

Instrument 4B: Site Visit 2 Focus Group Guide for Staff: LifeSet Team Supervisors

Introduction

Thank you for joining us today. We would like to invite you to participate in a 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 Supervisor?
3. How long have you worked at your agency?
4. What is the size of your caseload?

Program Model

First, 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 need to have to start LifeSet in their agency, what would they be?
7. [Bring/ show copy of the logic model] We have been shown this logic model. Does this reflect inputs, outputs and outcomes of LifeSet in New Jersey? If not, what would you add or take away from this model to make it more accurate?
 - a. Inputs are program resources such as staff, caseload size, and tools.
 - b. Outputs are program activities such as supervision and consultation, sessions with youth, setting youth goals, and holding group sessions with youth.
 - c. Outcomes, or goals, are the changes the program expects will result from the inputs and outputs such as increased education and employment or housing stability.

New Jersey-Specific Modification

8. How, if at all, has COVID impacted service delivery?

Fidelity

9. How much leeway would you say LifeSet Specialists have in delivering the program? Are they encouraged to make changes to the protocol to meet the individual needs of youth?
 - a. How are Specialists made aware of what changes they can or cannot make?
10. Would you say that Specialists are well-trained on the LifeSet model? How do you know?

Staff Requirements and Responsibilities

Next, I'd like to learn a little bit about the recruitment and hiring process for Specialists.

Recruitment and hiring of Specialists

11. Were any of you involved in the recruitment and hiring of LifeSet Specialists? If so, could someone describe that process?
12. What has been the turnover rate of Specialists in your agencies?
13. What makes it harder or easier to retain Specialists?

The next few questions are about your experience becoming a LifeSet Supervisor and the training you receive.

Required training and professional development

14. What's the onboarding process for LifeSet Supervisors? Can you describe what your first days as a LifeSet Team Supervisor were like, what you did, and how you were trained?
15. How ready did you feel once you started as a LifeSet Supervisor?
 - a. Was there anything that you didn't anticipate that happened in your first week?
16. What specific clinical expertise/experience that is needed for your role as a supervisor?
17. Are there mandatory trainings that you must complete for your role as a supervisor? 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 their referral.

Eligibility and intake

18. What happens after youth are referred to LifeSet? What information about the youth do you have at referral?
19. How do you confirm that youth are eligible for LifeSet?
 - a. What happens when a referred youth is not eligible?
20. How are youth assigned to a LifeSet Specialist?
21. Who do youth meet with first? What's important to know about this first point of contact (i.e., anything specifically important to do during this first meeting, how to introduce LifeSet to the youth, etc.?)
22. What is the enrollment and intake process for youth in LifeSet?
23. What happens if youth say they do not want to enroll in LifeSet?
24. After the first meeting, who do the youth work with and when?

LifeSet Services

25. Can someone please tell me how LifeSet service plans are created and what a typical plan looks like?
26. 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
27. What services and supports do youth receive?
28. What services are provided "in-house," and what services require outside referrals?
 - a. Who makes the referral to these services? What types of services are youth commonly referred to?
29. How long are youth typically in LifeSet?
30. What triggers closing a LifeSet case? What factors lead your agency to end LifeSet services for youth (i.e., discharge them from the program)?
31. How typical is it for youth to stop and start LifeSet? When does this typically occur and why?
32. We understand that a main component of LifeSet is building youths' relationships with supportive adults. How are people youth identify as important 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?
33. What other LifeSet components that help youth achieve positive outcomes?

Community context

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

Youth challenges and needs

34. What are some of the challenges LifeSet youth typically face when they come into program?

35. 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

36. What would you say are the biggest service needs that youth in LifeSet have?

Climate for youth transitioning from care

37. 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.

38. Is there anything that I did not ask about that you think I should know about LifeSet/ services as usual or your experience?
39. 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.*