

# **Instrument 3: Semi-Structured Protocol: Interview with Child Welfare Agency Leaders**

**A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for  
Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare**

This protocol will be used to facilitate one-on-one discussions with agency leadership to understand their experience participating in the BSC to improve engagement of fathers and paternal relatives.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average one hour. This collection of information is voluntary and all responses collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

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## **Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Project**

### **Semi-Structured Protocol: Interview with Child Welfare Agency Leaders**

***Note to interviewer:** The following detailed script should not be read verbatim. As the interviewer, you must be familiar enough with the script to introduce the study and the focus of the interview without reading word-for-word from the script. Please familiarize yourself thoroughly with the text before you conduct interviews. After introducing the site visit team and the study based on the detailed script, there is a brief script at the end that must be read verbatim to review the fundamental rights of the participants.*

#### Detailed Script

##### Introducing the interviewer and co-interviewer

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We especially appreciate your willingness to participate in this site visit online given these extraordinary circumstances. We are from Mathematica, an independent research firm. My name is [NAME], and my colleague is [NAME].

##### Explaining the project and the purpose of the group discussion

You should have received a copy of a Consent Information Form by email. If you did not, please let us know and we will send you that information. I'm going to review the content of that form before we begin.

We are conducting the Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare project for the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Our project is designed to support and learn about how child welfare agencies can engage fathers and paternal relatives using the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) methodology. The BSC is an approach used to reach important systemwide goals. Organizations conduct small tests of change and collect data from the tests to improve their practice. In this case, the sites in our study had the goal of improving

their engagement of fathers and paternal relatives, and Mathematica is working with the sites to support the implementation of the BSC.

We are interested in hearing about your agency's experience using the BSC to identify and implement promising strategies to help father and paternal relative's engagement. We are also interested in learning about your experiences using a BSC to improve engagement of fathers and paternal relatives; what you find helpful about the BSC; and what you think should be improved. We hope you feel comfortable enough to speak freely about your experience.

### Privacy and taping

Our study team will summarize today's discussion for the purposes of this project only. We will keep the information you provide in these discussions private to the extent permitted by law. We will not use any names or associate your name with a specific statement. We value the information you will share with us, and want to make sure we capture it all by recording this WebEx discussion. We will destroy the recording at the end of the project. If you want to say anything that you do not want recorded, please let me know, and I will be glad to pause the recording.

Before we start, I would like to remind you that participating in this interview is voluntary. We expect this discussion to take about 60 minutes. There are no repercussions if you choose not to participate. If you do not know the answer to a question, please let us know that, and we will simply move on. If you prefer not to answer a question for any reason, please let us know that, and we will move on. Do we have your permission to proceed with the discussion?

Do you object to our recording the discussion? Before we get started, do you have any questions?

### Ground rules for discussion

Before we start, we want to give you some ground rules about how our time together will go.

- Mute yourself when you are not speaking.
- Use your web camera if you are able.
- This will be an informal discussion.
- The discussion will last about 60 minutes. There will be no formal breaks. Please let us know if you need to step away.
- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. We are interested in learning everyone's opinion.
- We would like only one person to talk at a time so the recording can pick up everyone, but we hope that each of you will contribute. We value your opinions and want to hear about your experiences.
- To keep us on schedule, I might change the subject or move ahead from time to time.
- We also ask that you keep the discussion private and not share what you hear with others outside this discussion.

- Are there any questions? Is everyone/are you comfortable with these ground rules?

Also, before we begin I need to share with you 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 information collection 0970-0356 and the expiration date is 07/31/2022.

### **Brief Verbatim Script**

“Before we start, I would like to remind you that participating in this interview is voluntary. We expect this discussion to take about 60 minutes. There are no repercussions if you choose not to participate. If you do not know the answer to a question, please let us know that, and we will simply move on. If you prefer not to answer a question for any reason, please let us know that, and we will move on. Do we have your permission to proceed with the discussion?”

[The discussions will be tailored to the specific persons interviewed and interview format. To the extent information is not available from other sources collected through the BSC, such as the plan-study-do-act planning form and tracker, the following are guidelines for points for discussion.]

*To get things started, we will start with your role in the agency, and then we will discuss your experiences related to [agency’s] participation in the BSC.*

- A. Please introduce yourself by telling us how long you have been working at [agency], and describing your responsibilities.

*We learned that [agency] used the following strategies to engage fathers or paternal relatives: (pull from prior interviews or PDSA trackers).*

- B. How has your approach to engaging fathers and paternal relatives changed leading up to and during your agency’s participation in the BSC?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. How do the strategies identified through the BSC build on the strategies you previously used to engage fathers and paternal relatives?
2. How do the strategies identified through the BSC conflict with strategies you previously used to engage fathers and paternal relatives?

- C. How, if at all, have community, state, and/or national contextual factors influenced implementation of the BSC?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. What do you see as the greatest needs and challenges for fathers and paternal relatives of the children you serve in this community/county/state?
2. How, if at all, has the state or local policy climate affected your ability to engage fathers and paternal relatives? How does state or local policy affect the strategies you use to engage fathers and paternal relatives?
3. How did you select the community partners that you have been working with in the BSC? Why were these partners chosen?

*The Collaborative Change Framework guides the work of the improvement teams. We would like to learn more about how your agency selected the domains for the BSC. We are also interested in who was involved in these decisions.*

D. How did [agency] select the domains?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. How, if at all, were you involved in selecting the domains to focus on?
  2. How did you decide:
    - a. Which domains to focus on first?
    - b. What the agency needed to do to address these domains?

*Next, we would like to discuss supports for implementing the BSC.*

E. What resources (infrastructure and supports) have you needed from your agency or its partners to implement the BSC?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. We know that child welfare staff and their partners have many demands on their time. What, if any, adjustments to workload and responsibilities has your agency made to accommodate members of the Improvement Team?
2. Did the agency have the appropriate resources to participate in the BSC? If not, what additional resources would have been helpful?
3. How, if at all, has staff turnover affected your agency's implementation of the BSC?

*Thank you for you sharing your thoughts—your input is invaluable. As we close our discussion, we are interested in your reflections on the BSC's impact on your agency and the lessons you learned that you would share with other agencies, the larger child welfare system, and policymakers.*

F. In your opinion, what aspects of participating in the BSC are most rewarding?  
What aspects are most challenging?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. Are there lessons you have learned or advice you would like to share with other agencies interested in participating in a BSC? Lessons learned or advice about designing and implementing high quality and effective strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives?

Thank you for your time today.