

Appendix A: Client Interview Protocols

Note to reviewers: This appendix includes protocols for discussions with program group and control group clients.

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Client Interview Introduction and Informed Consent (both groups)

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this interview. This is an important part of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation (BIAS-NG) project. We want to learn about how we can use behavioral science to make your experience with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) better. We want to hear your thoughts about working with your caseworker and your ideas about how to improve the experience for individuals and families.

This interview is completely voluntary and private. Your case managers and DSHS staff will not see or hear these responses. The research team will never identify an individual nor link any answers back to a specific individual.

I will record the conversation in order to make sure we capture the information correctly, but you can tell us if you would like us to remove anything you have said from the interview transcript at any time. You may also choose not to answer questions, and you may choose to stop the interview at any time.

Your participation is voluntary. The interview will 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 0970-0502 and the expiration date is 08/31/2020.

[For In-Person Interviews (Written Consent)]: Please read and sign the consent form. Then we can get started.

[For Phone Interviews (Verbal Consent)]: I will now read you a form about what it means to participate in this research, describe your rights as a participant, and ask for your consent to continue with the interview.

Informed Consent: Client Interviews

You are invited to participate in an interview for the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation (BIAS-NG) project.

What is the study about?

MDRC, a nonprofit social policy research organization, and its partner MEF Associates are conducting this project on behalf of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families. Its goal is to use behavioral science, which incorporates ideas from psychology and economics, to improve communication and engagement with individuals who receive services from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). We developed revised intake materials for the WorkFirst program.

What will I need to do?

We are talking with individuals who have participated in the WorkFirst program. The interview will focus on your thoughts and experiences related to the WorkFirst Comprehensive Evaluation and the assignment of WorkFirst activities. This interview will take up to 1 hour.

Does the interview involve any risk to me?

There are no major risks from participating in the interview. The main risk is feeling uncomfortable discussing your case and/or family with DSHS. You can choose not to answer any of the questions that make you uncomfortable. We have very strong security measure in place and will make every effort to protect your privacy. There is a small possibility of someone outside of the study staff hearing or seeing your responses.

Will the interview help me?

Participating in the interview will not help you directly, although sharing your thoughts and experiences may help improve the future experiences of individuals and families.

Do I have to do the interview?

You do not have to do the interview if you do not want to. You can stop the interview at any time. Your participation in the interview will have no effect on services you or your family receive from DSHS or any other organizations. We would like to record the interview to help with our notes. However, if you do not want us to record, we will not. If we do record, you can ask to stop the recording at any time.

Will I receive anything for my time?

To express our appreciation for your participation, we will give you a \$25 gift card for participating in the interview.

Will you tell people what I say?

The study team will not share your answers with anyone, unless you say something about hurting yourself or others or if you describe someone else being hurt. Otherwise, only the study team will read the notes or listen to the recording and no one at DSHS or WorkFirst will hear your

answers. We may use some specific quotes but we won't include anyone's name. When the project is over, we will destroy our notes and recordings.

Questions:

If you have questions about the study, you can call the MDRC project director, Frieda Molina, at 212-340-8660.

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[FOR VERBAL CONSENT] Statement

"I have read this form and agree to be in the study. I know that my participation is voluntary and that MDRC follows strict rules to protect my privacy. I know that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I can stop participating at any point."

Name of Study Participant (Print)

Signature of Study Participant

[FOR VERBAL CONSENT]

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

- If yes, proceed.
- If no: "No problem. Thank you for your time today."

Record response.

Do you feel comfortable with me recording our discussion?

If yes, turn on the recorder and proceed. If no, continue without recorder.

A1. Program Group Client Interviews

Format: Semi-structured interview (1 hour)

We are going to start by asking you some questions about your recent TANF case with DSHS. Please think back to the most recent time when you applied for TANF/WorkFirst services through DSHS.

- 1) Tell us about yourself - Was this your first time applying for TANF in Washington?
 - a) If NO, how many times previously, and when? For what reason?
 - i) Which activities were you assigned to previously? Did you participate? Why or why not?
 - ii) How does your experience today compare to the last time you applied for WorkFirst?

Now I'd like to talk to you more specifically about the one-on-one meeting you had with the case manager when they asked you some questions as part of the Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) and developed your Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP).

CE Intake Meeting Flow (Fidelity)

- 2) Did your caseworker explain the purpose of your meeting that day? What do you remember about how they explained the purpose of the meeting?
 - a) Probe: What kinds of questions did your caseworker ask you during this meeting? Can you give some specific examples?
 - b) Probe: Did your caseworker explain how your answers to these questions would be used? If so, how?
- 3) Did your caseworker conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation with you during that meeting? If so, can you tell me more about that?
 - a) Probes:
 - i) What type of questions did your caseworker ask you?
 - ii) Did they discuss goals? If so, what was your goal?
 - iii) Did they present any visual materials? If so, tell me more about those. What stood out?
 - (1) [If Activity Flashcards mentioned]:
 - (a) When in the session were they used (beginning, end, throughout)?
 - (b) How did your case manager use these?
 - (2) [If Blueprint Implementation Prompt mentioned]:
 - (a) What goals did you write down? How did you determine the goals you set?
 - (b) What next steps did you write down? How did you determine the next steps?
 - (c) Who wrote down your responses on the paper (client, caseworker, both)?
 - (d) How did it feel to talk about your goals with your caseworker?
 - (e) How did it feel to talk about potential barriers to achieving your goals with your caseworker?

Activity Assignment (Motivation and Understanding)

- 4) Which activities did your caseworker assign you to in this meeting? Tell me more about what you understood about that activity at that time.

- a) Probe: How do you understand the difference between your WorkFirst Specialist and your WorkFirst Provider (Career Coach/Employment Specialist/Support Specialist)?
- 5) In your own words, what is the purpose or value of participating in [activity assigned]?
- 6) Did the specialist ask you about your goals? How did that conversation go? What were the goals that you discussed?
 - a) Did the specialist ask you why you wanted to reach those goals?
- 7) Do the WorkFirst activities help you accomplish those goals? How?

Planning / Following Through

- 8) What did you and your specialist discuss as your next steps after the meeting?
 - a) Probe: Did you need to set up childcare? What do/did you need to do to make childcare arrangements?
- 9) Did you create a plan to complete these next steps? If so, tell me more about how you and your caseworker developed that plan

Reflection and wrap-up

- 10) What questions did you have at the end of your intake session?
- 11) How confident were you that you would follow through on your agreed-upon WorkFirst activities?
- 12) Is there anything your caseworker could have done differently to better prepare you for your WorkFirst activities?
- 13) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me today about your interaction with DSHS?

Thank you for your time.

A2. Control Group Client Interviews

Format: Semi-structured interview (1 hour)

We are going to start by asking you some questions about your recent TANF case with DSHS. Please think back to the most recent time when you applied for TANF/WorkFirst services through DSHS.

- 1) Tell us about yourself - Was this your first time applying for TANF in Washington?
 - a) If NO, how many times previously, and when? For what reason?
 - i) Which activities were you assigned to previously? Did you participate? Why or why not?
 - ii) How does your experience today compare to the last time you applied for WorkFirst?

Now I'd like to talk to you more specifically about the one-on-one meeting you had with the case manager when they asked you some questions as part of the Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) and developed your Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP).

CE Intake Meeting Flow (Fidelity)

- 2) Did your caseworker explain the purpose of your meeting that day? What do you remember about how they explained the purpose of the meeting?
 - a) Probe: What kinds of questions did your caseworker ask you during this meeting? Can you give some specific examples?
 - b) Probe: Did your caseworker explain how your answers to these questions would be used? If so, how?
 - c) Did they present any visual materials? If so, tell me more about those. What stood out or could have been better?
- 3) Did your caseworker conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation with you during that meeting? If so, can you tell me more about that?
 - a) Probes:
 - i) What type of questions did your caseworker ask you?
 - ii) Did they discuss goals? If so, what was your goal?

Activity Assignment (Motivation and Understanding)

- 4) Which activities did your caseworker assign you to in this meeting? Tell me more about what you understood about that activity at that time.
 - a) Probes:
 - i) What are you expected to do in this activity?
 - ii) How do you understand the difference between your WorkFirst Specialist and your WorkFirst Provider (Career Coach/Employment Specialist/Support Specialist)?
- 5) In your own words, what is the purpose or value of participating in [activity assigned]?
- 6) Did the specialist ask you about your goals? How did that conversation go? What were the goals that you discussed?

- a) Did the specialist ask you why you wanted to reach those goals?
- 7) Do the WorkFirst activities help you accomplish those goals? How?

Planning / Following Through

- 8) What did you and your specialist discuss as your next steps after the meeting?
 - a) Probe: When was your next step? Is there anything else you discussed with your specialist as a future step?
 - b) Probe: Do/Did you need to set up childcare? What do/did you need to make childcare arrangements?
- 9) Did you create a plan to complete these next steps? If so, tell me more about how you and your caseworker developed that plan.
- 10) Did your caseworker show you any printed materials during this meeting? If so, what were they and how did you use them?
 - a) Did anything stand out visually from these materials? If so, what?

Reflection and Wrap-up

- 11) What questions did you have at the end of your intake session?
- 12) How confident were you that you would follow through on your agreed upon WorkFirst activities?
- 13) Is there anything your caseworker could have done differently to better prepare you for your WorkFirst activities?
- 14) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me today about your interaction with DSHS?

Thank you for your time.