

The Arc of Bristol County & New Hope, Inc.

emPower Bristol County

Needs Assessment Plan

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Needs Assessment Plan

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Introduction

emPower Bristol County

emPower Bristol County is a collaboration between The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, Inc designed to inform potential changes in both organizations to better identify, respond to, and provide safety for individuals with disabilities experiencing abuse or violence. Our efforts will strengthen two dynamic and highly effective organizations, improve our capacity to serve the greater Attleboro/Taunton communities and plan to improve needed services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that are experiencing domestic and sexual violence (DSV).

Several other factors inform emPower BC's work: the statistically high risk of people with IDD for experiencing DSV; the opportunity to examine and expand each agency's services through OVW funding; overlapping service areas (specifically within Bristol County, with main multiple site locations being in close proximity to each other); and the longstanding desire to integrate our capacity to better serve survivors with IDD.

emPower BC's Vision

emPower Bristol County envisions a world where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live their lives with safety, dignity, and respect, including freedom from domestic and sexual violence.

emPower BC's Mission

emPower Bristol County will create an innovative system of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities impacted by domestic and sexual violence through a dynamic, open, and supportive partnership dedicated to:

- Transforming cultures through education and awareness in our agencies
- Evaluating and strengthening agency response;
- Building our collaborative and individual capacities for service provision that combines best practices and creative implementation with a survivor strengths-based approach;
- Offering seamless, integrative, and accessible supports and services that promote safety, dignity, respect, and autonomy.

As emPower BC developed its collaboration charter, the focus of the collaboration's work was narrowed to specifically focus on working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have experienced domestic or sexual violence, their support networks, and the ways the founding organizations, The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, Inc. can better serve survivors with IDD on their journey healing from trauma

History of Interagency Collaboration

The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, Inc. have been associated with each other through mutual involvement in community organizations in the Taunton/Attleboro area. While programmatic collaboration had often been discussed, the realities of budgetary

constraints have often precluded joint ventures. The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope have operated under a memorandum of understanding since March of 2016 as part of the application process for grant funding through the Office of Violence against Women.

Collaboration Members

The Arc of Bristol County

Since 1959, The Arc of Bristol County has been serving the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, helping people to realize their potential and overcome barriers to their full participation in the greater Attleboro/Taunton community. Founded by families who refused to have their children put into institutions, The Arc of Bristol County provided needed supports so families could be whole and all citizens with disabilities could be involved members of their community.

The Arc's Vision

People of all abilities are empowered to succeed by making their own choices.

The Arc's Mission

The Arc's mission is to foster community partnerships, create a pathway for growth and innovation by offering exceptional support and services to people with all abilities through the attraction, development and retention of superior talent who passionately demonstrate best practices.

Scope of Services

The Arc of Bristol County currently has 264 employees, serves over 2,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, has eight offices in Southeastern New England located in: Attleboro (3 offices), Fall River, Middleborough, New Bedford and Taunton Massachusetts, and Smithfield, Rhode Island.

The Arc of Bristol County's Services include: Acquired Brain Injury Program, Adult Day Health, Adult Family Care, Agency with Choice, Autism Now Center, Community Directions, Day Habilitation Services, Family Support Center, Guardianship and Representative Payee, Individual and Residential Support Services, Kids on the Block Educational Puppet Performances, Project Kids Connect, Project Rec-Connect, Special Education Empowerment Program, and Trust Management. The Arc of Bristol County has received CARF accreditation through 2019.

New Hope, Inc.

New Hope was founded in 1979 by Edith Palmer, an Attleboro, Massachusetts native who sought to provide assistance to women living in abusive environments. It started with a 24-hour crisis hotline, answered by Edith and other volunteers, from calls forwarded by the Plainville Police Department. Over time, and with increased community support, New Hope expanded from emergency services to prevention and education, understanding that escape from violence is only the first step; to truly break the cycle survivors must be provided tools and opportunities toward regaining their self-sufficiency.

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New Hope's Vision

Every person has the right to live a life free of violence and exploitation.

New Hope's Mission

New Hope works throughout Massachusetts to build an anti-violence movement to end sexual and domestic violence. We seek to create communities free from violence, where individuals and families are able to achieve their full human potential. As an organization dedicated to social justice, New Hope encompasses a way of seeing, naming, understanding, and acting aimed at addressing inequality and oppression across society.

Scope of Services

Today New Hope operates in 54 cities / towns across Massachusetts to provide "full-spectrum care" to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. New Hope differentiates itself from the field of domestic violence prevention agencies both in philosophy – by recognizing the interconnection between sexual assault and domestic violence – and in practice, by providing both survivor communities with programming for each step in their recovery, regardless of race, age, income level, gender or sexual orientation.

New Hope specializes in providing trauma-informed care with an emphasis on client empowerment, helping individuals reclaim the control and power they may have lost at the hands of abuse. New Hope's spectrum of care includes Prevention Education; Crisis Intervention; Shelter; Advocacy; Counseling; Transitional Living Assistance; Family Reunification and Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of emPower Bristol County's needs assessment is to locate the gaps in each founding organization's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) who also have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through the process of the needs assessment, emPower BC will seek the input of key stakeholders in our organization's structure: DSV Survivors, adults with IDD, parents and guardians of people with IDD, and each organization's staff members.

The resulting feedback will inform our future work, including the strategic planning process, in the following areas:

- Current needs in the populations we serve;
- Selecting our implementation activities;
- Increasing buy-in among staff and other organizational stakeholders), and;
- Generating solutions to identified problems with feedback from service users, in line with our values around empowerment, as defined in our Charter.

Goals Statement

Through the process of completing the needs assessment, emPower BC will identify opportunities for improvement that will increase the organizational capacity of each founding agency to meet the needs of survivors with IDD and work to towards decreasing rates of DSV for our constituents through education and accessible support services.

Our needs assessment will identify gaps in services, policies, and procedures through conversations with key stakeholders in each of our organizations, including; those who use our services (Survivors of DSV, people with IDD, and Survivors with IDD), family members, staff, and with executive leadership and our governing boards, for input on prioritization and implementation.

Through the needs assessment, emPower BC will:

- Solicit advice and implementation suggestions regarding already identified gaps in services, policies, procedures, and training required to increase organizational capacity;
- Identify additional gaps in those areas to address in our strategic plan and implementation;
- Evaluate the current skills and knowledge of each organization's staff, volunteers, and interns as it pertains to meeting the needs of survivors with IDD;
- Identify assets and barriers in maintaining the relationship between The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope over the long-term;
- Assess any barriers present in each organization's culture that inhibits the mission of emPower BC.

Information Sources

Existing Information Sources

Agency Data Sources

Existing agency data sources, and most significantly the information collected via the emPower Bristol County Indicators Scores have provided a learning opportunity in our goal to enhance the expertise and capacity of both organizations to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Vera Indicators

As we begin our Needs Assessment Planning, emPower BC has completed the first round of Indicators provided by the Vera Institute of Justice. Having established our organizational baselines for service provision, our Needs Assessment Report will include data collected from the Indicators activities completed in both April and October, 2017.

These Indicators look at three areas in each agency; commitment, capacity, and effectiveness. These are measured through organizational review of policies and procedures, environmental assessment, and staff/client surveys and interviews. The overall score for The Arc of Bristol County was 27%. For New Hope, the overall score was 41%. These scores were mildly skewed by the Effectiveness Scores, in which The Arc of Bristol County was unable to implement the survey with individuals with IDD due to requirements around mandated reporting, concerns around supporting personal safety, and accessibility around the number of varied learning styles within this sector. New Hope received only two client responses during the review period, and both of those were very positive. Because of this issue with data collection, we are including summaries of the Commitment and Capacity findings, but not Effectiveness.

New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County's findings are as follows:

Commitment

The Commitment Score for The Arc of Bristol County was 43%. The findings included strong agency guidelines and staff compliance regarding reporting incidents, collaboration with New Hope, and decision making around expanding and changing services are person centered, data driven and well supported by agency staff and vision. It is recognized that The Arc of Bristol County could improve its Commitment Score by specifically including resources for survivors of domestic and sexual violence with IDD in their budget, which unfortunately has been fiscally prohibitive to date.

The Commitment Score for New Hope was 33%. Currently, New Hope collects data around disability for its clients, is in collaboration with The Arc of Bristol County, and explicitly includes a variety of disabilities in its Non-Discrimination notice. New Hope could improve its Commitment Score by operationalizing many of its current practices for working with survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities into policy, developing more connections within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, and including more consultants with this expertise for the agency.

Capacity

The Capacity Score for the Arc of Bristol County was 23%. The Arc of Bristol County has explicit policies and training regarding sexual harassment and abuse for staff and clients, private spaces for disclosure, and strong protocols for reporting any abuse or potential abuse of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The areas marked for improvement by the Capacity Score are finding or creating more inclusive, adaptive materials to indicate services available and where those safe spaces are for those survivors of DSV with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Staff training in DSV—specifically in the areas of screening, response protocols to initial disclosures of domestic or sexual violence and safety planning for survivors with IDD are areas identified as expansion needs.

The Capacity Score for New Hope was 26%. New Hope includes disability specific training during its on-barding process and has plain language, picture-based outreach materials. The Capacity Score could be improved by increasing physical access to our sites, having more adaptive communication technology available to staff members, developing plain language resources for more nuanced topics in DSV, and including more people with IDD in our trainings around intellectual and developmental disability and DSV.

The Arc of Bristol County

The Arc of Bristol County collects relevant data via its agency wide data base. This includes data related to referrals and intakes, including specific services sought and those established as a result of the referral and intake process. Our Quality of Services data base tracks significant incidents including those occurrences relevant to domestic and sexual violence.

Service Satisfaction data is collected via surveys provided (to families and individuals) on an annual basis. These surveys also request feedback on service areas to be developed, improved or expanded.

Staff Training and Employee Satisfaction Surveys are also offered annually. Here too, feedback is sought on staff training needs to be further developed or improved. All data is compiled and maintained. This data set will be further enhanced by the work completed as a result of this grant's indicators, needs assessment and subsequent implementation plan.

Information provided by these existing sources has been significantly enhanced by the EmPower BC Indicators Scores recently compiled; particularly in its identification of areas for improvement. Indicator scores highlighted agency policies and protocols, staff trainings and competency, intake and assessment policies and procedures, as well as The Arc of Bristol County's physical infrastructure as areas to be addressed to meet objectives of this grant.

New Hope, Inc.

Empower Database: New Hope collects relevant data from people who access any of the organization's services. This includes which services are sought and received, how many times a client has accessed services, and, if disclosed, demographic information including disability status. If accommodations are requested or required, it is noted in the database.

Client Satisfaction Surveys: in FY 2106, New Hope implemented client satisfaction surveys, available in English as a paper form and online. For FY 2017, New Hope has translated the survey into Spanish (paper form and online).

National Data Sources

Other Collaborations

Many other Collaborations funded by OVW have already produced resources that are informative for emPower BC in its development of this needs assessment plan, as well as informing some of our direction as a collaboration. Specifically, other collaborations that involve DSV and Disability Service agencies have provided invaluable guidance through their work.

National Organizations (The Arc, NNEDSV, NSVRC, AAIDD)

Nationwide organizations and coalitions in both the DSV and IDD fields provide a range of statistics, practice suggestions, and strategies for implementation of services. While there is not much in-depth information specifically applicable to our target service population of adults with IDD who may seek DSV services, the work done by national coalitions is a sound source for synthesizing the outlined practices for each field to inform our implementation.

Academic Sources

There is a comparatively small body of literature, academic and otherwise, specifically about providing DSV services for adults with IDD. emPower BC has gathered relevant articles regarding best practices, qualitative studies that highlight the needs of adults with IDD, quantitative research on rates of abuse and intervention efficacy, and general information about DSV and IDD as separate issues.

Local Data Sources

Massachusetts Specific Data

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has several sources of aggregate data relating to DSV, population demographics, health of under-surveyed groups, and available services.

- **The Disabled Persons Protection Commission**, the disability reporting agency in MA, keeps data on the rate of (reported) abuse against people with disabilities in the state and regularly publishes newsletter with that information, as well as suggestions for practice implementation regarding support for people with disabilities who have experienced violence.
- **The Jane Doe Institute**, the Commonwealth's DSV coalition, collects data from all the MA DSV agencies, as well as providing a number of quarterly opportunities for interagency networking to get feedback on strategy and implementation from other service providers in the DSV field.

Municipal Data

Data collected during the 2010 Federal Census provides demographic data for the areas served by the founding agencies, particularly focused on Taunton and Attleboro, which have been identified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as "Gateway Cities," those with populations ranging from 35k to 250k with lower than the state average educational

attainment and median income. Additionally, local crime statistics can be gathered from other municipal organizations as publicly available information.

New Data Sources

Identified Sectors for Participation

Adults with IDD

The primary focus of emPower Bristol County's work on this grant is to identify the gaps in our service for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. Empower Bristol County will be engaging people with these disabilities who are currently receiving services from The Arc of Bristol County. Given the focus on this group of survivors of domestic and sexual violence; we will be engaging more focus groups for this sector than other sectors with whom we will engage for our needs assessment activities (specifically family members and agency staff).

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are vital to the needs assessment process. We believe that people with IDD are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations most welcoming, comfortable, accessible, and intellectual and developmental disability-aware. Because the Implementation Plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is imperative that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes.

By engaging people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see People with IDD):

- What makes a service provider accessible and comfortable for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- The best methods of outreach to alert people with intellectual and developmental disabilities about accessible and disability-informed survivor services;
- The best practices for serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (including staff intervention, knowledge, and skills);

Survivors of DSV

We will be engaging domestic and sexual violence survivors who are clients of New Hope, Inc. We believe that survivors of DSV are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their own personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations safer and more trauma-informed. Because the strategic plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is critical that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes. (For more information on this process and reasoning see [Recruitment: Survivors of DSV with IDD.](#))

By engaging survivors of domestic and sexual violence we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see [Survivors with IDD](#)):

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- What makes a service provider approachable, safe, comfortable, and any barriers to services;
- The best methods of outreach to alert survivors of available services;
- The importance and value of confidentiality as a safety tool;
- The best practices for serving survivors who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (including staff behavior, knowledge, and skills); and
- The impact trauma has on someone's approach to seeking services.

Parents/Guardians of People with IDD

emPower BC recognizes that one major barrier to services for people with IDD is the perception of guardians as gatekeepers. The Arc was originally founded by parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to offer alternatives to institutional care, school systems that did not offer educational access, and begin supports for community access. We believe guardians of people with IDD can be one of the greatest potential allies in developing lasting interventions and sustainable changes in service provision based on the historical tenacity of this group. With this in mind, we will interview the parents and guardians of people with IDD who receive services from The Arc of Bristol County to:

- Assist in the determination of awareness levels about DSV services;
- Gather information about guardian and parent perceptions of the need and appropriateness of DSV services for people with IDD;
- Identify whether there is a need for awareness/educational resources for parents and guardians and what those resources might contain;
- Build buy-in among parents and guardians around increased access to preventative education and DSV services for people with IDD.

Parents/Guardians of Survivors of DSV

To offer an alternative perspective on DSV services for people under guardianship, New Hope will engage the parents and guardians of our clients to gain their input on the following:

- What makes a service provider approachable, safe, comfortable, and any barriers to services;
- The best methods of outreach to alert survivors of services;
- The importance and value of confidentiality as a safety tool;
- The best practices for serving survivors (including staff behavior, knowledge, and skills); and
- The impact trauma has on someone's approach to seeking services.

Staff at The Arc of Bristol County

We recognize the staff members at The Arc of Bristol County as our experts in the field of intellectual and developmental disability services. By engaging the staff, emPower BC will:

- Identify the resources needed by staff to confidently refer survivors with IDD to DSV services;
- Gather information about gaps in services, policies, and knowledge that would be useful connecting people with IDD to DSV support services;

- Assess which trainings are needed to give staff the base knowledge necessary to recognize domestic and sexual abuse, connect with DSV services, and provide the best support possible for survivors with IDD.

Staff at New Hope, Inc.

We recognize the staff members at New Hope as our experts in the field of domestic and sexual violence services. By engaging the staff, emPower BC will:

- Identify the resources needed by staff to confidently work with survivors with IDD;
- Gather information about common referrals made by staff members (e.g. Massachusetts Office for Victims Assistance);
- Assess which trainings are needed to give staff the base knowledge they feel is necessary to provide the best services possible for survivors with IDD.

Survivors with IDD

As information about emPower BC and our desire to increase our capacity has spread throughout our service areas, a few survivors of DSV with IDD have reached out to various staff at the founding organizations to find out how they can contribute to our process. These potential participants have already disclosed abuse, been through the reporting process, and, in some cases, engaged with the judicial system.

Survivors with IDD have a unique lens of the intersection between domestic and/or sexual violence and disability. They will be able to share their experiences and ideas about how to make disclosures or reports, and services accessible, welcoming, comfortable and safe for survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The opportunity to interview survivors with IDD and their supporters (family, paid caregivers, or otherwise) gives us a chance to ask specific questions about the ways services could have been better from both DSV and intellectual and developmental disability service agencies.

We will be engaging survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are clients of emPower Bristol County. We will only be engaging survivors with IDD who meet the following criteria:

- Who, at the time of recruitment, are not under plenary guardianship
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of New Hope and who have already disclosed that they are a person with an intellectual or developmental disability
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of The Arc of Bristol County that have already disclosed that they are a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence
- Potential participants who have reached out in tandem with their plenary guardian to members of the emPower BC team expressing interest in participating in the project

By engaging survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see [Survivors with IDD Group](#)):

- How organizations can provide better outreach to survivors with IDD;

- Specific concerns that survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities have about disclosing or reporting their experiences with domestic and/or sexual violence, including concerns about mandated reporting;
- Best practices for responding to disclosures or reports of domestic and/or sexual violence from survivors with disabilities.
- How organizations that primarily serves either domestic and/or sexual violence survivors, or people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, can be improved to be more welcoming, accessible, responsive, and trauma-informed for survivors with IDD.

Vera Indicators

- emPower BC completed the first round of Capacity Indicators provided by the Vera Institute of Justice in April 2017. Having established our organizational baselines for service provision, our needs assessment report will include the data from both rounds of review as guided by the Indicators completed approximately every 6 months. As of the time of this plan, the organizations have completed the indicators in APR 2017, OCT 2017, and MAR 2018.

Information Collection Methods

Note: Explanations of each role involved in the focus group and interview processes can be found in the [Roles](#) section.

Surveys

In the interest of collecting as much data from our sectors as possible, emPower Bristol County will use written surveys that mirror our focus group questions for agency staff members, parents and guardians, and survivors of DSV (does not include survivors with IDD). Due to varied learning styles and personal safety concerns, we have chosen not to use written surveys with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as our main method of data collection, although a written version of focus group questions will be available to this sector.

Audience

Survivors of DSV, Parents and Guardians of people with IDD, Parents and Guardians of people who have experienced DSV, Staff at both organizations

Structure

The Surveys will be printed or built on an online survey platform and distributed through a series of methods, including palm cards, email, and direct mail when applicable.

- For the staff member surveys, the Project Directors will email an invitation to participate to all staff members of their respective agencies.
- For Family & Caregiver Surveys, the Project Director from each agency will connect with staff to assist in outreach and distribution of the survey.
- Passive consent is confirmed when an audience member completes the survey. All surveys are designed to be completed in 20 to 30 minutes. Paper copies will be provided upon request.

Roles

Note: These roles are explained under the Recruitment Plan

- Survey Developers
- Data Collectors
- Recruitment

Focus Groups

emPower BC will primarily use focus groups for gathering information from adults with IDD and survivors of DSV because we believe that this is the most efficient way to effectively engage larger groups of individuals in a short period of time. We also believe that a focus group setting will help to generate a diverse range of ideas and perspectives. We will also run focus groups with parents and guardians and agency staff but will not conduct as many groups with these sectors.

While recruiters are explaining the options for participation in the focus groups, they will note that an individual interview is available for people who are interested in offering their input,

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but do not want to be part of the larger focus group. Participants who request an interview will be offered the opportunity for an individual setting.

Audience

Survivors of DSV, Adults with IDD, Parents and Guardians of Adults with IDD, Parents and Guardians of people who have experienced DSV, Staff members at each organization

Roles:

- Facilitator
- Note Taker
- Assistant
- Advocate

Optional Interviews

We recognize that speaking in a group setting may be uncomfortable for some people for reasons such as lack of privacy or discomfort in a group setting. Therefore, emPower BC will offer individual interviews to anyone recruited for focus groups. This will be clearly explained during the recruitment process ([Scripts for Focus Groups and Interviews](#)). It should be noted that The Arc of Bristol County has expertise in supporting people with IDD who utilize augmentative communication systems or other types of assistive technology to fully communicate their thoughts and needs. This expertise will be utilized to ensure such accommodations are provided to those who require it to fully participate in Empower BC's focus groups, interviews, etc.

Audience

People who request a 1-1 interview as an accommodation or have accommodations that work best in a 1-1 setting

Roles

- Facilitator (Advocate)
- Note Taker (Advocate)

Structure for Focus Groups and Optional Interviews

During focus groups and interviews, the people assigned to each role will fulfill those duties listed below. The size of focus groups will include a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 10 people per group. The exact size of the group will be determined according to the clinical and/or communication supports and accommodations required to equip each person involved in the group with enough support to fully participate in the group. As people arrive to the group or interview, they will be greeted by one of the people responsible for staffing the group or interview. Once they have been welcomed and are situated in the room, the Note Taker will distribute the participant's gift card. The duration of each focus group session will be up to 2 hours and include a break at the midpoint. Consideration will be given to the appropriate duration time which will be properly adjusted to accommodate the needs of each focus group's unique membership.

Procedure

- Focus groups and interviews will involve a moderated discussion using open-ended questions, unique for each audience, based on the goals of that particular group ([Scripts for Focus Groups and Interviews for all questions](#))
- Those conducting focus groups and interviews will be members of the collaboration team
- Each focus group or interview will have enough staff to cover the required roles listed above. During Interviews, the Note Taker or the Facilitator may also fill the role of advocate if they have been trained to do so.
- At all focus groups, a trained advocate will be available to provide support, as needed (see below for a description of the Advocate role).
- During interviews, the Facilitator or Note Taker may also fill the role of advocate.
- A list of local community resources will be available at all focus groups and interviews, should someone need information on where to obtain support.

Roles

Facilitator

Facilitators will be used in Focus Groups and Interviews. The facilitator may be a staff member of either organization. emPower BC will identify the most appropriate facilitator for each focus group based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: whether the group has an existing structure that involves a regular facilitator; who has the necessary skills to best lead the group; The facilitator will:

- Welcome participants and introduce the other people conducting the meeting.
- Make sure everyone is comfortable,
- Review general housekeeping details and will address safety and confidentiality issues using the script created by the collaboration, prior to getting into the pre-created questions and prompts. ([Scripts for Focus Groups and Interviews](#) for all facilitation scripts.)
- Fully review all mandatory reporting requirements reiterating or explaining in expanded detail for any focus group member or interviewee as needed. Alternate formats for presentation will be provided as appropriate to the needs of the particular focus group participants assembled.
- Keep the discussion in line with the questions and will intervene quickly in cases of possible arguments or personal disclosures. (See Appendix xx-xx for all questions.)
- Be responsible for insuring that people feel the environment is comfortable and safe and understand that they can leave at any time. For all focus groups and interviews, the facilitator will be responsible for keeping track of the time.

Note Taker

Note takers are responsible for recording the substance of the focus groups and interviews. Note takers will use a combination of sound and written recording to capture the responses of participants. In 1-1 interviews, where consent to make an audio recording is given, the Note Taker and Facilitator Roles may be merged, based on the comfort of the participant. The note taker will:

- Objectively taking notes of the discussion on (insert respective medium).
- Not participate in the discussion and will sit in a part of the room that will be the least distracting for participants when possible.
- Document what each person says without paraphrasing and will document when emotions such as frustration, anger, or happiness are expressed. The note taker may ask that something said be repeated by raising her hand.
- Not be linking any information shared to specific participants and will exclude any identifying information other than which organization and type of group they are from (for example, "Staff from XXX said...").

Be responsible for insuring that all written information and notes are kept in a safe and confidential place (See [Confidentiality](#))

- At the end of each focus group/interview, the note taker will facilitate a debriefing session with the (insert respective roles) jointly identify themes, significant comments, and new information related to the goals of the needs assessment.
- Be responsible for translating all notes into "note summaries," which will be provided to collaboration team members.

Assistant (For focus groups only)

During Focus Groups, Assistants are available to ensure the comfort and safety of participants. This can range from helping participants to find their care workers, to escorting participants to meet with the Advocate, to making sure pathways stay clear and accessible. The Assistant will also be responsible for helping the facilitator with technology management, passing out any documentation necessary, collecting feedback when applicable, and distributing incentives to participants. The Assistant will:

- Assist with food (if applicable) and room set-up and ensure that focus group participants feel safe and comfortable. Empower BC fully acknowledges that grant funds are not to be utilized to purchase any food items. Both the Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, Inc. will provide food items (as applicable) from funds completely unassociated with OVW Grant dollars awarded to Empower BC.
- If anyone wants to access the counselor or their own personal care attendant, the assistant will escort them out of the room.
- Assist with keeping track of time when not assisting individual participants.

Counselor/Advocate

An advocate trained by New Hope in offering support to survivors of DSV, will be available to offer support for those participating in focus groups. If possible, emPower BC will seek an advocate who has experience in both DSV and working with people with IDD. The advocate will be located in a private, accessible room--away from the main focus group space. During interviews, either the Facilitator or the Note Taker can serve as the Advocate if a third-party advocate is unavailable during the time of the interview. The counselor will:

- Be in a separate, private, accessible space to insure confidentiality and safety.
- Have training in (insert respective criteria)
- Have cards that list local resources

Training for Staff filling these roles

Staff members of the founding organizations who conduct focus groups and interviews who are not part of the Collaboration Team will be provided the following:

- The Recruitment Information Sheet ([Recruitment Materials](#))
- The emPower Bristol County Frequently Asked Questions ([Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- A copy of the script for the applicable group at least one week in advance of the group or interview ([Scripts for Focus Groups and Interviews](#))
- An overview of the grant purpose and Needs Assessment process, specifically; accommodations, safety, confidentiality, and reporting.
- Training on the specific requirements of their role and the protocol for handling difficult situations that may arise.

Recruitment Plan

Survivor (Participants) for all venues (focus group, interviews, surveys) will be recruited as outlined (for example: individual face-to-face conversations), facilitated by respective individuals. The recruitment materials will include an RSVP form (Appendix X) that will list all accommodation options, and invitees will be instructed to complete the form and give it back to the recruiter directly.

All people served will be assured that participation is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

Data Collection Plan

Audience	Organization Responsible for Recruitment	Type of Data collection	Breakdown (# Part. # Groups)
*Survivors of DSV	New Hope (Advocates & Counselors)	Surveys	10
		Focus Groups	10 3
		Interviews	(As Needed)
*Adults with IDD	The Arc (Case Managers & Program Directors)	Focus Groups	10 3
		Interviews	(As Needed)
Parents & Guardians	The Arc	Surveys	30
		Focus Groups	10 1
		Interviews	(As Needed)
	New Hope	Surveys	10
		Focus Groups	10 1
		Interviews	(As Needed)
IDD Agency Staff	The Arc	Focus Group	10 1
		Surveys	20
DSV Agency Staff	New Hope	Focus Groups	10 1
		Surveys	20
*Survivors with IDD	Both Agencies (All staff with knowledge of survivor and disability status)	Focus Groups	10 2
		Interviews	(As Needed)

*Groups included for compensation.

Survey Development

The Project Directors from emPower BC will serve as the final authors of the surveys based on the consensus of the Collaboration Team. The Collaboration Team will reach consensus on the surveys before the Project Directors finalize them and before they are distributed as part of the Needs Assessment. The collaboration team may reach out to other staff members and outside contributors to gather input on the survey content in advance of the final consensus.

Data Collection

The Collaboration Team will serve as the primary data collectors for surveys. The Project Directors will be responsible for collating data and presenting the data in its entirety to the Collaboration Team for its full review and interpretation. The Collaboration Team will work collectively to interpret the data so that it can be properly assembled within Needs Assessment Report. Founding Agencies administrative staff may be asked to assist with data input from paper forms.

Recruitment

Outreach will be conducted by staff members at both The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, specifically focused on reaching our service populations. The specific method for outreach to each sector is outlined below.

Recruitment Methods

Survivors of DSV with IDD

In line with emPower BC's values around safety, privacy, and autonomy, survivors with IDD who are not under plenary guardianship (See: [Guardianship](#)) will be reached through their caseworkers. To accomplish this, Collaboration members will send the Recruiter Memo ([Recruitment Materials](#)) and its accompanying packet to Service Coordinators, Case Managers, and Program Directors at The Arc of Bristol County and Counselors, Case Workers, and Advocates at New Hope. The memo describes the parameters for recruiting a person with IDD who has experienced DSV who is not under plenary guardianship to participate in a Focus Group. The caseworker or service coordinator will serve as the primary point for recruitment by obtaining consent, collecting RSVP information, and confirming interview times. A few survivors with IDD have approached New Hope indicating interest. For these individuals, their New Hope contact (working with New Hope Collaboration Team Members) will coordinate with them; regarding their participation in the Needs Assessment ([Focus Groups](#) or [Optional Interviews](#))

Survivors of DSV

New Hope will be responsible for recruiting survivors of DSV through direct offers to service recipients, dedicated outreach to shelter clients, existing support and therapy groups. The primary point of recruitment for Survivors of DSV will be their New Hope contact (e.g. counselor, advocate). Surveys will also be available in paper form in the New Hope waiting area as well as palm cards with information regarding the online survey.

Adults with IDD:

The Arc of Bristol County will be responsible for recruiting adults with IDD for the needs assessment by engaging current, established groups of self-advocates, those attending The emPower Bristol County Needs Assessment Plan

Arc of Bristol County's day habilitation programs and using housing services, those engaged in shared living programs and The Arc of Bristol County's Resource Centers.

Parents/Guardians of Adults with IDD:

The Arc of Bristol County will be responsible for recruiting parents and guardians of people with IDD through established caregiver support groups and outreach to families seeking services in educational supports and family care supports. The Collaboration team members from The Arc of Bristol County will designate case managers and family support workers to be the primary point for referral and recruitment for Parents & Guardians of people with IDD.

Parents/Guardians of People Receiving DSV Services

New Hope will be responsible for recruiting parents and guardians for children affected by DSV through established clients in our counseling and advocacy services. The Collaboration team members from New Hope will designate counselors and advocates to be the primary point for referral and recruitment for Parents & Guardians of children affected by DSV.

IDD Agency Staff:

The Arc of Bristol County will email information about the Needs Assessment Survey out to all employees. For Focus groups, staff will participate on a volunteer basis.

DSV Agency Staff:

New Hope will recruit staff members to fill out surveys. For Focus groups, staff will participate on a volunteer basis.

Recruitment Logistics

The recruiter will follow the recruitment scripts that have been specifically designed for the intended audience. (See Recruiter Scripts) The Recruiter will:

- Explain the purpose of the focus group/interview and the overall goal of the collaboration.
- Alert the invitee of any reasons that confidentiality cannot be maintained, such as (any agency specific) reporting, and mandatory reporting, and/or specific obligations based on type of profession and/or license.
- Review the recruitment materials, including the RSVP form and Frequently Asked Questions.
- For all activities with people served: discuss what compensation they will receive.
- Review the date, time, and location of the interview or focus group.
- Review accommodation needs.
- Obtain verbal consent from the individual to participate in the focus group.
- Offer an individual interview for those that do not want to participate in a focus group. If the invitee prefers an individual interview, the recruiter will have a list of pre-selected dates/times and ask that the invitee select the date/time that works best for them. The recruiter will ensure that this date/time is listed on the RSVP form.
- Answer any additional questions.

All recruiters are to contact the Project Director at their agency (The Arc of Bristol County: Jennifer Adams, New Hope: Erin Basler) by email with the first name and accommodation
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requests for each person who agrees to participate in the Needs Assessment. The recruiters will submit the RSVP forms to the Project Director at their agency within 2 business days of recruitment through intra-office mail or other delivery method (for the information collected, see [RSVP](#)).

Recruitment Tools

Recruitment Information Packet (For agency staff) ([Recruitment Materials](#))

The Recruitment Information Packet will outline the necessary information for those performing outreach to potential participants. This packet will include:

- A Summary of the Grant Purpose
- The Vision and Mission of emPower BC
- Specific Considerations Recruitment MEMO for Recruiters to read prior to beginning recruitment
- Specific Considerations Recruitment Script for Recruiters to read to potential participants
- Frequently Asked Questions Sheet (FAQ)
- Reference Chart: Target Audiences for Focus Groups, Interviews, Surveys
- RSVP Forms/Reminder Cards and instructions
- Contact information for the Project Directors
- Information on where to locate plenary guardianship status for Survivors with IDD

Specific Considerations Recruitment Memo (For Staff recruiting Survivors with IDD)

emPower BC has decided to use a slightly different approach to recruiting survivors with IDD. The Special Recruitment Memo will be sent out to all case managers at The Arc explaining the parameters for inclusion of a survivor with IDD, the precautions to be taken, and the procedure for outreach, as well as the recruitment information packet and an additional script specifically to recruit survivors with IDD.

Recruitment Announcement

Both organizing agencies will include information about the collaboration and upcoming focus groups in staff communication and their newsletters with additional information regarding how to get involved.

RSVP Form ([RSVP](#))

All invitees will receive an RSVP form at the time of recruitment. The RSVP form will ask for the invitee's first name, if they want to participate in the needs assessment process, how they'd like to participate (focus group/optional interview), and what accommodations they need. Names collected from the RSVP forms will only be utilized to connect participants with their requested accommodations.

The Project Directors will be the designated point persons for keeping track of all RSVP responses and accommodation requests for all focus groups and interviews. RSVP forms will be destroyed within one month following the focus group meetings. In the interim, they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. (See [Confidentiality](#))

Parameters around how the RSVP will be used during recruitment: For those receiving in-person recruitment, the recruiter will provide them with an RSVP form and request that they

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complete the form while the recruiter is present. The recruiter will go through each section of the RSVP form, explaining what is needed and ensuring that invitees understand what they are being asked. For those staff members invited via email, the RSVP form will be attached to the email and it will be requested that they email back the RSVP form by a due date selected by the Collaboration Team.

FAQ Sheet ([Frequently Asked Questions](#))

The FAQ sheet will answer general questions about what focus groups/interviews entail ([Frequently Asked Questions](#)). This sheet will be provided to all participants during the recruitment process. For (people served), we will let them know during recruitment that we are taking all forms back at the end of the recruitment process. Those who agree to participate in the Needs Assessment will be permitted to take the FAQ sheet with them if, through a conversation about safety and risks with the recruiter, they determine it would be useful to have and there is no risk of danger to the participant should someone find it in their possession.

Reminder Cards

Because we recognize that participants may want a meeting reminder, we will provide all invitees with the option of taking a meeting reminder card with them ([Reminder Cards](#)). This will be the only written material that people participating in the focus groups may take with them from the recruitment process. This card will be the size of a business card and will only list the Project Director's first name, a contact phone number, and a blank space to fill in the date/time of the meeting.

The phone number listed will be to a confidential cellphone and voicemail provided by New Hope and will not state anything about the project or domestic and/or sexual violence on the voicemail recording. The location of the meeting, information on New Hope, The Arc, or emPower Bristol County and more information on the Project Director will not be included. ***All participants will have the option to decline any and all reminders, contacts regarding their participation. The Recruiter will plainly inform the participant that they have this option; should the participant feel it poses any potential safety risk to them or their family members if such contacts were made after the initial recruiter contact. This is noted on the RSVP Form as SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT.***

Compensation

During all focus groups for people served, *The Arc of Bristol County will provide light refreshments. The Project Directors will make accommodations for any food/drink restrictions and requirements as needed.

Additionally, we will provide all survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with \$20 Visa gift card to cover their time and travel to the focus group/interview. At the beginning of each focus group/interview with people served; during the check-in process with each individual participant the Assistant will distribute the gift cards. Individuals will be told during recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group/interview that a gift card will be provided to them and that if they prefer not to take it with them for safety reasons, the Project Director will give it to the recruiter to keep for them until they are ready

to use it for up to three months. Individuals will also be told that they can discontinue their participation at any time during the focus group/interview, without losing their gift card.

The note taker will count the number of participants and gift cards given out and keep a record of this aggregate data for potential auditing requirements. The facilitator will sign off that this number is correct after each focus group/interview as a witness and to ensure accuracy.

**(emPower BC fully acknowledges that grant funds are not to be utilized to purchase any food items. Both the Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, Inc. will provide food items (as applicable) from funds completely unassociated with OVW Grant dollars awarded to emPower BC.)*

Informed Consent Process

During conversations between the recruiter and potential participant, consent will be obtained by reading the [Recruitment Script for Survivors of with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities](#). The script reviews each of the conditions for participation and the rights of participants point by point. These parameters are also outlined in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Consent

It is important to emPower BC that participants in the Needs Assessment individually consent to their involvement in the process. As such, at the time of recruitment, the Recruiter will read the consent notice ([Script](#)) to the potential participant and make a note of explicit verbal consent when given.

The passive consent process exists for all focus groups, and interviews as it provides for more confidentiality of participants, prevents a paper trail, and eliminates time spent on administrative matters in the session itself. Passive consent will also be clearly outlined in the facilitator's opening remarks. Participants will be told they can leave or discontinue their involvement at any time. Once the remarks have been read, it will be assumed that all participants who choose to stay will be giving consent for their participation. Participants of focus groups and interviews are agreeing to:

- Participate in a focus groups/interview.
- Have their comments anonymously recorded in audio format and in writing.
- Have their comments anonymously used in the needs assessment report.
- Have their comments anonymously used for developing the collaboration's strategic plan and implementation activities.

Guardianship

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there are two basic types of guardianship: plenary or full guardianship in which all personal decision making is transferred from the person under guardianship to the appointed guardian; and limited guardianship, in which a guardian is appointed to manage certain affairs, such as medical or financial decision making (DPPC, 2018). In Massachusetts, the practice of granting plenary guardianship, which significantly limits the rights of the person under guardianship including voting, marriage, and driving rights, has become increasingly rare since the publication of the MA Uniform Probate Code. Currently, courts are more apt to appoint medical proxies, representative payees, legal conservators, or limited guardians over full guardians to support the inherent human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

It is the practice of The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope to presume competence of those participating in our programs, and, as such, emPower Bristol County will presume competence of all people recruited to participate in the needs assessment process. Specifically, emPower BC views participation in the focus groups to be akin to participating

in other self-advocacy groups, which do not require additional consent for participation from the guardian.

emPower BC follows the values and practices of its founding agencies in that it presumes competency of all participants. Recognizing the delicate balance between self-advocacy, autonomy, legality, and safety, emPower BC will not be recruiting any survivors if DSV with IDD who are under plenary guardianship. Those under conservatorship, with shared decision making, or other specialized types of guardianship (e.g. medical proxy, representative payee) will be considered for participation. The only exception we will make is in the ***case of survivors with IDD and their guardians who approach emPower BC to become a potential participant and the recruiter knows the guardian and person with IDD well enough to reasonably believe that there is not abuse occurring in their relationship.*** These guardians will need to fill out an additional Guardian Consent Form to confirm they understand the rights and restrictions they have in the focus group process.

emPower BC will make the following packet available, as requested, to aid guardians in their decisions around participation:

- The emPower Bristol County FAQs
- The Focus Group Script for Survivors with IDD
- An invitation to participate in the Parent/Guardian Focus Groups and Survey process

If guardianship issues arise, the project directors will seek guidance from the management staff at The Arc. Guardians (much like support staff) will not be permitted to stay in the room during focus groups, as it may alter the comfort level of participants to give honest and open answers about their experiences.

Confidentiality

Preserving confidentiality

The following information outlines the specific considerations we have made to preserve confidentiality.

- Personally identifying information will only be collected during the RSVP process, when individuals will be asked their first name (only) for the purpose of confirming number of people in each focus group, linking individuals with their accommodations, and contact information to provide optional meeting reminders. (In consideration of potential safety concerns that may exist for participants; recruiters will be trained to establish with each participant whether or not it is safe to receive a reminder email or call.)
- Recruiters will use this same RSVP form to outline specific accommodations requested and required. This will be noted by the Recruiter adjacent to person's (first) name. (No last names are to be used on RSVP Form.) The Project Director will be responsible to ensure all accommodations are arranged and available at time of the focus group meetings or individual interviews.
- The recruiters who receive the RSVP forms will keep the RSVP forms in a sealed envelope while they have it. RSVP forms will be delivered to the project directors via intra-office mail or other arrangements within 2 business days of receipt. Recruiters will email Program Director informing them that RSVP forms have been sent via specified arrangement specifying date sent. Upon receipt of RSVP forms; Program Director will confirm such with recruiter(s). Both Recruiter and Program Director are equally responsible to track the delivery of these forms; remaining in contact should either become concerned about the length of time between mailing and delivery of the RSVP forms.
- Original RSVP Forms, with confirmed or declined participation and (as appropriate) accommodation notations will be placed in a binder and held by the Program Director in a confidential, secure, location. Copies of RSVP forms will not be made. In this way, information about who is engaging in focus groups or interviews is located in a sole document and location.
- The Project Director will use the RSVP Forms Binder for use to contact those who request a meeting reminder call/email. While we will not recruit anyone who is in imminent danger, we recognize that one's safety can change suddenly. In consideration of potential safety concerns, recruiters will be trained to establish with each participant (at initial point of contact) whether or not it is safe to receive a reminder email or call. All concerns regarding safety will be honored; calls and emails will not be sent when potential safety concerns are present for any participant. Additionally, such will be clearly documented on the participants RSVP form by the Recruiter as follows: **SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT.** This will be taken as an additional step in the prevention of calls or emails inadvertently being sent to a participant in this circumstance.

- At the time of the focus group meeting or interview, the Project Director will provide a list of participants, by first name, and their corresponding accommodations to the Facilitator. The RSVP Forms Binder will be brought to each focus group/interview to verify those who should be present and to ensure all required accommodations are met. For safety purposes, only those participants who can be confirmed by the Recruiter or Program Director as authorized to attend will be allowed access to the focus group meeting. This information will be communicated to the Facilitator as the participants enter just prior to the start of the meeting.
- The number of participants who attend focus groups and interviews will be aggregated for the needs assessment report. No other RSVP information will be aggregated or shared.
- In focus groups and interviews, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about themselves, specific staff, or program participants.
- All RSVP forms will be destroyed within one week following each focus group/interview.
- There will be no adverse ramifications for services due to any information shared. The facilitator will explicitly state at the beginning of each focus group meeting or individual interview that information or opinions shared during these sessions will not be shared with participants' service providers. To mitigate possible confusion, the facilitator will clarify the difference between this statement and the requirements around mandated reporting
- Focus group participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with anyone who did not participate in their specific focus group. Additionally, participants will be asked to not discuss what is said in the group with other group participants once the group is over. However, because we cannot ensure that participants preserve confidentiality, participants will also be encouraged to be mindful of what they share.
- The note taker will not link personal identifying information to comments made during any focus groups or interviews.
- The final needs assessment report will identify trends, barriers, and strengths, linked to what each organization and sector provided during the needs assessment process in summary form. The final Needs Assessment Report will include direct (anonymous) quotes supporting the aforementioned elements. In order to make systemic changes at collaborative organizations, it is imperative to identify strengths and needs to enrich the development of our strategic plan.
- Any information gathered through the needs assessment process will be kept by the Project Director in a locked filing cabinet in the New Hope offices. Information collected digitally will be stored on a password protected computer in the New Hope offices (assigned to the Project Director, Erin Basler) or in a password protected online database.
- In the case of an emergency, the Project Director from The Arc of Bristol County, Jennifer Adams, will have access to the digital information and physical information, including both items in the locked filing cabinet and on the password protected computer, on New Hope's premises can be obtained through the agency representative, Marie Palermo.

- The note taker will provide notes from each group to the Project Directors from New Hope, Erin Basler and from The Arc of Bristol County, Jennifer Adams so that a summary approved by the Collaboration Team can be completed for the Needs Assessment Report.
- Upon receiving the notes, the Project Directors will provide collaboration team members with summaries of the focus groups and interviews. The Project Director will be identifying themes, patterns, and issues that emerge utilizing regarding the focus group and interview process following each focus group and interview to ensure all information is captured and consistent.
- The Project Directors will aggregate data from the anonymous surveys returned by Families and Caregivers, agency staff, Survivors, and Perpetrators of Violence.
- Draft copies of the needs assessment report will be kept in a locked cabinet and/or stored in password protected computers that only the collaboration team members have access to.
- The report will be formally presented to the founding organization's staff and individuals served and their families at the discretion of the founding organizations. The completed plan will be initially reviewed by the Collaboration Team, each Founding Agency's President, and the Vera Institute of Justice and subsequently approved by the Office on Violence Against Women. Both Founding Agencies will make a determination regarding the process and distribution of this report to respective stakeholders including the most beneficial and informative timeline for such. The Collaboration Team will establish the parameters for this presentation prior to the onset of the Implementation Plan activities and tasks.
- All notes, records, and other pertinent documents related to the needs assessment will be destroyed after the strategic plan has been approved by The Office on Violence Against Women and The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope have signed off on it.

Mandated Reporting

The Arc and New Hope each have their own specific policies regarding confidentiality and mandated reporting based on the requirements of Massachusetts Law and Guidelines. These guidelines identify three groups for whom staff and affiliates of the agencies must adhere to mandated reporting policies. These groups are minor children (M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A, reporting to Department of Children and Families), people with disabilities (M.G.L. c. 19C, § 10, reporting to The Disabled Persons Protection Commission), patients living in nursing homes or managed care (M.G.L. c. 111, § 72G, Reporting to Department of Health), and adults age 60 and older (as defined in MGL c. 19A §15, reporting the MA office of Elder Affairs).

All staff and volunteers at both founding organizations are Mandated Reporters, as defined above. Although the needs assessment does not directly inquire about a client's history of abuse, there is the potential for a disclosure to take place during this phase of the project. Therefore, agreements and planning are necessary to prepare for the response of such disclosures. If a disclosure is made, emPower BC will follow Massachusetts Mandatory Reporting policies.

We recognize that aligning our values regarding autonomy and inclusion and meeting our reporting requirements may sometimes seem at odds. To this end, we have defined the following strategies to support autonomy and empowerment for people with IDD who may disclose abuse or assault:

- We will notify people at the onset, that both founding agencies are mandated reporters. We will be clear about what mandated reporting involves including what we must report. We will use language appropriate to the focus group membership or person being individually interviewed. We will use plain language as appropriate to cognition and learning styles (e.g. I can keep anything you say between us, unless it involves you being hurt or hurting someone else.) This will also include picture systems or other assistive technology as appropriate to individual learning style and needs.
- This information will be provided at the onset of initial contacts made by recruiters, as well as in opening minutes of focus group meetings or individual interviews. Empower BC recognizes this critical information and our responsibility to ensure all participants involved in any Needs Assessment activity is fully aware and fully understands this requirement well in advance of sharing any personal information. This information will be shared in advance of the focus group or interview being opened for discussion or sharing of information. If any group member or interviewee initiates dialog before mandated reporting is discussed; the facilitator will immediately insist that conversation is held until all meeting or interview guidelines (including mandated reporting) is reviewed and all questions are answered.)
- If a mandatory report is required, we will involve the survivor in reporting to the relevant regulatory agency. This can involve facilitating a self-report or making a report with involvement from the survivor. Should the survivor refuse to engage in self-reporting; the mandated reporter will fulfill their regulatory obligation and move forward with the report without the survivor. The survivor will be made aware in advance that the report will be filed. This also provides for an additional opportunity for the survivor to reconsider their direct involvement if they so choose. Should the mandated reporter find it necessary to proceed with the formal report without the direct involvement of the survivor; the reporter will immediately attempt to contact the survivor directly to notify the survivor that the report has been made.

While mandatory reporting supersedes our privilege, we acknowledge that when making accommodations for a survivor that involves the presence of a designated trusted person (to be chosen by the survivor), the staff member must inform all parties that privilege granted to DSV workers may be compromised. The Guidelines for Massachusetts Rape Crisis Centers: Working with Survivors with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, published by the DPPC in April 2017, offers guidance around this topic, but the privileges defined in 20J and 20K may not apply when there is a 3rd party present during confidential sessions as this potential exception has not been challenged or codified through court proceedings.

Access Considerations

The collaboration is committed to providing fully accessible focus groups and interviews for all participants throughout the needs assessment process. To the best of our ability, accessibility will be ensured through the following:

- Accessible space will be used for all focus groups and interviews. Focus groups and interviews will take place in a space that is commonly used by the participants, so that they are already familiar with the space and assumedly have been provided with what is needed for accessibility.
- emPower BC will assess child care resources based on such needs being requested to allow for participation in focus groups. Should child care be provided, this resource would not be paid out of the grant funds awarded by OVW.
- Reasonable accommodation will be provided to those participating. The RSVP form for focus groups and interviews will include a checklist of common accommodations, as well as space to identify other accommodations needed. The Project Directors will be responsible for overseeing requested accommodations.
- All participants will be asked not to wear perfume or scented lotions
- Recruiters and facilitators will be instructed to attend to the particular needs of each audience and speak in a manner that is accessible to all participants.
- All print materials and needs assessment tools will be in available in alternative formats such as (plain language, 14pt. font, compatible with screen readers, etc.)
- Because participants' own Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews, the floater will escort participants requesting their PCA out of the room to that individual. Should a personal needs situation arise for someone who does not have their own PCA available; we will provide assistance as appropriate to the person's immediate need.
- Questions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been written to enhance accessibility for those with cognitive disabilities by using concrete examples and plain, concrete language.
- For a list of common accommodations, please refer to the [RSVP Form](#).

In the event that a potential participant requires accommodations that cannot be met or would be better suited to a one to one interview, the recruiter will act as the liaison to the participant to make arrangements for alternative accommodations.

Safety Considerations

emPower BC places great importance on the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of those who use our services, particularly those who have agreed to participate in the needs assessment process. We understand that safety is defined differently for each individual. Every effort will be made to protect the safety of individuals participating in the needs assessment process. The collaboration will also make every effort to develop tools and processes to maximize the safety of all involved.

During recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group and interview, it will be made clear to participants that:

- Questions are intended to elicit information about community services the individual has received. Questions are not intended to gather personal experiences related to violence, abuse, or neglect.
- If the discussion of services or service access brings up memories or intense feelings and/or if a participant appears likely to disclose, an advocate will be available at each focus group for survivors and people with disabilities to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following the session. A private, accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety. Participants will be told that the advocate is available and where the advocate will be located, or they can request an escort to the advocate. For people with IDD (including survivors with IDD), the advocate available will have experience in working with people with IDD as well as be certified as an RCC advocate through New Hope. Facilitators will interrupt a disclosure and Assistants will offer the participant the opportunity to speak with the Advocate. At the onset of such connections with the Advocate, the Advocate will remind the person of mandatory reporting requirements as soon as they first begin to speak.
- Cards that list local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- No one has to answer any question that makes him or her uncomfortable.
- There will be no consequence to employment/services for anyone who chooses to participate or not participate in the needs assessment process.
- During the focus groups and interviews, no personally identifying information will be linked to those participating in the group, other than to provide them with their requested accommodations. Information may be collected during recruitment to facilitate appointment reminders.
- We will be offering optional individual interviews to anyone who would prefer to participate outside of a group setting.
- Anyone has the option for their gift card to be kept by the Project Directors, for up to three months, until they are ready to use it.
- We will be taking back FAQ forms at the end of the recruitment process.

Additionally, the following steps will be taken to help ensure safety for all participants:

- The meeting reminder card will not have the location of the meeting or any information linking the meeting to New Hope. The phone number listed on the card is

linked to a confidential voicemail at New Hope. (Note: NH has phones with blocked caller id available for safe plan advocates and one can be used for this purpose)

- We will be asking for the first name of all participants on the RSVP form for the purpose of connecting individuals with their requested accommodations and will not be linked to any individually identifying information during the focus groups or interviews. Information collection will be limited to facilitating accommodations.
- We will be asking for contact information from only those who request a meeting reminder in the form of an email, phone call, or postcard. While we will not intentionally recruit any participants who are in imminent danger, we recognize that safety needs can change suddenly. Reminder materials will not contain any information that could be traced to New Hope, The Arc of Bristol County, or other survivor services. The reminders will contain the date and time of the appointment, as well as the contact phone number for the collaboration. At the time of recruitment, all potential participants will be assured that reminder contacts (email, phone call, postcards) are NOT required to participate and if they feel this contact could represent a safety risk for them or a loved one, now or in the future, they are reminded that they are free to decline reminder contacts completely.
- Information included on the RSVP will be destroyed after the focus group/interview. For people requesting a meeting reminder postcard, the information will be written directly on the back of the post card, to be mailed two weeks before the scheduled focus group or interview. The recruiter will have a conversation with the prospective participant to determine which reminder method is best and safest for their current circumstances. Again, the participant can choose to receive no reminders. If this is the case, a notation: **SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT** will be prominently written on the front of the RSVP Form by the Recruiter. If an emergency happens and we need to contact a potential participant, the recruiter will serve as the liaison between emPower BC and the participant.
- Any print materials and signage at focus groups and interviews will not list emPower BC or use language regarding the intersection of domestic and/or sexual violence and disabilities.
- An individual's own Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews. However, we will make special accommodations for anyone requiring the assistance of a PCA ([Access Considerations](#))
- To the best of our ability, sites selected for focus groups and interviews will be where people will feel safe. Mostly, sites will be selected based on where participants already have a routine so as not to bring attention to the focus group.

We have taken special considerations when selecting the groups we will be engaging, particularly with regard to people with disabilities and survivors:

- Staff at The Arc of Bristol County will be responsible for determining the guardianship status of any potential participants. Recognizing the delicate balance between self-advocacy, autonomy, legality, and safety, emPower BC will not be recruiting any survivors if DSV with IDD who are under plenary guardianship. Those under conservatorship, with shared decision making, or other specialized types of guardianship (e.g. medical proxy, representative payee) will be considered for

participation. The only exception we will make is in the ***case of survivors with IDD and their guardians who approach emPower BC to become a potential participant and the recruiter knows the guardian and person with IDD well enough to reasonably believe that there is not abuse occurring in their relationship***. These guardians will need to fill out an additional Guardian Consent Form to confirm they understand the rights and restrictions they have in the focus group process.

- New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County will not recruit anyone who we know to be currently in a potentially vulnerable or dangerous situation.

Workplan

Event	Target start date	Completed by
Charter Approval by OVW	July 28, 2017	
Complete Performance Indicators	April 2017	
Statement of Focus	Submitted August 22, 2017/Approval Still Pending	
Approval by OVW		
Request for Inclusion of Survivors	Submitted August 22, 2017	
Complete Performance Indicators	October 2017	
Approval by OVW	October 16, 2017	
Develop Needs Assessment Plan	August 2017	November 10, 2017
Approval by OVW	Feedback Received: February 20, 2018	
Needs Assessment Plan, Resubmitted	May 4, 2018	
Approval by OVW	July 10, 2018	
Conduct Needs Assessment	August 1, 2018	September 30, 2018
Develop Findings Report	October 1, 2018	November 1, 2018
Approval by OVW	January 8, 2018	
Develop Strategic Plan	January 15, 2019	March 31, 2019
Approval by OVW	June 1, 2019	
Implementation	June 1, 2019	

Appendices

Frequently Asked Questions

What is emPower Bristol County?

emPower Bristol County is a collaboration between The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope Inc. based in Attleboro, MA. **The Arc of Bristol County** is a disability service agency that works with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to provide services with housing, employment, day services, and other supports. **New Hope, Inc.** works with people who have experienced domestic and sexual violence (DSV), their family members and supporters, to provide counseling, support with court and police processes, and other advocacy services. Our agencies are partnering to find ways to provide better service to people with IDD who experience domestic and sexual violence.

Why is this work important?

When people experience abuse or assault, it is important that they are able to get as much help as they need to heal. People with intellectual or developmental disabilities tend to have a higher risk of abuse, but survivor services may not know the best ways to make accommodations or what additional changes they should make to best work with survivors who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. Additionally, agencies with IDD expertise; do not always have the specialized resources to fully and properly respond to disclosures of domestic or sexual violence. Further, the survivor and their supporting IDD agency are often hard pressed to find this dual expertise within a local community.

Therefore, a collaboration of the expertise of an IDD service agency with that of a domestic and sexual violence service agency is able to bridge the gaps in services for those with IDD who are also survivors of DSV. As Empower BC continues to move forward with its work; it enhances the scope of skills and expertise in both founding organizations and thereby increases their individual and joint capacity to provide comfort and quality services while promoting safety and autonomy for this particular segment of survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

What is the mission of emPower BC?

emPower Bristol County will create an innovative system of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities impacted by domestic and sexual violence through a dynamic, open, and supportive partnership dedicated to:

- Transforming cultures through education and awareness in our agencies
- Evaluating and strengthening agency response;
- Building our collaborative and individual capacities for service provision that combines best practices and creative implementation with a survivor strengths-based approach;
- Offering seamless, integrative, and accessible supports and services that promote safety, dignity, respect, and autonomy.

Why do a need assessment?

When making big changes in any organization, it is important to get the feedback of people who use your services. The purpose of a Needs Assessment is to gather input from people who use New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County's services so we can identify what

are the most important changes we should make--according to the people the service is meant for.

Who are we asking to participate?

We are asking several groups of people to participate:

- People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- People who have experienced domestic or sexual violence (with and without disabilities)
- Staff members at New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County
- Family members and Caregivers of people with IDD or survivors of DSV

Why do you need my input?

We think it is important to get feedback from all of the people involved in making our services happen to give us the most information about what changes we should make. Your input also helps us decide which changes are most important to work on immediately. The information you give us will help us build a plan to make all of our services better specifically for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have experienced abuse, but we believe the changes will benefit everyone involved with both New Hope or The Arc of Bristol County.

What are the expectations for my involvement?

If you agree to participate in a focus group or interview, we ask that you show up ready to share your experiences with the services you use and share as many as you are comfortable with. We want you to help us understand:

- what an agency needs to do to make you feel safe and comfortable when you use their services
- what things do they need to do to help you trust the agency;
- what actions do they take (or need to take) so they can to help you and keep your information private.

If you would like a copy of the questions we will ask ahead of time or would prefer to answer a written survey, we can provide them to you.

To make sure you are able to participate fully in the focus group or interview, we will ask you for any accommodations you may need, like large print documents, interpreters, adaptive communication equipment. If child care is an obstacle; we can talk with you about potential solutions. We will also ask about food allergies to make sure we provide snacks that you can eat.

We do not expect you to talk about any abuse or assault you have may have experienced, answer any questions you are uncomfortable with or that you think don't apply to you. We do not expect you to stay in the focus group or interview if you want to leave. You can leave at any time.

Do I have to answer every question?

No, you do not have to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. You can also choose to leave the focus group at any time. If you leave the group to take a break,

you are welcome to come back. During the group, if you need help to leave the room, we will have someone to assist you.

Where and when will the focus groups/interviews be held?

The locations of focus groups are dependent on the date of each group. They are all located in the Attleboro & Taunton area and are accessible to people with mobility aids. When you pick a focus group, the person recruiting you will give you the address, along with any other information you need to get to the group.

Who should I contact if I can't come?

If you can't make it to your group or interview, call or text **Erin at (508) 639-0521**. This number is confidential and the voicemail does not contain any information about emPower BC, The Arc of Bristol County, or New Hope.

Is what I say Confidential?

Mostly. We will be recording the interviews and taking notes during the focus groups and interviews, but none of your information, like your name or where you live, will be put into the notes. Recordings of the focus groups and interviews will be deleted after they are typed up. Notes from the focus groups and interviews will be deleted after emPower BC writes our Needs Assessment Report. Only the Project Directors (Jennifer from The Arc of Bristol County and Erin from New Hope) will have access to the recordings and notes from the focus groups. None of your direct staff or anyone from your agency will be allowed to listen to the notes or be able to find out what you or anyone in this group (or interview) said.

At no time will any of your identifying information be connected to the things you tell us.

The only exception to this rule is if you are a child under the age of 18 (*M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A, reporting to Department of Children and Families*), **a person with disabilities** (*M.G.L. c. 19C, § 10, reporting to The Disabled Persons Protection Commission*), **living in nursing homes or managed care** (*M.G.L. c. 111, § 72G, Reporting to Department of Health*), **or an adult age 60 and older** (*as defined in MGL c. 19A §15, reporting to the MA office of Elder Affairs*) — **or— you tell us you are harming someone who is in one of those categories. All of the staff who work for emPower BC are Mandated Reporters in Massachusetts.**

What if I want to help but don't want to be in a group?

Focus groups will be limited to 10 people each. If that is not a comfortable way for you to give us information, we can set up an interview with you. During the interview, you will have a conversation with the interview facilitator. Another person will also be in the room to take notes (including audio) and offer assistance.

What should I tell people about this group if they ask?

You can tell people you are part of a focus group about how to make spaces more accessible and safer for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that have experienced abuse. To make sure we respect everyone's privacy, we will not, and expect that you will not, tell anyone about the things that you hear during the groups.

How is the information I give you going to be used?

We will use the information you give us to develop our Implementation Plan. This means the answers you give us will directly affect the work we do to make services more accessible and safe.

Who will get the information?

The information will be shared with The Arc of Bristol County, New Hope, The Vera institute for Justice and The Office of Violence Against Women once it is written into the Needs Assessment Findings Report. The report may contain quotes, but will not include any names, ages, or identifying information. Any quotes will be listed as "From a participant with an intellectual or developmental disability" Or "From a Survivor."

Will you be referring to the organizations by name in the final report?

The Needs Assessment Findings Report will include the names of emPower BC, The Arc of Bristol County, and New Hope. Aside from the people directly involved with writing the plan (referred to as the Collaboration Team), no one else's name will be included.

What is mandatory reporting and how does it apply?

The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope each have their own specific policies regarding confidentiality and mandated reporting based on the requirements of Massachusetts Law and Guidelines. These guidelines identify three groups for whom staff and affiliates of the agencies must adhere to mandated reporting policies. These groups are minor children (*M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A, reporting to Department of Children and Families*), people with disabilities (*M.G.L. c. 19C, § 10, reporting to The Disabled Persons Protection Commission*), patients living in nursing homes or managed care (*M.G.L. c. 111, § 72G, Reporting to Department of Health*), and adults age 60 and older (*as defined in MGL c. 19A §15, reporting the MA office of Elder Affairs*).

All staff and volunteers at both founding organizations are Mandated Reporters, as defined above. Although the Needs Assessment does not directly inquire about a client's history of abuse, there is the potential for a disclosure to take place during this phase of the project. Therefore, agreements and planning are necessary to prepare for the response of such disclosures. If a disclosure is made, emPower BC will follow Massachusetts Mandatory Reporting policies.

We recognize that aligning our values regarding autonomy and inclusion and meeting our reporting requirements may sometimes seem at odds. To this end, we have defined the following strategies to support autonomy and empowerment for people with IDD who may disclose abuse or assault:

- We will remind you at the beginning of your focus groups that both founding agencies are mandated reporters. We will be clear about what mandated reporting involves including what we must report.
- If a mandatory report is required, we will tell you that we need to make one, as well as giving you the opportunity to participate in making that report however you feel most comfortable. Some of those options include:
 - Sitting with you while you make the call for yourself
 - Making the call on speaker phone while you are present.

- o Letting you know that the report is going to be made and giving you the choice to participate or not.

These are not all of the options, but they are the most common ones we have offered to people in the past. In the case that someone from The Arc of Bristol County or New Hope needs to make a report, we will do our best to respect your rights while fulfilling our legal obligations.

What are the safety conditions for my participation?

We have developed a list of rules and supports to create as much physical and emotional safety as possible for people participating the groups.

- Questions are not intended to gather personal experiences related to violence, abuse, or neglect.
- There will be someone to talk to if you are uncomfortable or feel triggered (re-experiencing trauma) during the focus groups. This person is trained as an advocate through New Hope.
- Cards that list local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
- Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- No one has to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable.
- There will be no consequence to employment/services for anyone who chooses to participate or not participate in the needs assessment process.
- During the focus groups and interviews, no personally identifying information will be linked to those participating in the group, other than to provide them with their requested accommodations. **An Accommodation** is something you need to be able to participate in interviews and focus groups as easily as possible. We will do all we can to provide you with necessary accommodations.
- Information may be collected during recruitment to facilitate appointment reminders. ***You May Decline ANY and ALL Reminders if you feel it is unsafe for you to receive them.*** You may still participate without receiving reminders.
- We will be offering optional individual interviews to anyone who would prefer to participate outside of a group setting.
- Anyone has the option for their gift card to be kept by the Project Directors, for up to three months until they are ready to use it.
- We will be taking back FAQ forms at the end of the recruitment process.
- The meeting reminder card will not have the location of the meeting or any information linking the meeting to New Hope. The phone number listed on the card is linked to a confidential voicemail at New Hope.
- If someone wants a mailed reminder, we will have you fill out a postcard with an address that is safe for you to get mail. That is the only place we will record identifying information. The post card will be mailed 2 weeks before your group. The reminder will only contain the date and time of your appointment and the confidential phone number you can call with questions or to update us about your ability to be at your appointment. ***Talk to the person who is signing you up if you have ANY concerns about reminders. You do not have to receive post cards or any type of reminders to participate. You are welcome to decline all reminders if you feel it is unsafe for you to receive any type of reminder.***

- Any print materials and signage at focus groups and interviews will not list emPower BC or use language regarding the intersection of domestic and/or sexual violence and disabilities.
- An individual's own Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews. We will have an assistant in the room that can bring you to your PCA or help out during the group.
- To the best of our ability, sites selected for focus groups and interviews will be where people will feel safe. Mostly, sites will be selected based on where participants already have a routine so as not to bring attention to this group.
- Staff at The Arc of Bristol County will be responsible for determining the guardianship status of any potential participants. Guardian consent is not required for people with IDD to participate in general focus groups.
- New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County will not recruit anyone who we know to be currently in a potentially vulnerable or dangerous situation. We recognize that safety can change suddenly and will not contact you in any way that connects your appointment to New Hope, The Arc, or emPower Bristol County. ***Again, if person decides to participate; the person is welcome to decline any contacts or reminders regarding participation in the focus groups or interview.***

What accommodations are available to support my participation?

An Accommodation is something you need to be able to participate in interviews and focus groups as easily as possible. An example of an accommodation is having an ASL interpreter for someone who uses sign language to communicate. We have a list of some common accommodations on the RSVP form, but you can request anything that you usually need to make participating in your appointment as accessible as possible. We will do all we can to provide the necessary accommodation. In the case that the specific accommodation cannot be provided as requested (e.g. availability on a certain date, suitability for a group setting) the recruiter will contact the person needing the accommodation to offer alternatives for participation (e.g. 1-1 interviews, focus group date changes). In the event accommodations need to be talked about and the you have told us you don't want to be contacted, the person who asked you to be part of the group will connect you with the Project Directors (Jennifer, the Arc & Erin, New Hope)

If I have a PCA, can they come with me?

Your personal care attendant (PCA) may bring you to the focus group, but they will be asked to wait in a separate area during the group to give everyone privacy. If you need unexpected personal assistance, we will make arrangements to assist you.

How do I participate?

The person who reaches out to ask you to join the group will have an RSVP form that asks for your first name only, any accommodations you might need, and other information about how to reach you if you want to be reminded of the meeting. ***Remember, if you feel it is unsafe for you to receive a post card, email, phone call or any other reminders about the focus group or interview. You are welcome to decline all meeting reminders.***

What will I get in return?

Survivors of DSV and people with IDD will be given a \$20 gift card when you arrive at the focus group. The gift card is yours to keep even if you do not stay for the entire time.

emPower Bristol County
Needs Assessment Plan

What if I lose my gift card?

Once you take your gift card it is your responsibility to keep track of it. emPower BC will not be able to replace any lost or stolen gift cards. If you do not feel safe taking your gift card when you meet with us, we will hold it until you can take it (for up to three months).

Who do I contact if I have any additional questions or concerns?

You can call Erin at **(508) 639-0521** or reach out directly to The Arc of Bristol County or New Hope. Just say you are calling about the emPower BC focus groups.

Recruitment Materials

- A Summary of the Grant Purpose
- The Vision and Mission of emPower BC
- Specific Considerations Recruitment MEMO (For recruitment of Survivors with IDD)
 - *For Recruiters to read prior to beginning recruitment of participants.*
- Specific Considerations Recruitment Script (For recruitment of Survivors with IDD)
 - *For Recruiters to read to potential participants*
- Reference Chart: Target Audiences for Focus Groups, Interviews and Surveys
- Frequently Asked Questions Sheet (FAQ)
- RSVP Forms/Reminder Cards and instructions
- Contact information for the Project Directors
- Information on how to locate guardianship information of each individual in their records (and which agency representatives have access to said information)
- The Guardian Consent Form (for cases where a survivor with IDD and their plenary guardian reach out to emPower BC to participate in the focus groups).

Resource Sheets

- Focus Groups: Overview and Scripts for each sector
- Surveys: Overview and Scripts for each sector

RSVP Form

emPower Bristol County RSVP Form

FIRST NAME: _____

I am participating in: (Circle One)

Focus Group

| Interview

| Survey

DATE OF GROUP/INTERVIEW (Circle One)

Population	Focus Group	Focus Group	Focus Group	Interviews
Clients from The Arc				
Clients from New Hope				
Family – The Arc				
Family – New Hope				

REMINDERS:

☐ I want to receive a reminder in the mail (fill out Reminder Postcard)

☐ I want to be contacted by the person who recruited me

☐ Phone Number: _____

☐ You can leave
me a message
at this number

☐ **DO NOT** leave
me a message
at this number

☐ Email: _____

☐ **SAFETY CONCERNS: Do not call or email this participant.**

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need any special accommodations to participate in a focus group or interview, please tell us about them. The following is a list of common types of accommodations people request. There is also a space to fill in other things that will make it easier to participate in the focus groups or interviews.

☐ **Interpreter:** _____

☐ **Assistive communication**

☐ **For speech:** _____

☐ **For hearing:** _____

☐ **Wheelchair / other Mobility Access**

☐ **Childcare: # _____ Ages: _____**

☐ **Personal Care Attendant** (Note: Personal Care Attendants are not allowed in the room where the focus groups will take place. We will have an assistant in the room to bring you to your PCA if needed)

☐ **I have a food allergy:** _____

☐ **I have or someone close to me has experienced assault or abuse**

Other Accommodations: _____

TAKE A MOMENT TO GO OVER THE CONSENT STATEMENT INCLUDED IN THE FAQs.

☐ I consent to participating in the Needs Assessment for emPower Bristol County. I understand my participation is voluntary, and I may choose to stop at any time.

Reminder Cards

Postcards to be mailed

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Business Card sized appointment reminders to be given out at recruitment.

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Meeting Reminder

Date: _____

Time: _____

Call or Text Erin at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) with any questions.

Thank you!

Scripts for Focus Groups and Interviews

People with IDD

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We are all here today to talk about different places you get services from and what ways they make using their services easy or more difficult for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Consent Reminder

The stories you share today will help us improve services at The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, an agency that support people who experience domestic and sexual violence, to make them more comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

First of all, we want to make sure you all want to be here. Is this right?

- You agree to participate in this focus group because you want to.
- You agree that you can be silent or leave at any time and still receive your \$20 gift card.
- You agree not to share what is said here today with people outside of the group.
- You agree to have the session recorded using sound (audio) and written notes, but with no names used or listed.
- You agree that your comments can be used in a report, but we will use no one's name or address.
- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

Facilitator: [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions

Assistant: [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. If you need help with getting to the restroom, getting snacks, or with anything else, let [NAME] know. To keep what you say private, we asked anyone who came with you to stay in the other room. If you need that person, [NAME] will help you get to them.

Note Taker: [NAME] is going to be taking notes and recording our voices during this group. Your name will not be written down.

Advocate: [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT NAME] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know **[NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate]** are Mandated Reporters. Does anyone want to tell the group what that means?

When we say we are mandated reporters it means, if you tell us you are being hurt or that you are hurting someone else with a disability, a child, or someone over the age of 60, we have to let someone know.

Group Norms

We have some rules for all of us to follow so that everyone gets a chance to share what they want to during the focus group.

No one here has to talk about themselves or about things going on in their own lives.

That's your personal business; and you don't have to talk to people about your business if you don't want to or if you are uncomfortable talking about yourself in a group like this.

If you want to talk to the group about your own examples you can, but if it is very personal, you can talk with one of us privately and we can help you decide if you want to talk to someone you know and trust to share your personal business with. We can help you with that.

Whatever ideas we talk about here, will be used to help make services better. No one's name is shared; just your ideas are shared. This is a focus group. Does anyone know what a focus group is?

A focus group is a meeting where people get together to share ideas to work on a project. Our project is making services better to help keep people safe. In this meeting; you are going to give us your ideas about how to make services better. Then we put all the ideas together to improve services.

We will write down everyone's ideas on these large papers on the walls.

This will help all of us be able to remember what we have talked about and keep track of everyone's ideas to help make our services better.

No one's name will be on the list of ideas on these large papers.

One Person Rule: This means one person speaks at a time. We put color cards at your seat to make sure we don't accidentally record your name. Please raise your hand and the facilitator will say the color at your seat to let you know it's time to share your ideas. Everyone will have time to speak; but only one person at a time. This is respectful and lets everyone hear ideas one at a time.

Respect everyone's ideas! You don't have to agree with an idea someone else has; but be kind and respectful.

Share your ideas! Everyone in the group has a voice here, a right to share their ideas.

Remember the One Person Rule! This means one person speaks at a time. When we are asking questions, remember to raise your hand; and [facilitator] make sure you have time to speak!

Focus Group Questions

To set us up for answering the questions in during our meeting, we are going to talk about three different concepts: Safety, Confidentiality (or Privacy), and Mandated Reporting. We are going to define ideas as a group so we are all know what we mean when we use those words.

What does Safety mean to you?

1. What do people who support you (family, staff, and friends) do to help you feel safe?
2. What have service providers done to make you feel safe?

What does Privacy mean to you?

1. What are some examples of things that should be private?
2. What do people in your life do to show that they respect your privacy?

What does the word confidentiality mean to you? How about keeping things private, do you know what that means?

1. Are you afraid your story will be told to other people?
2. Is it okay for someone to tell your guardian what you say? If they need to tell your guardian, how do you want it to happen?

Sometimes, people will tell you they are mandated reporters. Like we explained at the start of the focus group, mandated reporters are people who, if they find out you or someone else under the age of 18, with a disability, or over the age of 60 are being hurt or threatened, have to let someone else know.

1. Some people are mandatory reporters and some people are not.
 - o Who are people in your life who ARE mandated reporters?
 - o Who are people in your life who ARE NOT mandated reporters?
2. If someone needed to make a report, what could they do to support you?
3. Would you rather make the report yourself or with help?
4. Are you worried about mandatory reporting?

Thank you for going over mandatory reporting with us!! Now we are going to take a 10-minute break. When we come back from the break at [TIME], we are going to talk about the other places in our community that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities get support, what they do great, and what they can do better.

[BREAK]

Now that we are back from break, let's come up with a list of different places where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities get help or support? (This list may include the name of the local developmental service agency, support staff, former school teacher, doctors, social security office, fuel assistance office, Protection and Advocacy, Legal Aid, Vocational Rehab, therapists or counselors, local self-advocacy group, hospitals, Special Olympics, police, job coach, etc.) **[WRITE DOWN SERVICES ON CHART PAPER/DRY ERASE BOARD]**

How do you find out about services or agencies in your town?

1. How did you learn about the services you use?
2. How do you find out about new services?
3. Does someone help you find out where to get services?
4. If so, who? (See prompts)
5. Do you try to find services on your own without help?
6. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information with people with disabilities on services that are available to them? (Prompts: Church Bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?)
7. We came up with a long list of places where people go for services or help. Which ones do you know about?
8. Which ones do you use at least once a year?

Sometimes, agencies do things that make it difficult for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to get the information they need about services that are available to them. What kinds of things do agencies do that make it difficult for you to get information?

1. Do they have information in ways you can use it? (e.g. with pictures, in large print, recorded on video)
2. What would help a person with a disability get the information that they need?

What should the people who work in these places do to help you better?

1. What advice should we give to people about how to help you?
2. There are lots of people who try to help you out. Think about your favorite person. What do they do that is helpful? What do they do that makes you feel comfortable?
3. Now think about someone who has not been helpful. What did they do that was not helpful?
4. If I have information for you, what is the best way to give you the information?
5. How do I make sure you understand?
6. How can someone help you calm down when you are upset?
7. Where do you feel most comfortable?

What can a person who works in one of these places do to make it easy for you to contact them?

1. What kind of information do you want when you first meet?
2. Do you want them to work with you directly, or talk to someone else about you?
3. What would ideal or perfect services be like?
4. If you were a staff person at one of these places what would you do to make people feel welcome and comfortable?

I'd now like to ask you to think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and that you can trust the staff that works there. For example: things staff do that make it easy for you to share your unique needs, accommodation requests, any challenges you may face, physical space, or personal information. I'm going to ask you a series of questions to explore what organizations and their staff can do to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities feel comfortable, and that they can trust the organization, and ask that you think about this place when answering these questions.

emPower Bristol County
Needs Assessment Plan

1. First, please think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
2. Do they know what they are doing? If so, how do you know?
3. Now think about the building. What about the building do you like?
4. Is it easy to get around? If yes, what makes it easy to get around?
5. Is it easy to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it easy?
6. Is there anything else that makes you feel comfortable about that place?

Now, I'd like to ask you to think about a place in your community that makes you feel uncomfortable, and that you cannot trust the staff that works there. For example: things that staff do that make it difficult for you to share your unique needs, accommodation requests, any challenges you may face, the physical space, or personal information.

1. First, please think about the people who work there. Do the people that work there do something that makes you uncomfortable, and that you cannot trust them?
2. What do they do to make you feel uncomfortable?
3. Now think about the building. Is there something about the building or place that you don't like?
4. Is it hard to get around? If yes, what makes it hard to get around?
5. Is it hard to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it hard?
6. Is there anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable, or that you cannot trust about this place?

Thank you for sharing your ideas about what the agencies and organizations do that make you feel comfortable, welcome, and safe--and what some agencies could do better. We are going to take one more 10-minute break. When we come back, we are going to talk about asking for and getting help when we need it.

[BREAK]

Welcome back from the break! We are in the last section of our focus group. Now, I want to ask you some questions about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but sometimes; it can be hard to ask for it. **For these series of questions, please think about the last time you needed help from someone such as: someone who works to support you, your family, or other people in your life who give you support. Some examples of things to ask for help on are: help with calling someone; help reading papers; help getting somewhere.**

Think about a time when you needed help.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
2. Did that person ask if you needed help?
3. Do you like it when people ask if you need help?
4. Is there anything else that these people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?

Where do you go when you need help?

1. Who do you ask first?
 - o If parent or friend, Why?
2. What do you want them to do or say?

3. What would keep you from talking to someone?
4. What agencies or offices would you go to if you needed help?
5. What would you want the staff to do or say?
6. Is there a service that would be helpful that is not available in your town?

What if you needed help, but didn't feel comfortable or safe asking for it?

1. What do people do that makes you not want to ask for help?
2. What kinds of feelings do you have that make it hard for you to ask for help?
3. If you needed help from an agency, what would make it hard for you to ask them for help?
4. Tell me about any worries you have about being understood?
5. Do you worry they will not know how to help a person with a developmental disability? If so, why?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really understands you and your disability, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they understand you?
3. How do you know they understand your disability?
4. What did you like about what the person did to help?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don't understand you and your disability, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they do not understand you?
3. How do you know they don't understand your disability?
4. What didn't you like about what the person did to help?
5. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?
6. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?

Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities when they go somewhere in the community for services?

Thank you for spending your valuable time helping us figure out how to make agencies and organizations more comfortable, safer, and helpful for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Your ideas are guiding the work we do to make our services better and more welcoming.

Survivors of DSV

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We are all here today to talk about different places you get services from after experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Consent Reminder

The information and viewpoint you share today, as someone who is a survivor and who has received survivor services will help us improve services at New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County, a disability service agency that provides services to adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to make survivors of domestic or sexual violence feel more comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible. Your comments, opinions and ideas about the services you have experienced are important to us as we work to improve these services.

We got everyone's consent when you were asked to participate in the focus group, but we want to remind everyone all of the things you gave consent for:

- You agree to participate in this focus group because you want to.
- You agree that you can be silent or leave at any time and still receive your \$20 gift card.
- You agree not to share what is said here today with people outside of the group.
- You agree to have the session recorded using sound and written notes, but with no names used or listed.
- You agree that your comments can be used in a report, but we will use no one's name.
- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

- **Facilitator:** [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions
- **Assistant:** [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. If you need help with getting to the restroom, getting snacks, or with anything else, let [NAME] know. To protect everyone's privacy, anyone who came with you today was asked to sit in the other room. If you need help getting to them, [NAME] will guide you to where they are in the other room.
- **Note Taker:** [NAME] is going to be taking notes and audio recording our voices during this group. Your name will not be written down.
- **Advocate:** [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know **[NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate]** are Mandated Reporters. In Massachusetts, mandated reporters are required to notify the appropriate agency if we hear about violence, abuse, or neglect of a person with a disability, a person over the age 60, or, in the case of children, if a child is being abused or witnessing abuse. We want you to know this about us so that you can decide what details you want to share. If you have any additional concerns, **[Advocate]** can answer any questions you may have.

Group Norms

We have some rules for all of us to follow so that everyone gets a chance to share what they want to during the focus group.

1. What happens here stays here.

You may or may not know other people in this room. For this group to go as well as possible, it is important that people feel like they can share openly. Part of that is agreeing, as a group, that we will not spread the information, stories, or experiences of other people in the room.

2. Take care of yourself.

Talking about the ways you received (or did not receive) support after experiencing violence can bring up a lot of feelings. If the conversation gets too intense for you, please do whatever you need to ensure that you are ok. If you need to leave the room for a moment or for the night, that is totally fine. **[ADVOCATE]** is also available if you feel like talking to someone about how you are feeling is the best thing for you.

3. The thoughts you share are anonymous.

We are taking notes and recording this focus group. We put color cards at your seat to make sure we don't accidentally record your name. Please raise your hand and the facilitator will say the color at your seat to let you know it's time to share your ideas. Everyone will have time to speak; but only one person at a time. This is respectful and lets everyone hear ideas one at a time.

4. Respect everyone's ideas! You don't have to agree with an idea someone else has; but be kind and respectful.

Share your ideas! Everyone in the group has a voice here, a right to share their ideas.

Does anyone else have things they want the group to do to make this space feel as safe as possible?

Focus Group Questions

Before we begin asking questions, let's come up with a list of different places where people who have experienced domestic or sexual violence get support. This list is of any place you interact with that you think it is important to tell about sharing your experiences with violence.

[WRITE DOWN SERVICES ON CHART PAPER/DRY ERASE BOARD]

How do you find out about services or agencies in your town?

1. How did you learn about the services you use?
2. How do you find out about new services?

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3. Is there anyone you reach out to when you are looking for services around DSV?
4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information with people who have experiences DSV on services that are available to them?
(Prompts: Church Bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?)
5. We came up with a long list of places where people go for services or help. Which ones do you know about?
6. Which ones do you use at least once a year?

We want to talk a bit about safety before we move into the next section so we have a common definition.

1. What does safety mean to you?
2. What makes you feel safe?

You all have used a variety of services from New Hope and other places that provide services around DSV like the ones we brainstormed at the beginning of the group. We want to ask you some questions about things those places have done to make you comfortable when visiting them:

1. What did they do to make you feel safe?
2. What did they do to make you feel comfortable?
3. What about the physical space worked well for you?
4. What did the staff do that worked well?
5. What did they do to ensure privacy and confidentiality?
6. If they provided resources or educational materials, what did you like about them?
7. Tell us about the overall atmosphere at those places.
 - a. Was it comfortable?
 - b. Were the staff approachable?
 - c. Were there certain things that made it feel safer to use that service?

Now, we would like you to ask you some questions about what those places could do to be more helpful, safe, or comfortable:

1. What made you feel unsafe when using the service?
2. What could be improved about the physical space?
3. Were there things the staff could do to make you feel more comfortable or safe when using the service?
4. Do you feel like your privacy and confidentiality were respected? If not, what happened to make you feel that way?
5. If they provided resources or educational materials, what would have made them more helpful for you?
6. Tell us about the overall atmosphere at those places.
 - a. Were there specific things that made it feel uncomfortable or unsafe?
 - b. What could the service provider have done differently to make you feel more comfortable or safe?

What would you like the places where you use services to know about how to best support survivors of DSV?

These next questions are about confidentiality and mandated reporting. This can be in the form of confidential services, patient/client privilege.

1. What does confidentiality mean to you?
2. When talking about your experiences of DSV, how important is confidentiality to you?
3. Do people tell you if they are mandated reporters?
4. What does mandatory reporting mean?
5. How would you want a mandatory report handled?
 - a. *Typically, when we talk about reporting, there are a few options: one can report on themselves, one can be present while a mandated reporter calls, one can be notified a report is being made, but choose not to participate in the call, or a report can be made without your knowledge.*
6. Are you concerned about working with mandatory reporters around your experiences with DSV?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really understands you as a survivor of DSV, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they understand you?
3. How do you know they understand your needs as a survivor?
4. What did you like about what the person did to help?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don't understand you as a survivor of DSV, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they do not understand you?
3. How do you know they don't understand your needs as a survivor?
4. What didn't you like about what the person did to help?
5. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support survivors of DSV?
6. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?

Do you have any other feedback for us about what we could be doing better in the way we provide services to survivors of DSV?

Survivors with IDD Focus Groups

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We are all here today to talk about different places you get services from and what ways they make using their services easy or more difficult for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Consent Reminder

The stories you share today will help us improve services at The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope, an agency that support people who experience domestic and sexual violence, to make them more comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

First of all, we want to make sure you all want to be here. Is this right?

- You agree to participate in this focus group because you want to.
- You agree that you can be silent or leave at any time and still receive your \$20 gift card.
- You agree not to share what is said here today with people outside of the group.
- You agree to have the session recorded using sound (audio) and written notes, but with no names used or listed.
- You agree that your comments can be used in a report, but we will use no one's name or address.
- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

Facilitator: [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions

Assistant: [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. If you need help with getting to the restroom, getting snacks, or with anything else, let [NAME] know. To keep what you say private, we asked anyone who came with you to stay in the other room. If you need that person, [NAME] will help you get to them.

Note Taker: [NAME] is going to be taking notes and recording our voices during this group. Your name will not be written down.

Advocate: [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT NAME] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know **[NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate]** are Mandated Reporters. Does anyone want to tell the group what that means?

When we say we are mandated reporters it means, if you tell us you are being hurt or that you are hurting someone else with a disability, a child, or someone over the age of 60, we have to let someone know.

Group Norms

We have some rules for all of us to follow so that everyone gets a chance to share what they want to during the focus group.

No one here has to talk about themselves or about things going on in their own lives.

That's your personal business; and you don't have to talk to people about your business if you don't want to or if you are uncomfortable talking about yourself in a group like this.

If you want to talk to the group about your own examples you can, but please don't share stories from your personal life about abuse. For some people, even hearing someone else's story can bring back memories that are sad, scary, or maybe painful. If you feel upset during the focus group, you can talk with one of us privately and we can help you decide if you want to talk to someone you know and trust to share your personal business with. We can help you with that.

Whatever ideas we talk about here, will be used to help make services better. No one's name is shared; just your ideas are shared. This is a focus group. Does anyone know what a focus group is?

A focus group is a meeting where people get together to share ideas to work on a project. Our project is making services better to help keep people safe. In this meeting; you are going to give us your ideas about how to make services better. Then we put all the ideas together to improve services.

We will write down everyone's ideas on these large papers on the walls.

This will help all of us be able to remember what we have talked about and keep track of everyone's ideas to help make our services better.

No one's name will be on the list of ideas on these large papers.

One Person Rule: This means one person speaks at a time. We put color cards at your seat to make sure we don't accidentally record your name. Please raise your hand and the facilitator will say the color at your seat to let you know it's time to share your ideas. Everyone will have time to speak; but only one person at a time. This is respectful and lets everyone hear ideas one at a time.

Respect everyone's ideas! You don't have to agree with an idea someone else has; but be kind and respectful.

Share your ideas! Everyone in the group has a voice here, a right to share their ideas.

Remember the One Person Rule! This means one person speaks at a time. When we are asking questions, remember to raise your hand; and [facilitator] make sure you have time to speak!

Focus Group Questions

To set us up for answering the questions in during our meeting, we are going to talk about three different concepts: Safety, Confidentiality (or Privacy), and Mandated Reporting. We are going to define ideas as a group so we are all know what we mean when we use those words.

What does Safety mean to you?

3. What do people who support you (family, staff, and friends) do to help you feel safe?
4. What have service providers done to make you feel safe?

What does Privacy mean to you?

3. What are some examples of things that should be private?
4. What do people in your life do to show that they respect your privacy?

What does the word confidentiality mean to you? How about keeping things private, do you know what that means?

1. Are you afraid your story will be told to other people?
2. Is it okay for someone to tell your guardian what you say? If they need to tell your guardian, how do you want it to happen?

Sometimes, people will tell you they are mandated reporters. Like we explained at the start of the focus group, mandated reporters are people who, if they find out you or someone else under the age of 18, with a disability, or over the age of 60 are being hurt or threatened, have to let someone else know.

1. Some people are mandatory reporters and some people are not.
 - o Who are people in your life who ARE mandated reporters?
 - o Who are people in your life who ARE NOT mandated reporters?
2. If someone needed to make a report, what could they do to support you?
3. Would you rather make the report yourself or with help?
4. Are you worried about mandatory reporting?

Now we are going to talk about the way agencies could be better at helping people with disabilities who experience abuse. When we say abuse, we mean situations where someone uses their power to hurt or threaten to hurt another person.

When someone is hurt, there are lots of organizations that can help them. One of those kinds of agencies works with people who have been abused. These agencies want to get better at helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Think about the ways you would want to be treated by an agency that can help.

What are some ways these agencies could help people with intellectual or developmental disabilities better?

1. What can these agencies do to make it easier to get support from them?
2. How should these agencies let people know that they can make accommodations? (Accommodations are things that agencies don't usually do that they make sure to have for people who need extra support. Some examples of accommodations are wheelchair ramps, having large print materials, communication options or interpreters.)

3. What do they need to understand about the differences between types of intellectual and developmental disabilities?
4. What do they need to know about how to treat people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?
5. What kinds of information would you like them to have about places in the community where you can get other kinds of support after you tell someone about abuse?
6. What should they do to make their physical space more welcoming for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Now, let's talk about the agencies you work with to support you around your disability. This can be agencies who help you with where you live, supporting you at your job, have programs during the day, or run social events that you go to. When you answer these questions, think about what those places can do to help you feel safer.

1. What are some ways they could improve the way they serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that have experienced abuse?
2. How should they people ask about their experiences with or history of abuse?
3. How would you like them to respect your privacy? (Talking without other people around? Not sharing your story with others unless necessary and explicitly explained to you before doing so?)
4. What can intellectual and developmental disability agencies do to make people feel safe and supported to tell someone if they are being abused?
5. Do they explain mandatory reporting to you?
6. How do you think agencies can make mandatory reporting better for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities when they have to tell someone about abuse?
7. How can disability agencies build trust with people who have experienced abuse?
8. Do they have a list of places you can get more help if you experience abuse?

Now we are going to take a 10-minute break. When we come back from the break at [TIME], we are going to talk about the other places in our community that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities get support, what they do great, and what they can do better.

[BREAK]

Now that we are back from break, let's come up with a list of different places where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities get help or support? (This list may include the name of the local developmental service agency, support staff, former school teacher, doctors, social security office, fuel assistance office, Protection and Advocacy, Legal Aid, Voc Rehab, therapists or counselors, local self-advocacy group, hospitals, Special Olympics, police, job coach, etc.) **[WRITE DOWN SERVICES ON CHART PAPER/DRY ERASE BOARD]**

How do you find out about services or agencies in your town?

1. How did you learn about the services you use?
2. How do you find out about new services?
3. Does someone help you find out where to get services?

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4. If so, who? (See prompts)
5. Do you try to find services on your own without help?
6. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information with people with disabilities on services that are available to them? (Prompts: Church Bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?)
7. We came up with a long list of places where people go for services or help. Which ones do you know about?
8. Which ones do you use at least once a year?

Sometimes, agencies do things that make it difficult for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to get the information they need about services that are available to them. What kinds of things do agencies do that make it difficult for you to get information?

1. Do they have information in ways you can use it? (e.g. with pictures, in large print, recorded on video)
2. What would help a person with a disability get the information that they need?

What should the people who work in these places do to help you better?

1. What advice should we give to people about how to help you?
2. There are lots of people who try to help you out. Think about your favorite person. What do they do that is helpful? What do they do that makes you feel comfortable?
3. Now think about someone who has not been helpful. What did they do that was not helpful?
4. If I have information for you, what is the best way to give you the information?
5. How do I make sure you understand?
6. How can someone help you calm down when you are upset?
7. Where do you feel most comfortable?

What can a person who works in one of these places do to make it easy for you to contact them?

1. What kind of information do you want when you first meet?
2. Do you want them to work with you directly, or talk to someone else about you?
3. What would ideal or perfect services be like?
4. If you were a staff person at one of these places what would you do to make people feel welcome and comfortable?

I'd now like to ask you to think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and that you can trust the staff that works there. For example: things staff do that make it easy for you to share your unique needs, accommodation requests, any challenges you may face, physical space, or personal information. I'm going to ask you a series of questions to explore what organizations and their staff can do to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities feel comfortable, and that they can trust the organization, and ask that you think about this place when answering these questions.

1. First, please think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
2. Do they know what they are doing? If so, how do you know?
3. Now think about the building. What about the building do you like?

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4. Is it easy to get around? If yes, what makes it easy to get around?
5. Is it easy to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it easy?
6. Is there anything else that makes you feel comfortable about that place?

Now, I'd like to ask you to think about a place in your community that makes you feel uncomfortable, and that you cannot trust the staff that works there. For example: things that staff do that make it difficult for you to share your unique needs, accommodation requests, any challenges you may face, the physical space, or personal information.

1. First, please think about the people who work there. Do the people that work there do something that makes you uncomfortable, and that you cannot trust them?
2. What do they do to make you feel uncomfortable?
3. Now think about the building. Is there something about the building or place that you don't like?
4. Is it hard to get around? If yes, what makes it hard to get around?
5. Is it hard to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it hard?
6. Is there anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable, or that you cannot trust about this place?

Thank you for sharing your ideas about what the agencies and organizations do that make you feel comfortable, welcome, and safe--and what some agencies could do better. We are going to take one more 10-minute break. When we come back, we are going to talk about asking for and getting help when we need it.

[BREAK]

Welcome back from the break! We are in the last section of our focus group. Now, I want to ask you some questions about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but sometimes; it can be hard to ask for it. **For these series of questions, please think about the last time you needed help from someone such as: someone who works to support you, your family, or other people in your life who give you support. Some examples of things to ask for help on are: help with calling someone; help reading papers; help getting somewhere.**

Think about a time when you needed help.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
2. Did that person ask if you needed help?
3. Do you like it when people ask if you need help?
4. Is there anything else that these people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?

Where do you go when you need help?

1. Who do you ask first?
 - o If parent or friend, Why?
2. What do you want them to do or say?
3. What would keep you from talking to someone?
4. What agencies or offices would you go to if you needed help?
5. What would you want the staff to do or say?
6. Is there a service that would be helpful that is not available in your town?

What if you needed help, but didn't feel comfortable or safe asking for it?

1. What do people do that makes you not want to ask for help?
2. What kinds of feelings do you have that make it hard for you to ask for help?
3. If you needed help from an agency, what would make it hard for you to ask them for help?
4. Tell me about any worries you have about being understood?
5. Do you worry they will not know how to help a person with a developmental disability? If so, why?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really understands you and your disability, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they understand you?
3. How do you know they understand your disability?
4. What did you like about what the person did to help?

When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don't understand you and your disability, what is that like?

1. What happens?
2. How do you know they do not understand you?
3. How do you know they don't understand your disability?
4. What didn't you like about what the person did to help?
5. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?
6. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?

Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities when they go somewhere in the community for services?

Thank you for spending your valuable time helping us figure out how to make agencies and organizations more comfortable, safer, and helpful for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Your ideas are guiding the work we do to make our services better and more welcoming.

Parents & Guardians – People with IDD

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We're glad you're here today. We hope you can share your stories about how you and your family member have been treated by agencies you've both interacted with around your family member's intellectual or developmental disability status and give us some ideas for making those services better — we mean how they treated your family member and you, whether you and your family member felt welcomed, comfortable, safe, and could you get the help just right for your family member.

Consent Reminder

The information you share today will help us improve services at New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County to make them most comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

We got everyone's consent when you were asked to participate in the focus group, but we want to remind everyone all of the things you gave consent for:

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- You agree that your comments can be used in a report, but we will use no one's name.
- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

- **Facilitator:** [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions
- **Assistant:** [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. If you need help with anything else, let us know. To protect everyone's privacy, anyone who came with you today was asked to sit in the other room. If you need help getting to them, [NAME] will guide you to where they are in the other room.
- **Note Taker:** [NAME] is going to be taking notes and recording our voices during this group. Your name will not be written down.
- **Advocate:** [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know [NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate] are Mandated Reporters. In Massachusetts, mandated reporters are required to notify the

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appropriate agency if we hear about violence, abuse, or neglect of a person with a disability, a person over the age 60, or, in the case of children, if a child is being abused or witnessing abuse. We want you to know this about us so that you can decide what details you want to share. If you have any additional concerns, **[Advocate]** can answer any questions you may have.

Questions for Family & Caregivers - People with IDD

To make sure we are all on the same page, when we say “family member” we are specifically referring to your family member that receives services from New Hope or The Arc of Bristol County.

What is the most important thing you look for in a service provider for your family member?

1. They were referred by someone you trust?
2. They have a history of serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?
3. They are known by your community/family?
4. What does the staff do well?
5. That the staff appears to be knowledgeable and comfortable in working with your family member?
 - a. If so, what did they do to demonstrate this?
 - b. The physical space, such as the comfort or accessibility it provides?
 - c. If so, what makes it comfortable or accessible for your family member?

How do you learn about service providers for your family member? (Some examples may be internet, community bulletin, or referrals.)

What are some important considerations when a service provider is working with a person who is nonverbal that has a guardian?

1. Who should the service provider talk to about options/services?
2. What’s the best way to obtain informed consent?
3. How do they navigate personal privacy needs?
4. Anything else?

We recognize that seeking services for someone with an intellectual or developmental disability can come with unique challenges. For example, you may need to request special accommodations or you may need for the service to be offered in a way that looks different. We’d like to know what you and your family member’s experience has been like when requesting the specific services or accommodations your family needs. So, thinking back to a time when your family member received excellent services:

1. What are some of the specific needs or accommodations you’ve needed when seeking services for your family member?
 - a. Respite care
 - b. Specific accommodations
 - c. Adaptive equipment
 - d. Adaptation to approach of providing the service
 - e. Environmental needs (such as setting for services, physical considerations, sensory considerations)
2. How was the staff helpful in asking you what your family member’s unique needs were?

3. Was there anything in place that made requesting support or accommodations for your family member easy for them/you? For example, providing you and your family with a check-list of available accommodations or asking you/your family member what you needed during the intake process?

Is there anything that would make asking for supports or accommodations for your family member easier?

- a. Think about a place in the community where you feel that your family member has received poor services.
 - a. What did the staff do poorly?
 - b. What is your perception of the staff's knowledgeable and comfort level in working with your family member? What did they do to demonstrate this?
 - c. Is there anything about the physical space that makes finding services there more difficult, such as any discomfort or inaccessibility issues?
 - d. Anything else that this organization did not do well?

What do you want service providers in your community to know about how to best support people with intellectual or developmental disabilities that interfere with their ability to communicate their needs with service providers?

1. What would be the most important things you would teach the staff there?
2. What would be in place to make it easier for you to seek what you needed on your family member's behalf?

Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities/who have experienced domestic or sexual violence] when they go somewhere in the community for services?

Parents & Guardians – Survivors of DSV

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We're glad you're here today. We hope you can share your stories about how you and your family member have been treated by agencies you've interacted with around your family member being a survivor of DSV and give us some ideas for making those services better — we mean; tell us how they treated you and your family member, whether you and your family member felt welcomed, comfortable, safe, and could you get the help just right for your loved one.

Consent Reminder

The information you share today will help us improve services at New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County to make both agencies most comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

We got everyone's consent when you were asked to participate in the focus group, but we want to remind everyone all of the things you gave consent for:

- You agree to participate in this focus group because you want to.
- You agree that you can be silent or leave at any time and still receive your \$20 gift card.
- You agree not to share what is said here today with people outside of the group.
- You agree to have the session recorded in both audio and in writing but with no names used or recorded.
- You agree that your comments can be used in a report, but we will use no one's name.
- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

- **Facilitator:** [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions
- **Assistant:** [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. If you need help with anything, let [NAME] know. To protect everyone's privacy, anyone who came with you today was asked to sit in the other room. If you need help getting to them, [NAME] will guide you to where they are in the other room.
- **Note Taker:** [NAME] is going to be taking notes and recording our voices during this group. Your name will not be written down.
- **Advocate:** [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know [NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate] are Mandated Reporters. In Massachusetts, mandated reporters are required to notify the

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appropriate agency if we hear about violence, abuse, or neglect of a person with a disability, a person over the age 60, or, in the case of children, if a child is being abused or witnessing abuse. We want you to know this about us so that you can decide what details you want to share. If you have any additional concerns, **[Advocate]** can answer any questions you may have.

Questions for Family & Caregivers of Survivors of DSV

To make sure we are all on the same page, when we say “family member” we are specifically referring to your family member that receives services from New Hope or The Arc of Bristol County.

What is the most important thing you look for in a service provider for your family member who has experienced domestic or sexual violence?

1. They were referred by someone you trust?
2. They have a history of serving people who have experience with DSV?
3. They are known by your community/family?
4. What does the staff do well?
5. That the staff appears to be knowledgeable and comfortable in working with your family member?
6. If so, what did they do to demonstrate this?
7. The physical space, such as the comfort or accessibility it provides?
8. If so, what makes it comfortable or accessible for your family member?

How do you learn about service providers for your family member? (Some examples may be internet, community bulletin, or referrals.)

What are some important considerations when a service provider is working with a minor who has experienced this type of trauma?

1. Who should the service provider talk to about options/services?
2. What's the best way to obtain informed consent?
3. How do they navigate personal privacy needs?
4. Anything else?

We recognize that seeking services for a survivor of DSV can come with unique challenges. For example, in MA, the Child Advocacy Center works with police departments so that a young survivor of domestic or sexual violence doesn't have to repeatedly tell their story. We'd like to know what your experience has been like when requesting the specific services or accommodations you need for your family member.

So, thinking back to a time when your family member received excellent services:

1. What are some of the specific accommodations you've needed when seeking services for your family member? *(Prompt: alternate meeting places, ability to work specifically with youth, trauma informed care, supports and resources for the family)*
2. How were the staff helpful in asking you or your loved one what their (your family member's) unique needs were?
3. Was there anything in place that made requesting accommodations for your family member easy for you?

Is there anything that would make asking for referrals or support for your family member easier?

Think about a place in the community where you feel that your family member has received poor services.

1. What did the staff do poorly?
2. What is your perception of the staff's knowledgeable and comfort level in working with your family member? What did they do to demonstrate this?
3. Is there anything about the physical space that makes finding services there more difficult, such as any discomfort or inaccessibility issues?
4. Anything else that this organization did not do well?

What do you want service providers in your community to know about how to best support youth who have experienced this type of trauma?

1. What would be the most important things you would teach the staff there?
2. What would be in place to make it easier for you to seek what you needed on your family member's behalf?

Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for youth who have experienced this type of trauma when they go somewhere in the community for services?

New Hope Staff Members

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We are all here today to talk about different places where survivors' access services from after experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Consent Reminder

The information you share today will help us improve services at New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County to make them more comfortable, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

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- You agree to respect what each person has to say during the group.
- You agree to take turns speaking, one at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to my questions.
- You will not face any repercussions to your job status as a result of the feedback you give in this group.

Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

Introduction

Before we get started, we want to introduce the people in the room:

- **Facilitator:** [NAME] is going to be in charge of leading the group discussion and asking questions
- **Assistant:** [NAME] is here to make sure that you have everything you need during the focus group. To protect everyone's privacy, anyone who may have come with you today was asked to sit in the other room.
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- **Advocate:** [NAME] is an advocate from New Hope. If you get uncomfortable at any point during this focus group and need to talk to someone about it, [ASSISTANT] can help you get to [ADVOCATE] in the other room.

It is important that you all know [NAMES OF facilitator, Assistant, Note Taker, and Advocate] are Mandated Reporters. In Massachusetts, mandated reporters are required to notify the appropriate agency if we hear about violence, abuse, or neglect of a person with a disability, a person over the age 60, or, in the case of children, if a child is being abused or witnessing abuse. We want you to know this about us so that you can decide what details you want to share. If you have any additional concerns, [Advocate] can answer any questions you may have.

Group Norms

We have some rules for all of us to follow so that everyone gets a chance to share what they want to during the focus group.

What happens here stays here.

You may or may not know other people in this room. For this group to go as well as possible, it is important that people feel like they can share openly. Part of that is agreeing, as a group, that we will not spread the information, stories, or experiences of other people in the room.

Take care of yourself.

If the conversation gets too intense for you, please do whatever you need to ensure that you are ok. If you need to leave the room for a moment or for the rest of the meeting, that is totally fine. [ADVOCATE] is also available if you feel like talking to someone about how you are feeling is the best thing for you.

The thoughts you share are anonymous.

We are taking notes and audio recording this focus group. We put color cards at your seat to make sure we don't accidentally record your name. Please raise your hand and the facilitator will say the color at your seat to let you know it's time to share your ideas. Everyone will have time to speak; but only one person at a time. This is respectful and lets everyone hear ideas one at a time.

Respect everyone's ideas! You don't have to agree with an idea someone else has; but be kind and respectful.

Share your ideas! Everyone in the group has a voice here, a right to share their ideas.

Does anyone else have things they want the group to do to make this space feel as safe as possible?

What inspires you about [working/volunteering/interning] at NEW HOPE?

Think about a time when things went well when you were working with or providing a service to someone that you feel may have had an intellectual or developmental disability. What things were in place within your organization to help you?

1. Staff Training?
2. Resources?
3. Supervisor support?
4. Other community relationships?
5. Accessibility of services New Hope provides?
6. Ability to meet the client's accommodation requests?
7. Policies and procedures?

Tell me about a time when things did not go well for you in working with or providing a service to someone that you feel may have had an intellectual or developmental disability. What types of things had an impact on the situation?

1. Lack of or inadequate training?
2. Lack of knowledge of resources?

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3. Lack of accessibility of services?
4. Lack of knowledge of community partnerships?
5. Lack of the ability to meet the client's accommodation requests?
6. Did the type of intellectual or developmental disability impact your ability to deliver services? If so, how?
7. (For Client Services only) Was there a dynamic of also working with a family member/guardian in that situation? If so, what were those dynamics like and how did they create barriers to serving the survivor?
8. (For Client Services only) Did the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator impact your service delivery? If so, how?
9. Anything else?

What is in place at New Hope to let you know that you are working with someone with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Intake Process
3. Process for clients to request accommodations
4. Staff training

The next set of questions is about how a person with an intellectual or developmental disability can access services from NEW HOPE. By access, we mean: Services that meet each individual's physical, emotional, cognitive, financial, and cultural needs to acquire appropriate resources, advocacy, and safety. What does NEW HOPE currently do that ensures services are accessible to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

1. What processes does New Hope have that create an opportunity for a person with an intellectual or developmental disability to request an accommodation?
2. What are some ideas about how your intake and service delivery process can create an opportunity for a client to request an accommodation?
3. What do you think New Hope could do to improve its accessibility to better serve people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?
4. Do you feel staff have what they need to meet accommodation requests?

What policies and procedures do you have available at New Hope to guide you in responding to a survivor with an intellectual or developmental disability who has experienced domestic or sexual violence?

1. What are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
2. What are some weaknesses?
3. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
4. How does your agency provide support to you in following these policies and procedures?
5. What are some changes that you think could be made to give you more guidance in providing services to survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

What do you see as New Hope's biggest barriers to providing services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

1. Anything regarding the organizational culture or atmosphere? For example, are there any stigmas or assumptions about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who tell you that they've experienced domestic or sexual violence?
2. How about the training your team received?
3. Anything else?
4. What do you wish you had in place at your organization to assist you in serving people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?
5. A system to understand someone's intellectual or developmental disability/accommodation needs?
6. Training?
7. Resources?
8. Community partnerships?
9. Specific policies and procedures?

Have you ever partnered with The Arc of Bristol County in the past to support a survivor with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. If so, how did it go?
2. What were the strengths of this partnership?
3. What could be improved?

What do you want intellectual or developmental disability service providers to know about how to best serve survivors of sexual assault?

1. What does The Arc of Bristol County need to know about the impact trauma has on survivors? Some examples could be:
2. Timeline for when survivors choose to disclose assault.
3. Impact trauma has on behavior.
4. Impact trauma has on personal relationships
 - a. Other "typical" experiences, such as flashbacks, nightmares, triggers, etc.
5. If you were going to train The Arc of Bristol County staff, what would you put in the training curriculum to ensure they had the basics for responding to and serving domestic and sexual violence survivors?

Do you have any other feedback for us?

The Arc of Bristol County Staff Members

Welcome

Welcome everyone. We are all here today to talk about different places that survivors of DSV who have an intellectual or developmental disabilities access services from after experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Consent Reminder

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Does everyone agree with these statements? Do you have any questions?

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disability, a person over the age 60, or, in the case of children, if a child is being abused or witnessing abuse. We want you to know this about us so that you can decide what details you want to share. If you have any additional concerns, **[Advocate]** can answer any questions you may have.

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Respect everyone's ideas! You don't have to agree with an idea someone else has; but be kind and respectful.

Share your ideas! Everyone in the group has a voice here, a right to share their ideas.

Does anyone else have things they want the group to do to make this space feel as safe as possible?

When we say "working with or providing a service to" please think about your own job and role with The Arc of Bristol County. Speak to any experience where you may have worked with someone you thought was a survivor of domestic or sexual violence. If you haven't yet, think about any hypothetical situations where you may work with a survivor of domestic or sexual violence who has an intellectual or developmental disability that you may be the first point of contact for (that person) at The Arc of Bristol County.

What inspires you about working at The Arc of Bristol County?

Think about a time when things went well when you were helping a client that experienced DSV. What things were in place within your organization to help you?

1. Staff Training?
2. Case Management resources?
3. Supervisor support?

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4. Resources?
5. Other community relationships?
6. Policies and procedures?
7. Anything regarding MANE reporting requirements?
8. Follow-up provided to the client?
9. Safety planning?

Tell me about a time when things did not go well for you in providing services to a client that experienced domestic or sexual violence. What things had an impact on that situation?

1. Inadequate or a lack of training?
2. Lack of resources?
3. Lack of knowing of Community resources and partnerships?
4. Lack of policies and procedures?
5. Concerns about confidentiality or safety?
6. Lack of follow-up support for the client?
7. Did the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator impact your service delivery? If so, how?
8. Did having/not having a guardian impact your ability to serve the client?

What is in place at The Arc of Bristol County to let you know when you are working with a survivor of DSV?

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Intake Process
3. Case review process
4. Process for clients to disclose history of abuse
5. Staff training

What are some factors in place at The Arc of Bristol County that make it comfortable and safe for a client to freely disclose their experience of DSV?

1. What exists at the agency to either support or inhibit eliciting disclosures?
2. What about the intake or service delivery process creates an opportunity for a client to disclose experiences of violence and abuse?
3. What does your organization do to support you and your team in responding to and handling disclosures of domestic or sexual assault?

What are some factors in place at The Arc of Bristol County that might prevent a client from feeling comfortable or safe to disclose DSV?

1. Anything regarding the organizational culture or atmosphere? For example, are there any stigmas or assumptions about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who tell you that they've experienced domestic or sexual violence?
2. Do you think there are any safety concerns your clients are dealing with?
3. Do you think confidentiality is a concern for clients when choosing to disclose or not?
4. What are some ideas you have about how your intake or service delivery process can change to create an opportunity for a client to disclose experiences of domestic or sexual violence?

What policies and procedures do you have available at The Arc of Bristol County that guide you in responding to a person with an intellectual or developmental disability who has experienced DSV?

1. What are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
2. What are some weaknesses?
3. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
4. How does your organization provide support to you in following these policies and procedures?
5. What are some changes that you think could be made to give you more guidance in providing services to domestic and sexual violence survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

What do you see as The Arc of Bristol County's biggest barriers to providing services to Survivors with IDD?

1. How about the training or knowledge?
2. Anything regarding organizational culture?
3. Do mandated reporting requirements challenge your ability to serve clients who have experienced sexual or domestic violence? If so, how?
4. Other resource needs?
5. What do you wish was in place at The Arc of Bristol County to improve your ability to serve survivors of domestic or sexual violence?
 - a. Training?
 - b. Resources?
 - c. Community partnerships?
 - d. Policies and procedures

Have you ever partnered with New Hope in the past to support a survivor of DSV with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. If so, how did it go?
2. What were the strengths or weaknesses of this partnership?
3. What could be improved?

What do you want DSV service providers to know about how to best serve people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

1. What does NEW HOPE need to know about how to accommodate the needs of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities? Some examples could be:
 - a. Communication considerations
 - b. Behavior considerations
 - c. Way you work with someone with an intellectual or developmental disability
2. If you were going to train New Hope staff, what would you put in the training curriculum to ensure they had the basics for serving Survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

Do you have any other feedback for us?

Surveys

Survey for Service Users

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender? (Check any that apply)
 - a. Woman/girl
 - b. Man/boy
 - c. Cisgender
 - d. Transgender
 - e. Gender fluid/Genderqueer
 - f. a/Demigender
 - g. Something else:
3. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check any that apply)
 - a. White
 - b. Hispanic
 - c. Latino
 - d. Black/African American
 - e. Native American
 - f. Eastern/Central Asian
 - g. Indian/Middle Eastern
 - h. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
4. Which of the following best describes you? (Choose the best option for you)
 - a. I have experienced domestic or sexual violence.
 - b. I have an intellectual or developmental disability.
 - c. I have another type of disability.
 - d. I am the caretaker of someone who has experienced domestic or sexual violence.
 - e. I am the caretaker of someone with an intellectual or developmental disability.
 - f. I am a person with a disability who has experienced domestic or sexual violence.

Take a moment to think about the concept of safety, why it is important to you and what it feels like to be safe?

1. What does safety mean to you?
2. What are some things that make you feel safe?

Survey for Survivors of DSV

This next section is about services you received as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence. Examples of these kinds of services are doctors, police, court personnel, therapists, sexual and domestic violence service agencies, etc.

1. Where do you find out about the services available to you as a survivor of DSV?
 - a. From the internet
 - b. From friends/family
 - c. From Doctors or Police during care
 - d. At a health fair/community table

- e. From a flyer or brochure in the community
- 2. When you go for services, and they are really good at working with survivors of DSV, what do they do?

The next questions are about how these service providers made your experiences with them positive or negative. These questions are all short answers. Please give as much detail as you are comfortable sharing. If you have something to tell us about a specific service type, please let us know what type of service it was. Example: Emergency Room staff brought warm blankets.

- 1. What did they do to make you feel safe?
- 2. What did they do to make sure you were comfortable?
- 3. What did they do to ensure your privacy and confidentiality?
- 4. If they gave you resources, what did you like about them?
- 5. How could the physical space be more welcoming?
- 6. Did the staff do anything special that made you feel supported?
- 7. Did the staff do anything that made you uncomfortable, feel unsafe, or negatively about working with them?

What would you like the places where you used services know about how to best support survivors of DSV?

Survey for Family or Caretakers of Survivors of DSV

This next section is about services your family member received as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence. Examples of these kinds of services are doctors, police, court personnel, therapists, sexual and domestic violence service agencies, etc.

- 1. Where do you find out about the services available to your family member as a survivor of DSV?
 - a. From the internet
 - b. From friends/family
 - c. From Doctors or Police during care
 - d. At a health fair/community table
 - e. From a flyer or brochure in the community
- 2. What is the most important thing you look for when finding services for your family member? (Please rank the following)
 - a. They have a history of working with survivors of DSV.
 - b. They were referred by family or friends.
 - c. They were referred by a professional (counselor, service coordinator, etc.)
 - d. They advertise their specialized services (like youth counseling, support groups, accessible locations, etc.).
 - e. Something else?
- 3. When you go for services for your family member and they are really good at working with survivors of DSV, what do they do?

The next questions are about how these service providers made your experiences with them positive or negative. These questions are all short answers. Please give as much detail as you are comfortable sharing. If you have something to tell us about a specific service type, please

let us know what type of service it was. Example: Emergency Room staff brought warm blankets.

1. What did they do to make you and your family member feel safe?
2. What did they do to make sure you and your family member were comfortable?
3. What did they do to ensure your family members privacy and confidentiality?
4. If they gave you and your family member resources, what did your family member like about them?
5. How could the physical space be more welcoming?
6. Did the staff do anything special that made you and your family member feel supported?
7. Did the staff do anything that made you and your family member uncomfortable, feel unsafe, or negatively about working with them?

What would you like the places where you and your family member used services know about how to best support survivors of DSV?

Survey for Family or Caretakers of People with IDD

This next section is about services your family member received as a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. Examples of these kinds of services are doctors, police, court personnel, therapists, sexual and domestic violence service agencies, etc.

1. Where do you find out about the services available to your family member as a person with IDD?
 - a. From the internet
 - b. From friends/family
 - c. From Doctors or Police during care
 - d. At a health fair/community table
 - e. From a flyer or brochure in the community
2. What is the most important thing you look for when finding services for your family member? (Please rank the following)
 - a. They have a history of working with people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
 - b. They were referred by family or friends.
 - c. They were referred by a professional (counselor, service coordinator, etc.)
 - d. They advertise their accessible services.
 - e. Something else?
1. When you go for services for your family member, and they are really good at working with person with IDD, what do they do?

The next questions are about how these service providers made your family member's experiences with them positive or negative. These questions are all short answers. Please give as much detail as you are comfortable sharing. If you have something to tell us about a specific service type, please let us know what type of service it was. Example: The doctor's office took extra time to explain a procedure to my family member using plain language instead of medical terms.

1. What did they do to make you and your family member feel safe?
2. What did they do to make sure you and your family member were comfortable?

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3. What did they do to ensure your family member's privacy and confidentiality?
4. If they gave you and your family member resources, what did you like about them?
5. How could the physical space be more welcoming?
6. Did the staff do anything special that made you and your family member feel supported?
7. Did the staff do anything that made you and your family member uncomfortable, feel unsafe, or negatively about working with them?

What would you like the places where you and your family member used services know about how to best support people with IDD?

Survey for Family or Caretakers of Survivors with IDD

This next section is about services your family member received as a person with an intellectual or developmental disability that has also experienced domestic or sexual violence or abuse. Examples of these kinds of services are doctors, police, court personnel, therapists, sexual and domestic violence service agencies, etc.

1. **Where do you find out about the DSV survivor services available to your family member as a person with IDD?**
 - a. From the internet
 - b. From friends/family
 - c. From a professional staff member (counselor, service coordinator)
 - d. From a direct care staff member (someone who does daily tasks to assist your family member)
 - e. From Doctors or Police during care
 - f. At a health fair/community table
 - g. From a flyer or brochure in the community
2. **What is the most important thing you look for when finding services for your family member? (Please rank the following)**
 - a. They have a history of working with people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
 - b. They have a history of working with survivors of DSV.
 - c. They were referred by family or friends.
 - d. They were referred by a professional (counselor, service coordinator, etc.)
 - e. They advertise their accessible services.
 - f. Something else?

When you go for services for your family member, and they are really good at working with person with IDD, what do they do?

The next questions are about how these service providers made your family member's experiences with them positive or negative. These questions are all short answers. Please give as much detail as you are comfortable sharing. If you have something to tell us about a specific service type, please let us know what type of service it was. Example: The doctor's office took extra time to explain a procedure to my family member using plain language instead of medical terms.

1. What did they do to make you and your family member feel safe?
2. What did they do to make sure you and your family member were comfortable?

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3. What did they do to ensure your privacy and confidentiality?
4. If they gave you and your family member resources, what did you like about them?
5. What did the service providers do to make sure you and your family member understood what was happening?
6. How do service providers find out what accommodations you and your family member need?
7. Was the space adequately accessible for you and your family member?
8. How could the physical space be more welcoming?
9. Did the staff do anything special that made you and your family member feel supported?
10. Did service providers tell you and your family member about mandatory reporting? If so, when did they bring it up?
11. Did the staff do anything that made you and your family member uncomfortable, feel unsafe, or negatively about working with them?
12. Were you offered a warm referral (someone familiar with you and your family member giving you the information of a specific service

What would you like the places where you and your family member used services know about how to best support survivors with IDD?

Survey for New Hope Staff

What inspires you about [working/volunteering/interning] at NEW HOPE?

Think about a time when things went well when you were working with or providing a service to someone that you feel may have an intellectual or developmental disability. What things were in place within your organization to help you?

1. Staff Training?
2. Resources?
3. Supervisor support?
4. Other community relationships?
5. Accessibility of services New Hope provides?
6. Ability to meet the client's accommodation requests?
7. Policies and procedures?

Tell me about a time when things did not go well for you in working with or providing a service to someone that you feel may have an intellectual or developmental disability. What types of things had an impact on the situation?

1. Lack of or inadequate training?
2. Lack of knowledge of resources?
3. Lack of accessibility of services?
4. Lack of knowledge of community partnerships?
5. Lack of the ability to meet the client's accommodation requests?
6. Did the type of intellectual or developmental disability impact your ability to deliver services? If so, how?

7. (For Client Services only) Was there a dynamic of also working with a family member/guardian in that situation? If so, what were those dynamics like and how did they create barriers to serving the survivor?
8. (For Client Services only) Did the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator impact your service delivery? If so, how?
9. Anything else?

What is in place at New Hope to let you know that you are working with someone with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Intake Process
3. Process for clients to request accommodations
4. Staff training

The next set of questions is about how a person with an intellectual or developmental disability can access services from NEW HOPE. By access, we mean: Services that meet each individual's physical, emotional, cognitive, financial, and cultural needs to acquire appropriate resources, advocacy, and safety.

1. What does NEW HOPE currently do that ensures services are accessible to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?
2. What processes does New Hope have that create an opportunity for a person with an intellectual or developmental disability to request an accommodation?
3. What are some ideas about how your intake and service delivery process can create an opportunity for a client to request an accommodation?
4. What do you think New Hope could do to improve its accessibility to better serve people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?
5. Do you feel staff have what they need to meet accommodation requests?

Are you aware of any policies and procedures do you have available at New Hope to guide you in responding to a survivor with an intellectual or developmental disability that has experienced sexual assault?

1. If so, what are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
2. What are some weaknesses?
3. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
4. What are some changes that you think could be made to give you more guidance in providing services to survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

What do you see as New Hope's biggest barriers to providing services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

Have you ever partnered with an intellectual or developmental disability agency in the past to support a survivor with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. If so, how did it go?

What do you want intellectual or developmental disability service providers to know about how to best serve survivors of domestic and sexual assault?

1. What does The Arc of Bristol County need to know about the impact trauma has on survivors?
2. If you were going to train The Arc of Bristol County staff, what would you put in the training curriculum to ensure they had the basics for responding to and serving sexual assault survivors?

Do you have any other feedback for us?

Survey for The Arc of Bristol County Staff Members

What inspires you about working for The Arc of Bristol County?

Think about a time when things went well when you were helping a client that experienced DSV. What things were in place within your organization to help you?

1. Staff Training?
2. Case Management resources?
3. Supervisor support?
4. Resources?
5. Other community relationships?
6. Policies and procedures?
7. Anything regarding MANE reporting requirements?
8. Follow-up provided to the client?
9. Safety planning?

Tell me about a time when things did not go well for you in providing services to a client that experienced sexual assault. What things had an impact on that situation?

1. Inadequate or a lack of training?
2. Lack of resources?
3. Lack of knowing of Community partnerships?
4. Lack of policies and procedures?
5. Concerns about confidentiality or safety?
6. Lack of follow-up support for the client?
7. Did the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator impact your service delivery? If so, how?
8. Did having/not having a guardian impact your ability to serve the client?

What is in place at The Arc of Bristol County to let you know when you are working with a survivor of DSV?

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Intake Process
3. Case review process
4. Process for clients to disclose history of abuse
5. Staff training

What are some factors in place at The Arc of Bristol County that make it comfortable and safe for a client to freely disclose their experience of DSV?

1. What exists at the agency to either support or inhibit eliciting disclosures?
2. What about the intake or service delivery process creates an opportunity for a client to disclose experiences of violence and abuse?
3. What does your organization do to support you and your team in responding to and handling disclosures of sexual assault?

What are some factors in place at The Arc of Bristol County that might prevent a client from feeling comfortable or safe to disclose DSV?

1. Anything regarding the organizational culture or atmosphere? For example, are there any stigmas or assumptions about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who tell you that they've experienced sexual assault?
2. Do you think there are any safety concerns your clients are dealing with?
3. Do you think confidentiality is a concern for clients when choosing to disclose or not?
4. What are some ideas you have about how your intake or service delivery process can change to create an opportunity for a client to disclose experiences of violence and abuse?

What policies and procedures do you have available at The Arc of Bristol County that guide you in responding to a person with an intellectual or developmental disability who has experienced DSV?

1. What are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
2. What are some weaknesses?
3. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
4. How does your organization provide support to you in following these policies and procedures?
5. What are some changes that you think could be made to give you more guidance in providing services to sexual assault survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

What do you see as The Arc of Bristol County's biggest barriers to providing services to survivors with IDD?

1. What do you wish was in place at The Arc to improve your ability to serve survivors of sexual assault?
 - a. Training?
 - b. Resources?
 - c. Community partnerships?
 - d. Policies and procedures

Have you ever partnered with DSV services in the past to support a survivor with an intellectual or developmental disability?

1. If so, how did it go?
2. What were the strengths of this partnership?
3. What could be improved?

What do you want DSV service providers to know about how to best serve people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

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1. What does NEW HOPE need to know about how to accommodate the needs of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities? Some examples could be:
 - a. Communication considerations
 - b. Behavior considerations
 - c. Way you work with someone with an intellectual or developmental disability
2. If you were going to train The Arc of Bristol County staff, what would you put in the training curriculum to ensure they had the basics for serving people with intellectual or developmental disabilities?

Do you have any other feedback for us?

MEMO

In advance of beginning recruitment contacts, the Recruiter will receive Recruiter Training from their respective Project Director. A Recruiter Packet will be provided at that time.

As Recruiters begin to reach out to and speak with potential participants; Recruiters will complete all Recruiter Packet Materials as outlined in the packet; being mindful of the importance of asking potential recruits if they feel they can safely accept meeting reminder calls, emails or materials. For those who do not feel it is safe to receive reminder contacts, the Recruiter will document such on the RSVP form as follows:

SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT.

TO: Recruiters - emPower Bristol County

FROM: Collaboration Team - emPower Bristol County

DATE:

RE: Recruitment of Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence (DSV) with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

Purpose of emPower Bristol County and Recruitment of Survivors of DSV with IDD

The purpose of emPower Bristol County's Needs Assessment is to locate the gaps in each organization's capacity to serve survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) who have an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD).

While other stakeholders will also be engaged for their valued input to emPower Bristol County's work; survivors of DSV with IDD have distinct contributions to make to our efforts.

Survivors with IDD are able to share their service experiences, unique insights and ideas about how to enhance necessary services to survivors of DSV with IDD as most accessible, welcoming, comfortable and safe. The opportunity to interview survivors with IDD offers us a chance to ask specific questions about the ways these services could be improved within both DSV and IDD service agencies. This sector of survivors can provide critical information directly through the lens of those we seek to improve services for.

Note: emPower Bristol County will only be engaging survivors with IDD who meet the following criteria:

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- Who, at the time of recruitment, are not under plenary guardianship
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of New Hope and who have already disclosed that they are a person with an intellectual or developmental disability
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of The Arc of Bristol County that have already disclosed that they are a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence
- Potential participants who have reached out in tandem with their plenary guardian to members of the emPower BC team expressing interest in participating in the project **AND** are known well enough for the recruiter to reasonably believe that there is not abuse occurring in their relationship

By engaging survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see [Survivors with IDD](#)):

- How organizations can provide better outreach to survivors of DSV with IDD;
- Specific concerns that survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities have about disclosing or reporting their experiences with domestic and/or sexual violence, including concerns about mandated reporting;
- Best practices for responding to disclosures or reports of domestic and/or sexual violence from survivors with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- How organizations that primarily serves either domestic and/or sexual violence survivors, or people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, can be improved to be more welcoming, accessible, responsive, and trauma-informed for survivors with IDD.

Confidentiality, Safety and Clinical Considerations

It is most important to state that the emPower Bristol County Collaboration Team is fully committed to protecting the confidentiality, safety and emotional wellbeing of survivors of DSV with IDD who chose to participate in this needs assessment. These interviews about their service experiences with providers around DSV are very valuable as are the ideas they are willing to offer for the improvement of these services.

However, in accepting their willingness to participate, we do not want to negatively impact their safety, personal healing process or general well-being in any way.

Therefore, Recruiters will be responsible to inform each individual that we are NOT asking that they share their experience with abuse or any details about it. ONLY what he/she feels service agencies, doctors, police, first responders, etc. must do to make a survivor of DSV with intellectual or developmental disabilities feel safe and comfortable when they seek help. We will also ask survivors what they feel is important for the provider to do and to know, and to demonstrate that as providers of this service, they understand both DSV and IDD.

To further consider the well-being of these survivors, they will be approached for recruitment exclusively by their specific case manager after consultation with their full clinical team in advance of any recruitment effort. It will also be acceptable for a clinical decision to be made by the team that an alternate member of the team may in fact be a better recruiter choice for the particular recruit. If so, for planning purposes only, this will be

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communicated to the Agency Project Director (Jennifer Adams/Erin Basler) in advance of any recruitment effort with the survivor.

For those potential participants who complete the recruitment process and decide to participate, the recruiter will determine with participant (and clinical team as appropriate) if there are safety concerns around future reminder communications regarding meeting times, interview dates, etc. For those which safety is a concern, the Recruiter will so document on the Recruitment document (RSVP Form) as follows:

SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT.

Recruitment Criteria for Survivors of DSV with IDD

How will we decide who to recruit?

We will be engaging (recruiting) survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are current clients of The Arc of Bristol County. We will only be engaging survivors with IDD who meet the following criteria:

- Who, at the time of recruitment, are not under plenary guardianship
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of New Hope and who have already disclosed that they are a person with an intellectual or developmental disability
- Who, at the time of recruitment, are on-going clients of The Arc of Bristol County that have already disclosed that they are a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence Potential participants who have reached out in tandem with their plenary guardian to members of the emPower BC team expressing interest in participating in the project **AND** are known well enough for the recruiter to reasonably believe that there is not abuse occurring in their relationship.

Recruitment Outreach

What is the outreach process for recruitment of Survivors of DSV who have IDD?

Once a full team decision has been reached that a specific survivor with IDD can be offered participation (this includes who on the team will recruit; the Case Manager or an alternate member of the survivor's team) the Recruiter will contact the individual utilizing an established recruitment script specifically designed for use when recruiting survivors with IDD. (See Recruitment Packet including Recruitment Script)

Legal Guardians and Guardian Consent

It is the practice of The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope to presume competence of those participating in our programs, and, as such, emPower Bristol County will presume competence of all people recruited to participate in the needs assessment process. Specifically, emPower BC views participation in the focus groups to be akin to participating emPower Bristol County
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in other self-advocacy groups, which do not require additional consent for participation from the guardian.

emPower BC follows the values and practices of its founding agencies in that it presumes competency of all participants. Recognizing the delicate balance between self-advocacy, autonomy, legality, and safety, emPower BC will not be recruiting any survivors if DSV with IDD who are under plenary guardianship. Those under conservatorship, with shared decision making, or other specialized types of guardianship (e.g. medical proxy, representative payee) will still be considered for participation. The only exception we will make is in the case of survivors with IDD and their guardians who approach emPower BC to become a potential participant. These guardians will need to fill out an additional Guardian Consent Form to confirm they understand the rights and restrictions they have in the focus group process.

emPower BC will make the following packet available, as requested, to aid guardians in their decisions around participation:

- The emPower Bristol County FAQs
- The Focus Group Script for Survivors with IDD
- An invitation to participate in the Parent/Guardian Focus Groups and Survey process

If guardianship issues arise, the project directors will seek guidance from the management staff at The Arc. Guardians (much like support staff) will not be permitted to stay in the room during focus groups, as it may alter the comfort level of participants to give honest and open answers about their experiences.

Consent Notice

In all cases, it is important to emPower BC that participants in the Needs Assessment individually consent to their involvement in the process. For those with legal guardians, this passive (verbal) consent will occur only after the legal guardian has provided their written consent for participation. With this in mind, at the time of recruitment, but after written consent from the legal guardian, the Recruiter will read the consent notice to the potential participant and document their explicit verbal consent on the RSVP form.

This Consent Reminder is in use for all focus groups and interviews. Participants are agreeing to:

- Participate in a focus groups/interview.
- Have their comments anonymously recorded in audio format and in writing.
- Have their comments anonymously used in the needs assessment report.
- Have their comments anonymously used for developing the collaboration's strategic plan and implementation activities.

The Recruitment Script for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Assault who have Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities will provide the specific dialogue for these potential participants.

Recruiter Materials

In advance of beginning recruitment contacts, the Recruiter will receive Recruiter Training from their respective Project Director. A Recruiter Packet will be provided at that time. The packet will contain information for how to determine a potential participant's guardianship status. This is not for the purpose of reaching out to guardians for consent, it is to determine whether a plenary guardian is in place.

As Recruiters begin to reach out to and speak with potential participants; Recruiters will complete all Recruiter Packet Materials as outlined in the packet; being mindful of the importance of asking potential recruits if they feel they can safely accept meeting reminder calls, emails or materials. For those who do not feel it is safe to receive reminder contacts, the Recruiter will document such on the RSVP form as follows:

SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT.

Recruitment Script for Survivors of DSV with IDD

The recruiter will use the script below with each potential participant who is survivor of DSV with IDD to fully explain the purpose of the collaboration, what is involved with the focus group process, and what is expected of them should they agree to participate. Each section of this document contains recruiter instructions and the script recruiters should use verbatim when contacting people with disabilities who meet the recruiting criteria about participation.

Within the script, **direct questions will be in bold** and *clarifying information for recruiters will be identified using italics*.

Purpose of the Focus Group

Instructions

The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope are working together and with the people who receive services from our agencies to ask you what your ideas are for making services better for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are survivors of domestic or sexual abuse.

We think it is important to ask the people who use our services to give us their ideas about what changes we should make to provide the most comfortable, safe, and accessible services delivered by staff who understand abuse and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Your input also helps us decide which changes are most important to work on immediately. The information you give us will help us build a plan to make all of our services better specifically for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have

experienced abuse, but we also believe the changes will benefit everyone involved with both New Hope and The Arc of Bristol County.

Script

The Arc of Bristol County is working with New Hope (*an agency that helps people who have experienced abuse*) to make services better for people who are survivors of abuse and also have an intellectual or developmental disability. They are looking for people to be part of their focus groups (*these focus groups are up to 10 people getting together to give their opinions on the ways different agencies that people with IDD use and how they can be better at supporting people with IDD, especially if they have experienced abuse in their lives*)

Would you like to hear more about being part of one of these groups?

Before you make your decision about being part of the focus groups, here is how they work: The person running the group will ask for your ideas about what you think doctors, counselors, hospitals, police, and agencies that help people can do to make the people who use them to feel safe and comfortable there. They will also ask questions about how it feels when staff there understand you and what people need when they have intellectual or developmental disabilities, especially if they are a survivor of abuse

If you decide you would like to participate, what you say in the focus group will not be shared with your staff or anyone at (agency). If you say yes to participating OR if you say "No, I do not want to participate." It will have NO effect on your services. You will still have your services as you do now.

If you want to participate, you can say;" Yes, I would like to participate." and later change your mind. You can change your mind at any time; even during the focus group. You can say to the people running the group, "I changed my mind; I don't want to answer any more questions."

Are you interested in being part of the group?

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

Instructions

In this section, Recruiters will explain confidentiality as it applies to the focus groups, mandated reporting protocols, and the use of information gathered during the focus groups.

Script

Thank you for being interested in being part of the focus group and your help with this project to make services better. We appreciate it.

Before you sign up for the group, I want to share a few more things with you.

If you participate in the focus group, we will ask you for your opinions, but we won't ask you to share personal stories. We will not ask you to tell anyone about your life that you do not want to talk about.

The focus groups will help us learn what you think agencies that provide help to survivors with IDD can do to make the help they provide to people better. We will put your ideas to make things better in a report that we will use to improve services. No one's name will be used in the report – Just the ideas.

Do you have any questions about what information you will be asked about or how we will use it in our report?

We also want you to know that what you tell us is confidential (*private*); unless you tell us that you or someone else is being harmed or if you tell us you are harming someone. Then we will have to tell others about anyone that is being hurt. That is because all of the staff who work for The Arc of Bristol County and New Hope are Mandated Reporters. That means that they (*staff*) must tell the State of Massachusetts when they learn that someone is being abused. If you say something during the focus group that we need to make a report about, the people running the group will talk to you about it invite you to make the report together.

Do you have any questions about what information can stay private and what information might need to be reported?

RSVP Form, Frequently Asked Questions, and Location

Instructions

Review the recruitment materials, including the [RSVP Form](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

For all activities with people served: discuss what compensation they will receive.

Participants from our direct constituent groups, people with IDD and survivors of DSV are will receive a \$20 gift card as compensation for their time participating in focus groups.

Parents/Guardians and Staff ARE NOT eligible for compensation based on the funding terms of the project.

Review the date, time, and location of the interview or focus group.

Script

I am going to write down your first name on an (RSVP) form; so that I can schedule a date and time for your focus group. We won't write down your last name anywhere.

I have some dates and times that you can choose from for your focus group. What works best for you? *Confirm date and time; or confirm within two business days if transportation etc. must be confirmed to book interview. Let the participant know this. Confirm and document on RSVP form safest way to confirm date, time and location with them. (See Review Safety Considerations)*

Is there someone you would like me to give the focus group information to help you get to the focus group? *(If the recruit identifies a support person, make a not in the accommodations section)*

Compensation for Participating

Instructions

Participants from the following categories will receive a \$20 gift card to compensate them for their time: Survivors with IDD; Survivors of DSV, and people with IDD. Parents/Guardians and staff members at each agency are not eligible for compensation through the OVW grant funding supporting the needs assessment.

Script

As a way of thanking you for the time you are taking to participate in the interview (or focus group for people with IDD), we will provide you with a \$20 gift card. You may take it with you at the time of the interview, or if you prefer, we can hold it for you until you would like to take it. (We will hold it for you for up to three months if you would like us to, or you can take it with you the day of your interview or focus group.) Even if you change your mind during the interview; you will still keep the gift card as a thank you for your time.

If participating in the focus group for people with IDD, inform the participant that there will be 6-10 people in the group with a facilitator, note taker and advocate. Provide them with an explanation of each's role. Let them know that the meeting will last two hours—with 15 minutes at the beginning for everyone to arrive and get settled, 1.5 hours of focus group questions with two 10-minute breaks, and 15 minutes after the group for any additional questions or needs; or be adjusted if the group needs it to. Let them know there will also be breaks during the group time. (Information regarding roles, etc. is located in [People with IDD Focus Group Script](#))

Review Safety Considerations

Instructions

Talk with participant to determine if they feel they can safely accept meeting reminder calls, emails or materials. For those who agree it is safe to receive calls, emails or materials, document such on the RSVP form as follows: **No Safety Concerns; can receive meeting reminders via calls, emails, reminder cards.**

Script

If you want, I can send you a reminder card in the mail with the date and time of your focus group. I can also call or email you to remind you about the focus group. We want to make sure it is safe for you to get reminders at home, on your phone or in your email.

Would you like a reminder to be sent to you in the mail? *(If the recruit selects this option, please write their address on the reminder postcard and submit it with the RSVP Form.)*

Would you like a phone call or email to remind you of the date and time of your focus group?

If you do not want a reminder, that is fine. You participate can still participate without having a reminder. If you feel it isn't safe for you to get any reminders, we will not send any and we will not call. *(If the potential recruit asks what is meant when we say safety, say, "In this case, safety means you are not afraid someone will hurt or threaten you in any way if they find out you are participating in the focus group.)* **Do you think it is safe for us to send you a reminder?**

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Do you want to receive reminders? *Be sure that you know if the participant's answer to this question is clear to you; YES or NO.*

What types of reminders would you like to get? *If someone chooses a mailed reminder, please fill out their address on the Reminder Post Card and submit it to the agency Project Director (Jennifer Adams at the Arc, Erin Basler at New Hope).*

If participant indicates ANY concern with safety; we will not make reminder calls, send emails or reminder cards. Recruiter will immediately mark the RSVP form as follows:

SAFETY CONCERNS. NO REMINDER CARDS, CALLS OR EMAILS TO BE MADE TO THIS PARTICIPANT

Review Accommodation Needs.

Instructions

The RSVP Form contains a list of common accommodations people may need to fully participate in the focus groups. Information can be found by asking the potential participant, looking in their medical fact sheet and records, asking support staff and care team, or observing how the person interacts and communicates in their typical way.

Script

We want to make sure you can fully participate in the focus groups. To make sure you can, we want to make a note of any accommodations you might need. Accommodations are anything you use to make it easier for you to communicate, get around, or generally have an easier time participating in activities. An example of an accommodation is when someone uses a communication book to let people know what they need.

Will you need any accommodations to participate in the focus group?

Can you tell us what kind of accommodations you will need?

We will do all we can to provide the accommodations that you need. If we run into a problem with your accommodation needs, I [the recruiter] will contact you to find a way for you to participate. *Utilize Accommodations information provided in Recruiter Packet to assist with determining necessary accommodations and making arrangements for such.*

Do you have any questions about your accommodations for the focus group?

Consent Reminder for Participants

Instructions

This consent process is in effect for all surveys, focus groups, and interviews. If necessary, potential participants will again be assured that participation is optional at all intersections of the process and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

This Consent Reminder is to be shared with all participants; including those who have plenary guardians who have ALREADY given their written consent.

Script

I want to make sure I explain to you what you are agreeing to when you are interviewed. I am going to tell you each thing; and we will stop after each one in case you have questions. Ask all the questions you have, and I will answer them.

By being part of the focus group, you are agreeing to:

- Participate in a focus groups/interview.
 - **Do you understand what this means? Do you have any questions about this?**
- Have your comments anonymously recorded in audio format and in writing.
 - **Do you understand what this means? Do you have any questions about this?**
- Have your comments anonymously used in the needs assessment report.
 - **Do you understand what this means? Do you have any questions about this?**
- Have your comments anonymously used for developing the collaboration's strategic plan and implementation activities.
 - **Do you understand what this means? Do you have any questions about this?**

Answer any additional questions.

Instructions

If yes, utilize the FAQ provided in the Recruiter Packet to do so. If the participant has questions that you do not have answers to, let them know that you do not have that answer at the moment but that you will be happy to get the answer for them. *Any questions that are not provided answers in the Recruiter Packet should be sent to the agency Project Director (Jennifer Adams at The Arc, Erin Basler at New Hope).*

Again, if for safety reasons, if this is someone that has decided they should not receive reminder contacts, determine how or if you should follow up with them on this information. Please document any questions not covered in the provided packet asked by the recruit on the back of the RSVP form.

Script

Do you have any other questions for me about anything we have talked about today?

Thank you again for talking with me today about the focus groups and thank you for agreeing to be give us your opinions about the services you use. We are grateful to you for your help with this important project. We look forward to seeing you at the focus group!

Recruiter Packet

Reference Chart: Target Audiences for Focus Groups, Interviews, Surveys

Audience	Organization Responsible for Recruitment	Type of Data collection	Participant Breakdown (Max # Part. # Groups)
Survivors of DSV*	New Hope	Surveys	10
		Focus Groups	10 3
		Interviews	(As Needed)
Adults with IDD*	The Arc	Focus Groups	10 3
		Interviews	(As Needed)
Parents & Guardians	The Arc	Surveys	30
		Focus Groups	10 1
		Interviews	(As Needed)
	New Hope	Surveys	10
		Focus Groups	10 1
		Interviews	(As Needed)
IDD Agency Staff	The Arc	Focus Group	10 1
		Surveys	20
DSV Agency Staff	New Hope	Focus Groups	10 1
		Surveys	20
Survivors with IDD*	Both Agencies	Interviews	5-15
*(Groups included for compensation)			

Relevant Legal Frameworks

M.G.L. 19C: Authority of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission M.G.L.

119 51A: Mandatory Reporting of abuse against a Child M.G.L 209A: Abuse Prevention

M.G.L 258E: Harassment Protection M.G.L 265:

Crimes against the Person

§13A: Assault and Battery

§13B: Indecent Assault and Battery on a Minor

§13F: Indecent Assault and battery on a person with an intellectual disability

§13H: Indecent assault and battery on a person fourteen or older

§15B: Strangulation or suffocation; penalty; batterer's intervention program

§22: Rape, generally; weapons; punishment; eligibility for furlough, education, training or employment programs

§24C: Victim's Name; confidentiality

§43: Stalking; punishment

§43A: Criminal harassment; punishment

§50: Trafficking of persons for forced service

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§4.00: Records

§5.00 Standards to Promote Dignity

§7.00 Standards for All Services and Supports

§9.00 Investigations and Reporting Responsibilities

§10.00 Research