

INSTRUMENT 2

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

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OMB #
EXPIRATION:

STREAMS
PROCESS STUDY
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR PROGRAMS SERVING ADULTS

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

INTRODUCTION

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 interested in hearing about your experiences as part of a broader research study that is looking at how programs like [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] are designed and operate. We are talking with staff at this program and other organizations that work with the program, and holding discussion groups with participants like yourselves to ask about your experiences with the 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 program; what program activities you have participated in; what you find helpful about this 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 taping 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 taping 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.
- At the end of our meeting, each person here will receive \$25 to show our appreciation for your feedback.

QUESTIONS

A. Introductions

To get things started, I'm going to go around the room and ask each of you for your first name and how long you've been in the program. Then we will discuss your experiences in the [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]. We would like everyone to participate in the discussion.

1. Please introduce yourself and share how long you have been participating in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].

B. Enrollment and motivation for enrolling in program

First, we'd like to talk about how you learned about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] and why you were interested in joining the program.

1. How did you first learn about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]? What were you first told about [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]?
2. What were your reasons for enrolling in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]? Did anything convince you to enroll? Was there anything that concerned you about enrolling?

C. Relationship education

Next, we will talk about different activities offered by [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]. Some of you may not have taken part in all of these activities. If you have, we'd like to hear about your experience.

Let's start with activities focused on relationships

1. Which activities discussed relationships and what relationship topics were covered?
2. How were the topics covered? PROBE IF NEEDED: Did the facilitator use lectures, group discussions and activities, or materials like handouts/videos?
3. What kinds of relationship topics did the class talk about most often? Did other topics come up that you didn't talk about quite as much?
4. Which of the relationship topics have been the most helpful to you, why? Which topics have not been very helpful?
5. Is there anything about healthy relationships you wish you had learned from the program, but haven't?
6. What was your relationship with the facilitator leading the relationship activities like? How often did you interact individually with the facilitator, for example, outside of group sessions, before or after sessions, or during breaks in sessions? About what topics?
7. How well has the facilitator answered questions raised by the group during relationship activities?
8. What qualities do you think are important for facilitators of relationship classes to have? Why are these qualities important; did your facilitator have these qualities?
9. What do you think you have learned by participating in the relationship activities offered by [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]?
10. How will this knowledge help you in the future? Has it helped you already; how?

D. Other services

Next, let's discuss other services that might have been offered by [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] (For each additional service provided, ask the full list of questions).

1. Describe what other activities or services (if any) you have received by participating in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] (i.e. parenting skills, financial management, or preparing for and obtaining employment).
 - a. Describe what topics were covered during these activities.
2. Which services have been the most helpful to you, why? Which services have been the least helpful, why?
3. Are there other services you wish had been provided related to [TOPIC]?
4. Describe your relationship with the staff person leading these other services. How often did you interact with these staff? About what topics?

5. How well have the staff who have helped you with these other services answered your questions? Why?
6. What qualities do you think are important for staff leading these services to have? Why are these qualities important; did staff have these qualities?
7. What do you think you have learned by participating in these other services offered by [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]?
8. How will this knowledge help you in the future? Has it helped you already; how?

E. Case management

We have a few questions about services you may have received through [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].

1. Besides one-on-one meetings with program staff about employment, what other one-on-one meetings or telephone discussions have you had with program staff?
 - a. About how often and where did these meetings (or calls) occur?
 - b. What happened during these meetings or calls with program staff, and what kinds of things did you discuss?
 - c. How well did these meetings meet your needs?
 - d. What seemed to be the most helpful about these one-on-one meetings and calls? What wasn't helpful?

F. Attendance

Now, let's turn to discussing your attendance at program activities.

1. What, if anything, has made it difficult for you to attend program activities? What has helped you to attend?
2. Has the program ever provided you any gifts or awards for attending program activities? (For example, bus tokens, cab fare, movie tickets, gift cards.) How important were these to you as a reason to either attend or continue attending?
3. Do staff encourage you to participate in the program? If so, how, and which staff member(s) provide this encouragement?
4. What happens if you do not participate in an activity you have been invited to?
5. What do program staff do to encourage you to participate that help the most? What have they done to try to get you to participate that didn't work as well?
6. Are there other strategies that the program could use that would encourage you to attend activities?

G. Overall satisfaction with program services

We will wrap-up today's discussion with a few questions about your overall experience with [HMRE PROGRAM NAME].

1. Thinking about the overall program, how satisfied have you been with your experience in [HMRE PROGRAM NAME]? Why?
2. Thinking about all of the services you received through [HMRE PROGRAM NAME], which services were the best fit for you and your goals? Which did not match well for you and your goals?
3. Which, if any, aspects of [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] do you think could be improved and how?
4. How likely would you be to recommend [HMRE PROGRAM NAME] to other single parents in your community? Why?

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.]