Needs Assessment Focus Group Toolkit

The Focus Group Toolkit is provided so that multiple people can gather input from community members about the issues and concerns facing families and individuals related to health, learning and school readiness/education, strong/functioning families, and other critical areas in a consistent manner. By using the tools provided, outreach activities can be compiled and analyzed across the community.

There are five tools:

1. Facilitation Agenda

2. Talking Points

3. Participant sign-in sheet

4. Focus Group Cover Sheet

5. Focus Group Documentation Tables

How to Use the Tools:

❑ Complete a separate summary for each focus group.

❑ Transfer any handwritten notes from flip charts, sign-in sheets and the cover sheet into the Word document.

❑ Keep a copy of the sign-in sheet for your records.

❑ Save the document with the name of the focus group and date (e.g. FRC Advisory Board 8-15-07)

❑ Email completed forms as soon after the focus group as possible to Kellie Bates at kbates@socialent.com

Suggested Process (modify as needed based on the group)

1. **Room Set-Up**. Before the group arrives, tape up three flip chart pages (you will need more pages as the group begins responding to the facilitation questions). Label one sheet Problems/Concerns, one Resources/Barriers, and one Solutions. (see examples on Facilitation Agenda page).

2. **Welcome**. After the group is seated send the sign-in sheet around the room and ask participants to indicate their age group on the sheet. Let them know that we are tracking this information so that we can evaluate how well we did reaching a broad spectrum of community members.

3. **Introduction**. As the sign-in sheet is going around the room.

4. **Documentation**. After the sign-in sheet has gone around or at the end of the meeting, the focus group facilitator or an assistant can determine participant demographics based on visual observation of the group. Transfer all flip chart notes into the Word file and submit to SEI.

<u>Facilitation Agenda</u>:

Before beginning determine how much time you have to work with. The following time frame assumes 45 minutes total.

1. <u>**Introduction**</u> – 5 minutes

   ❑ Provide a brief introduction to the Community Needs Assessment (see "Talking Points," page 4) purpose and process.

   ❑ Explain that you will ask the group to spend a few minutes identifying their concerns <u>for their community</u> in a particular area (e.g. health, education/learning, families, etc.), After that you will ask them to identify any resources <u>currently available in their community</u> to address the problems identified. And, finally you will ask them to identify any barriers for accessing the services. Emphasize that their input is vital in helping to identify and prioritize needs, create solutions, and plan for services.

   ❑ Explain that we are not trying to evaluate or judge any one person's opinions or experiences, but rather to capture the thinking of as many people as possible.

   ❑ Ask if there are any questions before you begin. Answer questions and then begin with the facilitation questions.

2. **Problems/Concerns Identification** – 20 minutes <u>total</u>

   Ask the following four questions and document answers on flipcharts.

   ❑ What are the <u>most significant</u> problems related to **health** in your community? What ages are affected by the issue? (Check the ages affected) - 5 minutes

   ❑ What are the <u>most significant</u> problems related to education, **learning and school readiness** (e.g. individuals reaching their developmental potential and ready for school/learning) in your community? What ages are affected by the issue? (Check the ages affected) - 5 minutes

   ❑ What are the <u>most significant</u> problems affecting **families** in your community (e.g., families able to provide parenting, economic security and a healthy environment)? What ages are affected by the issue? (Check the ages affected) - 5 minutes

   ❑ What **other problems or concerns** <u>significantly</u> affect members of your community?* What ages are affected? (Check the ages affected) - 5 minutes

* This question is intentionally broad and open ended so that people can respond in whatever way they need to. Facilitators can offer some possible issues/concerns to get the group going as long as they don't intentionally lead the discussion in a particular direction.

3. **Community Resources and Barriers** – 10 minutes

Have participants look at the list of problems, issues and concerns, and then ask:

❑ What recourses are available <u>in their community</u> to address these issues? (List each resource on the left side of the flip chart page)

❑ What are the barriers (if any) to accessing these resources? (List barriers next to the resource they apply to).

Community Resources Available to Address Problems / Issues	Barriers to Accessing Available Resources
(List resources currently available in the community)	(List barriers next to the appropriate resources)

4. **Solutions**. – 10 minutes

Have participants look at the list of problems, issues, resources and barriers, and then ask:

❑ What actions, programs, strategies do they think would <u>make the biggest difference in their community</u>? (e.g., What solutions would help solve the problems and reduce/remove the barriers listed?)

Solutions	Concern Area Affected			
(List each possible solution on a separate line and check the concern area the solution would address)	Health	Learning/ School Readiness	Families	Other

5. **Conclusion**. Thank folks for their time. Let them know we expect to have the data compiled, analyzed and a draft report ready early in September. They can check back with your agenda to receive a copy of the draft report and/or participate in future planning. (After the meeting, summarize flip charts into the appropriate tables in the toolkit.)

Community Needs Assessment Talking Points

❑ Our organization is interested in conducting periodic needs assessments for children 0-5 and their families. The results of these assessments guide the FRC planning and decisions.

❑ The Community Assessment looks at a wide range of issues, which can be grouped broadly into four categories:
   1. <u>Health</u> – all aspects of health fall into this category, including physical, oral, mental, etc.
   2. <u>Learning and Ready for School</u> – anything that relates to education and an individual's ability to reach their potential and be ready for school/learning
   3. <u>Strong/Functioning Families</u> – issues that relate to a family's ability to provide parenting, economic security, and a healthy environment for people living in the household
   4. <u>Other</u> – any other issues that do not fall into one of the above categories.

❑ In addition to information collected through focus groups and community outreach activities, assessment data is also being compiled from family surveys, provider surveys and client satisfaction forms.

❑ Explain how the information will be used. It is also good to explain the timeline for gathering community input and then using that input for planning or other purposes.

❑ Community members are encouraged to participate in focus groups, surveys, and by completing customer satisfaction surveys.

Focus Group Sign-in Sheet

Name (Please Print)	Your Age Group		
	Under 18	19-64	65+

Focus Group Cover Page

Meeting Date	
Location	
Group Facilitator (s)	

Meeting Type (Place "X" in the appropriate box)	Community Meeting / Focus Group (e.g., PTA, Chamber, Service Clubs, Advisory Boards, etc)	Service Provider Group (Public and/or private service providers, e.g., educators/teachers, counselors, health providers, etc.)	Tribal Council Meeting	Other (describe)

Meeting Attendance

(Total attendance should be sum of service providers, other stakeholders, family members, and consumers).

Total Attendance	Service Providers	Other Stakeholders	Family Members	Consumers/Clients

Participant Demographics

	Total	White	Hispanic	Black/ African Am.	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
Children/ Youth								
Adults (18-65)								
Seniors (65+)								

How was meeting advertised? (Mark all that apply)

Personal Contact		Letters to Groups	
Home Visitors		Newspaper articles/adv.	
Peer to Peer		Flyers	
Others (List)			

Were Incentives Used? No ____ Yes ____ If yes, please number and types of incentives

	Number provided	
Child Care		
Food		
Other		(Describe)
Other		(Describe)

Focus Group Results Documentation

After the meeting, please summarize the flip chart responses into the tables on the following pages.

Problems/Concerns: Health   All aspects of health fall into this category, including physical, oral, mental, etc.
(List each problems identified on a separate line and check all age groups affected by the problem)

Problems/Concerns: Learning / Ready for School – Anything that relates to education and an individual's ability to reach their potential and be ready for school/learning
(List each problems identified on a separate line and check all age groups affected by the problem)

Problems/Concerns: Strong/Functioning Families.   Issues that relate to a family's ability to provide parenting, economic security and a healthy environment.
(List each problems identified on a separate line and check all age groups affected by the problem)

Problems/Concerns: ALL OTHER issues significantly impacting community members.
(List each problems identified on a separate line and check all age groups affected by the problem)

Community Resources Available to Address Problems / Issues	Barriers to Accessing Available Resources
(List resources currently available in the community)	(List barriers next to the appropriate resources)

Solutions	Concern Area Affected			
(List each possible solution on a separate line and check the concern area the solution would address)	Health	Learning/ School Readiness	Families	Other