

Designing a Safe and Accessible Needs Assessment Plan

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Why Safety? Why Access?

- > Honors our movements' principles of inclusion and empowerment;
- > Promotes full participation from all audiences coming from different disciplines and backgrounds;
- > Models the behavior you ultimately want to see in your organizations and/or pilot sites;
- > Meets your legal and ethical responsibilities.

Safety: Key Considerations

- > Survivors of violence may experience a state of hyper-vigilance for years after the violent incident.
- > Survivors of domestic violence may experience some level of stalking for years after the relationship ends.
- > Survivors of violence embrace confidentiality as a key strategy for safety.
- > Perpetrators of violence exploit seemingly benign situations.
- > Attention to safety benefits all needs assessment participants.

Access: Key Considerations

- > Accessibility is more than just architectural and structural.
- > People with disabilities and Deaf people need full access to the activities and materials to fully participate.
- > Accommodations needs assessment participants should be factored into your grant budget.
- > Many accessibility concerns can be addressed proactively.
- > Needs assessment participants should be provided an opportunity to request specific accommodations based on their disability.



What does this mean for your Needs Assessment?

Safety and Access: Determining Your Methods

> Interviews

- > Increased confidence that information will be confidential (only interviewer and interviewee are privy to responses); however, who said what becomes easier to determine.
- > Accommodations can be tailored to specific needs (i.e., tactile signing for Deaf Blind; simpler language for cognitive disabilities)

> Focus Groups

- > Less control over the confidentiality of information and participants; easier to report anonymously on what was shared.
- > Accommodations such as PCA's can conflict with safety considerations.
- > Tailored accommodations might prove challenging in a group setting.

- > Guiding Principle: Identify the method that will allow you to collect the necessary data with minimal compromise of safety or access.

Safety and Access: Recruitment

> Use of flyers or mailings

- > Lose control over who has access to the document.
 - > Abuser could gain access to document, call the number to pose as an interested participant to gain information about the group.
 - > Post-separation, abusers can use the information from flyer to determine where his victim will be and at what time.
- > Access issues around readability, alternate formats, and language.

> Face to face recruitment

- > Affords more control of who learns about needs assessment.
- > May result in disclosures to staff who are not prepared to respond.
- > Allows recruitment to occur in a format that is most conducive to participant's accommodation needs.

> RSVP

- > Risks around confidentiality and anonymity if form collects identifying info.
- > Allows participants to express specific accommodation needs.

Safety and Access: Logistics

> Location

- > May pose challenges around accessibility if transportation is limited.
- > May pose safety concerns if being held at a VAW program.

> Timing

- > Evening groups can pose safety risks.
- > Early morning groups can pose access concerns.

> Room Set Up

> Food and Beverage

> Materials

Safety and Access: Your Tools

> Questions for People with Disabilities

- > Disclosures
- > Resources

> Questions for Survivors

- > Revictimization
- > Residential concerns
- > Resources

Key Considerations

> Accessibility

- > Be sure to address how you will ensure an accessible needs assessment process, including:
 - > When focus groups and interviews are taking place, are they accessible to the widest array of individuals?
 - > What transportation is available to and from these locations?
 - > What is your RSVP process? How can participants RSVP?
 - > How can participants request an accommodation? Who is filling the request for an accommodation?

Key Considerations

> Safety

- > Be sure you address what strategies you will use to ensure a “safe” process, including:
 - > What types of resources will you have available in the moment if individuals need them? Will advocates be available if someone needs assistance?
 - > What types of resources will be available after data collection? Are they accessible?
 - > How will confidentiality be explained and maintained?
 - > How will mandated reporting be explained and handled?
 - > If you have incentives, how can you ensure that it won't put the participant at an increased risk when returning home with them?
 - > How will you handle PCA participation during data collection?



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