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Instrument 4. Discussion Guide for REFRAME Community Listening Sessions

REFRAME: Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families Project

Introductory Statement and Consent

Thank you for your interest in today's discussion. This listening session is being conducted as part of the *Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families (REFRAME)* project sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. MEF Associates is conducting the study for them, with Insight Policy Research as partners. MEF Associates and Insight Policy Research are social policy research organizations located in the Washington, DC area. We are not employees of the federal government.

(Would pause here and introduce all of our team members).

The federal government funds a lot of different types of programs to help support families. Some of them work with nonresident dads, some with married or partnered parents, and some with adolescents. Many of those programs serve a large number of Black individuals. We know that Black families have cultivated strengths and resilience due, in part, to the unique systemic and structural challenges that they have experienced. We know this means supporting Black families might be different from how to best support other groups of families.

For service providers: We want to hear from you today about the experiences of Black families in the community, how they cope with and overcome institutional and systemic barriers that they face, the sources of their resilience, and your community's priorities for uplifting Black families.

For participants/clients: We want to hear from you today about your experiences raising a Black family, your family's strengths, your goals or dreams for your family, and how a program that wants to help you raise a great family can better meet your needs. Your participation is voluntary. You are not required to meet with us or answer our questions, and you may stop participating in the discussion at any time without any consequences. While we will encourage you to contribute to the discussion, you may choose not to answer any question you wish and can leave the discussion at any time.

You will receive a gift card in the amount of \$50 as a thank you for your time.

The discussion will take about 90 minutes. We're going to listen, and take notes on what you say. In our reports we're going to share the ideas and suggestions you gave, but we're never going to attach your name to anything you say in our reporting.

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 XX/XX/XXXX.

Ground Rules for Session

Before we begin, let me go over a couple of guidelines.

- While we will ask some questions to guide the discussion, our goal is to hear from you.
- This discussion is meant to be informal and relaxed.
- We won't have any breaks, but if you need to get up to use the restroom, stretch or get a drink, please do so as needed.
- There are no right or wrong answers. It is okay to share your opinions or thoughts even if they are different from what others have said. We want everyone to participate, and the opinions and experiences of everyone in the room are important. We want to hear different perspectives.
- Please talk one at a time so that I can hear everything that is said.
- Please remember to mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- I want to hear from all of you. Some people talk more than others, and I'll be encouraging everyone to speak up.
- The discussion today is private. Please do not discuss or share anything you heard after you leave the group.

Are you ok with starting the focus group?

A. Introductions

Start with a warm up question and ask participants to introduce themselves. Depending on the audience, you can probe for first name, organizational affiliation, title, family role (e.g., mother, uncle, son) etc.

B. Existing strategies and strengths to overcoming barriers. (Service Providers)

1. What do you see as the most valuable or notable strengths, assets, and resiliencies in the Black clients you serve?
 - a. How do these strengths and resiliencies support Black clients in addressing challenges?
2. Can you share an example of a time where you or your organization was able to effectively address a challenge impacting Black individuals, couples, or families etc.?
 - a. Explain the example.
3. What has been the most helpful in supporting the journey and goals of community members in overcoming this challenge (i.e., partnerships, cultural values, community resources, staff, volunteers, engagement strategies, practices, etc.)?
4. What supports were difficult to obtain or leverage to address the problem for your client(s) (i.e., partners, volunteers, buy-in, staff, etc.)?
5. Have you had an opportunity to tell decision-makers or program designers what they should do to support the growth, pursuit of goals or recover from challenges experienced by your clients/consumers? If so, what did you share? If not, what would that be?

Below are probing questions to guide the discussion if necessary.

1. Share an example of how your (organization or practice) worked to help [target population] overcome institutional challenges.
 - a. Probes: services provided, issues addressed, groups served?
2. Describe how the affected [target population] overcame the challenge. Tell us how you/your organization supported them in addressing the challenge.
 - a. Do you think this challenge is related to broad systemic issues faced by other Black community members? In what ways?
3. What about the [population type] helped them to overcome that barrier?
 - a. Probes: personality traits, motivations, self-perceptions, support systems
 - b. How have the [population type] affected by [barrier] grown in overcoming this challenge?
4. What aspects of cultural identity or practices of communities helped the group/individual overcome the challenge?
 - a. Probes: values of spirituality, family, extended support systems
5. What community resources did you rely on or leverage in addressing this challenge?
 - a. Probes: partnerships, volunteer networks, institutions, activism organizations
 - b. How did you leverage these institutions?
6. What about your organization or practices helped the affected Black [population type] to overcome [challenge]?
 - a. Probes: treatment models, counseling, engagement strategies, community involvement
7. What did you learn from your experience with this specific challenge? What would you like programs, policy makers, program designers and organizations working with Black [population type] to know?
 - a. What is important for programs to know when working with Black [population type]?
 - b. What practices could organizations apply to better serve Black families or to better address issues affecting Black families?
 - c. What do you wish the organizations your clients are involved with did differently? In particular in regards to the challenge you described.

**C. Existing strategies and strengths to overcoming barriers.
(Clients/Consumers)**

1. What do you see as the most valuable or notable strengths, assets, and resiliencies in yourself, your family, and your community?
2. How do these strengths and resiliencies support you, your family, and your community in addressing challenges?
3. Can you share an example of a time when you effectively addressed a challenge impacting you? *Describe the challenge and how you overcame it. What supported you in addressing the challenge?*
4. Can you clarify what has been most helpful in your journey to overcome this challenge (i.e., organizations, counselors, mentors, other members of their network)? What about these sources of support were especially helpful?
5. What could have been helpful for you in overcoming the challenge? Was this difficult to obtain?

6. If you had an opportunity to tell decision-makers or program designers what they should do to support your growth, pursuit of goals, or recovery from challenges based on what you shared today, what would that be?

Below are probing questions to guide the discussion if necessary.

1. What about *you* do you feel helped you to overcome the challenges?
 - a. Probes: personality traits, motivations, self-perceptions, support systems
 - b. How did you grow in overcoming this challenge?
2. What institutions, organizations or groups in your community supported or helped you overcome this challenge?
 - a. Probes: churches, family, extended support systems
3. How did these supports help you exactly? What did they do that was different from other supports?
4. What did you learn from your experience with this specific challenge? What would you like programs, policy makers, organizations working with other Black families to know?
5. What is important for programs to know when working with Black families?
6. What practices could organizations apply to better serve Black families or to better address issues affecting families?
7. What do you wish the organizations your clients are involved with did differently? With regards to the challenge you described
8. How does [organization mentioned] help Black individuals/families/youth overcome institutional barriers?
 - a. Probes: services provided, issues addressed, groups served

D. Closing

9. Before we end, is there anything else you would like to say that you wanted to say earlier, but didn't get a chance to?

Clarify payment procedures and inform clients on how they can reach you through the zoom chat function.