

Drug Free Communities (DFC) Sector Group Interview Protocol

Focus Group Introduction

Welcome. My name is [insert name of facilitator] and this is [insert name of note-taker]. We want to thank you for taking the time today to meet with us to discuss the Drug Free Communities program at [insert name]. Your participation in this group interview is part of a larger evaluation of the DFC program. We are very interested in your experiences with the program and your feedback will help inform the evaluation. Before we begin we want to remind each of you that your participation in this group interview (focus group) is voluntary and the information you share with us will be kept confidential.

Specifically, this means that (1) the focus group is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or leave the focus group at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence; and (4) only evaluation staff will have access to the interview tape and interview data (that is, if you **all** agree to be tape recorded). In our report on the evaluation of the DFC program we will provide overviews of what was learned at each site and will connect anecdotes to other data we have collected. However, we will not report or present the information you share with us in any way that will identify a specific person. We also ask that each member of the group today respect the confidentiality of others and that you do not discuss the contents of what you hear today outside of this group.

With your permission, we would like to record the audio of this focus group so that we can transcribe the conversation for accuracy in the analysis and interpretation of your comments along with comments of other staff. Nobody outside of the National Evaluation team will have access to this audio recording. Upon transcription of these recordings as appropriate to the evaluation, we will destroy the recordings themselves, maintaining only written records.

Are there any questions before we begin?

(Interviewer: Please remember to ask permission to tape record the interview. They can decline. Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin.)

Background

1. To start, let's introduce ourselves. Tell me who you are and which sector/agency you represent (e.g., law enforcement, neighborhood leader, family, youth) and how long you have been with the coalition?

DFC at your location

2. How does your coalition work? How do you go about making progress on your mission/goals?
 - a. On average, how much time (in hours) do you spend per month related to DFC (meetings, work outside meetings, attending activities, etc.)?
 - b. Most work and decisions take place at coalition meetings? Decisions at coalition then work in subgroups and report back? Most work in subgroups with reports at coalition meetings?
 - c. Please describe for us the structure of your DFC partnership? For example, are there any subcommittees, workgroups, teams, etc. charged with specific tasks?
 - d. To what extent are the Strategic Prevention Framework elements (assessment, planning, capacity, implementation, and evaluation – cultural competence and sustainability) central to how the coalition works? What do you see as the main vision and goals for your DFC? How have your DFC's goals, vision, and mission changed over time? Why change?
 - e. *Key Personnel?*
 - i. Are all the key community leaders actively involved in the effort? Do they have a voice in coalition decisions?
 - ii. What challenges do you face in recruiting those who are missing/encouraging members to be more active?
 - iii. How important is it in your coalition to have formal agreements? Are there any agencies with whom agreements need to be in place but are not? Any with whom agreements are not working? Please explain.

DFC Assessment, Capacity & Planning

3. Describe how 'ready' you believe your coalition was at the start of the DFC program? How about now?
 - a. Was anything done to increase coalition readiness and capacity to implement your community-based drug use prevention program – either with the coalition or specifically with you or your agency?
 - i. What were the successes/challenges encountered in moving your coalition forward to act more effectively in the community?
4. How does your coalition assess whether and to what extent families and youth from the target population are involved in DFC assessment, capacity, and planning activities and processes?
 - a. What successes/challenges has your DFC coalition faced in planning/conducting activities to increase family and youth involvement? How many/to what extent are parents of the target population actively involved? Youth? In what capacity (please describe)?

5. Has your coalition experienced any major changes in leadership?
 - a. What has been the impact, if any, on changes in coalition leadership on coalition dynamics and effectiveness in the community? On changes in coalition participants?
 - b. What has been the impact, if any, on changes in local political and community (please specify which one) leaders? Has this helped or hindered efforts?
 - c. To what extent has your coalition been able to sustain momentum for change during any changes in leadership?
6. What is the context in your community for conducting DFC activities/efforts? Has the community focus on substance abuse prevention been impacted by other community contexts?

DFC Implementation

7. Please tell me about key accomplishments since you started the DFC grant. Of the seven DFC strategies, were there any particular you felt made the most difference – in terms of increasing collaboration or decreasing youth substance use/abuse? What is something that DFC did in the past year of which you are most proud and why? Upcoming events that coalition is excited about?
 - a. Any events that were disappointing? Will you try again making changes based on what you learned or focus on new ideas?
 - b. Do you have any recommendations for future DFC communities on strategies or activities that were particularly effective?
8. Describe 1-2 activities that your DFC coalition ***planned or implemented*** to increase collaboration between coalition members? The broader community?
(Interviewer): This section should be pre-filled and verified on-site. Please make sure to obtain detailed information on the process of planning and implementation that is not covered in COMET – challenges encountered and how challenges were overcome, timeline, critical implementation events, etc.).
 - a. What sectors were represented in this effort? Which agencies took the greatest lead in implementing the activity (please name up to 3)?
 - b. How much coalition time, effort, and energy, was spent on this activity?
 - c. What adaptations, if any, were necessary to achieve success?
 - d. How many individuals or organizations did the activity impact?
9. Describe 1-2 activities your DFC coalition ***planned or implemented*** to decrease youth substance use in the targeted communities?
 - a. To what extent did this activity contribute to your coalition achieving its objectives and goals (i.e., youth substance use reduction)? What makes/made these activities successful? What challenges did the coalition encounter and how were these resolved?
 - b. What type(s) of overarching strategy(ies) did your activity target?
 - c. What sectors were represented in this effort? How were other agencies/sectors involved? Which agencies took the greatest lead in implementing the activity (please name up to 3)?
 - d. How much coalition time, effort, and energy, was spent on this activity?
 - e. How many individuals or organizations did the activity impact?

10. To what extent and how did the coalition involve families and youth from the target population in implementation activities and efforts? How many were involved and what were their roles and responsibilities?
11. Overall, what key events most influenced the activities and impacts of your DFC coalition (critical events)?
 - a. What are the two or three greatest facilitators of implementation of DFC activities and community change?
 - b. What are the two or three greatest barriers to implementation of DFC activities and community change? Have you been able to successfully overcome any barriers? If so, how?

Evaluation

12. How does your collaborative partnership assess its progress toward its goals? To what extent has the coalition been effective in accomplishing activities and/or goals?
 - a. Have a logic model? Has it been helpful in focusing coalition activities and evaluation
13. How are data and evaluation findings incorporated into future planning and implementation activities?
 - a. Does the coalition annually develop an action plan? What has been the focus (i.e., main objectives, strategies and activities) this past year and what is the focus for the upcoming year?

DFC Impacts & Outcomes

14. What community and systems changes (e.g., increased ownership of drug use issues, increase in safety, increase in community identity and sense of community) have resulted from DFC activities? How do you link DFC to the changes?
 - a. How would you describe your local community – is it safe, is there a good sense of community, are drugs readily available, are there enough recreation areas and other facilities for pro-social activities for youth? Challenges in the community?
 - b. Has DFC had any impacts on the local community? Please describe. Has your DFC coalition generated momentum in the community (i.e., engaging community members)? How (formalized strategy, grassroots campaign)?

Sustainability

15. What has your coalition done, if anything, to ensure sustainability of your drug use prevention effort when federal funding is terminated?
 - a. What are the keys to sustaining a coalition over time?
 - b. What recommendations would you give to other communities with limited resources interested in beginning DFC coalition work?