Child Welfare Virtual Conference: Focus Group Guide

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce leaders of the focus group and roles of each in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker).

- *Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: As participants in the Child Welfare Expo, we appreciate your participation in an evaluation designed to assess the overall effectiveness of the Expo and to get a better understanding of your experience. Your participation in this focus group will provide valuable feedback about your experience with the Expo and help identify areas for improvement. Your contributions to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will be used to improve future virtual conferences.*

- Convey to each focus group participant our privacy policy: *(1) the focus group is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participating in the focus group at any time; (3) the information will be kept private by the evaluation team who have signed agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) focus group data will be maintained in password protected files on a secure server; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information from the focus group outside the focus group.*

- Ask permission to tape record the focus group: *In order to ensure we capture the discussion accurately and completely, I would like to tape record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the tape and the transcript will not contain your names. If you choose not to have the focus group recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your names in reporting.*

- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. Ask them to provide their verbal consent to participate in the focus group.

- Note to facilitator: italicized questions are to be used as optional probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Questions in **bold font** are key questions that should be prioritized if time becomes an issue.

Questions

1. **How would you describe your overall experience with the technology? (note to facilitator: show screen shots of Virtual Expo platform to provide refresher as probes are asked)**

   o *Probe: What aspects of the Virtual Expo went well?*

- o   *Probe: What aspects of the Virtual Expo could be improved?*
- o   *Probe: Did you experience any connection issues? Any problems logging in? If yes, how did you resolve them? Was the resolution satisfactory?*
- o   *Probe: Describe your experience with the various features of the platform (e.g., sessions, exhibit booths, networking lounge, resource center). What (if anything) would have made it easier to get into these different spaces in the virtual environment?*
- o   *Probe: What additional support/guidance could have been provided before the conference? During the conference?*

2. **From your registration, we can see that some of you attended last year's Expo. For those that attended last year, we would like for you to compare your experiences.**

- o   *Probe: What were some of the notable differences from this year to last year?*
- o   *Probe: Were these improvements? Or drawbacks?*
- o   *Probe: Compare/contrast your focus/attention during the sessions.*
- o   *Probe: Compare/contrast your motivation and opportunities to connect with other participants (e.g., reconnect with people you already know, develop new relationships, etc.) during breaks or in between sessions.*
- o   *Probe: Compare/contrast your motivation and opportunities to get resources and tools.*

3. **This year there were tracks, one for managers and the other for frontline workers to present different information to each role. How did this contribute to you getting more relevant and useful information? Why or not why?**

- o   *Probe: Were the track descriptions provided at registration clear? Did they help you to make an informed decision about which sessions to participate in?*
- o   *Probe: In hindsight, were the sessions appropriate for the track you selected?*
- o   *Probe: What suggestions do you have that could make offering tracks more useful?*

4. **Polling Question: Did you attend one of the Transfer of Learning sessions? (Yes/No). If no, why not?**

   If yes…
- o   *Probe: What did you like about the TOLs?*
- o   *Probe: In what ways did the TOLs facilitate your engagement with other participants?*
- o   *Probe: In what ways did the TOLs reinforce what you learned during the sessions?*
- o   *Probe: In what ways did the TOLs facilitate your ability to apply what you learned during the session to your work?*

5. **We would like to better understand your engagement during the sessions. Overall, did the presenters keep you engaged? What made it engaging or not?**

6. **We would like to better understand your engagement with other participants. Did you engage with other participants? If not, why not?**

   If yes…
- o   *Probe: Where did you interact with the other participants?*
- o   *Probe: Did you interact with someone that you already knew?*
- o   *Probe: Did you meet anyone new?*
- o   *Probe: Did you meet anyone new that you plan on staying in touch with?*
- o   *Probe: What was the nature of this interaction?*

7. *How has your participation in the Virtual Expo increased your knowledge/skills and/or informed your opinions?*

   - *Probe: Please provide some examples of what you learned at the Expo.*
   - *Probe: Did your participation motivate you to do something differently, in your role?*
   - *Probe: Did your participation make you think or feel differently about assessment and decision-making?*

8. **How have you used or intend to use what you learned during the sessions in your work?**

   - *Probe: How have you applied the information learned at the Expo in your work?*
   - *Probe: Have you done anything differently in your work as a result of something you learned during the expo? If so, what?*

9. **Did you view and/or save any resources to your briefcase? If so, how have you used the resources? If you haven't already, what plans (if any) do you have to use the resources?**

   Optional probes if they have used the information:
   - *Probe: Have you used or intend to use the resources to develop training (informal or formal)? If so, which ones? What kind of adaptations did you have to make to the resources to do this?*
   - *Probe: Have you used or intend to use the resources to write policy or procedures? If so, what kind of adaptations did you have to make to the resources to do this?*
   - *Probe: Have you sent or intend to send the resources to colleagues? If so, how many?*
   - *Probe: Have you shared or intend to share the resources with clients (e.g., families and children)? If so, what did you share and for what purpose?*

10. **What advice would you give to future virtual conference planners?**

    - *Probe: What should s/he do or avoid doing?*
    - *Probe: What should s/he be sure to include or exclude?*

11. Are there other comments you would like to share with us regarding the Child Welfare Virtual Conference?