

Protocol for Parent's Focus Groups

Group Participants:

Participants should be married or involved in a committed relationship, and have adopted one or more children through the child welfare system. Spouses/partners are encouraged to come together, but individual adoptive parents will be included.

Participants will be invited to participate using individual letters that outline the purpose and scope of the project. These letters will be distributed through existing post-adoption support groups including: MAFAAK, FSN; FAFRFC. Participation will be limited to 12 people per group.

Group Facilitators:

Interview teams of two people who are not directly affiliated with child placing agencies will facilitate focus groups. (If possible, these teams will include gender, age, and adoptive parent representation.) The primary facilitator will take the lead in asking questions, and the second will ask follow-up questions as needed. The second facilitator may also be a focus group leader in training. Those in training will assume the same role as other second facilitators. Facilitator notes will not be taken, as the interviews will be recorded via audiotape. Members of the faculty team may attend as observers/recorders. An orientation for focus group facilitators will be conducted.

Setting and Duration:

Focus groups will be held in non-agency or neutral settings and will be scheduled for two (2) hour increments. This will allow a "warm-up" period for participants to socialize over refreshments and develop comfort with each other, the setting, and interviewers.

Ground Rules and Informed Consent:

Facilitators will outline ground rules for the group, and ask participants if they have any additions. All information shared by participants will be confidential as outlined in the informed consent document. Participants will be asked to respect the confidentiality of other participants. Groups will begin and end on time. Project staff will distribute aggregate findings to participants with individual letters and a website posting.

The informed consent process will be completed and participants will sign the form prior to receiving the demographic questionnaire and interview questions. Each participant is free to terminate his/her involvement at any time. Focus group interviews will be audiotaped for later transcription.

Interview Procedure:

Participants will receive the informed consent document, demographic questionnaire, and interview questions at the beginning of each session. They will be asked to provide consent prior to filling out the demographic questionnaire. Participants will be asked whether they need assistance in filling out documentation. After participants have completed the consent form and demographic questionnaire, the interview session will begin. The session will begin with the lead facilitator providing an overview of the project and introducing the first question. At the end of the interview, participants will be asked whether they are willing to participate in a follow-up group meeting.

Because of the open-ended nature of the questions, interviewers will be encouraged to keep participants' responses balanced, and be directive when necessary. The Appreciative Inquiry method will be implemented.