



Central East (HHS Region 3)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Southeast (HHS Region 4)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Mastering Qualitative Research Skills: Facilitating Focus Groups

Session 1: March 11th, 2024

PRESENTER:

Sandra Del Sesto, M.Ed, ACPS

Thank you for joining us today.
We will begin promptly at **12 PM** Eastern.

While waiting for us to get started, please share in the chat if there are any T/TA topics you are interested in hearing more about from us in the future.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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Technical Information

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

This training was developed under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Prevention Technology Transfer Center task order. Reference # 1H79SP081018.

For training use only.

Funding for this presentation was made possible by SAMHSA grant no. 1H79SP081018. The views expressed by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of HHS; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

LIVE

This webinar is now live.



It is being recorded.



Please remain muted.



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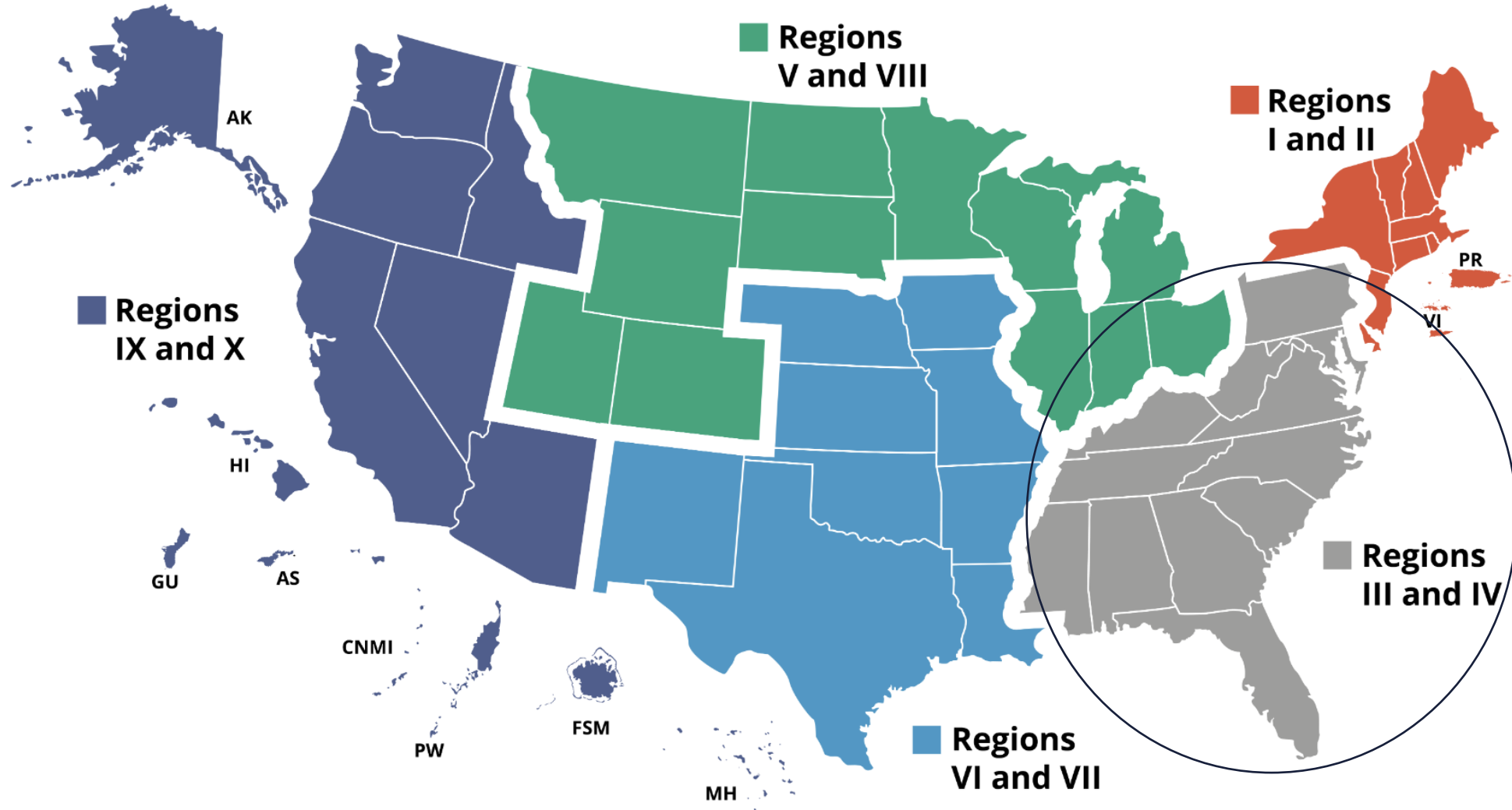
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What is SPTAC?

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Technical Assistance Center (SPTAC) is a national training and technical assistance system committed to helping SAMHSA prevention grantees move their prevention programs forward.



How We Are Organized



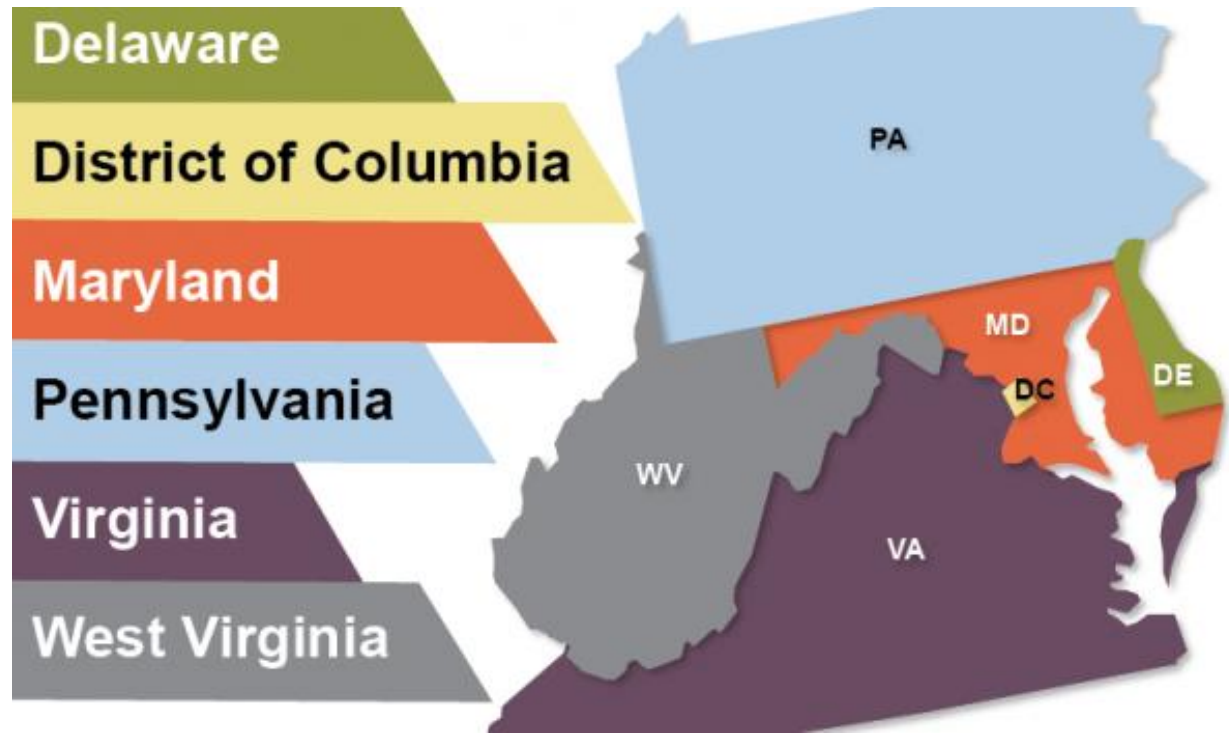
Who We Serve

States, tribal entities, territories and communities supported under SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program and Grants to Support Community-based Prevention Programs, as follows:

- Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery (SUPTR) Block Grant
- State Strategic Prevention Framework–Partnership for Success (SPF-PFS)
- Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Grant Program (STOP ACT)
- Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF Rx)
- Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention Navigator Program (formerly MAI)
- Prevent Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose-Related Deaths (PDO)
- State First Responders–Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA)
- Improving Access to Overdose Treatment (OD Tx)

Central East Region

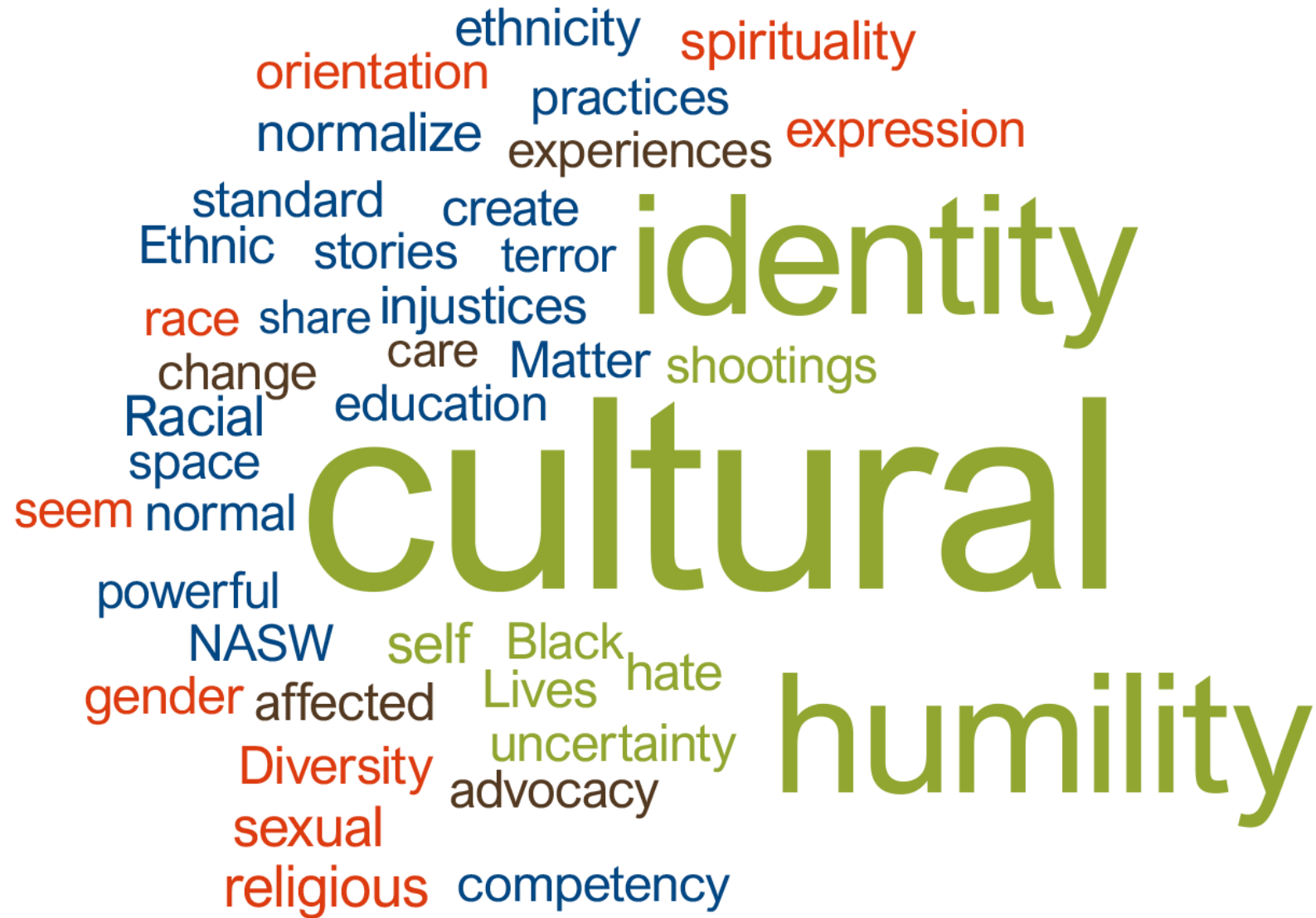
HHS REGION 3



Southeast Region

HHS REGION 4





The use of affirming language inspires hope.

LANGUAGE MATTERS.

Words have power.

PEOPLE FIRST.

The PTTC Network uses affirming language to promote the application of evidence-based and culturally informed practices.



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Mastering Qualitative Research Skills: Facilitating Focus Groups Session 1

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Presenter



Sandra Del Sesto

Learning Objectives

- Describe the purpose, key elements, and benefits of qualitative data
- Describe focus groups interviews and how to conduct them effectively
- Provide examples of good practice in focus groups

What Is Qualitative Data?

- Qualitative data is:
 - Information that cannot be counted, measured or easily expressed using numbers
 - Collected using **focus groups**, questionnaires, **interviews**, observation
 - Interpretation-based and descriptive
 - Helpful in making us understand **why, how, or what happened** behind certain behaviors versus how much, how many, or how often
 - Delivered in **narrative** form

Why Collect Qualitative Data

- Provides qualitative, descriptive information for decision-making.
- Can explain the motivation, behavior, and perspectives of the focus community.
- Identify examples of successes and shortcomings of existing activities or programs.
- Surface recommendations for future directions.
- Provides information to support interpretation of quantitative data collected through other methods.
- Identify potential community influencers and partners

Ethical Issues That Apply When Conducting Focus Groups

- Respect for persons and their ability to make decisions → informed consent
- Beneficence → maximizing benefits and minimizing any risks in participating
- Justice → equity in selection of participants

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects (1974)

Key Ethical Questions When Collecting Any Qualitative Data

- What is the **purpose** of the project?
- What **methods** will be used to gather data? Are they the right methods for the question(s) you are trying to answer?
- What **sample size** is needed to make good inferences from the data?
- What **population group** is the focus the project? Consider the principle of justice: Why are you collecting/using data from this group?
- What are the **potential risks and burdens** of the project to participants? Do the benefits outweigh any risks to them?

What Is a Focus Group?

- A systematic way to collect qualitative or descriptive data through small group discussion



Benefits of Focus Groups

Focus groups allow prevention practitioners to:

- Ask questions that might be hard for people to answer in writing.
- Clarify participants' responses through follow-up questions.
- Create a rich dialogue as participants build on one another's comments.
- Generate narrative information that is compelling and easy to understand.

Key Elements of a Focus Group

- Timeframe: 60-90 minutes
- Small group: 6-12 participants
- Shared group characteristics
- Representative of a cross-section of the sub-population in the focus community
- Consent
- Trained facilitator
- Predetermined questions on a specific topic
- Documentation

To Start, Clarify Your Purpose

1. Define your broad area of interest
2. Describe your specific area of interest in that area
3. Create the primary question you want to be addressed

Create a Research Question

- **The Issue:** Adult cannabis use has been legalized in your state. Surveys indicate that youth have misinformation about its effects. In order to develop an effective prevention intervention to address this, you need to know which sources of information the youth in your community trust the most.
- **The Research Question:** To what extent do local high school students trust their different sources of information about cannabis?

Then, Create a Set of Focus Group Questions

- Good questions are:
 - Open-ended
 - Short and clear
 - Neutral
 - Consistent across similar focus groups

Types of Questions

- A. Warm-up Questions:**
*introductions,
group guidelines, purpose,
logistics, incentives*
- B. Key Questions:** *feelings,
beliefs, opinions, values,
experiences, behaviors, and
knowledge*
- C. Wrap-up Questions:**
*summary/clarification
of what was said, final
thoughts, closure*



Include Probing Questions

- Explore key questions in greater depth.
- Clarify the meaning of responses to key questions.
- Elicit responses to key questions from quieter participants.
- Summarize what you hear and check for accuracy.



Your Planning Team

- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Project staff
- Evaluator
- Focus population
- Service providers



Record or Take Notes



Remove Barriers to Attendance

- Setting
- Time
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Space
- Virtual or in-person



BREAKING BARRIERS

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Choose Your Focus Group Audience

- Identify who can assist you in recruiting focus group members.
- Ensure a cross-section of the population.
- Select the best time and place.
- Provide incentives if possible.
- Create a consent form: A short description of the purpose of the focus group, how the information will be used, and a confidentiality agreement for potential members/guardians to sign.

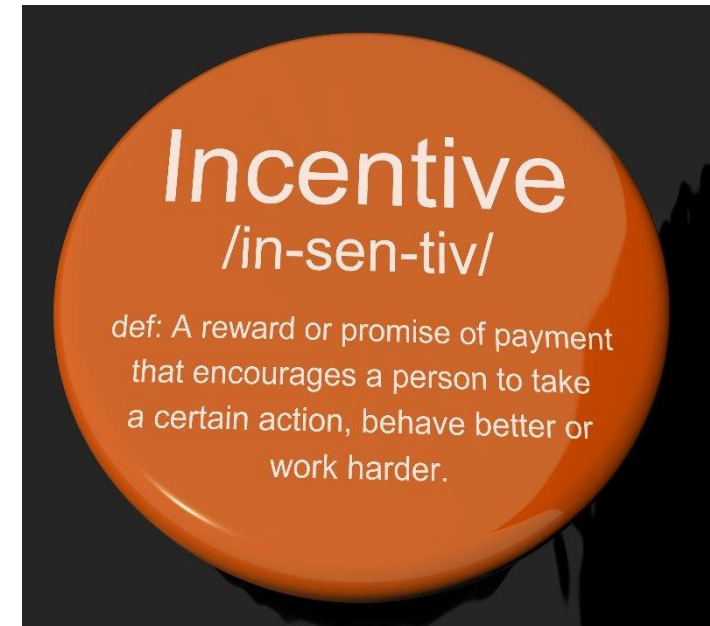
Consider in Your Recruiting...

- Recruit more people than you need.
- Monitor your refusal rates.
- Assemble your group carefully.
- Leave no sub-groups out.



Provide Incentives

- Stipends
- Gifts
- Gift cards
- Food/drink
- Community service credit
- Charitable contribution in their names
- Link to a fun and existing event
- A combination



Sample Focus Group Guidelines

- There are not right or wrong answers.
- Take turns speaking.
- Listen and respond to one another
- Avoid side conversations.
- Be respectful of others' opinions and experiences.
- Ask as many questions as you need.
- Honor the groups' confidentiality.

Frequently Asked Questions: Prepare Your Responses

- How did you get my name?
- What is the purpose of this focus group?
- How do I know what is said is confidential?
- Will you use my name?
- How will you use my answers?
- Will I be paid for my participation?
- What will happen if I don't participate?

When Your Focus Groups Are Done...

1. Analyze your data.
2. Confirm your findings.
3. Compare and connect.
4. Prepare a succinct narrative.
5. Take action!

Contents of Your Report

- Goals/objectives of the focus groups
- Participants and eligibility criteria
- Focus group procedures
- Data analysis procedures
- Findings/Conclusions

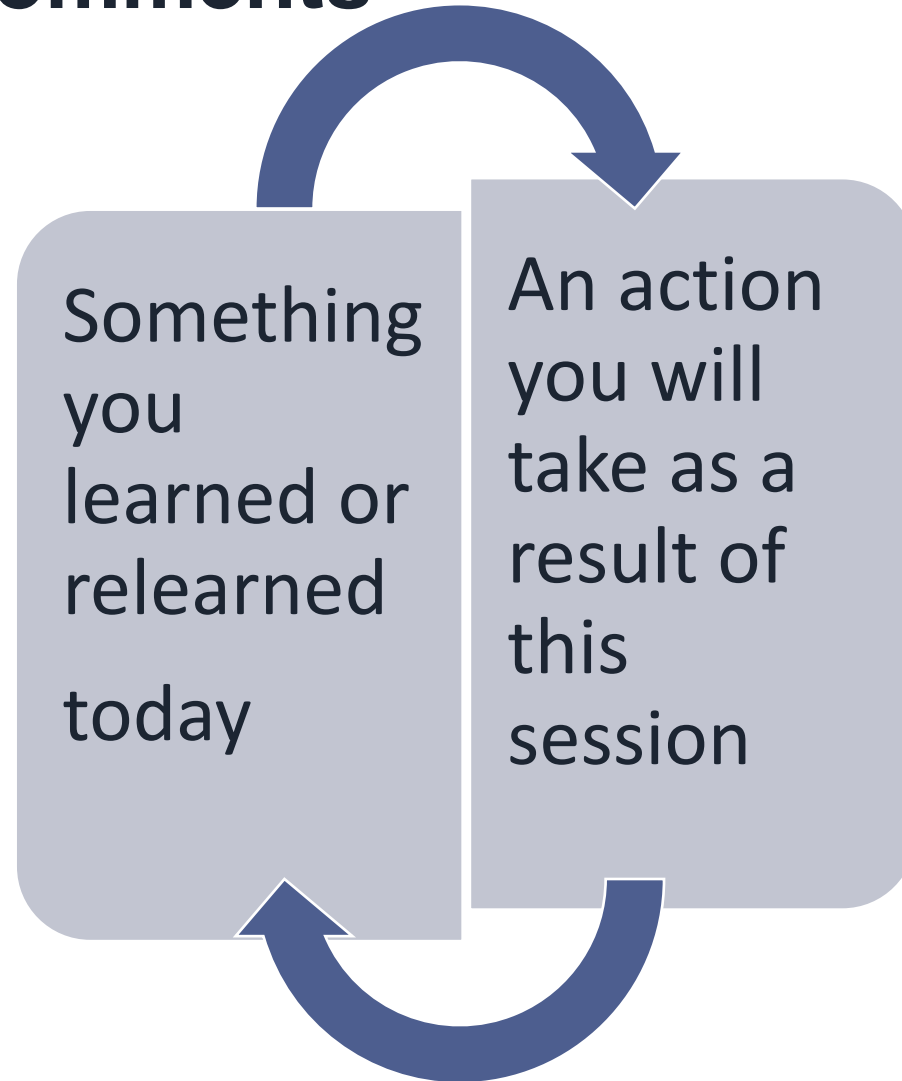


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Questions and Comments

- Before we close...



References

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Contact us!

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Contact Us



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a program managed by



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Funding for this presentation was made possible by SAMHSA grant no. 1H79SP081018. The views expressed by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of HHS; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

