

# **Instrument 4: Semi-Structured Protocol: Group Interview of Fathers and Paternal Relatives on the Improvement Team**

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

This protocol will be used to conduct group interviews with fathers and paternal relatives who are members of the Improvement Team.

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.

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 is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 07/31/2022.

## Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Project

### Semi-Structured Protocol: Group Interview of Fathers and Paternal Relatives on the Improvement Team

*Note to interviewer:* The following 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.

#### Introducing the interviewer and co-interviewer

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. 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

I am going to start out by giving you a bit of background and talk about why we wanted to meet with you today. 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 find out how child welfare agencies can engage fathers and paternal relatives by using the Breakthrough Series Collaborative, or BSC. The BSC is an approach used to reach important system-wide goals. Organizations that are trying out changes do small tests of how the changes go and collect data on them to improve their practice. In this case, the sites in our study worked to improve their engagement of fathers and paternal relatives, and Mathematica is working with the sites to support the implementation of the BSC.

We are talking with fathers and their relatives who have been involved with agencies like [AGENCY NAME] to learn about their experiences with the child welfare system and about their participation in the teams that implemented the BSC and the small tests of change. I 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 provided 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 using the recording. 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 recorder.

Before we start, I would like to remind you that participating in this interview is voluntary. 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, you do not need to respond. Do we have your permission to proceed with the discussion?

Does anyone object to our recording the discussion? Before we get started, does anyone 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.

- This will be an informal discussion.
- The discussion will last about 60 minutes. There will be no formal breaks. Please feel free to stretch or use the restroom whenever you need to.
- 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 recorder 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 help us learn all that we want to learn from you, I might change the subject or move ahead from time to time.
- We also ask that you keep the discussion private, and do not share what you hear with others outside this room.
- Are there any questions?

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 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 07/31/2022.

*To get things started, I am going to go around the room and ask each of you to give your first name. Then we will discuss your experiences related to [name of child welfare agency]. We would like everyone to participate in the discussion.*

A. Please introduce yourself, and tell us about when you first connected with [AGENCY].

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. What did you think interacting with [AGENCY] was going to be like?
2. How could your experience with [AGENCY] have been better?

*Now, we would like to learn more about how the agency developed its strategies to involve fathers and paternal relatives and your experience on the improvement team.*

B. How, if at all, were you involved in selecting, adapting, or designing the agency's engagement strategies as part of the BSC?

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. What were the key issues and challenges you faced when designing (or adapting) strategies? How did you address these challenges?
2. What support did you receive to participate in the Improvement Team?

**C. What is most useful to you about the shared learning environment?  
What could be better?**

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. What is most useful about the Learning Sessions? What could be better?
2. What is most useful about the Faculty Coaches? What could be better?
3. What is most useful about the Affinity Group calls? What could be better?
4. What is most useful about the collaborative SharePoint site? What could be better?

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

**D. In your opinion, what parts of engaging with the agency in the BSC were most rewarding? Which parts were most challenging?**

*[Probe on the following if needed]*

1. How do you think participating in the BSC is affecting the agency's ability to involve fathers and paternal relatives in case planning?

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us today.