



# Research for Organizing Webinar Series

## *Module 6: Interviews— Qualitative Data*

# Presenters

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# Agenda

- Logistics
- Who we are
- Past Modules
- Introduction to Participatory Action Research
- Introduction to Qualitative Data
- Introduction to Interviews
- Case Study
- Interview Guide Design
- Outreach Plan
- Training Interviewers & Conducting Interviews
- After the Interview
- Q & A

# Webinar Logistics

- **Audio Options:**

- **Listen by phone:**

- Select “telephone” in the audio option on the control panel.
    - Call the number sent to you in registration confirmation
    - Enter your access code
    - Enter your audio pin (press # [code numbers]#) so we can identify you.
      - Pin will be shown on your screen when you log in online.

- ***Or, listen through your computer’s audio.***

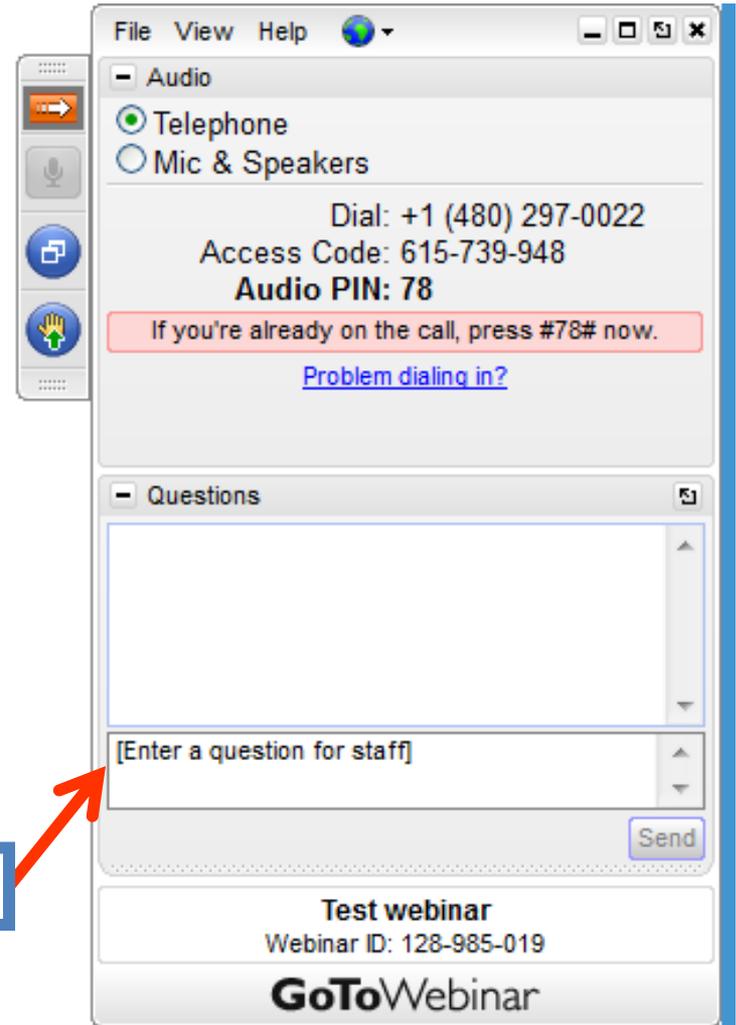
**Everyone but the presenters will be muted to reduce background noise.**

# Webinar Logistics

## Questions

- As we go through the webinar, if you have any questions, you can type them into the question box
- We will answer questions after the webinar during the Q&A session

Your questions here!



# **INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CDP)**

# Who is CDP?

- Strengthen impact of grassroots organizations, through...
  - Participatory Action Research Reports
  - Grassroots Policymaking
  - Popular-Education Curriculum Design and Research Training
  - Strategic Campaign Research

# CDP Partnership Model

- Prioritize working with groups that...
  - Are based in low-income/excluded communities in New York City
  - Conduct community organizing campaigns with a goal of achieving systemic change
  - Are membership-based, member-led
  - Engage in leadership development and base-building activities

## **POLL:**

**Have you previously attended or watched  
a recording of a Research for Organizing  
Webinar?**

# Research For Organizing Webinar Series

- [Module 1: Unpacking the Toolkit](#)
- [Module 2: Designing your Research Project](#)
- [Module 3: Overview of Research Methods](#)
- [Module 4: Creating, designing, and implementing Surveys – Quantitative Data](#)
- [Module 5: Focus Groups – Qualitative Data](#)
- **Module 6: Interviews – Qualitative Data**

# **MODULE 6: INTERVIEWS– QUALITATIVE DATA**

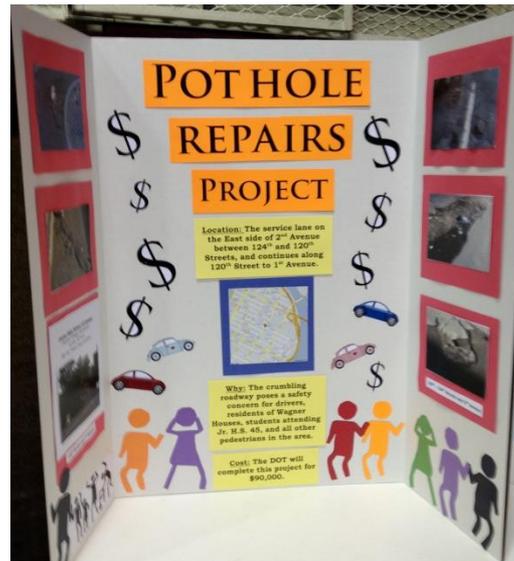
# Objectives for this Module

- *Participants will be able to...*
  - *Understand what qualitative data is and its use in participatory action research*
  - *Understand the benefits and challenges of conducting interviews*
  - *Understand how to design interview guides*
  - *Understand how members can be involved in designing interview guides and conducting interviews*

# **INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)**

# Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- Community-driven
- Power-building
- Action oriented



# **RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING (RFO) TOOLKIT**

# Research for Organizing Toolkit

- Designed for organizations and individuals using PAR in social justice work
- Compiled from years of working with grassroots organizations
- Trainings, tools and tips created for organizers & community members to become more actively involved in research process

# RFO Table of Contents

**RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING** A Toolkit for Participatory Action Research from the Community Development Project

[SIGN UP FOR OUR MAILING LIST](#)

HOME TABLE OF CONTENTS ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

DOWNLOAD THE ENTIRE GUIDE AS A PDF

DESCARGA SECCIONES EN ESPAÑOL

- Timeline of a PAR Project
- An Overview of Participatory Action Research
- Designing Your Research Project
- Getting Your Data
  - I. Surveys
  - II. Interviews**
  - III. Focus Groups
  - IV. Community Mapping
  - V. Community Visioning
  - VI. Mystery Shopping
- Entering Your Data Into a Database
- Analyzing Your Data
- Presenting and Packaging the Report
- Releasing the Report
- Glossary of Terms
- Tips for Facilitators

[Step-by-step Timeline of a Participatory Action Research Project](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Example Activities](#)

[Example Tools](#)

[TOP](#)

Step-by-step Timeline of a Participatory Action Research Project

[www.researchfororganizing.org](http://www.researchfororganizing.org)

# INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION



# Quantitative and Qualitative Data

- **QUANTITATIVE DATA**

- Data that is presented numerically

- **QUALITATIVE DATA**

- Descriptive data that can help tell peoples' stories

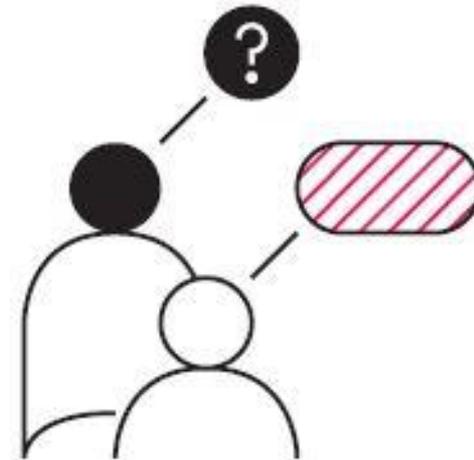
# Methods of Qualitative Data Collection

- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Field notes / Observations
- Ethnography

QUALITATIVE DATA IS DATA.



# INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWS



# Interviews

- Guided conversations about specific topic
- Used to document stories, experiences, and impacts
- Usually one-on-one
- Tend to use open-ended questions to get in-depth explanations

# Benefits of Interviews

- Useful for qualitative data, for getting more in-depth answers
- Great for dealing with **sensitive information** that may be difficult for individuals to share in a group setting
- Good for organizing – getting to know how **issues affect individuals**

# Challenges of Interviews

- Time-consuming
- Won't get numbers from results
- Interviewer needs to be trained
  - To deal with sensitive information and using the interview guide
  - Needs to take detailed field notes and/or record and transcribe interview for analysis.

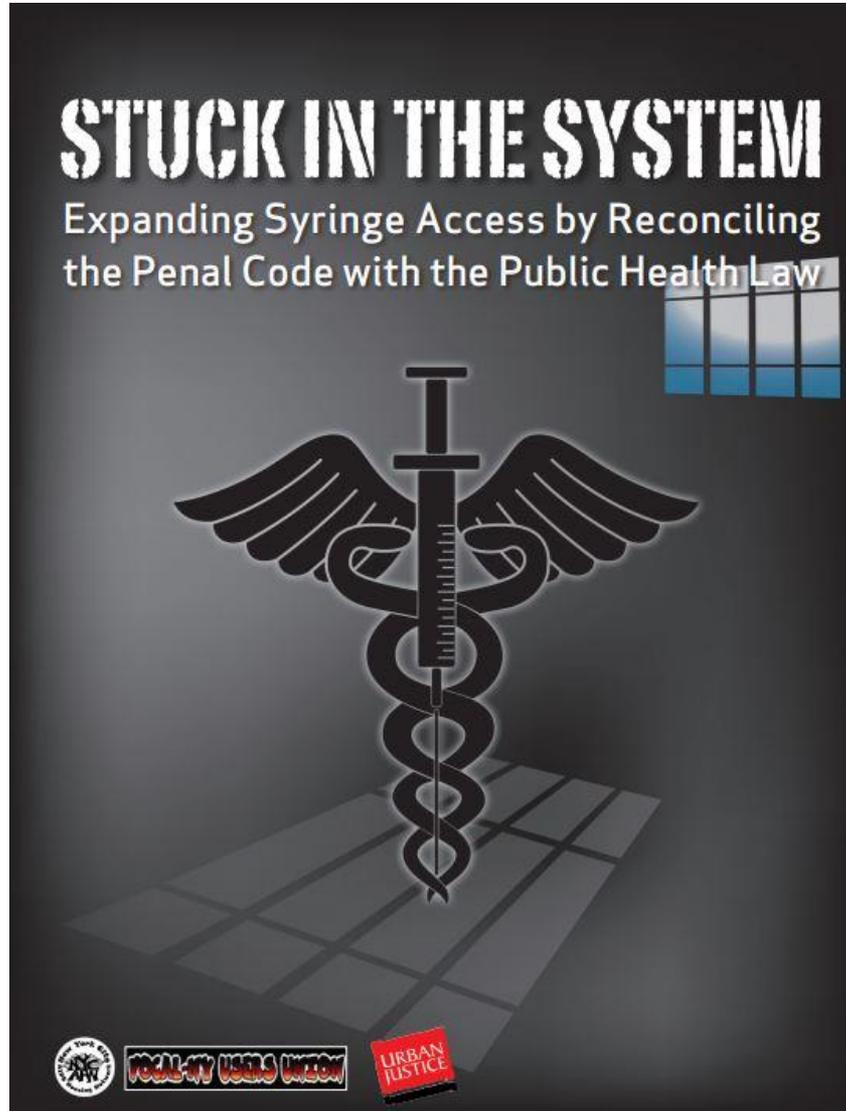
**CASE STUDY:  
VOCAL- NY–  
STUCK IN THE SYSTEM**



# VOCAL- NY– Stuck in the System



# Background on the Issue



# WHAT...

## Were the Organizing Goals connected to this research?

- Educate lawmakers, law enforcement and other parts of the justice system about the importance of syringe access in improving public health and safety
- Pass legislation that would end the criminalization of syringe possession
- Humanize those impacted by the issue
- Improve health outcomes for drug users

# WHAT...

## Overall questions did VOCAL-NY want to answer through their research?

- What impact do the practices of law enforcement have on drug users' access to clean syringes and ability to dispose of used syringes?
- What experiences do syringe exchange program (SEP) participants have with police in relation to possessing new and used syringes?

# HOW

## Did VOCAL-NY gather information (what methods did they use)?

- **INTERVIEWS:** collected qualitative data from 12 SEP program participants
  - Allowed VOCAL-NY to collect stories and experiences of SEP program participants
  - Interviews were best because of the personal nature of the information
  - Trained current and former drug users to conduct the interviews so that interviewees would feel more comfortable discussing drug use and interactions with the police

# Key Findings

## ***B. The fear of arrest encourages unsafe injection and disposal practices.***

- Among survey respondents who were arrested, 1 out of 3 respondents who were arrested said they either stopped using syringe access programs or went less often because of their experience.

Because drug users who have been arrested for syringe possession are less likely to use syringe access programs, they are also more likely to engage in unsafe injection and disposal practices. This is unsafe for users, law enforcement and other community members. Several SEP participants described how they engaged in unsafe injection practices because of law enforcement practices.

*"It's tougher. I don't want to get caught again, so I don't go as many times anymore [to the SEP]." – Survey respondent #66*

*"I found that I don't carry any syringes on me, I try not to any more. If I needed a fix, I would either have to take the chance of cleaning another pair out with bleach that belonged to somebody other than myself. I know that I can get them for free, but now I have a handicap because when I get them, I can't use them – when I get them I'm being stripped of them. If the police are going to strip me of my clean syringes, and then throw them away, then now I'm back where I'm started – now I'm taking risks using the older ones, or I'm cleaning*

# Key Findings

## ***D. Injection drug users and other syringe carriers report abusive practices when stopped by police, including after being arrested.***

- 13% of survey respondents reported being physically abused and 10% reported being verbally abused by police when stopped.
- Almost half (47%) of respondents reported being *both* strip and body cavity searched by the police when arrested for syringe possession.
- 68% of respondents reported being held 48 hours or more in jail, with 36% being held 72 hours or more.

Interviews also point to humiliating encounters and abusive practices by law enforcement.

*“Anybody that uses a clinic, anybody with a substance abuse problem is beneath them and [the police] tend to treat you like that.” – Interviewee #3*

*“Being involved with needle exchange we’re saving lives...[the police] believe that saving lives is getting people that use syringes off the streets.” – Interviewee #9*

*“They start making jokes, this is a waste of time, all you’re doing is making more junkies out here, that you should be embarrassed... So they put me in handcuffs and they started taking the needles out and putting them all over and then they started asking me for the right IDs and everything. I had my volunteer ID for [a SEP] out there clearly. They said, ‘if he’s got syringes, he’s got to be using.’ They kept on with their smart remarks, that I should be ashamed of myself.” – Interviewee #5*

# DAILY NEWS

## Murky laws endangering New York's syringe exchange programs: study

BY Katie Nelson  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER



laws are endangering  
Ind.

### NEW REPORT: SYRINGE ACCESS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS CITE POLICING PRACTICES AS BARRIER TO PUBLIC HEALTH

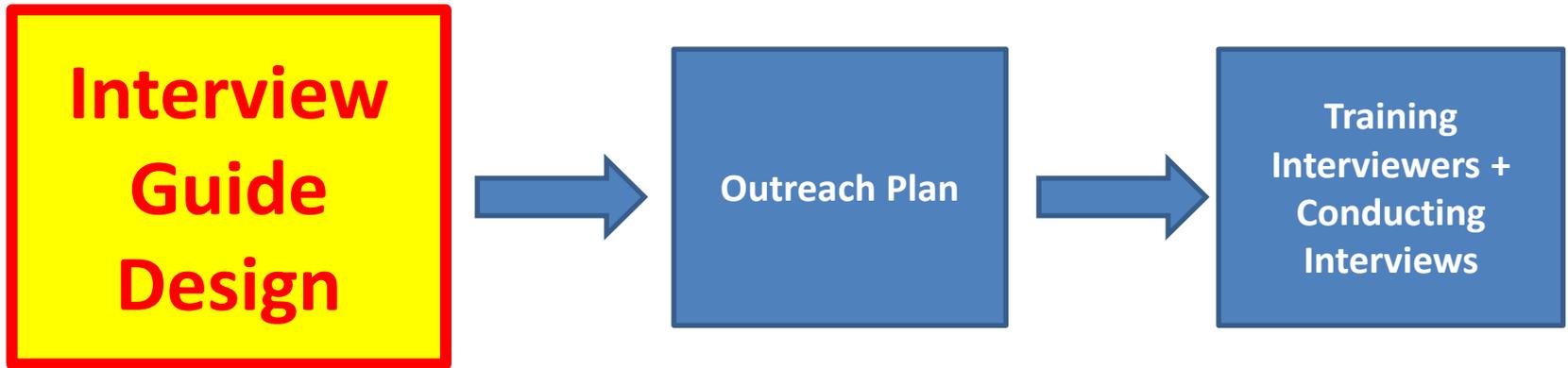
*Study Identifies Legal Loophole & Fear of Police as Undermining Publically  
Funded Programs*

*New State Data Shows over 700 Arrests in 2008 &  
Nearly 600 in 1<sup>st</sup> Six Months of 2009*

# HOW...

## Did research support VOCAL's organizing efforts?

- Syringe Access bill (2010) was signed into law, which reduces both police harassment and unlawful arrest of drug injectors who carry new and used syringes.
- VOCAL members engaged in consistent advocacy to pass this bill, including regular visits to Albany.
- The stories and data in the report were used as a part of this advocacy strategy & provided evidence of the need for and importance of this legislation.



# Preparing for Interviews

- Go back and look at research questions
- Determine categories/themes for questions you would want to ask
- Develop an interview guide
- Decide how many interviews you can/ want to conduct
- Train interviewers

# Getting Started

- Start with research questions
  - Which research questions can best be explored by interviews?
  - Review any data previously collected such as survey data or literature reviews to identify gaps
  - Develop interview questions based on categories and gaps in data

# Identifying Categories of Questions

- What experiences do syringe exchange program (SEP) participants have with police in relation to possessing new and used syringes?
- What impact do the practices of law enforcement have on drug users' access to clean syringes and ability to dispose of used syringes?

**Experience with Police**

**Impact on access to syringe programs**

# Preparing the Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE: Similar to focus group, guided set of questions organized into categories

- Helps facilitate the conversation
- Sections are based on the goals of the campaign, research questions, and data/findings from surveys (if you did a survey)

# Crafting Good Interview Questions

Good interview questions:

- Are open-ended
- Are easy to say
- Are clear and simple
- Are short and to the point
- Include clear instructions
- Are neutral/not leading

# Tool 3.4: Tips for Creating Effective Interview Questions

## *Use “how” questions vs. “why” questions*

- Good for seeking descriptions and detailed information
- “Why” questions often leads to justifications rather than descriptions.

## *Clarification or Probing questions*

- Useful when you want more information about or clarification.
  - What do you mean by\_\_\_\_\_?
  - Can you be more specific about\_\_\_\_\_?
  - When you said\_\_\_\_\_, what does that look like? Can you give me some examples?

# Tool 3.4: Tips for Creating Effective Interview Questions

## *Avoid Leading Questions*

- Interviewees may respond with what they think you want to hear. For example:
  - Don't you think that mold in your walls contributes to health problems like asthma or illness?

## *Avoid Questions with Multiple Elements*

- Interviewees may not know which part of the question to address. For example:
  - How has your landlord responded to tenant's concerns? Have city authorities supported or ignored you? What role should city authorities play in your dealings with your landlord?

# POP QUIZ!

**What's wrong with these interview questions?**

**In the past year, have you been  
arrested for syringe possession?**

**Don't you think that the police prevent people from properly disposing of syringes?**

**Please explain what happened to you and your family when you were evicted. Where did you go? Did you get new housing? What kind of housing? If you were able to secure new housing, was your rent more or less affordable?**

**How do you feel about how the police  
treats people that carry syringes?**

# Sample Interview Guide

Question Category/Section

## Section III: Experience with police around syringe possession

Question prompt

*Next, we'll talk about your experience and knowledge about people that have been arrested for carrying syringes. ...*

- 1. How do you feel about how the police treats people that carry syringes?*
- 2. What has your experience been with the police? Tell me about what happened:*
- 3. How did the experience impact you?*

Questions

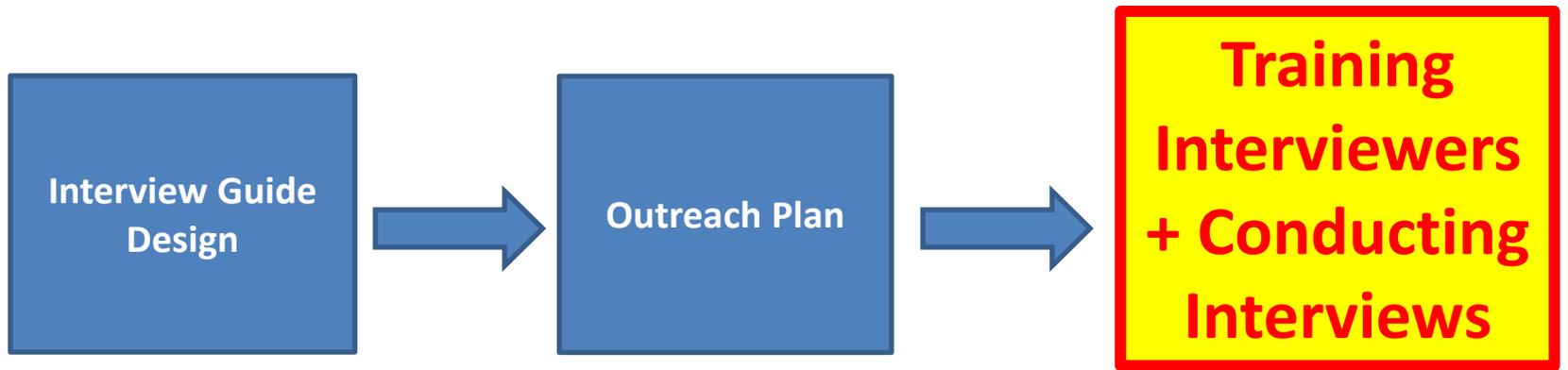


# Outreach Plan

- Decide how many interviews you can feasibly conduct
- Based on that number, conduct outreach to a larger set of people than you plan to interview
- If you conducted surveys before, consider outreach to survey respondents

# Participants

- Think about who is impacted:
  - Different geographic locations?
  - Languages?
  - Age groups?
- Ensure that you have the equipment and resources you need for language access



# Activity 3.3: Interview Role Play

DOWNLOAD  
ACTIVITY 3.3

## Activity: 3.3 Interview Role Play

### Purpose of Activity:

This activity will prepare participants to conduct interviews. Participants will become more familiar with the interview guide by practicing it with each other. This will also enable you to test out and adjust the interview guide if necessary.

### By the end of Activity Participants Will:

- Practice how to conduct an interview
- Review tips and questions for interviews
- Get familiar with and troubleshoot the interview guide for your project

### Before this Activity Participants Will Need to:

Have created interview questions and a draft interview guide for your project

Understand how interviews fit into your overall research project

### Materials Needed:

Butcher Paper

Markers



## 3. Getting Your Data: Interviews

### Activities

[Creating Effective Interview Questions](#)

[Interview Role Play](#)

### Tools

[Tips for Creating Effective Interview Questions](#)

[Interview Guide Template](#)

[Informed Consent Form Template](#)

### Case Studies

[VOCAL-NY and CDP Report: Stuck in the System](#)

[TOP](#)

# Tool 3.6: Informed Consent Form Template

DOWNLOAD  
TOOL 3.6 AS A  
PDF

DESCARGA  
HERRAMIENTA  
3.6 EN  
ESPAÑOL

## Tool: 3.6 Informed Consent Form Template

Please consider this information carefully before deciding whether or not to participate in this research.

### Purpose of the research:

*[Insert a few sentences about the purpose of conducting the research.]*

### What you will do in this research:

*[Insert a few sentences to explain to the participant how they will be participating in the research. For example: You will participate in a personal one on one interview where you will be asked to answer various questions about your experience as someone that works in a fine dining restaurant].*

### Time required:

*[Insert how long the interview will take.]*

### Risks:

*Insert any anticipated risks associated with the research. If there are none, write: there are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. Your name and any other identifying information will NOT be shared with anyone.*

### Benefits:

*Write any benefits that will be gained through this research. For example, at the end of the study we will write a report, which will document your experiences as well the experiences of all of the other restaurant workers who participate in the study. The report will provide important information on the restaurant industry.*



## 3. Getting Your Data: Interviews

### Activities

[Creating Effective Interview Questions](#)

[Interview Role Play](#)

### Tools

[Tips for Creating Effective Interview Questions](#)

[Interview Guide Template](#)

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[TOP](#)



***Organizing!***

# How to involve members

- Team of leaders to oversee the research project
- Leadership team can brainstorm interview guide categories or topics
- Members can be interviewed
- Members can also be trained to be interviewers

# AFTER THE INTERVIEW



# What Does Interview Data Look Like?

- If you recorded the conversation, it needs to be transcribed (like focus groups)
- Collection of notes of what was said during the interview
- Pull out common themes and powerful quotes that tell the story of your findings
- Also can build interviewee profiles

# Using Interview Data

Finding

***B. People take active steps to reduce risk to themselves and the community.***

Drug users that were interviewed discussed the types of risk-reducing activities they engage in, such as peer to peer counseling and participating in SEPs, despite the risk of arrest.

*“I’m not trying to die, I’m not trying to get infected. I care about other people, I don’t want nobody to get hurt, not over getting stuck by a needle I threw in the garbage.” – Interviewee #3*

*“Even though – knock on wood – I’m still clear of both hepatitis C and HIV, I wouldn’t want [another person] going ahead and getting stuck and having to go through that period of uncertainty while they were getting tested...I wouldn’t want to put anybody through that, so I’m careful.” – Interviewee #4*

*“We go out there and work and getting constantly harassed until someone explains to them that what we’re doing is not creating junkies, we trying to prevent people from getting infections and we’re trying to show them how to get rid of syringes the correct way.” – Interviewee #5*

Interview Data

# Using Interview Data

## In Depth Profile of a SEP Participant

*George Bethos, a 50 year old white male living in Brooklyn, first became involved with an underground syringe exchange in 1986 and became both a participant and outreach worker for legal SEPs once they emerged. He shared his experience being arrested for lawful syringe possession:*

The last time I was arrested for syringe possession was 50 yards from a syringe exchange program in Manhattan. The police saw me putting up a poster on the corner for a public health conference and they pulled me over, threw me up against the glass of a Papaya King, and began instantly questioning me. They said they had seen me in the area going to the syringe exchange before. As they were going through pockets and pulling out stuff, they kept asking me, "Who is selling dope? Who is selling quills [crack cocaine]? Who is selling Xanax?" When the police found syringes on me, they acted like they hit pay dirt. Even though staff from the syringe exchange program came out and explained that I was a client in good standing, the cops still handcuffed me. I tried to explain I had syringes to help cut back on HIV and AIDS and that it was the most successful way to prevent the spread, but the cops just responded by saying, "Who are you to play the hero?"

The police refused to take me by my methadone program to get medicated and threw me in the van even though I have bad legs and have difficulty moving around. They drove me around for hours so they could pick up more people near the end of their shift and get overtime. They kept trying to provoke me, including threatening me with violence by saying things like "we could bounce you're head off the roof of this van" if I didn't give them names. I spent two days in central booking while withdrawing from methadone and with no access to my other medication. The judge offered me a disorderly conduct charge or ACD, but I said I wanted to take the case to trial and they released me. After two more visits to the courthouse they dismissed the case when the police lab tests on the used syringes didn't show anything.

I now work as an outreach worker for an SEP and the number one reason people give for not returning used syringes is "fear of arrest." I've noticed the number of people coming into syringe exchanges goes down when there are police crackdowns in the area too. Police harassment also means a lot of users only carry one syringe that they can easily conceal and reuse, or they start stashing them in public places where other people could come across them. Some users don't carry syringes at all now and just share whatever someone else has. Especially if a user sees cops making searches on a block, they dump their syringes immediately no matter where they are. They wouldn't do this if it wasn't for police harassment.

In depth  
profile of a  
participant

# Focus Groups Vs. Interviews

## Focus Groups

- Conducted in groups
- Good popular education and organizing tool
- Participants build off each other to come up with creative solutions

## Interviews

- Generally conducted one on one
- Great when asking about sensitive topics
- Good for getting to know how issues affect individuals

# Q&A



# Research For Organizing Webinar Series

- Module 1: Unpacking the Toolkit
- Module 2: Designing your Research Project
- Module 3: Getting Your Data and Utilizing Databases
- Module 4: Creating, designing, and implementing Surveys – Quantitative Data
- Module 5: Focus Groups – Qualitative Data
- Module 6: Interviews – Qualitative Data

# Research For Organizing Webinar Series

## ***Moving Forward***

- **Module 7: Mystery shopping/observations**
- Module 8: Data Entry
- Module 9: Creating research findings and Policy Recommendations
- Module 10: Presenting & Releasing your Research