Attachment D
South Heartland District Health Department

Community Health Assessment Focus Group Facilitation Guide, 2024

Before we begin, please take a few moments to complete the Focus Group Participant Survey. Your responses will help us understand the diverse backgrounds of our participants. All information will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. You can tick or check your choices on the papers. Please let us know if you need any assistance with the survey.

Introduction and Icebreaker:

1. **Welcome Participants**
   - **Prompt**: "Welcome and thank you for being here today. The purpose of this gathering is to understand the health needs and concerns of your community. Your input is important to us."
   - **Introduce Yourself**:
     - **Prompt**: "My name is [Facilitator's Name], and I will be guiding today's discussion on behalf of the South Heartland District Health Department, Mary Lanning Healthcare, Brodstone Healthcare and the United Way of Nebraska. Assisting me today is [Assistant's Name], who will be taking notes and handling the recording."
   - **Explain the Purpose of the Focus Group**:
     - **Prompt**: "We are here to gather your thoughts and opinions on various health issues affecting our community. This session will help us better understand and address these concerns."
   - **Mention the Recording**:
     - **Prompt**: "This session will be recorded to ensure we capture all of your valuable input accurately. Your responses will remain confidential."
2. **Ground Rules**:
   - **Participation**:
     - **Prompt**: "Participation is voluntary. You are free to contribute as much or as little as you are comfortable with."
   - **All Responses are Valid**:
     - **Prompt**: "All responses are valid; there are no right or wrong answers."
   - **Respect Others' Opinions**:
     - **Prompt**: "Please respect others' opinions, even if you do not agree with them."
   - **Speak One at a Time**:
     - **Prompt**: "To ensure everyone has a chance to speak, please speak one at a time."
   - **Confidentiality**:
     - **Prompt**: "Please do not share any details discussed here outside of this group to maintain confidentiality."
   - **Encourage Open Communication**:
     - **Prompt**: "We encourage open and honest communication. Your feedback is crucial."
3. **Icebreaker Question**:
   - **Prompt**: "To start, let's go around the room. Please tell us your first name and share something you love about your community or about living in this county."

Key Discussion Topics and Questions:

1. **Top Health Concerns**:
   - **Prompt**: "What are the top health concerns you think your community faces today?"
   - **Follow-Up**:
     - **Prompt**: "Why do you think these issues are particularly critical?"
2. **Family Support Resources and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)**:

- o **Prompt**: "How do you think social conditions, such as housing and employment, affect your family's and your friends' and neighbors' health?"
- o **Follow-Up**:
    - ▪ **Prompt**: "What kind of support do you think would make the biggest difference in meeting community needs? Why?"
3. **Access to Care**:
    - o **Prompt**: "What are your experiences accessing medical, dental, eyecare, and mental health services in your community/in this area?"
    - o **Follow-Up**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**: "What challenges have you faced and what challenges do you think your friends and neighbors face when trying to access these services?"
4. **Gaps, Needs, and Solutions**:
    - o **Prompt**: "Are there any programs or resources you've seen in other places that you think could benefit our community?"

5. *County-Specific Questions: **(Not applicable to Hispanic focus group interview)***
    - o **Adams**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**: "What do you think would help people make healthier food choices? What do you think is a common barrier for people not to exercise?"
    - o **Clay**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**: "Which Clay County Health Department health services have you used, if any? Whether you currently use their services or not, how important do you think it is to the health of Clay County residents to maintain a Clay County Health Department? What barriers or hardships do you think Clay County residents would experience if they had to go to Hastings or Superior to get the services that are currently offered by the Clay County Health Department?"
    - o **Nuckolls**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**: "What support groups are needed in Nuckolls County? What are the barriers to population stability or growth in Nuckolls County?"
    - o **Webster**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**:

Wrap-Up:

1. **General Wrap-Up Question**:
    - o **Prompt**: "What are your hopes for future generations or for the future health and wellbeing of this community/county?"
2. **Closing Remarks**:
    - o **Prompt**: "We're almost at the end of our session. Does anyone have any additional thoughts or concerns that we haven't covered today?"
    - o **Next Steps**:
        - ▪ **Prompt**: "Thank you for your valuable input. We will use this information to guide our community health initiatives. We will keep you informed about the next steps in this process."
    - o **Express Gratitude**:

- ▪ **Prompt**: "Thank you once again for your time and contributions. Your feedback is greatly appreciated."

Tips for Facilitating the Focus Group:

1. **Preparing the Room**:
   - o **Arrive Early**: Arrive early to set up the room.
   - o **Clear Signage**: Ensure signage is clear for easy navigation.
   - o **Test Equipment**: Test recording equipment to ensure it works properly.
2. **Conducting the Session**:
   - o **Open-Ended Questions**: Use open-ended questions to facilitate discussion.
   - o **Encourage Participation**: Encourage participation from all members.
   - o **Non-Verbal Cues**: Pay attention to non-verbal cues.
   - o **Redirect Discussion**: Redirect the discussion if it strays off-topic.
   - o **Accurate Recording**: Record participants' words accurately.
3. **After the Session**:
   - o **Summarize Main Points**: Summarize the main points discussed.
   - o **Secure Notes and Recordings**: Collect and secure notes and recordings.
   - o **Confidentiality**: Ensure confidentiality and proper storage of materials.