

PHASE II: APS Local Staff (Supervisors, Investigators, Caseworkers, etc.) Interview Questions

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Interviewee Names: _____

Titles: _____

State: _____

Date of interview: _____

Greeting: Hello, My name is xxx. I am part of a study team that was contracted by the Administration for Community Living under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We are conducting a study of how opioid misuse affects older adults as well as APS in its attempts to help them.

The purpose of this interview is to understand your perspectives concerning cases involving opioids. We are conducting these interviews at the local level in several states to get a better sense of opioid cases and how they are being handled. This interview should take about 45 minutes.

During the interview, I will refer to the word “abuse” by surrogate decision makers and by this, I mean any types of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a victim by another person, that your agency investigates. I’m just using “abuse” for short.

First, I will be asking you to reflect on investigations where opioids were involved. Then, I will ask you about the particular issues regarding these cases. After that I will come back to issues of how APS agencies can best assist victims of abuse where opioids are concerned.

With your permission, our conversation will be tape recorded so that we will be able to capture correctly your input and ideas. Is that all right with you?

I expect you would be careful about this anyway, but, once we turn the recording on as we discuss, let’s avoid referring to anyone by name, be it the victim or any other individual.

If any of my questions are unclear to you, please stop me and ask for clarification.

1. Roughly, how many cases of abuse involving opioids would you say that you have handled in the past year?

Probe: suggest they just identify whether it is probably less than five, five to 10, or over 10?

2. How were these clients in these cases harmed by the abuse/neglect/exploitation that involved opioids?

Probe: Did you see any particular harm most common in opioid cases? Less common?

- 2a. Were there any cases where harm was impacted by COVID-19?

3. What were the long-term impact of the abuse/neglect/exploitation on the clients?

4. Did the clients or the perpetrators ever have other allegations of abuse/neglect/exploitation?

Probe: ask for specifics of allegations/substantiations

5. What were the challenges, if any, that you encountered in investigating the allegations of abuse of these particular clients?

- 5a. Were any of these challenges impacted by COVID-19?

6. Was your APS program able to provide any intervention(s) that assisted these clients to achieve increased safety and relief from continued abuse?

- 6a. If yes, please describe intervention(s) provided and specifically how intervention(s) assisted the victims.

Probe: Did this enable the victims to become safe? Please explain.

- 6b. If no, what barriers blocked efforts to assist the victims? Any barriers specific to COVID-19?

7. Do you have any thoughts or observations from these cases about what might have prevented the abuse/neglect/exploitation by the perpetrators from occurring?

8. Overall, do you find that substantiated cases of abuse involving opioids are generally more, less, or equally as difficult to work as other types of allegations?

Probes: Why?

- 8a. What impact did COVID-19 have?

9. Is it easier or harder to substantiate these cases?

Probes: Why?

10. Do you find that intervening and achieving a positive outcome is harder for these cases?

Probes: Why?

10a. Was it harder during COVID-19? Why?

11. When opioids are involved, is abuse, neglect, or exploitation easier to miss than abuse, neglect, or exploitation when opioids are not involved?

Probe: Why? In what ways?

11a. Was it easier to miss during COVID-19? Why?

12. Based on your experience working these cases, are there ways that APS and other agencies should be handling them differently when opioids are involved?
13. In your experience, what are ways to improve prevention of the abuse of older people when opioids are involved?
14. Do you have recommendations regarding how suspected victims of abuse involving opioids can be better served or how these cases can be better handled?
15. Are there any other comments you would like to make about cases involving opioids?
16. Do you have any recommendations for further research on abuse involving opioids?