

Appendix A.1: Protocols for focus groups and telephone and in-person interviews¹

Program Administrators *DRAFT Facilitation Guide*

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this <focus group or interview>. Your insights are a really important part of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation or BIAS-NG project. The goal of the project is to explore ways that we can apply principles of the behavioral sciences—that uses psychology and economics-- to improve your jobs and help serve families better. Insights from these fields have successfully been used to help people increase their savings rate or reduce their energy use, and we hope to identify areas in human services programs where they can be applied as well. We want to talk about how this program works, and any ideas you have that might help you do your job better or improve the experience of the program for families. Please read through and sign the consent form and we can get started. The conversation will be audio-recorded, but you will have the opportunity to tell us if you do not want any comments repeated. You are also welcome to share any comments to any one of us privately. *As is stated in the consent form that I'll be handing out, participation is voluntary and the focus group should take about an hour of your time.* According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), 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 number for this collection is OMB #0970-XXXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

Please go around and quickly introduce yourself.

What is your current position?

How long have you worked in this program?

Have you held previous positions at this or other human services programs?

Clients Engagement in Program Services

How do eligible [families/youth/clients] get referred to [PROGRAM]?

What are the steps they need to take to apply?

What are the goals of the [PROGRAM]?

What is the first formal contact with the [PROGRAM]?

How do clients flow through [PROGRAM] services? What are the typical paths clients take?

¹ Note: There are three protocols in Appendix A: (1) Program Staff, (2) Program Administrators and (3) Program Clients/Families. The appropriate protocol will be used for focus groups and telephone and in-person interviews.

What determines eligibility?
How long does it take to determine eligibility?
How do staff develop [PROGRAM] plans with clients?
Who is not engaging in services? Why do you think these clients are not engaging in services? Are there barriers that they face?
What happens when clients do not engage in services or comply with their plans?
Are there particular types of eligible [families/youth/clients] that you'd like to serve but are not serving now? Why do you think these [families/youth/clients] are not being reached?

Probe: How are people's walkthrough's similar/dissimilar? Does it appear to be the same at the caseworker/administrator level? Are there any steps that might be missing?

Monitoring outcomes and performance

What metrics do you use to monitor clients' progress?
What metrics do you use to monitor the staff?
What determines staff advancement? What is turn-over in staff? What kind of training and re-training is available to staff?

Staff Management and Communication

What kind of [PROGRAM] training does staff receive? How do you recruit staff?
Is there a philosophy of the [PROGRAM] that staff learn?

Probe: Discuss any broad themes or specific examples that have arisen that are especially relevant to BIAS. Can they be discussed in behavioral terms like social norms, channel factors, construal, foot-in-the-door effects, plan-making, or choice overload? How might they lead to implementation studies?

Conclusion

Do you have a story that you consider a particular success or failure of a client navigating the process?
What would you do to improve the services you offer?

Thank you again for your participation. If there is anything you've said in the course of the focus group that you do not want to be anonymously quoted to ACF or in our final report, please let us know so we can mark it as private. We will also be available if you have any comments you would like to make to us privately. Have a good day.