## Sample Questions For A Client Experience Focus Group

It’s always helpful to get input from the clients themselves about their experiences receiving mental health and medical care. The following is a sample of questions, developed by Barbara Demming Lurie that can be asked in focus groups to elicit their feedback**.**

***Script:*** “*We are trying to find ways to improve the clients’ experience when they receive care from mental health and medical providers. We hope to use what you tell us today to help these providers improve their services and ways they relate to you.*

*I’m going to first ask you questions about your physical health provider and then I’ll ask you the same questions about your mental health provider. Your input and ideas are important to us and we appreciate you’re taking to discuss this area.*

*First, let’s talk about the medical health care you’ve been getting. Later, we’ll talk about mental health care”.*

***OVERALL***

* In general, what have you liked about the medical care you’ve been receiving?
* In general, what have you disliked about the medical care you’ve been receiving?
* How could the care delivery be improved?
* If you haven’t gone to see a doctor when you’ve had a medical problem, why not?

***ACCESS:*** *Let’s talk first about access to the treatment you want.*

* How easy or hard was it to make an appointment to see someone about your health?
* How long did you have to wait before you got to see someone?
* Can you get the care you need when you need it?
* When you go to the clinic, how long do you usually wait to see someone?
* Are your calls returned quickly?
* Are the hours you can see your provider convenient for you?
* Is the clinic’s location convenient to you?
* Is there any way your access to treatment can be improved?

***EXPERIENCE AT THE CLINIC****: Now let’s talk about your experience when you go to receive health care.*

* Is the office staff courteous to you? Is there any way they could interact with you better?
* Were you treated well by your providers and others on his or her staff?
* Were your condition and your treatment explained to you in a way you could understand? If not, how could this be improved?
* If you were given medication, were you told all about it in a way you could understand?
* Do your providers tell you what you could do to improve your health? Do you get instructions for follow-up care?
* Are your doctor and the staff willing to listen carefully to you and answer all your questions?
* Does the staff take your preferences into account in deciding what your treatment will be?
* Do you receive a good explanation about what you need to do to manage your health? If not, how could it be improved?
* Do you encounter any language problems?
* Was the staff sensitive to accommodating your ethnic background?
* Do you feel that there is any prejudice against you or negative attitude about you at the clinic? If so, can you explain why you feel that way. What do you think can be done about it?
* Would you like to be given written material about your condition and how to handle it?
* Do your providers spend enough time with you?
* Do the clinicians respect your beliefs about your health?
* Are the clinicians helpful in having you achieve your goals?
* Are you kept informed about your treatment and progress?
* Do you receive all the services you need? If not, what other services would you like that weren’t provided?
* Do your providers explain everything you wanted to know? Are all your questions answered?
* Is your personal information kept private? Is there anything about your privacy that you’d like done differently?
* Do you find that you have to repeat your story or answer the same questions with different people on the treatment staff? If so, does that bother you? How could it be made better?
* Do you have any problems with the forms you have to fill out? Are they in a language you can understand?
* Think back if there was a time when you stopped going to see a particular clinician or clinic even though you still had a problem. Why did you stop going?
* What if anything can be done to improve your experience and your interaction with the staff?
* What if anything can be done to improve the services you receive?

***INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE***

* If your provider referred you to someone else, how was that done? How could the referral be improved, if at all?
* Do your mental health and medical providers keep in touch with each other about your care? Do they coordinate your care? If they do, do you think it’s helpful or not? For those who think it’s helpful, what could be done to improve the coordination between your health and mental health providers? For those who don’t think it’s helpful, why not?
* If you’re being treated by a team of people within the clinic, do you know everyone’s names and roles? Does the team coordinate your care well? If not, how could the coordination be improved?
* Does the clinic help you get the services you need in the community?

***WRAP UP***

* Is there anything we haven’t discussed that would improve your experience getting health care?
* If you were designing a client satisfaction questionnaire, what questions would you include? What are the most important things to you?

***MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES***

Use the same questions for mental health care, but change health to mental health where indicated.