

Consumer-Operated Services Multi-Site Research Initiative

Site Visit Manual

Logicon/ /ROW Sciences, Inc.

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CONSUMER-OPERATED SERVICES MULTI-SITE RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Site Visit Rationale and Procedures

Rationale

A site visit is an opportunity to gain insight and a realistic understanding of a program's operation. The Round 2 site visits will focus on gathering data pertinent to completion of the FACIT. The purposes of the Round 2 site visit are to:

1. Collect information about how services are implemented and the context in which they operate.
2. Focus on gathering information regarding the Common Ingredients as demonstrated at the COSP and TMHS sites.

Some key issues that will interest the site visitors are:

1. Aspects of the programs that reflect and/or fulfill the Common Ingredients, for example, in terms of safety issues. What is done to ensure that participants feel safe?
2. Similarities and differences between the traditional service(s) and COSP.
3. Similarities and differences between the three COSP models.

Site Visitors

Each team of site visitors will include one researcher from Logicon/ROW Sciences and one person who represents the perspective of either consumers or a culturally diverse group. Each team will have:

1. Experience in conducting site visits.
2. Familiarity with the goals and objectives of traditional mental health programs.
3. Familiarity with the goals and objectives of COSPs.
3. Familiarity with the Common Ingredients.

Team members will receive training using the attached "Site Visit Guide." They will also read available materials to familiarize themselves with the COSP and traditional program(s) including:

1. The PI's original proposal.

2. The site-specific logic model.
3. A list of services offered by both the COSP and the traditional site(s).
4. Any additional materials (e.g., descriptive brochures, mission statement, curricula, leaders' manuals, bylaws, policies and procedures, rights and responsibilities, grievance procedures, etc.) sent by the site either during Round 1 preparation or Round 2 site visit preparation.

Site Visit Agenda

In general, the equivalent of 1 full day is needed for each organization/agency visited. However, the agenda for each site visit will vary according to the needs, characteristics, and schedules of the local organizations/agencies. Logicon/ROW Sciences must rely on a local designee of the PI to represent those needs and to identify and schedule the interviewees in advance of the visit. (A checklist for the local contact person begins on page 8.) Logicon/ROW Sciences and the contact person will maintain close communication during this preparatory phase to make certain that the schedule addresses the needs of both the site and the Coordinating Center.

The prototype site visit (see Sample Site Visit Agenda, page 4) will consist of separate interviews or focus groups with the following individuals and groups:

For the overall site.

- *PI and relevant research staff.* To discuss the progress of the initiative.
- *Consumer Advisory Panel.* To discuss the issues above, as well as the initiative's responsiveness to consumer input.
- *Exit interview with the PI.* At the PI's discretion, an exit interview can be held to report general observations and provide an opportunity for greater clarification.

For each COSP and traditional service visited. (Focus on how services are implemented, and similarities, differences, and interactions between COSPs and traditional services, and different COSP models. Explore any differences among interviewees' perceptions of program functioning and actual functioning.)

- *Director of organization/agency.* To discuss the organization and its services, the local service network, how the organization interacts with the network, especially the COSP or traditional service(s), and how the Common Ingredients are in evidence at the site(s). This should also include a tour, with the opportunity to observe program activities, as appropriate.

- *Supervisory staff interviews.* To discuss the organization and its services from the managerial perspective. To gain a better understanding of similarities, differences, and interactions between the COSP and traditional service(s) and how the Common Ingredients are in evidence at the site(s).
- *Line staff interviews.* To discuss the routine operations of the program from the direct service perspective. To gain a better understanding of similarities, differences, and interactions between the COSP and traditional service(s) and how the Common Ingredients are in evidence at the site(s).
- *Consumer focus group.* To discuss participants' experiences with and perceptions of the COSP and the traditional service(s) and how the Common Ingredients are in evidence at the site(s).

Interview Questions

The site visit will consist of a series of semistructured interview questions, some with individuals and others in groups. The tone of the interviews will be conversational. Because the site visit is exploratory in nature and each site unique, and because site visitors might want to explore among the groups differing perceptions raised during the course of a visit, the site visitors may skip some questions and pursue other topics in depth.

Site visitors will *not* ask to see program records.

Confidentiality

Although site visitors will record the first names of all staff members and all consumers interviewed, anonymity will be maintained in that responses will never be attributed or attributable to individuals without permission. Also, no one from the site or the research team will be allowed to sit in on interviews or focus groups.

Written Report

The site visitors will take notes during the visit and prepare a written report, which will be stored with the Coordinating Center and used as raw data in completing the FACIT.

Sample Site Visit Agenda¹ One COSP Site/One Traditional Site

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A.M. Travel to site	8:30 - 9:30 Supervisory staff interviews (COSP) 9:45 - 10:45 Line staff interviews (COSP)	8:30 - 9:30 Supervisory staff interviews (traditional) 9:45 - 10:45 Line staff interviews (traditional)
Noon 2:00 Lunch and meeting with PI and research Staff 2:00- 4:00 Interview with director of traditional site and tour	Noon- 2 :00 Lunch and Travel to traditional site 2:00- 3:30 Interview with director of traditional site and tour	Lunch Exit interview with PI with PI Travel Home
4: 15 – 5: 45 Consumer focus Group		
6:15 - 7:30 Consumer Advisory Panel	3:45- 5: 15 Consumer focus Group (TMHS)	

¹ The agenda will be modified to accommodate each site.

Preparing for the Site Visit

The Coordinating Center must rely on local sites to plan the agenda, to identify and schedule the interviewees, and to advise the site visitors on hotels and other travel logistics. The following guidelines and checklist are intended to simplify those tasks.

Planning the Agenda

Using the Sample Agenda on page 4 and the Blank Agenda in Appendix C, plan an agenda that accommodates the needs and schedules of the programs and interviewees. Maintain contact with either Priscilla (she will do same) to ensure that the needs of the Coordinating Center are also met. Please consider the following:

Interviewees

To the extent possible, for each site visit we would like to hold separate interviews/focus groups with the following individuals or groups of individuals:

- For each overall site:
 - PI and relevant research staff (an exit interview can also be held, at the discretion of the PI).
 - Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP).

- For each COSP and traditional service to be visited:
 - Director of the service (includes a tour, as appropriate).
 - Consumer focus group.
 - Supervisory staff interviews.
 - Line staff interviews.

Recruiting Consumers

Please try to minimize selection bias in recruiting consumers. To the extent possible, participants should be typical of individuals who attend the program. Consumers from the traditional sites should not have attended the COSP.

We would like to have 8–10 participants in each group. If you recruit in advance of the date, to achieve that number we suggest overrecruiting 12–14 participants.

Please note that we are not funded to pay CAP members, staff members, or any other interviewees for their time. Payment is provided only to focus group participants.

Discussing the Site Visit with Interviewees

Please feel free to share with interviewees any information in this document, *except for the actual interview questions*. We want interviewees to respond spontaneously and to avoid “hallway discussions” in advance that may make all their responses artificially congruent. (We realize that the PI, CAP members, and others may have reviewed earlier drafts of the interview questions.)

Please assure interviewees that anonymity will be maintained, in that responses will never be attributed or attributable to individuals without permission. Please make certain that program directors and consumers alike understand that no one will be allowed to observe the interviews or focus groups. (The site visitors will echo these statements before they begin interviews.)

Timing

Feel free to alter the order of interviews to meet the needs of the site and participants.

Allow sufficient time for transportation between sites.

Allow about 15 minutes between interviews for room changes, restroom breaks, and “downtime” for the site visitors.

Allow 1 hour for most interviews or focus groups:

- Add an extra half hour or a full hour if the discussion is held during a meal.
- Add an extra half hour if the discussion includes a tour. More time may be required if the site visitors are to observe program activities.
- Allow 1½ hours for the interview with the PI and research staff.

Checklist for Setting up Site Visits

The following checklist will help you make local arrangements for the site visitors. If you have any questions, please contact Priscilla Sherman (301-294-5585; ksherman@hq.row.com) at R.O.W. Sciences.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Contact all programs to be visited to determine a convenient week. (The exact dates can be selected later.) Confirm the availability of site visitors with Priscilla Sherman	3 months before the site visit
Determine whether IRB approval or exemption is needed for the consumer focus groups. Take appropriate action. (See Appendices A and B for a brief written description of the focus group process and a sample informed consent form.)	Variable
Identify an individual to arrange the logistics and to be the contact for R.O.W. Sciences.	2–3 months before the visit
Send Priscilla the mission statements, policies and procedures, and bylaws (if applicable) for both the COSP and traditional site(s). (In some cases, these materials may be too bulky to consider sending. If this is the case, you can just send policies regarding the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety (e.g., weapons, managing crises, involuntary commitment); requirements for people to participate, join, or receive services (e.g., time limitations, fees);• ADA issues (e.g., accommodations for physical disabilities);• Cultural competency issues (e.g., translator services, accommodating a request for a staff member/peer of a particular cultural, ethnic, or racial background)• Equal Opportunity• Grievance procedures)	6–8 weeks before the visit

Task

Timeline

Please send any additional written materials that will help the site visitors understand the programs. This might include descriptive brochures, annual reports, curricula, leaders' manuals, rights and responsibilities, and so forth. (R.O.W. Sciences will already have copies of your proposal, logic model, most recent quarterly report, and a list of services offered by both the COSP and the traditional site[s].)

6–8 weeks before the visit

Discuss the site visits and the resources you need with the director of each organization to be visited. If you have not already done so, give him/her a copy of the Site Visit Rationale and Procedures and the Sample Site Visit Agenda (pages 1–4 of this guide).

7 weeks before the visit

Provide information to help the site visitors with their travel arrangements.

6–8 weeks before the visit

- Provide the name of the most convenient airport.
- Recommend the optimal means of transportation during the site visit (rental car, subway, etc.). Provide the phone number for rental agencies, as appropriate. (Depending on who your site visitors are, we may need you to locate a van with a 46-inch-wide lift to accommodate a motorized scooter.)
- Identify and give the phone number for one or two convenient, low-cost (i.e., within Government rates) hotels that are accessible to people with disabilities. Check with Priscilla for the Government rate in your area. Recommend the most convenient ground transportation to the hotel.

Task

Use the Sample Agenda on page 4, the Blank Agenda in Appendix C, and the Guidelines on pages 5–7 to begin planning an agenda that accommodates the needs and schedules of the programs and interviewees. Discuss any questions, issues, or concerns with Priscilla including your thoughts about recruiting consumers. Priscilla will also maintain contact with you to offer Her assistance and to ensure that the needs of the Coordinating Center are also met.

- Determine the number of days that are required for your site visit. Select the dates within the designated week and confirm them with Priscilla.
- Reserve private rooms for the interviews and focus groups. The focus group room should be informal, if possible, and should be able to comfortably accommodate participants and site visitors, plus a table to hold refreshments or pizza.
- Schedule interview time with the PI and relevant research staff.
- Schedule interview time with the CAP.
- Reserve time for the exit interview with the PI, if s/he desires.

COSP

- Schedule interview time and a tour with the COSP director.
- Schedule group interview time with 4–6 supervisory staff.
- Schedule group interview time with 4–6 line staff.
- Recruit and schedule focus group time for 8–10 consumers. (If you recruit in advance, we suggest overrecruiting 12–14 participants.)

TRADITIONAL SITE A

- Schedule interview time and a tour with the director of the traditional site.
- Schedule interview time with 4–6 supervisory staff.
- Schedule interview time with 4–6 line staff.

Timeline

Begin 6 or more weeks before the visit; finish 2 weeks before the visit.

6 weeks before the visit

4–6 weeks before the visit

4–6 weeks before the visit

- Recruit and schedule focus group time for 8–10 consumers. (If you recruit in advance, we suggest overrecruiting 12–14 participants.)

-

TRADITIONAL SITE B

4–6 weeks before the visit

- Schedule interview time and a tour with the director of the traditional site.
- Schedule interview time with 4–6 supervisory staff.
- Schedule interview time with 4–6 line staff.
- Recruit and schedule focus group time for 8–10 consumers. (If you recruit in advance, we suggest overrecruiting 12–14 participants.)

- Discuss with Priscilla to the appropriate amount of money that R.O.W. Sciences should pay consumers for their time.

6 weeks before the visit

- Complete the Service Matrix in Appendix D. If your service area includes more agencies within a category than the matrix allows (e.g., if your service area is the entire state), please list the *primary* agency under that category, *from the perspective of each traditional program director that the site visit team will be interviewing*. You may need to complete a separate matrix for each traditional program director interviewed. (Call Priscilla with questions.)

5 weeks before the visit

- Arrange for refreshments or order pizza for the consumer focus groups/interviews at both the COSP and traditional site(s). (The site visitors will reimburse you.)

1 week before the visit

- Confirm attendance with the interviewees.

1 week before the visit

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF THE FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

The COSP Coordinating Center (Missouri Institute of Mental Health and R.O.W. Sciences) will conduct a focus group with 8 to 10 mental health consumers at both the COSP and the traditional mental health service site(s). The focus groups will be composed of volunteers recruited from current participants in the program; there is no requirement that they be enrolled in the COSP study.

The focus group will last 1½ hours, including time for refreshments. One site visitor will facilitate the group's discussion using a series of semi-structured questions, while the other will record notes. The questions will elicit members' perceptions about their participation in consumer-operated and traditional mental health programs, and the kinds of services they receive. Although participants will be asked to introduce themselves by first name, no additional identifying information will be collected and recorded comments will not be identified by their source.

BENEFITS

Participants will receive (\$ *amount*) to compensate them for their time, as well as refreshments (or pizza).

The results of the focus groups will be shared with participants, the PI and Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP) at each site, as well as the director of the program itself. The information may also be incorporated into an article to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal that discusses the process of developing measures for an implementation/fidelity study.

POTENTIAL FOR HARM

The only potential for harm in the conduct of focus groups would come from a person divulging information about his/her mental health treatment to other participants. Because all participants would already be participating in mental health services, which by definition serve self-identified consumers of mental health services, little or no harm would result from this kind of revelation.

APPENDIX B
Program Name
Address

Consumer Discussion Group Consent Form

I understand that the purpose of the discussion group I participate in is to find out about mental health consumers' experiences in and opinions of traditional and consumer-operated mental health services.

I also understand that the discussion group is part of the Consumer-Operated Services Coordinating Center (COSP) study, which is evaluating the effectiveness of traditional mental health services compared to traditional plus consumer-operated services. I have been informed that the discussion group will last between 1 hour and 1½ hours and that discussion questions will be posed to the group as a whole, not to individuals.

I understand that I can participate in the discussion as much or as little as I like, including not participating at all. I also understand that if at any time during the group I feel uncomfortable, I can leave the room.

I understand that, except for my first name, the discussion leaders will not have any identifying information about me. All comments made by group members will be held strictly confidential and will not be identifiable by name.

I understand that I will receive refreshments and be paid (**amount**) for participating in the discussion group.

I understand that I may decline to participate in this discussion group and it will not at all affect my continued use of any kind of mental health services. If I do decide to participate, then I also understand that no matter what I say, or how much I say, it will not affect my continued use of mental health services.

I understand that this permission is valid only for **DATE**.

I agree to participate in the discussion group under the above conditions.

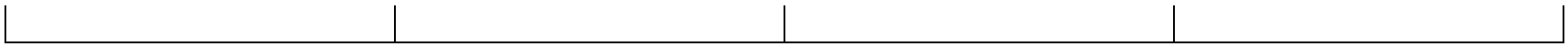
Date: ____/____/____

Consumer Signature:

Date: ____/____/____ Discussion Leader:

APPENDIX C
Blank Site Visit Agenda

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4



APPENDIX D
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES NETWORK

Major Local Service Agencies/Organizations	Name of Agency/Organization
Public Health Department	
Hospital	
Hospital 1 (Public)	
Hospital 2 (Private)	
Hospital 3	
Psychiatric Hospital	
Substance Abuse Agency	
Substance Abuse Agency 1	
Substance Abuse Agency 2	
Substance Abuse Agency 3	
Mental Health	
Outpatient Services	
Clubhouse or Rehabilitation Programs	
Assertive Community Treatment Programs	
Housing/Supported Housing	
Respite Care	
Department of Social Services	
Social Security	
Vocational/Prevocational Program	
Housing Authority	

COSP programs, other than the one in the study	
Homeless Shelters	
Other (specify)	
Other (specify)	
Other (specify)	