

Designing and Conducting Group Interviews

Participants

- Interview groups of 5 to 10 people, but the preferred size for a group interview is 6 to 8
- Choose similar types of people for each interview (youth, seniors, etc.)

Moderator characteristics

- Someone who can direct the group, in an open and unobtrusive manner
- Your moderator should have some familiarity with sexual assault issues
- Best to have a moderator who appears like participants
- You want a moderator who can be present and free of distractions
- Good listening skills
- Familiar with the questions and different routes they might take

Assistant moderator

- Handles logistics
- Takes careful notes
- Monitors recording equipment if you choose to record conversations

Environment

- Create a warm and friendly environment
- Arrange seating in a circle
- Set a welcoming and open tone for conversation
- Informal but directed

Considerations for the conversation

- Begin with a snappy introduction that gets attention and establishes tone of openness
- Use 5 second pauses to provide space for responses
- Ask prompting questions such as “Tell me more about that” or “Can you give an example?”
- Keep reactions to responses short and as neutral as possible. Avoid head nodding, “great point,” and “excellent”
- Ask questions that yield powerful information
- Use open-ended questions
- Avoid survey language like “How satisfied were you?” or “To what extent...?”
- Avoid yes or no questions
- Instead of using “Why?” questions, ask attributes or influences – “What prompted you to take that route?” “What influenced your decision to...?”
- Use “think back” questions – take people back to an experience
- Use reflection, examples, choices, rating scales, that get participants involved

- Sequence your questions so that they go from the general to the specific

Adapted from Krueger, R.A., Designing and conducting focus group interviews, University of MN, October, 2002.

Are We Making a Difference? Sexual Assault Response Teams Assessing Systems Change: A Resource for Multidisciplinary Team Leadership (p. 74) by Emily Goff, Sharon Haas, Laura Pejsa, and Jessica Jerney, 2015. Retrieved from <http://resources.svji.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SVJI-evaluation-resource-for-Web-10.19.16.pdf> Reprinted with permission

Tips for note taking

Clarity and consistency

Others will be reviewing these notes at a later date, so they need to capture clearly, completely, and accurately what was shared in the conversation.

Field notes contain different types of information than general notes

What's in the notes needs to be easy to identify and organized into categories and themes.

Quotes

Listen for notable quotes and well-said statements that capture an important point of view. Write down sentences and phrases that eloquently express a particular perspective. Place speaker's name or initials after quotes. Capture as much of the quote as you can, with attention to key phrases. Use three periods (...) to indicate that you've missed sections.

Key points and themes for each question

Usually participants will talk about several key points in response to a question. These points are often made by several participants. Sometimes they're said only once, but in a manner that deserves attention. At the end of the conversation, the assistant moderator will read themes to participants and confirm with participants that they're the right ones.

Follow up questions

If an important point needs clarification, the assistant moderator might want to ask a follow up question to establish greater clarity about a particular or confusing point.

Big ideas and hunches from the recorder

Sometimes the recorder will discover a new concept, and a light will go off about a new way of thinking about something. Capture these insights to use in the analysis process.

Other factors

Be sure to include notes about passionate comments, body language, or other non-verbal communication from the group. Watch for head nods, physical excitement, eye contact, disagreement, and other physical cues.

Consider using a standardized recording form (such as the Sample group interview – General responder.)

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How to conduct a systematic analysis process

Start while still in the group

- Listen for inconsistent comments, and probe for greater understanding
- Listen for vague comments, and ask clarifying questions
- Consider asking each participant a final preference question – go around the circle
- Present the summary of points, and ask for confirmation “do I have it?”

Immediately after the group interview

- Draw a diagram of seating arrangement for debrief
- Debrief between moderator and assistant moderator
- Note themes, hunches, interpretations, and ideas
- Compare and contrast with other group interviews
- Label and file notes and other materials from this group interview

Within hours of the group interview

- Review notes and prepare a report of this group interview in a question by question format
- Share report between moderator and assistant moderator and any other leadership present

Within days of the interview

- Compare and contrast results by categories between group interviews
- Look for emerging themes by question, and then overall
- Diagram the analysis into themes
- Describe findings, and use quotes to illustrate

Final report

- Consider a narrative style instead of a “bullet-point” format
- Be sure to include quotes
- The sequence could be question by question, or by theme
- Have a researcher review the report, if possible
- Revise, following input, and finalize

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A sample group interview

Welcome

We appreciate you taking the time to meet with us. I'm (facilitator).... and this is (assistant facilitator conversation documenter) ...

Our topic is...

We are conducting this interview on behalf of the (your team). We're interested to hear more about your experiences with some of the agencies connected to the team and this work. Our purpose for the interview is to learn from what you share and ultimately to better serve all members of the community.

We'll add what we've learned in these interviews to other information we've collected, and put everything together in a report of our findings and recommendations of things we can improve.

You have been selected because you've been referred by one of the agencies working with our team or because you've received services from a connected agency. This is one of (how many?) group interviews that we'll be doing.

Guidelines

Before we start, we want to establish some guidelines for our time together. It's important that you know that there are no right or wrong answers. This is about your opinions and your experiences.

We'll be tape recording, or taking notes, so in order to capture all responses, only one person should be speaking at a time.

We mentioned a report earlier, so we want you to know that whatever is shared in that report will not identify you. Related to this, we'd ask that whatever is shared here stays within the group and is not discussed with others. Is there anyone who cannot abide by this? Unless there is any objection, we'll refer to one another by first names and that includes the two of us moderators (you have name tags to help you out.)

There's no expectation that you'll agree with what others share, but there is the expectation that everyone gets to share their ideas and be listened to and respected by other participants.

Rules for cell phones if applicable: (Either turn all cell phones off or, if you must respond to a call, please do so quietly and rejoin the group quickly.)

My role as the moderator will be to guide the discussion. (Assistant facilitator's) role is to document the conversation, to summarize what you've said, and possibly to raise some questions at the end.

Please direct your comments to one another and not just to me. We'd like this to be a conversation.

Opening question and key questions

- What is your relationship to (organization)?
- Thinking back over your experience with this agency / organization, what is something that comes to mind that was especially helpful to you? (Tell us about a positive experience you had.)
- Who or what influenced you to seek the help that you looked for (such as connecting with this agency)? What influenced your decision?
- If you haven't had that experience, but found yourself needing to seek assistance, what would influence your decision about where to go? What to do? (Alternatively: Jot down three things that would be most important to you.)
- For those of you who have had an experience with (agency name), what do you wish might have been different about that experience?
- If you were talking with a friend about your experience, what would you share? (OR If you wanted to encourage a friend to seek support, what would you tell them?)
- Suppose you were in charge and you could make a change in the way things currently operate, what would you change?
- What can each one of us do to make this work better?

Concluding questions

- Reflect on the entire discussion, and share their positions or opinions about central questions of the conversation. An example: "Of all the things we discussed, what is the most important to you?"
- Summarize with confirmation – "Is this an adequate summary of what we talked about?"
- Review purpose, and ask if anything has been missed.
- Express thanks and dismiss

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Documenting Group Interviews

Name/description of group:		Location	Date	Facilitators:
# of participants	Demographics/ other	Demographics/ other	Demographics/ other	Demographics/ other
Question: (insert questions)	Evidence/Synthesis	Key themes	Supportive quotes	Additional comments (concur with prior focus groups)
(Specific interview question)	(Responses to the question) (You can jot initials of participants after responses, if necessary to ensure clarity, continuity. Be sure to remove them in reports/other public documents.)	(Themes that emerged from the multiple responses.)	(Specific quotes that capture different themes.)	

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Sample Group Interview – Community Member

PURPOSE: When might you conduct a group interview with community members?

- This is an interview that you may use in the process of conducting a community needs assessment to assess the community's perspective about sexual violence, its causes, what prevents it, and perspectives about services and supports available.
- This interview might be used to deepen the team's understanding about a particular service or issue related to sexual assault.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- What are community members' perceptions about sexual assault?
- How familiar are they with services available regarding sexual assault?
- How widespread or important an issue do they perceive it to be for the community?
- How well is it being addressed by the agencies involved, and where do they perceive there to be gaps in services?

PREPARATION STEPS:

- **Interview Set Up** – Identify a potential participant group for the interview, and engage key community or agency leadership in recruiting and encouraging participation.
- **Test Your Questions** – Run through questions a final time (with another person, if possible) to ensure they will elicit relevant responses, are in the proper order (general to specific), and make logical sense.
- **Send Reminders** – Send an email/phone call to remind participants about the day/time/location of interview.
- **Do You Have Everything?** – One quick check to make sure everything (name tags, poster paper, markers, recorder, etc.) is packed and ready to go.
- **Arrive Early** – Give yourself enough time to set up the room, food, or anything that needs to be taken care of before participants arrive.
- **Be Inviting** – Create a warm and friendly environment. You will not only make participants feel welcomed, but you will also put them at ease.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE:

- Welcome, make introductions, and thank participants
- Review the purpose of the focus group interview
- Review the ground rules
- Conversation
- Debrief

THE OPENING:

Welcome! I'm (Insert name here), and I'm going to be facilitating our conversation today. Our Assistant Facilitator (insert name here) will be documenting our conversation. I want to begin by thanking you all for taking the time to join us today. We want you to know how much we appreciate your participation and that the information you share will be put to good use.

As you know, we are here to learn more about your perceptions of sexual violence in the community and services available to address it. We are here representing the SART, which is made up of agencies involved in responding to sexual assault cases, including advocacy, prosecution, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other community agencies.

Our hope is to deepen our understanding of how the community perceives sexual violence and the services available to address it. We're interested in your perceptions about what is working well, and what kinds of support and assistance might foster beneficial changes to addressing sexual violence.

As I mentioned before, (Insert AF Name) will be documenting our conversation, and diligently capturing the thoughts and opinions expressed today. We do this to aid our memory as we later try to recall and organize what you've shared with us. We want to accurately capture what you've said.

We want you to know that the information collected here will remain anonymous, and you will not be associated with any individual answer or comment. The more honest and candid your responses, the more useful it will be towards informing our multi-disciplinary team's process and outcomes. Responses will only be shared in summary form.

Does anyone have any questions before I go on?

Before we get started, let's talk about some guidelines for our time together. First of all, we will be asking about your opinions, ideas, and experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. As I mentioned, (Insert AF Name) is going to be documenting the conversation, so it's important that only one person is speaking at a time, so that s/he can capture what's said. Your participation in this interview and the views you express will have no impact, positive or negative, on community services you are eligible for or with the agencies represented by the SART. Again, please share your views candidly.

We ask that everyone respect one another's privacy about what is said here by not sharing or discussing it outside of this conversation. There's no expectation that you'll agree with what others share, but it's important that everyone listen to all ideas shared, and that each person gets a chance to share their thoughts and ideas and be listened to. During the conversation, I'd ask that you direct your comments to one another, and not just to me. We'd like this to be a conversation with the full group.

At this time, I would ask that you each power off or silence your cell phones. If you must respond to a call, please separate from the group quietly and rejoin us as quickly as you're able.

Any final questions before we get started?

THE INTERVIEW / CONVERSATION:

- First, let's get started by asking what comes to your mind when you hear the words 'sexual violence'?
- What are some of the themes that you hear in the responses that have been shared?
- Do you think this is a pretty accurate depiction of what sexual violence generally looks like?

- Who do you think are perpetrators of sexual violence? What descriptors would you use?
- Who are victims? What descriptors would you use?
- Given all that we've talked about here, what do you think are some of the steps, services or something else that would be helpful in working to prevent sexual violence?
- What services are you aware of – where might you turn or direct someone you knew who had been sexually assaulted? What do you think might be missing? Are there gaps in services that you're aware of?
- If you could change anything, what do you think would be some effective ways to address the issue?
- How widespread a problem do you think sexual violence is in this community?
- Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and ideas with us. We will be preparing a report summarizing all of the information we've gathered throughout this process, and you can contact (agency) to inquire about a copy. Thank you for your participation in this effort.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Draw out all responses** – Allow ample time as well as silences, in order to hear all relevant thoughts and opinions. Don't rush through the questions, but be mindful of time.
- **Exercise flexibility** - Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Explore and move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic, but be careful about unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.
- **Who isn't speaking** – After 1-3 questions, make note of quiet participants and ask if they have anything they'd like to share without putting them on the spot. This gives them an opening to join the conversation.
- **Summarize responses:** After the discussion from each question, summarize the response and check for validation of your summary. "So what I'm hearing is..." "Would it be safe to say..." "My understanding is..."

DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

- See the "How to Conduct a Systematic Analysis Process" section of Group Interview Guide.

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Sample Group Interview - Community Service Provider

PURPOSE: When might you use this interview?

- This is an interview that may be used during the process of conducting a community needs assessment, to assess current status of each responder's role and perceptions regarding sexual assault cases.
- This interview might also be used following training, with questions designed to capture particular points from the training.
- It could also be used for monitoring purposes to determine how familiar different responder groups are with the SART and with team protocols.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- How do community service providers address requests for support from those who have experienced sexual violence and where strengths and challenges lie?
- How familiar are different service providers are with the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault?
- What are the responders' perspectives, and what do they perceive as obstacles and ways to improve?
- What are service providers' experiences with victims/survivors, and what they are hearing/learning?
- What can we provide to support and improve the system's response to sexual assault?

PREPARATION STEPS

- **Interview Set Up** – Identify a potential participant group for the interview, and engage key community or agency leadership in recruiting and encouraging participation.
- **Test Your Questions** – Run through questions a final time (with another person, if possible) to ensure they will elicit relevant responses, are in the proper order (general to specific), and make logical sense.
- **Send Reminders** – Send an email/phone call to remind participants about the day/time/location of interview.
- **Do You Have Everything?** – One quick check to make sure everything (name tags, poster paper, markers, recorder, etc.) is packed and ready to go.
- **Arrive Early** – Give yourself enough time to set up the room, food, or anything that needs to be taken care of before participants arrive.
- **Be Inviting** – Create a warm and friendly environment. You will not only make participants feel welcomed, but you will also put them at ease.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

- Review the purpose of the focus group interview
- Review the ground rules
- Conversation
- Debrief

THE OPENING

Welcome! I'm (Insert name here), and I'm going to be facilitating our conversation today. Our Assistant Facilitator (insert name here) will be documenting our conversation. I want to begin by thanking you all for taking the time to join us today. We want you to know how much we appreciate your participation and that the information you share will be put to good use.

We are here to learn more about your perceptions of sexual violence in the community and services available to address it. We are here representing the SART, which is made up of agencies involved in responding to sexual assault cases, including advocacy, prosecution, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other community agencies.

Our hope is to deepen our understanding of how the community perceives sexual violence and the services available to address it. We're interested in your perceptions about what is working well, and what kinds of support and assistance might foster beneficial changes to addressing sexual violence.

As I mentioned before, (Insert AF Name) will be documenting our conversation, and diligently capturing the thoughts and opinions expressed today. We do this to aid our memory as we later try to recall and organize what you've shared with us. We want to accurately capture what you've said.

We want you to know that the information collected here will remain anonymous, and you will not be associated with any individual answer or comment. The more honest and candid your responses, the more useful it will be towards informing our multi-disciplinary team's process and outcomes. Responses will only be shared in summary form.

Does anyone have any questions before I go on?

Before we get started, let's talk about some guidelines for our time together. First of all, we will be asking about your opinions, ideas, and experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. As I mentioned, (Insert AF Name) is going to be documenting the conversation, so it's important that only one person is speaking at a time, so that s/he can capture what's said. Your participation in this interview and the views you express will have no impact, positive or negative, on community services you are eligible for or with the agencies represented by the SART. Again, share your views candidly.

We ask that everyone respect one another's privacy about what is said here by not sharing or discussing it outside of this conversation. There's no expectation that you'll agree with what others share, but it's important that everyone listen to all ideas shared, and that each person gets a chance to share their thoughts and ideas and be listened to. During the conversation, I'd ask that you direct your comments to one another, and not just to me. We'd like this to be a conversation with the full group.

At this time, I would ask that you each power off or silence your cell phones. If you must respond to a call, please separate from the group quietly and rejoin us as quickly as you're able.

Any final questions before we get started?

INTERVIEW / CONVERSATION

Let's get started by having you share a bit about your role with providing support to community members

who may be victims of sexual violence. How do community members get referred to you, or come to you or your agency's attention? What happens from the time you are contacted?

- What are some of your initial thoughts and actions when you are providing this type of support?
- From your experience, what do you think is one of the biggest challenges that sexual violence survivors face?
- What is the most difficult part of your job when addressing this type of request for support?
- In this past year (2013), what changes did you see related to providing support to victims of sexual violence? (for example: greater frequency of certain types of situations, or trends in those coming to you for support)
- What gaps have you seen between services needed by victims of sexual violence and services that are available for victims of sexual violence?
- How familiar are you with the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault cases?
- If you could change anything about how this issue is addressed to make it more effective, what change would you make?
- Think of a sexual assault case that didn't end with the best possible outcome, for whatever reason. What change, if any, might have impacted that outcome in a beneficial way?
- How well prepared do you feel you are for addressing this type of request for support (training, preparation, resources, materials, etc.)?
- We are in the process of developing system-wide protocols for addressing sexual assault cases. What, if anything, occurs to you might be helpful to include in such protocols?
- Can you list 1-2 things the response team could work on to make your job/role easier or more efficient?

Thank you so much for sharing your time and experiences with us.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Draw out all responses** – Allow ample time as well as silences, in order to hear all relevant thoughts and opinions. Don't rush through the questions, but be mindful of time.
- **Exercise flexibility** - Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Explore and move into unplanned aspects of the topic, but avoid unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.
- **Who isn't speaking** – After 1-3 questions, make note of quiet participants and ask if they have anything they'd like to share without putting them on the spot. This gives them an opening to join the conversation.
- **Summarize responses:** After the discussion from each question, summarize the response and check for validation of your summary. "So what I'm hearing is..." "Would it be safe to say..." "My understanding is..."

WRAP / DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

- See the "How to Conduct a Systematic Analysis Process" section of Group Interview Guide.

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Sample Group Interview – General Responder

PURPOSE: When might you use this interview?

- This is an interview that may be used during the process of conducting a community needs assessment, to assess current status of each responder's role and perceptions regarding sexual assault cases.
- This interview might also be used following training, with questions shaped to capture particular points from the training.
- It could also be used for monitoring purposes to determine how familiar different responder groups are with the SART and with team protocols.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- How does each responder group address sexual assault cases, and where do strengths and challenges lie?
- How familiar are different responders with the team and with team protocols?
- What is the responders' perspective, and what do they perceive as obstacles and ways to improve?
- How do responders interact with victims/survivors in their initial response?
- What can we provide to different responder groups to support and improve the system's response to sexual assault?

PREPARATION STEPS:

- **Interview Set Up** – Identify a potential participant group for the interview, and engage key community or agency leadership in recruiting and encouraging participation.
- **Test Your Questions** – Run through questions a final time (with another person, if possible) to ensure they will elicit relevant responses, are in the proper order (general to specific), and make logical sense.
- **Send Reminders** – Send an email/phone call to remind participants about the day/time/location of interview.
- **Do You Have Everything?** – One quick check to make sure everything (name tags, poster paper, markers, recorder, etc.) is packed and ready to go.
- **Arrive Early** – Give yourself enough time to set up the room, food, or anything that needs to be taken care of before participants arrive.
- **Be Inviting** – Create a warm and friendly environment. You will not only make participants feel welcomed, but you will also put them at ease.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

- Welcome, make introductions, and thank participants
- Review the purpose of the focus group interview
- Review the ground rules
- Conversation
- Debrief

THE OPENING:

Welcome! I'm (Insert name here), and I'm going to be facilitating our conversation today. Our Assistant Facilitator (insert name here) will be documenting our conversation. I want to begin by thanking you all for taking the time to join us today. We want you to know how much we appreciate your participation and that the information you share will be put to good use.

As you know, we are here to learn more about your perceptions of sexual violence in the community and services available to address it. We are here representing the SART, which is made up of agencies involved in responding to sexual assault cases, including advocacy, prosecution, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other community agencies.

Our hope is to deepen our understanding of how the community perceives sexual violence and the services available to address it. We're interested in your perceptions about what is working well, and what kinds of support and assistance might foster beneficial changes to addressing sexual violence.

As I mentioned before, (Insert AF Name) will be documenting our conversation, and diligently capturing the thoughts and opinions expressed today. We do this to aid our memory as we later try to recall and organize what you've shared with us. We want to accurately capture what you've said.

We want you to know the information collected here will remain anonymous, and you will not be associated with any individual answer or comment. The more honest and candid your responses, the more useful it will be towards informing our multi-disciplinary team's process and outcomes. Responses will only be shared in summary form.

Does anyone have any questions before I go on?

Before we get started, let's talk about some guidelines for our time together. First of all, we will be asking about your opinions, ideas, and experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. As I mentioned, (Insert AF Name) is going to be documenting the conversation, so it's important that only one person is speaking at a time, so that she can capture what's said. Your participation in this interview and the views you express will have no impact, positive or negative, on community services you are eligible for or with the agencies represented by the SART. Again, please share your views candidly.

We ask that everyone respect one another's privacy about what is said here by not sharing or discussing it outside of this conversation. There's no expectation that you'll agree with what others share, but it's important that everyone listen to all ideas shared, and that each person gets a chance to share their thoughts and ideas and be listened to. During the conversation, I'd ask that you direct your comments to one another, and not just to me. We'd like this to be a conversation with the full group.

At this time I would ask that you each power off or silence your cell phones. If you must respond to a call, please separate from the group quietly and rejoin us as quickly as you're able.

Any final questions before we get started?

INTERVIEW/CONVERSATION

- Let's get started by having you share a bit about the process of how a sexual assault case is handled. Just briefly, how do sexual assault cases typically come to you/ your agency, and what's the general process? What happens from when you are contacted?
- What are some of your initial thoughts and actions when you are responding to a sexual assault case?
- What is the most difficult part of your job when dealing with a sexual assault case?
- Think of a sexual assault case that didn't end with the best possible outcome, for whatever reason. What change, if any, might have impacted that outcome in a beneficial way?
- How well prepared do you feel you are for addressing a sexual assault case (training, preparation, resources, materials, etc.)?
- How familiar are you with the protocols that the SART developed? How familiar do you think your colleagues are? How are the protocols used in your office?
- What has been most useful to you about the protocols? What have you found to be not as helpful regarding the protocols? What would you like to see in the protocols that is not currently included or addressed?
- Can you list 1-2 things the response team could work on to make your job/role easier or more efficient?
- Thank you so much for sharing your time and experiences with us.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Draw out all responses** -- Allow ample time as well as silences, in order to hear all relevant thoughts and opinions. Don't rush through the questions, but be mindful of time.
- **Exercise flexibility** -- Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Explore and move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic, but be careful about unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.
- **Who isn't speaking** -- After 1-3 questions, make note of quiet participants and ask if they have anything they'd like to share without putting them on the spot. This gives them an opening to join the conversation.
- **Summarize responses:** After the discussion from each question, summarize the response and check for validation of your summary. "So what I'm hearing is..." "Would it be safe to say..." "My understanding is..."

WRAP/DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

- See the "How to Conduct a Systematic Analysis Process" section of Group Interview Guide.

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Sample Group Interview – Law Enforcement Leadership / Investigators Interview

PURPOSE: When might you conduct a group interview with law enforcement leadership / investigators?

- This is an interview that may be used during the process of conducting a community needs assessment to assess current status of how the department is working to cultivate a positive sexual assault process within the department.
- This interview might also be used before or following an investigator’s training, with questions shaped to capture particular points from a recently presented training or one you’re about to present.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- How does the department address sexual assault cases, and where do strengths and challenges lie?
- What are leadership’s perceptions about good investigation practices for sexual assault cases?
- What does law enforcement leadership see as obstacles to sexual assault cases, and what changes would bring better results?

PREPARATION STEPS

- **Interview Set Up** – Identify a potential participant group for the interview, and engage key community or agency leadership in recruiting and encouraging participation.
- **Test Your Questions** – Run through questions a final time (with another person, if possible) to ensure they will elicit relevant responses, are in the proper order (general to specific), and make logical sense.
- **Send Reminders** – Send an email/phone call to remind participants about the day/time/location of interview.
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- **Arrive Early** – Give yourself enough time to set up the room, food, or anything that needs to be taken care of before participants arrive.
- **Be Inviting** – Create a warm and friendly environment. You will not only make participants feel welcomed, but you will also put them at ease.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

- Welcome, make introductions, and thank participants
- Review the purpose of the focus group interview
- Review the ground rules
- Conversation
- Debrief

THE OPENING

Welcome! I'm (Insert name here), and I'm going to be facilitating our conversation today. Our Assistant Facilitator (insert name here) will be documenting our conversation. I want to begin by thanking you all for taking the time to join us today. We want you to know how much we appreciate your participation and that the information you share will be put to good use.

As you know, we are here to learn more about your perceptions of sexual violence in the community and services available to address it. We are here representing the SART, which is made up of agencies involved in responding to sexual assault cases, including advocacy, prosecution, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other community agencies.

Our hope is to deepen our understanding of how the community perceives sexual violence and the services available to address it. We're interested in your perceptions about what is working well, and what kinds of support and assistance might foster beneficial changes to addressing sexual violence.

As I mentioned before, (Insert AF Name) will be documenting our conversation, and diligently capturing the thoughts and opinions expressed today. We do this to aid our memory as we later try to recall and organize what you've shared with us. We want to accurately capture what you've said.

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Does anyone have any questions before I go on?

Before we get started, let's talk about some guidelines for our time together. First of all, we will be asking about your opinions, ideas, and experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. As I mentioned, (Insert AF Name) is going to be documenting the conversation, so it's important that only one person is speaking at a time, so that s/he can capture what's said. Your participation in this interview and the views you express will have no impact, positive or negative, on community services you are eligible for or with the agencies represented by the SART. Again, please share your views candidly.

We ask that everyone respect one another's privacy about what is said here by not sharing or discussing it outside of this conversation. There's no expectation that you'll agree with what others share, but it's important that everyone listen to all ideas shared, and that each person gets a chance to share their thoughts and ideas and be listened to. During the conversation, I'd ask that you direct your comments to one another, and not just to me. We'd like this to be a conversation with the full group.

At this time, I would ask that you each power off or silence your cell phones. If you must respond to a call, please separate from the group quietly and rejoin us as quickly as you're able.

Any final questions before we get started?

THE INTERVIEW / CONVERSATION

- Let's get started by having you share a bit about the process of how a sexual assault case is handled in your department. Briefly, how do sexual assault cases typically come into the

department, and what's the general process?

- In thinking about those who handle sexual assault cases in your department, without mentioning names, are there certain individuals who stand out as particularly effective when responding to sexual assault cases? Tell us about what makes them stand out? (Attitude, personal characteristics, skill, etc.)
- As an investigator, what are some of the key things you look for when you receive documentation from a patrol? How do these key things make a difference for possible outcomes of the case?
- How would you describe the department's perspective about sexual assault cases? Has that changed at all in the past year? If so, how has it changed and what's brought about the changes?
- Are there things that concern you about your department's current response to sexual assault cases and their outcomes? Please say more.
- Are you familiar with the protocols developed by the SART? How are they introduced and used within the department?
- What change, if implemented, would make the difference for improving how sexual assault cases are addressed in the department?
- What are one or two things the SART could work on or implement that would make your job/role easier or more efficient?

Thank you so much for sharing your time and experiences with us.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Draw out all responses** – Allow ample time as well as silences, in order to hear all relevant thoughts and opinions. Don't rush through the questions, but be mindful of time.
- **Exercise flexibility** - Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Explore and move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic, but be careful about unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.
- **Who isn't speaking** – After 1-3 questions, make note of quiet participants and ask if they have anything they'd like to share without putting them on the spot. This gives them an opening to join the conversation.
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DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

- See the "How to Conduct a Systematic Analysis Process" section of Group Interview Guide.

Are We Making a Difference? Sexual Assault Response Teams Assessing Systems Change: A Resource for Multidisciplinary Team Leadership (pp. 87-88) by Emily Goff, Sharon Haas, Laura Pejsa, and Jessica Jerney, 2015. Retrieved from <http://resources.svji.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SVJI-evaluation-resource-for-Web-10.19.16.pdf> Reprinted with permission

Sample Group Interview – Multi-Disciplinary Team Member

PURPOSE: When might you conduct a group interview with law enforcement leadership / investigators?

- This interview might be used when a team is moving to a different stage of the work, to assess current dynamics and perceptions about the team's status and progress.
- It may also be used when team momentum or participation has slowed down, to assess what changes might revitalize member participation.
- This interview can also be used as an annual or bi-annual check in to help team leadership keep team morale and involvement high and anticipate needed adjustments.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- What are team members' perceptions of team purpose and progress?
- What are team members' suggestions for possible changes?
- What is working well? Do team members have suggestions about ways to improve process or progress, or to increase member participation?
- What issues get in the way of the team realizing its potential as a successful collaboration?

PREPARATION STEPS

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INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

- Welcome, make introductions, and thank participants
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- Review the ground rules.
- Conversation
- Debrief

THE OPENING

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Any final questions before we get started?

THE INTERVIEW / CONVERSATION

- How would you describe this team's work?

- How important do you think this team’s work is to the broader community? How do you think the community perceives the team’s work?
- What is your agency’s view of this team’s work? How does it see the team’s role?
- All teams have their own dynamics and personalities. How would you describe the dynamics between the team members in this group?
- How would you describe the comfort level within the team about sharing or raising issues with which all team members might not agree?
- How well do team members understand their role and purpose in the group?
- How clear is the role and purpose of the team to you as members?
- Are meetings generally a good use of your time? What changes would you suggest to make them more useful?
- How effective do you think the SART is at reaching its goals? Please give some examples.
- What do you think have been the team’s most important accomplishments?
- What else do you think is important to share about your experience with this team?

INTERVIEW TIPS

- **Draw out all responses** – Allow ample time as well as silences, in order to hear all relevant thoughts and opinions. Don’t rush through the questions, but be mindful of time.
- **Exercise flexibility** - Capitalize on unanticipated comments and useful directions the discussion may take. Explore and move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic, but be careful about unnecessary or irrelevant divergences.
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DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

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Sample Group Interview – Victim/Survivor

PURPOSE: When might you use this interview?

- This interview might be used during the team’s Community Needs Assessment to determine a baseline about victim’s experiences with the system’s response.
- The interview could also be used when a team is considering making changes to its protocols.
- This is an interview that could be conducted on an annual or periodic basis to determine whether there are indications of beneficial improvements happening for victim/survivors over time.

GOALS: What do you want to learn from the survey?

- What are victims’ experiences with the system’s response to a sexual assault?
- What could have been done differently that would have made the experience easier for them?
- What things helped them during the experience?
- What factors went into their decision to report the sexual assault?

PREPARATION STEPS

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INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

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- Review the purpose of the focus group interview
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THE OPENING

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Any final questions before we get started?

THE INTERVIEW / CONVERSATION

- If you wanted to encourage a friend to seek support in response to a sexual assault, what would you tell them?

- We'd like to ask you now about some of the different agencies within the system and your experiences with them. For those of you who have had an experience with law enforcement, how was that experience? What do you wish might have been different about it? What was helpful?
- For those of you who have had an experience with a sexual assault nurse examiner, what was that experience like? What do you wish might have been different about the experience? What was helpful?
- For those of you who have had an experience with advocacy services, how was that experience? What do you wish might have been different about the experience? What was helpful to you?
- Let's talk a bit now about reporting the sexual assault. There are many good reasons why someone wouldn't report a sexual assault to law enforcement. What are some of the reasons why you think victims do not report or that you did not report?
- For those of you who made the decision to report a sexual assault, what are some of the factors that went into that decision? What ultimately made you decide to report the assault?
- Suppose you were in charge and could a change in the way things currently operate, what would you change?
- Based on your experience, what do you wish the community understood about sexual assault?

INTERVIEW TIPS

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WRAP / DEBRIEF WITH CO-FACILITATORS

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