

Needs Assessment Plan The H.O.P.E. Collaborative Haywood County, North Carolina

October 2008

I. Introduction

This Needs Assessment Plan establishes the process for gathering information concerning community agency policies and practices as well as the experiences of persons with disabilities and Deaf persons and survivors of violence and abuse. The tools of the plan include focus groups and interviews. The data collected will define the major initiatives that will form the strategic plan for the H.O.P.E. Collaborative of Haywood County. The information will allow the H.O.P.E. Collaborative partner agencies to identify what is needed within their own organizations to promote safe disclosures, increase access to services and supports and create a seamless system of response to survivors of violence and abuse with disabilities.

Background Information on the H.O.P.E. Collaborative

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative of Haywood County, a 2007 project funded by the Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women's Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant, is located in the Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina. It is a collaborative group of six agencies joining together to improve the way that we respond, both as individual organizations and as an inter-connected system, to persons with disabilities and Deaf persons who experience violence and abuse in our county. The acronym "H.O.P.E." means "Helping Our People Emerge....from crisis to healing," reflecting our community and our sense of shared responsibility.

Partner Agencies

The Partner Agencies of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative include:

The Arc of Haywood County serves individuals with mild to severe/profound developmental disabilities through group homes and transitional and independent living apartments.

Haywood County Department of Social Services (DSS) DSS is a federally mandated, state supervised and county administered social service agency that receives and evaluates reports to determine whether adults with disabilities are in need of protective services

Haywood Vocational Opportunities, Inc. (HVO) HVO is an accredited rehabilitation facility that provides work force training and employment for people with disabilities.

R.E.A.C.H (Resources, Education, Assistance, Counseling, and Housing) of Haywood County
R.E.A.C.H. is the county domestic violence-sexual assault direct service provider for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, rape and elder abuse.

Smoky Mountain Center Smoky Mountain Center is a Local Mental Health Management Entity (LME) of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability and Substance Abuse Services. Smoky manages a provider network for mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services.

Thirtieth Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance, Inc. (Alliance) The Alliance is a nonprofit, regional coalition that provides education, outreach, and community capacity building to improve the response to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and elder abuse. The Alliance is acting as convener for the Collaborative.

Vision Statement of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative

Organizations in Haywood County take collective responsibility to provide a seamless system of quality, inclusive and responsive services that empower persons with disabilities and Deaf persons who experience violence and abuse to move from crisis to healing.

Mission Statement of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative will remove barriers to services and supports for persons with disabilities and Deaf persons who experience violence and abuse by fostering agency collaboration, creating a collective response, and changing organizational policies and procedures, which will be fully integrated into the culture of our agencies.

Focus Statement of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative focuses on persons with all types of disabilities and Deaf persons residing in Haywood County, North Carolina who have experienced violence and abuse. The Collaborative members are concentrating on sustainable, substantial systems' change. They desire to create agency environments which encourage disclosures of violence and abuse and a seamless, collective response when disclosures are made. They will work to change not only their agencies' policies and procedures but also their organizational cultures. The agencies have the capacity and expertise to create this change, as well as the vision and commitment to expand this project in the future to additional counties in this rural, mountainous region of Western North Carolina. The 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance, Inc. will not serve as a site of change but will be the convener for the H.O.P.E. Collaborative member agencies.

II. Purpose of the Needs Assessment

This needs assessment is an important step towards achieving the vision of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative for change in Haywood County, North Carolina in the provision of services for persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse. By studying the current system as it is and with feedback from leadership and management, front line staff, persons with disabilities, survivors of violence and abuse, volunteers, and Boards Chairs, the H.O.P.E. Collaborative will use the results from the needs assessment to create a needs assessment report and a strategic plan that can move the organizations of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative towards systems change.

The following plan includes the needs assessment questions, information sources, overview of methods, informed consent process, access considerations, safety considerations, confidentiality, work plan, and assessment tools.

III. Global Needs Assessment Questions

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative seeks to learn more about the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of survivors, persons with disabilities and service providers. The Collaborative developed the global needs assessment questions below to achieve this understanding.

Question 1: What services, policies, procedures, practices, knowledge and relationships do our organizations currently have for survivors with disabilities as they move from crisis to healing?

Question 2: What do our organizations still need to effectively work with survivors with disabilities?

Question 3: What are the barriers survivors with disabilities face in accessing and receiving services?

Questions 4: What opportunities exist or can be created that will lead to seamless, inclusive, and responsive services that empower persons with disabilities who experience violence and abuse to move from crisis to healing?

IV. Information Sources

Existent Data

While the H.O.P.E. Collaborative agencies serving persons with disabilities collect data, they have not in the past collected data relating to the occurrence of violence or abuse affecting the persons they serve. No other organizations at the local or State level serving persons with

disabilities have collected data on violence or abuse in their service populations. Currently, only one collaborative member, R.E.A.C.H., the domestic violence-sexual assault service provider for Haywood County, asks if an applicant for services has a disability as part of the intake process in response to requirements set out by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime for the receipt of funds.

The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Injury Prevention Research Center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and other agencies conducted “The North Carolina Domestic Violence Programs Survey: A Description of Service Provision Focused on Meeting the Needs of Special Populations” in 2002 to examine the extent to which domestic violence programs served women with particular types of needs (more specifically, women with disabilities, women with substance use or mental health challenges, and women from different cultures/countries). The survey was distributed by mail to all domestic violence programs in the State of North Carolina. Results showed that almost all programs (99%) reported that they had provided services to at least one woman with a physical or mental disability in the preceding twelve months and that they had worked with clients with mental health and substance abuse challenges during that time as well. Data regarding the instance of disabilities occurring in the State’s population has been gathered by the 2000 U.S. Census, which reports that 21.1 % of adult women in North Carolina report a disability.

While we will utilize the data cited above, sufficient information needed to inform the work of this Collaborative and relevant to our community has not been collected. Therefore, it is necessary to seek and collect new data through this needs assessment to form the foundation for the Collaborative strategic plan.

New Data

The data collected will be primary, original, and qualitative in nature. Data will reflect the current types of experiences of persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse and will provide an in-depth understanding of organizational policies, practices and relationships as well as agency attitudes, culture and norms. It is the expectation of the Collaborative that this needs assessment will measure gaps and barriers as well as capacity and opportunity in the community for change, coordination and collaboration. Data will include: the circumstances surrounding disclosure or nondisclosure, services accessed or received, referral processes, safety issues, satisfaction with services, and services that were needed but not received. Accessibility of the services will be determined by gathering input on the actual and perceived barriers of persons with disabilities in accessing and using needed supports and services, and will examine such areas as language appropriateness and ease of use.

The Thirtieth Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance will collect this data through focus groups and interviews involving H.O.P.E. Collaborative agency partners and the persons they serve. We will listen to the voices of H.O.P.E. Collaborative member agencies which includes front line staff, leadership and management, executive directors, and boards chairs. We will hear the words of persons with disabilities and survivors who use their services

as well. The Collaborative will overlay these beliefs, attitudes and opinions to form a complete picture of the experiences of persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse, and the Collaborative agency partners.

V. Overview of Methods

Two methods have been chosen for this needs assessment: focus groups and interviews. These methods were chosen based on what would work best for each needs assessment audience.

Audiences participating in the needs assessment process include Leadership and Management, Front Line Staff, Survivors of Violence and Abuse, Persons with Disabilities, Volunteers, and Board Chairs.

The type of needs assessment method they will be participating in is outlined in the following two method sections which shows in greater detail how this method will be implemented and who the audience will be.

Method 1: FOCUS GROUPS

A. Purpose: Focus Group Method

The focus group method was chosen to gather information specific to practices, attitudes, cultures, barriers and system response for persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse. Through small group settings, we hope to learn about organizational practices and procedures from leadership, management, and front line staff and what their perceptions are of the barriers and strengths in place to help persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse. From persons with disabilities we hope to learn what is working for them, what is not, and what can be made better for them. For survivors of violence and abuse, we hope to learn how they perceive the system, what works and what does not, and how agency response ensures safety and confidentiality. Persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse, who may not wish to participate in the focus group method, may choose to participate in an interview.

In addition, this method was chosen because focus groups provide:

- The opportunity to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions within a social group interaction.
- The ability to exchange information and to elicit a multiplicity of views in a small group setting.
- An efficient way to collect large amounts of information in a short period of time through the use of multiple participants.
- The ability to craft questions related to specific challenges of the focus group membership and the barriers they may be encountering.

- The capacity and commitment of partner agencies to readily provide the number of participants needed to convene the focus groups.

B. Audience: Focus Group Participants

The following audiences will participate in the focus groups:

- Leadership/Management
- Front Line Staff
- Survivors of Violence and Abuse
- Persons with Disabilities

The following chart represents how the focus groups will be organized including participating organizations involved, the audiences of the focus group, and the projected number of participants in each group. The summary total of focus groups is identified at the end of the chart.

FOCUS GROUPS		
ORGANIZATION	AUDIENCE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
<i>Leadership/Management</i>		
The Arc of Haywood County	Leadership/Management	4
Department of Social Services #1	Senior Leadership	8
Department of Social Services #2	General Leadership/Supervisors	9
<i>Front Line Staff</i>		
The Arc of Haywood County	Front line Staff	7
Department of Social Services #1	Social workers, Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMC), Child Support Workers, and Clerical	10
Department of Social Services #2	Social workers, Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMC), Child Support Workers, and Clerical	10
Smoky Mountain Center #1	Community Based Clinicians	6
Smoky Mountain Center #2	Balsam staff	10

Haywood Vocational Opportunities #1	Adult Day Vocational Program/Developmental Disabilities staff	6
Haywood Vocational Opportunities #2	Community Alternative Program staff (caregivers)	8
Haywood Vocational Opportunities #3	Vocational Rehab	9
<i>Survivors of Violence and Abuse</i>		
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County #1	Survivors currently receiving services	4
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County #2	Survivors currently receiving services	4
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County #3	Survivors receiving follow-up services	6
<i>Persons with Disabilities</i>		
The Arc of Haywood County and Haywood Vocational Opportunities #1	Persons with cognitive disabilities, employed in the community	5
The Arc of Haywood County and Haywood Vocational Opportunities #2	Persons with cognitive disabilities, in a training program	5
The Arc of Haywood County, Pathways for Independent Living, HVO, Department of Social Services, Veteran Affairs, Mountain Projects, Community Advocates (No Boundaries)	Persons with physical disabilities	8
Smoky Mountain Center	Persons with psychiatric disabilities	8
Department of Social Services, Haywood Vocational Opportunities, and Veteran Affairs	Persons with cross disabilities	6

Total Number of Leadership/Management Groups: 3

Total Number of Front Line Staff Groups: 8

Total Number of Survivor Groups: 3

Total Number of Persons with Disabilities Groups: 5

Total Number of Focus Groups: 19

C. Recruitment: Focus Groups

Participants recruited for the focus groups will not be screened based on disability and/or issues of violence and abuse. Every effort will be made to recruit the broadest range of participants. As a safety precaution, flyers, posters, or other public recruitment formats will not be used. During recruitment passive consent and confidentiality will be reviewed briefly, however, it will be reviewed in detail during the reading of the script for each group. (*see consent and confidentiality in Appendices 14 and 15, Scripts*) Recruitment information will emphasize that we will be talking about services and supports individuals with disabilities need in order to receive services and that we will are not seeking personal information relating to violence and abuse.

Persons with disabilities and survivors will be told that they will be given a \$20.00 gift card from Wal-Mart to thank them for participating in the needs assessment process.

Additionally, participants in the focus groups will be recruited as follows:

Leadership/Management and Front Line Staff who will participate in the focus groups will be recruited by the agency staff member in each agency from the Collaborative. Participation will be based on work schedules, staff meeting schedules, and staff availability. The agency staff members will contact potential participants through internal informational meetings, emails, and/or personal one-on-one contact. Once potential participants have been contacted, they will receive an Invitation Letter that will outline the purpose and logistics of the groups as well as contact information of the Collaborative Project Directors for any questions or concerns. Potential participants will be offered the option of an individual interview if they are uncomfortable with the focus group process and would still like to participate. (*Appendix 1, invitation letter for leadership/management/front line staff/volunteers*)

In addition to the Invitation Letter, potential participants will receive a Frequently Asked Questions Sheet (FAQ) that will address relevant general questions about the purpose and the process of the focus groups. (*Appendix 13, frequently asked questions for all agency staff and Board Chair*)

Along with the Invitation Letter and the FAQ sheet, the potential participant will also receive an R.S.V.P. Form that indicates the time and date of the Focus Group. (*Appendix 3, R.S.V.P. Form focus group*) The times and dates of the focus groups will be determined by each agency prior to recruitment and will be confirmed with the Collaborative Project Directors. Staff will complete the form and return it to the agency staff member who will then forward them either by mail or in person to the Collaborative Project Directors. The R.S.V.P. form will allow the participant to request needed accommodations. If the individual needs assistance in completing any of the forms, assistance will be provided by the agency staff member that contacts them. The facilitation team will be responsible for filling the accommodation requests. Once the R.S.V.P. Form is receive by the Collaborative Project Directors, a confirmation of focus group date and time will be given to the participant using the best method listed on the R.S.V.P. form

for that individual. It will be the responsibility of the Facilitation Team to make sure the participant receives this confirmation. Accommodations will be discussed at this time.

Survivors of Violence and Abuse and Persons with Disabilities will be recruited from each collaborative agency. Every effort will be made to ensure that persons are not being selected based upon disability or assumptions of experiences of violence or abuse.

Persons with disabilities: Individuals will be informed about the focus groups during regularly scheduled group meetings if they are currently in day programs. Individuals employed in the community will be invited during one of their monthly follow-up visits. Persons in the supported housing program will all be invited to participate.

Survivors: Survivors will be invited to participate if they are currently receiving support group services or if they have completed services and are still in contact with R.E.A.C.H.

Following the meeting or personal contact, the individuals can indicate their interest to the agency staff member. Once an individual has expressed interest, an Invitation Letter (Appendix 2, invitation letter for survivors and people with disabilities) will be given to the potential participants. If assistance is needed in reading the letter, agency staff will assist with this. The invitation letter will review the purpose of the focus group, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. Individuals that have a personal care attendant will be informed that the personal care attendant will not be in the focus group room. The personal care attendant can bring them to the group, see that they are checked in and then wait in the designated "Waiting Room" that will be close by. The individual will also be able to request an alternate personal care attendant that can be in the room with them if they require this as an accommodation.

Along with the Invitation Letter, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet will be shared with potential participants. The FAQ sheet will answer general questions about the focus groups and what their participation in it means. If accommodations are needed for reading or understanding the FAQ sheet, the agency staff member will be responsible for meeting these needs. (*Appendix 12, frequently asked questions for survivors and people with disabilities*)

The invitation letter and/or the FAQ Sheet could potentially create a safety issue for a participant, for this reason, the invitation letter and FAQ Sheet will be returned to the agency staff member responsible for recruitment after they have been read to/by the potential participant.

Once the Focus Group Invitation Letter and the FAQ sheet have been reviewed with the potential participant, they will be asked by the agency staff member if they wish to participate. If the individual would like to be in the group, they will be given an R.S.V.P. Form to fill out. On this form, the participant will indicate that they wish to participate, if the group meeting time listed on the form will work for them, if they have any dietary needs related to the snacks that will be available during the groups, if they need any special accommodations, and what the best

and safest way to reach them to confirm their participation would be. The agency staff member will assist the participant in completing the R.S.V.P. form if necessary. If any accommodations are listed, the Collaborative Project Directors will be responsible for making sure these needs are met. (*Appendix 3, R.S.V.P. Form focus group*) Potential participants will be offered the option of an individual interview if they are uncomfortable with the focus group process and would still like to participate. If they choose the interview, they will receive information as it pertains to interviews. (Appendix 2, invitation letter for survivors and people with disabilities; Appendix 4, R.S.V.P. Form interview; Appendix 12, frequently asked questions for survivors and people with disabilities)

Once the participant has completed the R.S.V.P. form with the agency staff member, the agency staff member will be responsible for noting transportation and/or childcare needs of participants prior to forwarding the R.S.V.P. Forms to the Collaborative Project Directors. The Forms will be sent to the Collaborative Project Directors either by mail or in person so that the Collaborative Project Directors can be informed of who will be in the group, the number of participants attending and accommodation needs.

If a participant is unable to make their scheduled focus group time, they may choose another time, if one is available, by requesting it of the agency staff member in a one-on-one discussion. If they decide they would rather participate in an interview instead of the focus group after they have been scheduled for the group, they may make that request also. The agency staff member will notify the Collaborative Project Directors of any changes in who will be attending the focus groups.

Potential participants will be reminded that the information that the H.O.P.E. Collaborative is seeking is just about access to services and the accommodations needed to participate in the services. They will also be reminded that we will not be talking about personal experiences of violence and abuse and will be informed of mandatory reporting requirements if reportable information should be shared. If at any time in the process the individual expresses any concerns for their personal safety, the agency staff member or group facilitators will provide safety planning and/or link them to an on-site R.E.A.C.H. advocate who will be present for all groups (See R.E.A.C.H. Advocate, page 13).

The following section outlines how the focus groups will be facilitated. This includes facilitation elements common to all of the groups, identification and roles of the facilitation team, the support staff to be used, and facilitation methods specific to each group type.

D. Facilitation: Focus Groups

1. Common elements for facilitation that apply to all of the focus groups

Focus Group Facilitation will be completed by the members of the following Facilitation Team who include: the two Co-Project Directors for the H.O.P.E. Collaborative from the 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance and an independent consultant who is

currently part of the H.O.P.E Collaborative. The facilitation team members are not affiliated with any of the partner agencies who will be participating in the actual assessment, and will act as outside, objective observers.

Snacks will be served based on the information received on the R.S.V.P. forms regarding food allergies. Accommodations requested will be available at each focus group.

All focus groups will last approximately one to one and one-half hours. The facilitators will follow a script in each setting for uniformity and will discuss issues of consent, confidentiality, safety and accessibility. A separate script will be written for each group type. (*Appendix 14, script for all agency positions; Appendix 15, script for survivors and people with disabilities*)

Questions and prompts, developed and approved for each specific group will be used to maximize the time spent with each group. (Appendix 6, questions for leadership/management in domestic violence agency; Appendix 7, questions for leadership/management in disability agency; Appendix 8, questions for front line staff/volunteers in domestic violence agency; Appendix 9, questions for front line staff/volunteers in disability agency; Appendix 10, questions for survivors; Appendix 11, questions for persons with disabilities)

The facilitators will be aware of the importance of protecting both agency and client information and will use the information gathered solely for the purpose of writing the needs assessment report and creating the strategic plan for systems change. The seating in the focus groups will be arranged so all participants can view one another, either all at one table or with U-shaped seating around tables. Participants may call each other by name since it is a small rural community and many of the participants already know each other, however, group member introductions will not be made. They will be reminded to keep information confidential and asked not to talk about any of the people in the group once the group is over. No personal identification, such as name tags, will be used. No videotaping or audio-recording will be used in the focus groups. All answers will be recorded using a computer, located in the room where the focus group is being conducted. Participants will be told that the response recorder will be in the room and will be taking notes. They will also be told that what they say may be directly quoted in the final report but their names will not be used.

After each scheduled focus group, the facilitation team will review the results, discuss the process, and compile the data from that group. Each focus group will be assigned a number for purposes of data entry. Following this review, the information from the focus group will be saved on a data disc and placed in a locked cabinet at the offices of the Collaborative Project Directors. Only the project directors will have access to the disc and all data will be destroyed 90 days after the approval of the Needs Assessment Report.

2. Facilitation details and locations for specific groups

Four specific types of focus groups will be held. These include: Leadership/Management, Front Line Staff, Survivors of Violence and Abuse, and Persons with Disabilities.

Focus groups for Leadership/Management and Front Line Staff will be held at their respective agencies. The agency staff member of each collaborative agency will arrange for an accessible, comfortable and private room in which to hold these groups. In addition to the focus group room, each site will also have a designated and accessible “safe room” available. This information will be reviewed prior to the beginning of the meeting. No less than four and no more than eleven participants will be in these groups. The groups will be conducted during convenient, regular operating hours. Participants in the Leadership/Management and Front Line Staff focus groups will not receive gift cards; however, refreshments will be available for each group.

Focus groups for Persons with Disabilities and Survivors will be held at an accessible location selected by the agency staff member. Each site will have an accessible focus group room, an accessible “Safe Room” where the R.E.A.C.H. domestic violence advocate will be, and an accessible “Waiting Room” where personal caregivers may wait during the focus group in case personal needs occur for the participant during the group. Participants are welcome to bring personal care attendants with them, however, the personal care attendants will need to wait in the specified “Waiting Room” and will not be in the actual room where the focus group will take place. If they have requested an alternate personal care attendant, the person will be available for the entire time of the focus group. At any time during the focus group, if an individual requests their own personal care attendant, the facilitation team floater will go and get them for the individual.

The majority of focus groups for persons with disabilities will be held at the Haywood Vocational Opportunities (HVO) facility. HVO will provide transportation for participants who may be working in supported employment at community locations in Haywood County and need to come on-site to HVO for the groups. Groups will be scheduled during regular operating hours.

A focus group for persons with psychiatric disabilities will be held in a community room at the assistive housing apartment program site administered by Smoky Mountain Mental Health. The group will be held at a time convenient for the participants.

Two focus groups will be scheduled in conjunction with regularly scheduled R.E.A.C.H. support groups. These groups meet at a local accessible Church. R.E.A.C.H. provides transportation and other accommodations, such as child care, for the participants in these support groups and will also be provided for the focus groups. Members of these support groups are actively receiving R.E.A.C.H. services and supports but do not have to reside at the domestic violence shelter. Another focus group will be held with persons who have received services from R.E.A.C.H. in the past but who are not now actively involved with the program. This group will be held at the local Church with the same supports available for the participants.

No less than four and no more than eight individuals will be in focus groups for persons with disabilities and survivors. The facilitation team members will greet each participant when they

arrive and be available to answer any general questions. The team member who is welcoming the participant will also give them their \$20.00 gift card. They will again be told that participation is voluntary and that it is okay if they choose to leave and they may still keep their \$20.00 gift card.

Once the participant has been welcomed, they are free to have refreshments or talk to the other participants in the room until the focus group begins.

3. Identification and Roles of the Facilitation Team

The facilitation team members will conduct the focus groups based on specific roles that will be assigned. Three specific roles have been identified: the Group Facilitator, the Response Recorder, and the Group Observer/Floater. Each of these roles is detailed as follows:

Group Facilitator

The Group Facilitator will attend to the environment of the group, including opening and closing the group and maintaining the focus of the discussion.

The facilitator will welcome the participants to the group and introduce the other facilitation team members who are present. As the session begins, the facilitator will make sure that everyone is comfortable, will review general housekeeping details related to restrooms, the need for breaks, and will address safety and confidentiality issues.

The facilitator will be responsible for following the script designed by the Collaborative which will explain the purpose and the roles of the participants in the group. The script will also include an overview of the topic and the focus group questions, ground rules for the group, and an explanation of how the group will work. (*Appendix 14, script for all agency positions; Appendix 15, script for survivors and people with disabilities*)

In addition, it will be the job of the facilitator to keep the discussions in line with the questions, to intervene quickly in cases of possible arguments or personal disclosures, and to monitor the time closely with the assistance of the floater. The facilitator will be primarily responsible for asking the questions and using the prompts set out in the script to get more extensive information and to create an atmosphere where all participants have a true opportunity to answer questions and make contributions without fear of group retribution.

Once the focus group has completed answering the focus group questions, the facilitator will end the session by thanking all participants, by reminding them of confidentiality issues, and by checking in with everyone to see if they have any safety or other needs that should be addressed.

Response Recorder

The primary job of the Response Recorder is to objectively record all that is said during the focus group in relation to the focus group questions.

The recorder will take notes using a computer during the Focus Group and will sit in a part of the room that will be the least distracting for the participants. The recorder will not participate in the discussion or offer any facilitation. Participants will be informed that the recorder is in the room to take notes and that the notes will not identify any of the participants by name or any other descriptor. The recorder will document what each person says without paraphrasing and will also record situations where emotions such as frustration, anger, or happiness is expressed. The recorder may ask that something said be repeated by raising her hand. Each set of focus group notes will be listed by group number, group size, date, and location and will be saved to a data disk that will later be securely stored at the office of the Collaborative Project Directors. In the event of technical difficulty, the notes will be recorded by hand and later transcribed onto the data disk.

After each session, the recorder will review the notes and write a summary of the focus group. The recorder will review the summary with the facilitator and the group observer. As part of their review, they will make sure that data was accurately captured and that anything missed by the recorder is added. Additional comments and suggestions will be made at this time and added to the focus group notes. Only the project directors will have access to the disc and all data will be destroyed 90 days after the approval of the Needs Assessment Report.

Group Observer/Floater

The group observer will primarily be responsible for overseeing the group and individual dynamics and for intervening if an individual requests to leave and talk to the R.E.A.C.H. domestic violence and abuse advocate located in a room nearby. If a participant begins to feel overwhelmed, wishes to talk individually or needs to leave, the group observer will check-in with them in a private space. The group observer will also help anyone with needs for their personal care attendant and will facilitate this process. If no one presents an individual need, the group observer may also assist the group facilitator by summarizing group comments on an easel tablet for all group members to see. The observer will let the facilitator know when there are five minutes remaining in the group and when the group time has ended for those with transportation arrangements. Overall, the group observer's role is to watch over safety, accessibility, comfort levels, and time concerns.

4. Support Staff: R.E.A.C.H. ADVOCATE

There will be an additional support team member from R.E.A.C.H., the Haywood County domestic violence-sexual assault direct service provider, who will be stationed near all focus groups in a designated "Safe Room". This support person will be present to provide any

immediate assistance and support for any focus group participant who may need help at any time during the group or following the group with issues related to domestic violence and abuse. In addition, a list of resources (*Appendix 16, H.O.P.E. Collaborative Resource List*) will be available for any participant in a variety of accessible formats including large print, other languages (Spanish), and lower level reading, if requested.

Method 2: INTERVIEWS

A. Purpose: Interview Method

Interview methods were chosen in order to gather information specific to agency policies, practices, attitudes, strengths and weaknesses, and commitment to the initiative from the partner agency leadership.

Interviews will be the primary method used for agency executive directors, Board chairs, some management positions and some front line staff and volunteers. Interviews will be an optional method for other front line staff, people with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse. In cases where there are not at least four participants for a focus group, the interview method may be used.

In addition, the interview method was chosen because interviews offer:

- An opportunity to gather more specific information about agency policies and procedures, fiscal planning, commitment to change in dealing with the topic
- The ability of individual participants to state their views honestly, without self-censorship or concern about others' reactions.
- A forum for staff in identifying current practices, barriers, supports, successes and challenges in working with survivors with disabilities
- An option for participants who do not want to be in a focus group but who would still like to express their opinions.

B. Audience: Interview Participants

The follow audiences will participate in the interviews:

- Leadership/Management
- Board Chairs
- Front Line Staff
- Volunteers
- Optional Method for front line staff, people with disabilities, and survivors

The following chart represents how the Interviews will be designed. The chart lists the organizations involved, the audiences for the interviews, and the projected number of interviews. The summary total of interviews is identified at the end of the chart.

INTERVIEWS		
ORGANIZATION	AUDIENCE	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
<i>Leadership/Management</i>		
The Arc of Haywood County #1	Executive Director	1
The Arc of Haywood County #2	Board Chair	1
The Arc of Haywood County #3	Qualified Professional	1
Smoky Mountain Center #1	Executive Director	1
Smoky Mountain Center #2	Board Chair	1
Director of Community Services #3	Director of Community Services	1
Smoky Mountain Center #4	Director of Balsam Center	1
Department of Social Services	Executive Director	1
Department of Social Services	Board Chair	1
Haywood Vocational Opportunities (HVO)	CEO/President	1
Haywood Vocational Opportunities (HVO)	Board Chair	1
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County	Executive Director	1
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County	Board Chair	1
<i>Front Line Staff</i>		
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County #1	Shelter Staff	2
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County #2	Advocates	4
<i>Volunteers</i>		
R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County	Crisis Hotline	4
<i>Optional Method</i>		
Individuals not wishing to do a focus group and who would prefer an interview	Staff, survivors, and persons with disabilities	Unknown

Total Number of Leadership Management Interviews: 8

Total Number of Board Chair Interviews: 5

Total Number of Front Line Staff Interviews: 6

Total Number of Volunteer Interviews: 4

Total Number of Interviews: 23

C. Recruitment: Interview Participants

Recruitment formats for the Interview Method will be similar for all potential participants. However, individuals that choose an interview instead of a focus group (front line staff, persons with disabilities and survivors) will be recruited on a one-on-one basis by agency staff members as individuals choose the interview rather than a focus group. (Appendix 1, invitation letter for leadership//management/front line staff/volunteers; Appendix 2, invitation letter for survivors and people with disabilities)

The recruitment of the chair of each agency's Board of Directors will be done by the CEO/President of each collaborative agency. All information needed to recruit these individuals will be provided to the CEO/President in advance. (Appendix 1, invitation letter for leadership//management/front line staff/volunteers invitation letter; Appendix 4, R.S.V.P. Form interviews; Appendix 13, frequently asked questions for all agency staff and Board Chair) Interviews will be scheduled at the respective agency or at locations convenient to the Board Chairs.

Each potential participant will receive an Invitation Letter that will outline the purpose and logistics of the interviews. Participants will be told that although the interview will be conducted by one person, another individual will be present in the room to record their answers. Participants will also be told that although the needs assessment report may contain direct quotes, their name will not be used and that information shared during the interview will be aggregated in the final report. They will be assured that the purpose of the needs assessment is to gain information that will lead to systems change within each organization and ultimately improve the service delivery system for persons with disabilities that experience violence and abuse. (Appendix 1, leadership//management/front line staff/volunteers invitation letter)

Along with the Interview Invitation Letter, the potential participant will receive a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet that will address questions about the project itself, what the Collaborative is, and what the goals of the needs assessment are. (Appendix 12, frequently asked questions for survivors and people with disabilities; Appendix 13, frequently asked questions for all agency staff and Board Chair)

Potential participants will also receive and complete an R.S.V.P. Form. On this form, participants will confirm with the agency person contacting them the time and date for the interview. R.S.V.P. forms will be submitted to Collaborative Project Directors in person or by mail.

(Appendix 4, R.S.V.P. Form interviews) The facilitation team will be responsible for filling accommodation requests. Interview information may be left at the agency or returned to the individual inviting them to the interview if the individual has any safety concerns.

Once the R.S.V.P. Forms have been received by the Collaborative Project Directors, the interview schedule will be set in conjunction with the agency leadership, Board Chair, and staff members and confirmation of interview time and location will be given to each participant through the method they have indicated on their R.S.V.P. forms.

D. Facilitation: Interviews

All interviews will last approximately 30 minutes to one hour. A written script will be used for uniformity. (Appendix 14, script for all agency positions; Appendix 15, script for survivors and people with disabilities) Agency personnel, volunteers and board interviews will be conducted in an accessible, private room at the respective agencies. The interviews will be conducted by two members of the facilitation team using the approved questions. (Appendix 5, questions for Board of Directors; Appendix 6, questions for leadership/management in domestic violence agency; Appendix 7, questions for leadership/management Questions disability agency; Appendix 8, question for front line staff/volunteers domestic violence agency; Appendix 9, questions for front line staff/volunteers disability agency)

For survivors and persons with disabilities, interviews will be conducted in a comfortable and private room in the agencies where they are receiving services. Interview participants will have access to written resources materials (Appendix 16, H.O.P.E. Collaborative Resource List) or can be linked with a R.E.A.C.H. advocate (see page 13 under "support staff") should any intense feeling be triggered by participation in the interview process. The interviews will be conducted by two members of the facilitation team using the approved questions. (Appendix 10, questions for survivors; Appendix 11, questions for persons with disabilities) Participants will be reminded that participation is voluntary, they may choose to skip questions and that they may also choose to leave at any time. Survivors and persons with disabilities will also be told that they may still keep their \$20.00 gift card even if they don't choose to stay.

The passive consent and confidentiality will be reviewed at the beginning of each interview according to the script. (Appendix 14, script for all agency positions; Appendix 15, script for survivors and people with disabilities) Mandatory reporting requirements will also be reviewed and explained (see consent in following section). Front line staff, leadership and management, volunteers, and Board members do not receive gift cards. Accommodations will be provided according to the needs specified on the RSVP Forms. (Appendix 4, R.S.V.P. Form interview)

One member of the facilitation team will act as the interview facilitator and the second will act as the response recorder, noting individual answers in an anonymous written format on a computer. No answers will be audio-recorded or videotaped. Persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse will have their identities protected and individuals will not be referred to by name in the needs assessment report. Specific employee information will be

protected and not identified. Agency information and agency names will be used with the specific intent of effecting change. Each interview will be assigned its own number for purposes of data entry.

VI. Consent Process

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative will use a passive consent process (*which also explains confidentiality and North Carolina mandatory reporting requirements*) with all needs assessment participants. The statement will be read as part of the script for each needs assessment group or interview. Explanations regarding consent to participate in a focus group or interview will be short and easily understood. The passive consent process will be used with all persons with disabilities and survivors whether or not the individual serves as their own legal guardian. (*See consent section in Appendix 14, script for all agency positions; Appendix 15, script for survivors and people with disabilities*) Once this statement has been read and they acknowledge that they understand it, they will be told that if they stay, they are showing their consent to participate in the needs assessment. Individuals with disabilities and survivors will also be told that it is okay if they choose to leave or discontinue their participation at any time and they may still keep their \$20.00 gift card.

The next section addresses the issue of accessibility and the role that it will play throughout the needs assessment process. A discussion of physical/location accessibility and participation accessibility is outlined.

VII. Access Considerations

Physical Access:

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative is committed to full accessibility for all participants in the needs assessment process. Sites will be accessible to people who use mobility devices and Collaborative members will ensure that walkways, hallways, doors and entryways are inspected and free of any obstacles prior to meetings. The HVO facility, where focus groups and individual interviews will be conducted for persons with disabilities, is a universally accessible site, daily serving persons with a broad range of disabilities. Sessions for persons with psychiatric disabilities will be held in an accessible community room of a local assisted living apartment complex serving that population. Sessions for survivors of violence and abuse will be held at an accessible local church.

Other sites where focus groups, interviews and surveys will be held are accessible to the staff, administration and Board of Directors members. Interpreter services as well as other accessibility accommodations, identified in the R.S.V.P. forms (Appendix 3; Appendix 4) or by the Collaborative, will be provided upon request. Reasonable accommodations will be provided according to the needs of every participant and the Collaborative Project Directors will be responsible for ensuring that the needs are met.

Personal Care Attendants Access:

Persons with disabilities may bring their personal care attendants with them if needed, although the attendant will be asked to wait outside of the focus group or interview room. A comfortable room, adjacent to the focus group or interview room will be provided for the personal care attendants where they will be readily available for the participant. Or an alternate personal care attendant will be provided in the focus group/interview room if requested on the R.S.V.P. Form.

Language Access:

The facilitators of the focus groups and interviewers will be instructed to speak slowly in a normal voice and pause whenever necessary in order to accommodate individuals with various levels of hearing and comprehension. All written materials will be prepared with the consideration of plain language and printed in 14 point font. Alternate formats will be available upon request.

VIII. Safety Considerations

Physical Safety:

Physical and psychological safety is a primary consideration for needs assessment participants willing to participate in focus groups or an interview. The recruitment process will offer a choice as to the means by which individuals participate in the needs assessment: via an individual interview or through a focus group. Individuals will be asked to return the invitation letter and frequently asked questions to the collaborative agency member during recruitment.

Emotional Safety:

The best way to provide emotional safety for each participant is to minimize the potential of any discussion of individual experiences which may trigger memories of violence or abuse. Facilitators will make it clear during the introduction that the group is designed to gain information on services and access to services and not to discuss individual experiences relating to violence and abuse. If the discussion of service and service access brings up memories or intense feelings and if a participant appears likely to disclose, the facilitator will act quickly to utilize both the floater and the R.E.A.C.H. advocate (*see page 14*). The R.E.A.C.H. advocate will be available if any participants wish to talk about an abusive situation realized or remembered during or after the process, to listen and make appropriate referrals and/or safety plans. If at any time a participant appears to need immediate support, the facilitator will ask if the person wants to speak with the floater or if they would like to speak to the R.E.A.C.H. advocate during or after the group/interview.

Safety following the meeting:

The Collaborative intends to provide a small incentive in the form of a \$20.00 gift card from a local merchant to persons with disabilities and survivors of violence and abuse. Some of these

participants may face risks from a perpetrator if they return home with gift cards. If anyone expresses reservations about taking the gift card home, the agency partner providing services to the participant will offer to let the gift card remain at that agency for safekeeping.

Agency Safety:

People with Disabilities and Survivors may fear that something that they say during the process will create difficulties for them with their service providers. The facilitation team will assure them that the needs assessment report will not connect their name with any information shared as part of the process. They will explain that the information will be used to help all of the collaborative agencies create a system of services that will be more responsive to their individual needs.

Agency personnel may fear that the information shared will be used in a punitive way within their agency. Staff will be assured that although individual agencies will be discussed in the needs assessment report, identifying information of specific staff will not be used. They will be assured that the intent is to gain the information needed to create a system that will be able to seamlessly meet the needs of individuals with disabilities that experience violence and abuse.

IX. Confidentiality

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative is highly committed to maintaining confidentiality for participants in our needs assessment. The Collaborative will not ask for nor collect identifying information of the participants, such as names or addresses. The Collaborative will do everything possible to ensure that all participants feel confident that their participation, ideas, feelings, and views will not be tied to their identities in the future. No identifying information will be revealed in the needs assessment report about individual focus group or interview participants. Full disclosure of how the information gathered will be utilized in writing the needs assessment report and in the strategic planning process will be covered at the beginning of each focus group or interview. Although individuals may know each other, focus group participants will be asked to maintain each other's confidentiality after the focus group concludes. As the interview or focus group begins, the facilitator will discuss the need for the group to "keep the information shared within the room." Although members may use each other's first names, the team will request that group members neither share participant's names nor their answers to the focus group questions after they leave. Group members will not be introduced to one another.

As results of the focus groups and interviews are shared with the Collaborative, they will be discussed, as much as possible, in terms of general thoughts, ideas, patterns and themes. Identifying participant information will only be accessed by those on the Collaborative staff responsible for processing the data. General information about issues common to some or all of the agencies will be collected and identified as part of the needs assessment process and related in the final Needs Assessment Report. The Collaborative desires to take collective ownership of both common and unique barriers and challenges that are revealed during the needs assessment process. Particular information, pertinent to the development of the strategic plan, relating to individual agency partners' policies, procedures, knowledge, needs,

and the experiences of persons with disabilities and survivors may be included in the Needs Assessment Report. Examples to illustrate these challenges and barriers may be included and may be agency specific. However, to the extent possible, they will be general in nature. All participants will be assured that any information will be used within the general context needed for systems change.

Mandatory Reporting

Two exceptions to confidentiality will be when current abuse is disclosed and the person is subject to the mandatory reporting statutes in North Carolina or if a participant discloses a plan to harm herself/himself or someone else. Because North Carolina is a “mandatory reporting state,” there are occasions when information about abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult must be reported to Adult Protective Services. North Carolina General Statutes 108A-99 *et. seq.* set out a mandatory reporting system relating to adults, (regardless of their living situation), who are incapacitated due to mental or physical disabilities and are suspected of being abused, neglected or exploited. The statutes require that anyone suspecting that a disabled adult is in need of protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation is to notify the local County-based Department of Social Services. All Collaborative agency partners are mandatory reporters under North Carolina Law. The Department of Social Services, in turn, is then responsible for evaluating and providing services to persons in need of protection. A person who reports does not have to have actual knowledge or proof that abuse, neglect or exploitation is occurring but merely a “reasonable cause to believe that a disabled adult is in need of protection services.”

Of particular importance for the Collaborative is minimizing any disclosures by participants or by agency personnel during the needs assessment process that could trigger these statutes. The partner agencies will engage in the following activities to minimize disclosures. Beginning with initial recruitment to the participation in an interview or focus group, all persons will be informed that the purpose of the needs assessment process is to collect data on agency policies and practices and the experiences of persons with disabilities who are survivors of violence and abuse relating to services and service access. The invitation letter, the R.S.V.P. form and the assessment script will emphasize that the needs assessment process is not about addressing any specific instances of violence or abuse and that the focus group is not a “support group.”

The facilitator will explain the mandatory reporting statute’s specific requirements in plain, accessible language and explain what kinds of things might cause a mandatory report to be made. The facilitator will set clear parameters in simple, concrete terms about what has to happen before the report is made. Should a report to protective services be made, the floater will meet with the individual and will make every effort to involve the participant in that process and will provide step-by-step information about what is likely to happen after a report is made.

Data Storage

All written documents, forms and electronic data used in the Needs Assessment will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance. Only the project directors will have access to the data and all data will be destroyed 90 days after the approval of the Needs Assessment Report. Data storage will not include any participant or individual information or agency specific identifiable data or any information that could compromise safety and confidentiality.

X. Work Plan

Time Frame	Tasks Completed
June – October 2008	Create, complete and submit Needs Assessment Plan
November 2008	Conduct Needs Assessment (Focus Groups and Interviews)
November-December 2008	Write and submit Needs Assessment Report

X. Assessment Tools Appendix Listing

NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS	
APPENDIX	AUDIENCE
Appendix 1	Invitation letter for leadership/management/front line staff/volunteers
Appendix 2	Invitation letter for survivors and people with disabilities
Appendix 3	R.S.V.P. Form Focus Group
Appendix 4	R.S.V.P. Form Interview
Appendix 5	Questions for Board Chairs
Appendix 6	Questions for leadership/management in domestic violence agency
Appendix 7	Questions for leadership/management in disability agency
Appendix 8	Questions for front line staff/volunteers in domestic violence agency
Appendix 9	Questions for front line staff/volunteers in disability agency
Appendix 10	Questions for Survivors
Appendix 11	Questions for Persons with Disabilities
Appendix 12	Frequently asked questions for survivors and people with disabilities
Appendix 13	Frequently asked questions for all agency staff and Board
Appendix 14	Script for all agency positions and Board
Appendix 15	Script for survivors and people with disabilities
Appendix 16	H.O.P.E. Collaborative Resource List

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative
Post office Box 554
Waynesville, North Carolina 28786
....serving the people of Haywood County

Dear Participant (leadership including Board Chairs/management/frontline staff/volunteers),

Thank you for agreeing to free up your time and participate in the H.O.P.E. Collaborative needs assessment process. The participation of your organization to date has been greatly appreciated and the contributions that have been made to the work of the Collaborative by members of your organization are already making a positive difference.

H.O.P.E. stands for “Helping Our People Emerge” *from crisis to healing*. The goal of our collaborative is to remove barriers to services and supports for people with disabilities and Deaf individuals who experience violence and abuse by fostering collaboration and creating a collective response through changes in policies and procedures that are fully integrated into the cultures of our agencies.

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative was made possible in October of 2007 when the 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance was awarded a three year grant from the Office on Violence against Women of the United States Department of Justice. The Collaborative was formed by a group of six major agencies within Haywood County serving persons with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. These agencies include the Alliance as the convening organization, The Arc, Haywood County Department of Social Services, Haywood Vocational Opportunities, R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County, and Smoky Mountain Center.

The primary focus of this needs assessment is to learn from persons with disabilities, Deaf persons, and survivors of domestic violence and abuse how the service delivery system in Haywood County is working or not working for them and what we can do to improve this system. We will also be meeting with leadership, management, front line staff, volunteers and Board Chairs from our collaborative agencies to gain perspectives on the current service delivery system and opportunities for future changes.

As part of this needs assessment, the Collaborative has chosen two different assessment methods for obtaining information; focus groups and

interviews. You are being asked to participate in (a/an focus group/interview). Members of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative Needs Assessment Team will be conducting the interviews or focus groups on site at your agency. Your (interview/focus group) should last (one/one and one-half hours).

The primary focus of the needs assessment is to assess service delivery for persons with disabilities and Deaf individuals who are survivors of violence and abuse. The needs assessment tools are designed to gather information related specifically to service delivery. Questions in the needs assessment relate to the service delivery system itself, accessibility of services, safety and confidentiality issues, and policies and procedures that an organization has in place or would like to develop with a goal of a stronger service delivery system.

Your experience and insight related to your agency's service delivery system are key elements to the success of this project. By participating in the (interview/focus group), we will be able to gather important information from you. This information, along with the feedback from all of the other needs assessment participants, will be compiled into a Needs Assessment Report and will inform our strategic planning process. The strategic plan will then create an initiative to begin positive systemic change that will benefit those in our community who are survivors with disabilities and will make it possible for them to enter the service delivery system at any point and receive what they need in an effective and timely way.

Please complete the attached R.S.V.P. form and return it to the person who gave it to you. The time, date and location of your (focus group/ interview) are on the R.S.V.P. form and have been scheduled by your agency (except CEO and board chair dates/times). If you require any accommodations to participate, please indicate them on this form. If a scheduling conflict comes up, please let us know as soon as possible. Our contact information is listed below. Thank you. We appreciate your time and the commitment you and your organization have made to this process.

Respectfully,

Denise Coleman, Executive Director

30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance

H.O.P.E. Collaborative Co-Project Director

coleman@30thalliance.org 828.452.2122

Sue Fowler, Ed.S. , Director of Grant Programs
30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance
H.O.P.E. Collaborative Co-Project Director
fowler@30thalliance.org 828.452.2122

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative
Post office Box 554
Waynesville, North Carolina 28786
....serving the people of Haywood County

Dear Potential Participant (Survivors and People with Disabilities),

Thank you for taking the time to review this invitation letter for participation in a needs assessment that will be conducted by the H.O.P.E. Collaborative of Haywood County. H.O.P.E. stands for “Helping Our People Emerge” *from crisis to healing*. The goal of our collaborative is to (survivors: create a safe environment for individuals to disclose and receive supports if they experience violence and abuse; persons with disabilities: develop services that are welcoming and responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities) by fostering collaboration and creating a collective response through changes in policies and procedures that are fully integrated into the cultures of our agencies.

The H.O.P.E. Collaborative was made possible in October of 2007 when the 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance was awarded a three year grant from the Office on Violence against Women of the United States Department of Justice. The Collaborative was formed by a group of six major agencies within Haywood County serving persons with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. These agencies include the Alliance as the convening organization, The Arc, Haywood County Department of Social Services, Haywood Vocational Opportunities, R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County, and Smoky Mountain Center.

The purpose of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative is to change our system so our agencies can better serve the people of Haywood County. Through agency collaboration, response to the needs of the people, and through changing the policies and procedures of organizations, the Collaborative will work towards a better system that will help move people from crisis to healing no matter where they enter the service delivery system. We will also be meeting with employees of each agency to get their views on the current service delivery system and opportunities for future changes.

Questions we will be asking in the needs assessment will relate to the system itself, accessibility of services, safety and confidentiality issues, and policies and procedures that agencies have in place or would like to develop to better serve (people with disabilities and Deaf individuals/survivors of violence and abuse). We will just be talking about how the current system meets your needs and how we can improve the system when your needs are not being met.

Your experience and insight into services are key elements to the success of this project. By participating in the (interview/focus group), we will be able to gather important information. This information, along with the feedback from all of the other needs assessment participants, will be compiled into a Needs Assessment Report and will help us develop a strategic plan. The strategic plan will then create an initiative to begin positive systemic change that will benefit our community by making it possible for people to enter the service delivery system at any point and receive what they need in an effective and timely way.

(The focus group will last about one and one-half hours during your regularly scheduled time at the agency you are currently attending. There will be no more than 8 people in your group. We will serve refreshments for all of the focus groups. If you don't want to participate in a group, you may choose to participate in an interview.)

OR (The interview will require about one hour of your time. It will be done during your regularly scheduled time at your agency. We will have an interviewer and a note taker at the meeting). We want you to feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas by telling the person that is inviting you if you want to participate in this process.

Members of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative Needs Assessment Team will be conducting the (interview/focus group) on site at your agency. The agencies where the needs assessment will be taking place include the Arc, DSS, HVO, and R.E.A.C.H. and Smoky Mountain Center. The Alliance is coordinating the needs assessment.

Your safety and confidentiality are important to us. No information that specifically identifies you will be used in the needs assessment report. If you have any safety concerns, please share them with us. We would like for individuals to be able to freely express their ideas during the process.

If you have a personal care attendant, we would like for this person to wait in another room. If you do need someone with you, you can request an alternate personal care attendant.

At this time, we are extending an invitation to you to participate in a needs assessment process. If you are interested in participating, please complete the attached R.S.V.P. form and return it to the person who gave it to you. If you need help with this, we would be glad to help you. On the form, you can check any accommodations you may need to be able to participate in this process. The R.S.V.P. form will have the date, time and location of your (interview/focus group) and you will be reminded of your (interview/focus group) time and date by the person talking to you today. If something happens and you can't participate, please let the person that you are talking to know as soon as possible. We appreciate your help.

If you decide to participate in the needs assessment, you will receive a \$20.00 gift card to Wal-Mart. This will be given to you when you arrive for your (interview/focus group) as a thank you for helping us with this project. If you have any questions you may ask the person that is inviting you or you can call the co-project directors listed below. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Denise
H.O.P.E. Collaborative Co-Project Director
828.452.2122

Sue
H.O.P.E. Collaborative Co-Project Director
828.452.2122

**R.S.V.P. Form
FOCUS GROUP**

Dear Participant:

If you would like to participate in the focus group that we have explained to you, please fill out the information below. Thank you for your help.

Name: _____	
Best or safest way to get in touch with you:	
House Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
E-Mail: _____	Friend: _____ Friend's phone: _____
Work: _____	Is it safe to leave a message? __yes__no
Is there a safe time to call you? _____time	Please do not call me: _____
YOUR SCHEDULED FOCUS GROUP TIME:	
Date: _____	Time: _____
Place: _____	
Focus Group Accessibility Needs:	
_____ Transportation	_____ Written Materials
_____ Child Care	_____ Braille
_____ # of Children _____ ages	_____ Large Print
_____ Listening Device	_____ Help with Reading
_____ Interpreter	_____ Alternate Personal Care
_____ Type	Attendant*
_____ Wheelchair access	
Dietary Needs:	
_____ Food Allergies	
_____ My favorite snack foods	

*Personal care attendants will need to wait in another room. If you require a personal care attendant during the focus group, please check this and we will get an alternate personal care attendant for you.

Please give this form back to the person who gave it to you. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Thank You!

**R.S.V.P. Form
INTERVIEW**

Dear Participant:

If you would like to participate in the interview that we have discussed with you, please fill out the information below. Thank you for your help.

Name: _____	
Best or safest way to get in touch with you: The safest time to call me? _____	
House Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
E-Mail: _____	Friend: _____
Work: _____ Is it safe to leave a message ___yes ___no	
Do not get in touch with me: _____	
YOUR SCHEDULED INTERVIEW TIME:	
Date: _____	Time: _____
Place: _____	
INTERVIEW Accessibility Needs:	
_____ Transportation	_____ Written Materials
_____ Child Care	_____ Braille
_____ # of Children _____ ages	_____ Large Print
_____ Listening Device	_____ Help with Reading
_____ Interpreter	
_____ Type	_____ Alternate Personal Care
_____ Wheelchair access	Attendant*

*Personal care attendants will need to wait in another room. If you require a personal care attendant during the focus group; please check this and we will get an alternate personal care attendant for you.

Please give this form back to the person who gave it to you. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Thank You!

QUESTIONS FOR BOARD CHAIRS

1. What are the strengths of (your agency) in working with (Disability agency: people with disabilities/Domestic Violence Agency: survivors of domestic violence and abuse)?
2. What is the Board's role at (your agency)?
 - a. In the decision-making process? Are there decisions that do not involve board approval? What types of decisions?
 - b. In how policies and practices created/changed?
 - c. In personnel decisions? Hiring? Expansion?
 - d. In the allocation of resource?
3. As a board chair, what kind of support would you be able to offer in assisting with the changes needed to enhance the services to persons with disabilities that experience violence and abuse? Decision-making? Personnel changes? Policy and procedure changes? Resource allocation?
4. In a time of limited resources, how do you feel this initiative will support Haywood County?
 - a. What does your agency need in order to enhance their ability to provide services to people with disabilities that experience violence and abuse? Resources? Training? Other things?
5. What other comments would you like to make?

QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
Domestic Violence Agency

- 1. What does your agency do well in working with survivors with disabilities?**
 - a. Are there opportunities for individuals with disabilities to request accommodations?
 - b. Are there resources available for providing accommodations?
- 2. What doesn't work as well in your agency in serving survivors with disabilities?**
 - a. Does the type of disability impact your ability to provide services? How?
 - b. Does the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator have an impact on your ability to provide services? Which relationships? What is the impact?
- 3. What policies and procedures do you have that guide staff in working with survivors with disabilities?**
 - a. What are the strengths? Weaknesses?
 - b. What might need to change?
 - c. What changes would you willing to make?
 - d. How is staff trained on these policies?
 - e. What do you do to support staff on following these policies and procedures?
- 4. What partnerships exist between your agency and other resources in the community that may be available to assist with providing services to survivors with disabilities?**
 - a. What types of relationship/partnerships do you have with: Department of Social Services? The ARC? HVO? Smoky Mountain Center?
 - b. What is the depth of these relationships? Formal? Informal?
 - c. What opportunities exist for creating a partnership if one is not already in place? What works? What doesn't work? How can they be improved?
- 5. How does change happen in your organization?**
 - a. What is the decision-making process?
 - b. How are policies and practices created/changed?
 - c. How are decisions made regarding hiring of personnel?
 - d. How are resource allocations made?

6. In a time of limited resources, what do you need in order to enhance your agency's response to survivors with disabilities?
 - a. Resources
 - b. Training
 - c. Other things

QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
Disability Agencies

- 1. What does your agency do well in working with persons with disabilities who have experienced violence and abuse?**
 - a. What does your agency do well to encourage the comfort and trust for individuals to disclose violence and abuse?
 - b. What does your agency do well to respond to these disclosures?

- 2. What doesn't work as well in your agency in serving persons with disabilities who have experienced violence and abuse?**
 - a. Does the type of disability impact your ability to provide services? How?
 - b. Does the relationship between the person with a disability and the perpetrator have an impact on your ability to provide services? Which relationships? What is the impact?

- 3. What policies and procedures do you have in place that guide staff who are working with people with disabilities who have experienced or who are currently experiencing violence and abuse?**
 - a. What are the strengths?
 - b. What are the weaknesses?
 - c. What might need to be changed?
 - d. What changes are you willing to make?
 - e. How is staff trained on these policies?
 - f. What do you do to support staff on following these policies and procedures?

- 4. What partnerships exist between your agency and other resources in the community that may be available to assist with providing services to persons with disabilities that experience violence and abuse?**
 - a. What types of relationship/partnerships do you have with: R.E.A.C.H.? Department of Social Services? The ARC? HVO? Smoky Mountain Center?
 - b. What is the depth of these relationships? Formal? Informal?
 - c. What opportunities exist for creating a partnership if one is not already in place? What works? What doesn't work? What changes can be made?

5. How does change happen in your organization?

- a. What is the decision-making process?
- b. How are policies and practices created/changed?
- c. How are decisions made regarding hiring of personnel?
- d. How are resource allocation made?

6. In a time of limited resources, what will enhance your ability to serve individuals that report violence or abuse to your agency?

- a. Resources?
- b. Training?
- c. Other things?

QUESTIONS FOR FRONT LINE/VOLUNTEERS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

- 1. Think about a time when things went well when you were helping a survivor that you feel may have had a disability?**
 - a. What things were in place with REACH to help you? Resources? Training? Policies? Procedures? Relationships?

- 2. Can you tell me about a time when things did not go as well for you in providing services to a survivor that may have had a disability?**
 - a. Did the type of disability impact your ability to deliver services? How? Why?
 - b. Did the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator impact your service delivery? Why? How?
 - c. Are there things you can suggest that may have been done to improve the situation? Resources? Training? Partnerships? Other things?

- 3. What policies and procedures do you have that guide you in providing services to a survivor with a disability?**
 - a. What are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
 - b. What are the weaknesses?
 - c. What are some changes that you think could be made to provide you with more guidance in providing services to survivors with disabilities?
 - d. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
 - e. How does your agency provide support to you in following these policies and procedures?

- 4. What are some ideas about how your intake and service delivery processes can create an opportunity for a person with a disability to get the accommodations they may need in order receive services from your agency?**
 - a. What processes does your agency have to create an opportunity for a person with a disability to request an accommodation?
 - b. What are some factors that may make it more difficult for a person with a disability to request an accommodation in your agency?

- 5. What relationships exist with other agencies in the county that can provide assistance in working with survivors with disabilities?**
 - a. What type of relationship/partnership do you have with DSS? HVO? The Arc? Smoky Mountain Center?
 - b. What is the depth of these relationships? Formal? Informal?
 - c. From your experience, what do you think can be done to strengthen these relationships/partnerships?

6. What do you want disability service providers to know about serving survivors of violence and abuse?

**QUESTIONS FOR FRONT LINE/VOLUNTEERS
DISABILITY AGENCY**

- 1. Think about a time when things went well when you were helping a person with a disability that was experiencing violence or abuse?**
 - a. What things were in place within your agency to help you? Resources? Training? Policies? Procedures? Relationships?

- 2. Can you tell me about a time when things did not go as well for you in providing services to a person with a disability that was experiencing violence or abuse?**
 - a. What type of things or concerns had an impact on your ability to effectively assist the person? Safety? Security? Knowledge? Skills? Resources?
 - b. What could you suggest that could have been done to improve the situation? Training? Resources? Partnerships? Other things?

- 3. What policies and procedures do you have available at your agency that guide you in responding to a person with a disability that experiences violence or abuse?**
 - a. What are the strengths of your policies and procedures?
 - b. What are some weaknesses?
 - c. What are some changes that you see that could be made?
 - d. Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?
 - e. How does your agency provide support to you in following these policies and procedures?

- 4. What are some ideas about how your intake and service delivery processes can create an opportunity for a person you are serving to disclose violence and abuse?**
 - a. What processes does your agency have that create an opportunity for a person to disclose violence or abuse?
 - b. What are some factors that may make it more difficult for a person to disclose violence and abuse? Culture? Atmosphere? Safety concerns? Confidentiality?

- 5. What relationships exist with other agencies in the county that can provide assistance in working with people with disabilities that experience violence and abuse?**
 - a. What type of relationship/partnership do you have with R.E.A.C.H.? DSS? HVO? Smoky Mountain Center? The Arc?
 - b. What is the depth of these relationships? Formal? Informal?
 - c. From your experiences, what do you think can be done to strengthen these relationships/partnerships?

- 6. What do you want domestic violence service providers to know about serving people with disabilities?**

QUESTIONS FOR SURVIVORS

1. How did you learn about the services available for survivors of violence and abuse?

- a. Where are good places to distribute or provide information about the services available?
- b. Are there specific places that you think agencies that provide services for survivors of violence and abuse should be sharing this information? Church bulletins? Library? Stores? Internet? What ways would reach more people?

2. What can agencies do to encourage survivors to talk about violence and abuse?

- a. What things do agencies do to help survivors feel more comfortable disclosing or talking about violence and abuse?
- b. What things do they do to help survivors trust and have confidence in them?
- c. What do they do to create a welcoming atmosphere?

3. What do agencies do that may keep survivors from disclosing or talking about violence or abuse?

- a. What things do agencies do that may make it uncomfortable for a survivor to disclose or talk about violence or abuse?
- b. What could agencies do that would prevent a survivor from feeling safe?
- c. What might they do to prevent a survivor from trusting them or having confidence in them?
- d. What things could agencies do that would create an unwelcoming atmosphere?

4. What would be the ideal service delivery system look like for individuals that are survivors of violence and abuse?

- a. What would a survivor want to happen when they disclose violence or abuse?
- b. What things would the survivor want the agency to avoid?

5. What are some things disability agencies need to know about working with and helping people who are survivors of violence and abuse?

- a. Confidentiality?
- b. Safety?
- c. Attitude?
- d. Other things?

QUESTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- 1. What is the best way for agencies to let people with disabilities know about services that are available?**
 - a. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information with people with disabilities on services that are available to them? Church Bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?

- 2. What things do agencies do that may make it difficult for people with disabilities to get the information they need about services that are available?**
 - a. What might make it hard for a person with a disability to get the information or get the services that they need?
 1. What about accommodations? Accessibility? Materials in different formats?
 2. What would help a person with a disability get the information that they need?

- 3. What do agencies need to do to help people ask for specific accommodations that they may need or to help them talk about their disability?**
 - a. How does an agency help a person with a disability feel comfortable talking about accommodation they need to get services?
 - b. How does an agency help a person with a disability to feel safe in asking for accommodations?
 - c. What can agencies do to assure people with disabilities that they know how to work with their specific disability?

- 4. How do organizations make you feel welcome?**
 - a. What do staff do that makes you feel welcome?
 - b. What other things make the environment welcoming?

5. What are some things that other agencies may need to know about working with people with disabilities?

- a. What types of accommodations people with disabilities may need?
- b. How to make sure accommodations are available?
- c. What do they need to know about how to treat people with disabilities?
- d. What might they need to know about specific types of disabilities?
- e. What do they need to know to refer people with disabilities to other services?

6. If you could help us design the very best way for agencies to provide services for people with disabilities, what things would you want to be sure agencies would include?

- a. What would happen when the person with a disability goes to an agency for help?
- b. What things should not happen?

**The H.O.P.E. Collaborative
Frequently Asked Questions
For Survivors and People with Disabilities**

Now that you have been invited to participate in our needs assessment process, we thought it would be helpful to provide some additional information. Here some answers to questions that we thought you might be interested in knowing. We will be going over these with you.

What does H.O.P.E. stand for?

HOPE stands for “Helping Our People Emerge” *from crisis to healing*. The goal of our collaborative is to remove barriers to services and supports for people with disabilities who experience violence and abuse by fostering collaboration and creating a collective response through changes in policies and procedures that are fully integrated into the cultures of our agencies.

The agencies that are part of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative are the Department of Social Services, Smoky Mountain Center, The Arc of Haywood, and Haywood Vocational Opportunities which are agencies that serve people with disabilities and R.E.A.C.H. which is our domestic violence and sexual assault agency in Haywood County.

Why do you want to talk with me?

We want to talk to you because you are one of the people that can best tell us about what services and supports you want or need from the agencies in our group. You are the expert on your own services and what you need.

Do I have to talk if I don't want to?

No, you don't have to say anything in the meeting if you don't want to. But we hope you will share information about services and how you access services at agencies in Haywood County. Your participation is voluntary.

If I talk, will you use my name?

We will not use your name in anything that we write about the meeting. We may use something you tell us in our report, but it will not say who said it.

Am I getting paid to be here?

You won't be paid for coming to the group meeting but we will give you a \$20.00 Wal-Mart gift card.

What happens if I lose my gift card?

Once we give you the gift card it will up to you to keep it safe. We cannot give you a new one if it is lost or stolen.

What if I change my mind after I am already in the (interview/group)?

If you change your mind, you can leave at any time. The \$20.00 gift card is yours for just beginning the process.

What if I don't feel safe in taking the gift card home? It is up to you to decide if it is safe to take the gift card with you. If you do not feel safe taking your gift card home, the agency that has recruited you for the (focus group/ interview) will keep it for you until you feel that it is safe.

If I have a personal care attendant can they come with me?

Your personal care attendant is welcome to bring you; however, we will have a separate room for them to wait on you. If you need someone with you while you are in the (focus group/ interview), we can provide an alternate personal care attendant for you. You will need to request this on the R.S.V.P. Form.

What are you going to do with the information?

We will put all of the information together into a report. The report will help us develop a strategic plan that will guide us on the changes that we need to make in policies, procedures and services to meet the needs of people that are served in our collaborative agencies.

Who are you going to share the information with?

The report will be shared with all of the agencies that we are working with so they will know what needs to be done to make a safe, welcoming and accessible environment for individuals served by the collaborative agencies. Then we will develop a strategic plan so that we can begin to make the changes needed to meet those needs.

Will my (boss/service provider) get angry if I am here?

If you will be missing work to participate in the (interview/focus group), please be sure that you arrange that in advance with your employer. (Persons at HVO: If you work or are in training at HVO, the person that has invited you to the meeting will talk to your supervisor or boss in advance if you are going to miss any work.) Participating in this process will not have any impact on any services that you receive.

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

You can tell them that you are helping your agency by providing us information on what you need to get the services you need. It is up to you to decide how much information you are going to share with others.

How will I get to the group?

If you need transportation to participate in the (interview/focus group), this can be provided for you. You will need to put that information on the R.S.V.P. Form that we give you.

What if I can't come? Who do I tell?

If you are scheduled to be in (a/an interview/focus group) and find out that you are going to be unable to participate, you can let the person that invited you know or contact one of the project directors. Their phone numbers are listed on the invitation letter. If you still would like to be in (a/an interview/focus group) we can see if there is another time for you to participate.

Frequently Asked Questions (For All Agency Positions Including the Board Chair)

Here is some additional information that we thought would be helpful to our participants. These “frequently asked questions” should clarify the information in the invitation letter. They will also provide a resource for you to reference later.

What does H.O.P.E. stand for?

H.O.P.E. stands for “Helping Our People Emerge” *from crisis to healing*. The goal of our collaborative is to remove barriers to services and supports for people with disabilities who experience violence and abuse by fostering collaboration and creating a collective response through changes in policies and procedures that are fully integrated into the cultures of our agencies.

The agencies that are part of the H.O.P.E. Collaborative are the Department of Social Services, Smoky Mountain Center, The Arc of Haywood, and Haywood Vocational Opportunities which are agencies that serve people with disabilities and R.E.A.C.H. which is our domestic violence and sexual assault agency in Haywood County. The 30th Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance is the convening agency and acts as the grants manager for this project.

Why do you need my input?

We are looking at making “systems change” through this process. The participation of individuals within each organization that are familiar with the agency, current services, people that are receiving services and that have ideas about things that can be improved is very important to the process.

When will the groups/interviews be held?

Groups and interviews will be held at each agency during the regular work day.

Are responses confidential?

All individual responses will be kept confidential by the group facilitators and interviewers. Personal identifying information (names) will not be linked to

individual responses in any of the written information such as the needs assessment report.

Who should I contact if I encounter scheduling conflicts?

Please contact one of our project directors at the phone number listed on the invitation letter if any conflicts arise. They will arrange an alternate time and date.

What will you do with the information?

The information that you share, along with the feedback from all of the other needs assessment participants, will be compiled into a Needs Assessment Report and will inform our strategic planning process. The strategic plan will then create an initiative to begin positive systemic change that will benefit persons with disabilities in our community who experience violence and abuse and will make it possible for them to enter the service delivery system at any point and receive what they need in an effective and timely way.

Will the information be publicized?

The needs assessment report will go to our funding source, the Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women. We will not be sharing any specific needs assessment information from the process with the media. When we move into the implementation phase following our strategic planning, we hope to share the changes that we are making with the public.

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

In the final report, which is for internal use in planning and will also be sent to the Office on Violence against Women, we will be talking about agencies by name. If we are to make changes that are needed in our organizations, we will need this information. This is a pro-active process designed to help all of the agencies make the changes needed to provide seamless services to people with disabilities that experience violence and abuse.

Will I get to see the report?

We will be preparing a summary report that will be shared with each agency. The choice of whom to further share the information with is up to the agency.

**SCRIPT
(For All Agency Staff and Board)**

THIS SCRIPT WILL BE USED FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS AND WILL APPLY TO ALL
AGENCY STAFF AND BOARD CHAIRS.

Background and Purpose/Focus

Thank you for coming today. As you may remember from your invitation letter, we are working on a needs assessment to look at service delivery in Haywood County for persons with disabilities who are survivors of violence and abuse. This needs assessment is part of a special grant project that was awarded by the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women. Through this grant, the H.O.P.E. Collaborative was formed. The H.O.P.E. Collaborative consists of six agencies in Haywood County that have been working on this grant project. The six agencies are: HVO, R.E.A.C.H., DSS, the Arc, Smoky, and the 30th Alliance.

We are asking for your help in identifying the services that currently exist and what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for individuals who come to you for help.

We will also be talking directly with survivors and persons with disabilities about the system. We want to hear about what went well for them and what didn't go well in receiving services at any point on the continuum. Parallel to that, we would like to hear from you about what helps your system work and what barriers there might be for you in getting your job done.

With the information that we gather from the needs assessment over the next 4-6 weeks, we will create a strategic plan that will identify what we need in terms of training, resources, policies and procedures and so forth. The participation of your organization to date has been greatly appreciated and the contributions that have been made to the work of the Collaborative by members of your organization are already making a positive difference.

Clarifications and Definitions (read to all agency staff including leadership)

Because we will be working with five different agencies and talking about the same topic, we would like to review with you some important, common definitions so that we will all be on the same page when we are talking about the questions. These definitions may be different from what you currently use.

For the purpose of this project, the definition of domestic violence is a form of abuse characterized by a pattern of power and coercive control in a relationship. The means used to gain and maintain control can include: physical, mental, emotional, financial, sexual abuse and stalking. Domestic violence occurs within intimate relationships and abusers can involve spouse, partners, boyfriends, or girlfriends, family members, or caregivers, paid or unpaid.

The definition of disability is a functional limitation that requires an accommodation to perform functions required to carry out daily life activities, whether situational or pervasive over time. Functional limitations may include balance, cognitive functions, dimensional extremes, mental health, movement and mobility, respiratory functions, sensory functions, stamina and fatigue, as well as voice, speech and language.

Who We are and What We Are Doing Here

(READ THIS SECTION FOR FOCUS GROUPS) There are three of us here today who will be running the focus groups. My name is (Denise or Sam) and I will be the facilitator and will ask the questions. (Sam or Denise) will be walking around as a floater and will help with anything you might need. Sue is the recorder and will be writing down on the computer what you say. She will not be writing down anything that could identify you as the one making comments or answering the questions. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. We will explain more about confidentiality in a few minutes.

The meeting itself will last approximately one to one and one-half hours. We will be asking you 4-5 major questions about services. If you need to take a break, please let us know. The restrooms are located (insert location information here). Please feel free to help yourself to refreshments.

Do you have any questions at this point?

(READ THIS SECTION FOR INTERVIEWS) There are two of us here today from the H.O.P.E. Collaborative Needs Assessment team and we will be conducting an interview with you. Denise (or Sam) will be asking you questions and Sue will be recording what you say on the computer. Personal Identifying information will not be used. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability and this will be explained in a few minutes.

The interview will last about one hour. We will be asking you 5-6 questions about services.

Do you have any questions at this point?

(Answer questions.)

At this time we will review consent, mandatory reporting and confidentiality with you.

Passive Consent Statement, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality

Please listen carefully to the information that will now be read to you. If you have questions, please be sure to have them answered before we begin. The purpose of this project is to talk about the service delivery system in Haywood County and how it helps or doesn't help (survivors with disabilities/persons with disabilities that experience violence and abuse). Because it is not a formal research project and we are just seeking your ideas and opinions, you will not need to sign anything about consent but by staying and participating in the needs assessment, you will be giving your consent.

1. You are volunteering your time to be part of this process and you are choosing to participate. You do not have to participate unless you want to.
2. As a participant, a variety of questions will be asked about services and you may or may not choose to answer.
3. You understand that questions that will be asked may include topics related to violence and abuse. But the information we will be asking about will be about services and your access to services. We do not want you to share any personal information about violence or abuse.
4. North Carolina is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about any violence or abuse that is personally happening to you, the group leaders may be required to report this information to Adult Protective Services. If you feel you need to report violence or abuse that is happening to you, you may report this for yourself by calling Adult Protective Services at 452-6620 or meet with someone after the meeting is over. We can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.
5. We will have a R.E.A.C.H. Advocate in a nearby "safe" room that is very good in helping people who are experiencing issues of domestic violence and abuse. If you decide that you don't want to answer questions because the information about violence and abuse bothers or upsets you, you may ask to talk to the R.E.A.C.H. Advocate at any time you are here with us.
6. Information that is shared will be recorded by the person in the group that is taking notes on the computer. You agree to and understand that your comments, insights, and suggestions will be written down. Although the person will write what you say, they will not be recording your name, any description of you or any identifying information about you.
7. You may change your mind about participating in the needs assessment at any time. If you would prefer an alternate or different method other than the one you are in, you have that option and you can let someone here know that you would be more comfortable in a different environment.
8. At the end of your participation in the needs assessment, you may also ask for someone safe to talk to if you experience any concerns about violence or abuse that is happening to you. We can also give you written information if you would just like information about resources.

We would also like for you to listen carefully while we review information on confidentiality.

9. Information from the needs assessment will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report and it will include all of the information from all of the Focus Groups and Interviews.
10. We cannot guarantee confidentiality since some of you may already know each other. We do ask that you do not talk about anything that is said in the needs assessment after you leave today. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
11. The group leaders will keep the needs assessment information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say, we will not write down the name of the person who said it. No names will be used in any written information.
12. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change but will not be shared in any public venue.
13. The information that we are collecting will be stored in a locked cabinet in our office and only the project directors (Sue and Denise) will have access to the information. All information that we collect will be destroyed 90 days after the approval of our Needs Assessment Report.

If you have any questions about anything that has been read to you, please ask to have it explained before we begin.

By choosing to stay in the group you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this group confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

We will take a minute or two in case any of you have questions you would like to ask.

Safety

Focus group:

We would like to review one more time the issues of confidentiality and safety. We are asking all of you to protect the discussions that are made today and to help keep what is said confidential. We ask that what is talked about remains in this room. While we will do our best to insure confidentiality, we also want you to realize that information may be disclosed outside of this room.

If you are here with a Personal Care Attendant who is in the waiting room and you need them during the focus group, please let Sam (or Denise) know, and they will get them for you. If you requested an Alternate Personal Care Attendant on your R.S.V.P. form and you need their help during the group, please let Sam (or Denise) know, and we will get them for you.)

In terms of the ground rules for our needs assessment, we ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. We also ask that you allow a person to finish speaking before you speak and to be very respectful of everyone here.

Are there any questions?

Interview:

With regards to safety, if you feel that there are safety issues related to your participation in the interview, please let us know. The information shared with us today is to be used to guide systems change, it is not intended to be a punitive process. Information shared as part of the needs assessment report will not be linked with individual names.

Continue with the script

We are now ready to begin the (focus group or interview) questions. Again, we are asking for your help in identifying the services that currently exist and what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for (persons with disabilities that experience violence and abuse/survivors with disabilities) who come to you for help.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Now we will begin with the (focus group/interview).

(INSERT FOCUS GROUP OR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HERE.)

Concluding statement:

Thank you for your help in answering these questions today. If you would like any additional information or need someone to talk to, please ask one of us before you leave today and we will be glad to help.

Your participation is very much appreciated and your comments and insight into service delivery has been extremely valuable. Again, thank you for your help. This concludes our (focus group or interview) and you are free to leave.

SCRIPT
(For Persons With Disabilities and Survivors)

THIS SCRIPT WILL BE USED FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS AND WILL APPLY TO ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.

Background and Purpose/Focus

Thank you for coming today. As you may remember from your invitation letter, we are working on a needs assessment to look at service delivery in Haywood County for persons with disabilities who are survivors of violence and abuse. This needs assessment is part of a special grant project that was awarded by the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women. Through this grant, the H.O.P.E. Collaborative was formed. The H.O.P.E. Collaborative consists of six agencies in Haywood County that have been working on this grant project. The six agencies are: HVO, R.E.A.C.H., DSS, the Arc, Smoky, and the 30th Alliance.

We are asking for your help in identifying the services that currently exist and what you feel is missing that would make the whole process work better for individuals who come to these agencies for help. We will also be talking directly with agency staff and Board chairs about the system.

We will be talking about personal experiences of how you get the services you need when you go to one of our partner agencies for help. We want to hear about what (persons with disabilities: helps you to feel welcome when you come to an agency for assistance; survivors: what an agency does to help you feel that the service you get are safe and confidential).

With the information that we gather from the needs assessment over the next 4-6 weeks, we will create a strategic plan that will identify what we need in terms of training, resources, policies and procedures and so forth so that people can get the help they need where ever they are receiving services. Your participation in this project is very valuable and what you have to say can make a difference for the people in Haywood County who may need help.

Who We are and What We Are Doing Here

(READ THIS SECTION FOR FOCUS GROUPS) There are three of us here today who will be running the focus groups. My name is (Denise or Sam) and I will be the facilitator and will ask the questions. (Sam or Denise) will be walking around as a floater and will help with anything you might need. Sue is the recorder and will be writing down on the computer what you say. She will not be writing down anything that could identify you as the one making comments or

answering the questions. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. We will talk about this in more detail in a few minutes.

The group itself will last about one to one and one half hours. We will be asking you 4-5 major questions about services and you are free to answer or not. If you need to take a break, please let us know. The restrooms are located (insert location information here). Please feel free to help yourself to refreshments.

Do you have any questions at this point?

(READ THIS SECTION FOR INTERVIEWS) There are two of us here today from the H.O.P.E. Collaborative Needs Assessment team and we will be conducting an interview with you. My name is (Denise or Sam) and I will be asking you questions and Sue will be recording what you say on the computer. Personal Identifying information will not be used. The information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability and we will review confidentiality in a minute.

The interview will last about one hour. We will be asking you 5-6 questions about services and you are free to answer or pass if you would prefer not to answer.

Do you have any questions at this point?

(Answer questions.)

Passive Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality

Before we move into the (focus group or interview) questions, I would like to read to you a statement about consent to participate in this needs assessment. Because the purpose of this needs assessment is to talk about the service delivery system in Haywood County and how it helps or doesn't help survivors with disabilities and is not a formal research project, you will not need to sign a consent form. After I have read the statement and if you choose to stay, you will be giving us your consent to participate.

Please listen carefully to the information that will now be read to you. If you have questions, please be sure to have them answered before we begin.

1. You are volunteering your time to be part of this process and you are choosing to participate. You do not have to participate unless you want to.
2. As a participant, a variety of questions will be asked about services and you may or may not choose to answer.
3. You understand that questions that will be asked may include topics related to violence and abuse. But the information we will be asking about will be about services and your

access to services. We do not want you to share any personal information about violence or abuse.

4. North Carolina is a mandatory reporting state. That means that if you talk about any violence or abuse that is personally happening to you, the group leaders may be required to report this information to Adult Protective Services. If you feel you need to report violence or abuse that is happening to you, you may report this for yourself by calling Adult Protective Services at 452-6620 or meet with someone after the meeting is over. We can give you the phone number again after we are finished if you need it.
5. We will have a R.E.A.C.H. Advocate in a nearby “safe” room that is very good in helping people who are experiencing issues of domestic violence and abuse. If you decide that you don’t want to answer questions because the information about violence and abuse bothers or upsets you, you may ask to talk to the R.E.A.C.H. Advocate at any time you are here with us.
6. Information that is shared will be recorded by the person in the group that is taking notes on the computer. You agree to and understand that your comments, insights, and suggestions will be written down. Although the person will write what you say, they will not be recording your name, any description of you or any identifying information about you.
7. You may change your mind about participating in the needs assessment at any time. If you would prefer an alternate or different method other than the one you are in, you have that option and you can let someone here know that you would be more comfortable in a different environment.
8. At the end of your participation in the needs assessment, you may also ask for someone safe to talk to if you experience any concerns about violence or abuse that is happening to you. We can also give you written information if you would just like information about resources.
9. Whether you stay through the entire needs assessment time, leave early, choose not to answer some questions or decide not to participate at all, you may still keep your \$20.00 Wal-mart gift card.

We would also like for you to listen carefully while we review information on confidentiality.

10. Information from the needs assessment will be collected and put into one report. The report will be called the Needs Assessment Report and it will include all of the information from all of the Focus Groups and Interviews.
11. We cannot guarantee confidentiality since some of you may already know each other. We do ask that you do not talk about anything that is said in the needs assessment after you leave today. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and comments.
12. The group leaders will keep the needs assessment information that is collected confidential. Even if we quote something you say, we will not write down the name of the person who said it. No names will be used in any written information.
13. We will need to record that the information shared came from a specific agency. This information will be used with the intent of effecting change but will not be shared in any public venue.

14. The information that we are collecting will be stored in a locked cabinet in our office and only the project directors (Sue and Denise) will have access to the information. All information that we collect will be destroyed 90 days after the approval of our Needs Assessment Report.

If you have any questions about anything that has been read to you, please ask to have it explained before we begin.

By choosing to stay in the group you are consenting to participate. You are not signing anything to give your consent. If you choose to stay you agree to participate and you also agree to keep the things said in this group confidential and not talk about them to others after you leave.

We will take a minute or two in case any of you have questions you would like to ask.

If you are here with a Personal Care Attendant who is in the waiting room and you need them during the (focus group or interview), please let Sam (or Denise) know, and they will get them for you. If you would prefer an Alternate Personal Care Attendance and let us know that on your R.S.V.P. form and you need their help during the group, please let Sam (or Denise) know, and they will get them for you.

Does anyone need anything right now?

Safety

Focus group:

We would like to review one more time the issues of confidentiality and safety. We are asking all of you to protect the discussions that are made today and to help keep what is said confidential. While you may know the person or the agency being discussed and you probably know the people that are here in this room because you are with them a lot, we ask that what is talked about remains in this room. While we will do our best to insure confidentiality, we also want you to realize that information may be disclosed or talked about outside of this room.

With regards to safety, if any of you feel that there are safety issues related to the discussions that we have, please let us know after we meet and we can help you with that. If you would like someone to talk to during our time together or when we are finished, there is someone here from R.E.A.C.H., (for persons with disabilities: our local domestic violence provider) who can talk with you. They are in a separate room nearby and are available for you at any time while you are here today. If you would like to talk with them, just let Sam (or Denise) know, and they will take you there. Just motion to them for help, and they will help you. If you would like to have some more information on places that are available to help you, you can also get a list of resources (*Appendix 16*) by asking one of us after the meeting.

In terms of the ground rules for our needs assessment, we ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. We also ask that you allow a person to finish speaking before you speak and to be very respectful of everyone here.

Are there any questions? Would anyone like to leave and not participate in the group?

(The Floater will help anyone who wishes to leave.)

Interview:

With regards to safety, if you feel that there are safety issues related to your participation in the interview, please let us know. After the interview we can arrange for you to talk with someone from R.E.A.C.H. (when talking with disability providers: our local domestic violence provider), that can help you. If you would like to have some more information on places that are available to help you, you can also get a list of resources (*Appendix 16*) by letting me know after the interview.

We are now ready to begin the (focus group or interview) questions. Again, we would like to remind you we are asking about how agencies and organizations help people in Haywood County in providing services that you need...specifically how they help or don't help. We want to focus on (persons with disabilities: what agencies do to provide you the accommodations you need and what makes you feel comfortable in asking from help from an agency; survivors: what agencies do to help you feel safe to disclose violence and abuse to their staff.)

Are there any questions before we begin?

Okay.

(INSERT FOCUS GROUP OR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS HERE.)

Concluding statement:

Thank you for your help in answering these questions today. If you would like any additional information or need someone to talk to, please ask one of us before you leave today and we will be glad to help.

Your participation is very much appreciated and your comments and insight into service delivery has been extremely valuable. Again, thank you for your help. This concludes our (focus group or interview) and you are free to leave.

HOPE COLLABORATIVE

RESOURCE LIST

Here is a list of resources that you may find helpful. If you would like to know more about any of these resources before making the call, you may privately ask any of our facilitators following our meeting.

R.E.A.C.H.....456-7898

CRISIS HOTLINE.....1-800-799-7233

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES
.....452-1091

SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER.....1-800-849-6127

WAYNESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT.....456-8611

HAYWOOD COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT.....452-6666

LEGAL AID (FOR LOW INCOME).....1-828-586-8931

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE – HAYWOOD CHRISTIAN
MINISTRIES.....456-4838

GUARDIANSHIPS (CLERK OF COURTS).....454-6501

HAYWOOD REGIONAL HOSPITAL.....456-7311

URGENT CARE.....452-8354

FREE CLINIC (GOOD SAMARITAN WAYNESVILLE).....454-5287

TRANSPORTATION (HAYWOOD PUBLIC TRANSIT).....452-1447
Ext 120