**WCSS Survey Orientation**

**for Improving Safety in Women’s Facilities**

**Talking Points**

**This is a SAMPLE ONLY. Closely review and revise to suit your circumstances before use.** For example, you may choose to refer to a “survey team” instead of a research team. Likewise, you may omit references to informed consent documents if your legal counsel determines that human subjects protection laws/regulations do not apply to your project (although many researchers choose to abide by them even when not required.) Again, this is a sample only – do not use without appropriate review and modification.

**BOLD indicates instructions.** Regular text is statement to respondents.

**When women come into room, welcome them and explain that you would like them to sit at individual tables for “their comfort and their privacy.”**

**Once group is settled, introduce team quickly and thank the women for coming to the survey orientation and acknowledge that you know they have been called away from their regular day.**

**Team intro should include some statement about past research but be very short!**

**Describe purpose of survey:**

We are here to ask for your help in researching conditions here related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act, or PREA. How many of you have heard of PREA? Have you had a class or seen a pamphlet?

We are here to conduct a PREA survey. PREA stands for the Prison Rape Elimination Act. It is a federal law intended to prevent sexual assault and rape in correctional systems. PREA applies to all federal, state, and local prisons, jails, lock-ups, private facilities, and community settings. We are here to ask for your opinion about sexual safety and other forms of safety and conditions in your housing unit. We will be surveying everyone in this unit, and several other units.

PREA does not include any direct reference to women and we are conducting the study to make sure women’s experience is included in the law and eventually the policies in this agency.

We have found that when women are not specifically included in programs and policies, women are disadvantaged and we want to collect data to make sure programs and policies fit women’s experience. We feel that it is important to document the experience of women and to try to make their voices heard in regard to this Law.

We want to use this information to make sure the Law is applied fairly to women.

This survey asks how safe you feel in your housing unit and facility. By helping us with this survey will help us learn about the problems and dangers women inmates face in this facility. The information you give will help reduce these problems and dangers, and hopefully, make the facility safer. We need your help in understanding and documenting the problems you have here.

The survey includes questions about inmates and staff. We never ask about anything you personally have done or that has been done to you. Instead, we want to know about the conditions in the housing unit you now live in. Again, all questions ask about this housing unit.

Everything you write on the survey is anonymous (as long as you don’t put your name or number on the survey). The questions in this survey ask about your opinions or views. We do not ask you to identify anyone (inmate or staff) who may be involved. You will never be identified or associated with anything you write on the survey. No one except the research team will look at the surveys. Your answers will be combined with other answers from everyone in this unit. Our reports will only talk about the combined information, not individual answers.

We cannot promise that things will improve here but we are here to document your experience in the prison. We hope this information will be used to make this facility safer for you and for women who come after you.

You have three documents in front of you: An information sheet and informed consent statement, a list of definitions and the survey itself. Please look at the informed consent document in front of you.

**Review the headings quickly and note the availability of help if any of the questions trouble them in any way.**

**Then state:**

We hope you are willing to help us by filling out the survey because it is important to get the opinion of everyone in this unit. However, there is absolutely no penalty if you choose not to take the survey, or if you withdraw from the survey. If you are willing to help us by contributing to this important project that documents the experience of women in facilities like this one, please READ and sign the informed consent statement. Please let us know if you need help reading the informed consent statement. Again, your name will never be attached to the survey itself. These sheets will be kept separate from the surveys and never associated with you in any way.

Please take a copy of the information sheet.

Are there any questions?

**Then review the procedures of the survey:**

* Pencils are on the tables. Please let us know if you need a sharper pencil or need an eraser.
* If you want some help in reading the survey, let us know

**Go over the survey and definition sheet quickly.**

**Review the definitions briefly. Point out the meanings of:**

* **Sexual Harassment (inmate & staff)**
* **Sexual Violence (inmate & staff)**
* **Physical Violence (inmate & staff)**
* **Staff Sexual Misconduct (staff only)**

**Point out the kind of questions in each section and point out the response categories for each section and how they would fill it out.**

**Stress that each question they intend to answer needs to be filled out as close to their opinion as possible. Say:**

“Everything you say is important to us so we want to be sure each question you intend to answer is answered. Everyone’s opinion is important to us.”

**Remind them not to put names or any other identifying comments on the survey.**

**When reviewing the final sections of the survey with the inmates, reassure them that no one outside the research team will see their responses and that their names will never be associated with their responses on the survey.  This reassurance should be delivered as participants are nearing completion of the survey, to help reduce the anxiety caused by questions 3.61 and 3.62.**

**State that the research team will be walking around the room to be available for help.**

**The research team should look out for participants who are having difficulty with understanding the survey or comprehending the defined terms.**

**Before they hand it back, ask them to review their answers to make sure they didn’t skip any items they intended to answer.**

**Tell them to raise their hand when they are done and one of the team will collect it and flip through it quickly to make sure that we can count their opinion.**

**Ask if there are any questions. Say:** “If I did not do a good job of explaining this, let me know” **and thank the group again.**