Appendix 3: SWIFT Qualitative Focus Group Guide: Participants

Briefing:

Thank the interviewees for making the time to attend the focus group discussion.

Thank you for participating in this focus group. You would have all had a telephone conversation with one of the members of our research team, where they went over all the information for this focus group, and you agreed to be part of the study. For some of you, this might have been a while back and so we will cover some of this information briefly as a reminder.

This discussion will take about 1-1.5 hours. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to learn about your experiences and what you liked or didn't like about the parenting programme on WhatsApp, so that we can make it better for other parents and caregivers. The programme is called ParentText. The other members of this focus group are also parents and caregivers like you. We will need to record this discussion, with your permission, so that we can listen to your contributions at a later stage. However, all your answers will be completely confidential and will only be viewed by the research team.

We will not be introducing ourselves in the group. This is not something we have forgotten to do, it’s because we want your names and who you are to remain private because this session is being recorded. We will also not use any of your names when we write up everything after this discussion. You have promised that you will respect others in the group and will not discuss what is said by others outside of the group.

We know that during the programme, some sensitive things may have come up, especially in the second module about child safety and perhaps in some of the referrals you chose to access. Because this is a group discussion, we don't expect you to share any of these sensitive details. Just remember, we only want you to share what you’re comfortable with.

Please remember that you are able to leave this discussion at any time if you would like to, or you can choose not to answer any questions that you don’t want to respond to, for any reason. If you decide at a later stage that you would like your contribution to be removed from the study, you can contact the research team by email on your consent form and up until the [date to be determined]. After this point, we would have started to share our findings. Before signing the consent forms, do you have any questions?

At this point hand out the consent forms. Tell participants to detach the last page and sign it if they still consent to being part of the study. They can fold the last page in half and hand it back to you as you go around (don’t let them pass it between themselves). Please remind them that all the information they need about the study is on the two pages they still have and that they should keep those safely as it also has contact numbers on it.

Thanks again for participating in this discussion. Please let me know if any of my questions are confusing.

A. Finding out about ParentText.

I’d like to start by asking you how you found out about the ParentText programme.

1. How did you find out about or hear about ParentText? (E.g. you saw a poster, someone you know shared it with you, a nurse at the clinic told you about it)

* For those who saw the poster: What did you think of the poster?
  + Probe: Did it catch your attention? Did you get all of the information that you needed from it? Did you like the layout e.g. images, colours?
* For those who were told about it by a nurse: What was your experience of that? What was it that made you want to sign up?
  + Probe: What did the nurse say or do that made you want to sign up?
  + Probe: What did the nurse say or do that made you not want to sign up?
* Did any of you find out about it in another way? - besides through the clinic?

1. Is there anything else you’d like to share about how you found out about or heard about the ParentText programme?

B. First impression of ParentText:

Let's talk about your first thoughts of the ParentText programme. I know it was 3 months ago or more for some of you since you first started interacting with it. So, I want to just take you back. Once you joined ParentText you would have started with some research questions, and you would have received your first thank you in the form of R25 airtime. Once you finished that you would have started interacting with the actual lessons and chatbot….

1. What was your first impression of ParentText?

* Probe: What are the things you liked? What worked well for you? How was it helpful for you?
* Probe: What didn’t you like? How can we make it better?

2. What were you expecting when you started using ParentText?

* Probe: Did it meet your expectations?
  + Probe: How did it meet your expectations?
  + Probe: What was it that didn’t meet your expectations?

3. When first connecting to and using ParentText you would have needed WhatsApp to be connected. What was your experience of connecting to and using ParentText?

* Probe: How were you all connected? E.g. mobile data, Wi-Fi, a combination.
* Probe: What challenges did you have with connecting?
  + Probe: Was it in (a) joining, (b) using the programme, (c) any other technical challenges?
  + Probe: How did you manage these challenges? How did it affect your user experience?
  + Probe: Did anyone help you when you experienced the challenge? Who?

C. ParentText content:

*I want to learn more about your experience using* ParentText*, the content, the activities and the notifications.*

1. What do you think about the look of ParentText? *For example, the colours used, the amount of information given in each message, the volume and quality of the audio messages, the volume and quality of the videos.*

* Probe: What did you like?
* Probe: How could it be improved?

1. What do you think about the ParentText content? (remind the participants of the modules: improving your relationship with your child/teen and keep your child/teen safe)

* Probe: For good or bad reasons - What module stood out to you and why?
* Probe: Was the information useful? Was it relevant to you and your family or community?
* *Probe: How could we improve the content?* (*e.g. do we use words and phrases that are simple, clear and easy to understand?)*

3. What did you think about the notifications?

* Probe: Did you find them helpful for reminding you about the programme?
* Probe: What do you think about the number of notifications? (too many? more?)
* *Probe: What about the timing of them? (did you receive at a bad time e.g. while you were working or busy?*) When is better?

4. What did you think about the length of the programme, 10 days?

* Probe: Was 10 days enough? Did you want the programme to be longer or shorter?

5. Was there any parenting information that you expected to get from ParentText but didn’t?

* Probe: If yes, what would you have liked to get more information on?
* Probe: Is there anything we could have added that you are now thinking would be helpful?

1. Were you able to complete the program and if you weren’t, what prevented you from being able to complete it?

* *Probe:* If you completed ParentText, what encouraged you to keep using the programme? *Was there any specific information/content, reminder or another feature that helped/encouraged you to keep using the programme?*
* *Probe:* If you didn’t manage to complete ParentText, could you please try to explain what made it difficult to complete the programme?
* Probe: Was there any specific information/content, reminder or another feature of the programme that discouraged you from using ParentText?
* Probe: Was it something to do with your personal or family life?
* *Probe: Did you have a technical challenge or struggle connecting to the programme?*

6. Are there any parts of ParentText that you think you will continue to use?

* *Probe: Which ones? (e.g. the content, the referrals) Why or why not?*
* *Probe:* If you think about other people in your family or community, do you think they would use ParentText? Why or why not?

1. Did you tell anyone about ParentText? Who was it (not their name but their relationship to you)? Do you know if they used it? What did they say?

D. Effect of ParentText on caregivers, children, and family:

Let’s talk about if and how using ParentText has affected you, the children you care for, and the rest of your family.

1. Let’s start with the changes you have noticed in your life since you started using ParentText?

* If ‘yes’, can you tell me a bit more about what changes you have noticed?
  + - * Probe: For example, what about your daily stress levels?
* For those of you who haven’t, could you please tell me why you think there hasn’t been any change in your life?

2. Have you noticed any changes in your relationship with your child(ren) as a result of using ParentText?

* If ‘yes’, can you describe the change(s) you have noticed? When did you start to notice the changes? Could you provide an example?
* For those of you who haven’t seen any change, why do you think so?
* Have any of you had a co-parent working through this too? What changes have you seen in their relationship with your child?

3. Have you noticed any changes in your child(ren)’s behaviour as a result of you using ParentText?

* If ‘yes’, can you describe the change(s) you have noticed? When did you start to notice the changes? Could you provide an example?
* For those of you who haven’t seen any change, why do you think so?

4. Have you noticed any changes in the way you discipline your child(ren) as a result of using ParentText?

* If ‘yes’, can you describe the change(s) you have noticed? When did you start to notice the changes? Could you provide an example?
* For those of you who haven’t seen any change, why do you think so?

5. Have you noticed any changes in behaviours or conversations around your child’s safety? *Remember, the child safety module focused on things like online and community safety, safe touch, preventing sexual violence, responding to crises etc. Again, you don’t need to share any personal details here, whatever you are comfortable with.*

* If ‘yes’, can you describe the change(s) you have noticed? When did you start to notice the changes? Could you provide an example?
* For those of you who haven’t seen any change, why do you think so?

5. Have you noticed any other changes for you, your child(ren) or your family as a result of ParentText?

* If yes, can you describe the change(s) you have noticed, when you started to notice the changes and provide an example?
* For those of you who haven’t seen any change, why do you think so?

6. From your point of view, what was the biggest change that resulted from using ParentText? Why do you think so?

7. Are there other adults in your home who help you look after your children? How did they respond to the changes, if there were changes?

E. ParentText Referrals

*ParentText provides contact information for other services in the community, for example, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence. I’d like to hear more about your experience with these referrals.* You don’t have to disclose the specific challenge you were facing; this is more about the referrals as a source of information.

1. How was your experience of getting or accessing referral information in the ParentText programme?

* Probe: Did you know how to access it? Was it easy to navigate?
  + If no, how could we make it easier for you?

1. How was your experience of following up with these referrals with the relevant service providers?

* Probe: Were they able to help you? Why/why not?

1. What could have made the referrals more helpful?
2. Did you know that you could access the help menu even today? Have you used it to refer back?

F. Potential for digital interventions

I would now like to explore your thoughts around the potential for digital/online/virtual interventions.

1. Based on your experience with the ParentText programme – do you think a purely digital intervention like this can help people in your community? Why/Why not?

2. Are there times when you think some in-person components are necessary? Where digital isn’t enough?

* *Probe: When do you think this would be?*

3. Do you have any other suggestions about what other types of digital support might be helpful to you and your community?

G. Final questions

Thank you for your contributions so far. We will be finishing the discussion soon, I just have a few more questions.

1. Do you have anything else that you want to share or recommend we do to improve ParentText and make it better for other caregivers like yourself?
2. Do you have any questions for me?

Debriefing

If there was anything that made you feel unsettled while doing this interview, remember you can still type “help” on your phone and use the SADAG or other helplines. If you urgently need to speak to someone from the study, you can speak to me now when we finish or send an email or WhatsApp to the contact details on your consent form.

As we said in the beginning, we didn’t want you to share anything that you weren’t comfortable with. There might be some valuable information that you think is important for us to know about your experiences with either the referrals or the sexual violence content. If so, please WhatsApp us.

***We’ve come to the end of our discussion***. ***Thanks again for taking the time to come speak with us today. Your responses have been very helpful!***