LEAD POLICE OFFICER SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

(TOPICAL DOMAINS WITH SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND PROBES)

Opening questions (ice-breakers):

1. To start off, I would like us to go around in a circle and hear from each person how long you have been a police officer, what year you were trained in the LEAD program, and your position/rank in the department.

What is LEAD?

1. How would you describe LEAD to an officer who had never heard of it?
2. What is your role in the LEAD program?
   1. **Probe:** Day-to-day activities of an officer for the LEAD program?

Preparation/Training:

1. What kind of preparation did you get to become a LEAD officer?
2. What did you learn in the LEAD officer training?
   1. **Probe**: How did the LEAD training help you make LEAD referrals, if it did?
3. What additional trainings would be helpful to you?
   1. **Probe**: improve the LEAD program? H elp you make more referrals?

Buy-in

1. Who decides which officers get trained in LEAD?
   1. **Probe**: Can you describe any resistance or reluctance that you felt when you were told you had to attend a LEAD training?
   2. **Probe**: What made you decide to become LEAD-trained?
2. What is the general attitude toward LEAD by other officers who are not LEAD trained?
   1. **Probe**: Can you describe any resistance or reluctance in your Police Department among other officers for being LEAD trained?
   2. **Probe:** What about resistance or reluctance to making LEAD referrals?
3. Can you explain why you bought-in to the program?

Referrals:

1. How do you decide which individuals to refer to LEAD?
   1. **Probe**: For social referrals and arrest diversion- different criteria?
   2. **Probe:** Would you say that someone needs to be ready to accept treatment to be in the LEAD program?
2. What kind of things do you say to people about LEAD when you make a LEAD referral?
3. How often do you know the person you refer to LEAD before you make the referral?
4. How long does a typical referral process take from start to finish?
   1. **Probe**: How does that amount of time compare to the amount of time it takes to process a typical arrest?
5. How would you revise the eligibility requirements for LEAD referrals, if at all?
   1. **Probe**: Why?
   2. **Probe**: Do the eligibility requirements seem fair?
6. What are the common reasons someone declines to participate in the LEAD program?
   1. **Probe**: Do more people decline to participate in the LEAD program during an arrest diversion or a social contact referral?
   2. **Probe**: How often do people decline LEAD?
7. If someone does accept the referral, what are the next steps after the referral?
   1. **Probe**: How well does the warm hand-off work?
   2. **Probe:** What is the after-hours protocol?
   3. **Probe:** Detox?

Officer role after referral:

1. Who here participates in the staffing meetings?
   1. **Probe**: What role does that play in your work?
   2. **Probe**: What do you contribute to the staffing meetings?
2. In what ways do you interact with LEAD participants after they are referred, if you do?
   1. **Probe**: How much time do you spend with a LEAD participant during a typical wellness check?
   2. **Probe**: How often do you usually see people after they are referred?
3. What do you do when you encounter a LEAD client that is breaking the law?
   1. **Probe**: Are you ever uncertain about what to do? How do you make decisions in those cases?
   2. **Probe**: Do you know when someone is active or not active in LEAD, and does that make a difference?
4. What would you change about your role after the referral process, if anything?

2020 Questions:

1. How has the pandemic impacted the way you interact with people suspected of committing low level crimes due to their drug use?
   1. **Probe:** Have you noticed changes in the volume of crimes related to drug use?
2. For those that you do come in contact with, are you offering LEAD at the same level as you offered it before COVID?
   1. **Probe:** Why are you offering it more? Why are you offering it less?
3. How have LEAD referrals been impacted, if at all, by the recent civil unrest and protests in your city and across the country?

Lessons learned and future:

1. In general, thinking about the referral process, attending the case reviews, following-up with the LEAD participant, do you think that LEAD makes your job easier or harder, or does it not affect your workflow?
2. What have you learned from being a part of the LEAD program?
3. What have been the most successful components of the LEAD program?
   1. **Probe**: What do you like about LEAD?
4. What has not worked well with the LEAD program?
   1. **Probe**: What do you not like about LEAD?
5. Do you think there are any circumstances in your [Name of city/jurisdiction] that might make the LEAD program different than in other places? Vs. LEAD started in other states. Is there anything about your jurisdiction that needs to be taken into account for LEAD to be successful?
   1. **Probe**: Do you know of any adaptations that were made in your jurisdiction in order to make LEAD more successful for your community’s context?
6. What advice would you give to other communities that are interested in starting a LEAD program?