

ENVISION ILLINOIS

Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance (The Alliance)

Illinois Department of Human services: (IDHS)

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)

Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL)

Blue Tower Training, a division of Macon Resources, Inc (BTT)

Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council (IFVCC)

National Alliance on Mental Illness Illinois

Needs Assessment Plan

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Introduction

In 2014, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and six collaborative partners, were funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), to form a collaborative to address domestic violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people. Envision Illinois consists of the following collaborative partners: IDHS Division of Mental Health, IDHS Division of Developmental Disabilities, IDHS Division of Rehabilitation Services, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, , National Alliance on Mentally Illness Illinois, The Self-Advocacy Alliance, Blue Tower Training, and Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council. Each of the partners is a statewide organization that brings a unique contribution to the work of the Collaboration.

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is charged with designing, coordinating, monitoring, and funding a comprehensive and coordinated community-based social service system which includes both disability and domestic violence services.

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) consists of 53 community-based domestic violence victim services organization members located across the State of Illinois.

Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL) is the statewide association of Illinois' 22 Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

National Alliance on Mental Illness Illinois (NAMI Illinois) is a statewide organization of individuals with mental illnesses, families, friends, and professionals dedicated to improving the quality of life for those affected by mental illnesses.

Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance (The Alliance) is a statewide network that brings together self-advocacy groups across the state to speak with one voice and work together to make systems change.

Blue Tower Training, a division of Macon Resources, Inc (BTT) provides local, regional, and national training, consultation, and materials related to violence against persons with disabilities.

Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council supports a coordinated community response to family violence across the state of Illinois.

Envision Illinois seeks to create a system in Illinois in which domestic violence is recognized in the lives of people with disabilities and Deaf people, and is responded to appropriately, in a trauma informed manner, by service providers. As statewide organizations with considerable influence at many levels throughout the state, we believe that we can create such a system. We have determined that we will first explore the intersection of domestic violence and disability through a thoughtfully crafted process, expand our own understanding and expertise with information gained from the Needs Assessment, and develop a strategic plan which addresses the findings.

Mission Statement

The Mission of Envision Illinois is to transform services in Illinois into a survivor-centered, seamless, responsive and sustainable system that fully meets the needs of Deaf people and people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence. We will achieve this by listening to the voices of survivors and self-advocates which will lead us to:

- Examine the belief and value systems of the collaborative agencies to promote welcoming, accessible, integrated and informed services and programs and to transform the agency cultures;
- Foster relationships among partners and fully utilize their resources and expertise;
- Integrate and expand knowledge, cultural consciousness and the expertise of partners to create long term social change;
- Remove physical, programmatic, communication and attitudinal barriers and bridge gaps in service delivery; and
- Embed these changes through coordinated policies and protocols, and developed resources across all partner agencies.

Accessible from any point of entry, a diverse array of highly effective comprehensive and inclusive coordinated community responses will be provided by staff who have actively prepared for access utilizing a trauma-informed approach through which

policies and procedures, philosophy, and services are designed to support from crisis to healing.

Vision Statement

We ENVISION a culture in Illinois in which Deaf people and people with disabilities who experience domestic violence are empowered by a system of inclusive, accessible, person-centered and person-directed services that result in equal access to healing, safety and justice.

Needs Assessment Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to inform the Envision Illinois Collaborative of both the strengths and gaps in services that exist for Deaf people and people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. Information from the Needs Assessment will be used to develop a strategic plan that creates a rich array of comprehensive, survivor-centered, seamless, responsive and sustainable services that fully meet the needs of Deaf people and people with disabilities in Illinois who experience domestic violence.

The Goals of the Needs Assessment are to:

1. Examine the needs and preferences of Deaf people and people with disabilities.
2. Identify the strengths, gaps and opportunities within the domestic violence and disability service systems and across systems to develop a sustainable system to meet the needs of Deaf people and people with disabilities.
3. Identify policies, procedures and practices which create capacity for our systems to address the intersection of domestic violence and Deaf people and people with disabilities.
4. Examine the readiness, knowledge, cultural consciousness, comfort, confidence, attitudes, beliefs, values, expertise and awareness of community partners to create long term social change through supporting Deaf people and people with disabilities.

5. Identify resources and connections, including potential/possible connections, of community partners to support Deaf people and people with disabilities.
6. Identify physical, programmatic, communication and attitudinal barriers that impact services (identification and response) and connections between community partners providing services to Deaf people and people with disabilities.

Information Sources

Existing Data

Existing data will be gathered from state informational systems to understand the current level of services to people with disabilities and Deaf people and to establish a baseline for the project. Infonet (collects victim services information), ANET (collects abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disabilities living in the community) and ROCS (collects information from disability service providers) will be utilized to gather statewide data.

New data

New data will be gathered during the Needs Assessment through focus groups, surveys, and individual interviews. We will not be gathering information on the incidence of violence in the lives of people with disabilities. We will be gathering information on current policies, procedures and practices within the domestic violence and disability systems in the state and assessing factors such as staff comfort and confidence levels that affect our ability to respond appropriately to people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence.

The information gathered will be used to develop a Strategic Plan which will address identified strengths, weaknesses and needs. This will help Envision Illinois map out strategies for systems change that will move us toward our vision.

Overview of Methods

Participants, Recruitment, Numbers and Tools

Envision Illinois will be using a mixed methods approach to gathering data for the needs assessment. This will provide the most accurate and beneficial data. We will use three methods of gathering information: focus groups, individual interviews and surveys.

We will be gathering information from people with disabilities and Deaf people, staff and volunteers from the domestic violence and disability service systems (including ICADV member agencies, DHS contracted service providers for mental health and developmental disabilities services, DHS/Division of Rehabilitation services employees, Department on Aging/Adult Protective Services) and other community supports. We will try to make the groups as representative and inclusive as possible by asking every MOU partner and its constituents to contribute in some manner to the process (through individual interviews, focus groups or surveys).

Focus Groups

A focus group is a group of individuals that have been brought together for a moderated discussion about a particular topic. Because they tend to be open-ended in nature, focus groups allow for a deeper exploration of a given topic.

(www.accessingsafety.org)

Envision Illinois will conduct focus groups with:

- individuals with disabilities and Deaf people who may or may not be survivors of domestic violence
- staff at disability service agencies and community supports
- staff at domestic violence agencies
- staff at MOU partner agencies

Focus groups allow diverse ideas to be shared and, with careful moderation, a deeper examination of issues. The focus group questions have been carefully written to elicit

information about current services including such factors as responsiveness, policies, procedures and practices, better practices and ideal services and connections between agencies that affect people with disabilities and Deaf people in Illinois who may experience domestic violence.

General Guidelines for Focus Groups:

- Each group will have 3-12 people.
- Focus groups with people with disabilities and Deaf people will be limited to 8.
- Groups will last about 1 to 1.5 hours.

We are committed to ensuring accessibility to all focus groups. Our commitment to confidentiality will be stressed at the start of each group. Every focus group script includes a statement about confidentiality. Scripts and additional details on consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting and safety and access can be found in other sections of this document.

- Participation in focus groups is voluntary.
- Materials will be provided in universally designed alternative formats if requested and in easily understood language; Envision Illinois team members have reviewed questions to insure that they are clear, concise and understandable.
- Focus groups will be held in a space that is welcoming and accessible for those who will be attending and at a time and place that is considerate of the needs and preferences of focus group participants, e.g. available transportation, avoiding programming conflicts.
- Survivors and individuals with disabilities who participate in either a focus group or an individual interview will receive a \$20.00 gift card.
- Each group will be staffed at the minimum with a facilitator and a recorder and a support person who is available to individuals who need a quiet room or services.

- Everyone assisting in the focus groups will be trained to insure consistency and clear understanding of roles. This training will provide a thorough understanding of the process and purpose of the focus groups. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a description of this training.
- Everyone will have training on their role as Mandatory Reporters.
- Recruitment efforts will be intentional to reach a diverse group of people and services, e.g. Centers for Independent Living, community mental health centers, day programs, walk-in and shelter services.

Roles for Focus Group Staff

Facilitator - Will facilitate and lead the discussion; facilitator will make the opening remarks, and welcome and monitor the group to insure that everyone is able to contribute. This is especially crucial in a group where the topics may be difficult to discuss and group members may utilize different modes of communication.

- We have chosen to utilize members of the Envision Illinois collaborative to conduct the focus groups. Team members have the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate groups as well as knowledge of the systems to assist in understanding and recording responses.
- For staff focus groups we will employ members of the collaboration who do not work for that entity in order to minimize any bias or inhibiting effect by the presence of a funder or authoritative entity.
- For people with disabilities and Deaf people focus groups, we believe that someone familiar with the language and needs of the group will be able to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere and have a more valuable conversation.
- Recorder – Notes will be taken using a flip chart in order to capture salient points, acknowledge individual contributions and ensure that we have accurately reflected the comments.
- Support person- The support person's primary role is to respond to an individual's crisis or distress. If a participant begins to feel overwhelmed, wishes to talk individually or needs to leave, the support person will check-in with them

in a private space. The support person will be someone from the community so that a connection to ongoing supportive services can be established.

Groups of people with disabilities and Deaf people will be limited to 8 to insure that everyone is given an opportunity to contribute, and that individual needs can be addressed. Focus groups of staff may contain up to 12 participants. We believe that given the skill of the facilitators and the relative sophistication of the individuals in these groups this number will be manageable.

There may be individuals who are interested in participating or contributing to the process, but are unable to participate in focus groups because of schedules, safety concerns or other reasons; they may simply prefer a private conversation. Interviews will be arranged with these individuals at an agreed upon date and time. In these cases the interview process is anticipated to take about an hour, and will use the focus group discussion questions.

Focus Groups of People with Disabilities and Deaf People

The voices of people with disabilities and Deaf people are vital to the Envision Illinois needs assessment. These individuals may or may not have experienced domestic violence, but they are the experts on the delivery of services in Illinois. Without their input and experience we will not be able to generate lasting change in the state. They can provide us with information regarding welcoming, accessible, empowerment-based and culturally appropriate services. They can also provide context to support policy changes to best provide environments that not only ensure safety, but are also accessible. We will be gathering information from these experts to not only inform us of current practices, but ideal practices as well. The information we gather will be used to make changes as necessary within our own organizations and to support and guide our constituents.

Recruitment

In general, recruitment will be done through the Envision Illinois member organizations and their respective constituents. A recruitment packet will be sent to identified points of contact or host sites and the member of the state team most directly involved with the agency/organization will coordinate planning for the focus group. The point of contact will notify the Envision Illinois team member of any needed supports or accommodations. Anyone who does not wish to be in a focus group but nonetheless

wants to participate in the Needs Assessment will be interviewed.

The collaborative has agreed on the following focus groups for people with disabilities and Deaf people:

- Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities
- Individuals with mental illnesses
- Individuals with physical disabilities
- Individuals with sensory disabilities

In order to learn from people with chemical sensitivities, we will intentionally recruit individuals who experience this for focus groups or individuals interviews.

We are taking special care to include Deaf individuals in the Needs Assessment because of their unique experiences and challenges in seeking and receiving services. The same recruitment process will be used. We've determined that interviews will be the best way to gather the information we need; we will interview at least three, but no more than five, Deaf clients.

Focus Groups of Staff

Input and information from the staff in the domestic violence and disability service systems are vital to this Needs Assessment; they not only provide current services, they are the key to creating a new system of services in Illinois. They will be able to tell us what works well, and what needs to be improved. They will also help us map existing connections – both formal and informal – between organizations in the state.

- Staff/volunteers from victim service agencies representing a sample of the types of positions and services
- Staff/volunteers from disability service agencies and community supports (community mental health centers, CILs, community-based developmental service providers, Adult Protective Services, NAMI) representing a sample of the types of positions and services

Recruitment

In general, recruitment of staff/volunteers will be done through the Envision Illinois member organizations and their respective constituents. Focus groups whenever possible, will be held in conjunction with existing meetings and/or activities in order to reach a greater number of agencies. This methodology has been used successfully in

the past and yields the broadest perspective with the least amount of travel and expense. Identified Envision Illinois team members will work with the point of contact to arrange the focus groups.

Individual Interviews

Envision Illinois will be conducting interviews with the key stakeholders in each MOU organization, e.g. executive directors, policy makers of each organization in the Collaboration utilizing the approved individual interview questions. Due to its size and structure, interviews within DHS will include key stakeholders in each disability division. Additionally, individuals identified during the initial interviews with these MOU partner organizations will be included. These individuals hold a unique perspective on the issues we are addressing, and the interview process acknowledges their unique experience. We believe that this process will garner more in-depth information.

General guidelines for Individual Interviews

Interviews of key stakeholders will be conducted by a member of the Envision Illinois team who is not employed by that agency. The interviews will be done by phone or in-person as determined by both parties. It is anticipated that the interview will take 1.5 hours. Interviewers will participate in the same training as described for focus groups, above.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for interview questions and introductory script.

Roles for Individual Interview Staff

Each individual interview will be conducted by one member of the Envision Illinois collaborative team. For individual interviews of key stakeholders, we will employ members of the collaboration who do not work for that entity in order to minimize any bias or inhibiting effect by the presence of a co-worker. The team member will facilitate the interview and record the responses.

Surveys

Surveys will be used to collect information from disability service agencies and victim services throughout the state.

Survey monkey will be utilized to reach a broader base of individuals, e.g. different levels of staff, experiences and also secure a larger geographic base. A link to the survey will be sent by the appropriate Envision Illinois partner to its constituent base to promote completion of the survey. Respondents will be insured that the results will be anonymous and data will be reported out on an aggregate level only.

Surveys provide a way of collecting data as a representation of a whole group and are an easy way to generate a lot of information in a relatively small amount of time. They can be cost effective, require the least amount of resources, and can be offered anonymously, which should encourage people to participate without their identity being revealed.

Confidentiality, Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Safety and Access

Confidentiality

Envision Illinois has a strong commitment to the confidentiality of any information regarding people with disabilities and Deaf people, staff and program, as well as the workings of each agency. We will conduct the assessment in a respectful and transparent manner, avoiding suggestions of blame or fault-finding. Envision Illinois is mindful of the confidentiality concerns for individuals and organizations.

- No personal information will be collected in the Needs Assessment other than noting the number from each agency and necessary information to arrange accommodations.
- In the focus groups, interviews and surveys participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about staff or other participants. In the introduction to the focus groups, the facilitator will make the following announcement:

We consider this a safe place to share, and we ask you to keep what is said in this room private. We want everyone to feel safe and free to share their ideas and comments.

- No personally identifiable information will be included in any aspect of the Needs Assessment Report. We will explain this throughout the process, at each focus group and interview.
- We will make it clear that there will be no negative consequences for

employment or services due to information shared.

- The recorder will not note any specific identifiers shared in the notes.
- All information gathered through the needs assessment process will be submitted to the Project Director and stored by the administrative agency.
- We will make clear any exceptions to our policy of confidentiality. Those exceptions include disclosure of child abuse, homicidal/suicidal intent, and reports of abuse of an adult individual who has a disability which triggers our Mandatory Reporting requirements.
- Our Mandatory Reporting process will be described during the recruitment process, and at the beginning of each focus group with people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Information from the Needs Assessment Report will be shared with participating organizations and OVW. All identifying information will be removed in the Needs Assessment Report except for those key stakeholders participating in individual interviews who are identifiable as a result of the unique position that they hold. Envision Illinois team members will receive debriefing forms from the focus groups and interviews. Nothing that could reasonably identify individuals will be shared (gender, age, race, etc.). During the assessment of information the Envision Illinois Team will use these forms to identify themes, patterns and issues. The Needs Assessment Report will be compiled for the Full Team, who will then make recommendations and approve the Report before it is submitted to OVW.

Consent

Envision Illinois will use a passive consent process which explains our confidentiality and mandatory reporting policies with all Needs Assessment participants. The statement will be read as part of the script for each Needs Assessment group or interview (see Appendix 3). Descriptions of consent in a focus group or interview will be short and easily understood; the facilitator will ask for assent (verbal, show of hands or other acknowledgment). Once this statement has been read and acknowledged participants will be told that if they stay they are showing their consent to participate in the Needs Assessment. Individuals with disabilities and Deaf people will also be told that it is okay if they choose to leave the focus group or end the interview and can keep the gift card. A reminder about confidentiality will be made at

the conclusion of every focus group.

Mandatory Reporting

Envision Illinois team members will be mindful of what information is collected. As mandated reporters the team members will adhere to Illinois law regarding mandatory abuse reporting for individuals with a disability.

Because repercussions from disclosure of abuse can be so serious, and because not reporting suspected abuse can contribute to on-going harm, the following guidelines will be followed by all members the of Envision Illinois team during the Needs Assessment:

- If, during the course of work on this project, a disclosure is made that a team member believes requires a report, that member will reflect carefully on the various definitions and facts to determine if a report is required.
- In keeping with our belief in self-determination, the individual will be informed about the need to report, our belief that a report should be made, and encourage the individual to participate in this process at the conclusion of the focus group, if possible.
- If the individual receives services from a provider, we will ask the individual if they want their service provider to be notified.
- If mandatory reporting does occur, the individual who disclosed will be informed and given the opportunity to participate in the process. The individual may choose to meet with the identified support person on the team as well.

There are three types of disclosures that we must report in keeping with Illinois law and the policies of each of our organizations – child abuse or neglect, homicidal/suicidal intent and abuse or neglect of individuals with disabilities.

- In the event of a disclosure which involves child abuse or neglect the incident will be reported within 24 hours by the facilitator, recorder or interviewer; the affected individual will be informed—after the focus group or interview if possible—that a report will be made, and will be encouraged to make it themselves.
- In the event of a disclosure of homicidal/suicidal intent which presents a clear

and present danger we will contact the appropriate authorities and/or community professionals, (which may include 911, the Crisis Intervention Services or Adult Protective Services).

- In the event of the abuse or neglect of individuals with disabilities who are covered by state law, the appropriate authority (Adult Protective Services, Office of Inspector General, Department of Public Health) will be contacted.

Before every Focus Group, we will ensure that everyone is aware of our duties to report. This disclosure will be made in a format that is accessible and understandable to participants. It will be available in print, will be read aloud and will be available in alternate formats if we have received a request for them.

Safety Considerations

There are a variety of potential risks for anyone participating in this process. We recognize that individuals can make statements during focus groups which might feel harmful or distressing in some way, including a staff person who may criticize or present unflattering information about their employer or agency. We will make every attempt to describe the focus group process, our confidentiality standards as well as exceptions to these standards to participants. The Envision Illinois team will try to be mindful of common risks and minimize them through careful planning. We will carefully consider who we are inviting to participate, our recruitment process and the location and protocols for our focus groups and interviews. Despite this we cannot anticipate or eliminate all potential risks. Our safety strategy will be to:

- Chose safe people and safe places to conduct the groups and interviews
- Present options to those who wish to participate.
- Provide a list of services and resources
- Consult with anyone presenting a safety concern or need
- React individually to questions, concerns or requests

We will emphasize during the introduction to the focus groups that there is a person available to provide support or help as needed.

Access

The Collaboration is committed to making the Needs Assessment process fully accessible for everyone involved, including:

- Accessible space
- Reasonable accommodations
- Language interpretation, including for Deaf and non-English speaking participants.

The Envision Illinois team member will work with the point of contact at each location to ensure that materials and locations are accessible and for responding to requests for accommodations. INCIL will provide consultation and technical assistance as needed.

Compilation and analysis of data

The appropriate Envision Illinois Team member will complete the required documentation and submit within 2 working days to the Project Director and Project Coordinator. For focus groups this includes the debriefing form and the focus group data and the completed interview form for individual interviews. Survey monkey results will be compiled by the system at the conclusion of the survey timeframe.

Upon completion of the Needs Assessment data collection activities, the data will be compiled by the Project Director with assistance from members of the Envision Illinois Team. Once the data have been compiled, the team will identify issues, themes, patterns and connections. The team will then use the analyses to identify strengths, needs and gaps in our services, knowledge and resources. A Needs Assessment Report will be developed from the collaborative consensus which will be submitted to OVW and used to inform the Strategic Plan.

Summary of Needs Assessment Data Collection

Focus Groups			
Agency	Participants	Number	Location
People with Disabilities and Deaf People			
The Self-Advocacy Alliance, people receiving services from MOU partner organizations, other self-advocacy efforts	Including people with mental illnesses, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and Deaf	8-10 per group 80 – 100 total	At least 2 groups in each of the 5 DHS regions
Organizations			
DDD	-Local Advisory Council Meetings -Independent Service Coordination meeting	3 - 5 groups (existing meetings) 25	statewide Lincoln
DMH/NAMI	-Local Advisory Council Meetings -Recovery Support Specialist meeting	3- 5 groups (existing meetings)	Statewide
DRS	-Field Supervisors	40	At least 3 groups
APS	-Advisory Council	20	Springfield
INCIL	-Board Members	5-20	Springfield
ICADV	Program Council	70	5 locations statewide

Interviews			
Agency	Participants	Number	Location
DDD	-State Operated Developmental Center Administrator	1	Dwight
	-Community Services Administrator	1	Springfield
DMH	-State Operated Hospitals Administrator	1	Chicago
	-Community Services Administrator	1	Springfield
DRS	-Vocational Rehab Administrator	2	Chicago
	-Home Services Administrator		Springfield
APS	-Adult Protective Services Administrator	1	Springfield
	-Adult Protective Services, Legal	1	Springfield
INCIL	-Executive Director	1	Springfield
NAMI	-Executive Director	1	Springfield
ICADV	-Executive Director	1	Springfield
	-Director of Contracts	1	Springfield

Surveys			
Agency	Participants	Number	Location
DHS/DDD	-All DDD contractors -DDD central & regional staff	300 20	Statewide
DHS/DMH	-Community Mental Health Center contractors -DMH central & regional staff	150 20	Statewide
DHS/DRS	-DRS staff: Voc Rehab, Home Services	1750	Statewide
APS	-Area Agencies on Aging -APS community agencies	13 43	Statewide
INCIL	-CIL Program Directors -CIL Coordinators: Personal Assistant, Transition, Deaf Services	22 66	Statewide
NAMI	-Chapter members and Constant contacts	1700	Statewide
ICADV	-Member organizations: Executive Directors	65	Statewide

Timeline & Work plan

Begin development of Charter	March 2014
Charter approved by all partner agencies	June 2014
Narrowing the Focus Memo	June 2014
Submit Charter to OVW	July 2014
Begin development of Needs Assessment Plan	June 2014
Submit Needs Assessment Plan to OVW	Oct 2014
Begin conducting Needs Assessment	January 2015
Begin development of Needs Assessment findings/report	March 2015
Needs Assessment approved by all partner agencies	April 2015
Submit Needs Assessment findings report to OVW	April 2015
Begin development of Strategic Plan	June 2015
Strategic Plan approved by all partner agencies	August 2015
Submit Strategic Plan to OVW	August 2015

APPENDICES

Appendix A

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND DEAF PEOPLE QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS/INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Date: _____

(Please choose type of interview)

☐ Individual Interview

☐ Focus Group

Number of Focus Group Participants: _____

Focus Group Site (e.g., agency, town): _____

Facilitator: _____

Recorder: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Facilitator/Interviewer:

- Ask questions conversationally.
- Go slowly.
- Provide structure but allow multiple people plenty of time to answer each question. It is okay to follow the group tempo and direction if the people in the group want to focus on a particular issue with services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence.
- Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions.
- Please have available a list of domestic violence agencies.

Recorder:

- Record group proceedings on separate pages, numbering each set of responses to correspond to survey questions.
- Summarize responses to each question.
- Lengthy narrative is not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello. Thank you for being here today. Our names are _____. We are working as part of the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic

violence agencies working with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. We are trying to learn about what is important to people with disabilities and Deaf people who may have experienced or know someone who has experienced domestic violence. I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Your point of view is what counts.

I will be asking questions to help us learn. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer. Please ask me repeat or explain a question if I am unclear. _____ will write notes so we remember what you tell us. _____ will not write down your name or identify who said what so no one outside this room will know what you say to us today. We also ask that you keep what is said here private and confidential so everyone will feel comfortable sharing.

If our talk is upsetting to you and you would like to leave the room that is fine. And if you would like to talk with someone privately during or after the meeting, _____ is here from the domestic violence agency and will meet with you alone. Just step outside the room and _____ will go with you.

I do want you to know that we care about your safety, and state law requires us to report some types of danger. For example we must report child abuse or if someone threatens to hurt themselves or someone else. We must also report some situations in which we believe that someone with a disability is at risk of violence or other types of abuse. For that reason we ask that you not share deeply personal information. If you do share about one of these things, here's how we will handle it:

- If one of us feels that the information you share needs to be reported we will ask to speak with you in private after the group.
- At that time we will work with you to report the information. We can provide you with the number and contact information if you would like to choose this option.
- If you choose not to report the information, then it is the state law that one of us must report.
- We will talk with you as long as needed to do the right thing to protect you or someone else.

Your continued presence in the room tells us that you are okay with being a part of this group. Now that you know more about the purpose of the group discussion, what are some rules for us to work together in this group? *Brainstorm ground rules. Provide an example if participants struggle to come up with their own.*

Before I start asking questions, let me first explain what I mean when I use the word domestic violence. Domestic violence is when one person tries to have power over you by hurting your body, hurting your emotions, trying to have sex with you, takes your money or in some way tries to control you. It can happen one time or a lot of times. It can be your Mom, Dad, sister, brother, personal assistant, staff or someone you are dating. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. *Check for understanding before proceeding into focus group questions.*

1. What gets in the way for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence when they want to get help? Make sure to include a variety of access issues – location, transportation, hours of service, accommodations.
2. Do you know if there is a domestic violence agency in your community? Follow up with name and/or location of agency.
3. Does your disability service provider teach about relationships and what to do if you are hurt in a relationship? What is taught?
4. What does staff need to know and do to better help people served that experience domestic violence?
5. What advice would you give to staff who may work with someone who has a disability or a Deaf person who wants services from an agency? Follow-up includes what makes you feel safe
6. How could staff improve their response to people served who experience domestic violence?

WRAP UP:

That is all the questions we have for today. Thank you again for participating in this project. Your assistance is greatly needed and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me. And if you want to talk to someone privately, _____ is still here. Let me know or tell _____ and we'll make sure you get a chance to meet with _____. (Give cards, contact information)

Appendix B

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Date: _____

(Please choose type of interview)

☐ Individual Interview

☐ Focus Group

Participants Length of Employment at Agency:

___ up to 1 yr ___ 2-5 yrs ___ 5+ yrs

Number of Focus Group Participants: _____

Focus Group Site (e.g., agency, town): _____

Facilitator: _____

Recorder: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Interviewer:

- Ask questions conversationally.
- Go slowly.
- Provide structure but allow multiple participants plenty of time to answer each question. It is okay to follow the group tempo and direction if the individuals in the group want to focus on a particular service issue.
- Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions.

Recorder:

- Record group proceedings on separate pages, numbering each set of responses to correspond to survey questions.
- Summarize responses to each question.
- Lengthy narrative is not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello. Thank you for being here today. Our names are _____. We are working as part of the

Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services focused to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. We are trying to learn the best way to provide services for people disabilities and Deaf people who may have experienced domestic violence. I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Your point of view is what counts. Your participation in this project is invaluable and we thank you again for taking part in this project.

I will be asking questions to help us learn. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer. Please ask me repeat or explain a question if I am unclear. _____ will write notes so we remember what you tell us. ____ will not write down your name or identify who said what so no one outside this room will know what you say to us today. We consider this a safe place to share, and we ask you to keep what is said in this room private and confidential. We want everyone to feel safe and free to share their ideas and comments. Brainstorm ground rules and emphasize environment of trust and open dialogue

For this project, we believe that disability is not something that a person has but, instead, something that occurs outside of the person – the person has a functional limitation. Disability occurs in the interaction between a person, his or her functional ability, and the environment. A person's environment can be the physical environment, communication environment, information environment, and social and policy environment. Envision Illinois is focusing upon people with mental illness, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, vision/hearing loss, chemical sensitivities and physical disabilities.

1. Describe your relationship with local disability agencies and support groups (Community Mental Health Centers, DORS, Developmental Disability agencies, and Center for Independent Living)? What is the referral process? Do you have a working agreement? What are you doing to increase staff familiarity with disability services in your area?
2. What policies, procedures, and/or practices are in place to serve people with disabilities or Deaf people? (e.g., guardians, accommodations, Braille, ASL interpreter, service animals, personal assistance, medication, etc.)?
3. In what ways are survivors with disabilities people served involved in the development of agency policies, procedures, and practices?
4. Describe the training staff receive on how to support survivors with disabilities? (e.g., content, frequency of training, how long is the training, how often, who teaches it).
5. Describe how your agency informs people with disabilities about domestic violence and your services? (e.g. what types of activities, audiences or locations, adaptation of materials)
6. How do agency staff members respond to a Deaf person or a person with disabilities who seek services?

7. How does your agency ask about any accommodations and supports during intake process?
How does your agency use this information?
8. What obstacles do people with disabilities or Deaf people experience in receiving support after disclosing domestic violence?
9. How does your agency address conflict between an individual and the guardian?
10. Can you provide a successful example of when your agency demonstrated support for people with disabilities and/or Deaf people who are experiencing domestic violence?
 - a. What made this a successful experience?
 - b. How would you expand on this success to continue providing support for clients who have disabilities and/or are Deaf who are experiencing domestic violence?

WRAP UP:

That is all the questions we have for today. Thank you again for participating in this project. Your assistance is greatly needed and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or want to share additional information about this issue, please don't hesitate to call me. (Give cards, contact information)

Appendix C

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY SURVEY

Hello. Thank you for filling out this survey. The survey is part of a needs assessment for the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. As part of this project, we are conducting surveys with service providers in order to assess services for people with disabilities who are victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this project is invaluable, and we thank you for taking part in this project.

For this project, we believe that disability is not something that a person has but, instead, something that occurs outside of the person – the person has a functional limitation. Disability occurs in the interaction between a person, his or her functional ability, and the environment. A person's environment can be the physical environment, communication environment, information environment, and social and policy environment. Envision Illinois is focusing upon people with mental illness, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, vision/hearing loss, chemical sensitivities and physical disabilities.

Check those that apply:

☐ Management ☐ Advocate/Counselor ☐ Shelter ☐ Walk-in

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCIES

1. How big of a problem do you believe domestic violence is for people with disabilities?

<u>Huge</u>				<u>Minor</u>
5	4	3	2	1
2. Do you know what agencies in your community serve people with disabilities?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
3. Is your agency networking and communicating on a regular basis with local agencies serving people with disabilities?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If Yes, please identify the type of agencies or services. *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Community Mental Health Centers
- ☐ Centers for Independent Living
- ☐ Vocational Services/Day Program (job training, supportive employment, sheltered workshops)
- ☐ Community Residential Services (CILA, Intermediate Care Facility, group home, day program)
- ☐ Adult Protective Services
- ☐ Community group supports (NAMI, Autism Support)

☐ Other: _____

In general, how would you rate your relationship with local agencies serving people with disabilities?

<u>Collaborative</u>		<u>Cooperative</u>		<u>Detached</u>
5	4	3	2	1

4. Has your agency served any people with disabilities during the past 2-3 years?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If yes, what types of disabilities did the people report? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Intellectual ☐ Physical ☐ Mental Illness ☐ Vision/Hearing
☐ Don't Know ☐ Other: _____

5. How frequently do you think your program provides advocacy for domestic violence survivors with disabilities?
☐ Never ☐ 1-2x annually ☐ 3-6x annually ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

6. Does your agency have policies and procedures in place around serving people with disabilities? If yes, what areas are covered? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Accessibility of services
☐ Providing reasonable accommodations for survivors using your services
☐ Training and use of Video Relay Services, Relay Operator procedures and TTY
☐ Recruiting, hiring and working with American Sign Language interpreters
☐ Survivors who use personal assistants/support staff or service animals
☐ Alternative formats for written materials
☐ Advocacy for survivors with mental illness, intellectual, vision/hearing loss, chemical sensitivities and physical disabilities
☐ Coordination of services with disability service providers
☐ Hiring practices regarding applicants with disabilities
☐ Other: _____

7. In the past 2-3 years, has your agency made any changes in policies and procedures to accommodate a survivor with a disability?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If yes, in what area: _____

8. How comfortable are you with working with people with disabilities?

<u>Very</u>				<u>Not at all</u>
5	4	3	2	1

How prepared are you to provide services to people with disabilities who experience domestic

violence?

Very

5

4

3

2

Not at all

1

What additional knowledge or skills are needed? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Disability awareness and sensitivity
- ☐ Identifying and serving people with intellectual disabilities
- ☐ Identifying and serving people with mental illness
- ☐ Identifying and serving people with vision, hearing and physical disabilities
- ☐ Identifying and serving people with chemical sensitivities
- ☐ Local and state resources for people with disabilities
- ☐ Independent living philosophy
- ☐ Communicating with persons who use alternative devices
- ☐ Strategies for increasing accessibility
- ☐ Other: _____

9. How many hours of mandatory staff training on domestic violence and people with disabilities does your agency have in a year?
☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ over 10
10. How many times each year do representatives from agencies serving people with disabilities train your agency staff?
☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3+
11. Do you have outreach efforts that target people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
12. Do you ask people if accommodations are needed to support participation in services?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

Describe accommodations your agency has in place _____

13. Are people with disabilities involved in policy and program decisions in your agency?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If yes, how? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Board members
- ☐ Hiring of staff

- ☐ Training of staff
- ☐ Needs assessment
- ☐ Evaluation of services
- ☐ Other: _____

14. Do you feel your agency has the resources needed to serve people with disabilities?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If not, what is needed? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ policy ☐ training ☐ physical accommodations support ☐ interpreters
- ☐ alternative format materials (large print, Braille, audio recording)
- ☐ specialized staff ☐ linkage with disability service provider
- ☐ other, specify: _____

15. Are there any comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding providing services to people with disabilities? *Please comment below.*

Appendix D

SERVICE PROVIDER QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Date: _____

(Please choose type of interview)

☐ Individual Interview

☐ Focus Group

Participants Length of Employment at Agency:

___ up to 1 yr ___ 2-5 yrs ___ 5+ yrs

Number of Focus Group Participants: _____

Focus Group Site and Type (e.g., MD, DD, DRS,CIL): _____

Facilitator: _____

Recorder: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Interviewer:

- Ask questions conversationally.
- Go slowly.
- Provide structure but allow multiple participants plenty of time to answer each question. It is okay to follow the group tempo and direction if the individuals in the group want to focus on a particular domestic violence issue.
- Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions.

Recorder:

- Record group proceedings on separate pages, numbering each set of responses to correspond to survey questions.
- Summarize responses to each question.
- Lengthy narrative is not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello. Thank you for being here today. Our names are _____. We are working as part of the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services focused to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. We are trying to learn the best way to provide services for people disabilities and Deaf people who may have experienced domestic violence. I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Your point of view is what counts. Your participation in this project is invaluable and we thank you again for taking part in this project. Your participation in this project is invaluable and we thank you again for taking part in this project.

I will be asking questions to help us learn. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer. Please ask me repeat or explain a question if I am unclear. _____ will write notes so we remember what you tell us. _____ will not write down your name or identify who said what so no one outside this room will know what you say to us today. We consider this a safe place to share, and we ask you to keep what is said in this room private. We want everyone to feel safe and free to share their ideas and comments. Brainstorm ground rules and emphasize environment of trust and open dialogue.

For purposes of this interview, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior that is used by an intimate partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone

Perpetrators of domestic violence can include: Family or household members, spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, personal assistants for older adults and people with disabilities.

1. Tell me about your relationship with the domestic violence agency. What is the referral process? Do you have a working agreement? What are you doing to increase staff familiarity with domestic violence services in your area?
2. How does your agency gather information about history of trauma for individuals served? How is this information used?
3. Describe the training staff receive on domestic violence (e.g., content, frequency of training, how long is the training, how often, who teaches it).

4. Describe how your agency teaches about relationships? What is taught? (e.g., content, frequency of training, how long is the training, how often, who teaches it). For MH, describe how your agency addresses relationship and safety issues. For CILs, counseling, classes, individual education, referrals.
5. In what ways are people served involved in the development of agency policies, procedures, and practices?
6. Does your agency have any policies and procedures about relationships, safety and domestic violence? What areas are covered? (e.g. responding to disclosure, relationships between people who receive services and staff and/or personal assistants? Relationships between two people receiving services, referrals to victim services, education policy – rights, safety, indicators, workplace policy).
7. How do agency staff members respond to a Deaf person or a person with disabilities who disclose domestic violence?
8. What obstacles do people with disabilities or Deaf people experience in receiving support after disclosing domestic violence?
9. Can you provide a successful example of when your agency demonstrated support for people with disabilities and/or Deaf people who are experiencing domestic violence?
 - a. What made this a successful experience?
 - b. How would you expand on this success to continue providing support for clients who have disabilities and/or are Deaf who are experiencing domestic violence?

WRAP UP:

That is all the questions we have for today. Thank you again for participating in this project. Your assistance is greatly needed and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or want to share additional information about this issue, please don't hesitate to call me. (Give cards, contact information)

SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

Check those that apply:

- ### *SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS*

Perpetrators of domestic violence can include: Family or household members, spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, personal assistants for older adults and people with disabilities.

-
- Envision Illinois Needs Assessment Plan*

In general, how would you rate your relationship with local domestic violence agencies?

Collaborative

Cooperative

Detached

5

4

3

2

1

4. Has your agency served any people with disabilities who have disclosed a history of domestic violence or reported a recent incident during the past 2-3 years?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

If yes, who was the offender? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Intimate partner ☐ Family member/Guardian ☐ Personal Assistant ☐ Staff

☐ Other ☐ Don't know

5. How frequently do you think your agency responds to domestic violence against people with disabilities? *Response includes reporting, referrals to domestic violence agencies or counseling programs, advocacy, etc.*

☐ Never ☐ 1-2x annually ☐ 3-6x annually ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

6. Does your agency have policies and procedures in place around serving people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence? If yes, what areas are covered? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Screening for domestic violence

☐ Reporting

☐ Referrals to domestic violence agencies

☐ Coordination of services with domestic violence agencies

☐ Training on domestic violence

☐ Advocacy for survivors with mental illness, intellectual, vision, hearing and physical disabilities

☐ Victim safety and offender services

☐ Background checks on job applicants for possible history of domestic violence

☐ Other: _____

7. In the past 2-3 years, has your agency developed or revised policies and procedures to enhance identification and response to domestic violence against people with disabilities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

If yes, in what area: _____

8. How comfortable are you discussing domestic violence with people with disabilities?

Very

Not at all

5

4

3

2

1

How prepared are you to provide services to people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?

Very

5

4

3

2

Not at all

1

What additional knowledge or skills are needed? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Awareness and identification of domestic violence

☐ Responding to domestic violence

☐ Local and state resources for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence

☐ Implications of domestic violence on program planning

☐ Implications of domestic violence on policy development

☐ Other: _____

9. How many hours of mandatory staff training on domestic violence and people with disabilities does your agency staff have in a year?

☐ 0

☐ 1-5

☐ 6-10

☐ over 10

10. How many times each year does the domestic violence agency conduct training with your agency staff?

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3+

11. Do you have outreach efforts that target people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

12. Does your intake tool include questions to screen for domestic violence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

Do you have educational materials about domestic violence available for people with disabilities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

13. Are people with disabilities involved in policy and program decisions in your agency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

If yes, how? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Board members

☐ Hiring of staff

☐ Training of staff

☐ Committees

☐ Needs assessment: surveys, focus groups

☐ Evaluation of services

☐ Other: _____

14. Do you feel your agency has the resources needed to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If not, what is needed? *Check all that apply.*

☐ policy ☐ training ☐ physical accommodations support ☐ interpreters
☐ educational materials for people with disabilities ☐ peer support programs
☐ specialized staff ☐ linkage with domestic violence center
☐ other, specify: _____

15. Are there any comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding responding to domestic violence against people with disabilities? *Please comment below.*

Appendix F

ICADV QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Date: _____

Name of person interviewed: _____

Interviewer: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Interviewer:

- Ask questions conversationally.
- Go slowly.
- Provide structure to the interview, but allow participant plenty of time to answer each question.
- Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions.

Recorder:

- Record proceedings on separate pages, numbering each set of responses to correspond to survey questions.
- Summarize responses to each question.
- Lengthy narrative is not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello. Thank you for being here today. Our names are _____. We are working as part of the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services focused to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. As part of this project, we are traveling across the state to conduct groups like this to assess the services provided to and available to people with disabilities who have been victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this project is invaluable and we thank you again for taking part in this project.

For this project, we believe that disability is not something that a person has but, instead, something that occurs outside of the person – the person has a functional limitation. Disability occurs in the interaction between a person, his or her functional ability, and the environment. A person's environment can be the physical environment, communication environment, information

environment, and social and policy environment. Envision Illinois is focusing upon people with mental illness, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, vision/hearing loss, chemical sensitivities and physical disabilities.

1. What obstacles to service do you think exist for people with disabilities when they experience domestic violence?
2. Does ICADV have policies regarding domestic violence agencies services to people with disabilities? If so, what is covered in the policies?
3. How does ICADV monitor local domestic violence agencies services to people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?
4. Does ICADV require training on providing services to people with disabilities? If so, how many hours? If yes, please describe.
5. Does ICADV have people with disabilities facilitate trainings? Please describe their involvement.
6. How does ICADV support accessible services for people with disabilities?
7. Does ICADV provide material specifically for people with disabilities or for centers in working with people with disabilities? (brochures, website, etc.) Please describe the types of materials available, i.e., training, outreach.
8. What changes in rules, policies or practices would better serve people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence?
9. How could ICADV and domestic violence agencies create meaningful ways for people with disabilities to provide input into policies, regulations, training programs, etc.?
10. Does ICADV require linkage agreements between domestic violence agencies and disability service providers? If yes, please describe.
11. How do you see domestic violence agencies and disability services working together to respond to violence against people with disabilities?
12. How can we promote collaborative efforts among domestic violence agencies and provider agencies to address the service needs of people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?

13. What are the challenges to a collaborative response? What strategies or successes can be built upon to enhance collaboration?
14. Describe the ideal service system for addressing domestic violence against people with disabilities. What role would domestic violence agencies play? What role would disability service providers play?

WRAP UP:

That is all the questions we have for today. Thank you again for participating in this project. Your assistance is greatly needed and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or want to share additional information about this issue, please don't hesitate to call me. (Give cards, contact information)

Appendix G

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES STAFF QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Date: _____

Name of person interviewed: _____

Division Represented (DMH, DDD, DRS, DFCS) _____

Interviewer: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Interviewer:

- Ask questions conversationally.
- Go slowly.
- Provide structure to the interview, but allow participant plenty of time to answer each question.
- Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions.

Recorder:

- Record group proceedings on separate pages, numbering each set of responses to correspond to survey questions.
- Summarize responses to each question.
- Lengthy narrative is not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello. Thank you for being here today. Our names are _____. We are working as part of the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) focused to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. As part of this project, we are traveling across the state to conduct groups like this to assess the services provided to and available to people with disabilities who have been victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this project is invaluable and we thank you again for taking part in this project.

For purposes of this survey, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior that is used by an intimate partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate,

humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone

Perpetrators of domestic violence can include: Family or household members, spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, **personal assistants** for older adults and people with disabilities.

1. What obstacles to service do you think exist for people with disabilities when they experience domestic violence?
2. Does your Division require disability service providers to have policies and procedures in place to identify and respond to domestic violence against people with disabilities? If so, what does the policy say?
3. How does your Division monitor disability service providers response to people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?
4. Does your Division require training on identifying and responding to domestic violence against people with disabilities? If so, how many hours? If yes, please describe.
5. Does the Division have people with disabilities facilitate trainings? Domestic violence agency staff?
6. How does your Division support accessible services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?
7. Does your Division provide materials for people with disabilities about domestic violence and available resources? (brochures, website, etc.) Please describe the types of materials available, i.e. training, outreach, peer programs.
8. What changes in rules, policies or practices would better serve people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence?
9. How could DHS and provider agencies create meaningful ways for people with disabilities to provide input into state policies, regulations, training programs, etc.?
10. Does your Division require linkage agreements between disability service providers and domestic violence agencies? If yes, please describe.
11. How do you see disability service providers and domestic violence agencies working together to respond to violence against people with disabilities?

12. How can we promote collaborative efforts among domestic violence agencies and provider agencies to address the service needs of people with disabilities who experience domestic violence?
13. What are the challenges to a collaborative response? What strategies or successes can be built upon to enhance collaboration?
14. Describe the ideal service system for addressing domestic violence against people with disabilities.
15. How does state policy support personal choice in the area of domestic violence? What role do people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence play in determining the response to domestic violence?

WRAP UP:

That is all the questions we have for today. Thank you again for participating in this project. Your assistance is greatly needed and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or want to share additional information about this issue, please don't hesitate to call me. (Give cards, contact information)

Appendix I

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES STAFF SURVEY

Hello. Thank you for filling out this survey. The survey is part of a needs assessment for the Envision Illinois Project, which is a group of disability services organizations and domestic violence agencies working in concert with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. As part of this project, we are conducting surveys with service providers in order to assess services for people with disabilities who are victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this project is invaluable, and we thank you for taking part in this project.

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DHS STAFF

☐ DMH ☐ DDD ☐ DRS

For purposes of this survey, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior that is used by an intimate partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone

Perpetrators of domestic violence can include: Family or household members, spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, personal assistants for older adults and people with disabilities.

1. How big of a problem do you believe domestic violence is for people with disabilities?

<u>Huge</u>				<u>Minor</u>
5	4	3	2	1
2. How big of a priority do you believe services to people with disabilities that have experienced domestic violence is for the Department?

<u>Huge</u>				<u>Minor</u>
5	4	3	2	1
3. How well does your Division respond to domestic violence against people with disabilities?

<u>Great</u>			<u>Poor</u>
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4. Does your Division require provider agencies to have written agreements to contact local domestic violence agencies in regards to disclosures of domestic violence against people with disabilities?

5. How frequently do you think your service providers respond to domestic abuse against people with disabilities? *Response includes reporting, referrals to domestic violence agencies or counseling programs, advocacy, etc.*

6. Does your Division require provider agencies to have policies and procedures in place around serving people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence? If yes, what areas are covered? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Advocacy for survivors with mental illness, intellectual, vision, hearing and physical disabilities

☐ Other: _____

If yes, in what area: _____

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

What additional knowledge or skills are needed? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Awareness of domestic violence
- ☐ Identification of domestic violence
- ☐ Responding to domestic violence
- ☐ Local and state resources for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence
- ☐ Implications of domestic violence on program planning
- ☐ Implications of domestic violence on policy development
- ☐ Other: _____

9. How many hours of staff training on domestic violence and people with disabilities does your Division require service providers to have in a year?

- ☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ over 10

10. Thinking through your current strategies, what could you build upon to reach more people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence?

11. Does your Division require provider agencies to include people with disabilities on committees, boards, or other decision-making entities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

12. How are people with disabilities involved in policy and program decisions in your Division? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Advisory Councils
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Committees
- ☐ Needs assessment: surveys, focus groups
- ☐ Evaluation
- ☐ Other: _____

13. Do you feel your Division has the resources needed to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

If not, what is needed? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ policy ☐ training ☐ administrative support
☐ educational materials for people with disabilities ☐ peer support programs
☐ specialized staff ☐ linkage with domestic violence system
☐ other, specify: _____

14. Are there any comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding responding to domestic violence against people with disabilities?

Please comment below.

Sample Point of Contact Script/letter

Dear (Name):

Envision Illinois is a collaboration between the following entities:

- The Self-Advocacy Alliance,
- Department of Human Services
- Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living
- National Alliance on Mentally Illness Illinois
- Blue Tower Training
- Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council

This collaboration is funded by the Office of Violence against Women to enhance and increase services to people with lived experiences with mental health challenges, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, vision/hearing loss, chemical sensitivities, physical disabilities and Deaf people who experience domestic violence. As a part of our needs assessment, we are conducting focus groups across the state to learn the best way to provide services to people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence.

We need individuals to serve as Point of Contact for focus groups. The responsibility of the Point of Contact is to coordinate logistics for the focus group. This includes:

- Recruiting individuals to participate in the focus group (focus groups for people with disabilities and Deaf people only)
- Arranging for space to conduct the focus group
- Identifying any needed supports or accommodations
- Serve or appoint a host to be available at the time of the focus group to provide directions or assistance with logistical matters

If you are willing to serve as Point of Contact, a member of the Envision Illinois team will work with you and provide needed resources or supports. Your assistance with this process is appreciated by the Envision Illinois team as well as the individuals with disabilities and Deaf people who experience domestic violence.

RSVP Focus Group Form

This form is to be completed by the Point of Contact for recruiting focus group participants-ALSO PLEASE COMPLETE AND ATTACH THE RSVP FORM. *(Both forms are due to XXX, Project Director, two weeks prior to the scheduled focus group)*

Point of Contact: _____

Name: _____ Phone _____

Date of Focus Group: _____ Time of Focus Group: _____

Location of Focus Group: _____

Parking, building identification, contact person day of focus group and other relevant info:

Are any accommodations needed? Yes _____ No _____

Accommodations: *indicate number of people per accommodation*

() Large Print

() Braille

() American Sign Language

() Assistive Listening Device

() Other _____

Other considerations or information that would be helpful for focus group facilitator:

* To protect the confidentiality of those participating in the focus group, a space will be available in the lobby for Personal Assistants. If you need the assistance of your personal assistant during the group to participate, please speak with _____ before the group.

Envision Illinois Needs Assessment Focus Groups Frequently Asked Questions

We are looking for information about people with disabilities and Deaf people who experience violence in relationships with families, personal assistants and intimate relationships. We will use this information to improve services. This includes safety, social and emotional well-being, accessibility, and a proactive and compassionate response to survivors. It is only with information from people with disabilities and Deaf people, staff in disability and community service agencies, and staff in domestic violence services will know what changes need to be made. We need to hear your voices. We appreciate your expertise.

What is Envision Illinois?

Envision Illinois is a group of people in Illinois who have come together to make sure that people with disabilities and Deaf people who experience domestic violence receive the best response possible. Envision Illinois is working to identify gaps and improve services. We are conducting focus groups as one way to gather information on what changes need to be made in Illinois.

Who are we asking to participate?

To gather the most information possible, we will be speaking with a number of people in Illinois. We will be speaking with people with disabilities and Deaf people; employees at disability agencies and community support agencies; employees at domestic violence service agencies; and state level professionals who impact rules and policies for people with disabilities, Deaf people, disability and domestic violence agencies. We will have focus groups with these different audiences. We will also conduct some individual interviews.

What is a focus group?

A focus group is when a group of people meet to discuss a certain topic. There is someone who leads the discussion by asking questions. There is also someone to record what the participants say. Everyone will have a chance to share their opinion. A focus group is not a therapy group or a support group. The purpose is for the person leading the group to learn what the participants think and to share this information with the Envision Illinois Team. No names of participants will be used when the information is shared.

What do you need me to do?

Please arrive on time. The group will last up to an hour and a half. Answer questions from your own knowledge and experience. Provide ideas on how things could be better. Do not share with anyone what others in the group say.

When and where will the focus groups be held?

The focus group will be held on _____ at _____(time) at _____ (location).

Who should I contact if I can't come?

Please contact _____ (name of person recruiting) at _____ (insert contact information) if any conflicts arise so someone else can take your place.

Are responses confidential?

All individual responses are kept confidential by those asking the questions and by those recording what people say. All of the responses will be put together in one summary report. There will be no written consent forms and there will be no records of names of participants.

What is mandatory reporting and what does it mean to me?

Questions in the focus groups are not intended to ask individuals to share stories of personal experiences of violence or abuse or the stories of violence or abuse of persons they know. Illinois requires reporting of child abuse and neglect for anyone under the age of 18. If a participant in the group talks about an instance of child abuse or neglect, it will have to be reported along with any identifying information that is shared. If this occurs, the participant who shares the information will be encouraged to make the call themselves with the facilitator/recorder present. If the participant chooses not to make the call, the facilitator/recorder will make the call.

Illinois also has mandatory reporting laws about abuse or neglect of people with disabilities and Deaf people. Attempts will be made to have no mandatory reporters leading/recording any of the focus groups with people with disabilities and Deaf people. If this is not possible, the facilitator will tell the participants at the beginning of the focus group.

Envision Illinois Training Plan

Training for Facilitators and Recorders

All staff who will participate as a facilitator or recorder will be required to attend the 3 hour training to review the Needs Assessment process for conducting a focus group and interview. All materials will be provided and reviewed during the training.

Training For Focus Group Staff

Attendees include people who will serve as facilitators and recorders for focus groups and interviews.

Topic	Content	Time
Welcome and Introductions	Welcome and introductions Icebreaker activity	10 minutes
Goal of Training and Needs Assessment	Overview of training Overview of Needs Assessment	15 minutes
Description of roles, responsibilities, skills	Explain roles, responsibilities, expectations and handouts Broad overview of focus group process	15 minutes
Topic	Content	Time
Responding to Disclosures	Responding to disclosures - how to support - how to link to victim services - mandated reporting - confidentiality	15 minutes

Questions, Comments, Contributions	Provide opportunity for questions, comments and contributions from participants	5 minutes
	Break	15 minutes
Basics of group facilitation	<p>Overview of group facilitation skills</p> <p>Conducting focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting session on time - Welcome and introductions - Overview of focus group - Be warm but neutral - Follow Focus Group Guide - Ask only one question at a time - Frequently repeat key phrases from the question - Be comfortable with silence - Encourage full participation - Moving group forward - Using probes when more information is needed - Clarifying information - Recording information - Closing the session - Follow-up after the session 	20 minutes
Basics of group facilitation	<p>Facilitator Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting disclosures - Facilitating a quiet group - Quiet/shy participant(s) - Overly talkative participant(s) - Side conversations of participants - Overly disagreeable participant(s) 	

Basics of Recording	<p>Overview of the role and tasks of the recorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping with seating - Monitoring temperature of the room - Supporting participants who need support - Assisting facilitator with time management - Assisting with debriefing - Supporting the facilitator as needed - Documenting information shared - Document what is said, not who said it - Put notes where all focus group participants can see - Ask question if information shared is not understood - Share documentation with Envision Illinois team 	15 minutes
Role playing to practice facilitation and recording	<p>Participate in scenarios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debrief after scenarios 	25 minutes

Logistics	<p>Scheduling and assignment of focus groups and locations</p> <p>Share information and plan for emergency contacts</p>	25 minutes
Questions, Comments, Contributions	Provide opportunity for questions, comments and contributions from participants	5 minutes

ENVISION ILLINOIS

TRAINING MATERIALS

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ENVISION ILLINOIS NEEDS ASSESSMENT BASICS

Who are the primary audiences?

The needs assessment is being conducted to inform the Envision Illinois planning team about opportunities for organizational change as it relates to serving people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence. Secondary audiences include the Department of Justice: Office of Violence Against Women, State level policy makers, community providers and advocates.

What are the primary purposes?

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to inform the Envision Illinois Collaborative of both the strengths and gaps in services that exist for Deaf people and people with disabilities who experience domestic violence. Information from the Needs Assessment will be used to develop a strategic plan that creates a rich array of comprehensive, survivor-centered, seamless, responsive and sustainable services that fully meet the needs of Deaf people and people with disabilities in Illinois who experience domestic violence.

The Goals of the Needs Assessment are to:

- Examine the needs and preferences of Deaf people and people with disabilities.
- Identify the strengths, gaps and opportunities within the domestic violence and disability service systems and across systems to develop a sustainable system to meet the needs of Deaf people and people with disabilities.
- Identify policies, procedures and practices which create capacity for our systems to address the intersection of domestic violence and Deaf people and people with disabilities.
- Examine the readiness, knowledge, cultural consciousness, comfort, confidence, attitudes, beliefs, values, expertise and awareness of community partners to create long term social change through supporting Deaf people and people with disabilities.
- Identify resources and connections, including potential/possible connections, of community partners to support Deaf people and people with disabilities.
- Identify physical, programmatic, communication and attitudinal barriers that impact services (identification and response) and connections between

community partners providing services to Deaf people and people with disabilities.

What types of information are needed?

- Qualitative data
- Explore the depth and nuances of opinions and experiences
- Understand differences in perspectives especially between the 3 levels: individuals, community providers, and state systems
- Understand what factors influence the experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence
- Understand what factors influence the services provided by domestic violence centers and disability organizations to people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence
- Understand what kind of changes are needed to better serve people with disabilities and Deaf people who have experienced domestic violence

From what sources should the information be collected?

Envision Illinois' needs assessment has four primary target audiences:

- People with disabilities and Deaf people.
- Community-based providers of service to people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- Community-based providers of service to domestic violence victims.
- State agencies that fund, regulate and monitor the local service providers, including regional support staff, training, policy and administrative personnel.

Each will be approached separately using needs assessment tools and strategies specific to the group.

What methods will be used to collect the information?

The needs assessment will rely on several methods, which will vary depending on the audience and the information being sought. Methods to collect information will include interviews with key individuals, written surveys, facilitated focus groups and existing data analysis.

Each assessment method will be matched with the targeted populations identified below.

Interviews – Interviews will be used with the following needs assessment audiences:

people with disabilities and Deaf people and key informants in state agencies (policy, training, and administrative staff in program divisions and regional team members). Envision Illinois will develop specific interview questionnaires to guide the individual interviews with these audiences.

Surveys – Envision Illinois will create written surveys to gather information from state employees of the Illinois Department of Human Services, local agencies serving people with disabilities and Deaf people and local agencies serving domestic violence victims. Surveys will contain questions specifically developed for each group.

Focus Groups – Envision Illinois will conduct focus groups to gather anecdotal information, from people with disabilities and Deaf people in a variety of settings (e.g., CILS, day treatment, sheltered workshops), local disabilities provider agencies, DHS implementation teams and domestic violence programs. Focus group facilitators will use questions specifically developed for each group.

What context-sensitive considerations must be made?

The focus groups and individual interviews are designed to help the planning team gain a better understanding of the service delivery system. The emphasis is on the system response, not the individual experience of a survivor. It is essential that facilitators and/or interviewers maintain this focus and not encourage individual disclosure about incidents of domestic violence.

What is the best timing for getting the information?

The entire needs assessment process should take place between late January and March. Individual interviews and focus groups will begin in January and continue through early March. Surveys will be distributed in February to service providers. Data analysis and writing of the final report will be conducted in March with a target date of March 20th for submitting the report to Department of Justice.

Who should collect the information?

Members of the Envision Illinois planning team will be the primary staff involved in the needs assessment process and serve in various capacities including facilitators, recorders, analyzers, and site coordinators. External consultants will be enlisted to support the process and function primarily as facilitators and recorders.

How will the information be analyzed?

Survey data will be compiled through electronic analysis and result in quantitative measures. Individual interviews and focus group information will be originally compiled by the recorder than collected and analyzed by members of the planning team.

How will interpretations and conclusions be made?

For the most part, the needs assessment is designed to capture general themes about the Illinois service delivery system in the areas of identification, response, and ongoing services. The analysis team will identify points of intervention which will be translated into the project's plan. Intervention strategies may include administrative supports, training, policies and procedures, and resource development.

How will the information be reported?

A final needs assessment report will highlight aggregate data about the service delivery system and recommended steps will be sent to the Department of Justice and all Envision Illinois partner agencies. A summary will be made available to the public.

FOCUS GROUP ADVANCE WORK

Roles of the Focus Group Team

For each group, there will be a facilitator, domestic violence advocate and a recorder. Additionally, there may be a site coordinator at each focus group. If this is not possible, a member of the focus group team will need to assume the responsibilities of any site logistics.

- The co-facilitator needs to decide before the session begins how much time can be allotted for each question based upon anticipated group size.
- The recorder takes notes on the flipchart, handles the environmental conditions and logistics, responds to unexpected interruptions and keeps track of time.
- The site point of contact will direct participants to the group room, double check transportation plans and accommodation needs, and explain the layout of the building, i.e. restrooms, water fountains.
- The domestic violence advocate is available for handling participant “emergencies.” For example, if a group member needs to leave the discussion because the content is too sensitive, who will accompany the participant?

Preparing for the Focus Group

- Review the needs assessment guide – understand the purpose of the project and needs assessment, intent and value of each question, and logistical issues.
- Practice questions out loud, know why you are asking each question; know how much time you plan to spend on each question, and which ones are the key questions.
- Contact project director or site coordinator with questions about the focus group (directions, room availability, set-up, equipment, participant information, etc.) Exchange contact information for emergency situations.
- Meet with focus group team prior to scheduled groups to discuss dividing responsibilities, style, preferences, etc.

PRE-START WORK

Approaches to the Work

- Successful approaches to facilitating focus groups include.

- Being a “blank slate.” Approach the group with an open mind and as few preconceptions as possible about what participants are likely to say or not say.
 - Listening deeply. Listen to self (own thoughts), Listening for meaning, Listening for depth (intent, emotion).
 - Listening with “soft eyes and soft ears.” Listening without judgment and visibly conveying warmth and compassion.
 - Honoring expertise and experiences of the group.
 - Capturing the synergistic effect of a group.
 - ENJOY the experience
- Be ready for unexpected problems, such as bad weather, fewer participants than expected, poor meeting space, site coordinator did not make adequate preparations, participants bring other adults or the group doesn't want to talk.
 - Anticipate running out of time—think about what you would do to modify the agenda.
 - Bring a copy of the facilitation guide, questionnaire, frequently asked questions, ground rules and agenda.

Getting Ready for Participants

- Upon arriving at the site of the focus group, it is important to set up a physical space that is going to feel welcoming and comfortable to the participants. It should be neutral, private, free from distractions and easily accessible.
- Arrange chairs in a circle or semi-circle. Allow enough room for wheelchairs, special equipment and/or service animals. If a circle or semi-circle is not possible, arrange the room in such a way that participants can see and interact with each other.
- At least one person in the team should be acting as host for the session and meeting participants at the door.
- Engage in small talk, but do not discuss the focus group topic
- Observe participants prior to the start of the session. Look for potential dominating individuals as well as shy group members.

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

Start the Session on Time

- Groups have been scheduled for a limited amount of time and going past the focus group time may not be an option, so it is important to start on time.

Check with the site point of contact for any time constraints. Check with participants about transportation times.

Welcome & Introductions

- Thank everyone for agreeing to participate in the focus group.
- Tell participants “They are the Experts” - It is important to convey to participants that you value their opinions, that they are the experts, and that the co-facilitator and recorder have come to learn from them. This empowers participants, helps them feel a sense of purpose and helps eliminate any barriers that may arise as a result of differences between participants and focus group staff.
- Introduce the team and group members – quickly!

Provide an overview of the focus group

- Use introduction information from focus group tool as a guide to begin the session
- Explain the purpose of Envision Illinois and the purpose of the focus group. Be sure participants know up front about the topic of the group, i.e. domestic violence
- Cover how the information will be used to inform the grant.
- Emphasize confidentiality: staff and group members
- Brainstorm ground rules for the focus group (GR should be posted in the room)
- Inform participants that a staff person is available if they need to leave the group at anytime.
- Highlight the agenda (agenda should be posted in the room)
- Describe the roles of facilitators and recorders.
- Check for understanding
- Check for commitment – any group members not comfortable should be given the opportunity to leave the group at this time without penalty.

Facilitator Affect: Be Warm But Neutral

- Avoid providing non-verbal feedback, such as crossing your arms or raising your eyebrows as people speak.
- Keep your verbal responses neutral to avoid encouraging or discouraging a particular type of response. Ways to be value-neutral are: *information seeking* (e.g. “tell me more about that...”), *clarifying* (e.g. “Can you explain what you mean?”) and *acknowledging* (“I hear what you are saying...”). Other responses

may include OK. Thanks for sharing with us. What do others think about that or would anyone else like to comment on that?

- Be careful of focus group participants asking questions of you. The group may be discussing a topic you know a great deal about, but it's important to remember that you are only there to gather information from the participants.
- Facilitators must avoid giving personal opinions or sharing experiences during the group.

Follow the focus group guide

- Ask the primary questions as written to ensure consistency across groups. Rewording to clarify may result in a different interpretation of the intended question.
- Give the participants sufficient time to respond to the primary question before asking a probing or follow-up question.
- Continue to ask secondary questions until you are satisfied that you have as much information as possible on the topic.

Ask Only One Question at a Time

- Don't ask more than one question at a time, even if the questions go together. Participants usually cannot remember several questions at one time, and asking multiple questions makes it hard for them to know where to start.
- Recorders may have difficulty linking responses to questions if multiple questions are asked.

Frequently Repeat Key Phrases from the Question

- Participants tend to lose focus on the question after 2-3 people have responded to it. Repeating key phrases from the question at strategic times, or asking participants to link their response to key terms in the question will help participants stay focused.

Be Comfortable with Silence

- It is also important that co-facilitators be comfortable with silence and "pregnant pauses." Some participants may participate more if they have more time to consider the question before they speak. Allow at least 5 seconds before restating the question or encouraging input.

Encourage full participation

- Seek balance among participants.
- Use probes when you want to expand participation
 - “Does anyone see it differently?”
 - “Has anyone had a different experience?”
 - “Does anyone else have a thought to share?”
 - “We have more time I want to make sure that we have heard from everyone.”
 - “*Participant Name*, I don’t want to leave you out of the conversation. What do you think?”

Move the group forward

- Go into the group knowing how much time can be spent on each question and keep track of the time during the session (utilize the assigned timekeeper to help with this)
- Guide the pace: speed up or slow down as appropriate.
- Intervene if the discussion starts to fragment.
- Redirect when needed. Our discussion has moved away from the original question. Can anyone speak more about ...
- Summarize comments on a question then segue to the next item of discussion

Use Probes When You Need More Information

- If a participant is at a loss of words, or their response is vague, help them to articulate their thoughts by repeating the question or slight rewording of the original question (without changing meaning). If this doesn’t work try using a probing question to elicit more detail.
- When participants are not providing enough information, try the following probes:
 - “Would you explain further?”
 - “Would you give me an example of what you mean?”
 - “Can you say more about that?”
 - “Tell us more.”
 - “Is there anything else?”
 - “Please describe what you mean.”
 - “I don’t understand. Can you share more?”
- Be cautious when using probes to not inadvertently encourage disclosure of domestic violence. (see page 15 if disclosure occurs)

Clarify information

- Facilitators and recorders may need to ask participants to repeat a statement or clarify a response to ensure accurate data. If you are unable to hear or understand the participant's comment or if multiple statements are made and you are unsure which question is being answered, ask for the participant to restate the response or clarify the information.
- Rephrasing or summarizing the statements before moving to the next question will give participants the opportunity to clear up any misinformation.

Recording the Information

- Prior to starting the focus group, participants should be informed how the information will be captured and how it will be used.
- The recorder has the primary responsibility for capturing the information shared during the focus groups by participants.
- The recorder should listen for general themes and record them on the flipchart where all participants can see what has been written. Get the flavor of the conversation, not word for word notes. Grouping responses into similar categories can help identify main themes, root causes, and relationships between categories.
- Information can be recorded in descriptive phrases, pictures, or any method which captures the participant's intent, story, or theme of the discussion.
- Comments should not be identified by participants/agencies.
- Recorders can ask for comments to be repeated, clarified, or confirmed.
- Number each page of the flipchart and note any changes in the prescribed order of questions.
- Use two colors on flipchart alternating between recorded comments for better visibility
- In addition to taking notes on the flipchart, comments can be captured by a co-facilitator on a notepad. Check the flipchart paper and markers before leaving to conduct a group. If there is not sufficient paper, notify the project director.
- Immediately following the focus group, recorders and co-facilitators should debrief and review notes to ensure accuracy and add any observations relevant to the session.

Closing the Session

- Ask for final thoughts or comments.

- Pose a closer question such as, If you could tell us one more thing that we could do to improve services to people with disabilities and Deaf people who are victims of domestic violence, what would it be?
- Summarize session
- Restate how their input will be used to guide the Envision Illinois project
- Provide contact information for any follow-up
- Thank everyone for their participation
- Remain on-site until all participants have transportation to return home if you are the site point of contact

Following the Session

- Meet as a team to debrief after the group. Debriefing should include:
 - Review notes – add additional observations or comments, correct any misinformation. Be sure to document any special situations that may have influenced focus group.
 - Discuss team experience – What went well? What can we do differently next time? What lessons were learned?
 - Jot down any recommendations for future focus groups to turn into project director
- Site point of contact should take care of any clean-up or room changes that are needed.
- Gather the flipchart, markers, and any other materials used during the group to return to project director.
- Type up notes or send flipchart to project director for typing within 1 week of group.
- Send participant payment documentation to ICADV the next day.

FACILITATOR CHALLENGES

One technique that can be used for many challenging situations is referring back to the posted ground rules. This can help re-direct conversation, encourage participation, and move the dialogue forward. Specific scenarios and possible solutions follow below:

Dealing with Disclosure - a group member shares about her experience of domestic violence.

Possible Reasons

- The focus group may be the first experience when the victim has felt safe to talk about the violence.
- The discussion may have inadvertently triggered feelings in victims.

Possible Solutions

- Express appreciation for the fact that they shared.
- Acknowledge that disclosing is difficult/takes courage.
- Acknowledge any discomfort they, or others in the group may be feeling.
- Offer the services of the Domestic Violence Advocate if one is available, or offer to talk more after the discussion if the person wishes to do so.
- Re-direct conversation back to the response of the service delivery system, i.e. domestic violence centers, disability service organizations.

Quiet Group – the entire group appears hesitant to get involved in a discussion.

Possible Reasons

- No/little experience working together.
- Unsure of the expectations of the focus group.
- Views the facilitator or “system” as the authority.
- Uncomfortable with the group topic.

Possible Solutions

- Ask people to write comments down, then the facilitator reads their comments to keep them anonymous.
- Use a round table approach, including going in one direction around the circle, giving each person a minute to answer the question.
- Acknowledge that folks are quiet. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them feel more comfortable talking.

Quiet/Shy Participant - a group member is not participating as the facilitator thinks they should.

Possible Reasons

- Shy, timid or insecure.
- Indifferent to the topic discussed.
- Uncomfortable with the topic.
- Bored.
- Feeling inferior/superior.
- Distracted by pressing issues outside the meeting.
- Having trouble understanding.
- Conflict with other group members.

Possible Solutions:

- Make eye contact with the participant and ask a simple question.
- Recognize his/her contribution immediately, sincerely and encourage more.
- Suggest that everyone takes a turn in sharing their opinion.
- Ask during a break or in private about why the participant is so quiet, if applicable.

Overly Talkative Participant - a group member talks too much, rambles on repeatedly and is generally dominant.

Possible Reasons

- A natural need for attention.
 - Being overly prepared/unprepared for the meeting.
 - Having the most authority.

Possible Solutions:

- Have each person take a few minutes to write their thoughts or responses down. Then go around the group asking people to share their comments. Always offer the opportunity to pass on sharing.
- Say, "I appreciate your participation, but I'd also like to hear from others in the group."
- Establish a time limit for comments if time becomes an issue.
- Call on others specifically and ask them if they'd like to add to the discussion.
- During a pause for breath, thank the participant for their comments, and restate the question, ground rules or agenda.
- Glance at your watch.
- Emphasize relevant points and time limits.
- Ask the participant to explain how their comments relate to the topic in hand.
- Reflect their comments back to the group.

Side Conversation - a group member is disrupting the meeting by being involved in too many side conversations.

Possible Reasons

- Feels the need to introduce an item not on the agenda.
- Is bored with the meeting.
- Has a point to raise that they feel is more important.
- Is discussing a related topic but not being heard.
- Wants to be the center of attention.

Possible Solutions:

- Ask the participant to share their idea with the group.
- One team member can get up and casually walk around near the participants having the side conversation.
- Restate a recently made point and ask for the participant's opinion.
- Ask if they want to add a comment to the group discussion.
- Remind participants that there will be a final chance to add their comments during the closing.

Overly Disagreeable Participant - a group member is highly argumentative or generally antagonistic.

Possible Reasons

- Have a combative personality.
- Are upset by others' opinions or the specific meeting issue.
- Like the attention.
- Are unable to make suggestions constructively.
- Feel they are being ignored.

Possible Solutions:

- Paraphrase the participant's comments, and after their response, recap his/her position in objective terms.
- Respond to the participant's comments, not the attack.
- Open the discussion of the participant's comments to the group.
- Ensure that the recorder has captured the comments.

AGENDA



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



REVIEW OF AGENDA



REVIEW OF GOALS



WORKING AGREEMENT



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



WRAP UP

RULES FOR GROUP

FACILITATOR

- BE SUPPORTIVE
- ASK CLEAR QUESTIONS
- LISTEN CAREFULLY
- GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO TALK
- KEEP GROUP ON TOPIC

GROUP MEMBERS

- BE OPEN AND HONEST
- TAKE TURNS TALKING
- LISTEN CAREFULLY TO QUESTIONS
- CONFIDENTIALITY
- FOCUS ON THE QUESTIONS
- SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

RECORDER

- TAKE NOTES ON WHAT IS SAID, BUT NOT WHO SAID IT
- PUT NOTES WHERE ALL GROUP MEMBERS CAN SEE
- ASK QUESTIONS IF NOT SURE WHAT SOMEONE SAID
- SHARE NOTES WITH ENVISION ILLINOIS TEAM

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ❖ Your participation in this group is important to us because it will help us to gather information about domestic violence and people with disabilities and Deaf people.
- ❖ Your participation is voluntary. You can choose to leave the group at any time.
- ❖ We will be taking notes today, and comments will be recorded on a flip-chart.
- ❖ Your name will not be used in the notes, so anything you say will be confidential.
- ❖ We are not required to report anything that you tell us to anyone else.
- ❖ We will be discussing topics that might make you feel uncomfortable. You can take a break from the discussion if you need to. If you need to talk to someone, one of the team members can go outside with you to talk.
- ❖ We would like everyone to contribute to the group, but you don't have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering.
- ❖ If you have any questions or need something after the focus group you may contact Teresa Tudor at 217/558-6192 or Shirley Paceley at 217/875-8890

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION