of healthy marriage and relationship education programs designed to improve intimate relationships. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 90 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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 control number for this collection is XXXX-XXXX and it expires on XX/XX/XXXX.

## Privacy and taping

The information we collect will be summarized only for the project. Although we will be audiotaping the session and taking notes, everything you say will be kept private. We will not use any names or quote anyone. We value the information you will share with us and want to make sure we capture it all.

Does anyone object to our audiotaping the discussion?

## Ground rules for discussion

Before we start, we want to provide guidance about how our time together will go:

- This will be an informal discussion.
- The discussion will last about 1 and 1/2 hours. There will be no formal breaks. If needed, please feel free to stretch or go to the bathroom.
- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions we will ask. We are interested in learning each of your opinions. We very much appreciate your input.
- We would like only one person to talk at a time so the recorder can pick up everyone. But we hope that each of you will speak up, and tell us your thoughts and feelings.
- To keep us on schedule, I may change the subject or move ahead from time to time.
- Each person here today will receive \$25 to show our appreciation for your feedback.

## QUESTIONS

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### A. Introductions

*To get things started, I'm going to go around the room and ask each of you for your first name. Then we will discuss your experiences in the [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].*

1. To start, please introduce yourself.

### B. Enrollment and motivation for enrolling in class/program

*First, let's talk about how you learned about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] and why you enrolled.*

1. How did you first learn about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] or name of class? What were you first told about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] or name of class?
2. If this class was not required, why did you decide to enroll in the class and receive the content on relationships?
3. What did you have to do to sign up for [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]?
  - a. Were there any steps other than your typical class registration process?
  - b. Did you fill out paper work? Go to a meeting?
  - c. Was it easy to sign up for the program? Difficult (and why)?

4. How would you describe [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] to someone who is about the same age as you and whom you just met (someone new to your school)?

- a. What is its purpose?
- b. What are its main parts?

C. Relationship education content

*Next, I'd like to learn a little more about the topics covered in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].*

1. What topics were covered during classes focused on relationships?

a. Did the class address:

- what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like
- how to effectively talk with partners and resolve disagreements
- how to handle a partner who is violent
- how to make decisions related to risky behaviors (like unprotected sex)

2. How were the topics conveyed? That is, to what extent did the teacher/facilitator/ instructor use lectures, group discussions and activities, or materials like handouts/videos?

3. Which relationship topics were most emphasized? Which were least emphasized?

4. Which relationship topics have been the most helpful to you, why? Which topics have been the least helpful, why?

5. Is there anything about healthy relationships you wish you had learned from this class, but haven't?

6. How well did the teacher/facilitator/instructor convey the relationship education to the class? Did the same individual lead each session or did you have different leaders throughout the program?

7. How well has the teacher/facilitator/instructor/other personnel addressed questions raised by you or other student during relationship activities?

8. What qualities are important for teacher/facilitator/instructor/other personnel of relationship classes to have, and why?

9. What do you think you have learned about relationships through the classes?

10. How will this knowledge help you in the future? Has it helped you already; how?

D. Other topics

*Next, let's discuss if the classes covered other topics.*

1. Describe what topics other than relationships were covered during this class (i.e. financial management).

2. Which of these topics have been the most helpful to you, why? Which topics have been the least helpful, why?

3. Are there any additional topics you wish had been covered during this class, but haven't?

## E. Attendance

*Now, let's discuss whether and how you were encouraged to attend.*

1. What, if any, activities have you attended after school or on the weekends that were associated with this class?
  - a. Were other people invited to attend these activities with you?
  - b. Was there anything that made it difficult to attend activities outside of school?
2. Have you received any gifts or awards for attending class sessions or related activities (in or outside of school)? (For example, t-shirts, movie tickets, gift cards.)
  - a. If so, did you find that these rewards helped to keep you coming to [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]?
3. Have any school activities, such as testing, assemblies, or other events, interfered with this class? How did the interruptions affect this class?

## F. Overall satisfaction with program services

*Now let's discuss how satisfied you've been with [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].*

1. How do you think your participation in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] affect how you behave in relationships or how you view relationships?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 the best, how would you rate your experience in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]? Why?
3. Would you encourage your friends to take the [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] class? If so, why? If not, why not?

*That concludes our questions for today. Thank you again for taking time to answer our questions. Does anyone have a question or comment they'd like to share before we end?*

[Distribute gift cards.]