

# QSR Focus Group Questions

## Focus Group Specific Questions:

### **Caseworkers**

- ❑ What is the best thing about being a caseworker in this agency? What keeps you here?
- ❑ What is working well in this organization?
- ❑ What is not working well/could be improved?
- ❑ How do you describe your job to people you meet outside of the child welfare system?
- ❑ How do you describe your role to families you serve when you meet them for the first time?
- ❑ What training do you receive to assist in doing your job?
- ❑ Describe supervision you receive.
- ❑ How do you spend your time each day?
- ❑ To get a better understanding of how you approach your work, how do you define success for a family? If a family is successful, what does that look like? What is your role in helping them reach success? That is the family's role in reaching success? What are the roles of other key stakeholders (schools, mental health, probation, etc.) in working with you and the family to achieve success?
- ❑ What are the greatest challenges you face, as a worker, to achieve success?
- ❑ Who are the families who are struggling to make progress/challenge practice?
- ❑ How do you provide families with services needed?
- ❑ If you could change one thing, in the child welfare system what would it be?
- ❑ What would help you do your job better?
- ❑ Are you seeing any new trends in the demographics in your county, organization, or families that affect practice?
- ❑ How would you describe your agency's relationship with the courts, schools, service providers, and other child welfare partners? How is the collaboration among the various partners? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- ❑ Are there services/resources that children/families need but are not available?
- ❑ What is given priority by your agency/supervisors? What are the practice expectations?
- ❑ How would you describe your agency's approach to working with children, youth and families?
- ❑ If a child/youth or family needed a unique service how do they go about obtaining that?
- ❑ ICWA Related Questions - What is the process for placing tribal children?
- ❑ How are staff turnovers and vacant positions managed?
- ❑ What are the work pressures/stressors and how are they relieved?

## QSR Focus Group Questions

### Supervisors

- ❑ What is working well in this organization?
- ❑ What is not working well/could be improved?
- ❑ Tell us about staff development in your agency, what role do you play in helping caseworkers gain the skills and confidence they need to be successful in their work? What are their greatest needs?
- ❑ What training do you receive to assist in doing your job as a supervisor?
- ❑ Describe supervision you receive.
- ❑ How do you spend your time each day?
- ❑ How much time is spent doing clinical supervision versus compliance enforcement?
- ❑ Tell us about how caseworkers are given feedback about their work. How are you given feedback about your performance?
- ❑ Who are the families with whom you succeed?
- ❑ Who are the families who are struggling to make progress/challenge practice?
- ❑ How do you provide families with services needed?
- ❑ If you could change one thing, in the child welfare system what would it be?
- ❑ What do you feel you need as supervisory staff to support you to be successful in your work?
- ❑ What are the greatest challenges you face as a supervisor in educating and supporting those in your unit/department?
- ❑ Are you seeing any new trends in the demographics in your county, the organization, or the families that affect practice?
- ❑ How would you describe your agency's relationship with the courts, schools, service providers, and other child welfare partners? How is the collaboration among the various partners? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- ❑ What are the working relationships with supervisors in other agencies involved with their children, youth and families?
- ❑ Are there services/resources that children/families need but are not available?
- ❑ What is given priority by your agency/managers? What are the practice expectations that are being promoted?
- ❑ How would you describe your agency's approach to working with children and families?
- ❑ If a child or family needed a unique service how do they go about obtaining that?
- ❑ ICWA Related Questions - What is the process for placing tribal children?
- ❑ How are staff turnovers and vacant positions managed?
- ❑ What are the work pressures/stressors and how are they relieved?
- ❑ Is there clinical and management back-up support for supervisors?

## QSR Focus Group Questions

### Director/Managers

- What is working well in this organization?
- What is not working well/could be improved?
- Who are the families with whom you succeed?
- Who are the families who are struggling to make progress/challenge practice?
- How do you provide families with services needed?
- What is the working relationship between divisions within the agency? Address flexibility, teaming, coordination of services for families involved with multiple services.
- What is the relationship between the agency and outside agencies? How is the collaboration with providers and other community agencies? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- How are the working relationships with managers in other agencies involved with their children, youth and families?
- What have the social workers/supervisors said they need to be able to do their jobs?
- How much manager time and activities are devoted to practice development and building local service capacities to deliver effective services?
- How much time is spent evaluating practice results and leading next step actions to improve results?
- What are the available training opportunities for managers?
- Describe the technical, clinical, and financial back-up support for managers.
- What are the work pressures/stressors and how are they relieved?
- How are staff turnovers/vacancies managed?

### Legal Partners

- What is working well in this county?
- What areas are in need of improvement?
- What are the biggest barriers to accomplishing your work goals?
- What families are succeeding in obtaining independence?
- What keeps families from succeeding?
- Are there significant demographic changes in the community that impact your work?
- How is the child welfare agency perceived by the court?
- Are the services needed by children, youth and families accessible?
- How would you describe your agency's relationship with the child welfare agency, schools, service providers, and other child welfare partners? How is the collaboration among the various partners? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- How well are the workers prepared for court?

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- ❑ Are there areas where the workers need additional training? Are there areas where legal partners need additional training?
- ❑ What are the worker caseloads & how does it impact their work?
- ❑ If you could change one thing within the child welfare system what would it be?
- ❑ Are reports/memos filed timely?

### Providers

- ❑ What is going well in this county?
- ❑ What areas are in need of improvement?
- ❑ What is the communication like in this county?
- ❑ How is the child welfare agency perceived by the community?
- ❑ What are the primary challenges that children, youth and families face in this county?
- ❑ How do you provide families with services needed? Are there services that children, youth and families need that are hard to obtain?
- ❑ What is the role of children, youth and families in case planning?
- ❑ If you could change one thing in the child welfare system what would it be?
- ❑ How is the collaboration among the various partners involved with the children, youth and families? How is the collaboration among the various partners? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- ❑ What is given priority by your agency/supervisors? What are the practice expectations?
- ❑ What training do you receive to assist in doing your job? Are there areas in which the workers need additional training?
- ❑ Describe supervision you receive.
- ❑ What are the work pressures/stressors and how are they relieved?
- ❑ How are staff turnovers/vacancies managed?

### Foster Parents

- ❑ What is working well in this county?
- ❑ What areas need improvement in this county?
- ❑ Describe the communication with the agency and child welfare partners?
- ❑ How are the working relationships with child welfare agency staff and everyone involved with the children, youth and families? How is the collaboration among the various partners? Are teams of professionals built and working together to help support families?
- ❑ Describe the training that you had to prepare you to be a foster parent and training requirements after you are licensed.
- ❑ How often do you see the worker assigned to the child/youth in your care?
- ❑ What does the worker do when they visit?
- ❑ Can you reach the workers promptly?

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- ❑ Describe the contact that the children/youth in your care have with parents/siblings/relatives.
- ❑ Do you have contact with the parents of the children/youth in your care? What are the expectations for working with birth parents?
- ❑ Are you involved in the planning for the child/youth in your care? How?
- ❑ What is your role with the school system in this county?
- ❑ When the children/youth in your home have a crisis how does the agency handle it?
- ❑ Are there services that children/youth need that are not available?
- ❑ If a child/youth needs a unique service how is it obtained?
- ❑ Describe the support that you get to assist you in caring for foster children/youth.
- ❑ What is the compensation for foster care in this county? Are payments timely?
- ❑ If you could change one thing about the agency/county what would it be?
- ❑ What are the pressures/stressors and how those are relieved?
- ❑ Other topics that emerge from the discussions may be explored, depending on time available.

### Older Youth

During the introduction of the session let them know that they are the TEACHERS. The general purpose of the focus group is to learn how the agency can provide services, which are more supportive effective and create better outcomes for them.

- ❑ What was your age of at the time of your first placement experience? Did you stay in that same home or move? How many times?
- ❑ What's working well in your life right now?
- ❑ What's good about this home? What needs to change?
- ❑ Are you involved in the planning for your future? How? Do you participate in the development of your case plan?
- ❑ What do you think works best in the child welfare system that we would want to continue?
- ❑ Can you tell us one or two improvements that could be done soon to make things better for you and others?
- ❑ Are/Were you placed near any siblings and/or your parents?
- ❑ What kind of contact do you have with your parents? Siblings?
- ❑ What were some of the things you experienced you would never want another child to go through?
- ❑ Do you feel you are being adequately prepared for adulthood?
- ❑ What do you want to accomplish? Or where do you see yourself at age 22?
- ❑ How do you think the community sees the child welfare system?

## QSR Focus Group Questions

### Birth Parents/Kinship Families

During the introduction of the session let them know that they are the TEACHERS. The general purpose of the focus group is to learn how the agency can provide services, which are more supportive effective and create better outcomes for them.

- ❑ Describe your relationship with your children. How often do you see them? What have been the positives and/or obstacles that you face since being involved in the child welfare system?
- ❑ Describe your relationship with your caseworker. How much contact do you have with him/her? What has your caseworker told you about your case? What do you expect from your caseworker? Don you know what your caseworker expects from you?
- ❑ What areas have you needed help from your caseworker? How has your caseworker assisted you? How did you communicate your needs? What needs do you still need help with, if applicable?
- ❑ Describe your understanding of your legal rights as a parent.
- ❑ How much contact do you have with your attorney? Describe the contact.
- ❑ What do you want for your child? Your family? What will it take to make that happen?
- ❑ Are you involved in the planning for your family? How? Do you participate in the development of your case plan?
- ❑ What do you think works best in the foster care system that we would want to continue?
- ❑ Can you tell us one or two improvements that could be done soon to make things better for your family and others?
- ❑ Is your child placed near you and siblings?
- ❑ Are the needed services for your family available?
- ❑ How often do you see the worker assigned to your family?
- ❑ What does the worker do when they visit?
- ❑ Can you reach the workers when you need to?