Mass Rights for Change:

Needs Assessment Plan



# Mass Advocates Standing Strong

# Victim Rights Law Center

Pathways **for Change**

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**Table of Contents:**

Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………..…4

The Collaboration and Its Partners …………………………………………….4

Vision and Mission of the Collaboration……………………………………..6

Needs Assessment Purpose…………………………………………………………………6

# Needs Assessment Goals …………………………………………………………………….8

Methods of Getting Information………………………………………………………….9

Information………………………………………………………………………………………….9

Existing Data ………………………………………………………………………………9

New Data ………………………………………………………………………………….17

Overview of Methods ………………………………………………………………………..17

Purpose: Who are we talking to and why? ……………………………….17

Participants: Who will we be talking to? ………………………………….18

#### How Will We Talk to People………………………………………………………21

#### Table of Methods: Who, how many, and from which agency? ….23

Overview of the Structure of Each Method ……………………………………….25

Recruitment Plan ……………………………………………………………………..25

How we will recruit people……………………………………………….25

Recruitment Process ………………………………………………………………..28

Recruitment Tools ……………………………………………………………………29

Consent Process …………………………………………………………………….…30

Confidentiality ……………………………………………………………………….…35

Preserving ……………………………………………………………………....35

The Limits ……………………………………………………………………..…37

Accessibility Considerations ………………………………………………………………39

Safety Considerations ……………………………………………………………………….40

Work Plan …………………………………………………………………………………………42

Appendices: ………………………………………………………………………………...…...43

1. Flyers ……………………………………………………………………………………..…43

Flyers Without Gift Cards....……………………………………………………….43

Flyers With Gift Cards……………………………………………………………..…44

1. Information Sheets…………………………………………………….……………..45

#### Information Sheet for People with I/DD…………………………………….45

#### Information Sheet for Survivors ……………………………………………..…47

Information Sheet for Staff of Pathways and VRLC.……………………49

Information Sheet for Guardians and Parents/Support People.…51

Information Sheet for Gift Card Recipients – Accessible.……………53

Information Sheet for Staff of Pathways and VRLC - Accessible…59

1. Consent Guide …………………………………………………………….……………62

Guide for People with I/DD………………………………………..…………..…62

Guide for Survivors…………………………………………………………………...70

Guide for Staff of Pathways and VRLC……………………………………….79

Guide for Guardians and Parents/Support People……………….……87

1. Consent Form Checklist …………………………………………………………...95
2. RSVP Form and Accommodation Requests ………………………………98
3. Gift Card Tracker ………………………………………………………………….…100
4. Meeting Reminder Cards ……………………………………………………..…101

#### Questions for survey of Pathways Board of Directors………………102

#### Beginning Scripts……………………………………………………………......….104

1. Focus Group/ Interview Questions for: ……………….……………….…112

People with I/DD ……………………………………………………………112

Survivors of Sexual Violence …………………………………..………115

People Who Are in the Rainbow Support Group……………..118

People with I/DD who have guardians …………………………...121

Guardians and Parents of people with I/DD ……………………124

Trainers of Awareness and Action Trainings ………………..…127

Staff of Pathways ……………………………………………………………128

Staff of VRLC …………………………………………………………………..131

MASS Board of Directors ………………………………………………..133

Support People to people with I/DD ………………………………135

1. Other Written Materials …………………………………………………………138

Email: Request to Participate in Survey ………………….………138

Resource List …………………………………………….……………………140

**Introduction:**

# The Collaboration and Its Partners

**Mass Rights for Change (MRfC)**

We are 3 agencies:

• Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS)

• Victim Rights Law Center, (VRLC)

• Pathways for Change, Inc. (Pathways)

In 2007 a program called *Building Partnerships for the Protection of Individuals with Disabilities Initiative*, funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, invited MASS (and others)to begin work on an exciting project that would create a program to educate people with disabilities by trainers with disabilities to *recognize, report* and *respond* to all types of abuse. This is how the Awareness and Action (A&A) trainings began.

VRLC and Pathways began working together in 2009. Pathways and VRLC’s long standing collaborative relationship includes cross referrals for sexual violence survivors in Central Massachusetts. In addition to referrals, VRLC attorneys provide training to Pathways staff and volunteers to help improve free legal assistance access to sexual assault survivors in Central MA.

Seeing the need and an opportunity to expand services to survivors with I/DD, Pathways forged a connection between MASS and VRLC and agreed to request the funds to support this collaboration. In 2017 we gratefully received grant funding for this project from the Office of Violence on Women.

We came together to build the collaboration and named ourselves Mass Rights for Change (MRfC). We created our name by taking parts of the name of each agency. As a collaboration, we have created a Charter together that includes a roadmap for how our collaboration will work together throughout this project. We then created a Statement of Focus that states that we have come together in order to focus on survivors of sexual violence who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), and how each agency can improve to serve these survivors. We now are creating a plan for how to assess the needs of the agencies as well as survivors in the community.

### The Individual Agencies

**Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS**) is a grassroots self-advocacy organization run for and by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state of Massachusetts. MASS calls the people within their organization, “members” and not clients or consumers. The partners involved within this collaboration include members from the Central Massachusetts region of MASS. They are also the Awareness and Action team for Central Massachusetts. The Awareness and Action program is a key and unique program provided by MASS. MASS is the only self-advocacy I/DD organization dedicated to providing peer-to-peer education around abuse and violence in Worcester County. Through its Awareness and Action Program, MASS’ self-advocates train others in Worcester County about how to recognize, report, and respond to abuse.

**Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)** provides free legal services to sexual violence victims in Massachusetts. VRLC is the only organization to offer sexual assault-specific legal services in Worcester County. VRLC offers survivor-centered and empowering legal representation. VRLC represents all rape and sexual assault survivors in Massachusetts. This includes adults and children; people of all abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations and immigrants, refugees, and undocumented persons, regardless of immigration status.

**Pathways for Change, Inc. (Pathways**) is a stand-alone multicultural rape crisis center (RCC). They provide trauma informed services to survivors of sexual violence in ASL, English, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese. Pathways is well-known for innovative work that includes their Deaf Survivors Program (DSP), creating a hotline collaboration, work with sexually exploited individuals, and so much more. Pathways provides free support services to 47 cities and towns in Central Massachusetts, which includes:

• 24-hour crisis intervention

• Support Counseling

• Healing Circles (support groups)

• Advocacy in the medical, police and legal settings

• Prevention education for youth and adults

• Professional training

• Community outreach

The Mass Rights for Change team is committed to a survivor-centered approach that empowers individuals with I/DD in Central Massachusetts who have experienced sexual violence. The core of this collaboration is that it values the whole person seeking help, services, support and safety. We see the person before we see the disability or that they have been a victim.

**Our Vision:**

The vision of Mass Rights for Change is to see a future that supports all victims of sexual violence who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to:

• Recognize they have been abused

• Know they have rights

• Be able to get the services they need without barriers

• Act on their power to manage their recovery and healing

• Have all the help they need to recover in their own way that works best for them

This vision will support all survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD to have doors opened. We will start with our 3 agencies and then we hope to do this across our area, our state, and hopefully the country.

**Our Mission:**

The mission of the MRfC team is to remove barriers and increase the services, access and support for survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD in Central Massachusetts. The mission is for MASS, VRLC, and Pathways to work together to make this change happen, by building a strong, ongoing partnership, between the 3 agencies. We will do this through respect, team work, true listening and understanding. Specifically we will:

* Develop new ideas that will build trust between our programs and survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD
* Review, revise, and create policies, and practices within MASS, VRLC, and Pathways
* Create guidelines to increase the accessibility and responsiveness of our services and programs
* Develop a plan to improve how people are given help and increase survivor safety. And treat individuals with kindness and compassion, making sure that all survivors are believed.
* Develop and provide training for the MRfC partners

**Needs Assessment Purpose:**

We have tried to make sure that within our discussions the words we use are clear to all team members, including those who may struggle with large words or complicated ideas. This is how we will write all of the documents our team creates. Therefore, this needs assessment will be written in plain language, will use bullets to show information when appropriate, and be as uncomplicated as possible.

In order to accomplish the mission of the MRfC team, we need to better understand the issues that survivors of sexual violence with I/DD face when seeking services. Our team hopes to do this by asking people with I/DD, survivors of sexual violence, and people who work with both groups, what helps and what stops or at least slows down people from getting the services they need, and how we can remove these barriers and increase the helpful practices. We hope to get from this process:

* Practical information on what works in services for survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD and how to improve services
* Information on what we can do to improve our individual agencies and services, and to implement activities based on that information
* Increase agency commitment and ability to provide help and services to survivors with I/DD
* To make sure that all participants within the project are excited about our project and our success now and in years to come.

**Needs Assessment Goals:**

* Find what gets in the way for each of our agencies in helping survivors of sexual violence. This may be in the policies, procedures, the buildings or what training staff and volunteers receive to help survivors.
* Find out what is good and what is working or not working inside of each organization to help staff and volunteers provide safe, accessible and helpful services to survivors of sexual violence and those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
* Find out how people who are survivors of sexual violence and who have I/DD are now able to get help from each of our organizations and what gets in the way of them getting that help.
* Find out how people who are not part of the statewide support system of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) get access to services and support.
* Guardian and Parent Input: Sometimes guardians and sometimes parents have influence or rights to decision-making about people with I/DD. We are going to ask this group about their opinions about the need and necessity of sexual violence services for people with I/DD. We may also ask them to identify whether there is a need for more resources for parents and guardians and what those resources might contain.

## Methods of Getting Information

### Information

### Existing Data

Mass Rights for Change will use the following as sources:

* Vera Performance Indicators for both Pathways and MASS

Vera Institute of Justice created performance indicators for disability agencies and victim service agencies. The indicators were created for the bulk of service agency programs that work with survivors. The indicators look at how strong an agency is about their commitment and also their capacity to work with survivors of sexual violence who have disabilities. They have not yet created indicators for victim service agencies that have lawyers as staff, so we are not able to have indicators for VRLC.

MASS is a disability organization that does not provide services like a typical disability organization, for example, like a day program, or work program. Instead it supports people with I/DD to become self-advocates and find ways to advocate in their community. Therefore many of the questions that are geared towards disability organizations in the indicators do not quite match up with the mission and goals of MASS. However, the indicators show a starting point to look at MASS as an agency to be able to compare its progress during the implementation phase of this grant and beyond.

The overall rating for MASS was at 19% with a Commitment level of 25% and a Capacity level of 13%. These scores are low, as was to be expected. MASS as described above, is not a service agency and therefore won’t meet some of the areas highlighted by the indicators for those kinds of agencies. However, our collaboration and MASS has been able to identify areas such as policies and procedures, and specific resources that they could improve in order to better support survivors with I/DD, that are noted through the indicator questions. These factors will be built along with the information from the needs assessment to help create a strategic plan that will grow MASS’ capacity for supporting survivors. The highest scores for MASS throughout the indicators were in areas of partnerships, and in the responsibility of recognizing violence against people with disabilities as a priority, and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the solutions.

Pathways too, is not a typical rape crisis center. It is a stand-alone agency and this is very rare for RCC’s to not be part of larger systems. Because of this, Pathways has more latitude for creating policies and procedures that work best for their clients and staff. The indicators therefore don’t quite capture the uniqueness of Pathways.

The overall rating for Pathways was at 57% with a Commitment level of 70% and a Capacity level of 43%. This puts Pathways in the “moderate” category of overall capacity according to Vera. The indicators showed that Pathways highly values partnerships with other organizations and has put in a lot of effort on policies to address survivors’ needs. The areas of program materials, and program resources were areas that Pathways could focus on to grow in implementation. Although for example Pathways has many options and formats already available for survivors in printed formats, they will be able to improve them for survivors with I/DD. The indicators show many strengths of Pathways, but the areas such as advocacy, programmatic resources, and materials will be incorporated with what is learned from the needs assessment, to create a strategic plan to improve Pathways further.

* Satisfaction Surveys from Pathways for Change

Pathways uses a client survey to help provide feedback on various services someone may have received within the counseling program (See Table 1 below for results). Clients are asked to complete a voluntary survey for quality control and to ensure services are accessible, comfortable and appropriate for the needs of individuals. The survey questions help to measure the ease of accessing services, the skills of the counselor they interacted with and the overall satisfaction of their experience at Pathways. Surveys are 100% confidential and voluntary. Counselors provide options of how to return the survey to ensure confidentiality. Those options include: putting it in a sealed envelope and handing it to the administrative assistant, putting it in an envelope with postage provided by Pathways or depositing it in the “survey return box” which is in the waiting room.

Surveys are introduced after 4 sessions of individual counseling or after a client has completed a support group series (10-12 group sessions). Hotline and advocacy clients who become individual/group clients at Pathways are also given the option to complete a survey based on that experience. Pathways purposely chooses not to ask hotline and advocacy clients to complete a survey at the time of accessing those services because the individual would likely be in crisis and it would not be appropriate to request such a thing from someone in that emotional state.

The first set of criteria looks at how the counseling impacted the client’s daily functioning. Clients are asked to check off whichever positive ‘change’ impacted them the most. Although Pathways understands that there is no time limit on healing, based on clinical input, it was determined that after even a short amount of support, they hope to see some movement in positive areas in a survivors day to day functioning.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Impact of counseling*** *is based on checking all that apply.* ***Services Access*** *is scored 1-5 with 5 being most satisfied. Client After 4 counseling/group sessions* | | | | | | |
|  | **Percentage of clients  choosing this option** | |  |  | **Averaged Score** | |
| *Impact of Counseling Experience* | **Validated** | 34% |  | Was it easy to access services? | **Facility is Accessible** | 4.7 |
| **Stronger** | 52% |  | **Scheduling Appointments** | 4.6 |
| **Normalized** | 69% |  | **Counselor is On Time** | 5.0 |
| **Coping Skills** | 52% |  | How satisfied were you with your counselor? | **Listen and Supportive** | 4.8 |
| **Confidence** | 41% |  | **Speak Same Language** | 4.9 |
| **Talk in Sessions** | 79% |  | **Insight to your Needs** | 4.7 |
| **Sleep Better** | 21% |  | **Understands you Culture** | 4.8 |
| **Functioning Better** | 21% |  | **Explored Options with You** | 4.8 |
| **Positive** | 31% |  | Overall Experience | **Working Towards Goals** | 4.5 |
| **Hopeful** | 69% |  | **Progress Towards Feeling In Control & Empowered** | 4.4 |
| **Other** | 0% |  |  |  |  |

The results of the survey found that after just a short time, Pathways clients often find positive impacts in many areas of their lives. Some significant changes were found in areas such as clients feeling hopeful about their healing; learning that how they are feeling is normal for the traumatic event they experienced; and even early on clients are learning coping skills that will help them further their healing and ability to cope with the traumatic experience of sexual violence.

Another area Pathways looks at is the experience of the client accessing services which influences their overall experience of Pathways itself. For that section of the survey, clients are asked to rate on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the most positive, how their experience was in areas of accessibility of space, scheduling appointments and if they felt that their culture was honored.

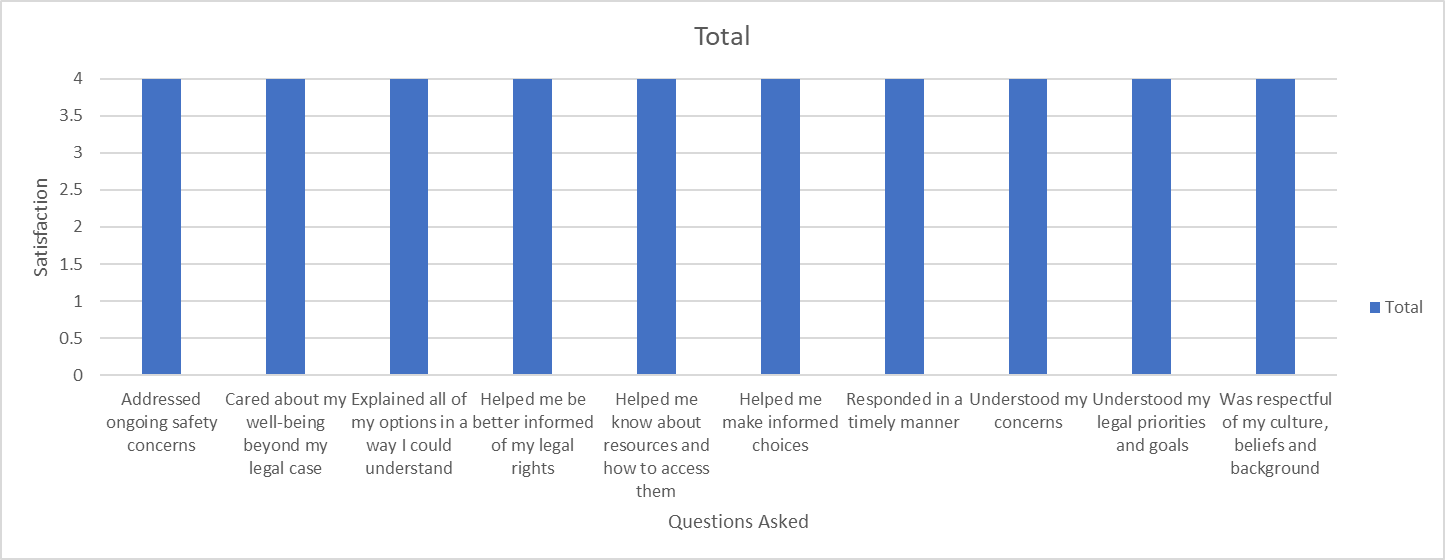
An area that the survey showed that needs improvement is the need for agency accessibility. Although the physical space meets the A.D.A. requirements, other areas to improve upon are with the signage and materials provided. Pathways anticipates needing to redevelop materials to be in plainer language and with illustrations to help individuals better understand the materials being presented to them. Pathways also identifies that they must create materials in other formats, such as video, audio and braille to be more accessible.

One other area in need of improvement, based on the surveys, is in scheduling appointments. Currently Pathways only utilizes hearing and video phones to contact clients. Ideally having alternative communication options would ensure that everyone requesting services will be able to be contacted using the communication mode that is most comfortable to them.

* Satisfaction Surveys from VRLC

VRLC has an anonymous survey that they offer to their clients after they have completed their work with VRLC. VRLC sends the surveys with a letter when they are closing the case. The client can get them by mail or email depending on what they prefer. The client then can decide if they want to respond and if they do, can send it back in a pre-addressed envelope by mail or go to a special webpage set up just for these surveys and have it emailed to VRLC. They can also choose to say who they are or they can choose to be anonymous.

The results of the surveys received by VRLC in 2018 and early 2019 show the following:



This graph shows the questions asked and that almost all the people who responded to the VRLC survey reported their experience was the highest rating they could give. The survey results show extremely high satisfaction with the work done by the VRLC lawyers.

The survey also showed that almost all 19 people who answered the survey gave the highest rating they could for the specific services they received as well as how VRLC met the concerns they had. The survey asked for example, how VRLC met their safety concerns, or increased their sense of empowerment, and on these scores, they were almost all at the highest rating allowed.

The VRLC satisfaction surveys show a very positive review from those who responded. Although this is good information that clients are very satisfied with VRLC it highlights how much the MRfC needs assessment can provide helpful information for VRLC to improve services for survivors with I/DD.

* Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU)

SARU is a special unit that works under the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) which is the state protective agency for people with disabilities aged 18-59. SARU works specifically with survivors of sexual assault who have I/DD. This unit is a new program and has only recently begun to collect data.

We asked for a picture of their “Central” stats that cover the MRfC area. According to SARU, for the last quarter, the Central region had 14% of the total referrals. Of those clients, half of them had some individual advocacy, and 13% of them were referred to victim services including a rape crisis counseling (RCC) center. The numbers for the Central region mirror the statewide statistics, except for the proportion of referrals to RCC’s. The referrals statewide to RCC’s was almost twice the number within the Central region. This may be due to the nature of the clients being referred but may indicate a gap. This may indicate that reaching out to survivors with I/DD through SARU will only reach a portion of the people who may need services. Our needs assessment will hopefully address this need further with answers to some of our questions.

#### The data collected from these sources will be used along with the “new data” to form a report of our findings and prepare the best strategic plan for our team, given the results.

### New Data

MRfC wants to know what the needs are for survivors of sexual violence and people with I/DD in Worcester County. In order to find this out we will be talking to:

* Survivors of Sexual Violence
* People with I/DD
* People who support people with I/DD
* Staff and leaders of our member agencies
* Therapists that work with survivors of sexual violence in the community

We will talk to these different groups of people using focus groups, individual interviews if needed, and online surveys. (See Appendices H, I, and J,)

## Overview of Methods

### Who are we talking to and why?

### Participants

### Survivors of Sexual Violence

We will talk to survivors of sexual violence because they are people who have been through the experience. They are the experts and our team can learn from them directly. We will be asking them (See Appendix J for full list of questions) what they think about:

* What makes services safe, accessible, and comfortable
* What gets in the way of feeling comfortable
* What are the best ways to reach out to survivors; and to introduce services; so that people feel safe to seek out services
* What are best practices for providing services and support to survivors
* How does trauma impact all of these issues

We need to be careful how we ask survivors to participate in our focus groups and interviews. Pathways works with survivors who tend to be in crisis when they start receiving services and our collaboration wants to emphasize their emotional safety. Since this means survivors may be in a very vulnerable state, we have set up a very specific process to make sure people are safe, are only participating if they want to, and that they will have supports in place if needed. (See Recruitment Plan).

### People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

Our team will also be talking to people with I/DD. Since people with I/DD are not a single group but made up of many sub-groups, we want to try to hear from as many of those groups as possible. In order to do this, we have decided to ask people with I/DD who are part of MASS programming:

* Self-Advocate Members
* Members Who Identify as LGBTQI+ in the “Rainbow Support Group”
* Members with Guardians

We decided to ask self advocates with I/DD because they are a large sub-group of people who are members of MASS. They will have a unique perspective on how people with I/DD receive services and what works and what does not, as they help to advocate already for people with I/DD. (See Recruitment Plan)

We have structured our groups to have separate groups for each of the above sub-groups of people. We are asking people who identify as LGBTQI+ in a separate group because we wanted to make sure we could have a safe enough space for people to share their experiences. Sometimes being part of a group that is further oppressed, it is hard to be sure people can talk freely about their experiences, and so we are hoping a separate group will help people feel comfortable. (See Recruitment Plan)

This same idea is also true for people with guardians. Since people who have guardians sometimes have different ways to get information, get access to services, or join things in the community, we wanted to have a safe space for them to also be able to share their experiences freely. (See Recruitment Plan)

### People who Support People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

Since, in the end, we are looking to help survivors with I/DD, the MRfC team believes that people who are supporters of people with I/DD see firsthand what helps and what doesn’t, when supporting people with services. We understand support people may in fact be barriers to support and services, but we believe asking them questions may give our team insight into how to best move ahead.

In order to ask support people, we will focus on the people who support the MASS Board, and the self-advocates. Guardians and parents of people with I/DD are also supporters, and we will have a focus group for them as well. Although one group are for support specifically, guardians are the gatekeepers for people with I/DD who themselves, are not legally allowed to independently ask for and get services. The MRfC team believes both sub-groups will help offer beneficial information to our collaboration about how to improve access and safety to survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD.

### Staff and Leaders of Our Member Agencies

In order to better understand how each of our agencies are working, the positive parts and the areas that are lacking or need improvement, we will be asking staff from our member agencies to help our collaboration. The sub- groups in this category are:

* Trainers of Awareness and Action
* The Board of Directors of MASS
* VRLC lawyers and front-line staff
* Pathways clinical team
* Pathways Outreach and Education Team
* Pathways Board of Directors

We are fortunate we can talk with Trainers of Awareness and Action. This is the only group that currently works at the intersection of sexual violence and I/DD. Therefore, we will ask pointed questions about abuse and disability. Since they train on abuse to people with I/DD specifically, we hope that we can get a lot of information from these trainers about access, services, barriers and best practices.

This is also true for members of the MASS Board. All Board members are people with I/DD and therefore this sub-group is also a unique opportunity for MRfC to learn about how decisions are made at MASS and how MASS can help survivors of sexual violence, as well as how our collaboration partners can do the same.

## How Will We Talk to People

**Focus Groups**

MRfC will mostly use focus groups for gathering information from survivors of sexual violence and people with I/DD because we believe that a group of people can add to ideas that individual interviews may not bring up. We also can meet more people at one time in a group, so it will be a better way to reach more people in a shorter amount of time. If someone is not able to join a group or is uncomfortable being part of a group, we will also offer individual interviews. (See Recruitment Plan.)

Each focus group will start with a beginning script and then questions will be asked based on that specific group of people. Each of the beginning scripts (See Appendix I) includes a thank you to all the participants, and a reminder of the conversations and forms they went over about the limits of confidentiality and what to expect during the groups. People will be given the opportunity to leave if they have changed their mind, and then the questions for each particular group will be asked.

The structure of the group is as follows:

* Each group will have a facilitator and/or co-facilitator to ask the questions
* Each group will have a note-taker in the room
* Each group, except for Pathways and VRLC staff groups, will have a counselor available outside of the group for support
* Each group that involves people with I/DD will have a self-advocate outside of the room available for support
* The group will last approximately one to one and a half hours
* Each group will be run in a wheelchair-accessible location
* Every participant who is a volunteer, survivor, support person/guardian, or person with I/DD, will be given a $20.00 gift card
* Every participant who will be given a gift card will be told they do not have to stay for the entire group to get the gift card
* After each group the facilitator(s), note-taker, and any other MRfC member involved with the group will meet to debrief and make sure we have captured all the information from each group to be collected

### Interviews

We understand that for some people speaking in a group is uncomfortable for many reasons. There also may be people who are not able to attend a group due to logistics or practical issues.

We have allowed people to request an interview instead of joining a group. The process for individual interviews will be the same use of the beginning script and then the questions that are meant for that person. There will be an interviewer asking the questions and a note-taker in the room. The interviewer will also be a counselor to provide support as necessary.

### Surveys

MRfC will use surveys to collect information from the Board of Pathways. We have chosen surveys for this group because the logistics of trying to get the Pathways Board together for a group is not practical but they are eager to give us information and feedback.

## Table of Methods

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Groups** | | |
| **Who we will be talking to** | Number of People | Agency |
| Self Advocates with I/DD | 2 groups of 6-8 | MASS |
| People with I/DD who identify as LGBTQI+ “Rainbow Support Group” | 1 group of 3-6 | MASS |
| People with I/DD who have guardians | 1 group of 6 | MASS |
| Guardians and Parents of people with I/DD | 1 group of 6-8 | MASS |
| Survivors of Sexual Violence | 2 group of 6-8 | Pathways |
| Trainers of Awareness and Action Trainings | 1 group of 6-8 | MASS |
| Staff of Pathways | 2 groups of 6-8 | Pathways |
| Staff of VRLC | 1 group of 6-8 | VRLC |
| Board members of MASS | 1 group of 6-8 | MASS |
| Support People for People with I/DD | 1 group of 6-8 | MASS |

**Total Projected:** Max: 100 Min: 75

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Interviews** | | |
| **People we will be talking to** | Number of People | Agency |
| Self Advocates with I/DD | Up to 8 | MASS |
| People with I/DD who identify as LGBTQI+ “Rainbow Support Group” | Up to 3 | MASS |
| People with I/DD who have guardians | Up to 6 | MASS |
| Guardians and Parents of people with I/DD | Up to 3 | MASS |
| Survivors of Sexual Violence | Up to 3 | Pathways |
| Trainers of Awareness and Action Trainings | Up to 3 | MASS |
| Staff of Pathways | Up to 3 | Pathways |
| Staff of VRLC | Up to 3 | VRLC |
| Board members of MASS | Up to 3 | MASS |
| Support People for People with I/DD | Up to 3 | MASS |

**Total Projected**: Max: 63\* Min: 0

\* This Maximum is only if we are unable to run the groups as planned, and have to use interviews to reach our participants. Therefore, the true projected number of interviews is planned for a maximum of 6-10 interviews.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Surveys** | | |
| **People we will be talking to** | Number of People | Agency |
| Pathways Board | 4 | Pathways |

**Total Projected:** Max: 4 Min: 0

(Current number of people on the Pathways Board is 4 and we expect 100% of Board participation.)

**Total Overall Projected Participants: Max: 110 Min: 60**

Overview of the Structure of Each Method

**Recruitment Plan:**

**How we will recruit people to participate**:

**People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities**

The Self-Advocates Group, The Rainbow Support Group, and Board of MASS, will have the Project Director attend the end of their regular meetings. An announcement will be made by the leader of the group, and on the agenda of the Board meeting, that MRfC will be having focus groups to improve services. An information sheet and a flyer will be handed out at the time of the announcement. (See Appendices A, B). People will be able to come and meet with the Project Director and get more information, or sign up using the consent guide, consent checklist, and the RSVP form. (See Appendices C, D, E) They also will be able to just give their contact information to the Project Director to be able to talk more about the project or get contact information to ask later when ready.

Awareness and Action Trainers (a peer to peer program) will have the Project Director attend a portion of the annual statewide meeting that is organized for the trainers. The exact time will depend on what the members decide works best to not interrupt the flow of the conference. An announcement will be made that we will be having focus groups about improving services and an information sheet, and a flyer will be handed out. (See Appendices A, B) People will be able to come and meet with the Project Director and get more information, or sign up using the consent guide, consent checklist, and the RSVP form. (See Appendices C, D, E) They also will be able to just give their contact information to the Project Director to be able to talk more about the project or get contact information to ask later when ready.

When people are agreeing to join our focus groups or meet for an interview, they will be asked if they sign for things themselves or have someone else sign for them. If they do have someone sign for them, we will confirm if they have a legal guardian. We will then ask permission to talk with their guardian and ask for their guardian’s contact information as well, and they will both receive the information sheet and consent guide and checklist, along with the RSVP form. (See Appendices B, C, D, and E.)

# Survivors of Sexual Violence

Pathways works with individuals who are often in crisis and because of this, recruitment of survivors for the focus groups and interviews needs to be with the support of the agency’s clinicians. Counselors will discuss with their supervising clinicians, clients who they feel are in emotional places that will be okay to join a focus group and who they feel would be comfortable and express interest in participating in a focus group or interview.

Once the counselors receive clearance from the clinicians, they will then speak to their clients and ask if they would like to participate by sharing information sheet and giving them a flyer (See Appendices A, B). As a rape crisis center, Pathways is unable to share information directly with individuals outside of Pathways. Therefore, clients who are interested can contact the Project Director directly to make plans to participate. The Project Director will arrange for the safest and easiest way for clients to be able to fill out the consent form and RSVP. The Project Director will also identify some dates and will hold an information session for the Pathways clients, including those who are currently in support groups. This is where the names of interested individuals can be collected directly from the Pathways clients to the Project Director.

We understand it is best to be passive and let people come to us if they are interested in joining our focus groups or an interview. This would make sure that people are only participating if they want to and without anyone else being involved. Our team thought about doing this, but decided that the survivors of sexual violence may be in a very vulnerable place, having been through a traumatic event, and decided this way of recruiting would be the safest way to get participants without causing any undue harm or risk to those survivors.

### People who Support People with I/DD

The Board of MASS are people with I/DD, and many have support staff that work with them. Since we will be asking the Board if they are willing to participate in a focus group, we will also ask their support people at the same time to join a separate support person focus group if they are interested. The recruitment flyers will be available and they can speak to the Project Director when she comes to speak with the Board about participating.

People who have guardians will be asked if they will give permission to ask if their guardians would want to participate in a focus group or interview. If the person agrees, they will be asked for their guardians contact information and be given a flyer and an Information sheet to give to their guardian. (See Appendices A, B).

### Staff and Leaders of Our Member Agencies

An announcement will be made by a MRfC member of Pathways at staff meetings for Pathways, and a MRfC member of VRLC at the VRLC staff meeting that a focus group about services will be held for staff members, and an information sheet and flyer will be handed out. (See Appendix A, B) Staff people who are interested in participating will contact the Project Director for more information in order to make sure participation is voluntary. The Project Director will make it clear that there will be no negative consequences for participating or not participating in a focus group or interview.

The Project Director will send consent forms and RSVP’s by email to staff who are interested in participating and the dates will be set during the usual staff meeting time at Pathways in order to not complicate agency schedules. The date for the VRLC staff focus group will not be during staff meeting but at another time suitable to them and to the facilitators.

Pathways Board members will be sent an email asking if they are willing to participate in an anonymous online survey. If they are interested, the email will have a link to the online survey that they can select and take part in the survey.

**Recruitment Process**

**What we will do when we get people who do want to participate:**

Overall we will review the recruitment materials, and go over the consent guide, consent form and the RSVP forms with people who are willing to participate when they sign up. This will include covering the following:

1. Tell participants that all focus groups will be transcribed by the Note-taker and recorded.

2. Let participants know about mandated reporting status and what that means under Massachusetts law.

3. Discuss the gift cards participants will receive if appropriate.

4. Inform staff that they will not receive compensation for participation in the interviews/groups.

5. Review date, time and location of the focus groups and, if the Participant requests a reminder, confirm the best way to provide that reminder, considering safety concerns.

6. Review accommodation requests.

7. Confirm whether the individual is willing to participate by reviewing the consent guide and then signing the consent form.

8. The Recruiter will go through each section of the consent guide, explaining what is needed so that the invitees understand what they are committing to.

9. Provide the invitee with an RSVP form and request that they complete the form while the Recruiter is present if possible.

10. Offer an individual interview for those who do not want to participate in a focus group if the invitee prefers an individual interview.

11. The Recruiter will ensure that this date and time is listed on the RSVP form and answer any additional questions.

## Recruitment Tools

# Information Sheet

The Information sheet will answer general questions about what the focus groups/optional interviews are about and how they will work. (Appendix B). This sheet will be provided to all participants during the recruitment process

**RSVP**

An RSVP form (See Appendix E) will be given to all people who want to attend our focus groups or an interview. This RSVP goes along with an accommodation form if someone needs accommodations. (See Appendix E) The RSVP includes the person’s first name and first initial of their last name. It asks if the person is going to come to a group or an interview and how that person would like to be reminded. We will offer meeting reminder cards, email, phone calls, and texts as options and we will ask to make sure that these are safe ways for people to get the reminders.

# Meeting Reminder Cards

Because we recognize that participants may want a meeting reminder, we will provide all invitees with the option of taking a meeting reminder card with them (Appendix G). This card will be the size of a post card and will only list the Project Director’s name, contact phone number, and a general email address. The phone number listed will be to the Project Director’s direct voicemail and not state anything about the project or sexual violence on the voicemail recording. If the person would like the meeting reminder to be sent to them in the mail they will be asked to fill out an envelope with their address to use. The envelope will not have any identification on it other than the person’s name and address. The return address will be a Post Office Box address.

**Consent Process:**

# Affirmative Consent

It is important to MRfC that participants in the Needs Assessment each consent to their involvement in the process. We will make sure of this by giving each participant who will attend a focus group or interview, a consent guide (See Appendix C) that goes over the process and with it a consent form to check off and initial if they agree. (See Appendix D). This is called an affirmative consent process and we will use it with everyone who will join all focus groups or interviews. Before we start each group or interview, we will remind everyone of the form they signed and make sure they are okay to start the group or interview. (See Beginning Script Appendix I) If they agree to stay in the group or interview we will know that they have agreed to fully and freely participate. We have chosen this process to capture the benefits of written consent with the ease and time-saving of verbal consent. Agreeing to participate by signing the consent form before the group or interview will make sure that the person fully understands what they are agreeing to do. It will allow participants time to review the consent guide and checklist, process its contents, and ask questions.

The written consent guide will inform survivors of sexual violence the following:

* I understand that the purpose of this project is to identify ways to improve services for survivors of sexual violence.
* I understand that I will be asked questions along with other people in a small group.
* I understand that I will be asked to discuss my experience accessing services as a survivor.
* I understand that being interviewed may have some risks.
* I understand that answering some questions may be uncomfortable.
* I understand that I do not have to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering.
* I understand that I can say, “pass” if I do not want to answer.
* I understand that, even if I have started to answer a question, I can stop talking at any point.
* I understand that I can leave the focus group at any point.
* I understand I can take a break from the focus group at any point for any reason.
* I understand that some of my answers could be shared with other people.
* I understand that my comments will be recorded electronically and in writing.
* I understand that only the Project Director will have access to the recordings and notes of the groups and interviews. The people who work on this project are trained to keep things confidential.
* I understand that my comments may be used anonymously in a project report.

The written consent guide will inform people with I/DD, Guardians and parents of people with I/DD, and support people with the following:

* I understand that the purpose of this project is to identify ways to improve services for people with I/DD.
* I understand that I will be asked questions along with other people in a small group.
* I understand that I will be asked to discuss my experience accessing services.
* I understand that being interviewed may have some risks.
* I understand that answering some questions may be uncomfortable.
* I understand that I do not have to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering.
* I understand I can say, “pass” if I do not want to answer.
* I understand that, even if I have started to answer a question, I can stop talking at any point.
* I understand that I can leave the focus group at any point.
* I understand I can take a break from the focus group at any point for any reason.
* I understand that some of my answers could be shared with other people.
* I understand that my comments will be recorded electronically and in writing.
* I understand that only the Project Director will have access to the recordings and notes of the groups and interviews. The people who work on this project are trained to keep things confidential.
* I understand that my comments may be used anonymously in a project report.

The written consent guide will inform the staff of Pathways and VRLC:

* I understand that the purpose of this project is to identify ways to improve services for survivors of sexual violence and people who have I/DD.
* I understand that I will be asked questions along with other people in a small group.
* I understand that I will be asked to discuss my experience of providing services.
* I understand that being interviewed may have some risks.
* I understand that answering some questions may be uncomfortable.
* I understand that I do not have to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering.
* I understand that I can say, “pass” if I do not want to answer.
* I understand that, even if I have started to answer a question, I can stop talking at any point.
* I understand that I can leave the focus group at any point.
* I understand I can take a break from the focus group at any point for any reason.
* I understand that some of my answers could be shared with other people.
* I understand that my comments will be recorded electronically and in writing.
* I understand that only the Project Director will have access to the recordings and notes of the groups and interviews. The people who work on this project are trained to keep things confidential.
* I understand that my comments may be used anonymously in a project report.

Affirmative verbal consent at the beginning of each focus group session cuts out any extra time to go over everything before we start the group. This verbal consent will be clearly stated when the facilitator starts the group or interview with the Beginning Script. The Beginning Script will:

* remind participants of what to expect during the focus group;
* highlight for participants that they can withdraw their consent and leave or discontinue the focus group at any time;
* affirm that participation is completely voluntary;
* affirm that there are no negative consequences if someone refuses to participate or stop their participation at any time;
* affirm that there are no negative consequences for participating or for any comments made during the groups.

Once the beginning script has been read, it will give participants one more opportunity to consent, by staying in the room.

**Guardianship:**

MRfC will attempt to recruit people who have guardians as well as those who do not. When people are agreeing to join our focus groups or meet for an interview, they will be asked if they sign for things themselves, or have someone else sign for them. For those people who do have guardians, we will speak to both the person being recruited and their guardian about the project. We will use the same Information sheet and consent form and will answer any questions either person has before they begin to participate. The guardian is free to be present at the location of the group, but will not be allowed to attend the group. There will be a focus group for guardians and parents available if they would like to participate in the needs assessment.

**Confidentiality:**

# Preserving Confidentiality

The following are the specific ways we will make sure to keep things as confidential as the law allows:

* Personally identifying information will only be collected during the RSVP process, when individuals will be asked their first name and the first letter of their last name in order to link them with any requests for accommodations.
* The Project Director will keep a list of any individuals who request accommodations and their first names.
* This information will be brought to each focus group/interview as needed, and will be destroyed within 2 weeks after the focus group/interview.
* Contact information will be given only if they are requesting meeting reminders. This information will be destroyed within 2 weeks after the focus group/interview.
* In focus groups and interviews, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about themselves, specific staff, or program participants. (See Appendix B, I.)
* Any RSVPs not already destroyed from the above procedure will be destroyed after each focus group/interview.
* For participants who receive services there will be no negative consequences for the participants or the services they receive.
* For the staff of VRLC and Pathways, there will be no negative consequences for their jobs due to any information shared.
* Focus group participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with anyone who did not participate in their specific focus group. Also, participants will be asked to not discuss what is said in the group with other group participants once the group is over. However, because we cannot make sure that participants preserve confidentiality, participants will also be encouraged to be mindful of what they share.
* The note taker will not link personal identifying information to comments made during any focus groups or interviews. However, she may link comments as being from the same person.
* The final needs assessment report will identify trends, themes, barriers, and strengths, linked to what each organization and group as a whole stated during the needs assessment process as a summary.
* Any information gathered through the needs assessment process will be kept by the Project Director in a locked cabinet and/or stored in password-protected computers that only the Project Director has access to.
* If the note taker is someone other than the Project Director, the Project Director will receive all notes and recordings from the note taker to create the summary.
* The Project Director will make summaries and quote anonymously information from the focus groups and interviews. The note taker will be identifying themes, patterns, and issues that come up in the group with any MRfC member involved in that group or interview to make sure we get all the information shared while it is fresh in people’s minds.
* Draft copies of the needs assessment report will be kept in a locked cabinet and/or stored in password protected computers that only the collaboration team members have access to.
* The report will not be shared with anyone outside of the collaboration until it has been reviewed and approved by the collaboration, the Vera Institute of Justice, and the Office on Violence Against Women.
* All notes, records, and anything else in writing that is related to the needs assessment that has not already been destroyed will be destroyed after the strategic plan has been approved by Office on Violence Against Women and (all collaborative agencies) have signed off on it.

### The Limits

Although our focus groups and interviews are not designed to ask about a person’s history of abuse, there is a possibility that someone may make a disclosure.

Pathways and MASS both have mandated reporting requirements under the Massachusetts law. The law states that there are certain groups who are protected, and require a report to a state protective service agency if abuse is known or suspected to be occurring. These groups include people with disabilities (M.G.L. c. 19C, § 10, reporting to The Disabled Persons Protection Commission), patients living in nursing homes or managed care (M.G.L. c. 111, § 72G, Reporting to Department of Public Health), minor children (M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A, reporting to Department of Children and Families), and adults age 60 and older (as defined in MGL c. 19A §15, reporting the MA office of Elder Affairs). Members of the VRLC do not fall under these laws, but in fact are by law, required to keep information confidential.

It was not possible to have only VRLC members conduct all of the focus groups and interviews in order to ensure full confidentiality. Therefore, the MRfC team has put in place clear information about the limits of confidentiality throughout this process.

The MRfC team highly values people’s rights to determine how they disclose information, and in order to support this, we have put in place the following:

* During recruitment, people will be told about how each group and interview will run including the limits of confidentiality
* The limits of confidentiality will be written on an Information sheet that will be given to all people recruited for the project (unless there is a safety concern or the person declines the handout.)
* Before the start of every group or interview the participants will be reminded of the limits of confidentiality that were stated in the consent guide.
* Facilitators will make every effort to intervene and redirect participants before stories are shared that could lead to any disclosure happening.
* However, if a mandatory report is required from something said in a focus group or interview, we will involve the survivor in reporting to the relevant regulatory agency. This can involve a person making a self-report or making a report with involvement from the survivor. If the survivor refuses to be involved, the mandated reporter will still need to make the report, but without the survivor. The survivor will be told the report will be filed before it is reported, unless there is some specific safety concern that would make this dangerous. Once the report has been filed, the survivor will be told about it if they chose not to be part of the process.

## Accessibility Considerations

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

* Accessible space will be used for all focus groups and interviews.
* When possible, the collaboration will use space the participants of the groups are familiar with and comfortable using.
* Our RSVP form will have space to request any accommodations needed.
* The accommodation requests will go through the Project Director who will ensure the accommodations are met.
* Facilitators will be instructed to attend to the particular needs of each group and speak in a manner that is accessible to all participants.
* All print materials and needs assessment tools will be available in alternative formats (for example, large print, digital format, etc.).

**Safety Considerations**

Physical and psychological safety is a primary consideration of the MRfC team, while recognizing that safety is defined differently for each individual. Every effort will be made to protect the safety of individuals participating in the Needs Assessment process. MRfC has made every effort to develop tools and processes to make sure people are as safe as possible. We’ve done this by:

• Making the questions be meant to gather information about services. The questions are not meant to gather personal stories about abuse.

• For all participants except the VRLC and Pathways staff: If the discussion of services or accessibility brings up memories or intense feelings and/or if a Participant appears likely to disclose, a counselor will be available at each focus group to provide emotional support as needed either during or following the session. A self-advocate will be available along with the counselor for all groups that involve people with I/DD. A private, accessible space will be made available to ensure confidentiality and safety. Participants will be told that the counselor and/or advocate is available and where the they are located.

* Lists of local resources will be available to anyone requesting one.
* Anyone may leave in the process at any point, if they feel uncomfortable.

• No one has to answer any question that they don’t want to answer.

* There will be no negative consequences for people in their jobs because of any information shared or for not participating.
* There will be no negative consequences for people and the services they get because of any information shared or for not participating.
* No personally identifying information will be linked to people participating in the process, other than to make sure accommodation requests are met or to link comments to the same person.
* We will be offering individual interviews to anyone who would prefer to participate outside of a group setting.

Also for all people participating we will do the following to help ensure safety for all participants:

* The meeting reminder card will not have the location of the meeting or any information linking the meeting to Partnership agencies. The phone number and email listed on the card are confidential and the voicemail is protected so only the Project Director has access to it.
* We will ask for the first name and first initial of their last name of all participants on the RSVP form in order to connect with any requested accommodations and gift card and will not be linked to any other identifying information.
* We will ask for contact information from those who request a meeting reminder. This information will be destroyed within 2 weeks after the focus group or interview happens.
* Anything we print or hand out for focus groups and interviews for clients will not list Partnership agency names or use language regarding the intersection of sexual violence and disabilities.
* An individual’s Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews; however, accommodations will be made for anyone requiring the assistance of a PCA. They can certainly remain outside of the group to be available as necessary.
* An individual’s guardian will not be allowed to be in the focus group or interview. They are more than welcome to remain outside the group to be available as necessary.

###### Work Plan

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Collaboration Charter | Completed September 2018 |
| Approval by OVW | December 2018 |
| Statement of Focus & Approval by OVW | December, 2018 |
| Develop Needs Assessment Plan | January - April 2019 |
| Submit Needs Assessment | May 2019 |
| Approval by OVW | June 2019 |
| Conduct Needs Assessment | July and August 2019 |
| Develop Findings Report | September 2019 |
| Approval by OVW | October 2019 |
| Develop Strategic Plan | November 2019 |
| Approval by OVW | December 2019 |
| Implementation | January 2020 – October 2020 |

##### Appendices



**A:**

**Let’s talk!**

**Mass Rights for Change** is holding focus groups to hear what **YOU** think about providing services that people need!

Things we talk about in the focus group will be confidential and private.



There will not be any negative consequences for you at your work and you can tell us exactly what you think.

**If you are interested in participating, please contact**: Inger Riley **508-203-1013** or at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com)



**Let’s talk!**

**Mass Rights for Change** is holding focus groups to hear what YOU think about getting the services you need!



Things we talk about in the focus group will ***be confidential and private***.

**Participants will receive a $20 gift card**

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**If you are interested in participating, please contact**: Inger Riley **508-203-1013** or at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com)

**Appendix B:**

**Information Sheet for People With I/DD**

**Information Sheet**

What can organizations do better to support you?

How do you look for services you need?

#### What is helpful or not helpful when getting services?

**Mass Rights for Change** wants to find out!

Would you like to join in a group meeting to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

Some things to know:

• Each group of 6-8 people will last about an hour to an hour and a half, and will be held in a wheelchair-accessible location.

• Each group will have a facilitator and/or co-facilitator to ask questions.

• Each group will have a note-taker who will record what is said in the group.

• Each group will have a counselor and a self-advocate available outside the door for support.

• You will get a $20.00 gift card (even if you don’t stay for the entire group).

• Answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering.

• If you started to answer a question you can change your mind and stop.

• You can take a break or leave the group at any time.

* Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used.
* No one will know what you said and your services will stay the same.
* If our questions make you think of personal stories, please don’t share them in the group. You can speak to someone outside the group if you want.
* We will keep what you say confidential unless there are safety concerns.
* There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the group or an interview.
* On the RSVP form you can request accommodations. We will ask if you want us to send you a reminder.

If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at meetingremind@gmail.com.

Information Sheet for Survivors

Information Sheet

What can organizations do better to support you?

How do you look for services you need?

#### What is helpful or not helpful when getting services?

**Mass Rights for Change** wants to find out!

Would you like to join in a focus group to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

Some things to know:

• Each group of 6-8 people will last about an hour to an hour and a half, and will be held in a wheelchair-accessible location.

• Each group will have a facilitator and/or co-facilitator to ask questions.

• Each group will have a note-taker who will record what is said in the group.

• Each group will have a counselor and a self-advocate available outside the door for support.

• You will get a $20.00 gift card (even if you don’t stay for the entire group).

• Answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering.

• If you started to answer a question you can change your mind and stop.

• You can take a break or leave the group at any time.

* Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used.
* No one will know what you said and your services will stay the same.
* If our questions make you think of personal stories, please don’t share them in the group. You can speak to someone outside the group if you want.
* We will keep what you say confidential unless there are safety concerns.
* There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the group or an interview.
* On the RSVP form you can request accommodations. We will ask if you want us to send you a reminder.

If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com).

### Information Sheet for Staff of Pathways and VRLC

**Information Sheet**

What can organizations do better to support survivors of sexual violence?

How comfortable are you providing services to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilitiesHow do you look for services you need?

#### What is helpful or not helpful for survivors getting services?

**Mass Rights for Change** wants to find out!

Would you like to join in a focus group to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

Some things to know:

• Each group of 6-8 people will last about an hour to an hour and a half, and will be held in a wheelchair-accessible location.

• Each group will have a facilitator and/or co-facilitator to ask questions.

• Each group will have a note-taker who will record what is said in the group.

• Answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering.

• If you started to answer a question you can change your mind and stop.

• You can take a break or leave the group at any time.

* Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used.
* No one will know what you said and your services will stay the same.
* If our questions make you think of personal stories or about specific clients, please don’t share them in the group.
* We will keep what you say confidential unless there are safety concerns.
* There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the group or an interview.
* On the RSVP form you can request accommodations. We will ask if you want us to send you a reminder.
* Nothing you say will jeopardize your employment.

If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at meetingremind@gmail.com.

Information Sheet for Guardians and Parents/ Support People of People with I/DD

Information Sheet

What can organizations do better to support people with I/DD?

How do you support people to look for services they need?

#### What is helpful or not helpful when getting services?

**Mass Rights for Change** wants to find out!

Would you like to join in a focus group to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

Some things to know:

• Each group of 6-8 people will last about an hour to an hour and a half, and will be held in a wheelchair- accessible location.

• Each group will have a facilitator and/or co-facilitator to ask questions.

• Each group will have a note-taker who will record what is said in the group.

• Each group will have a counselor and a self-advocate available outside the door for support.

• You will get a $20.00 gift card (even if you don’t stay for the entire group).

• Answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering.

• If you started to answer a question you can change your mind and stop.

• You can take a break or leave the group at any time.

* Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used.
* No one will know what you said and your services will stay the same.
* If our questions make you think of personal stories, please don’t share them in the group. You can speak to someone outside the group if you want.
* We will keep what you say confidential unless there are safety concerns.
* There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the group or an interview.
* On the RSVP form you can request accommodations. We will ask if you want us to send you a reminder.

If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com).

**Information Sheet for People Getting Gift Cards Who Join Groups - Accessible**

Would you like to join in a group meeting to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mass Rights for Change**  **wants to find out…** |  | |
| What can organizations do to support you? |  | |
| How do you look for services you need? | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\LLJ509NW\theexplorer[1].jpg | |
| What is helpful or not helpful when getting services? |  | |
| **Some things to know…** | | |
| Each group of 6-8 people will last about one hour and will be held in a wheelchair-accessible location. | |  |
| Each group will have a facilitator and possibly a co-facilitator who will ask you questions. | |  |
| You will get a $20 gift card (even if you don’t stay for the entire group). | |  |
| You can answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering. | |  |
| If you started to answer a question, you can change your mind and stop any time. | |  |
| You can take a break or leave the group at any time. | |  |
| Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used. | | **X** |
| No one will know what you said and nothing bad will happen because you participated in the group. | |  |
| If our questions make you think of personal stories, please don’t share them in the group. | |  |
| There will be someone available that you can talk to during or after the group. We will also have support for you to reach out to if you need someone to talk to after you leave group. | |  |
| We will keep what you say confidential unless by law we have to tell if you are not safe. | |  |
| There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the groups. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\Q7IDBB50\right-1712994_960_720[1].png |
| On the RSVP form you can request accommodations and say if you want to come. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G9SBLKUQ\Alternative_Handicapped_Accessible_sign.svg[1].png |
| If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | |  |

**Information Sheet for Staff Who Join Groups - Accessible**

Would you like to join in a focus group to talk about this? If you can’t make the group, we are also scheduling individual interviews to ask the same questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mass Rights for Change**  **wants to find out…** |  | |
| What can organizations do to support you? |  | |
| How do survivors look for services? | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\LLJ509NW\theexplorer[1].jpg | |
| What is helpful or not helpful when getting services? |  | |
| **Some things to know…** | | |
| Each group of 6-8 people will last about one hour and will be held in a wheelchair-accessible location. | |  |
| Each group will have a facilitator and possibly a co-facilitator who will ask you questions. | |  |
| You can answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering. | |  |
| If you started to answer a question, you can change your mind and stop any time. | |  |
| You can take a break or leave the group at any time. | |  |
| Some answers might be shared later but no names will be used. | | **X** |
| No one will know what you said and nothing bad will happen because you participated in the group. | |  |
| If our questions make you think of personal stories, please don’t share them in the group. | |  |
| We will keep what you say confidential unless by law we have to tell if you are not safe. | |  |
| There will be a consent guide to review before you agree to join the groups. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\Q7IDBB50\right-1712994_960_720[1].png |
| On the RSVP form you can request accommodations and say if you want to come. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G9SBLKUQ\Alternative_Handicapped_Accessible_sign.svg[1].png |
| If you have more questions please contact Inger Riley at (508) 203-1013 or email at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | |  |

**Appendix C:**

##### Informed Consent Guide for People with I/DD

**Informed Consent Guide**

For Mass Rights for Change

Focus Groups and Interviews



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My name is Inger Riley |  | |
| I work with Mass Rights for Change (MRfC) |  | |
| MRfC wants to find out about how to improve services to people with I/DD. | Image result for time to improve | |
| We are asking you to **help us** with this. |  | |
| We want to know what you think about services for people with I/DD. |  | |
| We want to ask you questions about your experiences, beliefs and thoughts about services in the community. | Related image | |
| We will explain the process to you and will answer your questions. | Image result for introductions clipart | |
| We will also ask you questions. |  | |
| Questions we may ask might make you think of personal stories in your life. |  | |
| Please do not share those during the group. |  | |
| If you feel uncomfortable you can take a break and talk with someone if you want. There will be a counselor and an advocate outside available |  | |
| After we talk to many people we may use what we learn to make services better for people with I/DD |  | |
| **YOUR QUESTIONS** | | |
| Why should I take part? | | Image result for why should I clipart |
| You are the experts. Your input can help MRfC understand how to make services better. | |  |
| **Do I have to take part?** | |  |
| No, it is your choice. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\2L8U0KEK\choices[1].jpg |
| You can change your mind.  No problem...walk away. | | Image result for never mind clipart |
| You do not need to tell us why.  Just walk away. | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Will you tell other people what I say? | Related image |
| **No.**  We might use your words but not your name. If you say that you or someone you know is getting hurt we must report it. |  |
| Will my voice be recorded? | Image result for audio recording clipart |
| It may but if it is we will delete it as soon as we write down what you said. |  |
| Your name and information will be private. Anonymous. | Image result for anonymous clipart |
| Others will not be able to pick you out. | Related image |
| You can ask more questions on the day of the interview. | Related image |
| Please let a member of staff know if you want to **take part**. |  |
| **Questions** | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G9SBLKUQ\question-marks[1].jpg |
| Speak to Inger Riley |  |
| Contact Inger Riley  Phone: 508-203-1013  [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | http://www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au/files/75c9b22c-bb91-47f1-bfb2-a3ae00e514c7/contactus.jpg |

**Informed Consent Guide for Survivors**

**Informed Consent Guide**

For Mass Rights for Change

Focus Groups and Interviews



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My name is Inger Riley |  | |
| I work with Mass Rights for Change (MRfC) |  | |
| MRfC wants to find out about how to improve services for survivors of sexual violence. | Image result for time to improve | |
| We are asking you to **help us** with this. |  | |
| We want to know what you think about services for survivors. |  | |
| We want to ask you questions about your experiences, beliefs and thoughts about services in the community. | Related image | |
| We will explain the process to you and will answer your questions. | Image result for introductions clipart | |
| We will also ask you questions. |  | |
| Questions we may ask might make you think of personal stories in your life. |  | |
| Please do not share those during the group. |  | |
| If you feel uncomfortable you can take a break and talk with someone if you want. There will be a counselor outside available. |  | |
| After we talk to many people we may use what we learn to make services better for survivors. |  | |
| **YOUR QUESTIONS** | | |
| Why should I take part? | | Image result for why should I clipart |
| You are the experts. Your input can help MRfC understand how to make services better. | |  |
| **Do I have to take part?** | |  |
| No, it is your choice. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\2L8U0KEK\choices[1].jpg |
| You can change your mind.  No problem...walk away. | | Image result for never mind clipart |
| You do not need to tell us why.  Just walk away. | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Will you tell other people what I say? | Related image |
| **No.**  We might use your words but not your name. If you say that you or someone you know is getting hurt we must report it. |  |
| Will my voice be recorded? | Image result for audio recording clipart |
| It may but if it is we will delete it as soon as we write down what you said. |  |
| Your name and information will be private. Anonymous. | Image result for anonymous clipart |
| Others will not be able to pick you out. | Related image |
| You can ask more questions on the day of the interview. | Related image |
| Please let Inger know if you want to **take part**. |  |
| **Questions** | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G9SBLKUQ\question-marks[1].jpg |
| Speak to Inger Riley |  |
| Contact Inger Riley  Phone: 508-203-1013  [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | http://www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au/files/75c9b22c-bb91-47f1-bfb2-a3ae00e514c7/contactus.jpg |

##### Informed Consent Guide for Staff of Pathways and VRLC

**Informed Consent Guide**

For Mass Rights for Change

Focus Groups and Interviews



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My name is Inger Riley |  | |
| I work with Mass Rights for Change (MRfC) |  | |
| MRfC wants to find out about how to improve services for survivors of sexual violence. | Image result for time to improve | |
| We are asking you to **help us** with this. |  | |
| We want to know what you think about services for survivors. |  | |
| We want to ask you questions about your experiences, beliefs and thoughts about services in the community. | Related image | |
| We will explain the process to you and will answer your questions. | Image result for introductions clipart | |
| We will also ask you questions. |  | |
| Questions we may ask might make you think of personal stories in your life. |  | |
| Please do not share those during the group. |  | |
| If you feel uncomfortable you can take a break. |  | |
| After we talk to many people we may use what we learn to make services better for survivors. |  | |
| **YOUR QUESTIONS** | | |
| Why should I take part? | | Image result for why should I clipart |
| You are the experts. Your input can help MRfC understand how to make services better. | |  |
| **Do I have to take part?** | |  |
| No, it is your choice. | | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\2L8U0KEK\choices[1].jpg |
| You can change your mind.  No problem...walk away. | | Image result for never mind clipart |
| You do not need to tell us why.  Just walk away. | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Will you tell other people what I say? | Related image |
| **No.**  We might use your words but not your name. If you say that you or someone you know is getting hurt we must report it. |  |
| Will my voice be recorded? | Image result for audio recording clipart |
| It may but if it is we will delete it as soon as we write down what you said. |  |
| Your name and information will be private. Anonymous. | Image result for anonymous clipart |
| Others will not be able to pick you out. | Related image |
| You can ask more questions on the day of the interview. | Related image |
| Please let Inger know if you want to **take part**. |  |
| **Questions** | C:\Users\hleboeuf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G9SBLKUQ\question-marks[1].jpg |
| Speak to Inger Riley |  |
| Contact Inger Riley  Phone: 508-203-1013  [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | http://www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au/files/75c9b22c-bb91-47f1-bfb2-a3ae00e514c7/contactus.jpg |

##### Informed Consent for Guardians and Parents/Support People of People with I/DD

**Informed Consent Guide**

For Mass Rights for Change

Focus Groups and Interviews



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My name is Inger Riley |  | |
| I work with Mass Rights for Change (MRfC) |  | |
| MRfC wants to find out about how to improve services to people with I/DD. | Image result for time to improve | |
| We are asking you to **help us** with this. |  | |
| We want to know what you think about services for people with I/DD. |  | |
| We want to ask you questions about your experiences, beliefs and thoughts about services in the community. | Related image | |
| We will explain the process to you and will answer your questions. | Image result for introductions clipart | |
| We will also ask you questions. |  | |
| Questions we may ask might make you think of personal stories in your life. |  | |
| Please do not share those during the group. |  | |
| If you feel uncomfortable you can take a break and talk with someone if you want. There will be a counselor outside available. |  | |
| After we talk to many people we may use what we learn to make services better for people with I/DD |  | |
| **YOUR QUESTIONS** | | |
| Why should I take part? | | Image result for why should I clipart |
| You are the experts. Your input can help MRfC understand how to make services better. | |  |
| **Do I have to take part?** | |  |
| No, it is your choice. | | choices[1] |
| You can change your mind.  No problem...walk away. | | Image result for never mind clipart |
| You do not need to tell us why.  Just walk away. | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Will you tell other people what I say? | Related image |
| **No.**  We might use your words but not your name. If you say that you or someone you know is getting hurt we must report it. |  |
| Will my voice be recorded? | Image result for audio recording clipart |
| It may but if it is we will delete it as soon as we write down what you said. |  |
| Your name and information will be private. Anonymous. | Image result for anonymous clipart |
| Others will not be able to pick you out. | Related image |
| You can ask more questions on the day of the interview. | Related image |
| Please let a member of staff know if you want to **take part**. |  |
| **Questions** | question-marks[1] |
| Speak to Inger Riley |  |
| Contact Inger Riley  Phone: 508-203-1013  [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com) | http://www.snowyriver.nsw.gov.au/files/75c9b22c-bb91-47f1-bfb2-a3ae00e514c7/contactus.jpg |

**Appendix D:**

##### Consent Form

This is to go along with the Informed Consent Guide when taking part in a focus group or in an interview.

For information or questions Contact:

Project Director, Inger Riley at

(508) 203-11013 or at [MeetingsRemind@Gmail.com](mailto:MeetingsRemind@Gmail.com)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Please Mark Your Answer | | MCj03826130000[1] | |
|  | I have read and understand the Consent Agreement | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | I had time to think about the group/interview | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | I was able to ask the questions I needed to and got the answers. | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | I am happy to have the things I do and say written down and recorded. | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
| **X** | I understand that **my name will not be used** and that other **people will not know what I said.** | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
| Image result for new sad experience clipart | I understand that there will be a **counselor available** if I need to speak someone during or after the group. | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | Even after the group or interview starts, I know that I do not have to take part and **I can change my mind**, without giving a reason **at any time.** | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | I understand that I have **the right to refuse to answer any of the questions,** and I do not even have to give a reason why. | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |
|  | **I agree to be part of the group or interview.** | 120px-Thumb_up_icon.svg[1]Yes | Circle-Thumb-Down[1]No |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Your First Name*** | ***First Letter of Your Last Name*** | ***Date*** |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix E:**

## RSVP Form

# Please include with the *Accommodations Request Form*.

Thank you for being interested in joining the *Mass Rights for Change* focus groups. Please complete this form and return it to the person who talked to you about the groups. All information you give us is confidential and this form will be kept until you go to the group, but then will be destroyed after the group.

My First Name is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The First Letter of my Last name:\_\_\_

The best way for me to take part is:

Attending the group below:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like a meeting reminder by:

#### Phone Call Email Text Mail All of these

Here is my information to do that:

It is safe to leave a message at that phone number.

**~OR~**

I would like to help, but not in a group. Please contact me to schedule an interview.

### Please sign your Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you need any assistance in order to participate?**

\*If yes, please fill out this

## Accommodation Request Form

Please include with the *RSVP Form*

It is important that the space feels comfortable for you. Please let us know what type of supports or arrangements you need during the focus groups or in a one-to-one meeting. This is provided to you free of charge.

Please check all that apply for you.

**Accommodations:**

American Sign Language (ASL)

Other Sign Language (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Spoken language interpretation (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

##### Assistive listening device

##### Large print

Braille

Personal Care Aid

Other - Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Any other information you want us to know:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F:**

**Mass Rights for Change Gift Card Log**



**Appendix G:**

Mass Rights for Change Meeting Reminder

We are excited that you are interested in helping out with the MRfC focus groups.

Your meeting is on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your meeting is: a group or 1:1

If you have any questions you can contact Inger Riley at:

MeetingRemind@Gmail.com

(508) 203-1013

**Appendix H:**

**Online Survey Questions for Pathways Board of Directors**

As a Pathways Board member, your input is very important. Your answers will help us find out how we can better support survivors of sexual violence with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) feel more comfortable and welcomed at Pathways for Change.

1. What would you like people to know about how to best support survivors of sexual violence?
2. How are decisions made at Pathways? (Such as: Operationally? Financially? Administratively? Programmatically? Leadership?)
3. How are policies made and/or changed?
   1. When was the last time you changed a major policy?
   2. What was that process like?
4. What do you think is Pathways’ biggest obstacle for reaching survivors?
5. What is your biggest resource challenge? (Such as: Financially, Human Resources, Materials, Networking, etc.)
6. How should the physical space of the agency “feel” to help survivors feel safe/comfortable? *Some examples: Accessible space, accessible materials, arrangement of furniture, sounds, colors used to decorate, temperature of the room, etc*.
7. What would you as a board member like to know about how to best support individuals with I/DD?
8. What polices does Pathways have, or need to have in place, to best support survivors with I/DD?
   1. What kinds of trainings would you need to learn more about survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD?
   2. What trainings would we need for staff to learn more about survivors with I/DD?
9. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share resources about Pathways for survivors with I/DD?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

**Appendix I:**

**Beginning Script for Focus Groups and Interviews for Survivors**

Hello and thank you so much for agreeing to help us! My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (If Co-facilitator… and this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.) This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is our note-taker and will be writing things we say down and also will be recording us to make sure she gets it right. She will not use anyone’s names when she writes things down, and once she has put your comments down anonymously, she will destroy the notes and delete the recording.

I want to remind you about the consent form that you went over and signed. It said that what you say is anonymous and that we will keep what we say private so people can feel comfortable sharing. But if someone is in danger that is the only time I would not be able to keep it private, because of safety.

We are so glad you agreed to come and talk to us today, and I just want to make sure you are all still agreeing to that consent form that you signed? If you have changed your mind and want to leave, that is okay too.

So if you all are okay to stay, we can start. [Pause to make sure people have time to agree to stay.]

Okay, so welcome to our focus group! We want to find out what you think is helpful or not helpful when you are trying to get services in the community. You can answer these questions about any services you think about in the community. There are no right or wrong answers. I am not going to call on people. You can choose to answer or not answer any question. I will wait after each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak has a turn. And let’s make sure that we give each other time to speak, and not talk at the same time.

Just as a reminder, please don’t share really personal things about yourself here. We do know that even just talking about some things that don’t go well with services can be hard. So we have a counselor available outside, just in case you need some support. We’ll spend about an hour to an hour and a half talking today and you will have a gift card to take home with you when you leave. You will still be able to keep your gift card even if you don’t answer the questions or choose to leave now or before the group ends. We hope you feel free to answer the questions that you’d like to answer. It will be kept private, so you can tell us what you really think!

Are there any questions before we start?

**Beginning Script for Focus Groups and Interviews for People with I/DD**

Hello and thank you so much for agreeing to help us! My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (If Co-facilitator… and this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.) This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is our note-taker and will be writing things we say down and also will be recording us to make sure she gets it right. She will not use anyone’s names when she writes things down, and once she has put your comments down anonymously, she will destroy the notes and delete the recording.

I want to remind you about the consent form that you went over and signed. It said that what you say is anonymous and that we will keep what we say private so people can feel comfortable sharing. But if someone is in danger that is the only time I would not be able to keep it private, because of safety.

We are so glad you agreed to come and talk to us today, and I just want to make sure you are all still agreeing to that consent form that you signed? If you have changed your mind and want to leave, that is okay too.

So if you all are okay to stay, we can start. [Pause to make sure people have time to agree to stay.]

Okay, so welcome to our focus group! We want to find out what you think is helpful or not helpful when you are trying to get services in the community. You can answer these questions about any services you think about in the community. There are no right or wrong answers. I am not going to call on people. You can choose to answer or not answer any question. I will wait after each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak has a turn. And let’s make sure that we give each other time to speak, and not talk at the same time.

Just as a reminder, please don’t share really personal things about yourself here. We do know that even just talking about some things that don’t go well with services can be hard. So we have a self-advocate available that you can go and talk with to get support and with them is a counselor just in case you need some more support. We’ll spend about an hour to an hour and a half talking today and you will have a gift card to take home with you when you leave. You will still be able to keep your gift card even if you don’t answer the questions or choose to leave now or before the group ends. We hope you feel free to answer the questions that you’d like to answer. It will be kept private, so you can tell us what you really think!

Are there any questions before we start?

**Beginning Script for Focus Groups and Interviews for Guardians and Parents of People with I/DD**

Hello and thank you so much for agreeing to help us! My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (If Co-facilitator… and this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.) This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is our note-taker and will be writing things we say down and also will be recording us to make sure she gets it right. She will not use anyone’s names when she writes things down, and once she has put your comments down anonymously, she will destroy the notes and delete the recording.

I want to remind you about the consent form that you went over and signed. It said that what you say is anonymous and that we will keep what we say private so people can feel comfortable sharing. But if someone is in danger that is the only time I would not be able to keep it private, because of safety.

We are so glad you agreed to come and talk to us today, and I just want to make sure you are all still agreeing to that consent form that you signed? If you have changed your mind and want to leave, that is okay too.

So if you all are okay to stay, we can start. [Pause to make sure people have time to agree to stay.]

Okay, so welcome to our focus group! We want to find out what you think is helpful or not helpful when people with I/DD are trying to get services in the community. You can answer these questions about any services you think about in the community. There are no right or wrong answers. I am not going to call on people. You can choose to answer or not answer any question. I will wait after each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak has a turn. And let’s make sure that we give each other time to speak, and not talk at the same time.

Just as a reminder, please don’t share really personal things about yourself here. We do know that even just talking about some things that don’t go well with services can be hard. So we have a counselor available outside, just in case you need some support. We’ll spend about an hour to an hour and a half talking today and you will have a gift card to take home with you when you leave. You will still be able to keep your gift card even if you don’t answer the questions or choose to leave now or before the group ends. We hope you feel free to answer the questions that you’d like to answer. It will be kept private, so you can tell us what you really think!

Are there any questions before we start?

**Beginning Script for Focus Groups and Interviews for Staff of VRLC and Pathways**

Hello and thank you so much for agreeing to help us! My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (If Co-facilitator… and this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.) This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is our note-taker and will be writing things we say down and also will be recording us to make sure she gets it right. She will not use anyone’s names when she writes things down, and once she has put your comments down anonymously, she will destroy the notes and delete the recording.

I want to remind you about the consent form that you went over and signed. It said that what you say is anonymous and that we will keep what we say private so people can feel comfortable sharing. But if someone is in danger that is the only time I would not be able to keep it private, because of safety.

We are so glad you agreed to come and talk to us today, and I just want to make sure you are all still agreeing to that consent form that you signed? If you have changed your mind and want to leave, that is okay too.

So if you all are okay to stay, we can start. [Pause to make sure people have time to agree to stay.]

Okay, so welcome to our focus group! We want to find out what you think about providing services to survivors and people with I/DD in the community. There are no right or wrong answers. I am not going to call on people. You can choose to answer or not answer any question. I will wait after each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak has a turn. And let’s make sure that we give each other time to speak, and not talk at the same time.

Just as a reminder, please don’t share really personal things about yourself or clients here. We’ll spend about an hour to an hour and a half talking today. We hope you feel free to answer the questions that you’d like to answer. It will be kept private, so you can tell us what you really think!

Are there any questions before we start?

**Appendix J:**

**Focus Group Questions for People with I/DD**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. Think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and where you can trust the staff that works there. A place that is easy for you to go to and easy for you to share personal information. I’m going to ask you some questions about what makes you feel comfortable and trust this place. I want you to think about this place when answering these questions.

1. What do you like about this place?
   1. Think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
   2. Is there anything about the space you like? *Some examples: Accessible space, Accessible materials, Arrangement of furniture, Sounds, Colors used to decorate, Temperature of the room, etc.*
   3. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?

Let’s talk about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but it can be hard to ask for help from others. For these questions, think about the last time you needed help from someone (such as help calling someone, reading papers or getting somewhere).

1. How did you get the help that you needed?
   1. How did you know to get the help from that person or agency?
2. When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don’t understand you and your disability, what is that like?
   1. What would help them better understand you?
3. Did the staff talk to you about confidentiality? Privacy?
   1. How do you feel about an agency sharing your information?
   2. How important is confidentiality when you’re receiving services?
   3. Is it ever okay for a staff person or agency to share information about you with others?
   4. Did they require you to sign a release of information when you first met with them?
      1. If yes: Do you feel you had to sign that release?
      2. Did they explain what a release is and who they would share information with, and how you could control that information?
4. Do you know what your human rights are? (The right to be who you want to be and live how you want to live.) If yes, how did you find out about them?

Sometimes, the way agencies do things makes it hard for people to get the information they need about services that are available.

1. Can you think of things agencies do that make it hard to get information? *Such as:* How they communicate? Did they provide accommodations? Was it accessible for you? Were the materials available to you the way you needed them to be?
2. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support you?
3. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?
4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information for people with disabilities about services?
5. Who, if anyone, helps you find this information?
6. Is there anything else you want to make sure we know or can tell others about helping people with I/DD get good services?

### Note: If running out of time, skip to questions 7 and 11

## Focus Group Questions for Survivors of Sexual Violence

*Read Beginning Script:*

Okay, so let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. I’d like to begin, by asking you about how you learned about Pathways for Change.

1. Where are some places that would be the best place to learn about Pathways services? *Some examples we hope to hear are: Hospital, Police, Ambulance, Family or Friend, Church/temple/synagogue bulletin boards or Newsletters, Library bulletin boards or Newsletters. Referral from another agency, Social media- Facebook, twitter, etc., Internet*

Now, I’d like to ask you to think about what other agencies or service providers do, or could do, to help make your experience positive when accessing services.

1. How did the agency look and feel when you went inside? Did it feel comfortable? What made it feel that way? *Some examples might be: Accessible space and materials, arrangement of furniture, sounds, and colors used to decorate, temperature of the room, etc.*
   1. How did the staff treat you? Were they supportive and helpful?
   2. Were materials and information provided? Were they useful?
2. Did the staff talk to you about confidentiality or Privacy?
   1. How important is confidentiality or privacy when you’re receiving services?
   2. When you first met with the staff person, were you told to sign a release of information to share your personal information with someone outside that agency?

*For those who answer yes, we could also ask:*

* 1. Do you feel you had to sign that release?
  2. Did they explain what a release was and who they would share information about you to?
  3. Is it ever okay for a staff person or agency to share information about you and the details of your abuse with a different agency?

1. What does safety mean to you?
2. Have you ever worked with a staff person or agency where you didn’t feel safe to talk about yourself?
   1. What have service providers done to help you feel safe?
   2. What made you feel comfortable enough to trust the organization or service provider enough to disclose?
   3. What did they do that stopped you from trusting them?
   4. Did you feel that you had to share about yourself in order to get help from them?
3. Overall, was the agency easy to find? Were services easy to connect with?
   1. Did the services provided meet your needs or did the agency provide a resource or referral to help you get your needs met?
   2. Was the service provided skilled and helpful for you? In what ways?
4. What would you like service providers to know about how to best support survivors of SV?
   1. What is the one thing you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services to survivors of SV?
5. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

**Focus Group Questions for The Rainbow Support Group**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. Think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and where you can trust the staff that works there. A place that is easy for you to go to and easy for you to share personal information. I’m going to ask you some questions about what makes you feel comfortable and trust this place. I want you to think about this place when answering these questions.

1. What do you like about this place?
   1. Think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
   2. Is there anything about the space you like? *Some examples: Accessible space, Accessible materials, Arrangement of furniture, Sounds, Colors used to decorate, Temperature of the room, etc.*
   3. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?

Let’s talk about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but it can be hard to ask for help from others. For these questions, think about the last time you needed help from someone (such as help calling someone, reading papers or getting somewhere).

1. How did you get the help that you needed?
   1. How did you know to get the help from that person or agency?
2. When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don’t understand you and your disability, what is that like?
   1. What would help them better understand you?
3. Did the staff talk to you about confidentiality? Privacy?
   1. How do you feel about an agency sharing your information?
   2. How important is confidentiality when you’re receiving services?
   3. Is it ever okay for a staff person or agency to share information about you with others?
   4. Did they require you to sign a release of information when you first met with them?
      1. If yes: Do you feel you had to sign that release?
      2. Did they explain what a release is and who they would share information with, and how you could control that information?
4. Do you know what your human rights are? (The right to be who you want to be and live how you want to live.) If yes, how did you find out about them?

Sometimes, the way agencies do things makes it hard for people to get the information they need about services that are available.

1. Can you think of things agencies do that make it hard to get information? *Such as:* How they communicate? Did they provide accommodations? Was it accessible for you? Were the materials available to you the way you needed them to be?
2. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support you?
3. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?
4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information for people with disabilities about services?
5. Who, if anyone, helps you find this information?
6. Is there anything else you want to make sure we know or can tell others about helping people with I/DD get good services?

### Note: If running out of time, skip to questions 7 and 11

**Focus Group Questions for People with I/DD**

**who Have Guardians**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. Think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and where you can trust the staff that works there. A place that is easy for you to go to and easy for you to share personal information. I’m going to ask you some questions about what makes you feel comfortable and trust this place. I want you to think about this place when answering these questions.

1. What do you like about this place?
   1. Think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
   2. Is there anything about the space you like? *Some examples: Accessible space, Accessible materials, Arrangement of furniture, Sounds, Colors used to decorate, Temperature of the room, etc.*
   3. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?

Let’s talk about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but it can be hard to ask for help from others. For these questions, think about the last time you needed help from someone (such as help calling someone, reading papers or getting somewhere).

1. How did you get the help that you needed?
   1. How did you know to get the help from that person or agency?
2. When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don’t understand you and your disability, what is that like?
   1. What would help them better understand you?
3. Did the staff talk to you about confidentiality? Privacy?
   1. How do you feel about an agency sharing your information?
   2. How important is confidentiality when you’re receiving services?
   3. Is it ever okay for a staff person or agency to share information about you with others?
   4. Did they require you to sign a release of information when you first met with them?
      1. If yes: Do you feel you had to sign that release?
      2. Did they explain what a release is and who they would share information with, and how you could control that information?
4. Do you know what your human rights are? (The right to be who you want to be and live how you want to live.) If yes, how did you find out about them?

Sometimes, the way agencies do things makes it hard for people to get the information they need about services that are available.

1. Can you think of things agencies do that make it hard to get information? *Such as:* How they communicate? Did they provide accommodations? Was it accessible for you? Were the materials available to you the way you needed them to be?
2. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support you?
3. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?
4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information for people with disabilities about services?
5. Who, if anyone, helps you find this information?
6. Is there anything else you want to make sure we know or can tell others about helping people with I/DD get good services?
7. Is there anything you would want a guardian to know?

### Note: If running out of time, skip to questions 7 and 11

## Focus Group Questions for Guardians and Parents

## of People with I/DD

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. Think about a place in your community where you feel comfortable, and where you can trust the staff that works there. A place that is easy for you to go to and easy for you to share personal information. I’m going to ask you some questions about what makes you feel comfortable and trust this place. I want you to think about this place when answering these questions.

1. What do you like about this place?
   1. Think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
   2. Is there anything about the space you like? *Some examples: Accessible space, Accessible materials, Arrangement of furniture, Sounds, Colors used to decorate, Temperature of the room, etc.*
   3. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?

Let’s talk about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but it can be hard to ask for help from others. For these questions, think about the last time you needed help from someone (such as help calling someone, reading papers or getting somewhere).

1. How did you get the help that you needed?
   1. How did you know to get the help from that person or agency?
2. When you go somewhere in the community for services and people don’t understand you and your disability, what is that like?
   1. What would help them better understand you?
3. Did the staff talk to you about confidentiality? Privacy?
   1. How do you feel about an agency sharing your information?
   2. How important is confidentiality when you’re receiving services?
   3. Is it ever okay for a staff person or agency to share information about you with others?
   4. Did they require you to sign a release of information when you first met with them?
      1. If yes: Do you feel you had to sign that release?
      2. Did they explain what a release is and who they would share information with, and how you could control that information?
4. Do you know what your human rights are? (The right to be who you want to be and live how you want to live.) If yes, how did you find out about them?

Sometimes, the way agencies do things makes it hard for people to get the information they need about services that are available.

1. Can you think of things agencies do that make it hard to get information? *Such as:* How they communicate? Did they provide accommodations? Was it accessible for you? Were the materials available to you the way you needed them to be?
2. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support you?
3. What would be the most important thing you would teach them?
4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information for people with disabilities about services?
5. Who, if anyone, helps you find this information?
6. Is there anything else you want to make sure we know or can tell others about helping people with I/DD get good services?

### Note: If running out of time, skip to questions 7 and 11

# Focus Group Questions for Awareness and Action Trainers

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay let’s begin! Please don’t share personal stories or any stories from people you have trained that may be identifying in any way. Think about being an Awareness and Action Trainer and think about how you train as well as the people that you are training while you answer these questions.

1. How do you help people feel safe and build trust?
   1. What do you do to make people more comfortable?
   2. What are ways you get participants to trust you?
2. How do you make materials more accessible?
   1. How do you know someone understands what you are saying?
   2. Do you do anything differently if they don’t understand?
3. How do you talk about confidentiality or privacy?
4. Do you find the RCC staff helpful during and after trainings?
5. Do you think you have good training to respond to requests for support on the topic of sexual abuse? How did you get that training?
6. What do you think survivors of sexual violence with I/DD need most from agencies trying to support them?
7. What if anything, do you think is missing from the trainings?
8. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

**Focus Group Questions for Pathways Staff and Volunteers**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay, let’s begin! Please do not share details about clients. I’d like to begin, by asking you about how survivors with I/DD learn about Pathways for Change, Inc.’s resources and how we can best support all survivors including survivors with I/DD.

1. Where are some places that would be the best for survivors of sexual violence to learn about Pathways services? *Some examples we hope to hear are: Hospital, Police, Ambulance, Family or Friend, Church/temple/synagogue bulletin boards or Newsletters, Library bulletin boards or Newsletters. Referral from another agency, Social media- Facebook, twitter, etc., Internet*

Now, I’d like to ask you to think about what agencies or service providers could do to help make people’s experience positive when accessing services after a traumatic event.

1. How should Pathways’ physical space/location of the agency “feel” to help a survivor feel safe/comfortable? *Some examples: Accessible space, accessible materials, arrangement of furniture, sounds, colors used to decorate, temperature of the room, etc.*
   1. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?
2. Overall, do you think Pathways is easy to find and that Pathways services are convenient?
   1. If no, what could Pathways do to make services easier to access?
   2. Do you feel there are barriers that could prevent someone from connecting with Pathways?
3. How should a counselor talk to clients about confidentiality/Privacy?
4. When supporting a survivor at Pathways, should the agency require the person to sign a release of information at the very first meeting?
   1. If yes: Do you think the individual would feel they were required to sign that release?
   2. How should the counselor explain what a release was and how we would share information about the individual?
   3. Is it ever okay for Pathways to keep on file an unconditional release of information as well as share information about a client and the details of their experience of SV with a different agency at our discretion, rather than the clients?
5. Have you ever worked with someone where the individual didn’t feel safe to talk about themselves?
   1. What did you do or could have done to help the individual feel comfortable enough to disclose?
   2. Did you feel that an individual would feel they are required to share about themselves (even when not comfortable) in order to receive help?
6. What are some best practices to know about how to support people who experience sexual violence?
   1. What is something you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services for individuals who experience sexual violence?
7. Have you ever worked with a client who had I/DD that you know of?
   1. If not, what do you think might be some barriers to providing them the best service you can?
8. Are there any policies or procedures which would guide you here? What would be helpful to you? What could Pathways do to help you feel better able to work with survivors with I/DD?
9. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

**Questions for Staff of VRLC**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay, let’s begin! Please do not share details about clients. I’d like to begin, by asking you about how survivors learn about VRLC resources and how we can best support all survivors including survivors with I/DD.

1. What practices have helped you to successfully engage with survivors and people who have experienced trauma? Was any training in particular successful?
2. What barriers do survivors face in trying to access VRLC services?
3. What barriers or challenges do you, individually, face in accepting/working on cases that involve sexual victimization?
4. Are you seeing clients with I/DD in your practice?
5. What barriers does VRLC, as an organization, face in accepting cases advocating for survivors? How about survivors with I/DD?
6. What privacy concerns do you have about representing survivors? Are those the same concerns you have for representing survivors with I/DD?
7. What would help you to feel better prepared and able to work with survivors with I/DD?
8. What policies and procedures does VRLC have in place to support you working with survivors with I/DD? What policies and procedures could they have that would help you?
9. Are there any other issues or concerns about working with survivors with I/DD that you would like to share?

Questions for MASS Board of Directors

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay, let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else. As MASS Board members, your input is very important. Your answers will help us to find out how we can help sexual assault survivors with I/DD feel more comfortable, and to make our agencies more welcoming places. Please think about MASS, and your role as board members and leaders when answering these questions.

Think about when you communicate with MASS or attend Saturday monthly board meetings.

1. What would you like people to know about how to best support and speak with Self-advocates?

a. Prompt: What would be the most important thing you would teach them about the best ways to support and speak with you?

2. How are decisions made at MASS?

3. How easy or hard is it to change policies at MASS? What is the process?

4. What information, training, and support could MASS offer to involve and welcome current or new self-advocate members?

5. What information and training should be offered to caregivers and staff about supporting and speaking with people with I/DD??

6. What is the biggest area where MASS needs more resources?

**Prompt**: By resources we mean things like additional services you think MASS should offer, or additional employees or funding for employees to work on areas you and the Board see as important for self-advocates

7. What work is MASS currently doing related to the subject of sexual violence?

8. In your work on the board, how often does the subject of sexual violence come up?

9. Do you know if MASS has any policies or procedures about supporting survivors of sexual violence?

10. What are effective and helpful ways to spread the word to self-advocates and people with I/DD about how to get help after sexual violence (and how to help victims/survivors)?

a. What would help people feel more comfortable when talking about sexual violence?

10. Does anything get in the way of talking about sexual violence (and helping victims/survivors)?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say?

**Focus Group Questions for People**

**who Support People with I/DD**

*Read Beginning Script*

Okay, let’s begin! Please remember to not share personal information about you or anyone else that you support. Your answers will help us to find out how we can help people with I/DD feel more comfortable, and to make our agencies more welcoming places.

Think about the people you support with I/DD:

1. Where are some places that would be the best for people with I/DD to learn about services? *Some examples we hope to hear are: Hospital, Police, Ambulance, Family or Friend, Church/temple/synagogue bulletin boards or Newsletters, Library bulletin boards or Newsletters. Referral from another agency, Social media- Facebook, twitter, etc., Internet*

Now, I’d like to ask you to think about what agencies or service providers could do to help make the experience positive for people with I/DD when accessing services.

1. How should the physical space/location of the agency “feel” to help a person with I/DD feel safe/comfortable? (Some examples: Accessible space, accessible materials, arrangement of furniture, sounds, colors used to decorate, temperature of the room, etc.)
   1. *Prompt:* What materials and information would be useful to have available?
2. How should staff talk to someone with I/DD about confidentiality? Privacy?
3. Have you ever supported someone with I/DD where the individual didn’t feel safe to talk about themselves when asking for help?
   1. What did you do or could have done to help the individual feel comfortable enough to speak up?
   2. Did you feel that an individual with I/DD felt they had to share about themselves (even when not comfortable) in order to receive help?
4. Have you ever supported someone with I/DD where the individual with I/DD didn’t feel safe to talk about themselves with a service provider?
   1. What could the service provider have done to help the individual feel comfortable enough to talk about themselves?
5. When you have supported someone with I/DD to access services, and you felt it was easy, why was that?
6. When you felt they were hard to access why was that?
7. Can you think of things agencies do that make it hard to get information? *Such as:* How they communicate? Did they provide accommodations? Was it accessible for you? Were the materials available to you the way you needed them to be?
8. What would help an individual get the information that they need?
9. If services provided do not meet the individual’s needs, how can an agency be told how to be better?
10. Have you ever provided that feedback to an agency? How did that go? What worked and what didn’t work?
11. Do agencies provide a resource or referral to help people get their needs met if that agency can’t meet the person’s need?
12. What are some best practices to know about how to support people with I/DD?
    1. *Prompt:* What is something you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services for individuals with I/DD?
13. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

**Appendix K:**

**Request to Participate in a Survey Email**

Hello,

I am writing to ask you as a member of the Pathways Board of Directors, if you would be willing to take about 15 - 20 minutes of your time to complete an online survey. As you know, Pathways has been involved with a grant from OVW, regarding improving services to survivors of sexual violence who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Through this grant, we have created a collaboration called Mass Rights for Change.

Mass Rights for Change is conducting a needs assessment, and as a member of the Pathways Board, you would be an invaluable resource to tell us what you think about how Pathways can improve services, both for current clients and any future clients who may have I/DD. We do know that people with I/DD are at much higher risk of becoming victims of sexual violence, and the goal of our collaboration is to help improve services, support, access and safety for these survivors.

If you would be willing to take this survey, please click on the link below to get right to our online survey.

*Insert Survey Monkey Link Here*

Your comments and answers will remain anonymous and not attributed to you, but your words may be used in a needs assessment report that will be generated from this process. This survey will be available until \_\_\_\_\_\_ for us to be able to use it in our needs assessment.

If you have any questions or comments about this, please don’t hesitate to contact Inger Riley, the Project Director for MRfC, at 508-203-1013 or at [meetingremind@gmail.com](mailto:meetingremind@gmail.com).

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope you will lend us some of your knowledge and expertise, so we can help improve the lives of people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence.

Sincerely,

Inger Riley and the entire Mass Rights for Change Team

