

Marion County Service Equity Assessment Staff Focus Group Guide

Introduction and Overview

Thank you for agreeing to help us with this project. My name is XXX, and this is XXX. We work for the Rede Group, a company that does strategic planning, research, and evaluation for nonprofit and public sector organizations. I'm going to moderate this discussion today and XXX will be taking notes. We appreciate your willingness to share your time and expertise with us in this focus group. I'm first going to go over a few details before we start. If you have any questions, feel free to ask them as they come up.

A focus group is a gathering of deliberately selected people brought together to participate in a planned discussion intended to elicit information and feedback about a particular topic. MCHHS is doing an organizational self-assessment process to identify organizational capacity for community-based equity work and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) benchmarks within the department, with the end goal of increasing service equity with Marion County. Our main purpose today in this group is to learn from you about the elements of the organizational culture and structure that you find support or interfere with the agency's ability to address inequities. We are also interested in exploring the personal characteristics you think people at MCHHS need in order to enable the organization to address the environmental, social, and economic conditions that impact inequities. Prior to this focus group, you received a handout that gives definitions of inequities and related terms. If you have any questions about this, let us know.

We will be recording this discussion and taking notes. And we are taping this discussion to accurately capture all of your comments. We will only use first names today. Feel free to remove your last name from your Zoom name. There will be no names attached to any comments in the report. Moreover, the Rede Group will not use this recording for any other purpose other than developing the report. The recording will not be made available to anyone outside of the Rede Group and that includes our client, MCHHS. What you say here today is confidential. We are interested in hearing your experiences and opinions.

There are a couple things I want to make sure we do. If you can, turn off your cell phones and place them away from you. It's very important that each of you here today feel confident in your ability to speak about the issues that we're discussing, so our commitment is to keep this conversation confidential in that context. We'd also like you all to keep your cameras on for the entire session. This will help us keep a realistic environment, as we typically meet for focus groups in person. Since this is a remote session, make sure that you are in a private place with no interruptions. I want to ask each of you here today to hold in confidence anything you hear from others. I want to go around and have an affirmation from each of you that you will not share anything outside of this group that's discussed here today.

(Audio confirmation that each participant will keep the discussion private)

Thank you. If you have any questions about this process or this project after today, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. I want to let you know that today we will focus on your experiences, and to that end, I will ask you to only share your experiences and beliefs and not speak on behalf of others. If you agree with what someone says, speak up, rather than nodding your head or gesturing in some other way. This helps us capture agreement in our notes.

And in order to move the conversation along, I may need to interrupt or redirect conversation. And that's not to be rude. We just want to make sure that we get to all the questions we have to go over. I also may ask directly to make sure

that everyone has an opportunity to participate. I may ask folks if they have anything to add. If you don't, that's fine. But if you do, please take that opportunity.

(Group members share their names)

Thank you all. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Focus Group Questions

One topic we're meeting to discuss today is MCHHS's capacity to address inequities in the communities MCHHS serves.

1. Why do you believe that inequities should be an area of concern for your organization?
2. Can you describe what work MCHHS is doing to address the environmental, social, and economic conditions that impact inequities in the communities MCHHS serves?

Probes:

- a. Were these projects successful or unsuccessful?
 - b. What factors led to the success or failure of this work?
 - c. Is there anything that has enriched this work?
3. How do you feel about the work that MCHHS and you as individuals do to address the environmental, social, and economic conditions that affect inequities in the communities MCHHS serves?

Probes:

- a. How important do you feel this work is?

Transition Statement:

Now, let's talk some about how MCHHS supports staff to be involved in addressing inequities in the communities MCHHS serves.

4. What has MCHHS done to help staff at various levels learn about and develop skills to address the environmental, social, and economic conditions that impact inequities in the communities MCHHS serves?

Probes:

- a. Does your Division/section/program have regular discussions or workgroups addressing inequities? What role have you and other staff played in these discussions?
- b. How does MCHHS leadership support your ability to learn about inequities in the communities MCHHS serves?

5. When you or other staff have ideas about improving MCHHS's mission, work, and practices within your program, division, and/or the department, what processes are in place to bring them to the attention of decision-makers?

Probe:

- a. Give an example of how, when, and how often MCHHS includes staff input and feedback on

planning activities.

6. Do you think that MCHHS is supportive of new ideas and programs that increase service equity?

Zoom poll: optional demographics and optional stretch/water break

Transition Statement:

For the following questions, we'd like you to think about your experience as an employee and how you feel at work about how leadership and staff treat each other.

7. In what ways has MCHHS been inclusive and affirming? And by affirming I mean being accepting and respectful of you as employees.

Probe:

a. Would you give an example of what you mean or explain further?

8. In what ways has MCHHS not been inclusive and affirming?

Probe:

a. Would you give an example of what you mean or explain further?

9. What do you feel would be the most important work that could be implemented to further EDI initiatives?

Wrap-up Statement:

As we're wrapping up our discussion, let's hear any remaining ideas you may have about MCHHS's work to address inequities in the communities MCHHS serves.

Probes:

a. What more can MCHHS do to improve its ability to address the environmental, social, and economic conditions that impact inequities?

b. In regards to equity, diversity & inclusion within MCHHS, is there anything we should have talked about but didn't?