**Step 6: IDEA Focus Group or Interview Activity**

A focus group or interview activity is an opportunity to gain feedback from constituents, members of your community and unheard voices. It provides an opportunity to engage in collective conversation around IDEA goal setting and establish agreement around intended outcomes. There are numerous advantages of including outside voices into the planning process. Including other’s perspectives helps to:

* Clarify and test council assumptions and findings.
* Understand where you are and are not meeting needs
* Gather stories and testimonials
* Uncover ideas and issues you are unaware of but are important to the community you serve
* Aid in your prioritization and decision-making process
* Build new relationships
* Determine how to better serve communities
* Learn how the council is viewed in a variety of communities

**Who would we like to engage with further?**

Brainstorm a list of your constituents including coaches, families, site liaisons, vendors, partners, sponsors and donors. Then think one sphere outside your constituent base. Who is connected to the organization and may have thoughts and opinions that would be useful to hear? You may also want to think about additional spheres that include people and organizations that are not currently involved. What barriers have kept them from involvement or connection?

**Tips for Focus Groups and Interviews**

The ideal size of a focus group is 8-10 people with similar experiences (i.e.: coaches, families, participants). Secure two trained and experienced external facilitators to lead the discussion to elicit honest feedback. Make sure to create space and provide tools for different types of processing (pause between questions, provide flip chart and note cards). Ask about and provide accommodations when appropriate. Focus groups can be conducted in person or virtually.

Start with an activity from the GOTR curriculum to build rapport. Ensure everyone involved is committed to engaging in conversation. Create a space that allows for authentic conversation and ensure guests know that honest feedback is sought. Keep all information confidential. Make sure there is a way to record and take notes. Provide a summary of the feedback and thank participants.

If conducting interviews, email and schedule the interview in advance. The ideal interview length is 30-45mn.

**Determining Interview Questions**

Using the results from your Internal SWOT Analysis, determine a set of questions to test assumptions and gain new knowledge to inform the development of the council’s IDEA related goals and activities. Below is an introductory statement and a few suggested questions.

Girls on the Run is committed to being an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible organization. At Girls on the Run, we call this our IDEA Statement. As part of Girls on the Run (insert council name), I serve on a small group that is seeking feedback on how we can best address IDEA issues at our council. As a valued member of our organization, I'm asking for your honest input on the following questions.

* What are the strengths of our organization?
* How diverse do you consider our local council board/staff/volunteer base to be?
* How could we improve upon our current recruitment process to ensure we attract staff, volunteers and board members who mirror our community and reflect the diversity of our participant base?
* How does the council help staff and volunteers feel connected and how can this be improved upon?
* What support do our staff, board members and volunteers of color need that we aren't currently providing?
* What kind of training are you aware of that the council offers on issues of inclusion, diversity, equity and access?
* What kind of training do you feel those associated with the council need on this issue?
* What organizations, groups or people do we need to hear from and be in relationship with?
* How do you feel the community perceives the council as it pertains to issues on inclusion, diversity, equity and access? What is the prevailing narrative about GOTR?
* What else do we need to know? What relevant stories or feedback do you have to share?