Instrument 4: Site Visit Focus Group Protocol – Youth Focus Groups

Informed Consent Script

Hello, my name is [name], and I am here with my colleague(s), [name(s)]. We are from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and economic policy research organization based in Washington DC. ***(IF APPLICABLE)*** **[TRANSLATOR NAME]** is also here from **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** to help with translation. The US Department of Health and Human Services is paying for this study.

We have invited you here today to learn more about how **[LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]** is serving young people. The discussion should take up to 1.5 hours, including time to check everyone in and get settled. You will receive a $40 gift card as a token of our appreciation.

> ***Comprehension check****: Does that make sense? Does everyone understand the purpose of today's discussion?*

It's important that you know that this conversation is voluntary. That means you don't have to participate if you don't want to. And benefits or services you receive will not be affected in any way should you choose not to participate. If you do choose to participate, you may also leave the conversation at any time or skip any questions that you want to. You will still receive a $40 gift card for your participation if you leave during the conversation to thank you for your time.

> ***Comprehension check****: Is everyone good so far? Does everyone understand that they don't have to participate and that they can skip any question that they want to?*

Now I will explain how the information from this discussion will be used. First, we will be taking notes during this conversation, and we consider the information you share with us to be private. Everyone on the research team has signed a pledge promising to never share your name with anyone outside of our team. We won't name you in a quote or tell anyone what you said today. And when we write our reports and discuss our findings, information from all the people we speak with will be combined so that no one person can be identified.

We will share our findings with our funder. We will also produce one or more publications. ***[IF APPLICABLE]*** There's a small chance that the person who told you about the focus group or anyone here who saw you come to this location today could try to guess what you might have shared. However, because of the care we take to summarize general themes across everyone, we think that risk is very small.

[IF APPLICABLE] Note that **[TRANSLATOR NAME]** is of course here as well to help with translation and has also signed a pledge—like the research team—to promise to not share information you share outside of this session. Please keep that in mind when deciding whether or not to participate.

During the discussion, others may share sensitive information. We ask that you only use your first name and avoid mentioning information that could identify you personally to help keep your identity and identities of everyone in the group safe. There is also some risk that others in the group may share what you say outside of the group. We ask that everyone in the group respect the other participants and not share information they hear today with anyone outside this group. That said, we can't control what others in the group outside our research team may report that they heard over the course of this discussion, so please consider whether to participate, as well as what you may choose to share if you do participate.

> ***Comprehension check****: Does everyone understand how we will keep what you share today safe? Does everyone understand what we mean when we say what you share will be kept private?*

Next, we'll discuss some safety measures we're taking to keep everyone healthy from illnesses. As with any in-person gathering, there is the risk of getting sick. We are taking precautions that we'd like to share with you. We have high-quality masks available if you want them. However, we ask that if you're not feeling well, you leave the session—you'll still receive your $40 gift card. I also want to discuss a few benefits of your participation so we're all

clear. We value your experience and perspective. We find that many people enjoy participating in groups like this. And you would help in our effort to identify opportunities to improve services for youth at risk of experiencing homelessness.

On the other hand, it's possible that you could find some of the discussion we have stressful given we may discuss personal experiences, but again it's all voluntary and you can choose not to participate or skip questions.

> ***Comprehension check***: *Does anyone have any questions or concerns about the risks and benefits of participating in today's discussion?*

Do you agree to participate in this discussion?

Additionally, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this discussion. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept within our small research team and possibly a secure transcription service. We will only record if everyone here is okay with it.

Are you okay with recording this session?

[If written consent given, turn on recorder]

Introduction

Thanks so much for agreeing to take part in this discussion! Let's get to know each other a little bit before diving into our questions for you.

1. Please go around and tell us your first name and one thing you like to do for fun.

Thanks. For the rest of the questions, anyone should feel free to jump in to respond if you want to.

2. Would anyone be willing to share how you got to be involved with [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?
    a. PROBE: Who contacted you? What was going on in your life at that point?

MODULE A: Leading in Partnership with Youth and Young Adults with Experience of Homelessness

This module is intended only for the YAB focus group. These questions should not be given to young people who are participating in the RHY PDP programming, but not the co-design processes.

Thanks for that. Now we have some questions about experiences you may have had with sharing your perspective and perhaps helping make decisions about how the [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] would work.

3. [IF APPLICABLE] Our understanding is that you all have been involved with [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]'s Youth Advisory Board. Has anyone *not* been involved in that?
    a. [IF NOT EVERYONE IS INVOLVED] Thanks for confirming. Just answer these next few questions as you're able to and want to.
4. How did you get involved in the Youth Advisory Board?
    a. Who reached out to you about it?
    b. Why do you think you were invited?
    c. Why did you decide to join?

5. What kinds of things have you been asked to do as part of the Youth Advisory Board?
    a. PROBE: When you come to meetings, what has been the focus of those meetings?
    b. PROBE: What types of things are you asked for an opinion/guidance on?
    c. PROBE: Are there any other YAB activities that you have participated in?

6. How do you think of or define preventing youth homelessness? What does that look like? Does it seem to you that prevention is meaningfully defined in this project?

7. [Describe RHY PDP Prevention Plan] How and to what extent were you asked to share input on the Prevention Plan for [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?

8. What do you know about how your input was used in making decisions about what the Prevention Plan would look like?
    a. Do you think the plan reflects the needs and perspectives of young people like you? Why?

9. How good do you feel about how input from the Youth Advisory Board was gathered?
    a. How, if at all, could this process of gathering input be changed to better allow young people to express their views?

10. How good do you feel about how your input was used?

a. What would you like to see done differently if you could start the process of planning the Prevention Plan over again? Why?

11. To what extent are you continuing to be engaged with [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] in giving input on how it should be run to support young people?
    a. What is this continuing engagement involving?
12. To what extent do you believe that the RHY PDP project is providing welcoming environments at both the RHY PDP project and in the service organizations youth use, e.g., health, mental health, etc.?
    a. How is the RHY PDP project contributing to welcoming environments?
    b. What more needs to be done with respect to creating welcoming environments?
    c. Are there any program policies or have you been asked to complete an activity that is inconsistent with or in violation of your values or cultural upbringing?
    d. PROBES: translating documents into multiple languages, having multilingual staff
13. Has anyone been involved in giving input or collaborating on other aspects of how [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] is run? Please explain.
    a. What were you asked to do?
    b. What did you give feedback on?
    c. How good do you feel about how your input was gathered?
    d. How good do you feel about how your input was used?
    e. What could [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] do to improve how they collaborate with young people about how the program is run?

MODULE B: Youth Experiences of the RHY PDP

This module is intended only for young people being served by the RHY PDP program.

Next, we have some questions about more specific parts of what [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] is like.

14. What kinds of support or resources do you get from [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?
    a. PROBE: Cash assistance
    b. PROBE: Case management
    c. PROBE: [Insert other services as applicable from local RHY PDP plan, e.g., family mediation, financial planning or coaching, etc.]
    d. How do you access these services and supports?
15. What do you do with your [CASE MANAGER ROLE NAME]?
    a. How often do you meet with them?
    b. What do you talk about or work on?
    c. What do they help you out with?
    d. What, if anything, are they expecting you to do?
16. To what extent do you think services and supports from [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] are tailored to meet your specific needs? What makes you say that?
    a. In what ways do you think the services and supports are intended to prevent homelessness?
17. In your experience, do the RHY PDP programs and other service organizations in the community (e.g., health, mental health agencies) provide welcoming environments for young people?

a. How do you think the RHY PDP project contributes to welcoming environments?
b. What more needs to be done with respect to creating welcoming environments?

18. How well do you think [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] has served you overall? What makes you say that?
    a. Do you believe that the program prevented you from experiencing homelessness?
    b. What services or supports that you were provided have helped you the most?
    c. Which services or supports do you feel were not needed?

19. How much progress have you made toward your individual goals since being part of [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?
    a. PROBE: Safe, stable housing; education/employment; meaningful permanent relationships
    b. What services or supports from [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] have been most helpful for achieving your goals? Why?

20. What, if any, services or supports that you really need but can't get through [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?

21. Are there any other changes you'd like to see to how [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] works? What are they?

22. Have you received services for housing and services outside of [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]? Tell me about that.

23. Have you received services from the government outside of Runaway and Homeless Youth services?
    a. PROBE: Housing, health care (Medicaid), food (SNAP), cash assistance (TANF), other/local supports

Program Reach

Finally, we have some questions about how the [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] has reached a range of young people.

24. In your opinion, to what extent has the [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] treated all young people participating in the program equally well?
25. As far as you know, does [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM] staff engage a wide range of young people who might benefit from the program? Is anyone left out?

Wrap Up

26. Finally, is there anything else you think it would be important for us to understand about your experience with [LOCAL RHY PDP PROGRAM]?

Thank you!