

# Instrument 4A: Site Visit 2 Focus Group Guide for Staff: LifeSet Specialists

## Introduction

Thank you for joining us today. We would like to invite you to participate in focus group that will last about 90 minutes. We are conducting an evaluation of LifeSet, and today we'd like to learn more about the LifeSet program model and service delivery. Specifically, we will talk about the key program components, the intake process and service provision, the training you received, among other topics. We will use this information to better understand how the LifeSet program operates and serves young adults in New Jersey.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You can choose not to answer any question or not participate in the interview at all. There will be no consequences to you if you choose not to participate. We will keep the information you provide private and will not share it with anyone except for research staff working on the study. Additionally, federal law states that 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 data collection is 0970-0XXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

## Background and Role

**Welcome everyone. Let's go around the room and briefly introduce ourselves. I'll start [facilitator introduces self]. Please share the following:**

*Current position and professional experience*

1. Your name
2. How long you have been a LifeSet Specialist?
3. How long have you worked at [agency]?
4. What is the size of your caseload?

## Program Model

**Now, I would like to learn more about the program model and LifeSet's goals and main components.**

*Program goals and main components*

5. What are the goals of LifeSet?
6. What are the main components and program features of LifeSet?
  - a. If someone came to you and asked which of these components they have to have to start LifeSet in their agency, what would they be?

## Staff Requirements and Responsibilities

**Next, I'd like to learn a little bit about your initial training and any additional required trainings for Specialists.**

*Required training and professional development*

7. What's the onboarding process for LifeSet? Can you describe your first days as a LifeSet Specialist, what you did, and how you were trained.
8. How ready did you feel once you started as a LifeSet Specialist?
  - a. Was there anything that you didn't anticipate that happened in your first week?
9. What specific clinical expertise/experience that is needed for your role as a Specialist ?
10. Are there mandatory trainings that you must go through? Can someone please describe the training you are required to complete?
  - a. Probe on topics, frequency, number, delivery mode, who delivers the trainings

## Service Delivery

**Next, I'd like to learn more about what it's like to be a youth in LifeSet, from being referred to closing their case.**

**To start, I'd like you all to help us walk through a typical youth's path, starting with case assignment.**

*Eligibility and intake*

11. How are youth assigned to a Specialist? What information about the youth would a Specialist have at case assignment?

12. When do youth first meet their Specialist? Can someone please describe what happens during that first meeting?
13. What is the enrollment and intake process for youth in LifeSet?
  - a. What assessments do youth need to do when they start with the LifeSet program?
14. What happens if youth say they do not want to enroll in LifeSet?
15. Do you ever decide during intake that a youth is not eligible or appropriate for LifeSet? If so, why and how often does that occur? What actions do you take?

#### *LifeSet services*

16. Can someone please tell me how LifeSet service plans are created and what a typical plan looks like?
17. How and in what ways do youth interact with their Specialist?
  - a. Probe on: how often do staff meet with youth, what types of communication are used [i.e., phone, in person, text]; how long meetings last
18. What services and supports do youth receive?
19. How long are youth typically in LifeSet?
20. What triggers closing a LifeSet case? What factors lead your agency to end LifeSet services for youth (i.e., discharge them from the program)?
21. How typical is it for youth to stop and start LifeSet? When does this typically occur and why?
22. We understand that a main component of LifeSet is building youths' relationships with supportive adults. How are the people youth identify as important to them involved in helping them achieve their goals?
  - a. How does the situation of the youth impact the involvement of supportive adults? For example, whether the youth lives on their own versus with relatives?

#### **Community context**

***Now, I'd like to learn a bit about the typical challenges and needs of youth in LifeSet.***

#### *Youth challenges and needs*

23. What are some of the challenges LifeSet youth typically face coming into the program?
24. Have you noticed differences in what youth from different racial and ethnic groups, cultures, or who speak languages other than English need?
  - a. Probe on: urban vs rural geographic location, linguistic needs of youth, cultural needs of youth, citizenship status
25. What would you say are the biggest service needs that youth in LifeSet have?

#### *Climate for youth transitioning from care*

26. In general, would you say that things have improved, worsened, or stayed the same for youth transitioning from care in New Jersey over the last couple years? Why?

#### **Closing Questions**

***Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I have a couple closing questions.***

27. Is there anything that I did not ask about that you think I should know about LifeSet/ services as usual or your experience?
28. Do you have any final questions for me about the study, or about the research team?

*The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to evaluate the programs and services provided to young adults who are currently or were previously in foster care. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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 and expiration date for this collection are **OMB #: 0970-XXXX, Exp: XX/XX/XXXX**. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Michael Pergamit at [mpergamit@urban.org](mailto:mpergamit@urban.org).*