

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

Script and Prompts for Transformation Focus Groups

Thank you for coming. I am _____, and I'm part of an evaluation team from Advocates for Human Potential, a small research and consulting firm. We are working on a needs assessment for a federal grant received by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. This is _____, who will take notes during the focus group.

Oklahoma is one of seven states to receive a five-year Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The goal of these grants is to transform state mental health service systems from systems dictated by outmoded bureaucratic and financial incentives to systems driven by consumer and family needs that focus on building resilience and facilitating recovery. The grants require states to enlist consumers and family members as active partners in all transformation planning and activities.

The first year of Oklahoma's Transformation grant is devoted to needs assessment and planning, and Advocates for Human Potential (AHP) has been contracted to assist with this effort.

We'd like your help in identifying important issues that should be addressed in the transformation process. Your participation in the focus group is voluntary and confidential. You may decline to comment on any question that is asked. We will be taking notes during the session to record everyone's comments, but nothing you might say in this group will ever be reported in any way that would allow you to be identified. To protect everyone's privacy, we will use first names only in this room.

We want to hear what you think, as you are the experts. You will be doing most of the talking. Before we start, I want to mention a few more things.

There is no need to raise your hand during the discussion. Speak right up, but please respect others when they are talking. When today's discussion is over, please respect the privacy of your fellow group members. Please do not repeat anything they have said outside this meeting.

This discussion will last about an hour and a half. Is there anyone who can't stay for the whole period? Any questions? Now let's begin.

Appendix D Continued

QUESTIONS FOR MH CONSUMERS/FAMILY MEMBERS:

- 1) Please tell us about people's experiences with mental health services :
 - timely access to desired services
 - level of involvement in treatment planning
 - access to trauma services
 - PSR services
 - medication
 - access to Recovery Support Specialist and/or self-help groups
 - inpatient care
 - mental health court or other programs related to the criminal justice system

- 2) Can you tell us about people's experiences getting access to:
 - housing
 - public benefits including SSI/DI, Medicaid and Medicare
 - employment and/or vocational services
 - education
 - treatment for co-occurring substance abuse problems?
 - physical health care, dental care
 - crisis services

- 3) How are consumers and family members involved in decision-making at {program name}?

- 4) What are your greatest concerns about the mental health system?

- 5) What change to the current system do you think would have the most positive impact?

- 6) Is there anything else you think we should know that we haven't asked about?

Appendix D Continued

QUESTIONS FOR CMHC STAFF/ MGT:

- 1) What do you see as the greatest strengths of your program(s)?
- 2) What is the biggest challenge your program(s) face?
- 3) How do your MH clients access:
 - housing
 - public benefits including SSI/DI, Medicaid and Medicare
 - employment services
 - education
 - self-help groups
 - treatment for co-occurring substance abuse problems
 - physical health care, dental care
 - crisis services
 - trauma services
- 4) Please tell us about:
 - how consumers are involved in treatment planning
 - how consumers and family members are involved in program (Center) decision-making
 - your program's experience with Recovery Support Specialists
- 5) What are your greatest concerns about the mental health system?
- 6) What change to the current system would have the most positive benefit?
- 7) Is there anything else you think we should know that we haven't asked about?

ADDITIONS FOR MGT.

- 1) Please tell us about the impact of current financing mechanisms on your Center's (program's) delivery of services.
- 2) Please describe any collaborative relationships/initiatives that your Center (program) has with other local health and human services agencies.
- 3) From your perspective, what is the most pressing need for change on the state level?
- 4) Is there anything else you think we should know that we haven't asked about?

Appendix D Continued

QUESTIONS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES PROVIDERS:

- 1) What do you see as the greatest strengths of your program(s)?
- 2) What is the biggest challenge your program(s) face?
- 3) Thinking about your clients who have both substance abuse and mental health problems, what challenges do they face getting services that address both issues?
- 4) How do your clients access:
 - housing
 - public benefits including SSI/DI, Medicaid and Medicare
 - employment services
 - education
 - self-help groups
 - physical health care, dental care
 - trauma services
- 5) Please tell us about:
 - how consumers are involved in treatment planning
 - how consumers are involved in program decision-making
- 6) What are your greatest concerns about the substance abuse services system?
- 7) Is there anything else you think we should know that we haven't asked about?

ADDITIONS FOR SA PROGRAM MGT.

- 1) Please tell us about the impact of current financing mechanisms on your program's delivery of services.
- 2) Please describe any collaborative relationships/initiatives that your program has with the CMHC and other local health and human services agencies.
- 3) From your perspective, what is the most pressing need for change on the state level?

Appendix D Continued

QUESTIONS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE CLIENTS/ FAMILY MEMBERS:

1) Please tell us about people's experiences with substance abuse services:

- timely access to desired services
- level of involvement in treatment planning
- access to self-help groups
- inpatient care
- trauma services
- drug court or other programs related to the criminal justice system

2) Some people have both substance abuse problems and mental health problems. Do you know what services are available locally for people with both diagnoses? If you know about these services, please tell us about any barriers or challenges people face in getting these services.

3) Do people have access to:

- housing
- 30 March 2006 public benefits including SSI/DI, Medicaid and Medicare
- employment services
- education
- self-help groups
- physical health care, dental care

4) In this program, please tell us about:

- how consumers are involved in treatment planning
- how consumers are involved in program decision-making

5) What are your greatest concerns about the substance abuse services system?

6) Is there anything else you think we should know that we haven't asked about?

Appendix D Continued

Focus Group Questions for non-MH/SA Groups

1. Please describe the nature and scope of the work your organization does.
2. Under what circumstances do you encounter/work with clients of the mental health and/or substance abuse service systems?
3. Please tell us about the experiences of mental health and/or substance abuse clients related to:
 - housing
 - public benefits including SSI/DI, Medicaid and Medicare
 - employment and/or vocational services
 - education
 - treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems
 - physical health care and dental care
 - crisis services
4. Under what circumstances do you encounter/work with mental health and/or substance abuse agencies?
5. What do you think are the most crucial problems/challenges facing the mental health and substance abuse service systems?
6. What change to the current system would have the most positive impact?