Next-of-Kin Implementation Checklist

A next-of-kin (NOK) interview provides an in-depth look at how someone lived, their social supports, and the circumstances that led to an overdose death. NOK interviews are tools that overdose fatality review (OFR) teams can use to expand their understanding of the life experiences of a decedent and identify nontraditional touchpoints or systems that may not be represented by OFR team members. This document is a companion document to *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation* and includes checklists for the agency employing the NOK interviewer as well as for the NOK interviewer. To learn more about OFRs and NOK interviews, visit Next-of-Kin Interview Toolkit | Overdose Fatality Review (ofrtools.org).

Checklist for the Agency Employing the NOK Interviewer

The agency that employs the NOK interviewer has a set of responsibilities to establish prior to hiring an NOK interviewer or adding NOK interviewer job duties to an existing employee. The following checklist outlines those tasks.

Recruiting and Hiring an NOK Interviewer

❑ Review and update "Sample Interview Questions for NOK Interviewer Applicants" and the "Sample NOK Interviewer Job Description" in Appendix B of the *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation* toolkit based on agency needs.

❑ Hire the NOK interviewer or designate NOK responsibilities to current staff.

❑ Review agency protocol to determine whether Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is needed for the agency to do NOK interviews.

• If so, submit the IRB application to be approved.

OFR
Overdose Fatality Review

COSSUP
Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program

Collecting and Storing NOK Interview Data

❑ Locate agency data storing protocols that are compliant with local, state, and federal privacy laws to be used by the NOK interviewer.

❑ Create or update data sharing agreements that support NOK data sharing. A sample is found at Overdose Fatality Review Practitioner's Guide Sample: Interagency Data Sharing Agreement (ofrtools.org).

❑ Register for access to the OFR Data System if not already using: OFR Data System Registration (smartsheet.com).

❑ Refer to the agency record-retention policy, and determine how long the data will be retained, who will manage the data, and how the data will be destroyed.

❑ Assign who will be responsible for the data to be maintained securely.

Ongoing Support of the NOK Interviewer

❑ Provide necessary resources to support the NOK interviewer.

- Private location to conduct interviews
- Recording device or software
- Computer and external hard drives
- Cloud storage system
- Locked cabinets for data storage (consent forms, recordings, notes, etc.)
- Access to the OFR Data System

❑ Create policies to support the NOK interviewer's mental health and well-being as outlined in *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation*, Section 7D.

- Provide private space for interviews.
- Support flexible work time.
- Diversify the NOK interviewer's workload.
- Provide debriefing opportunities.
- Encourage the NOK interviewer to complete the self-assessment in Appendix G of *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation*.

Checklist for the NOK Interviewer

The NOK interviewer will need to determine the logistics of the NOK program within the agency. The following checklist outlines tasks to be completed prior to **any** engagement with the NOK.

Get trained to do NOK interviews.

❑ Watch the "Next-of-Kin Interviews" Webinar on Next-of-Kin Interview Toolkit | Overdose Fatality Review (ofrtools.org).

❑ Read *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation* and all supplemental NOK material available on Next-of-Kin Interview Toolkit | Overdose Fatality Review (ofrtools.org).

❑ Complete the NOK Interview Training through the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) by registering at Next-of-Kin Training Application (smartsheet.com) and completing the requirements to attend.

❑ Register to join the NOK Interview Learning Community at Next-of-Kin Learning Community Registration (smartsheet.com).

❑ Review and listen to the Voicemail Script for Next-of-Kin Interviewers, and modify as needed.

❑ Review and practice the NOK interview questions provided in the NOK training through COSSUP.
- Complete a mock interview with practice questions.

Develop an engagement protocol for outreach to the identified NOK.

❑ Determine selection criteria for the NOK.

❑ Determine circumstances in which the NOK will not be contacted (certain periods of times, minors, etc.).

❑ Determine how the NOK will be identified, who will provide contact information, and when engagement will occur.

❑ Review and update the "Sample Contact Letter" and the "Sample Contact Script" in Appendix C of the *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation* toolkit based on your agency needs.

❑ Determine how frequently and what medium outreach will be conducted with the identified NOK.

Develop an interview protocol.

❑ Select a secure location for completing the NOK interviews.

❑ Determine how narrative information will be documented during the interview (notes, paper and pencil, computer, recording, etc.).

❑ Review and modify, as needed, the NOK interview "Sample Consent Form" in Appendix D of *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation*.

❑ Compile a list of all local, state, and national grief or bereavement supports to provide to the NOK.

❑ Review the "Sample Crisis Response Protocol" in Appendix D of *Next-of-Kin Interviews: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementation* and make agency-specific updates as needed.

Checklist for the NOK Interviewer (continued)

Review and update the agency's data sharing protocols.

❑ Determine where to securely report the NOK data.

- Ensure that the agency has registered for access to the OFR Data System, including the NOK Interview module.

❑ Determine how the data (notes, recordings, consent forms, etc.) will be stored upon completion of the interview. For example, if taking pencil-and-paper notes, will those documents be shredded or stored in a locked file cabinet.

❑ Determine how the data will be shared with partners.

Determine how to summarize and share the NOK information with the OFR.

❑ Complete a mock OFR team summary report-out.

Practice self-care.

❑ Identify self-care and debriefing strategies to process the information shared by the NOK.

Learn more about OFRs and NOK at **www.ofrtools.org**.

Visit the COSSUP Resource Center at **www.cossup.org**.

Learn more about next-of-kin interviews at **www.ofrtools.org/toolkits/next-of-kin-toolkit**.

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The Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR) serves as the connecting point for COSSUP training and technical assistance (TTA) efforts and collaborates with Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) leadership and fellow TTA providers to work directly with COSSUP site-based grantees. IIR's role includes guidance and contributions by subject-matter experts (SMEs) in priority COSSUP areas of focus; coordination of the COSSUP TTA network's cadre of SMEs and providers; publication production and design of COSSUP resources; planning, coordination, and delivery of national-level trainings and working group meetings; COSSUP Resource Center development and maintenance; coordination of distance-learning opportunities and resource dissemination; and other complementary activities.

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