

## **INSTRUMENT #4**

### **YOUTH INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing the instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. This information collection is voluntary. 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. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Reports Clearance Officer (Attn: OMB/PRA 0970-XXXX), Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, 330 C. St. SW, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

The Personal Responsibility Education Program: Promising Youth Programs  
Interview/Focus Group Guide for Youth in Target Populations

**I. Introductory script [to be shared with youth]**

Thank you for joining us today. Our names are [NAMES OF FACILITATOR/NOTE TAKER], and we are from an independent research firm called Mathematica Policy Research. We're part of a team that the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has funded to learn more about how to teach youth about abstinence, preventing pregnancy, and sexual health education.

During the interview/discussion, we hope to learn more about your experiences with abstinence or sexual health education programs, how you think such programs could work better for [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION], how you make decisions about relationships and sex, and how you get information about these topics. Your point of view is extremely valuable. We expect the interview/discussion to take about 90 minutes of your time [for youth who participate in an online discussion board will specify that 90 minutes will be over three days].

Being part of this interview/discussion is completely voluntary. There are no penalties or consequences for not answering our questions. We will ask some questions that deal with sensitive topics, like how you make decisions about relationships and sex. We recognize that youth participating in this interview/discussion may or may not have engaged in sexual activity and this won't impact your ability to answer the questions; however, you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may also stop participating in the interview/discussion at any point. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. Our questions are designed to learn about your experiences and your opinions.

*For individual interviews:* You will receive a \$20 gift card for completing this interview.

*For online discussion boards:* You will receive a \$20 gift card if you join the discussion each day for 3 days.

Privacy statement: To the fullest extent permissible by law, we will keep the information you share with us private. We will only use first names as we talk today. If we use quotes from this discussion, we will not include the real name of the person who made the statement. All names will be changed to ensure privacy. No one but the researchers will see any of the notes from our discussion. We are also talking to other [groups of] [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION]. We will take our notes from our conversation today and combine it with information from our other conversations with participants like you.

*For online discussion boards:* We also ask that you respect one another's privacy and do not share what we discuss today outside of this discussion board. We cannot, however, guarantee that all group participants will honor this request.

*For online discussion boards:* Here are few things to keep in mind during our discussion:

- During the discussion, we might ask some follow-up questions to individual participants. Other participants will not be able to see these questions or your responses.
- Please do not use your full name. Please just use your first name.
- You can reply to other participants' posts, but please remember to be respectful of everyone's opinions, even if they are different from your own.
- Please check the discussion boards at least twice a day for three days. We'll be responding to your posts and asking follow-up questions.

We also want to notify you that 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 # is 0970-XXXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

## **II. Informed consent process [Consent and assent forms attached]**

Prior to conducting the interview, the interviewer is required to secure informed consent from participants. The consenting process is described below. *(The type of consent required (parent permission and child assent or informed consent) will depend on the target populations selected by ACF, age of the respondent, and IRB requirements. Parental permission may be required for youth under age 18; therefore, we have provided options for (1) parental permission and child assent and (2) informed consent.)*

- IF REQUIRED, INTERVIEWERS SHOULD OBTAIN PARENTAL CONSENT/PERMISSION PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW:
  - Give participant 2 copies of consent/permission form.
  - Review the form with the parent and ask if they have any questions.
  - Answer all questions.
  - Ask parent to sign form and give you one copy, and give them the other copy
- CONDUCT YOUTH ASSENT (MAY BE OBTAINED AT TIME OF INTERVIEW):
  - Give participant 2 copies of assent form.
  - Read form with youth and ask if they have any questions.
  - Answer all questions.
  - Ask youth to sign form and give you one copy, and keep the other copy

OR

- IF PARENTAL PERMISSION IS NOT REQUIRED, INTERVIEWERS SHOULD CONDUCT YOUTH CONSENT PRIOR TO STARTING THE INTERVIEW
  - Give participant 2 copies of consent form.
  - Read form with youth and ask if they have any questions.

- o Answer all questions.
- o Ask youth to sign form and give you one copy, and keep the other copy

### **III. Ice breaker**

- Ask a general question about personal interests to get the conversation started. For example: What was the last movie you saw or book you read? Did you like it? Why or why not?

### **IV. Experiences receiving abstinence or sexual health education programs**

Our next questions are about your participation in formal abstinence or sexual health education programs. By “formal education programs” we mean organized classes, groups, or lessons that might have occurred in your school or through a community organization.

- Have you ever participated in a formal abstinence or sexual health education program?

*If yes:*

- At what age did you first participate in a program?
- What formal abstinence or sexual health education programs do you recall participating in?
  - What was the name of the program (if recall/applicable)?
  - Where did you attend it (e.g. school, community based organization, church, online or on a personal computer)?
  - Who presented the information (e.g. teacher, health educator)?
  - What type of education was it (e.g. individual, group-based, or online)? If group based, what was the size of the group?
- Thinking back on your past experiences in these programs:
  - What did you like the most and least about the program?
  - Was there ever a time you wanted to attend the program(s), but couldn't? If so, why?
  - Was there ever a time you chose not to continue participating in the program(s) or skipped one or more sessions? If so, why?
  - How could these programs have been better?
  - Which topics covered during this program were the most/least helpful to you? Why?

- Which, if any, topics do you think were missing? How would covering this topic be useful? Do you think this topic would be useful to all youth or mainly [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION]?

## **V. Development of abstinence or sexual health education programs**

- What do you think are the most important topics/issues to include in an abstinence or sexual health education program?
  - For example, birth control and condoms; abstinence; healthy relationships; refusal skills; communication; values; attitudes, and norms; decision making; anatomy and physiology; or life skills (e.g. goal setting)?
- What would be the ideal method of program delivery for you to receive abstinence or sexual health education (e.g. individual sessions, group classes, online, or a combination)? Why?
- What abstinence or sexual health topics/issues do you think would be challenging or sensitive to discuss with youth? Is there anything that would make it easier for youth to discuss these topics or issues in the context of an education program?
- What kinds of things would make it more likely that you would participate in an abstinence or sexual health education program? What would make it less likely or difficult for you to participate?
  - For example, who the facilitator is, the timing of sessions or activities, whether other youth like you are also participating. Why would these affect whether you participate?

## **VI. Decision making around avoiding or engaging in sex, and preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases**

### **A. Decision making around avoiding or engaging in sex**

Young people make different decisions about whether and when to have sex. Our next questions are about the reasons that [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] decide to engage in sexual activity or not.

- How do you think [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] make decisions about whether and when to engage in sexual activity?
  - What are the reasons you think [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] decide not to engage in sexual activity?
  - What are the reasons you think [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] decide to engage in sexual activity?

- Would being in a romantic relationship influence decisions about whether and when to engage in sexual activity? If so, how?
  - What are the pressures and/or expectations [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] may experience to have (or not have) sex?
  - Do you think there are unique issues that [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] face when making sexual health and relationship decisions that other youth may not face?

## B. Methods for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases

Now, we have some questions about the methods youth might use to avoid pregnancy or getting a sexually transmitted disease. There are many different ways that people can avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, such as choosing not to have sex at all, or using birth control.

- Thinking about yourself or other [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION], what methods—such as choosing not to have sex at all, or choosing to use birth control—do [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] use to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases?
  - What are the reasons [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] would choose these methods?
    - Do youth use them because they learned about them through a program, found information online, were told about it by a partner, their friends use them, it's easy to access to them, or for some other reason?
- What are the reasons [SPECIFY YOUTH SUBPOPULATION] would choose not to use a particular method?
  - Do you think youth who may be sexually active and want to use birth control or contraception are able to access the kinds of birth control they want easily enough?
  - If you were to engage in sex, do you feel like you have the skills to use your preferred form(s) of birth control correctly and consistently, even if you have not used them before?
    - If so, where did you learn how to use it?

## VII. Other sources of abstinence or sexual health information and resources

- From what sources, other than formal abstinence or sexual health education programs, have you received information about sexual health? For example, parents or another trusted adult, a class or program at school, a provider at a health clinic, friends, , sibilings, or the Internet?
  - [If they identify informal sources of information]: How did you go about getting information from [SOURCE]?
- Which sources do you believe are the most/least accurate?

- Which sources do you rely on the most/least?
- If you have attended a formal abstinence or sexual health education program, did the information you receive differ between the sources you just mentioned and the formal program? If so, how?
- If information about abstinence or sexual health that you receive from these sources differs, what do you do?