

Management Interviews

I. Purpose

The interviews with senior management staff members provide another opportunity to collect in-depth information about an LHD's organizational strengths and areas for improvement related to addressing health inequities, this time from the perspective of those in leadership and decision-making positions.

Advantages: The interviews provide an opportunity to explore with management and leadership staff how the LHD's processes, structures, and culture influence its capacity to address the root causes of health inequities. As with the focus groups, this qualitative information adds depth, context and clarity to the Staff Survey findings and can be used to further explore issues raised in the survey.

Challenges and Limitations: Because the interviews will be conducted with a relatively small numbers of staff, some voices and perspectives may be missed. However, in combination with the Staff Survey and focus groups, this is of minimal concern. The large amount of qualitative data generated by the interviews is time-consuming to analyze and must be done by someone with experience and skill in synthesizing such content.

Questions in the interview protocol are intended to measure the following elements of the Matrix of Organizational Characteristics and Workforce Competencies for Addressing Health Inequities:

Use management interviews to:

- Collect information about organizational culture, institutional commitment, and decision-making processes directly from the perspective of organizational leaders.
- Explore issues identified by the staff survey and focus groups with senior managers and leaders of the LHD.
- Provide a dedicated time and space for management staff to reflect individually on the LHD's work to address the root causes of health inequities.

Organizational Characteristics	Workforce Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutional commitment• Hiring to address health inequities• Structure that supports true community partnerships• Transparent and inclusive communication• Institutional support for innovation• Community accessible data & planning• Streamlined administrative process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal attributes• Knowledge of public health framework (e.g. Ten Essential Services, public policy development, advocacy, data)• Community knowledge• Collaboration skills• Cultural competency & humility

II. Implementation

Staff Time and Resources

The table on the following page shows the estimated investment required for implementing the Management Interviews.

Management Interviews Implementation Task	Who	Estimated Staff Time
Reviewing focus group protocol and customizing to reflect survey findings and LHD priorities	Leadership and Implementation Team	5 hours
Selecting and Scheduling Staff	Facilitator, with assistance from Implementation Team member	1 hour to manage and randomize staff lists, 2 hours to schedule
Preparing for and Conducting Interviews	Facilitator	1 hour per interview, plus travel time if interviews are in-person
Participating in the Interview	Selected Management Staff	1 hour
Qualitative Data Analysis	Analyst/Consultant	10-12 hours

Additional Resources Needed:

- Private meeting room/office, possibly off-site (but nearby), in which to conduct the interviews. Interviews can also be conducted over the phone.
- *Optional:* Digital recorder to record interviews and funds for a professional transcription service.
- If not trading interview services with a colleague organization/neighboring LHD, funds will be needed to secure a consultant to conduct the interviews and analyze the data.

See below for additional discussion regarding third-party interviewing and analysis of interview data.

Implementation Plan

The checklist below provides recommended steps for conducting the Management Interviews:

☐ **Determine an Appropriate Facilitator**

As with the Staff Focus Groups, the individual chosen to implement this component of the Toolkit should have experience conducting interviews, and should have knowledge of public health practice, social determinants of health and health inequities. It is strongly recommended to have an individual external to the LHD conduct the interviews, either in person or by phone. If resources are not available to hire a consultant, one cost-saving solution is to partner with a neighboring LHD that would also like to engage in the Self-Assessment, and find an appropriate staff member in each LHD to interview staff from the partnering LHD.

Another option for minimizing costs is to hire a consultant to conduct the interviews and provide transcripts of the focus groups with identifying information and comments removed so that the analysis of these qualitative data can be performed by internal LHD staff with the capacity and skills to do so.

☐ **Review and Customize the Interview Protocol**

The Implementation Team or a subset should review the protocol to ensure that the language and questions are relevant to the LHD, and to prioritize questions based on Staff Survey findings, focus group themes and concerns, and other agency needs. The Roadmap in *Appendix III* can assist in customization.

☐ **Determine the Number of Interviews to be Conducted**

The number can vary with the size of your LHD and leadership team. Staff members with the administrative and budgetary authority to make changes in your LHD should all be considered. In general, it is not necessary to conduct more than 10-12 interviews; if this number represents an overwhelming proportion of your LHD's senior management staff, then fewer may be selected. If your leadership team is extremely small, on the other hand, the Implementation Team may choose to add additional staff with management responsibilities to the list of potential interviewees.

☐ **Designate a Coordinator/Liaison**

Select a member from the Implementation Team to serve as a coordinator and liaison to work with the interviewer.

This coordinator/liaison will be responsible for:

- Compiling a contact list of all senior management staff with names, email and phone contact information, job titles, and division, as applicable, from which the interviewer can randomly select interview participants.
- Assisting the interviewer with securing interview locations as needed.
- Providing the interviewer with the interview protocol and any background information about the LHD and the Self-Assessment that would be relevant to their role as interviewer.

☐ **Communicate with Staff about the Interviews**

Although management staff members are likely to be highly aware of the ongoing Self-Assessment, it may still be helpful for the public health official or lead executive to communicate that their participation in the interviews should be prioritized. This communication can also alert staff of the individual that will be contacting them to schedule the interviews.

☐ **Select the Interview Participants**

To maintain confidentiality and a safe space for interviewees to be candid, the interviewer should be the one to select the actual staff members that will participate in the interviews. One easy way to randomly select interviewees is to assign each person from the pre-screened list of potential participants a consecutive number, and then use an online random number generator, such as <http://www.randomizer.org> to randomly select the appropriate number of participants from the list provided.

☐ **Schedule and Conduct the Interviews**

The interviewer finds times that work for the selected participants, decides with the interviewee if a phone or in-person meeting would be best, and conducts the interviews as arranged. Staff should allow one hour for the interview. The interviewer should record the interviews with a digital recorder, if possible, or take notes as close to verbatim as possible during the interview.

☐ **Transcribe the Interviews**

A professional transcription service is the easiest way to obtain a full transcript of each interview. If costs are prohibitive, then the external partner who conducted the interviews should transcribe the responses from the taped interviews.

See Appendix VII for technical guidelines on managing and analyzing the interview data.

III. Key Considerations

Strategic Selection of Questions

The interview protocol included in *Appendix I* contains more questions than can be discussed within the suggested interview length of one hour. Before conducting the interviews at your LHD, it is important to prioritize the questions that will add the most value to your Self-Assessment given your own needs and context, and communicate clearly to the consultant or partner who will conduct the interviews about your goals for the interviews.