

# FinEx Materials User Testing: Focus Group Discussion Guide

## Tool: Financial Well-Being Scale Questionnaire and Scoring Worksheet Discussion Guide

### Introductions (10 minutes)

#### ***Introduction of Moderator:***

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our discussion today. My role is to direct the content and flow of the discussion and to make sure that we cover the topics of interest. We are not looking for any right or wrong answers, so feel free to offer both positive and negative viewpoints. We want everyone to participate, the opinions and experiences of everyone in the room are important.

#### ***Purpose of the Focus Group:***

I work for a company called Abt Associates, and we conduct research on a variety of social issues. I'm here today because we're doing a study for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). As part of its mission to empower and protect consumers in the financial marketplace, the CFPB conducts research on strategies, tools, and educational content to help consumers in making informed financial decisions. To help improve the financial capability of consumers, CFPB provides tools and resources to financial educators to support their work. During the next two hours, we'll be asking you for feedback on CFPB's Financial Well-Being Scale. These tools are designed to help financial educators measure their clients' overall financial health. We are hoping to gain insights from your expertise working with consumers to gauge the ease and usefulness of working with the Financial Well-Being Scale questionnaire and scoring worksheet. The information you share with us today will help the CFPB identify opportunities to improve them in the future.

#### ***Disclosure:***

As you can see, we are being audio-taped and video-taped. *[As needed: We also have some of our colleagues from CFPB observing remotely through WebEx. They are very interested in your feedback and appreciate your honest reflections.]* We want to be able to capture what we learn today and combine it with information from other focus groups that we are conducting. The information will be used to prepare a report for our client, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Please be assured that the information collected will be kept private to the maximum extent allowed by law. You will not be identified, beyond a first name, in the videotape and no identifying information will be included in the report or shared with a third party. Any quotes we use will be given under a pseudonym. By protecting your privacy, I hope that you will speak openly and candidly about today's topic.

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#### ***Ground Rules:***

Before we begin, let me go over a couple of ground rules.

- 
- We want to keep the discussion informal and relaxed.
  - We will not be taking an official break, so please use the restrooms as needed. They are located <INSERT DIRECTIONS>.
  - During the discussion, participants should feel free to ask me or each other questions if something is not clear.
  - Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.
  - If you have opinions or thoughts different from what someone else says, please say so or I'll think that you all agree.
  - Be careful not to talk all at once; I don't want to miss anything that is said.
  - We would like to hear from everyone. Some people talk more than others, and I'll be encouraging everyone to speak up.
  - You do not have to answer any specific questions you do not want to answer.
  - The discussion we'll have today is private and should not be discussed after you leave the focus group.
  - Please turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate.
  - Does anyone have any questions?

***Participant Introduction/Warm-up:***

Let's start today by getting to know each other a bit more. Let's go around the room and please tell us a little about yourself by answering the questions written on the flip chart.

- Your first name only (Advise them that last names will not be recorded if inadvertently disclosed.)
- Your profession (financial coach, housing counselor, financial counselor, etc.) How long have you been involved in financial education?

***Background:***

Now, in a sentence or two, tell us more about the consumers that you work with. Some examples of what we are looking for are listed here on the flipchart:

- Why do they seek your services? (To prepare for a home purchase, in response to a credit denial, for social services/benefits, to proactively manage their credit profile?)
- What types of "solutions" would they like from you?
- Generally, what are the socioeconomic characteristics of your clients?

**Activity: Client/Coach Role-Plays**

As mentioned, today we are talking about CFPB's Financial Well-Being Scale Questionnaire and Scoring Worksheet. To warm up, we are going to do an activity. I am going to pass out index cards that might describe an individual who may come to you for help. Please review the characteristics of the client profile as you will be acting out that individual in the activity.

***Client Profile Example***

***Name: Male***

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**Age: 44 years**

**Marital status: Married**

**Household Income: \$55,000**

**Employment Status: laid off**

**Children: 2**

**Credit Card Debt: \$0**

**Mortgage Payments: \$1200/month**

**Savings: \$30,000**

**Description/Special circumstances or challenges (e.g. trying to buy a home, recently divorced, medical debt, recently laid off):** A 44 year old accountant who recently got laid off from his job. His job provided a good income and benefits and, as a result, he has \$30,000 in savings plus \$100,000 in a 401(k). In addition, he has 3 month of severance. He has no credit card debt and he and his wife own both of their cars. However, he has two children and they are expecting a third child in two months. His wife is a teacher and plans to return to teaching after the baby is 3 months old but her salary only covers half of their expenses (he was the primary breadwinner before he got laid off).

Now I'd like you to pair up with the person next to you. One of you should play the part of the client, using the client profile you were given. The other should play the part of the financial coach. In this first scenario, the coach should administer the Financial Well-being Questionnaire to the client. Then the coach should score it using the Financial Well-being Scoring Worksheet. When finished, please staple the client profile to the questionnaire and scoring worksheet. Please stay in character the whole time- for example, the coach should not ask the client for help with scoring.

*Once everyone has completed this activity, ask each pair to reverse roles, using the other client profile. This time the coach should ask the client to complete the Financial Well-Being questionnaire. After the client completes the questionnaire, ask them to staple the client profile to the questionnaire and scoring worksheet.*

Before we discuss this activity from the point of view of the client and of the coach, are there any general impressions?

### **Comprehension**

Thinking about your own clients filling out this questionnaire.

- What challenges might your clients face when filling out this questionnaire?
- For your clients, would you be more likely to administer the questionnaire to them, or have them complete the questionnaire themselves? Why?
- As a coach, is there anything about the *administration* of the Financial Well-Being Scale Questionnaire that was difficult to understand or confusing? What?
- Is there anything about *scoring* the Financial Well-Being Scale that was confusing or difficult to understand? What?
- Are there supplemental materials, trainings or formats that would improve your ability to use the worksheet and scoring tool with your clients?

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### ***Efficiency***

- What other resources would you need to use this tool effectively?
- How difficult would it be for you to obtain the resources needed to use this tool?
- Who makes the decision at your organization about which tools and resources you will use to support your clients with their financial situations? Do you think your organization would consider this tool a good use of resources? Why or why not?

### ***Appropriateness***

- Do you think your clients would feel comfortable filling out and discussing the questionnaire with you?

### ***Contribution***

- How relevant is this tool to the work you do? How would you integrate this tool into your work?
- How might you use the Financial Well-Being Questionnaire and Scoring Worksheet with your clients? When would you use it? How would you use it? Would you use the full scale or the abbreviated scale and why? What would you do with the data? Would you combine it with other data? What other data? Who would use this data? How would you communicate or report this information to clients? To funders? To other stakeholders?

Probes:

- Would you use it to help you do an initial assessment of your client's financial well-being and situation? Would you use it to facilitate a conversation on your client's financial situation? What do you use now to assess your client's financial well-being and situation, or to facilitate the conversation? How would this tool compare in ease of use, etc.?
- Would you use it to help track your client's individual progress over time? In what ways? At what frequency? Would it show changes in taking control over money management, or building stronger protections against shocks? What do you use now to assess your client's progress over time? How would this tool compare in ease of use, etc.?
- Would you use it to help assess program outcomes? What other information do you collect on your clients? What other program performance measurement tools do you use? Who uses this information? Is it provided to funders? Other stakeholders?

### ***Appeal***

- Overall, how much do you like the design, content, and language of the tool?
- Is there any supplemental material that CFPB could provide that would make the financial well-being tools more useful to you in your work?
- Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share with the CFPB on this tool?

Thank you very much for your insights today. This has been very helpful. As you leave the room, please see <NAME>, who will give you your honorarium and ask you to sign a receipt form.

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## Tool: Auto Loan Shopping Worksheet Discussion Guide

### Introductions (10 minutes)

#### *Introduction of Moderator:*

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Please also allow me to introduce my colleague, \_\_\_\_\_. He/she is here to take notes. From time to time she may pass me a note asking to hear more about something we are discussing.

#### *Ground Rules:*

Before we begin, let me go over a couple of ground rules.

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  - Does anyone have any questions?

### **Participant Warm-up and Background (15 minutes)**

#### ***Participant Introduction/Warm-up:***

Let's start today by getting to know each other a bit more. Let's go around the room and please tell us a little about yourself.

- Your first name only (Advise them that last names will not be recorded if inadvertently disclosed.)
- Your organization – Tell us in a sentence or two about the organization you are affiliated with.
- Your profession (financial coach, housing counselor, financial counselor, etc.) - How long have you been involved in financial education?

#### ***Participant Background:***

Please describe in a sentence or two the consumers that you work with. For example,

- What are some socioeconomic characteristics?
- What do consumers say are their primary financial challenges? Do any mention challenges related to auto loan financing?
- Do you advise consumers on issues related to auto loan financing? Why or why not?

### **Tool Overview (40 minutes)**

Buying a car can be a confusing process, especially when it comes to financing. Helping consumers understand their choices and the loan process can help them save money. This Auto Loan Worksheet is designed to help consumers understand which facets of an auto purchase are negotiable and to look beyond any one single factor (such as the vehicle price, the monthly payment or interest rate) when comparing auto purchasing options. By understanding the total costs of a vehicle (and what aspects of those costs may be negotiable) as well as how different financing structures impact monthly and total payments, consumers can choose the option that best meets their needs.

The following activity is designed to demonstrate the type of choices and range of factors one should consider in finding the best deal. Let me briefly discuss the instructions.

***Step 1:*** Separate into pairs. Identify who will serve as the financial educator and consumer.

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**Step 2:** Read the scenario (A or B)<sup>1</sup>, paying close attention to the type of car, preferred features and needs identified by the consumer.

**Step 3:** Use the Auto Loan Shopping Worksheet (See Appendices A and B) and role play as the financial advisor and consumer (identified in the scenario). The financial advisor should help the consumer complete the Auto Loan Shopping Worksheet and advise him/her on the best loan available. Help the consumer with the following:

- To determine their upfront costs
- To calculate how much he/she would need to borrow
- To know much money they'll pay over the life of the loan
- To calculate the total cost of your purchase
- To understand what factors are negotiable and which are not

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<sup>1</sup> The moderator will provide each pair with the either Scenario A or B to review. The moderator will also have iPads available for focus group participants to calculate the loan payment in each scenario.



**Scenario A:** Michael just graduated from college this year. He is in \$50,000 in college debt, but just started his job with an exciting company in Los Angeles, CA where he earns \$65,000 a year.

**Features:**

He is interested in buying a used 2013 BMW 3 series to fit his new lifestyle. He is interested in the following features:

- Four door sedan
- Built in navigation
- Bluetooth access

**Price of Vehicle and Down payment:**

Michael has already received an offer from the dealer. The car is listed at a price of \$32,000. The additional features add up to \$1,500. He managed to save \$2,500 as a down payment and is interested in a five year loan from the dealer at 2.9% APR. He started his auto loan worksheet, but did not finish. He is now confused about buying the car.

**Instructions:**

- Role play as financial counselor and Michael (the consumer)
- Help Michael complete the auto loan worksheet, advising him on which factors are negotiable and which option is best (e.g., should he look at other car options, other financing options, or both?)



**Scenario B:** Lisa is a single mom with two kids in Columbus, Ohio. Her previous car is no longer working and she needs a reliable car to pick up her kids from school and get to work each day.

**Features:**

She is interested in a 2017 Honda CRV, preferably with following features:

- Air conditioning (e.g., Lisa’s previous car didn’t have it)
- Cargo grocery bag holder
- Child safety locks

**Price of Vehicle and Down payment:**

The car is listed at a price of \$28,195. The additional features add up to \$500. She is also interested in a five year loan. However, she just learned that the dealership currently has a lease special for \$200 a month with a zero down payment. She is trying to weigh both options. The lease option is attractive—the car would be new, with no maintenance costs. However, she wouldn’t own the car. She started her auto loan worksheet and is now confused on which option to pursue.

**Instructions:**

- Role play as financial counselor and Lisa (the consumer)
- Help Lisa complete the auto loan worksheet, advising her on which factors are negotiable and which option is best (e.g., should she lease or buy car?).



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## Practitioner Feedback on Tool (55 minutes)

### *Appeal*

1. What do you like or dislike about the auto loan shopping worksheet as an educator or consumer?
2. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being most likely), how likely are you to use this worksheet with your clients in its current form? Why or Why not?
3. What changes in the design would help to make the worksheet more engaging for your clients?

### *Comprehension*

4. Is there anything about the worksheet (e.g., content, language, etc.) that is confusing or unclear?
5. Are there parts of the worksheet that you would regularly avoid because it's too complicated to use accurately or complete with your clients?
6. Are there additional tools or materials that would make using the tool easier to use?

### *Appropriateness*

7. Do you feel comfortable using this worksheet? Why or why not?
8. How do you think your clients will react to using the worksheet? If you have used the worksheet with your clients, how have they reacted to it?

### *Contribution*

9. To what extent does this worksheet help you to carry out your work? Are there other tools that you currently use when working? What features of an auto loan shopping worksheet will help best support your work?
10. Would this tool increase the likelihood of your working with clients on auto loan financing? In general, how can CFPB better encourage and support educators to engage with auto loan financing?
11. How do they think you could better reach consumers around this topic?
12. What additional training and/or tools will be most useful to ensure educators can effectively use the auto loan shopping worksheet?

*Thank you so much for participating in this focus group. Your feedback will be useful in helping us to revise the auto loan shopping worksheet to best support your work in helping consumers understand their choices.*

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## **Tool: CFPB Resource Inventory Discussion Guide**

### **Introductions (10 minutes)**

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During the next two hours, we'll be asking you for feedback on CFPB's Resource Inventory for Financial Educators. This tool is designed to help financial educators identify and access reports on the state of the field, consumer research, and tools developed by CFPB. We are hoping to gain insights from your expertise in the field to gauge the ease and usefulness of this inventory for you. The information you share with us today will help the CFPB identify opportunities to improve the Resource Inventory in the future.

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***Background:***

Please describe in a sentence or two the consumers that you work with. For example,

- What are some socioeconomic characteristics?
- Why do they seek your services? (To prepare for a home purchase, in response to a credit denial, for social services/benefits, to proactively manage their credit profile?)
- What do consumers say are their primary financial challenges?
- What are your clients' expectations when they come to you for services?
- What types of "solutions" would they like from you?

***Perceived Need (15 minutes; Contribution, Part 1)***

- My first question for you is what kinds of information, speaking broadly, do you find you *most useful* to support your work? Feel free to distinguish between resources you need for *working with clients* and *professional development/continuing education*, and *other uses*.
  - a. Where do you go for this information/these resources?

- 
- My first question for you is what kinds of information, speaking broadly, do you find you *most need* to support your work? That is, what kinds of resources do you feel you're missing? Feel free to distinguish between resources you need for *working with clients* and *professional development/continuing education*, and *other uses*.
  - (As needed) What kinds of information do you seek from the CFPB? How do you get that information?
  - How do you prefer to have information/tools available to you?
    - a. Hard copies, online, apps, in-person training, etc.?
    - b. Does that vary based on contents or use of material? <or? How does that vary based on contents or use of material?

### **Practitioner Feedback on Tool**

#### ***Overview of Tool and Design (45 minutes; Comprehension and Appeal)***

*Moderator Instructions: Hand out copies of the tool to users now.*

Moderator: Now I'd like to turn to the CFPB Resource Inventory we'll focus on for the rest of our time today. Here's a copy of the resource inventory for each of you to refer to throughout the focus group.

- First of all, have any of you seen this inventory before? (Show of hands.) That's good to know. We'll talk about your previous experience with the inventory in a little bit.
  - a. Before we talk about any prior experience with the inventory, I want to give everyone a chance to look through their copy now and then we'll come back together to talk about your first reactions.

#### ***Exercise—Review Tool for Initial Impressions***

- I have here some stickers and sticky flags to help you make note of your impressions on the tool. (*Comprehension and Appeal*)
  - a. Please use the green stickers to mark anything that stands out to you as being *particularly useful* or *well done* (that can mean clear, well-organized, design, content, etc.).
  - b. Please use red stickers to mark anything that stands out to you as *confusing*, *poorly done* (that can mean organization, design, content, etc.), or anything that *needs more work*.
  - c. You can use the sticky flags in any color to flag other points you want to make or things you want to talk about.

We are going to take these with us so we can review all the mark-ups carefully afterward. We'll give you a clean copy of the inventory to take with you at the end of the focus group.

*Moderator: Give ~5 minutes for participants to thumb through the resource inventory or until they appear finished, i.e., stop looking at it, side conversations, etc.*

*Note-taker: Take note of participants' body language, facial expressions, small utterances (sighs, "huh," etc.). This is especially important because it won't be captured in the audio recording and should supplement the transcript. I*

*Moderator: (Transition) Now I'd like to talk through your mark-ups of the resource inventory.*

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- First I'd like to hear about your *overall impressions* of the Resource Inventory. (*Contribution*)
    - a. How relevant is the tool to the work that you do?
    - b. How often do you think you could use a tool like this?
    - c. How do you think you would use the resource inventory? I.e., to track down something I've heard of, to identify new resources, to get information to work with my clients directly, for professional development, etc.
    - d. For those who have *seen the tool before*, do you remember your first impressions?
      - i. How were you first introduced to it?
      - ii. Have/How have you used the tool since you were introduced to it?
    - e. What were the *overall pros and cons* of the Resource Inventory? (*Comprehension and Appeal*)
    - f. Based on this first view of it, how many of you are likely to want to spend more time looking through it? (*Appeal*)

### ***Efficiency and Contribution***

- Now I'd like to hear about those *green dots* you put in the Resource Inventory. What did you flag as being particularly well done or helpful? Why?
- Now I want to hear about those *red dots* you put in the Resource Inventory. What did you flag as being confusing, poorly done, or needing more work? Why?
  - a. Do you have suggestions for how to address the issues you flagged?
- Does the resource have the right content? Is there any content missing? How could the content be improved?
- Is the content organized properly? How about its sequencing?

### ***Exercise—Finding Targeted Information***

Now that we've talked about the tool overall, I'd like to ask you to use it for seeking information.

- **Scenario 1:** You have a client coming to you in her last year of college. She has \$27,000 in student loan debt and still needs to finance another semester of courses, books, and lab fees. She is coming to you to talk about loans for her final semester and to think about repayment. Where in this guide would you look for information to work with this client?
  - a. How easy is it to find the information you would want to counsel this client?
  - b. Which resources do you think would be most helpful to you in this situation?
  - c. When you used the guide for this purpose, did it raise any new insights or suggestions about how the inventory should be organized or designed?
- **Scenario 2:** You have been asked attend an upcoming workshop on financial education approaches for different age cohorts and need to do some background reading on financial wellbeing of youth and seniors. Where in this guide would you look for information on background materials?
  - a. How easy is it to find the information you would want to make these presentations?
  - b. Which resources do you think would be most helpful to you in this situation?

- 
- c. When you used the guide for this purpose, did it raise any new insights or suggestions about how the inventory should be organized or designed?

***Appeal & Wrap-Up (45 minutes)***

- Overall, how much do you like the design, content and language of the tool? Is it engaging and easy to use?
  - a. How likely are you to use the tool in its current form? How much do you value having a paper copy?
    - i. How likely would you be to use the tool in an online format? What features would make it most appealing in an online version?
    - ii. If both versions of the tool were available, how would you like them to interact with each other (e.g., same format/layout or on web pages, etc.)?
  - b. What changes in the language, design or content would make the tool more engaging?
- What other resources would you need to use this tool effectively? How difficult would it be for you to obtain the resources needed to use this tool?
- Is there any supplemental material that CFPB could provide that would make the Resource Inventory more useful to you in your work?
- Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share with the CFPB on this tool?

Thank you very much for your insights today. This has been very helpful. As you leave the room, please see <NAME>, who will give you your honorarium and ask you to sign a receipt form.

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## **Tool: Behind on Bills? Toolkit Discussion Guide**

### **Introductions (10 minutes)**

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#### ***Disclosure:***

As you can see, we are being audio-taped and video-taped. *[As needed: We also have some of our colleagues from CFPB observing remotely through WebEx. They are very interested in your feedback and appreciate your honest reflections.]* We want to be able to capture what we learn today and combine it with information from other focus groups that we are conducting. The information will be used to prepare a report for our client, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Please be assured that the information collected will be kept private to the maximum extent allowed by law. You will not be identified, beyond a first name, in the videotape and no identifying information will be included in the report or shared with a third party. Any quotes we use will be given under a pseudonym. By protecting your privacy, I hope that you will speak openly and candidly about today's topic.

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Please also allow me to introduce my colleague, \_\_\_\_\_. He/she is here to take notes. From time to time she may pass me a note asking to hear more about something we are discussing.

#### ***Ground Rules:***

Before we begin, let me go over a couple of ground rules.

- We want to keep the discussion informal and relaxed.

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- We will not be taking an official break, so please use the restrooms as needed. They are located [describe location].
  - During the discussion, participants should feel free to ask me or each other questions if something is not clear.
  - Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.
  - If you have opinions or thoughts different from what someone else says, please say so or I'll think that you all agree.
  - Be careful not to talk all at once; I don't want to miss anything that is said.
  - We would like to hear from everyone. Some people talk more than others, and I'll be encouraging everyone to speak up.
  - You do not have to answer any specific questions you do not want to answer.
  - The discussion we'll have today is private and should not be discussed after you leave the focus group.
  - Please turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate.
  - Does anyone have any questions?

***Participant Introduction/Warm-up:***

Let's start today by getting to know each other a bit more. Let's go around the room and please tell us a little about yourself by answering the questions written on the flip chart.

- Your first name only (Advise them that last names will not be recorded if inadvertently disclosed.)
- Your organization – Tell us in a sentence or two about the organization you are affiliated with.
- Your profession (financial coach, housing counselor, financial counselor, etc.) How long have you been involved in financial education?

***Background:***

Please describe in a sentence or two the consumers that you work with. For example,

- What are some socioeconomic characteristics?
- Why do they seek your services? (To prepare for a home purchase, in response to a credit denial, for social services/benefits, to proactively manage their credit profile?)
- What do consumers say are their primary financial challenges?
- What are your clients' expectations when they come to you for services?
- What types of "solutions" would they like from you?

**Overview of the Tool (45 minutes)**

Consumers may be behind on bills for a number of reasons – they may have more expenses than money coming in on a monthly basis; they may have been derailed by a financial shock such as a large medical bill or car repair; they may have bills that are all due early in the month and have trouble balancing this with a biweekly or monthly paycheck. In many cases, consumers may feel overwhelmed by their daily financial lives and may feel embarrassed about being behind on bills.



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The Behind on Bills? toolkit is designed to help consumers lay out their monthly finances concretely, understand where they have choices, and problem-solve on challenges such as dealing with debt collectors and managing a month where money is particularly tight.

The toolkit includes 8 tools:

- An income tracker – “Where does all of my money come from?”
- A spending tracker – “Where does my money go?”
- A bill calendar – “What are all my bills and when are they due?”
- A goal-setting sheet – “What is one thing I want to change?”
- A short-term brainstorming resource sheet for increasing in-coming money or reducing expenses – “How can I get extra money out of my situation?”
- A bill prioritization sheet – “How do I make tough choices in tight months?”
- Steps and questions for dealing with a debt collector – “How do I respond to a debt collector?”
- Resources (websites and phone numbers) for finding more help – “Who else can I turn to for help?”

In general, the tools are designed to be used sequentially. Knowing how much money is coming in and going out is a necessary starting point and knowing when bills are due is important for staying on top of them and understanding where prioritizing and seeking solutions will be most helpful and possible.

On the front of each tool, there is a box summarizing what the tool can help the user do and a single question to start with for that tool. Where relevant, the tool also says what the user will need on hand to use the tool – for example, a paystub— or what to do with the tool. On the back, the tools have worksheets or advice on next steps or one step further the user can take.

### ***Using the toolkit***

Just to get a sense of your experience with this toolkit – raise your hand if you have seen this booklet before. Now, raise your hand if you have used it before. (And, if so, say how you have used it).

Please take the next half hour to review each of the tools in turn – if they are new to you, familiarize yourself with them. If you have seen or used them before, refresh your memory. While you are reviewing the tools, try to think about how you would use these and in what cases.

Then, look at these client scenarios, find the tools you could use for each, and think about how or whether you would use these tools (hand out printed version of the list below, and read through them):

- Sherri is a single mother of one with a steady income. She rents an apartment for herself and her daughter and comes to you because, though she manages to make ends meet, she wants to start saving for her daughter’s college.
- Jose is a single man working for the city government. He comes to you because his car, which he uses for work, broke down and the repair cost \$1200. He put the repair on his credit card but now worries about how to pay his monthly bills.
- Terrence works in construction and earns most of his income between March and October when the weather is good. He often has a hard time in January and February making his earnings stretch until work picks up again.

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- Louis is being called multiple times a day by a debt collector who says he owes money to a hospital. Louis thinks his insurance has already paid as much as is owed.
  - Genevieve manages a retail store and gets paid at the end of the month. She often gets late notices and has to pay late fees on bills.
  - Roberta is a new college graduate and just got her first job. She wants to get an apartment and a car but her student loans prevent her from doing both.

### **Practitioner Feedback on Tool (60 minutes)**

#### ***Appeal***

1. Overall, how much do you like the design, content and language of the *Behind on Bills?* toolkit? Is it engaging and easy to use?
2. How do you think you would integrate this tool into your work? Or, how would this tool change your work?
3. Is there supplemental material or are there changes in the toolkit format that could make the tool easier to use? Or, which would make you more likely to use the tool?

#### ***Comprehension***

4. When do you think you would find the tool helpful? When do you see yourself avoiding using the tool?
  - a. In what kinds of situations would you use the tool? With what sorts of clients? Would you use it with clients facing particular challenges? Would you use it with clients who are facing short-term/acute budget challenges or for clients with fairly stable incomes and expenses? Would this tool be helpful with clients who have seasonal incomes or expenses?
  - b. Are there particular types of clients or situations where you would avoid using this tool? (For example, would you avoid using it with clients who are more or less confident? With clients who are dealing with ongoing budgeting challenges rather than acute ones?)
  - c. What types of instructions or supplemental materials could CFPB provide to make the tool more useful for working with all types of clients?
5. Are there parts of the tool that you would generally avoid because it's too complicated to use accurately or completely?
6. What additional materials or training could make it easier for financial educators to understand and use all parts of the toolkit?

#### ***Efficiency***

7. What resources (staff prep time, client prep time, equipment, staff/client session time) do you think it would take for you to use the toolkit?
  - a. What tools or components would require the least resources and prep time to use? What tools or components would require the most?
8. Are the resource requirements you just mentioned ever a barrier to using the tool? When/how?
  - a. Would resource needs or prep time (for you or the client) make it unlikely for you to use parts or all of the toolkit? In what situations or with what types of clients? Are there

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materials, instructions, or pre-session guidelines that would make it more likely for you to be able to use the toolkit or particular tools?

- b. Would you be likely to know in advance of a client meeting that you would be using these tools? If you did know, how would that change how you are able to use the tool? What would you ask clients to bring to the meeting or think about in advance?
- c. What tools or guidance could CFPB provide along with the tool to make the tool easier to use and less resource intensive?

### ***Appropriateness***

- 9. In general, do you feel comfortable using this tool? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 10. Has anyone had the chance to use this tool with your clients? If so, how have they reacted to it?
- 11. Are there supplemental materials, trainings or additional tool formats that could help you feel more comfortable using the tool?

### ***Contribution***

- 12. Do you currently use another tool for the same purpose? Would you use this tool in conjunction with others? What are the advantages/disadvantages of the tools you use for this topic or for how they complement each other? How do you see the *Behind on Bills?* Toolkit fitting in?
- 13. Does this toolkit fill an unmet need in the field? Are there supplemental materials or different tool formats that could help this toolkit fill an unmet need in the field?
- 14. How might CFPB communicate about and distribute the tool to maximize its value to the field?

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## Families and Money Tool Discussion Guide

### Part 1: Welcome and Introduction (15 MIN)

#### Introductions (5 MIN)

##### *Introduction of Moderator:*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our discussion today. My role is to direct the content and flow of the discussion and to make sure that we cover the topics of interest. We are not looking for any right or wrong answers, so feel free to offer both positive and negative viewpoints. We want everyone to participate; the opinions and experiences of everyone in the room are important.

##### *Purpose of the Focus Group:*

I work for a company called Abt Associates, and we conduct research on a variety of social issues. I'm here today because we're doing a study for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). As part of its mission to empower and protect consumers in the financial marketplace, the CFPB conducts research on strategies, tools, and educational content to help consumers in making informed financial decisions. To help improve consumers' financial capability, CFPB provides tools and resources to financial educators to support their work. During the next two hours, we'll be asking you for feedback on one or more versions of a tool CFPB is developing called the Families and Money Tool. There are currently three draft versions on which we are gathering feedback:

- Who Shapes my Money Choices?
- Who's in My Money Circle?
- What's My Family's Money Style?

These tools are designed to help financial educators talk to their clients' about how the financial ideas, attitudes and behaviors of their friends and family may be different than their own and how those relationships may influence their financial health. We are hoping to gain insights from your expertise working with consumers to gauge the ease and usefulness of working with these tools. The information you share with us today will help the CFPB identify opportunities to improve them in the future.

##### *Disclosure:*

As you can see, we are being audio-taped and video-taped. *[As needed: We also have some of our colleagues from CFPB observing remotely through WebEx. They are very interested in your feedback and appreciate your honest reflections.]* We want to be able to capture what we learn today and combine it with information from other focus groups that we are conducting. The information will be used to prepare a report for our client, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Please be assured that the information collected will be kept private to the maximum extent allowed by law. You will not be identified, beyond a first name, in the videotape and no identifying information will be included in the report or shared with a third party. Any quotes we use will be given under a pseudonym. By protecting your privacy, I hope that you will speak openly and candidly about today's topic.

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***Ground Rules:***

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- You do not have to answer any specific questions you do not want to answer.
- The discussion we'll have today is private and should not be discussed after you leave the focus group.
- Please turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate.
- Does anyone have any questions?

***Participant Introduction/Warm-up: (10 MIN)***

Let's start today by getting to know each other a bit more. Let's go around the room and please tell us a little about yourself by answering the questions written on the flip chart.

- Your first name only (Advise them that last names will not be recorded if inadvertently disclosed.)
- Your organization – Tell us in a sentence or two about the organization you are affiliated with.
- Your profession (financial coach, housing counselor, financial counselor, etc.) How long have you been involved in financial education?
- What kinds of topics, issues, or challenges do your clients face around how their families impact the way in which they manage their money?
- What do you find challenging about working with your clients when it comes to the topic of how their families impact the way in which they manage their money?

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## Part 2: Presentation of Tools through Fish Bowl Exercise (70 MIN)

### Presentation of Tools (20 MIN)

*Directions: Hand out the materials (the designated prototype for review) to each participant. Provide them with an overview of the tool prepared by the CFPB Office of Financial Education.*

- I have here some stickers and sticky flags to help you make note of your impressions on the tool. (*Comprehension and Appeal*)
  - Please use the green stickers to mark anything that stands out to you as being particularly useful or well done (that can mean clear, well-organized, design, content, etc.).
  - Please use red stickers to mark anything that stands out to you as confusing, poorly done (that can mean organization, design, content, etc.), or anything that needs more work.
  - You can use the sticky flags in any color to flag other points you want to make or things you want to talk about.
    - We are going to take these with us so we can review all the mark-ups carefully afterward.

*Following a ten-minute review of the materials at the individual level, collect responses of the participants on first reactions to the materials. Instructions for note-taker: Make note of non-verbal cues as people are reviewing, such as facial expressions, sighs, exclamations, “hmm’s” (and intonation), etc. Record responses to the discussion following these questions.*

Please review the materials that you just received. Take a minute to write down your initial reflections, notes or ideas. As you go review it, think about how you might fill this out for yourself *and* about working through it with your clients.

*Moderator: (Transition) Now I’d like to talk through your initial impressions of the Families and Money Tool.*

- First I’d like to hear about your *overall* impressions. (*Contribution*)
  - What did you mark with green dots? Why?
  - What did you mark with red dots? Why?
  - What else stood out to you?
- When you first picked up the tool and before you examined it more closely what did you think it was about? Was that first impression accurate?
- Does this seem like the kind of tool you might use? When/why?
- Is the design presentation of the tool clear and easy to understand? If no, why?
- Is the tool’s language clear and easy to understand? Is there any language that is ambiguous or confusing?
- How did you feel when you thought about filling this out for yourself? How do you think your own reaction might help you approach using this tool with a client?
- Please provide 2-3 words that would describe:
  - the clients you think you would use this tool with; and
  - how the client might feel about using these tools

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### **Fish Bowl Scenario #1 (12 MIN)**

*Directions: Hand out the client/practitioner scenarios for interactive role play exercises. Inform participants that some of them will be selected to perform a role play while the others observe. Then hand out the client/practitioner scenarios for interactive role play exercises.*

Please take a minute to review scenario #1 that you just received.

***Select participants for Fishbowl exercise #1 so that participants can role play the completion of the prototype.***

For the next ten minutes, we'll be testing the use of this new tool. One person will be playing the role of a client and another will be using the materials to support the client in completing the tools in his/her role as a practitioner. The "practitioner" will test the use of the selected materials in a basic client session, using the tool as the guide for the interaction.

***Conduct the Fishbowl exercise #1.***

Thank you for your participation in this exercise. Now let's spend some time reviewing the use of this tool as a group. First I'll ask a few questions to the people who participated in the scenario, then we'll get a discussion from the larger group. I'd like to start with the "client" first.

***Direct these questions to the "client" and "practitioner" in the exercise.***

- Was the printed tool clear enough for each of you to understand and complete the exercise?
- How could the language or design be changed to improve your ability to use the tool?
- Did you feel comfortable completing the exercise as it was presented to you? Was anything difficult or confusing to use?
- From your perspective in each role, can users easily use the tool?
- Was there anything additional the practitioner could have done to help the exercise?
- As the practitioner, was there additional information or resources that would have helped you?

### **Discussion: Fish Bowl Scenario #1 (10 MIN)**

Now for the groups:

- What types of clients or what situations would benefit most from this tool?
- How often do you think you could use a tool like this?
- What did you observe about the client and practitioner's interaction?
- What did you notice about yourself as you watched the interaction?
- How much time do you think it would take for you to use this tool with your client?

### **Fish Bowl Scenario #2 (12 MIN)**

***Choose 2 more of the group members to play the role of "client" and "practitioner".***

Similar to the first exercise, we'll be testing the use of this tool in another, more challenging scenario. . One person will play the role of a client and the other will use the materials to help the client complete the tools in their role as a practitioner. The "practitioner" will test the same tool as the client interview that we just saw in the same basic format, using the tool as their guide.

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*Direct these questions to the “client” and “practitioner” in the exercise.*

I know that you’ve seen someone else role play using the tool. I want to ask you the same questions about what your experience was like, even after seeing someone else do it.

- Was the printed tool clear enough for you to understand and complete the exercise?
- How could the language or design be changed to improve your ability to use the tool?
- Did you find completing the exercise easy or difficult? Why?
- From your perspective in each role, can users easily use the tool?
- Was there anything additional the practitioner could have done to help the exercise?
- As the practitioner, was there additional information or resources that would have helped you?

### **Discussion: Fish Bowl Scenario #2 and Scenario Comparison (15 MIN)**

Now for the groups:

- What did you observe in this role play that differed from the first scenario? This can be in relation to situations for using the tool, the complexity or time it would take to use the tool, your own reactions to the conversation, or other factors.
- Would it be beneficial for your client to have access to the material prior to meeting with him or her or do you think it would be better to introduce the material to the client in person?
- Are there other resources (e.g., client financial information, training) that you think you would need to effectively use the tool?

### **Part 3: Formative Evaluation of the Selected Materials (20 MIN)**

#### **Formative Evaluation: Appropriateness (8 MIN)**

- Do you think the language and design of the tool is appropriate for your clients (in ways such as education level, degree of financial capability, culture, etc.)? If not, why not? How might the language or design be altered to make it more appropriate?
- What percentage of your clients would respond well to this?
- How are clients likely to respond? Do you think they may have reluctance to discuss home issues/relationship topics like this with you?
- How could this tool be altered to make it more relevant for your clients?

#### **Formative Evaluation: Contribution (10 MIN)**

I want to return to the questions we opened with about the issues your clients face around how their families impact the way in which they manage their money, and what is challenging for you about that.

- Would you use this tool?
- What tools are you currently using to address these issues? In what ways would this tool complement the tools you’re already using? In what ways is this tool better/worse?
- What method(s) of distribution (e.g., website, social media, lending club) might improve or increase usage of this tool?
- What types of concrete advice do you see giving clients after they’ve gone through this tool?



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- What referral partners might you need to support the client once a need for new services was identified?

#### **Formative Evaluation: Appeal (3 MIN)**

- Overall, how much do you like the design, content and language of the tool? Is it engaging and easy to use? What is the best thing about this tool? What do you dislike?

### **Part 4: Formative Evaluation of all prototype materials (15 MIN)**

*Pass out remaining tools to the group ensuring that each participant has each of the materials.*

This is the last portion of the session. Please take a few minutes (up to 5) to review the materials that you just received. Please write down your initial reflections, notes or ideas for our next discussion on all three of the handouts.

- What are your initial impressions of these two versions compared to the one we've discussed so far?
- What changes in the language, design or content might make the tool more engaging?
- Would you consider using this as a suite of tools together?
  - How long would you estimate it would take to complete an appointment with one of the materials? (Probe: number of minutes or sessions)
- Do you have any last comments you'd like to share on the Families and Money tool?

#### **Conclusion**

Thank you for your feedback on these new resources.

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### **Fishbowl Scenario #1:**

Patrick is a 48-year old divorced father of two who lost his job in pharmaceutical sales almost three months ago and is urgently looking for work. Last year, he had a good year and earned \$58,000 on commissions and is now receiving \$450 per week in unemployment for three more months. While he looks for another job, he has also started driving for Uber part-time and brings in variable amounts each week, depending on his schedule and ride volume. He has come to your office at the referral of a workforce center appointment as he's running very low on savings after spending down a small emergency savings account and, on the verge of losing his unemployment benefit, has begun running up his credit cards for living expenses. He has had a very good credit rating and has access to over \$30,000 in credit on the three cards he carries.

He is struggling to make his mortgage payment of \$1,500 a month, a car payment of \$385 a month, and pays child support of \$500 per month. He is close to his children, ages 12 and 15, and has a cordial relationship with his ex-wife. His child support payment goes to the kids' health insurance premiums, sports fees for his daughter's swim team and son's guitar lessons, and daily expenses; they had been trying to develop some savings for the kids' college.

He's in a serious relationship with a lawyer, Courtney, who has her own 14-year old son, but they do not live together and keep separate finances. When he was working, they enjoyed frequent dinners out and a vacation together every year; since they do not share finances and Courtney is still working, she tries to help him out when she can but his financial strain is also creating some relationship strain.

Patrick grew up in a family that had some hard times growing up but his parents, who live several hours away, achieved good financial stability by the time they retired. They are in their 70s and they draw Social Security and have retirement plans through his father's job and his mother's IRA. Their house is paid off but in need of some repair. Patrick and his siblings, Corrine and Mike, have been discussing how to help their parents repair the house and plan for elder care since none of the children live close by and their parents have been "enjoying their retirement" by traveling and have not shared any financial or health contingency plans with their children. Patrick, Corrine, and Mike all have different amounts of disposable income and attitudes towards money. Corrine remembers the most of the hard times from her childhood and is very frugal out of fear of hitting a rough patch herself; she has been pressuring her parents and siblings to plan for old-age expenses. Even though his financial situation has been very up and down, Mike is more of a spender, believing that you should enjoy the good times when you have them.

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## Fishbowl Scenario #2

Renee is a 28-year old mother of a 4-year old daughter who lives with her spouse, Morgan and Morgan's 75-year old mother, Ann. She's come to your office because they are interested in buying a house. Renee and Morgan received the Earned Income Tax Credit this year and are considering saving a portion of their tax refund following their appointment at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site, a community-based free tax preparation clinic. Last year their gross income was \$37,700 with Renee working part-time (24-34 hours per week) at a retail clothing store where she earns \$10 an hour; Morgan works part-time as a technology support contractor and earns about \$27,000 per year. They currently have \$4,200 remaining on a loan on one of their cars, \$12,000 in student loan debt. Morgan has no credit card debt; s/he does not qualify for any credit cards. Renee is also taking classes online part-time to finish her general education requirements for her bachelor's degree (and pays tuition for those) in hopes of returning to school next year to complete her major requirements and degree. She is interested in saving as going back to school full-time would require her to cut back her hours or quit her job.

Morgan's mother, Ann, and Renee's younger sister, Kate, provide childcare for their daughter. In exchange, Renee and Morgan pay them gas money, contribute to Kate's college fees, and provide gifts for Ann, who loves to shop frequently but for inexpensive items. Kate lives in the dorm this year but is considering moving out next year to save money. Kate will move into an apartment with a friend or into Renee and Morgan's house if they buy one. If that were to happen, Kate would provide childcare in lieu of rent.

Renee has a few good friends nearby whom she sees occasionally for dinner out and a once-a-year spa day when they can all arrange their work schedules and child care; all but one of these friends (who is better off) are in similar financial positions to Renee and they appreciate having a break to treat themselves. Morgan gets together with friends each week on Friday for Happy Hour.

Renee's parents and extended family live several hours away but she is close to them, especially her father who supported Renee financially when she was just out of high school but has recently declared bankruptcy.

All of Morgan's extended family lives in town; they get together frequently for family birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays, which are always big celebrations. Morgan's family does not talk about money.