Protocol for Cognitive Interviews

2023 Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV)

(Draft February 8, 2023)

### Background on SSV

The 2023 Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) includes forms SSV-1, SSV-2, SSV-3, SSV-4, SSV-5, SSV-6, SSV-IA, & SSV-IJ. The SSV is sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) of the U.S. Department of Justice. BJS is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels.

### Purpose

Cognitive interviews will be conducted to gain a better understanding of how respondents interpret the format and language of both the summary and incident instruments as well as to identify burden to determine what improvements should be implemented into survey.

### Population of Interest for Cognitive Interviews

State prison systems; state juvenile correctional systems; the federal prison system; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); the U.S. military; local or privately-operated jail jurisdictions; privately-operated prisons; locally or privately-operated juvenile facilities; and facilities in Indian country.

### Interview Recruitment

Respondents will be recruited via email and will be able to choose their preferred date for interviewing through Qualtrics. Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary and will receive a form for consent via Qualtrics.

### Introduction

* Thank you very much for taking the time to join us today. We are considering some changes to the latest version of the Survey of Sexual Victimization, and we’d like to get your feedback and input on the survey and its level of burden.
* Any information you provide will be kept confidential under U.S. Code 34 § 10231.

### About the Respondent

1. Name
2. Job Title/Duties?
3. Do you recall if you completed the SSV when it was last conducted? If yes, could you tell me about your experience?
	1. (Or how much experience do you have completing the Survey of Sexual Victimization?
4. Do you work with anyone else in your facility to gather data for this survey?
	1. If yes, what is their job title? And what was their role in gathering/providing data?
5. How much time do you spend on the SSV (from gathering data, answering questions, and submission)?

### Summary Forms

Now let us take a look at the summary forms. Please open the summary form sent to you via email prior to this meeting.

If you take a look at the summary form, you will notice some changes. I will give you time to look over the form before asking the next set of questions.

Reporting Instructions

1. Overall, do you find that the instructions provided on the summary form are straightforward? If not, what would make them easier to understand?
2. A change to the summary form is the removal of the check box option for reporting the value of ‘none’ or ‘zero’. Are the instructions located on page ‘1’ for reporting the value of ‘none’ or ‘zero’ clear and concise? If not, how would this instruction be better explained?

Definitions

This survey now utilizes the PREA Standards definitions for the different types of victimizations. I will give you time to review the definitions.

The definitions can be found on two separate pages of the summary form. Please notice the Inmate-on-Inmate Sexual Victimization definitions located (Section 1 for the SSV-1 or 2, Section 2 for SSV-3,4,5, or 6), and Staff-on-Inmate Sexual Victimization definitions located (Section 2 for the SSV-1 or 2, Section 3 for SSV-3,4,5, or 6).

With the change in definitions for the SSV, do you find the definitions provided are clear and concise? If not, what would you like to see better explained?

1. Now that the definitions provided in the SSV mirror the PREA Standards definitions, do your records accommodate these changes?

General

1. Do you find the form has enough space for you to report responses adequately?
2. Are you reporting all allegations whether substantiated, unsubstantiated, or unfounded?
3. Are there any additional comments you would like to provide regarding SSV Summary Forms before moving on?

### Incident Forms

Now let us take a look at the incident form. Please open the incident form sent to you via email prior to this meeting.

If you take a look at the incident form, you will notice the format has changed a bit. I will give you time to look over the form before asking the next set of questions.

Definitions

This survey now utilizes the PREA Standards definitions for the different types of victimizations. Similar to the Summary forms you just reviewed, we also changed the definitions for the SSV Incident forms. We would like you focus on the definitions regarding sex and gender on page 14. I will give you time to review the definitions.

1. In regard to the definitions for sex and gender categories, do you find those definitions easy to understand? If not, what would you like to see better explained?

Formatting

If you take a look, the incident forms now utilize the responses of yes or no for some questions.

1. Do you find the ‘yes’/ ‘no’ format easy to understand?
2. For questions that utilize the ‘yes’/’no’ format, are the instructions clear and concise? If not, what would make them easier to understand?
3. How would you respond to questions that utilize the ‘yes’/’no’ format?

### Incident Form Questions

Question #1

1. We have added the option to check a box for incidents occurring on multiple dates. Is the meaning of this check box clear and do you understand when to use it?

Question #7

1. Instructions now will navigate you through the survey questionnaire. You will see that for every victimization type, you must complete Section A. Section A asks about the victim(s). It then directs you to complete either Section B (if an inmate/youth perpetrator) or Section C (if a staff perpetrator).
2. Do you find that the instructions provided for question #7 clear and concise? If not, what would make them easier to understand?

Section A

Question #8

1. If more than 2 victims, you will be required to complete the online version of the survey instrument. Will this be difficult for you in completing the survey?
2. We will also be asking about victimization effects and outcomes per victim as opposed to outcomes that applied to all victims involved, as in prior years’ collections. Will this be difficult for you in completing the survey?

**Questions #9-16** are for Victim #1 only. This is new. You will be completing them only for victim #1 and then starting with #17, answering for Victim #2. Is this problematic?

Sex and Gender Identity Questions

Question #9

1. What was the victim’s sex?
2. What record would you consult to answer this question?
3. How easy or hard would it be to access that record?
	1. If there are challenges, how would you attempt to gather the data? Or would the question be skipped?

Question #10

1. What was the victim’s gender identity? (on gender identity): How would you report gender identity generally?
2. How do you usually know this information? (Examples, if necessary: from interactions with a victim, what they tell you, administrative records of gender identity, or consulting someone else?)
3. Are the categories listed exhaustive? Do your records differ from these?
4. Do you have any thoughts on the two-question approach?
5. Do you foresee any issues associated with reporting about gender identity separately from sex?

Question #11

1. This question asks you to provide the victim’s exact age in years at the time of the incident. Do you have any problems answering this question?

Race and Ethnicity Questions

Question #12

1. This question asks about the race or ethnicity of the victim.
	1. What are the race or ethnicity categories that you have in your records?
		1. How would you manage categories in your system that are not shown here?
	2. You will notice that there is a new response category of “Middle Eastern or North African”. Does your information system include this race category?
	3. There is no longer an option of “other” and a space to write in different race or ethnicity categories. Would this be a problem for you? Does your information system include another option not listed here?
	4. This question instructs you to select multiple race or ethnicity options. Do your information systems also have the option for multiple race and ethnicities to be recorded?
2. I’d like to show you an alternative option for this question that includes additional information.

[Show the long form version]



Would you be able to provide information about the victim’s race or ethnicity to this level of detail?

Question #13

1. We ask if Victim #1 had any injuries. Is this list problematic to answer yes or no to each injury? We also rearranged these so that they appear in an order of least to most potentially severe or lethal Do you agree with this arrangement? Is it easier to follow?
2. The current part b. of this question asks about medical treatment for any injuries. Would you be able to answer which specific injuries noted in part a. required medical treatment?

Question #14

1. We ask if Victim #1 had any treatment. Is this list problematic to answer yes or no to each? We rearranged the order of these and added a new selection at 04. Do you agree with this arrangement and are you ok with this additional category?

Question #15

1. We ask if Victim #1 had any sanctions or changes in custody. Is this list problematic to answer yes or no to each? We rearranged the order of these to flow from temporary measures to more permanent changes in the victim’s custody. Do you agree with this arrangement?

Section B – Inmate/youth perpetrated victimizations

Question #23

We ask about the nature of the incident between the victim and the perpetrator. We have rearranged the response options so they are sorted from least to most severe and also will be asking yes or no for each selection.

1. Does this arrangement make sense to you? Is it easy to follow?

Question #24

We ask about the types of pressure, coercion, or force that occurred as part of the inmate/youth perpetrated incident. We have rearranged this question with verbal and situational pressures being first on the list and physical pressures following. It also asks yes or no for each selection.

1. Do you agree with this arrangement?
2. Is it easier to follow?
3. We have added some further explanations under selection 07. Do you agree with this addition?

Question #26

Just like the inmate/youth victim section, we will now ask about each individual inmate/youth perpetrator – their demographic details and the sanctions that they faced after the incident.

**Questions #26-30** are for perpetrator #1 only. This is new. You will be completing only for perpetrator #1 and then starting with #31, answering each question for perpetrator #2. Is this problematic? If there are more than 2 perpetrators, you will be directed to complete this form online. Would you be able to do so?

Question #26

1. What was the inmate/youth perpetrator’s sex? What record would you consult to answer this question?
2. How easy or hard would it be to access that record?
	1. If there are challenges, how would you attempt to gather the data? Or would the question be skipped?

Question #27

1. How do you usually know this information? (Examples, if necessary: from interactions with an inmate/youth, what they tell you, administrative records of gender identity, or consulting someone else?)
2. Are the categories listed exhaustive? Do your records differ from these?
3. Do you have any thoughts on the two-question approach?
4. Do you foresee any issues associated with reporting about gender identity separately from sex?

Question #30

We ask about the sanctions for inmate/youth perpetrator #1. We have rearranged this question so responses flow from temporary to permanent custody changes, to sanctions related to their current incarceration, to the most severe criminal consequences. It also asks for you to respond yes or no for each selection.

1. Do you agree with this arrangement?
2. Is it easier to follow?
3. We have added some further explanations under selection 06 and a new option of 13 (“awaiting a legal outcome”). Do you agree with these additions and understand when to select them?
4. Would you be able to use these?
5. Are they valid?

Section C – Staff-perpetrated victimization

Question #36

We ask about the nature of the incident between the victim and the staff perpetrator. We have rearranged this question according to severity and also will be asking yes or no for each selection.

1. Do you agree with this arrangement? Is it easier to follow?
2. Are there any terms listed in these response options that are unclear or need clarification?

Question #37

We will be asking how many staff were involved in the incident and if there were more than 2 staff, directing you to fill out the form online. Questions #38-45 are for staff perpetrator #1 only. This is new.

1. You will be answering questions about the demographic details, employment details, and sanctions for each staff member individually if two or more are involved. What records do you need to consult to find this information? Is this problematic?

Questions #38 and #39

As with Sections A and B that ask about the sex and gender identity of the inmate/youth involved in this incident, here we have a two-question measure for staff.

1. Do you record both the sex and gender identity of staff members?
2. Are the categories reflective of your records or do you use different categories?
3. Do you see any challenges to reporting both sex and gender identity of staff perpetrators?
4. If there are challenges, how would you attempt to gather the data? Or would the question be skipped?
5. Are your staff records maintained in a different filing system?
6. Is it easier to retrieve this information from staff filing records vs inmate filing records?

Question #41

1. As with the question related to inmate/youth ethnicity and race, we have included a revised question about the involved staff member’s race or ethnicity.
	1. Do your records or staff race or ethnicity align with the categories shown here? If not, how would you go about answering this question?
	2. An option for “Middle Eastern or North African” has been added. Is this a category in your staff information system?
	3. The option for reporting an “other” race category has been removed. Do your information systems collect a different racial category that you may need to specify?
2. As you will recall when we discussed the inmate/youth victim’s characteristics, I showed you an extended version of this question that contained detailed information about the country of origin within larger racial and ethnic categories. Would you be able to provide this level of detail for staff?

Question #43

We have reordered the position description according to positions with the most to least contact with inmates/youth for the staff perpetrator #1.

* 1. Is this exhaustive?
	2. Do you agree with the rearrangement?

Question #45

We ask about the sanctions for staff perpetrator #1. We have rearranged this question according to severity of the sanction and also will be asking yes or no for each selection.

1. Do you agree with this arrangement?
2. Is it easier to follow?
3. We have added some further explanations under selection 11. Do you agree with this addition? Would you be able to use it?
4. Is it valid?

### Web Instrument

1. Do you find the web instrument easy to navigate?
2. If any, what improvements would you like to see in our online survey?

### Wrap-Up

That is all the questions I have for you today. Is there any additional information that you would like to share?

**Thank you so much for your time and assistance!**