**GREENVILLE PARTNERS IN ACTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

*Creating access to a seamless network of services for*

*victims of domestic and sexual violence impacted by mental illness*

**INTRODUCTION**

Greenville Partners in Action (GPIA) is a three year project funded in October 2009 by the Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women’s Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities. The project is a partnership and collaboration of three organizations located in Greenville, South Carolina that have united to improve response to adult individuals with mental illness who are also victims of sexual and/or domestic violence. The three partner organizations are Julie Valentine Center (formerly the Greenville Rape Crisis and Child Abuse Center), the Greenville Mental Health Center and Safe Harbor.

There are two primary stages to the project: The (1) Planning and Development Phase and the (2) Implementation Phase. The collaboration is in the Planning and Development Phase which lays the foundation for the policies, protocols and services for implementation in the future.

Greenville Partners in Action created a Charter that reflects the process of developing a collaborative partnership among the three partner organizations. The Charter outlined the principles, functions, key terms, values and the organization of the collaborative partnership. The Charter also laid the foundation for building the relationship, establishing trust, and creating an effective process for the three organizational partners and their individual representatives.

**Partners**

The **Julie Valentine Center,** located at 2905 White Horse Road, Greenville, SC 29611, isan organization that provides services to adult survivors of child sexual abuse, adult sexual assault victims and child victims of sexual and physical abuse. Stephanie Shatto, the Rape Crisis Coordinator is the individual partner representative of the Center.

The **Greenville Mental Health Center,** located at 124 Mallard Street, Greenville, SC, 29601, assesses, treats and provides rehabilitative services for individuals with mental illness. Ginger De Francesch, a Mental Health Counselor II, and April Simpson, Community Rehabilitative Services Coordinator, are the individual partner representatives.

**Safe Harbor**, located at 429 North Main Street, Greenville, SC 29601, is the lead partner organization, is a comprehensive domestic violence organization that provides shelter, counseling, court advocacy, education and community services in four South Carolina counties. Jayne Crisp is the Violence Against Women with Disabilities Project Director, and Michelle Hill, a Community Counselor, is the Project Assistant.

The three Greenville Partners in Action organizations all provide direct services to individuals who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and who experience mental illness.

**Vision**

Adult individuals with mental illness who have also been victimized by sexual and/or domestic violence will have access to safe, comprehensive, nonjudgmental, client-centered services in Greenville County. They will be treated with integrity, compassion, and respect by competent service providers.

**Mission**

Greenville Partners in Action intends to establish a sustainable cultural change in the representative organizations that reflects integrity, compassion, and respect for adult individuals with mental illness who are victims of domestic or sexual violence. The populations we have targeted are adult individuals who seek access to the services of our organizations and are in a process of recovery regardless of the impact of mental illness, and trauma experiences as victims or survivors of sexual or domestic violence.

We will address this change by:

* Eliminating barriers to services
* Strengthening partnerships by enhancing communication and resource sharing
* Providing education and training to ensure a culture of competency among service providers
* Establishing organizational policies and procedures that create a non-judgmental, safe, and accessible continuum of care.

**Purpose**

Greenville Partners in Action is currently in the needs assessment planning phase of the project. This document outlines how GPIA intends to conduct the needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment is to gain information from our organizations’ clients, leadership and staff that will contribute to changes within the organizations that will reduce or eliminate barriers and provide access to clients-in-recovery.

"Clients-in-recovery" is a term used in our document to describe adult individuals who seek access to the services of a partner organization who are in the process of recovery. These individuals are in the process or act of regaining a level of functioning that was compromised by sexual or domestic violence. These individuals may have developed a mental illness as a result of the victimization or may have had a mental illness prior to the victimization.

**Needs Assessment Goals**

The following are the needs assessment goals of Greenville Partners in Action. We will:

1. Identify existing policies, procedures and practices within the partner organizations that support or compromise the *quality of services* to individuals with mental illness who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. And, we will identify potential solutions for the development of policies and procedures that (would improve the quality of services) to individuals with mental illness who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence.
2. Identify gaps and barriers that compromise our *partner* *organization relationships*, and explore opportunities that strengthen those relationships.
3. Identify strengths within our partner organizations that *support accessibility to services and promote a safe client-centered environment*. Identify barriers within our partner organizations that compromise access to services and inhibit a safe client-centered environment.
4. Identify *knowledge and attitudes* that exist in our partner organizations that inhibit client-centered services for individuals with mental illness who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence, and identify opportunities that will support or strengthen client-centered services by partner organization staff.

**INFORMATION SOURCES**

**Existing Sources of Information**

Following a careful search for information regarding accessibility and services to individuals with mental illness who are victims of domestic or sexual violence, we find that there are no studies, research or finding related to Greenville County, SC (or anywhere else) that provides us with information on the intersection of domestic and sexual violence and mental illness. We found only one study that attempted to address the impact of violence on mentally ill individuals. This (national) study concluded that social workers should better assess individuals for their experiences of victimization to determine the impact of such experiences.

**New Sources of Information**

The GPIA Needs Assessment will provide GPIA with new information that will help us provide a more effective and dynamic approach to helping clients of the three partner organizations gain access to those services to which they are entitled. Focus groups, interviews and surveys conducted in the Needs Assessment will help the GPIA develop an implementation strategy that assist in creating better internal policies, reduce organizational barriers, create more client-centered environments, and increase knowledge to improve services.

**Information Collection Methods**

Organizational information for the Needs Assessment will be obtained through the use of focus groups, surveys and individual interviews. GPIA will collect information from individuals served by our partner organizations and those that work in our organizations. These individuals include victims and survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence, individuals with mental illness, board members, executive directors, supervisors, program directors, direct-service, support staff; and volunteers and interns from the Julie Valentine Center and Safe Harbor.

All individuals participating in the Needs Assessment will be asked to respond to critical questions regarding policies, the quality of services, accessibility, knowledge and attitudes, and they will have opportunities to make recommendations for improvements.

Every individual representing the various populations participating in the GPIA Needs Assessment has a unique perspective and the diversity of participants will help us obtain the critical information needed to create a strategic plan which will lay the ground work for change.

The Needs Assessment will concentrate on elements that will identify opportunities for organizational improvement, policy and systems change, enhanced services, a strengthening of relationships and other programmatic changes that will improve service and accessibility to clients in recovery. The data collected and feedback from all the groups participating will provide a foundation for developing a GPIA Strategic Plan that will assist organizational staff in implementing the necessary changes within the partner organizations.

**FOCUS GROUPS**

Greenville Partners in Action agree that the primary method of data collection will be the use of focus groups. Focus groups are small groups of individuals who represent the same “population”. These population groups are victims and survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence; and individuals with mental illness; staff supervisors; support staff and direct service providers.

Focus group feedback from a variety of populations is an efficient and effective method to acquire the most valuable and extensive data, information, and knowledge. Each focus group will have an average of 3 to 8 participants. GPIA is limiting the size of the focus group to: 1) increase opportunities to get useful information, 2) allow every person the opportunity to speak and to be validated; and 3) to allow time for questions to be answered during the 90 minute focus group session.

The general purpose of the focus groups will be gain information about:

* Existing policies and procedures;
* Policies and procedures that work and do not work; or need to be created to best serve clients-in-recovery;
* Accessibility to services and providing a safe, client-centered environment;
* How knowledgeable the staff of each partner organization is regarding the services provided by other partner organizations;
* Opportunities for strengthening the relationships between each partner organization;
* Knowledge of feelings, attitudes, and perceptions held by staff and clients, and how these feelings, attitudes, and perceptions either support or inhibit services to clients-in-recovery; and
* Positive and negative experiences of clients and staff.

**Focus Group Participants**

Greenville Partners in Action will seek information from our clients who are individuals with disabilities that include victims and survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence and individuals with mental illness. We will also seek information from supervisors, support staff of our partner organizations and direct service providers.

**Clients**

The clients of each partner organization have a unique and personal understanding of their specific experiences as either a victim of sexual and/or domestic violence or an individual with mental illness. Clients are the "experts" at knowing what services are accessible, responsive and effective. Clients have knowledge of procedures and attitudes of various organizations that make them feel safe and respected or stigmatized and disrespected.

**The Greenville Mental Health Center**

Greenville County, covering 790.08 square miles, serves as part of the catchment area for the Greenville Mental Health Center, a SC state government organization. Greenville County has 451,428 residents and Greenville Mental Health Center’s catchment area has approximately one-half that amount, or 225,714 residents. The Greenville Mental Health Center serves approximately 3,889 households. The Greenville Mental Health Center is divided into three major areas: Adult Acute Care; Child, Adolescent and Family Services; and Community Rehabilitative Services.

Due to the size of the organization (number of staff and clients), GPIA has chosen to narrow the focus of Greenville Mental Health Center focus group participants and recruit from the Community Rehabilitative Services Division. Clients will be recruited and given an opportunity to participate in the project from each of the following departments within CRS Division. These departments are:

*Rehabilitative Psychosocial Services (RPS)* - A day program that provides individual and group services designed to help persons with persistent and severe mental illness, learn skills to support independent living in the community.

*Senior Adult Services (SAS)* - a day program that provides individual and group RPS services to persons with mental illness who are 62 years or older. The clients learn skills to support independent living in the community with an emphasis on issues more pertinent to the needs of senior adults.

*Case Management Services* - A program that provides intensive individualized services to persons with persistent and severe mental illnesses for the purpose of promoting independent living skills to remain in the community and prevent multiple hospitalizations, and the

*Homeless Program* - A non-traditional approach to reducing the homeless population by which the staff proactively seeks homeless persons with mental illness through tactical outreach in the community. It is designed to assist homeless individuals with mental illness in connecting with community resources to uncover opportunities for housing. Clients in the Homeless Program work with staff to improve independent living skills while increasing coping skills and community integration.

These four departments were chosen for the following reasons:

* The clients from the programs consistently/regularly participate in the programs and services of the Greenville Mental Health Center;
* The partner representatives have better access to the clients;
* The clients are familiar with other community resources; and
* The clients are easy to contact for participation in the project.

The GPIA representatives of the Greenville Mental Health Center work in the CRS division and therefore have better access to this population of clients and staff. These are clients have serious and persistent mental illnesses. Client participation will consist of 4 focus groups.

**Julie Valentine Center**

The Julie Valentine Center serves adults, children and families who have been affected by sexual violence or child abuse. These services include support groups, advocacy, and individual counseling sessions. In 2011 the programs of the Julie Valentine Center provided services to over 600 children and almost 200 adults.

The specific JVC client population that will be recruited to participate in the focus groups will be adult survivors of sexual violence.

**Safe Harbor**

**S**afe Harbor clients are individuals who are currently in abusive relationships or have had a history of abusive relationships. Safe Harbor serves over 623 victims of domestic violence a year.

The Safe Harbor client population consists of:

*Shelter Clients* **-** Survivors of domestic violence who have left domestic violence situations and have sought safety and shelter at the Safe Harbor Greenville shelter;

*Transitional Housing Clients* - Survivors of domestic violence participating in the Safe Harbor Transitional Housing Program who have transitioned from the shelter to independent living with case management services provided by Safe Harbor caseworkers ;

*Community Counseling Clients* - Individuals from the community who qualify for Safe Harbor's community counseling program. This program provides individual and group counseling to individuals, not in the shelter, who have experienced domestic violence.

Focus Group participants will be recruited from the above mentioned adult client population participating in the Shelter, Transitional Housing and Community Counseling programs.

**Supervisors**

Supervisory staff of the partner organizations can provide valuable information from their unique leadership perspective; their understanding of the organization; and their knowledge and experience. Their contribution is essential to helping the GPIA understand how policies and procedures affect their ability to provide effective supervision and training to the individuals.

**Greenville Mental Health Center** - GPIA will conduct one focus group of Greenville Mental Health Center supervisors who lead the programs identified for this project.

**Julie Valentine Center** – No focus groups will be conducted of JVC supervisors. Individual interviews will be conducted with these staff members.

**Safe Harbor** - One focus group will be conducted of Safe Harbor supervisors. This focus group will include the shelter counselor/transitional housing supervisor, the community counseling supervisor, the house manager, and the communication supervisor.

**Direct Service Providers**

It is essential to get feedback from those who have the most interaction with clients. Direct service providers have an intimate knowledge of the policies, procedures, attitudes and knowledge within their organization that positively and negatively affect their ability to provide safe, accessible and client-centered services and environment.

**Greenville Mental Health Center** direct service providers include senior adult service counselors, case management staff, counselors for the homeless program, and rehabilitative psychosocial program counselors.

**Julie Valentine Center** direct service staff includes therapists, the volunteer coordinator, support group leaders, and family advocates.

**Safe Harbor** direct service staff includes shelter counselors, community counselors, transitional housing counselors, and shelter managers.

**Support Staff**

Support staff assistance is critical to the overall functioning of each of the partner organizations. Support staff may provide assistance to multiple supervisors or programs and manage critical programs within each organization.

**Greenville Mental Health Center** does not have support staff and will not have support staff participating in a focus group.

**Julie Valentine Center** does not have support staff and will not have support staff participating in a focus group.

**Safe Harbor** support staff includes: resale store staff; administrative support staff, the Director of Development, the Volunteer and Communications Coordinator.

**Focus Group Participation Chart**

This chart illustrates the number of individuals GPIA anticipates

participating in the focus groups.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Number of Individuals Participating in Each Group** | **Number of Focus Groups** |
| GMHC Homeless Program Clients | 5-8 | 1 |
| GMHC Senior Adult Services Clients | 5-8 | 1 |
| GMHC Case Management Clients | 5-8 | 1 |
| GMHC RPS Group Services Clients | 5-8 | 2 |
| JVC Clients | 5-8 | 3 |
| SH Shelter Clients | 5-8 | 2 |
| SH Community Clients | 5-8 | 2 |
| SH Transitional Housing Clients | 5-8 | 1 |
| ***CLIENT SUBTOTAL*** | ***40-64*** | ***13*** |
| GMHC Direct Service Providers | 3-5 | 4 |
| GMHC Supervisors | 3-5 | 1 |
| JVC Child Direct Service Staff | 5-10 | 2 |
| SH Supervisors | 4 | 1 |
| SH Direct Service Staff | 5 | 1 |
| SH Support Staff | 5-8 | 1 |
| ***STAFF SUBTOTAL*** | ***25-37*** | ***5*** |
| ***FOCUS GROUP TOTALS*** | ***65-101*** | ***22*** |

**Focus Group Recruitment Process**

**Recruitment Strategies**

The recruitment process for this project will provide a way for prospective needs assessment participants to be informed about the project and to be able to make an informed decision if their participation will be safe and comfortable.

All collaborative partner representatives and selected staff from the partner agencies will be engaged in the recruitment process. Every person involved in the recruiting of clients or staff, will be trained by a collaborative partner representative and will be considered a Focus Group "Recruiter". All trained volunteer Focus Group Recruiters will follow the protocol and scripts as described in this section of the needs assessment plan.

Each of the partner organizations have identified support group coordinators, individual counselors, and case managers who will invite clients to participate in a focus group. Each partner agency recruiter will be given an orientation to the following recruitment process by a partner agency representative using the *Recruiter Training Script and Commitment Form,* (Appendix 1).

**Client Recruitment**

* Two weeks prior to the focus group, during an individual counseling session, case management meeting or group session, the counselor recruiter will introduce the project to their client following the *Client Recruitment Script* provided to them by their GPIA representative. (See Appendix 2).
* Information at the needs assessment recruitment session will be presented verbally and in writing. A *Client Needs Assessment Information Form,* (Appendix 3) will be given to clients and will include:

1. A description of the project;
2. The needs assessment goals and process;
3. Expectations of focus group participation;
4. The time and date of the focus group meeting/s
5. Confidentiality policies and the mandated reporting process.

* All clients will be told they will a receive a $25 Walmart Gift Card at the conclusion of the Client Focus Group Recruitment Meeting. The Gift Card will be used as an incentive for individuals to participate in a focus group. The card will be given out to each participant as they are signing in at their specific focus group meeting. They will be allowed to keep the card whether or not they remain and participate in the focus group meeting.
* To ensure the safety of participants, the Client Needs Assessment Information Form will be collected at the end of the recruitment session.
* 3"X 5" *Client Participation Cards,* (Appendix 4) will be handed out to potential participants. Participation Cards will include space for individuals to write their first name only and a space for participants to indicate special needs or accommodations. The cards will be left on the table after the group leaves and will be collected by the partner agency recruiter. The recruiter will give the *Client Participation Cards* to the agency’s representative who will then give it to the project director to keep in a locked file cabinet at the lead partner organization.
* After information about the needs assessment has been explained, a future opportunity for individual interviews will be offered to individuals who do not feel comfortable participating in a focus group. (The recruiter will refer to the *Client Focus Group* *Recruitment Script*). The needs assessment recruiter will be given the pre-arranged interview dates and will schedule a participant on one of those prearranged dates.
* Following the initial recruitment session or meeting, each client at their regular individual treatment or support group session, will be given a l verbal reminder as to the date and time of the focus group. Following the support group meeting, the recruiter/counselor will also provide a reminder to those clients who signed up for individual interviews, the date and time of their scheduled interview.

**Client Recruitment Safety Issues**

Some individuals may not feel comfortable asking questions about the focus group process during open meetings. The recruiter will explain to the group that any questions about participation can be asked in private after the meeting, through email or by phone.

The partner representative will then forward the information regarding participation to the GPIA Project Assistant. The special accommodation requests will be sent to each partner representative representing the organizational location where the request has been made. The representative will ensure that the requested accommodations are met. Once the requested accommodations have been made, the partner representative will provide this information to the Project Director.

If an individual requests special accommodations, that person will be asked to remind the person at the site of the focus group registration of their requested accommodation to ensure that their needs are met at the focus group check in.

Note: *None of the clients in the recruitment target population have guardians or personal care assistants. If there is need for a PCA, guardian or other person to accompany the participant to the focus group, that individual will be asked to wait in a separate area during the time the client is participating in the focus group.*

**Staff Recruitment**

Forty-five (45) days prior to the date of the first focus group session at a regularly scheduled staff meeting, staff will be introduced to the needs assessment process by their organization's partner representative using the *Staff Focus Group Recruitment Script*, (Appendix 5). The partner representative of each organization will act as their organization's focus group participant recruiter. The partner representative will identify the various population groups participating in the focus group, and how the staff can contribute to the success of the needs assessment process. The 45 day advance recruitment notice is necessary to give participating staff time to adjust their counseling schedule around the needs assessment schedule.

The *Staff Needs Assessment Information Form* (Appendix 6), will be handed out to each staff member (as was done for the clients) with needs assessment information. The value of each staff member to this project will be emphasized. Staff will be invited to participate in a staff focus group. Staff will be offered an individual interview if they do not feel comfortable participating in a focus group. If a staff member's schedule conflicts with the focus group session, the focus group recruiter may provide alternate dates for individual interviews.

A *Staff Participation Card* (Appendix 7)will be provided to each staff member at the conclusion of the meeting. The individual will be asked to check one of the several boxes to indicate the staff category to which they belong. The card has the date and time of the focus group meeting; and space at the bottom of the card to write any special accommodations that may be needed by the staff member.

The focus group recruiter will pass a manila envelope around the meeting room and ask that everyone to insert their Participation Card into the envelope - whether or not they are participating in the focus group. The envelope will be given to the partner organization representative. The *Staff Participation Cards* will be sorted into separate focus groups to determine the number of participants in each group. This information would then be hand delivered to the GPIA Project Assistant.

* *One week* prior to the scheduled first date of the focus group, an e mail reminder will be sent out to all staff members and will ensure confidentiality of those who are or who are not participating. (Appendix 7a)
* *One day before* the first scheduled focus group, another reminder email will be sent out to the entire staff. All staff members will be sent the email to ensure confidentiality of those who are or who are not participating. (Appendix 7 b)

**Facilitation of Focus Groups**

The successful facilitation of focus groups is essential to gathering information that will lead to the improvement of services for individuals with mental illness who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence. The focus groups will be conducted within each partner agency for staff and clients. The facilitation of each focus group will take approximately 90 minutes. The focus groups will be managed by a facilitation team comprised of a group facilitator, co-facilitator, a recorder, and a support person.

**Focus Group Staff and Responsibilities**

## **Facilitator** *-* Greenville Partners in Action is a small collaborative with three participating partners. Our partnership has anticipated the use of twenty-six (26) focus groups for the needs assessment. We anticipate that the number of groups would place a significant burden on existing staff and therefore are recruiting an experienced facilitator from an approved consultant organization, to assist with the facilitation of this number of groups.

## The facilitatorof each group will be a GPIA consultant representative from Upstate Area Health Education Center. Upstate Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a non-profit, community-based organization committed to providing high quality, accessible, educational programs and services in its eleven county service area.

## The project director will provide a three-hour orientation of the GPIA Needs Assessment process to the facilitator that will include the following information:

## The goal and purpose of the needs assessment

## Information about the staff and organizations of the partner members

## An overview of the documents, scripts, surveys and interview forms (and copies of all needs assessment documents)

## A briefing about the unique characteristics of each of the focus group populations;

## Logistical information related to the focus group facilitation, and interview facilitations, and any other information critical to the effective and successful facilitation of each focus group.

## The facilitator will provide leadership and administrative guidance throughout the focus group process. The facilitator will follow the *Client Focus Group Facilitator's Script* (Appendix 8), and the *Staff Focus Group Facilitator's Script*, (Appendix 9). The facilitator will also follow the *Client Focus Group Questions*

## (Appendix 10), and the *Staff Focus Group Questions* ( Appendix 11), when addressing the specifically identified focus groups. The scripts created for each focus group population, provide consistent information to all focus groups. Each script will :

## Include the role and responsibilities of the recorder and co-facilitator,

## Include a welcoming statement and purpose of the focus group;

* Establish the parameters for participation, i.e. consent, confidentiality, mandated reporting, and safety;
* Address concerns of participants regarding parameters and process of the focus group;
* Facilitate the focus group by asking questions that will yield information that is relevant to this needs assessment;
* Prompt the group when necessary to acquire more comprehensive information;
* Guide the group in maintaining focus on the discussed topic.

**Co-Facilitator** *–* The co-facilitatorfor every focus group will be the GPIA Project Director. The Co-facilitator will:

* Verify that the location is accessible and that accommodations have been met;
* Help facilitate a safe and comfortable atmosphere for the participants;
* Aid the facilitator in her responsibilities;
* Welcome participants at check in upon arrival and give out Walmart gift cards to *client* participants;
* Observe participants to assist facilitator in addressing participant needs;
* Capture key themes from the discussion visually on a flip chart to ensure that clients feel heard and validated;
* Serve as time-keeper;
* Serve as a familiar face to ensure participant comfort;

**Recorder**– GPIA has decided to use a designated recorder for all focus groups for the purposes of consistency and accuracy in reporting. The designated recorder will be the Project Assistant of the collaboration. The recorder will:

* Not participate in the discussion and will only ask for clarification if a response is not fully understood for recording purposes;
* Objectively record to the best of her ability the overall responses, themes, ideas, and information received. This will be recorded on a laptop that belongs to the lead agency.
* Deliver the record of each focus group to the collaborative lead partner immediately following each group for secure storage. (See section on Data Storage).
* Compose a brief synopsis of the overall themes for each question at the end of the group.

**Support Person**– The GPIA collaborative will have a counselor from the participating agency available to each focus group for support services if needed. The support person will be an individual who has expertise in crisis intervention strategies and understands the impact of trauma on individuals. The support person will:

* Provide emotional support to participants who are distressed by the focus group discussion;
* Contribute to the safety and comfort of the focus group environment;
* Be available in a separate room for privacy;
* Provide referrals if needed;
* Offer a list of resources previously prepared by the collaboration.

**General Focus Group Protocol**

***Welcome and Check-in Process***

* A list of first names and requested accommodations for each focus group will be available to the Co-facilitator who is conducting the check-in process.
* As participants check in, they will be asked their first name and will be linked to their special accommodations on their *Client Participation Card*. If the participant has made a special request, the Co-facilitator will provide the pre-requested accommodation at that time.
* If a participant has a special accommodation that was not indicated on the participation card, the Co-facilitator will attempt to provide the requested accommodation at that time.

1. All client participants will be given a Walmart gift card upon check-in.

Client participants *will be allowed to keep the gift card* *whether or not they remain in the focus group meeting and complete the process.*

1. All participants will be offered a snack and beverage upon entering into the focus group meeting room.
2. At the beginning of the focus group, all members of the group (facilitator, co-facilitator, recorder, and support person) will introduce themselves and explain their role for the group.

**INTERVIEWS**

The purpose of the interviews will be to learn:

* What policies and procedures are already established;
* How current policies and procedures support and/or inhibit services to clients-in-recovery;
* What policies and procedures could be developed that would best serve the clients-in-recovery;
* Accessibility to services and providing a safe, client-centered environment;
* What attitudes and knowledge exist among the staff of each agency that support of inhibit services provided to clients-in-recovery;
* How knowledgeable the staff of each organization is about the services provided by the other partner organizations;
* Potential opportunities for strengthening the relationships between each partner organization.
* Knowledge of resource allocation and willingness to dedicate funds to clients in recovery.

**Interview Participants**

Greenville Partners in Action will be conducting interviews from two populations from our organizations:

* Executive leadership, and
* Clients and/or staff who do not wish to participate in their designated focus group.

Interviews will be conducted and recorded by a consultant representing Upstate Area Health Education Center (AHEC), and who is familiar with the needs assessment goals and process. The interviewer will use the following documents in performing the staff interviews with executive leadership, clients and staff:

* The *Executive Leadership Interview Script* (Appendix 12)
* The *Executive* *Leadership Interview Questions* (Appendix 13)
* The *Staff Interview Script* (Appendix 14)
* The *Client Interview Script* (Appendix 15), and the
* *Client Focus Group Questions* (Appendix 10).

**Executive Leadership**

Greenville Partners in Action agree that the primary method of data collection from partner organization executive leadership will be the use of individual interviews. Interviews will allow GPIA to obtain qualitative information from knowledgeable leadership about the partner organization, services, and culture and provide for more opportunities for candid and open responses.

The interviews should reveal valuable administrative information about each partner organization from leadership who have a unique insight, can provide valuable contributions to our needs assessment, and can provide a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding administrative policies and procedures. Executive leadership also has the authority to make lasting changes within each organization regarding the future of the organization, fiscal matters and services.

The interviews will also allow GPIA to find common partner concerns and explore the perceptions of the organizational leadership. It is to the benefit of GPIA and each organization, that each of the executive directors of the partner organizations has clinical backgrounds that provide additional insight into each organization's clinical services. Their clinical background and expertise as well as their business/administration knowledge will give the GPIA unique and valuable information from a variety of perspectives.

The individuals participating in the interviews will include the five (5) executive leadership staff members of each of the partner organizations. The executive leadership consists of three (3) executive directors, one assistant director and one clinical director from the three partner organizations. The leadership of the three partner organizations has a unique perspective about the functioning of each organization, its policies, procedures, administration, staff and clients. The interview questions of executive leadership will be distinctly different from those of the client population being interviewed.

**Executive Directors- Julie Valentine, Safe Harbor, and Greenville Mental Health Center**

The executive directors of these three partner organizations have significant influence in all personnel, financial and administrative decisions. They will have a major impact on the success of the needs assessment and implementation and can also significantly influence and encourage the support of other leadership and line staff in total system's change. The executive directors of the three partner organizations have voluntarily attended quarterly partner meetings and are continually provided information about the activities and goals of the project.

**Assistant Director - Safe Harbor**

The assistant director of Safe Harbor has attended collaborative partner meetings, Vera conferences, an OVC-sponsored disabilities conference, and has been informed and involved in the project in staff meetings and in special project events since the beginning of the project. The assistant director is responsible for the oversight of two domestic violence shelters, the Safe Harbor resale shop, all human resource decisions and management of the organization.

There are no assistant directors of the Greenville Mental Health Center or Julie Valentine Center.

**Clinical Director - Julie Valentine Center**

The clinical director of the Julie Valentine Center provides oversight to the clinical staff of the Julie Valentine Center and provides staff with guidance and knowledge of best clinical practices. Her responsibilities also include: outreach supervision; training oversight; and management of the clinical practices regarding child and adult victims of child abuse, sexual violence and exploitation. The clinical director has influence on personnel management and administrative policies and serves as a clinical representative of the executive director. The clinical director also serves as a significant agent of change for the Julie Valentine Center and is often the most direct link to staff. She can provide valued feedback as to the need for change, the impact of change, and clinical observations on how programs and services impact clients.

**Clients and/or Staff**

GPIA values the opinion and experiences of our clients and/or staff and in order to ensure their fullest participation, the partnership will provide opportunities for clients and/or staff of Julie Valentine Center, Greenville Mental Health Center and Safe Harbor to provide feedback in a safe, convenient and accessible environment through individual interviews. Ten interview time slots will be available for clients/staff of the three partner organizations who have requested to participate in the needs assessment but are unable to participate in their organization's client or staff focus group and who asked for individual interviews. The interview questions for individual clients and staff will be the same questions asked in the client and staff focus groups.

**Interview Participant Chart**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Number of Participants** | **Number of Interviews** |
| JVC Executive Director | 1 | 1 |
| JVC Clinical Director | 1 | 1 |
| GMHC Executive Director | 1 | 1 |
| SH Executive Director | 1 | 1 |
| SH Assistant Director | 1 | 1 |
| **Interviews Grand Total** | **5** | **5** |

**Interview Recruitment**

**Executive Leadership**

The executive directors of the three partner organizations have been personally invited by the project director, during one of the quarterly partner meetings, to participate in the needs assessment and have unanimously verbally agreed to commit to needs assessment interviews. All three directors of the three partners and the assistant director of Safe Harbor have been fully engaged in the project since the award of the grant.

The GPIA project director will personally meet again with each director and assistant director and will schedule each individual's participation. During the recruitment meeting with each director, the project director will also introduce and explain the interview process and provide each director with an *Executive Interview Information Form* that will explain: 1)The goal of the interview; 2) The value of the interview; 3) The interview process; and, 4) The names of the interviewer and recorder participating in the process.

GPIA will coordinate with the five executive leaders, the interview date and time that is convenient and available for them. The interviews will be scheduled for that time. GPIA will conduct five (5) separate and individual interviews with the leadership staff of the three partner organizations.

**Clients and/or Staff Special Interview Requests**

During the focus group recruitment meeting the recruiter from the organization represented will inform clients and/or staff that interview time slots will be available for those who would like to participate in the needs assessment focus group but are not able to meet with their designated focus group. Client and/or staff participants will be informed by their organization's partner representative of interview schedule options. The interview appointment will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time for both the participant and the interviewer.

**Interview Facilitation**

**General Interview Protocol**

The facilitation team will include the facilitator, the co-facilitator and a staff recorder. The facilitator will be a consulting staff member from Upstate AHEC who will be trained in the interview protocol and procedures. If the interviewer is able to record the interview responses, a staff recorder will not be used during the interviews.

The role of the interviewer/facilitator is to:

* Create a safe and comfortable atmosphere for the participants.
* Ask questions relevant to the needs assessment.
* Use good facilitation skills to ensure that the participants stay on the topic.
* Collect the recorded information after each interview and ensure it is safely secured.
* Provide all the information to the Project Director for safe and secure storage.
* Distribute the Walmart gift cards to those clients who are interviewed.

To ensure confidentiality of Safe Harbor staff, a partner representative from one of the partner organizations will act as the recorder for the interview comments from Safe Harbor staff. Interviews of staff for Julie Valentine Center and the Greenville Mental Health Center will be conducted by the project assistant, who is the identified recorder for the needs assessment process focus group. The recorder will have the option of taking notes or electronically recording the responses.

Participants will be asked permission by the interviewer or recorder prior to using electronic recording methods for interviews. The recorder will integrate the responses from all the interviews in a manner as to respect the confidentiality of the individuals interviewed. Each individual interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

The Interviewer/Recorder will:

* Contribute to a safe and comfortable interview environment.
* Write down all responses to the interview questions and prompts.
* Ask for clarification if needed, especially if a response is not understood.
* Maintain an accurate record of the discussion during each individual interview.
* Maintain confidentiality.
* Deliver the written record of each interview session to the facilitator immediately after each interview for safe storage.

**Executive Leadership**

Interviews of the partner organization directors will be conducted in their own offices by the facilitator who is a consultant representing the Upstate Area Health Education Center. This person is not a representative of any of the partners in the collaborative and will facilitate the goal during the interviews, which is to gain as much information as possible and remain neutral and non-threatening to the responses gained from the executive, assistant and clinical directors. The facilitator may be joined by a recorder who is not a staff member of any of the three partner organizations.

**Clients and Staff**

Any participant who chooses to be interviewed for the needs assessment in place of participating in a focus group, will attend their interview at the same location as the focus group. The clients or staff participating in interviews will be given the same questions as those clients or staff participating in focus groups. Each interview will be conducted for about an hour (60 minutes) by the facilitation team members. The interview team will include the facilitator (who will conduct the interview), a recorder (the project assistant) and a counselor representing the client's organization.

If a client or staff member from Safe Harbor requests an interview, the representative of another partner organization, or the project director will record the interview. A counselor will be available to provide assistance in a separate room outside the interview room to provide emotional support to clients as needed. The counselor will also provide referrals and resources if needed and/or requested.

**SURVEYS**

Surveys are an efficient method of gathering a representation of opinion from a individuals who may not be available for interviews or focus groups. GPIA has determined that a survey method will be used to collect the best data from the interns, volunteers and Boards of Directors of the three partner organizations.

**Interns**

The purpose of the surveys for the interns will be to learn their understanding of organizational policies and procedures and their impact on services and programs. Their responses offer a unique perspective on services and programs since the interns are providing temporary professional services, but are not employed by the partner organizations.

Interns are individuals who are working on their Master's degrees and have completed the mandatory hours in their respective colleges and universities to participate in an internship program at Safe Harbor or at the Julie Valentine Center. Both are approved by a variety of South Carolina colleges and universities as placements for graduate students.

Interns serve as unpaid clinical staff in counseling positions at both of these partner organizations. The interns are supervised by the clinical supervisory leadership of these organizations. The interns selected will have recently completed their internships at Safe Harbor and Julie Valentine Center. This will ensure that each intern participating will not feel that their participation will influence their grade.

* **Greenville Mental Health Center** has no interns and therefore will not have surveys for this population.
* **Safe Harbor** will conduct one survey with 3-6 interns.
* **Julie Valentine** will conduct one survey with 3-6 interns.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers at Safe Harbor provide administrative, clerical, direct service, crisis line, and special project support. Volunteers at the Julie Valentine Center work as victim/survivor advocates provide crisis intervention services in person and on the hotline, meet victims in the hospital and provide advocacy and support as needed by victims. Volunteers can offer an unprejudiced perspective of how policies, procedures, and attitudes affect clients-in-recovery, staff and each organization.

* **Julie Valentine** will conduct one survey with 3 to 6 volunteers.
* **Safe Harbor** will conduct one survey with 3 to 6 volunteers.

**Boards of Directors**

The purpose of the surveys for the Boards of Directors will be to learn:

* Generate support and investment in the possible policy changes to promote accessibility to services at the partner organizations;
* Provide suggestions for enhancing current environments of the partner organizations to promote a safe, accessible and client-centered environment;
* The willingness and motivation the board has to support policy and procedure change to enhance services for clients-in-recovery.

**Survey Participant Chart**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Number of Individuals** | **Number of Surveys** |
| Julie Valentine Board | 8 - 10 | 1 |
| GMHC Board | 8 - 10 | 1 |
| SH Board | 6-12 | 1 |
| SH Interns | 3-6 | 1 |
| Julie Valentine Interns | 3-6 | 1 |
| SH Volunteers | 3-6 | 1 |
| Julie Valentine Volunteers | 3-6 | 1 |
| **Grand Total – Surveys** | **31-56 individuals** | 1. **Surveys** |

**Survey Recruitment Process**

**Interns from the Julie Valentine Center and Safe Harbor**

The Clinical Director of the Julie Valentine Center and the Intern Supervisor of Safe Harbor will act as focus group recruiters for their organizations. Recruitment will follow the same process and protocol as the recruitment for volunteer focus groups.

**Volunteers from Julie Valentine Center and Safe Harbor**

Julie Valentine Center and Safe Harbor Volunteer Coordinators will act as Focus Group Recruiters for volunteers of their organizations.

Volunteer Coordinators will send emails to all their direct service provider volunteers inviting them to participate in the needs assessment survey through Survey Monkey. The email will provide the volunteers with a brief overview of the project; explain the needs assessment process; emphasize their value to the project, and a link to the survey.

**Boards of Directors**

The boards of the Julie Valentine Center, Safe Harbor and the Greenville Mental Health meet once a month**.** The executive directors of each of the three organizations have been identified as the organizational representative who will recruit the board members for survey participation.

The executive director of each of the three partner organizations will invite the board members of their specific organization to participate in the needs assessment survey at the meeting one month/30 days prior to the needs assessment survey board meeting. The recruitment process is as follows:

1. The executive director of each organization will introduce to the board the type of information the collaborative hopes to gain from the board members by making presentation to the board. The executive director will provide board members with a *Board Member Needs Assessment Information Form* (Appendix 16) that includes:
   1. the project goal and purpose;
   2. the value of the project;
   3. the value of board member participation; and
   4. how the survey will be conducted. (Note: An individual member of the collaboration will be available to assist the executive directors at the recruitment meetings if requested by the executive directors.)
2. A *Board Member Survey Participation Card,* (Appendix 17), will be handed out to the board members. The board member can indicate on the card whether or not they choose to participate in the survey and indicate the need for any special accommodations. All three organizations will follow the same protocol.

**Survey Facilitation Process**

**Intern and Volunteer Survey Facilitation Process**

The volunteer coordinators of Safe Harbor and Julie Valentine Center will give the volunteers and interns from both organizations who have agreed to participate in the Needs Assessment Survey, the information needed to participate in the survey electronically on Survey Monkey. The volunteers and interns can take the survey at their convenience in the privacy of their home or office.

**Board Member Survey Facilitation Process**

1. The *Board Member Needs Assessment Survey,* (Appendix 18), will be added to the agenda of the month following the recruitment meeting.
2. The survey will be handed out to every board member. Specific accommodations requested by board members will be provided.
3. The board members who agree to participate in the needs assessment will be given approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete the survey.
4. Upon completion of the surveys, the individual partner representative of the organization will collect the surveys, place them into a manila envelope, and seal the envelope.
5. The partner representative will mark the name of her agency on the outside of the envelope and will deliver the sealed envelope to the project director for secure storage the same day.
6. Board members who may be absent on the day of the survey will be informed of the survey and allowed to take the survey on an individual basis at their request.

**DATA STORAGE**

All members of GPIA have committed to secure all documents and written notes, summaries, reports, participation/registration cards, and all other written records containing GPIA participant's responses and information. The collaborative partners of GPIA will take steps to ensure that all data collected by the Needs Assessment is securely protected and stored throughout the duration of the grant period and responsibly destroyed by shredding at the conclusion of the project.

*Client and Staff Participation Cards* and other documentation will be kept at Safe Harbor, the collaborative lead partner organization, in a locked cabinet for secure storage. The staff members who will have access to these documents, reports and written notes will be members of GPIA and trained recruitment and facilitation personnel. All individuals will be bound by the confidentiality protocol as outlined in the GPIA Charter, which will be covered during the Recruitment Training process.

Documents used to collect information from the needs assessment participants include Client and Staff Participation Cards. These documents and all other forms used to collect information from the needs assessment participants will be stored in a lead agency file cabinet. They will be retrieved from the cabinet to use on the day of each focus group meeting or for each survey. They will be returned to the file cabinet when not being used.

After the needs assessment information is collected from participants in the GPIA Needs Assessment focus groups, interviews, and surveys, all written documentation will be placed into a secure manila envelope and transported to the lead partner agency by an individual partner member of the GPIA for storage in the designated file cabinet. All electronic notes recorded during focus groups and interviews will be stored on the project assistant’s password- protected computer.

All electronic and written notes, summaries and documentation by GPIA Needs Assessment participants will be stored at Safe Harbor and ultimately destroyed by shredding at the conclusion of the project.

Written documents including the GPIA Charter, the GPIA Needs Assessment Report, forms and templates used in the Needs Assessment and other documentation considered part of the "deliverables" of the GPIA project, will be shared within the collaboration and entities such as Vera, OVW and others outside of GPIA who are current and possible future stakeholders to the project.

Although the *Needs Assessment Final Report* will contain feedback from individuals who have participated in the GPIA Needs Assessment, the information shared will *not* reveal any personal references to particular participants.

**CONSENT**

GPIA values the participation of each individual who may want to contribute to the project. Consent means that individuals have provided approval or willingness to participate in the Needs Assessment after thoughtful consideration.

Greenville Partners in Action representatives will receive their consent to participate from all individuals who are potential participants.

Participants will be informed that the information they share with the collaborative partners will help the partnership in the development of the GPIA Strategic Plan and ultimately assist our organizations in becoming more safe and accessible to individuals with mental health disabilities.

GPIA is using passive consent by all participants. Therefore each participant will not have to sign a written consent form. Since GPIA's intention during the needs assessment is to only collect information about individuals' experience with the partner organizations ,and not intended to gain personal identifying details or offer direct counseling services, we are not obligated to get a personal written consent form for this initiative. Staff will explain to participants that participants are agreeing to participate and are giving passive consent by attending and being present for the focus group meetings.

The issues of confidentiality, mandatory reporting, safety, and access will also be addressed in the in the *Welcoming Statement* at the beginning of the focus group meetings with survey participants, and with individuals participating in interviews. (See the *Client Focus Group Preparation Script,* Appendix 8).

Focus group and interview participants will also be informed that they can leave the focus group or discontinue the interview at any time. Clients will also be informed that a support person is available to meet with them individually in a private area if needed. Once the *Welcoming Statement* is read, and participants choose to stay in the participating group or interview, their participation will indicate their agreement to stay, and indicate their passive consent .

**MANDATED REPORTING**

South Carolina State Law (Section 44-22-90) requires that certain people must report suspected or actual (physical or psychological) abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult or to prevent the individual from causing harm to himself or others (Section 63-7-310).

Each of the partner organization's reporting policies for children and vulnerable adults are also in align with the South Carolina Mandated Reporting laws.

For mandatory reporters there must be a reason to believe that a vulnerable adult has been or is likely to be abused, neglected, or exploited. For any other person (who is not a mandatory reporter in SC), they must have actual knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited.

"Vulnerable adult" in the State of South Carolina, according to the SC Code of Laws, Section 43-35-10, means a person eighteen years of age or older who hasa physical or mental condition which substantially impairs the person from adequately providing for his or her own care or protection; this includes a person who is impaired in the ability to adequately provide for the person’s own care or

protection because of the infirmities of aging including, but not limited to, organic brain damage, advanced age, and physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction.

Mandated reporters as defined by the State of South Carolina would include: a physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, medical examiner, coroner, other medical, mental health, or allied health professional, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, school teacher, counselor, psychologist, mental health or mental retardation specialist, social or public assistance worker, caregiver, staff or volunteer of an adult day care center or facility, law enforcement officer, and anyone with actual knowledge of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Most of the individual members of the collaborative partner organizations fall into the category of mandated reporters.

**Mandated Reporting Responsibilities of Greenville Partners in Action**

The majority of the individual representatives of our partner organizations are obligated to follow the mandatory reporting policies of their organization, and they are also mandatory reporters. However, GPIA is limiting the identifying information provided by client participants to reduce the potential of having to make a report. Although we will be reducing the potential of reporting, we are also committed to the safety and security of the clients we serve.

Therefore, GPIA commits to the following guidelines to protect the safety and security of the needs assessment participants:

* Mandated Reporting obligations and confidentiality protections will be stated and emphasized throughout the needs assessment process with all participating groups during : 1) The recruitment phase of the project,

2) The welcome and introduction phase of the focus and interview sessions, and, 3) At any other time as appropriate when meeting with individuals and groups.

* The collaborative partners have created a *Needs Assessment Information Form* that will be given to all prospective needs assessment participants. The form will also be read to the participants by the (facilitator/co-facilitator) before the Needs Assessment facilitation begins in an effort to present the GPIA’s values around confidentiality. It will also articulate our commitment to respect the participants, and protect the safety, self-determination, and integrity of the clients, the partner representatives, and partner organizations.
* During the recruitment process, all potential participants will be informed of the GPIA's mandatory reporting requirements under SC State Law. This information will be presented verbally so that all participants fully and clearly understand the staff's obligation. This information will be presented orally and in writing and will be included on the *Needs Assessment Information Form.*
* During the introduction and overview of each needs assessment meeting or activity, all participants will, again, be verbally informed of GPIA's mandatory reporting requirements under SC State Law.
* Any potential or actual participant who has articulated or demonstrated concerns about the mandatory reporting requirement will be given the option of not participating in the needs assessment process.
* Should a participant choose to disclose they or a loved one is in danger; the facilitator will give the participant the option to be counseled by the support staff provided at each focus group venue. The participants will be informed prior to the focus group or interview that the support person will be a mandated reporter and will be required to contact the appropriate authorities for the situation.

**Reporting Protocol**

* If the participant reports the abuse or neglect of a child, (by law) a report will be made to the SC Department of Social Services.
* If the participant reports the abuse of neglect of a vulnerable adult, (See Mandated Reporting Section), a report will be made to SC Adult Protective Services.
* If a threat or harm to another adult individual is disclosed, a report will be made to the Greenville Police Department.
* If the participant discloses that they want to harm themselves, the clinical support person who is assigned to the focus group, will immediately assess the participant to determine if immediate or longer term mental health assistance intervention is needed.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Partner Confidentiality**

Greenville Partners in Action recognizes that confidentiality is essential in maintaining and supporting the safety of clients, the partner organizations, and the partner representatives. Each collaborative partner expects members to hold confidences regarding the disclosure of personal and privileged information about ourselves, our agencies, experiences, activities, interactions with others, and the entire collaboration. We have agreed to continue to build trust and respect by upholding our shared value of confidentiality within Greenville Partners in Action throughout the Needs Assessment process.

**Participant Confidentiality**

Each of the collaborative partner organizations has policies regarding client confidentiality that are mandated by State law or determined by Federal or State funding sources. We hold the confidentiality of client information as important and as valued as shared partner confidentiality. Based on these values, the Partnership agrees not to share any identifying information about any clients served by our organizations. No personal information will be collected other than what is on the *Needs Assessment Participant Card* which will be used voluntarily to identify special accommodations and determine numbers of individuals attending each meeting.

GPIA has developed a more comprehensive and detailed confidentiality agreement in the GPIA Charter that reflects the value of confidentiality among the partner representatives, their organizations and clients. All potential participants in the Needs Assessment will be informed that their personal and any identifying information will be kept confidential. However, their responses, opinions, perspectives and discussions will be shared with staff of the project, Vera advisors, our grant manager with OVW and other key personnel and stakeholders.

GPIA will encourage all participants to respect each other's confidences.

The facilitator for all focus group meetings will address confidentiality guidelines prior to each focus group and ask participants to agree by nodding their heads to the guidelines presented. Participants will also be asked not to reveal personal information they have not already shared with others. GPIA acknowledges that opinions and discussions about each of the partner organizations may be sensitive in nature. Services to clients will not be affected by their participation in the needs assessment or their observations and feedback during the needs assessment. Participation and feedback from employees, board members, interns and volunteers will not affect their status in their organization.

Although the individual members of the collaborative partner organizations fall into the category of mandated reporters, GPIA will not collect enough identifying information about the participants to make a report. The recorder is a mandated reporter who works for Safe Harbor. Since she may know some of the client participants, and have enough information to make a report should a disclosure be made, a GPIA member from one of the other participating organizations will record the client focus group with Safe Harbor Clients.

The collaborative partners have created a *Needs Assessment Information Form* that will be given to all prospective needs assessment participants. The form will also be read to the participants by the (facilitator/co-facilitator) before the Needs Assessment facilitation begins in an effort to present the GPIA’s values around confidentiality. It will also articulate our commitment to respect the participants, and protect the safety, self-determination, and integrity of the clients, the partner representatives, and partner organizations.

**SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS**

Greenville Partners in Action is aware of the goal of this project and the vulnerabilities of our clients, and is committed to the maintaining the integrity and safety of our needs assessment process. We plan to implement a safe needs assessment to all those who participate by committing to the following process:

* Each participant of the needs assessment will be recruited in person by staff of their own organization, who is known and familiar to them, and to their particular participation group. This recruitment will take place during one of their regular counseling sessions or appointments with staff. This method will eliminate the need of staff to be in contact with the potential participant outside of their counseling or program service location.
* In order to provide the most comfortable and familiar setting for the participants, GPIA will hold all interviews and focus groups at the respective collaborative partner organization locations.
* No written material about the needs assessment will be sent to participant residences or given to them to take home, or keep in their possession.
* GPIA will respect the confidentiality of all participants and personal information to include name, addresses, emails or other identifying information will not be used or stored during the process. Their first name will be used on the Focus Group Participation Card to identify special accommodations. And the participant's first name will be used in the focus groups during the meetings.
* Each participant will have the opportunity to withdraw from participation in the needs assessment or have the option of an individual interview in the event the participant has concerns about confidentiality.
* If a needs assessment participant determines that their safety at home could be compromised by taking home the Walmart gift card, the representative from that participant's organization will retain the gift card for them until they chose to use it at a later date.
* Certain accommodations will be available to individual upon request. These will include physically accessible facilities, personal care attendants and any other reasonable accommodation that will provide access, safety and security for participants.
* The Julie Valentine Center and Safe Harbor are not equipped to provide transportation to and from the focus group and needs assessment meetings to individuals participating in the needs assessment focus groups or interviews. The Greenville Mental Health Center will provide transportation to the clients participating in focus groups.

* No on-site child care facilities are available for participants of the Greenville Mental Health Center, Safe Harbor, or the Julie Valentine Center. These organizational partners do not have adequate facilities to provide safe child care and cannot offer this accommodation to needs assessment participants.
* Trauma or crisis intervention specialists will be available to assist participants, if needed, during focus group meetings and interviews.
* Individual interviews will be available to those participants requesting them.
* All three partner organizations have the capacity to publish needs assessment documents in large print and will produce these as needed.