

Appendix B

Protocol for Client Interviews

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 Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) better. We want to hear your thoughts about working with your caseworker and your ideas about how to improve the experience for families.

This interview is completely voluntary and private. Your caseworker will not see these responses. The research team working with the County on the project will summarize all responses. The research team will never identify an individual nor link any answers back to a specific individual.

Please read and sign the consent form. Then we can get started. I will record the conversation, but you can tell us if you do not want anything you say repeated. You can also share any comments with us privately.

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.

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 psychology and economics, to improve communication with families at the beginning of a case with the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (CYF). We developed a flyer to include with the accept-for-service letter. We also developed some text messages for families in the first several weeks of their case.

What will I need to do?

We are talking with families who have received the materials from the project and asking them to provide thoughts and experiences from their case. This interview will take up to 1 hour. The interview focuses on your thoughts, experiences, and feedback on how you used the flyer, received the text messages, and worked with your caseworker.

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. You can choose not to answer any of the questions that make you uncomfortable.

Will the interview help me?

Participating in the interview will not help you directly, but sharing your thoughts and experiences may help improve the experiences of future families with a CYF case.

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 CYF 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 \$40 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 CYF, including your caseworker, 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.

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

We are going to start by asking you some questions about your case.

- When was your first contact with the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF)?
- Do you recall when your case went from investigation (the first time someone from CYF visited you) to formal case opening (when you got a letter saying you have to make a plan for family well-being)? Was the difference between investigation and case opening clear?
- Did you receive information from CYF about the case planning process? Do you recall what information you received?
 - Did you receive information about the home visit? If so, do you remember what information you got? Did you find it helpful? Is there any other information that would've been helpful to know?
- How did your caseworker work with you? What did he/she do that was helpful? What are examples of things he/she might have been done to make the start of the case easier for you?
- What kinds of communication did you have with your caseworker? Was it in-person meetings, phone calls, text messages, or something else?
 - What, if anything, made communication hard?
- How often did you talk, text, or email with your caseworker? Would you have liked it to be more or less often? Why?
- Tell me about who you turn to when you have questions about your case. Who do you ask about services you were referred to?
 - [If these are people other than the caseworker] Why do you rely on them? What are they able to do or tell you that the caseworker doesn't or can't?
- What kinds of barriers, if any, did you encounter to keeping in touch with your caseworker? Arranging home visits? Being present for the family conference?
 - What factors, if any, get in the way of attending home visits or conferences?
- How prepared did you feel for the home visit and family conference? What got in the way of feeling prepared? What would have helped you?
- [IF PROGRAM CASE] Do you recall receiving this flyer [show]? Do you recall receiving these text messages from CYF [show]?
- If so, what did you think when you first saw them? How did they make you feel about your case?
 - Did you ever look at the flyer again, later in the process?

- Did you find it helpful? Was there other information that would've been helpful to have on the flyer?
- What actions or information would have helped you understand more about your case? Whom would you have liked to receive the information from?
- Do you feel like you achieved important steps, or made progress, during the first two months of your case? If so, why? If not, what do you think would have helped you?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience or your perception of the case planning process?

Thank you for your time!