

PROJECT CARE
(Community, Accessibility, Response, & Education)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

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Introduction

Project CARE is a community collaborative based in Hamilton County, Ohio (Greater Cincinnati) which is funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), U.S. Department of Justice. The focus of Project CARE is on improving service systems at the **intersection of women with any disability and Deaf women and domestic violence/intimate partner violence, stalking and sexual assault**. Project CARE is the culmination of eight years of collaborative work amongst Hamilton County agencies concerned with building a community response to violence against individuals with disabilities. Funding by OVW will enable Project CARE, over the course of three years, to achieve its longstanding goal to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve its member agencies' ability to respond to domestic violence/intimate partner violence, stalking and sexual assault of women with disabilities and Deaf women in their community.

Several critical organizations that provide services to women in Hamilton County, including women with disabilities and Deaf women, comprise Project CARE. Through the OVW grant, these organizations have entered a collaborative agreement under which they work together as equal partners to implement a shared vision and mission.

Project CARE's vision is that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of violence are empowered to access highly effective services that are welcoming, comprehensive, and pose no barriers. This vision will be achieved through the Project CARE mission, which is to transform services into a seamless system that fully meets the needs of women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, stalking and sexual assault, by:

1. cultivating and sustaining collaboration;
2. changing and improving policies, practices and culture; and
3. strengthening the abilities and responsiveness of our organizations.

There are two categories of organizations in Project CARE: non-profit organizations that provide direct services to women in Hamilton County, and non-profit organizations that provide support and technical assistance to these and other organizations.

The following partners in Project CARE provide direct services to women in Hamilton County:

- **The Center for Independent Living Options** which helps individuals of all ages who have physical, sensory, cognitive, and/or psychological disabilities become self reliant and live independently to ensure their full inclusion in our community.
- **The Hamilton County Board of MRDD** which provides a variety of services to eligible individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities and their families.
- **United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211** which connects people with important community services and volunteer opportunities 24 hours a day.

- **The University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program** which collects forensic evidence for adult survivors of sexual assault and provides services to avoid further trauma to all sexual assault survivors.
- **Women Helping Women** which provides crisis intervention and support services for direct and indirect victims of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- **The YWCA of Greater Cincinnati's Battered Women's Shelter** which provides safe crisis line assistance, protective shelter and necessary supportive services for battered women and their children to move them toward self-sufficiency, independence and freedom from abuse.

The following partners in Project CARE provide organizational resources and technical assistance to the Project CARE organizations that provide direct services to women. These organizations function as equal partners and will contribute to the development and facilitation of the needs assessment as well as all stages of implementation of Project CARE. The following organizations do not, however, provide direct services to women in Hamilton County and therefore will not be evaluated in the needs assessment.

- **The University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice** which is a division of an urban, public, research university that includes among its PhD fields of expertise crime prevention and victimology.
- **The Family Violence Prevention Project** which is a collaborative of 40+ agencies dedicated to preventing all forms of family violence.
- **The INclusion Network** which networks in the community to provide information and assistance to other organizations, with the goal of welcoming participation and contribution of people who have disabilities.

Historically, women with disabilities and Deaf women have been disproportionately excluded from services for women who are victims or survivors of violence. Project CARE's approach of collaboration, policy change and improving organizational capacity was designed to counteract this exclusion by identifying and addressing the specific, systemic ways that women are excluded. Working within its member organizations, Project CARE will make internal policy changes that will eliminate exclusionary practices. Perhaps more importantly, these policy changes will ensure that services are welcoming and accessible to all women.

To begin to understand what changes its partner organizations must make to become welcoming and accessible, Project CARE will undertake a needs assessment. The needs assessment will assess services that are currently provided by its members, identify services that are needed but not available or accessible, and research opportunities for Project CARE partner organizations to improve their effectiveness as individual organizations and as a network. Ultimately, Project CARE is concerned with identifying how it can change its member organizations so that they are welcoming and accessible to all women, with or without disabilities.

Goals

With the ultimate objective of becoming organizations that are fully welcoming and accessible to all women, Project CARE has determined several goals that will guide its needs assessment process. These goals are to:

1. Identify the strengths and assets existing within Project CARE organizations that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stalking and/or sexual assault.
2. Identify the gaps and barriers existing within Project CARE organizations that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stalking and/or sexual assault.
3. Identify opportunities to strengthen the capabilities of Project CARE organizations to address violence against women with disabilities and Deaf women by becoming increasingly accessible and responsive.
4. Identify opportunities for Project CARE organizations to work together as a seamless system to effectively meet the needs of women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stalking and/or sexual assault.

Existing Information Sources

There are two sets of existing information sources related to Project CARE: a community assessment completed in 2003 and a logic model process conducted in 2005. Both information sources provide contextual information which will assist Project CARE in understanding the landscape within which it will conduct its work.

In 2002 and 2003 the Family Violence Prevention Project (FVPP) of Greater Cincinnati conducted an assessment of the community's family violence prevention needs. The specific goals of this research were to identify existing family violence prevention services and to identify gaps and duplication in existing services. Provider and stakeholder surveys included a series of questions about professional experiences with family violence and its prevention. Even though the focus was prevention, the collected information addressed both the community's intervention and prevention services. In May of 2005, the Family Violence Prevention Project engaged in a logic model process. Participants of the logic model process included partnering agencies of the Family Violence Prevention Project and diverse community stakeholders from the disability movement and the family violence movement. One objective of the logic model process was to explore how the local family violence prevention movement could address violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people in the Greater Cincinnati region.

Both the community assessment and the logic model process will be useful as supplemental data that can be used in the needs assessment report and strategic planning. These existing information resources also highlight several things that impact how we plan for the Project CARE needs assessment:

1. Surveys have already been utilized. Project CARE had considered doing additional survey work but believes it will find more useful information through focus groups and interviews. Findings from the earlier surveys may be used in the needs assessment report and strategic planning process.
2. The prior studies identified a lack of awareness and knowledge of global accessibility issues and specific dynamics of abuse of people with disabilities. We believe this has been adequately established and planned needs assessment activities need not include questions on this topic.
3. The prior studies were conducted largely through the voluntary contributions of staff time and expertise. It is clear that Project CARE can rely on its partner organizations to commit to a very thorough and professional needs assessment process, as described below.

Approval of Needs Assessment Activities

All partners in Project CARE have reviewed and approved this needs assessment plan. The University of Cincinnati requires that staff involved in activities that may be considered research notify its Institutional Review Board of the proposed activities. The University of Cincinnati's Institutional Review Board (IRB) chair has reviewed an overview of the process proposed by Project CARE and has determined that a review by the IRB is not necessary. The Ethics Council of the Hamilton County Board of MRDD has also reviewed the process proposed by Project CARE and has granted approval for needs assessment activities involving their staff and the people they serve.

Methods

Focus groups and interviews will be utilized to achieve the needs assessment goals that are described on page 5. Several distinct audiences will be involved in focus groups and leaders of the organizations that provide direct services to women will be interviewed. Described below are the distinct audiences that will be involved in the focus groups and the organizational leaders that will be interviewed:

Focus Groups

Focus group methodology is the primary instrument to be used for evaluating the accessibility and responsiveness of Project CARE organizations to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. Use of focus groups will enable us to hear directly from those that are most familiar with services and to take advantage of the sophisticated observations that come from the conversations that focus groups engender. Conversations are often necessary to fully explore the complexities and diverse factors inherent in matters of accessibility. Focus groups can also be used to drill down to the root of problems, which is essential given that the purpose of the needs assessment is to understand what systematic changes are needed. In addition,

collecting information from individuals assembled into a group allows each participant to see what gaps in information there are, and to supply that information.

Three distinct focus group audiences will be involved in the needs assessment. Each focus group will be conducted somewhat differently predicated on the dynamics of the these distinct audiences. The audiences are:

1. Staff and consultants at organizations that provide services to women,
2. Women who have used services for victims or survivors of violence, and
3. Women with disabilities and Deaf women living in the Hamilton County service provision area.

The manager of Project CARE and the chief consultant for the needs assessment, Professor Bonnie Fisher of the University of Cincinnati, will work with the sites of change to identify participants and coordinate the focus groups. The exact process of recruiting for these focus groups will be described in the section labeled “Recruitment” on page 13.

Stated Purpose of Focus Groups

The overarching purpose of the focus groups is to collect information to be used in an effort to improve services in Hamilton County for women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. The focus groups will solicit what participants think and feel about services for women in Hamilton County and, as appropriate, their experiences using those services. Focus group questions will concentrate specifically on how accessible, welcoming and responsive those services are. For exact verbiage, see the attached focus group questions, which differ as appropriate to the intended audience.

Planned Focus Groups

A total of fourteen focus groups will be convened, with an estimated total number of participants of 84 to 112 (based on groups of six to eight). The following focus groups will be convened:

- A. Staff and contractors of Partner organizations that provide services to women (seven total). Supervisors and the staff they supervise will not be in focus groups together because the questions appropriate to each are different. Supervisors identified in the recruitment process for a staff focus group may be offered the opportunity to answer questions in an interview format. The Hamilton County Board of MRDD focus group will be limited to staff of the Service Facilitation and Major Unusual Incidents departments, which are most appropriate to the Project. Planned staff and contractor focus groups are:
 1. The Center for Independent Living Options staff
 2. Hamilton County Board of MRDD staff
 3. Hamilton County Board of MRDD contracted service providers
 4. United Way / 211

5. University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit staff
 6. Women Helping Women staff
 7. YWCA Battered Women's Shelter staff
- B. Women who have used services for victims or survivors of violence (two total):
1. Women who have used the services of Women Helping Women
 2. Women residing at the YWCA Battered Women's Shelter
- C. Women with disabilities and Deaf women living in the Hamilton County service provision area (five total); constituents of:
1. The Center for Independent Living Options (two groups)
 2. Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (two groups)
 3. Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati (joining other groups)
 4. The INclusion Network

Facilitators and Staffing of Focus Groups

The groups will be led by facilitators who are representatives of Project CARE partner organizations. Facilitators will not be co-workers or supervisors of participants in the groups they facilitate. Facilitators will also not have been employed at an agency at which participants have been served. All staff of the Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation / Developmental Disabilities are mandatory reporters and therefore facilitators will not be drawn from this partner organization. All facilitators will have prior experience facilitating focus groups.

In addition to prior experience, all facilitators will be trained by the chief consultant for the needs assessment who has many years experience training facilitators and conducting focus groups as faculty of the University of Cincinnati. The Center for Independent Living Options, the INclusion Network and the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati will contribute their expertise in accessibility to the training of facilitators. To supplement the training, a script and a list of frequently asked questions and answers will be provided during the training. These materials will also be on-hand for each facilitator and assistants during the focus groups. In addition to being trained in how to run a focus group, facilitators will be well versed in the safety and accessibility considerations described on pages 15 and 17 of this Needs Assessment Plan. This will include a procedure for dealing with disclosure of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence or stalking, as described in the "disclosure" section (page 11 of this Needs Assessment Plan).

Each focus group will be attended by the facilitator, the chief consultant for the needs assessment, and the Project Manager. The Chief Consultant's role will be to function as an observer and as a recorder. The Project Manager's role will be to function as an observer and as an assistant. A professional advocate from either of the two partner organizations that provide support services to women who have experienced violence will be at the site of the focus groups, but not in the room where focus groups will be

held. This advocate will be available should any focus group participant need support services.

Focus Group Process

The following process will be followed in all focus groups, with exceptions as noted.

Focus groups will be two hours in length, with one half-hour at the beginning to accommodate delays in start time, introductions, instructions and confirmation of consent. Meetings will be held in accessible meeting rooms at partner offices in Hamilton County, Ohio. Each meeting space will be evaluated by one of the accessibility expert organizations that are partners in Project CARE (i.e., the INclusion Network) with attention to the accessibility criteria (please see “Accessibility Considerations” described on page 17 of this Needs Assessment Plan.)

Each focus group will adhere to the following process, which will be outlined in a script used by the facilitator:

- Accommodations will be provided as agreed to in advance. All participants will have been what accommodations they need and will have been informed in advance as to whether those accommodations will be made.
- To maximize the safety of participants, a participant’s regular personal care attendant (PCA) may accompany the participant to the focus group site, but will not sit in the room where the focus group is held. A substitute PCA will be provided to anyone that requests an attendant to accompany them in the room where the focus group is held.
- The facilitator will introduce her/himself and the assistants.
- Refreshments will be provided: water, soft drinks and a light snack.
- The purpose of the focus group will be stated as described in the section “Stated Purpose of Focus Groups” on page 7.
- The consent form will be read aloud, while participants read a hard copy at the same time. Please see the consent forms on pages 49 and 52 for actual verbiage.
- Participants will be encouraged to ask about anything they do not understand or that concerns them.
- It is not expected that anything discussed will cause anyone to become upset. If a participant feels uncomfortable about what is being discussed, one of the group leaders will gladly talk with that person privately. (See the Disclosure section on page 9 for more information).

- Interpersonal relationships will not be discussed. Participants will be informed that only experiences or needs related to services for women in Hamilton County will be discussed.
- Participants can leave the focus group at any time.
- Participants may be excused to use the rest room or for other personal needs.
- Tent cards, each with a different number, will be set before each participant so that we may refer to a participant without using their name. Participants will be asked not to refer to each other by name, should any of them know each other.
- The focus group will be digitally audio recorded and later transcribed. The transcription will include no information that could be used to personally identify any participant. If any participant does not wish to be recorded, we will proceed by taking notes by hand.
- Notes and the audio recording of focus groups will be stored in locked file cabinets at the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati and at University of Cincinnati. Information from the focus groups will only be used to help plan to make changes to agencies in Hamilton County, Ohio. All notes will be destroyed once our strategic plan is completed and approved.
- Participants will be asked to respect each others' confidentiality and privacy by not sharing any personal information with anyone after the meeting is over.
- Gift cards will be distributed to each participant. The gift cards are to compensate each participant for sharing their knowledge, experience and time. Participants will retain the card if they leave early. Staff and consultants participating in focus groups will not be given gift cards.
- Service provider groups will be notified that that no other employee, including supervisors or administrators, will be told what any individual says during the focus group. Participation in this focus group will not affect their employment in any way.
- Women with disabilities, Deaf women and victims/survivors will be informed that participating in the focus group will not affect their eligibility for services or the quality of services they receive.
- The facilitator will begin the formal focus group with the appropriate focus group questions. See pages 22-29 for the full text of questions. Participants will discuss each question on a volunteer basis.

At the end of the focus group, the facilitator will offer him/herself and other staff in the focus group to speak with anyone privately, should they have any concerns or questions. At this time, consultation with the trained advocate that is on-site but not in the room will be privately offered to any woman who has indicated a need. Participants will also be notified that they may call Amy Roberts of the United Way at a later time by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day. Amy Roberts will be the designated contact as the United Way is not associated with violence against women and minimizes the risk that anyone who desires to bring contact information home with them would be put at risk. The contact phone number will have a neutral message that does not mention Project CARE, the purpose of Project CARE, focus groups or violence in any way.

Disclosure

Focus group questions have been designed to discourage and minimize the likeliness that a participant will disclose a traumatic event that they have experienced. In the event that such a disclosure is made, the facilitator is trained to take the following steps, depending on which of the three listed scenarios occur:

1. If the disclosure does not seem to have caused the woman who made the disclosure to be upset, the facilitator will acknowledge the disclosure and steer the conversation back to the topic at hand. Upon completion of the focus group, the facilitator will privately ask the woman who made the disclosure if she would like referrals to appropriate community resources such as the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati's Domestic Violence Hotline or Women Helping Women's crisis line and inform the woman that such an advocate is immediately available and on site.
2. In the event that a woman has made a disclosure and appears to be upset, an assistant, who will have been trained in advance for this purpose, will offer to escort the person to a private place outside of the room. An advocate from the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati or Women Helping Women will be on site and will provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options. The role of the advocate will not be to perform in-depth counseling, but rather to validate the survivor's experiences and feelings, discuss a safety plan (if necessary), and connect the woman with appropriate referrals to community resources.
3. Whether or not the woman who has made a disclosure appears to be upset, the facilitator will have been trained to steer the conversation back to the topic at hand. At the end of the focus group, the facilitator will offer him/herself and other staff in the focus group to speak with anyone privately, should they have any concerns or questions. At this time, consultation with the trained advocate that is on-site but not in the room will be made available, as appropriate.

There will be no mandated reporters present in the focus group. If a participant is referred to an advocate, the advocate will inform her that she is a mandatory reporter. The participant will then decide whether to speak with the advocate.

Interviews

Interviews are the secondary instrument that will be used to evaluate the accessibility and responsiveness of Project CARE organizations to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking.

Nine interviews will be conducted with leaders at partner organizations that provide direct services to women, with a minimum of one interview per site of change. Leaders are defined as administrators that have decision-making authority with regard to the policies and procedures of their organization or relevant division within their organization. Two interviews will be conducted with larger organizations with more than one leader with decision-making authority.

Each interview will be conducted in person for approximately one hour in length. Interviews will be conducted by a Project CARE partner who is not a co-worker, supervisor or in any way associated with the person being interviewed. The chief consultant for the needs assessment will attend as an observer and recorder. To ensure that the interview is comfortable, we will not audio record the conversation and will take written notes.

The following individuals will be interviewed:

- A. The Center for Independent Living Options
 - 1. Suzanne Hopkins, Director of Programs
 - 2. Lin Laing, Executive Director

- B. Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
 - 1. Gay Covell, Assistant Director of Community Services
 - 2. Eric Metzger, Manager, Major Unusual Incidents Prevention

- C. United Way / 211
 - 1. Amy Roberts, Director

- D. University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Unit
 - 1. Carol Buschur, Clinical Manager

- E. Women Helping Women
 - 1. Kendall Fisher, Executive Director

- F. YWCA Battered Women's Shelter
 - 1. Theresa Singleton, Director, Protection from Abuse
 - 2. Stacey Hall, Director, Battered Women's Shelter

Recruitment

The recruitment process will be managed by the Project CARE manager and chief consultant for the needs assessment, through the use of approved scripts, messages and posted announcements, which are provided in the materials section of this document. Each partner organization that provides direct services will be involved in recruitment. Prior to recruiting participants, recruiters will be trained by the chief consultant for the needs assessment with assistance from the Center for Independent Living Options, the INclusion Network and the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati. Trainings and recruitment activities will follow the safety considerations described in the safety considerations section below. The training will include an explanation of the different types of guardianship.

Each recruiter will be given a script. The script will guide the facilitator through the focus group purpose, process and recruitment procedure. See pages 34-40 for the recruitment scripts. Recruitment scripts will be standardized across focus groups as much as possible to ensure that participants are told comparable information, in the interest of comparability of data.

As there will be three different categories of participants, and participants will be drawn from a variety of sources, different processes will be used to recruit participants. These processes are organized in three sections below, one for each category of participant. Within each category, the recruitment process differs according to the nature of the organization and other considerations related to the specific intended audience.

Prior to all focus groups and interviews, potential participants will be asked how we may accommodate them so that they can optimally participate. Great care will be taken to make requested accommodations. Should requested accommodations not be possible, the potential participant will be notified during any follow-up interaction and potential alternatives, including not participating in the group, will be discussed at this time. For those that we will not contact again prior to the group, whose requests we are not able to fully accommodate, we will discuss the alternatives upon their arrival. For details on accommodations that may be made, see the “Accessibility” section on page 17 of this Needs Assessment Plan

Service provider focus groups and interviews

Each partner that provides direct services to women will be responsible for ensuring adequate representation from their organization. Each of these partners will be responsible for identifying participants for a minimum of one focus group and one interview of leadership. The proposed roster of participants for focus groups and interviews will include job titles and job descriptions, and will be reviewed and approved by the chief consultant for the needs assessment and reviewed by all partners in Project CARE, to ensure a broad cross-section of organizational representation and responsibilities.

Focus groups of women with disabilities and Deaf women

The partners that will be recruiting women with disabilities and Deaf women have quite different organizational structures and different contacts within the community.

Therefore, the recruitment processes that will be used differ considerably from partner to partner, as described here:

1. Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities – an announcement will be made at a regularly scheduled social and advocacy group meeting. Women interested in participating in a focus group will be asked to speak privately with one of the social/advocacy group leaders. In the event that there is not adequate diversity represented in the selected participants (i.e., living arrangements or degree of capability) a trained recruiter will speak one-on-one with people served at adult centers run by the Board. Two focus groups will be held at the group's regular meeting location. The groups will not meet during their regular meeting times. A separate meeting time will be scheduled based on the schedules and preferences of the participants.
2. Center for Independent Living Options – An announcement will be made during the regular meeting of CILO's Women of Worth program. The group facilitator will follow a recruitment script (see page 37). Women interested in participating in a focus group will be asked to speak privately with the facilitator. A poster announcing the focus groups will be placed in common areas at the Center. See page 43 for the poster text. In addition, CILO staff will use the recruitment script to invite individuals they meet with one-on-one. Scheduling and more complete information will be provided via the contact method that the individual prefers. Confirmed participants will be asked if they would like a reminder two days prior to the focus group. The reminder will come from the CILO and will not mention violence against women. Two focus groups will be held. A group drawn from the Women of Worth group will be held during one of its regularly scheduled meetings at the Center. A second group will be formed from individuals identified through one-on-one contact with staff, to be held at the Center at a mutually convenient date.
3. INclusion Network – Note: The INclusion Network is not a site of change; however, they are an excellent source of potential focus group participants. The INclusion Network hosts public events and has extensive interaction with people with disabilities. The Executive Director of the INclusion Network will be provided with a recruitment script to use to invite individuals she meets with one-on-one. The recruitment script is included on page 39. Confirmed participants will be asked if they would like a reminder two days prior to the focus group. The reminder will come from a trained staff person at the INclusion Network and will not mention violence against women. One focus group of INclusion Network constituents will be held at a convenient, accessible location to be determined.
4. In order to encourage diverse representation in focus groups, the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati will be involved in recruitment. Although they are not partners in Project CARE, the Center has a collaborative relationship with Women Helping Women and supports the work of Project CARE. The

Center will display a poster announcing the focus groups in common areas at the Center and at locations where Deaf individuals regularly meet. See page 44 for the poster text. Interested individuals will be instructed to obtain more complete information via videophone, TTY or in person. Individuals responding to the request for participants will be offered a slot in one of the groups coordinated by the INclusion Network or the Center for Independent Living Options. Confirmed participants will be asked if they would like a reminder two days prior to the focus group (via videophone, TTY or other method specified by the participant). The reminder will come from the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati and will not mention violence against women.

Victims or survivors of violence against women

1. Focus group of women at the Battered Women's Shelter:

The Shelter will post an announcement in the case managers' offices and in resident common areas, inviting women currently residing in the shelter to participate in a focus group. The announcement will instruct interested individuals to meet with the Shelter Services Coordinator to confirm participation. Interested individuals will be notified that no Shelter staff will be present at the focus group, nor will staff be given information at a later date that could be connected to a particular individual.

2. Focus group of women who have used the services of Women Helping Women

An announcement will be made during support groups of women who receive or have received services from Women Helping Women. These women will be instructed to indicate their interest to the facilitator. They will also be instructed that they may indicate their interest following the support group meeting if they prefer. Interested women will be put in contact with a designed contact at Women Helping Women. If there is adequate interest, the focus group will be held during a regular meeting time; otherwise an alternate meeting time will be scheduled.

Safety Considerations

The safety of participants is of paramount concern, along with full consent, which is described in section "Consent Process" (please see page 18 of this Needs Assessment Plan). Project CARE will employ best practices for the safety of individuals involved in social science research, based on a threefold strategy for minimizing risk:

1. The use of procedures that involve less risk than other procedures,
2. Taking precautions to decrease the likelihood that harm will occur, and
3. Instituting procedures to deal with contingencies – if harms do occur.

Any information that is emailed to potential participants will not mention services for women who have experienced violence. Any email message sent regarding the focus group will be a short message containing logistical information requested by the participant. The message will not mention violence against women.

When making phone calls to confirm or follow-up with participants, staff will be trained to follow these steps to ensure safety:

- Only female staff will make phone calls;
- Only those who indicate it is o.k. to be reached by phone will be contacted by phone;
- Should the intended person not be available, the caller will state that they will call back another time;
- The name of the caller and their organization will be stated; the purpose of the call will be stated as follows: “We would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in a discussion group about services in our community;”
- If for some reason the person called needs to hang up abruptly, they will be informed that they can either hang up or say first, “no thank you, I am not interested at this time;”
- No messages will be left with individuals that answer the phone or on answering machines.

All questions will be carefully designed to avoid disclosure of personal experiences of violence. In the event that a disclosure is made during a group, facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the disclosure, including how recent the experience and the emotional state of the individual. The conversation will be guided back towards the discussion of services.

Should any woman disclose a personal experience and/or recount a history of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking during the group, Project Care will provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options. This process is described further in the section labeled “disclosure” above.

To maximize the safety of participants, a participant’s regular personal care attendant (PCA) may accompany the participant to the focus group site, but will not sit in the room where the focus group is held. A substitute PCA will be provided to anyone that requests an attendant to accompany them in the room where the focus group is held.

At the end of the focus group, the facilitator will offer him/herself and other staff in the focus group to speak with anyone privately, should they have any concerns or questions. At this time, consultation with the trained advocate that is on-site (but not in the focus group) will be privately offered to any woman who has indicated a need. This advocate will provide referrals and viable options. Participants will also be notified that they may call Amy Roberts of the United Way at a later time by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day.

All employees of the Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities are legally bound to report any disclosure to the authorities. This would need to be announced to the participants and could influence the responses of those not

comfortable with the risk of involving the authorities, not to mention putting undue, and undesired, emphasis on disclosure. Therefore, Hamilton County Board employees will not serve as facilitators for the focus groups of victims/survivors or women with disabilities and Deaf women.

A strict confidentiality policy, described below, will also be employed to maximize the safety of participants.

Accessibility Considerations

The following steps will be taken to ensure accessibility for all aspects of the needs assessment:

- Any woman recruited for focus groups or interviews will be asked what accommodations they require to participate;
- Any posted or emailed message will include a notice that anyone who requires accommodations or assistance to participate in the focus group should contact a designated person in advance of a focus group or interview;
- Handouts, including consent forms, will be available in Braille upon request;
- Handouts will be in 18 point Arial font, or similar optimal font;
- All focus group locations will be fully accessible; two partner organizations, the INclusion Network and the Center for Independent Living Options, are accessibility experts and will review any potential location for accessibility;
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters will be available if requested at any focus group. Interpreters fluent in other languages may be requested;
- To maximize the safety of participants, a participant's regular personal care attendant (PCA) may accompany the participant to the focus group site, but will not sit in the room where the focus group is held. A substitute PCA will be provided to anyone that requests an attendant to accompany them in the room where the focus group is held.
- Focus group times will be chosen so that they occur when accessible and affordable transportation is available. Communications from Project CARE regarding the focus groups will include a notice that resources are available for travel accommodations. Potential participants will be encouraged to discuss their transportation needs and the recruiter will arrange or pay for travel within budget. If requested accommodations are outside of budgeted amounts, the collaborative will be consulted to determine a solution;
- All materials, focus group questions, interview questions, and scripts will be scrutinized by the INclusion Network and Center for Independent Living Options for accessibility considerations.

Consent Process

Obtaining true, full consent of participants is of paramount concern. Project CARE will adhere to the following best practices in obtaining full consent for all focus groups, including service provider groups:

- Making full disclosure of the nature of the research and the subject's participation;
- Ensuring adequate comprehension on the part of the potential subjects
- Stating the subject's voluntary choice to participate and that refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits, and that the subject may discontinue at any time;
- Avoiding technical terms;
- Providing accommodations and assistance as needed;
- Providing translation services as needed;
- Prohibiting the involvement of minors;
- Obtaining consent without the use of coercion, overt or subtle;
- Assuring that the subject has the legal capacity to give consent;
- Providing sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate.

Process for Obtaining Consent

Written consent forms will be presented to each participant at the start of each focus group. Please see consent forms on pages 49 and 52. Participants will be asked to read the consent form and the consent form will be read aloud at the start of each focus group in order to accommodate a variety of communication and cognitive abilities. The discussion of the consent form will be translated by ASL or other interpreters as needed. The facilitator will collect signed consent forms at this time. The form will be “universally designed,” i.e., worded so as to be understandable by persons with a wide range of cognitive abilities. Participants will be notified in advance that a personal care attendant can be provided and other specific accommodations will be provided upon request.

It is anticipated that some women with disabilities and Deaf women who are recruited will have a legal guardian. All participants will be screened as to whether they are their own legal guardian. The recruitment training will include information about the types and definitions of guardianship. In cases where another individual is a participant’s legal guardian, that guardian will be asked to sign the consent form in advance of the focus group. Legal guardians will not participate in focus groups because having a legal guardian (who is often a parent) present during a focus group may inhibit the free sharing of ideas and experiences by participants.

The consent form will contain the following: the title of the needs assessment, a description of its purpose, the duration, what procedures will be followed, any potential risks or discomforts, what incentive will be given, an explanation of confidentiality measures, a statement that participation is strictly voluntary, and an offer to answer

questions. The consent form will also include an area to indicate verbal consent and a signature by a witness.

For actual verbiage, please see the consent forms pages 49 and 52.

Confidentiality Statement

To maintain confidentiality, Project CARE will adhere to the following best practices:

1. Information that could be used to personally identify participants will not be collected;
2. If during transcription, information that could potentially identify a participant is discovered, it will not be included in the transcription;
3. Codes will be substituted for personally identifiable information;
4. Records will be maintained in a locked, secure place on password protected computers.

All data collected during the needs assessment will be stored by the Project Manager in a locked cabinet in a locked office at the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati. The Administrative Assistant will have a key to these files, to use at the discretion of the Collaborative. Copies of needs assessment data records will also be stored in a locked cabinet in the University of Cincinnati office of Professor Bonnie Fisher, the chief consultant for needs assessment. Any data collected during the needs assessment that contains information that could potentially identify participants will be destroyed upon approval of the strategic plan by OVW.

The report generated from the needs assessment will not include any personally identifiable information. The only personal information collected will be names and signatures on consent forms, which will not be included in any other focus group documentation. For purposes of recording and transcribing focus groups, numbered tent cards will be placed before participants. Comments made by participants will be attributed to the number that appears on the card before them. Should transcription or analysis reveal any information that has the potential to be used to potentially identify a participant, that information will be struck, and/or not included in any subsequent materials.

The chief consultant for the needs assessment and the Project CARE manager will do the initial data analysis and draft report; neither of these individuals work at the sites of change that are being assessed. The Project CARE manager is an employee of the YWCA but the YWCA battered women's shelter is a separate entity in a separate location. Also, shelter staff interact with the Project CARE manager for Project CARE business only, in the same way as partners not connected with the YWCA. Before it is finalized the needs assessment report will be vetted by all partners for confidentiality concerns. The data from the needs assessment will be used for no purpose other than the needs assessment report and will not be shared with anyone outside the Collaborative. Any data collected during the needs assessment that contains information

that could potentially identify participants will be destroyed upon approval of the strategic plan by OVW.

Work Plan

Needs Assessment Plan Submitted (with questions & materials)	December 12, 2008
Needs Assessment Plan Approved	January, 2009
Complete Needs Assessment Focus Groups and Interviews	February 28, 2009
Needs Assessment Report Submitted	March 31, 2009
Needs Assessment Report Approved	May 15, 2009
Conduct Strategic Planning and Submit Plan	May - June 15, 2009
Strategic Plan Approved	July 31, 2009

Materials

Materials that will be used in the needs assessment process described in this document are contained on the following pages.

Focus Group Questions – Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women

We are interested in learning about your experience with agencies that serve women in Hamilton County. We will use this information to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women.

1. Think about the staff at places where you go for services. What skills or knowledge should staff have so they can serve you well?
Prompts:
 - What should staff know about communicating with women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - What about attitudes? What should be the attitudes of staff who provide services to you?

2. Think about times when an agency was not able to fully assist you. What happened?
Prompts:
 - In what ways did staff make it difficult to get the services you needed?
 - What difficulties were there with the buildings where services are provided?
 - What difficulties have you had communicating with agencies in Hamilton County?

3. What kinds of things have agencies done to show they cared about you?
Prompts:
 - What did they do to make you feel welcome?
 - What did they do to make you feel respected?
 - What could an agency do to make you feel more welcome or respected?

4. If a woman with a disability or a Deaf woman was physically hurt, sexually hurt or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking), what can you suggest to agencies so they can serve her well?
Prompts:
 - What knowledge should staff have about women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - How do attitudes or beliefs affect the services you receive from an agency?
 - What could agencies do to reach out to women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - What else could an agency do to better serve a woman who has been hurt or stalked?

5. Think about a time when you received services from more than one agency. How well do agencies work together in Hamilton County to serve women with disabilities and Deaf women?

Prompts:

- How would you improve the way agencies work together in Hamilton County?
- What agencies should work together that do not work together?

6. Take a minute to think about your most important wish in terms of services that you get. What would your biggest wish be for the agencies that you use?

Prompt:

- What's the most important thing for service providers to know about women with disabilities or Deaf women?

7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know about services for women?

We have covered a lot and we really appreciate your time. If you think of anything else after this group is finished, you can call Amy Roberts of the United Way by dialing 211 or by dialing 711 for the telecommunications relay service for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Focus Group Questions – Victims or Survivors

Thank you for participating in our focus group. We will be discussing what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. We are interested in how well these services work for all women, including women with disabilities and Deaf women. We will use this information to improve services in Hamilton County.

1. Tell us about a time when you were seeking services. How did you find out about the services?
Prompts:
 - What was your experience contacting the agency?
 - What makes it easy for you to contact an agency?
 - What makes it hard to contact an agency?

2. What did you like about the way staff interacted with you when you were explaining your situation?
Prompts:
 - How did you know that staff cared about you?
 - How did staff make you feel welcome and comfortable when explaining your situation?
 - What would have been more helpful?

3. Maybe there were times when your needs or the needs of someone you know were not met by an agency. Talk about that. What might they have done differently?
Prompt:
 - Maybe there were times when an agency was not able to provide you or someone you know safe access to services. What might they have done that that would have been safer?

4. What do you believe staff at agencies that don't often provide services to victims and survivors need to know?
Prompts:
 - What information do they need?
 - What skills do they need?

5. Think about a time when you received services from multiple agencies. How well do agencies work together in Hamilton County to support victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?
Prompts:
 - How would you improve the way agencies work together to support victims or survivors?
 - What agencies should work together that do not work together?

6. Please take a minute to think about the one thing that you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services for victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What is that one thing?

Prompt:

- What's the most important thing for service providers to know about victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?
7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know about services for victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

We have covered a lot and we really appreciate your time. If you think of anything else after this group is finished, you can call Amy Roberts of the United Way by dialing 211 or by dialing 711 for the telecommunications relay service for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Focus Group Questions – Disability Service Providers

Thank you for participating in our focus group. We will be discussing what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women. We would also like to know specifically about agencies for women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.

1. What does your agency do to assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How does your agency screen and identify women who are victims or survivors of violence? When do you do this?
- What resources do you offer victims?
- What training does staff receive?
- What policies and practices are in place for assisting women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors?

2. What kinds of things does your agency do to make victims or survivors know you care about them?

Prompts:

- What do you do to make them feel welcome?
- How do you make them feel respected?
- What could your agency do to make them feel more welcome and respected?

3. Talk about times when, maybe, your organization was not able to fully assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What happened?

Prompts:

- What difficulties have there been related to the physical space where you provide services?
- In what ways could staff have been better prepared?
- How do attitudes and beliefs affect your ability to serve victims and survivors?
- What other aspects of your organization have affected your ability to assist victims or survivors?

4. What could your agency do to improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

Prompts:

- What staff knowledge or skills could be improved?
- How might the physical layout or location where services are provided be improved?
- What policies and practices might be instituted?
- What resources might be offered?
- How might you partner with organizations that serve victims and survivors?
- How else might your organization improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

5. Think about other agencies that women use or that you refer women to. Describe what these organizations could do so you all could improve the way you assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How do agencies currently work together to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors are served?
- Do you currently work with providers of services for victims or survivors?
- What agencies need to work together that do not currently work together?
- How should agencies work together?

6. Please take a minute to think about the one thing that you consider most important, that needs to be addressed within your organization regarding services for women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking? What is that one thing?

7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know about the issue of women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

We have covered a lot and we really appreciate your time. If you think of anything else after this group is finished, you can call Amy Roberts of the United Way by dialing 211 or by dialing 711 for the telecommunications relay service for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Focus Group Questions – Victim/Survivor Service Providers

Thank you for participating in our focus group. We will be discussing what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.

1. What does your agency do to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors are served?
Prompts
 - How does your agency ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women receive the accommodations they need?
 - What resources do you offer women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - What training does staff receive?
 - What policies and practices are in place for assisting women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors?

2. What kinds of things does your organization do to make women with disabilities and Deaf women know that you care about them?
Prompts:
 - What do you do to make them feel welcome?
 - How do you make them feel respected?
 - What could your organization do to make them feel more welcome and respected?

3. Talk about times when, maybe, your organization was not able to fully assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who were victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What happened?
Prompts:
 - What challenges have you had providing accommodations for women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - What difficulties have there been related to the physical space where you provide services?
 - In what ways could staff have been better prepared?
 - How do attitudes and beliefs affect your ability to serve women with disabilities and Deaf women?
 - What other aspects of your organization have affected your ability to assist women with disabilities and Deaf women?

4. What could your organization do to improve the way it provides services to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors?

Prompts:

- What staff knowledge or skills could be improved?
- How might the physical layout or location where services are provided be improved?
- Think about the way you reach out and communicate with women you serve. How might you improve your outreach to women with disabilities and Deaf women? How might you improve the way you interact in person? How might you improve your materials?
- What policies and practices might be instituted?
- What resources might be offered?
- How might you partner with disability or Deaf organizations?
- How else might your organization improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

5. Think about other agencies that women use or that you refer women to. Describe what these organizations could do so you all could improve the way you assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How do agencies currently work together?
- How do they work together to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking are served?
- Do you currently work with disability organizations?
- What agencies need to work together that do not currently work together?
- How should agencies work together?

6. Please take a minute to think about the one thing that you consider most important, that needs to be addressed within your organization regarding services for women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking? What is that one thing?

7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know about the issue of women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

We have covered a lot and we really appreciate your time. If you think of anything else after this group is finished, you can call Amy Roberts of the United Way by dialing 211 or by dialing 711 for the telecommunications relay service for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Interview Questions – Victim Service Provider Leadership

We have some questions for you about your agency and the services you provide, as they relate to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking.

1. What does your organization do to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors are served?

Prompts:

- How does your organization ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women receive the accommodations they need?
- What training does staff receive?
- What measures do staff take to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women feel welcome and respected?
- What formal policies specifically address serving women with disabilities and Deaf women?
- In what ways do staff follow these policies? In what ways do they not follow these policies?
- How does your budget specifically address serving women with disabilities and Deaf women? Are there line items for accommodations for people with disabilities and Deaf people?

2. Talk about times when, maybe, your organization was not able to fully assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What happened?

Prompts:

- What challenges have you had providing accommodations for women with disabilities and Deaf women?
- What difficulties have there been related to the physical space where you provide services?
- In what ways could staff have been better prepared?
- How do attitudes and beliefs affect your ability to serve women with disabilities and Deaf women?
- What other aspects of your organization have affected your ability to assist women with disabilities and Deaf women?

3. What could your organization do to improve the way it provides services to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors?

Prompts:

- What staff knowledge or skills could be improved?
- How might the physical layout or location where services are provided be improved?
- What about the way you reach out and communicate with women you serve? How might you improve the way you interact in person? How might you improve your outreach and educational services to reach women with disabilities and Deaf women?
- What policies and practices might be instituted?
- What resources might be offered?
- How might you partner with disability or Deaf organizations?
- How else might your organization improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

4. Think about other agencies that women use or that you refer women to. Describe what these organizations could do so you all could improve the way you assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How do agencies currently work together?
- How do they work together to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking are served?
- Do you have any formal agreements with other service providers? Do you have any formal agreements with disability organizations?
- What agencies need to work together that do not currently work together?
- How should agencies work together?

5. What formal, long-term changes might your organization make to better serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- What policy changes might your organization institute?
- What about the network of agencies in Hamilton County? What changes could be implemented so that agencies work together better to serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

6. Please take a minute to think about the one thing that you consider most important, that needs to be addressed within your organization regarding services for women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What is that one thing?

7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know?

Interview Questions – Disability Service Provider Leadership

We have some questions for you about your agency and the services you provide, as they relate to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking.

1. What does your agency do to assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How does your agency screen and identify women who are victims or survivors of violence?
- What training does staff receive related to violence against women?
- What measures do staff take to ensure that victims or survivors feel welcome and respected?
- What formal policies specifically address the needs of victims or survivors of violence?
- In what ways do staff follow these policies? In what ways do they not follow these policies?
- How does your budget specifically address the needs of victims or survivors of violence?

2. Talk about times when, maybe, your organization was not able to fully assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What happened?

Prompts:

- What difficulties have there been related to the physical space where you provide services?
- In what ways could staff have been better prepared?
- How do attitudes and beliefs affect your ability to serve victims or providers?
- What other aspects of your organization have affected your ability to assist victims or survivors?

3. What could your organization do to improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

Prompts:

- What staff knowledge or skills could be improved?
- How might the physical layout or location where services are provided be improved?
- What policies and practices might be instituted?
- What resources might be offered?
- How might you partner with organizations that serve victims and survivors?
- How else might your organization improve the way it provides services to victims or survivors?

4. Think about other agencies that women use or that you refer women to. Describe what these organizations could do so you all could improve the way you assist women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Prompts:

- How do agencies currently work together?
 - How do they work together to ensure that women with disabilities and Deaf women are served?
 - Do you have any formal agreements with other service providers? Do you have any formal agreements with organizations that serve victims or survivors?
 - What agencies need to work together that do not currently work together?
 - How should agencies work together?
5. What formal, long-term changes might your organization make to better serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?
Prompts:
 - What policy changes might your organization institute?
 - What about the network of agencies in Hamilton County? What systems-based change could be implemented to better serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?
 6. Please take a minute to think about the one thing that you consider most important, that needs to be addressed within your organization regarding services for women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking? What is that one thing?
 7. Is there something you haven't had a chance to say that you really want us to know about the issue of women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking?

Recruiter Script – Service Provider Focus Groups

Introductory statement/overview:

We are looking for staff to participate in a focus group. We are interested in learning about this organization and other organizations that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking in Hamilton County. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services in Hamilton County.

Information about the focus group

- The focus group will last one and a half hours.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- The focus groups are being conducted by Project CARE, which is a group of Hamilton County organizations that are interested in improving the way they provide services to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking.
- Nothing you say will affect your current employment. Nothing will be shared with your employer that could identify you personally.
- None of the information we share with Project CARE agencies or other agencies will contain any personal information. All notes will be destroyed once our plan is completed.
- What accommodations will you need so that you can fully participate in the focus group?

Notes

- If asked, the organizations in Project CARE are: Center for Independent Living Options; Family Violence Prevention Project; Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Inclusion Network; University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice; University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit; United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211; Women Helping Women; and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati.

Recruiter Script – Service Users – Hamilton County Board of MRDD

To be presented at the start of a Leaders in Action Meeting

Introductory statement/overview:

We are looking for women to participate in a focus group. We are interested in learning about their experience with agencies that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women. What we want to know is what women think and feel about services in Hamilton County and how it works to use them. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County.

Information about the focus group

- The focus group will last two hours.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- For your knowledge and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card.

Discuss the following only during one-on-one conversation with interested women:

- The focus groups will discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women. We would also like to know about **services** for women who get physically hurt, sexually hurt, or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). We will not be talking about your relationships or your personal experiences with people in your life. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.
- The focus groups are being conducted by a group of organizations that serve women in Hamilton County that are interested in improving the way they provide services.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- The focus group will last two hours.
- What accommodations will you need so that you can fully participate in the focus group?
- If you have a personal care attendant, you may bring them to the location of the focus group. However, all personal care attendants will be outside of the room where the focus group is being held. Should you need a personal care attendant to accompany you in the room where the focus group is being held, we will provide an assistant.
- May we contact you to send a reminder or if we need to tell you if something's changed? [If appropriate: to tell you what accommodations we can make]. How would you like to be contacted?

Notes

- In the event that there is not adequate diversity represented in the selected participants (i.e., living arrangements or degree of capability), speak one-on-one with people served at adult centers run by the Board.
- If asked, the organizations conducting the focus group are: Center for Independent Living Options; Family Violence Prevention Project; Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Inclusion Network; University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice; University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit; United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211; Women Helping Women; and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
- The terms hurt or stalked are defined as: physically hurt, sexually hurt or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). If the group would benefit from further elaboration, explain that this may include threats of physical and sexual abuse, being handled roughly or restrained against your will, withholding equipment or breaking equipment.
- No documentation or other materials describing the focus groups may be given to the potential participant, as required by the grant requirement for safety reasons.
- If a woman requests she be contacted by email, any email message should be a short message containing logistical information. The message should not mention violence against women.
- If the individual requests she be contacted by phone, only female staff should make the call. Should the intended person not be available, the caller should state that they will call back another time. Do not leave a message.
- All questions will be carefully designed to avoid disclosure of personal experiences of violence. In the event that a disclosure is made during a group, facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the disclosure, including how recent the experience and the emotional state of the individual. The conversation will be guided back towards the discussion of services.
- Should any woman disclose a personal experience of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking during the group, a trained professional will be on site to provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options.
- Contact person: prior to and after the focus group, participants with questions may contact Amy Roberts of the United Way by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day.

Recruiter Script – Service Users – Center for Independent Living Options

To be presented at the start of a Women of Worth group meeting, to women with whom have private consultation with Center staff, and to women who are inquiring about the poster announcing the focus group..

Introductory statement/overview:

We are looking for women to participate in a focus group. We are interested in learning about their experience with agencies that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women. What we want to know is what women think and feel about services in Hamilton County and how it works to use them. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County.

Information about the focus group

- The focus group will last two hours.
- We will meet here at the Center for Independent Living Options at a time to be determined.
- For your knowledge and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card.
- Any interested women, please speak with me after our meeting.

Discuss the following only during one-on-one conversation with interested women:

- The focus groups will discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women. We would also like to know about **services** for women who get physically hurt, sexually hurt, or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). We will not be talking about your relationships or your personal experiences with people in your life. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.
- The focus groups are being conducted by a group of organizations that serve women in Hamilton County that are interested in improving the way they provide services.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- The focus group will last two hours.
- What accommodations will you need so that you can fully participate in the focus group?
- PCA
- May we contact you to send a reminder or if we need to tell you if something's changed? [If appropriate: to tell you what accommodations we can make]. How would you like to be contacted?

Notes

- Two focus groups will be formed of CILLO constituents. One will be made up of participants of Women of Worth. The other will be made up of individuals recruited through a poster placed at the Center and by invited individuals that get one-on-one services at the Center.
- If asked, the organizations conducting the focus group are: Center for Independent Living Options; Family Violence Prevention Project; Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Inclusion Network; University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice; University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit; United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211; Women Helping Women; and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
- The terms hurt or stalked are defined as: physically hurt, sexually hurt or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). If the group would benefit from further elaboration, explain that this may include threats of physical and sexual abuse, being handled roughly or restrained against your will, withholding equipment or breaking equipment.
- No documentation or other materials describing the focus groups may be given to the potential participant, as required by the grant requirement for safety reasons.
- If a woman requests she be contacted by email, any email message should be a short message containing logistical information. The message should not mention violence against women.
- If the individual requests she be contacted by phone, only female staff should make the call. Should the intended person not be available, the caller should state that they will call back another time. Do not leave a message.
- All questions will be carefully designed to avoid disclosure of personal experiences of violence. In the event that a disclosure is made during a group, facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the disclosure, including how recent the experience and the emotional state of the individual. The conversation will be guided back towards the discussion of services.
- Should any woman disclose a personal experience of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking during the group, a trained professional will be on site to provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options.
- Contact person: prior to and after the focus group, participants with questions may contact Amy Roberts of the United Way by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day.

Recruiter Script – Service Users – The INclusion Network / Hearing Deaf Center

To be presented to women who have private consultation with the director of the INclusion Network and women who are inquiring about the poster announcing the focus group.

Introductory statement/overview:

We are looking for women to participate in a focus group. We are interested in learning about their experience with agencies that serve women with disabilities and Deaf women. What we want to know is what women think and feel about services in Hamilton County and how it works to use them. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County.

Information about the focus group

- The focus group will last two hours.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- For your knowledge and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card.

Discuss the following only during one-on-one conversation with interested women:

- The focus groups will discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women. We would also like to know about **services** for women who get physically hurt, sexually hurt, or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). We will not be talking about your relationships or your personal experiences with people in your life. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.
- The focus groups are being conducted by a group of organizations that serve women in Hamilton County that are interested in improving the way they provide services.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- The focus group will last two hours.
- What accommodations will you need so that you can fully participate in the focus group?
- If you have a personal care attendant, you may bring them to the location of the focus group. However, all personal care attendants will be outside of the room where the focus group is being held. Should you need a personal care attendant to accompany you in the room where the focus group is being held, we will provide an assistant.
- May we contact you to send a reminder or if we need to tell you if something's changed? [If appropriate: to tell you what accommodations we can make]. How would you like to be contacted?

Notes

- If asked, the organizations conducting the focus group are: Center for Independent Living Options; Family Violence Prevention Project; Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Inclusion Network; University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice; University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit; United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211; Women Helping Women; and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
- The terms hurt or stalked are defined as: physically hurt, sexually hurt or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). If the group would benefit from further elaboration, explain that this may include threats of physical and sexual abuse, being handled roughly or restrained against your will, withholding equipment or breaking equipment.
- No documentation or other materials describing the focus groups may be given to the potential participant, as required by the grant requirement for safety reasons.
- If a woman requests she be contacted by email, any email message should be a short message containing logistical information. The message should not mention violence against women.
- If the individual requests she be contacted by phone, only female staff should make the call. Should the intended person not be available, the caller should state that they will call back another time. Do not leave a message.
- All questions will be carefully designed to avoid disclosure of personal experiences of violence. In the event that a disclosure is made during a group, facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the disclosure, including how recent the experience and the emotional state of the individual. The conversation will be guided back towards the discussion of services.
- Should any woman disclose a personal experience of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking during the group, a trained professional will be on site to provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options.
- Contact person: prior to and after the focus group, participants with questions may contact Amy Roberts of the United Way by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day.

Recruiter Script – Victims/Survivors

To be presented at the start of support group meetings, to women who have private consultation with staff, and to women who are inquiring about the poster announcing the focus group.

Introductory statement/overview:

We are looking for women to participate in a focus group. We are interested in learning about their experience with agencies that serve women who are victims or survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. What we want to know is what women think and feel about services in Hamilton County and how it works to use them. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for victims or survivors.

Information about the focus group

- The focus group will last two hours.
- We will meet here at the [time and location TBD]
- For your knowledge and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card.
- Any interested women, please speak with me after our meeting.

Discuss the following only during one-on-one conversation with interested women:

- The focus groups will discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to victims or survivors. We would also like to know how these services might work for a woman with a disability or a Deaf woman. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.
- The focus groups are being conducted by a group of organizations that serve women in Hamilton County that are interested in improving the way they provide services.
- We will meet at [time and location TBD]
- The focus group will last two hours.
- What accommodations will you need so that you can fully participate in the focus group?
- If you have a personal care attendant, you may bring them to the location of the focus group. However, all personal care attendants will be outside of the room where the focus group is being held. Should you need a personal care attendant to accompany you in the room where the focus group is being held, we will provide an assistant.
- May we contact you to send a reminder or if we need to tell you if something's changed? [If appropriate: to tell you what accommodations we can make]. How would you like to be contacted?

Notes

- If asked, the organizations conducting the focus group are: Center for Independent Living Options; Family Violence Prevention Project; Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Inclusion Network; University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice; University Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Unit; United Way of Greater Cincinnati/211; Women Helping Women; and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
- No documentation or other materials describing the focus groups may be given to the potential participant, as required by the grant requirement for safety reasons.
- If a woman requests she be contacted by email, any email message should be a short message containing logistical information. The message should not mention violence against women.
- If the individual requests she be contacted by phone, only female staff should make the call. Should the intended person not be available, the caller should state that they will call back another time. Do not leave a message.
- All questions will be carefully designed to avoid disclosure of personal experiences of violence. In the event that a disclosure is made during a group, facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the disclosure, including how recent the experience and the emotional state of the individual. The conversation will be guided back towards the discussion of services.
- Should any woman disclose a personal experience of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking during the group, a trained professional will be on site to provide immediate, private consultation if needed and to provide referrals and viable options.
- Contact person: prior to and after the focus group, participants with questions may contact Amy Roberts of the United Way by calling (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and asking for Amy Roberts. Ms. Roberts will answer questions and make referrals to anyone who indicates they might need them. Participants may leave a message which will be returned the next work day.

Poster – Women with Disabilities

Improving Services for Women with Disabilities in Hamilton County

Focus Group

If you would like to participate in a focus group that will discuss the quality of services used by women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County, please contact by phone or in person:

NAME

TITLE

Center for Independent Living Options

PHONE NUMBER

\$25 gift cards will be given to participants. Participation is limited to the first 8 signed up for each group.

Poster – Deaf women

Improving Services for Women who are Deaf

Focus Group

If you would like to participate in a focus group that will discuss the quality and accessibility of services for women in Hamilton County, please contact:

Rob Bonney
YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
rbonney@ywcacin.org

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
greater cincinnati

**\$25 gift cards will be
given to all participants.**

(Participation is limited to the first 8 signed up)

This project is endorsed by HSDC/CSD

[Note: HSDC is Hearing Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati and CDS is Community Services for the Deaf]

Poster – Battered Women’s Shelter

Improving Services for Victims/Survivors in Hamilton County

Focus Group

If you would like to participate in a focus group that will discuss the quality of services used by victims/survivors in Hamilton County, please contact by phone or in person:

NAME

TITLE

YWCA Battered Women's Shelter

PHONE NUMBER

\$25 gift cards will be given to all participants. Participation is limited to the first 8 signed up.

Facilitator Script – Focus Groups of Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women

A. INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT

- Thank the participants for joining you. Introduce yourself and the assistants.
- Tell the group about the refreshments that are available.
- Slowly read aloud the consent form. Be sure that any accommodations are in place.

B. READ ALOUD CONSENT FORM:

Read consent form on page 49.

C. FOCUS GROUP PROCESS:

- Does anyone object to being audio recorded? (if anyone objects, inform the group that we will take notes by hand only)
- Collect the signed consent forms.
- Notify the participants that they may leave the room if they need to use the rest room or for other personal needs.
- Ask if there are any questions before we begin with the focus group questions.
- We will turn on the recording device now and begin with the first focus group question.
- Ask and discuss focus group questions.
- Please have on hand the “notes” from the recruiter script on page 42.

D. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group. If anyone has any questions or concerns once we are finished, feel free to speak with me or one of the other focus group leaders. If you have any questions after you've left this focus group, you may call the United Way at (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and ask for Amy Roberts. If Amy cannot come to the phone at the time, she will return your call by the next business day.

Thank you. We look forward to using your feedback to improve services for women in Hamilton County.

Facilitator Script – Focus Groups of Victims/Survivors

A. INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT

- Thank the participants for joining you. Introduce yourself and the assistants.
- Tell the group about the refreshments that are available.
- Slowly read aloud the consent form. Be sure that any accommodations are in place.

B. READ ALOUD CONSENT FORM:

Read consent form on page 52.

C. FOCUS GROUP PROCESS:

- Collect the signed consent forms.
- Notify the participants that they may leave the room if they need to use the rest room or for other personal needs.
- Ask if there are any questions before we begin with the focus group questions.
- We will turn on the recording device now and begin with the first focus group question.
- Ask and discuss focus group questions.

D. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to speak with me or one of the other focus group leaders. If you have any questions after you've left this focus group, you may call the United Way at (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and ask for Amy Roberts. If Amy cannot come to the phone at the time, she will return your call by the next business day.

Thank you. We look forward to using your feedback to improve services for women in Hamilton County.

Facilitator Script – Focus Groups of Service Providers

A. INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Thank the participants for joining you. Introduce yourself and the assistants.
- Tell the group about the refreshments that are available.
- The focus group will last one and a half hours.
- We have gathered this group to discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, or stalking. We will use this information to improve services for women in Hamilton County.
- Nothing you say will affect your current employment. Nothing will be shared with your employer that could identify you personally.
- We will make a recording of the focus group using a sound recorder. We will use this recording later to write down what is said during the focus group.
- Our notes and the sound recording of this focus group will be stored in locked file cabinets at the YWCA and at the University of Cincinnati. Information from the focus groups will be used to help improve agencies in Hamilton County. None of the information we share with these agencies will contain any personal information. All notes will be destroyed once our strategic plan is completed.
- You may leave the room if you need to use the rest room or for personal needs.
- Ask if there are any questions before we begin with the focus group questions.
- We will turn on the recorder now and begin with the first focus group question.
- Ask and discuss focus group questions

B. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to speak with me or one of the other focus group leaders. If you have any questions after you've left this focus group, you may call the United Way at (513) 762-7199 or by TTY at (513) 762-7250 and ask for Amy Roberts. If Amy cannot come to the phone, she will return your call by the next business day.

Thank you. We look forward to using your feedback to improve services for women in Hamilton County.

Consent Form [Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women]

Please read the following explanation carefully and ask questions about anything you do not understand before you sign this form. When you sign this form, that means you agree to participate in the focus group and be part of the effort to improve services in Hamilton County for women with disabilities and Deaf women.

We have invited you to discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to women with disabilities and Deaf women. We would also like to know about **services** for women who get physically hurt, sexually hurt, or repeatedly bothered/followed (this is sometimes referred to as stalking). Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County.

The focus group will last two hours.

Because your participation in the focus group is voluntary, this means you can leave the group at any time. You do not have to discuss any question that you do not want to talk about.

We think that you have much to share with us. Because of your knowledge, experience and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card. If you need to leave early, you may keep the gift card.

We do not expect that anything that we talk about will cause you to become upset. We will not ask you to talk about anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. We will not be talking about your relationships or your personal experiences with people in your life. If for some reason you do become uncomfortable, one of the group leaders will be glad to talk with you privately.

For confidentiality reasons, please do not call each other by name during the focus group, even if you know each other. We have placed numbers in front of you so that we don't need to call you by name. After this focus group is finished, please respect each others' privacy by not sharing personal information with anyone else.

We will make a recording of the focus group using a sound recorder. We will use this recording later to create a report on what is learned in the focus group. We may write down issues or ideas that you mention, but we will not use your exact words. We will use the information in this report to create a plan to improve services in Hamilton County.

Our notes will not mention your name or any personal information about you. None of the information we share with other agencies will contain any personal information. Our notes and the sound recording of this focus group will be stored in locked file cabinets at the YWCA and at the University of Cincinnati. Information from the focus groups will be used to help improve agencies in Hamilton County. All notes will be destroyed once our plan is completed.

Participant Signature _____

Date: _____

🍏 Oral presentation of consent to participant who is not able to read the written consent form

Signature and title of person obtaining / witnessing consent:

Date: _____

Consent Form [Survivors]

Please read the following explanation carefully and ask questions about anything you do not understand before you sign this form. When you sign this form, that means you agree to participate in the focus group and be part of the effort to improve services in Hamilton County for women with disabilities and Deaf women.

We have invited you to discuss what local agencies do that is helpful and what is not helpful to victims or survivors. We would also like to know how these services might work for a woman with a disability or a Deaf woman. Your participation will help us develop a plan to improve services for women with disabilities and Deaf women in Hamilton County.

The focus group will last two hours.

Because your participation in the focus group is voluntary, this means you can leave the group at any time. You do not have to discuss any question that you do not want to talk about.

We think that you have much to share with us. Because of your knowledge, experience and willingness to help, we will pay you with a \$25 gift card. If you need to leave early, you may keep the gift card.

We do not expect that anything that we talk about will cause you to become upset. We will not ask you to talk about anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. We will not be talking about your relationships or your personal experiences with people in your life. If for some reason you do become uncomfortable, one of the group leaders will be glad to talk with you privately.

For confidentiality reasons, please do not call each other by name during the focus group, even if you know each other. We have placed numbers in front of you so that we don't need to call you by name. After this focus group is finished, please respect each others' privacy by not sharing personal information with anyone else.

We will make a recording of the focus group using a sound recorder. We will use this recording later to create a report on what is learned in the

focus group. We may write down issues or ideas that you mention, but we will not use your exact words. We will use the information in this report to create a plan to improve services in Hamilton County.

Our notes will not mention your name or any personal information about you. None of the information we share with other agencies will contain any personal information. Our notes and the sound recording of this focus group will be stored in locked file cabinets at the YWCA and at the University of Cincinnati. All notes will be destroyed once our plan is completed.

Participant Signature _____

Date: _____

🍏 Oral presentation of consent to participant who is not able to read the written consent form

Signature and title of person obtaining / witnessing consent:

Date: _____