



PFS Covid Focus Group Project Information and Materials

Purpose

You have been invited to participate in a focus group sponsored by the Fairfield CARES Community Coalition in partnership with Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the UConn Health Department of Public Health Sciences. The purpose of this focus group is to understand how COVID-19 has impacted families and youth regarding mental health and substance use. The information gained through this focus group will be used to support local and state level planning of resources and services for youth and families.

Procedure

You will participate in a virtual group on the Zoom meeting platform with 6 – 12 other individuals. When you enter the virtual session, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey to collect information on your age/grade, gender identity, race/ethnicity and town of residence. You can also choose to answer a few short questions on how COVID-19 has impacted your life.

During the virtual focus group, a moderator will facilitate the discussion and a note-taker will be present. This virtual session will be recorded. Individual responses are confidential, and no names will be included in the final report. You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group, and you may stop at any time during the session. To be eligible for the gift card, you must complete a short survey at the end of the focus group.

There are no right or wrong answers to focus group questions. Fairfield CARES Community Coalition wants to hear the many varying viewpoints and would like for everyone to contribute their thoughts. Out of respect, please refrain from interrupting others. However,

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please be honest even if your experiences or opinions are different from of other group members.

Confidentiality

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content discussed during the session. Participants can choose to provide initials or a pseudonym on their screen to allow for increased confidentiality. Researchers from UConn Health Department of Public Health Sciences will analyze the data, but—as stated above—your responses will remain confidential, and no names will be included in any reports. Meetings will be recorded in the Zoom meeting platform to allow for transcripts to be created of the session. Names will not be connected to responses provided within the transcript. The Zoom meeting platform will be protected with encryption, and only participants with meeting access codes will be permitted to enter. The host will be able to expel a participant at any time for not following rules and expectations stated at the start of the group.

How do I participate?

Youth who agree to participate must have their parent or guardian provide written consent to Cathy Hazlett (chazlett@positivedirections.org), the Fairfield CARES Coalition Coordinator, allowing them to participate. A consent form can be found on the next page of this document. Please email the completed form to Cathy Hazlett prior to the youth focus group, she will then email the zoom link to each youth participant, but she will not be directly involved in conducting the focus groups.

Parents who plan to participate in a focus group should email Cathy Hazlett (chazlett@positivedirections.org), the Fairfield CARES Coalition Coordinator, to inform of their participation. Cathy will email the zoom link to each individual, but she will not be directly involved in conducting the focus groups.

Focus Group Ground Rules

1. The virtual session will be recorded.
2. Participants will not share information provided by another participant outside the focus group.
3. There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view.
4. One person will speak at a time.
5. Only first names, initials or pseudonyms will be used during the session, participant names will not be recorded in the notes, no identifying information will be collected.
6. Participants must let others speak and will listen respectfully as others share their views.
7. We want to hear from everyone who is comfortable sharing, if participants prefer to send the facilitator their response in the chat, they will be able to do so.
8. Participants may choose not to respond to a question at any time.
9. Participants may exit the focus group at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

10. No personal information will be shared by participants.
11. Participants who are not following ground rules will be dismissed from the meeting by the facilitator.

Process to Receive Gift Cards:

At the end of the focus groups, the following links will be posted in the chat. One link is for adult participants and the other is for youth. These surveys request first name, and email address (not a student email as outside e-mails to school e-mail addresses are often blocked). Gift cards will be sent to the e-mail address entered within 10 business days of the focus group by UConn Health staff.

Youth Consent Form:

I, (print name of parent/guardian) _____
have read the attached information regarding the Covid-19 & Substance Use Focus Group being coordinated by the Fairfield CARES Community Coalition in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the University of Connecticut's Health Department of Public Health Sciences, and give permission for my child to participate in the focus group.

The email address that Fairfield CARES should use to send the focus group zoom link to my child is (please print clearly) _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

(Please email the completed consent form to chazlett@positivedirections.org)

Thank you.