

Consumer Focus Group Protocol

Arrangements for recruiting and convening the focus groups with service providers

- Goal for number of participants: 18-40
- Goal for number of focus groups: 3-5 (6-8 people each)
- Time frame (according to time-task plan):
 - Data collection: through February 9, 2004
 - Data analysis: February 2004
 - Integrate findings into Gaps and Accessibility Matrix: February 2004
- All participants will be pre-screened according to the “Consumer Focus Group Screening Protocol.”
- At the time of screening, potential focus group participants will be asked if they need any accommodations in order to participate in the focus groups. All attempts will be made to provide the necessary accommodations for individual participants. In no way will the request for accommodations impact the likelihood of selecting an interested individual for participation in a focus group.
- Individuals who decline to participate will not be penalized in any way.
- Procedures designed to ensure the privacy, dignity, and respect of all participants will include the following:
 - Participation will be entirely voluntary and based on informed consent following a full explanation of the purpose of the focus groups.
 - Participants will receive lunch or other appropriate meal as an incentive and a token of appreciation for their participation.
 - All identifying information will be kept separate and secure to ensure the privacy and security of potential participants.
 - Focus group venues will be at neutral sites (not at the Center Against Sexual Assault) and will maximize participant safety and comfort.
 - At least two experienced Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault staff members will conduct the focus groups.
 - Focus group facilitators will confirm to participants at the outset that all information they disclose will be kept confidential, within the boundaries of the law.
 - Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault staff involved in the focus groups will sign a confidentiality pledge.

Conduct of the focus groups

Ground Rules

- Maximum duration of each focus group will be 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Participation is entirely voluntary and based on informed consent.

- Confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality are outlined in writing on the informed consent form for participants. This form will be read aloud by focus group facilitator, who will also answer any questions pertaining to confidentiality.
- Participants will be asked to please respect the contributions of other focus group participants. Please try not to judge another participant with whom you may disagree.
- Participants will be told that it is all right to be influenced in their own opinions by the opinions of other focus group participants.
- To help ensure confidentiality, focus group participants will use first names only. Participants can choose aliases if they prefer this to using their own first names.
- Facilitators will ensure that all participants have a chance to talk.
- Facilitators will be sensitive to any signs of distress on the part of the participants. Where necessary, proceedings will be halted to allow participants to take breaks. Crisis intervention services will be available to participants through the Center Against Sexual Assault's 24 hour Crisis Hotline and walk-in services. At least one of the focus group facilitators will be a trained crisis advocate who will be available during and after the focus groups to speak with any participants who wish immediate crisis assistance.
- Participants will be instructed at the outset that they must respect each other's privacy and not repeat what they hear during the group.
- Focus groups will follow a specific question format and adopt neutral and non-directive methods to elicit responses from the participants. Facilitators will allow sufficient time for the participants to respond to questions.
- Victim responses will be recorded in contemporaneous written notes taken by the Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault staff members. If prior written consent is given by all participants in the focus groups, tape-recorders may be used as a backup to assist accurate data collection and analysis.

Analyzing Focus Group Data

- No actual names or participant identifiers will be used in written summaries of the focus group discussions.
- Qualitative analysis will, as far as possible, concentrate on common themes emerging from the discussions.
- Direct quotes from participants and/or case scenarios may be used for illustrative purposes, but no actual names or participant identifiers will be included.

Maintaining Confidential Records

- Steps will be taken to protect all the information collected in the focus groups. These will include the following safeguards:
 - An original and backup signed informed consent form will be kept on paper only. They will be stored in secured containers (such as locked desk drawers or file cabinets) in two separate locations.
 - Only key project staff who have signed confidentiality pledges will have access to signed forms and meeting notes.
 - Pseudonyms will be used for the purpose of creating and maintaining the notes.
 - Neither the written summaries of the focus group discussions nor the project reports will include the names or identifying information of any of the participants.