APPENDIX 'A' - MEETING PLANNING

Planning Virtual Meetings

- The most common platforms are Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, though people seem to be most familiar with Zoom. If your organization does not have a virtual meeting platform, please advise and BSO should be able to provide access to the BSO Zoom account.

- An effective virtual focus group is from 6 - 15 participants, not counting the moderator and tech support. To achieve that number, it is best to invite or allow registration for 15 to 20. You may wish to have no limits to the number who register and if more than 20 register, be prepared to use breakout rooms and engage another moderator to have two or more focus groups happening at the same time.

- For each focus group, provide a moderator (see Appendix ‘C’ for more ınformation on moderator skills and requirements) and tech support. Tech support will address the inevitable problems of people not being able to sign on, see the video, hear the audio and will also monitor the chat for questions, leaving the moderator free to engage on the questions.

- Zoom Tech checklist

- Please record each focus group and deliver to BSO a transcript with each speaker identified. If you have a Zoom Pro account you can enable audio transcription and receive a transcript with your recording. There are a number of services that import audio or video recordings and create computer-generated transcripts but Otter.ai is one of the best and provides a lot of services for a free account. Otter also has advanced security and privacy provisions built into its service which maintains the data standards we adhere to. If you choose to use another service please consider its privacy and security measures as well as ease of use.

- We ask that you insert the names of the speakers from within Zoom Pro or Otter (it memorizes them and speeds the process up by suggesting speaker names) so that we can cross-reference names and identities and determine if there are patterns such as solutions specific to Black women or Black 2SLGBTQIA+. To make this process easier, ask participants to share their first name before speaking.

- Focus groups should be between 60 and 90 minutes. The meeting should go no longer than 90 minutes as after that everyone is generally too tired to be articulate.

- If you are new to running Zoom meetings, please advise and we can provide a ‘how to’ session.

In-Person

- If conducting the consultation in person the focus group could be one table of 6 to 15 people, or several tables of 6 to 15 people each, provided that the number of people in the room can be spaced out so that conversations can still be heard easily by the moderator and note takers.

- Town Hall type formats are not conducive to in depth conversation and engagement between participants.

- The room itself should be isolated from other activities in the building, have a door and be protected from distractions such as other people walking through.

- Round tables or chairs set in circles support conversation between participants more than theatre or classroom style seating with chairs in rows.

- As with virtual consultations, the ideal size of each group is 6 to 15 participants, not counting the moderator and note taker. To achieve that number, it is best to invite or allow registration for 15 to 20. You may wish to have no limits to the number who register and if more than 20 register, be prepared to set up more tables and engage more moderators and note takers to have two or more focus groups happening at the same time.

For each focus group engage a moderator (see Appendix 'C' for more information on moderator skills and requirements) and a note taker. Alternatively, the focus group could be recorded and the audio uploaded to Otter.ai (see above), if the recording is good quality. We ask that you insert the names of the speakers from within Otter (it memorizes them and speeds the process up by suggesting speaker names) or in the summaries so that we can cross-reference names and identities and determine if there are patterns such as solutions specific to Black women or Black 2SLGBTQIA+. To make this process easier, ask participants to share their first name before speaking or have name cards on the table.

- Focus groups should be between 60 and 90 minutes. The meeting should go no longer than 90 minutes as after that everyone is generally too tired to be articulate. You may wish to plan for a 'cool down' activity after the focus group and before people leave to lighten the mood.

- Participants may expect small snacks or beverages or babysitting services. You may choose to provide those amenities but BSO will not reimburse expenses.

Hybrid

The Hybrid model is one where the focus group is in person but with some people able to access the focus group from a video platform. While a hybrid meeting allows for greater reach and addresses health concerns, hybrid meetings can be challenging. We advise against them for focus group research as it is often too hard for those on the video platform to hear the conversation in person and it is too easy for moderators to forget about the participants on the video platform. However, if your organization has successfully conducted hybrid meetings then it is an option and all the above considerations apply.

Accessibility

- Please allow at least two weeks in advance to book services. Be informed of cancellation policies, especially if funds are limited. Registration should identify accessibility needs to allow sufficient time to cancel services that are no longer needed.

- Some accessibility considerations should be provided regardless, as they are of value to wider audiences and have no costs associated, such as:

- Avoiding cross-talk (where two people are speaking at the same time), as well as speaking slowly, especially for words that require sign language interpreters to spell out. Aside from supporting captioning, interpreting, and sensory processing, these help with the transcription process afterwards.

- Prioritizing friendly and clear language, instead of using jargon or overly complicated words, can help those who are neurodivergent or have English as a second language.

- Built-in automated captions (also known as live transcriptions) on video platforms can help those who are neurodivergent and/or have English as a second language.

- Visual descriptions of speakers and key visual elements can help those who are blind or low vision, and/or neurodivergent. It is also helpful for speakers to mention their names before sharing.

- Providing questions in advance can help those who are Deaf/hard of hearing, neurodivergent and/or those with English as a second language.

- Alternative formats of materials, offered by request, can help those who are blind or low vision and use screen readers. For example, a Word document formatted with accurate headings allows for quicker navigation of the content.

- When engaging ASL and Closed Captioning services, it is important to provide relevant materials and commonly used words to ensure the quality of the interpretation. BSO and other organizations have worked with some services who have, as a result, gained a level of experience with this industry.

- Other information to include (drafts are often sufficient):
  - List of participants who use ASL as their primary language (if applicable)
  - Names of the moderator and other relevant team members at the meeting
  - Agenda or outline
  - Scripts/Speaker notes
  - Questions
  - Relevant documents or media
  - Other information to include (drafts are often sufficient):
  - List of participants who use ASL as their primary language (if app

- Physical Accessibility is a consideration for in-person meetings, especially for older participants as well as those with mobility devices. Prioritize venues with step-free entrances and accessible washrooms. Provide clear signage for easier navigation.

- BSO can assist with accessibility planning and implementation and has some limited funds to assist with the engagement of ASL and Closed Captioning.