How you can participate

/ **Use the chat to ask questions or share experiences**

/ **Respond to polls about specific virtual services topics**

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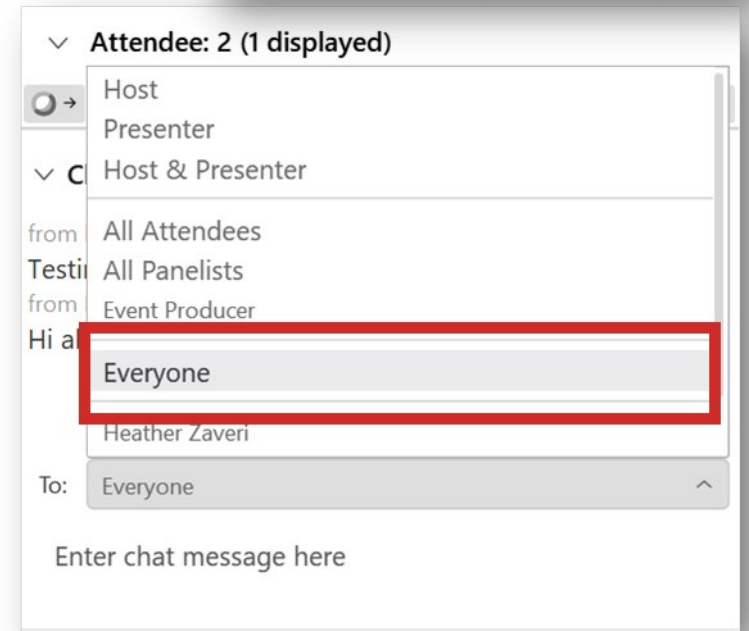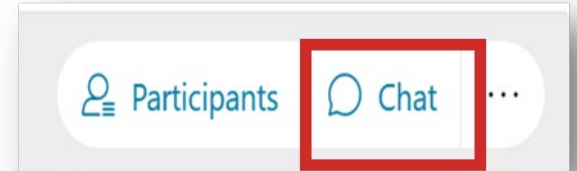
Learning objectives

/ **Describe how grantees from the 2015 cohort adapted to virtual service delivery during the COVID-19 public health emergency**

/ **Identify considerations and potential practices for virtual approaches to HMRF programs going forward**

> ➤ *Some suggested practices may require pre-approval. Please consult with your FPS.*

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Today's agenda

/ **Overview of the study**

/ **Workshops**
- Q&A

/ **Recruitment and retention**
- Q&A

/ **Considerations for specific settings**

/ **Open Q&A**

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Today's presenters

Liz Gearan

Francesca Venezia

Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande

Liana Washburn

Grace Roemer

Overview of the study

Research questions

1. **How did the public health emergency affect HMRF program operations in the 2015 cohort?**

2. **How did the HMRF grantees change their programs to operate virtually in response to the public health emergency (including recruitment, enrollment, service delivery, and data collection)?**

3. **How did program staff and clients respond to changes in services and virtual delivery?**

4. **What potential virtual approaches can grantees in the 2020 cohort use to optimize program delivery, even after in-person services become more feasible?**

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Data sources

/ **Final performance progress reports (PPRs)**

/ **8 listening sessions with grantee management staff, facilitators, and case managers**

/ **9 client interviews**

/ **Discussions with 3 experts on learning and 3 curriculum developers**

/ **Other studies of virtual services**

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The transition to virtual

/ **Most grantees reported delivering at least some of their programming virtually beginning sometime after March 2020**

/ **Many grantees paused their service delivery as they made the shift from in person to virtual**

- For some grantees, the pause lasted a week or two; others did not start delivering virtual services until May or June 2020

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Workshops

Content and curriculum

/ **No major content changes**

/ **Consulted curriculum developers and other resources on virtual delivery**

/ **Discussing sensitive topics**
- Joining from home meant a potential lack of privacy for clients
- Discussions might have covered relationships with household members who could overhear

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Adaptations to workshops

/ **Modified how group activities were conducted**

/ **Shortened session length**

/ **Recorded (asynchronous) sessions**

/ **Mailed or dropped off workshop materials**

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Share with the group

/ **Did your program consult with curriculum developers or other resources on how to adapt a curriculum for virtual delivery?**

    a) Yes

    b) No

    c) I don't know

/ **If yes, how did that inform your program's virtual delivery? Share in the chat!**

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Facilitation

/ **Keeping clients engaged**
- Grantees used various Zoom features (breakout rooms, chat, reactions)
- Most grantees asked for cameras to be on
- Texting between sessions helped maintain contact and build relationships with and between clients
- Not being able to meet in person affected level of engagement between clients

/ **Co-facilitation**
- Some grantees had multiple facilitators in each session, with distinct roles (for example, one delivered programming and the other provided technical support)

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Facilitation (continued)

/ **Grantees had to balance the benefits and challenges of clients participating from home**

- There can be more distractions at home
- It can be difficult to find a private space at home
- Clients can benefit from doing activities in their home, where they would actually be using the skills

/ **Grantees found it helpful to set expectations for clients**

- Dress respectfully
- Join from a quiet place
- Stay off other devices
- Join at a table/desk, not while driving

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Selecting and using technology

Platforms

- Most grantees used Zoom
- Some grantees used social media to deliver programming
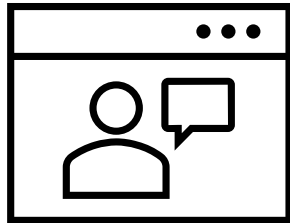
Devices

- Clients used computers, phones, and tablets to participate
- Grantees had to consider device capabilities

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How grantees supported facilitators

/ **Provided access to technology (for example, tablets, routers, laptops)**

/ **Provided training on technology and virtual delivery**
  - Covered virtual engagement and using virtual platforms
  - Included ACF-sponsored trainings on HMRF virtual workshops and virtual services

/ **Supported staff well-being during the pandemic, such as by offering a training on work-life balance**

How grantees supported clients

/ **Provided access to technology (for example, devices, Wi-Fi, cellular data)**

/ **Provided training on technology**

- Many HM adult grantees suggested giving clients a technology screening before the start of the program to understand their technology needs

/ **Gave clients a space to talk about concerns and challenges they were facing during the pandemic**

Share with the group

/ **How has your program supported facilitators and clients during virtual delivery?**

/ **Share in the chat!**

External informants' recommendations

Supporting facilitators

- Additional training on virtual vs. in-person delivery; leveraging platform tools
- Technology support to help clients and get workshops running smoothly
- Co-facilitators can monitor chat boxes, break-out rooms, and update live documents
- Curriculum developers are another source of support

Fostering engagement

- Engagement and bonding are challenging in virtual environments
- Facilitators can encourage trust and bonds between clients by maximizing participants' voices and limiting lectures
- Best practices for engagement will vary depending on the target population

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External informants' recommendations (continued)

/ Hybrid delivery options
- "Hybrid" could refer to various virtual and in-person formats
- Academic researchers stressed potential for hybrid delivery approaches; curriculum developers had concerns about logistics and planning

/ Considering equity, privacy, and safety
- Equity is a multidimensional issue
- Potential for emotional safety issues in home environments for youth
- Address confidentiality early on by establishing group guidelines

/ Matching content and delivery
- Learning objectives stay constant; content shifts to address virtual delivery
- Important to design for the intended delivery mode from the start

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Key takeaways from external informants

/ **Facilitators need strong support**

- Additional training and support
- Resources from curricula developers

/ **Design for virtual environments from the start**

/ **Carefully consider hybrid delivery options**

/ **Investing in technology infrastructure**

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Q&A

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment

/ **Grantee reports of changes**

- Shifted from in-person to virtual recruitment
- Referrals depended on operating status of referral sources

/ **Strategies and methods used**

- Word of mouth continued to be successful
- Social media use increased for some grantees
- Virtual presentations conducted with partners and community members

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Recruitment (continued)

/ **Barriers**

- Partner organizations were closed
- Institutions did not have the capacity to support virtual services

/ **Silver linings**

- Increased enrollment
- Able to reach clients in a larger geographic area

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Share with the group

/ **How does your program's experience recruiting clients for virtual services compare with these findings?**

- Share some key similarities or differences that stood out to you in the chat!

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Retention

/ **Retention trends varied by grantee and target population**

/ **Strategies and methods used**
- Multiple grantees offered incentives
- Reminder calls and texts
- Leveraged different platforms

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Share with the group

/ **What strategies has your program used to retain clients in virtual services?**

/ **Share in the chat!**

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Retention (continued)

/ Barriers

- Employment status
- Homelessness
- Stress and anxiety
- Personal/family illness or death from COVID-19
- Lack of skills and access to technology

/ Silver linings

- Easier to attend because there was no commute

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Share with the group

/ **Do you think offering virtual services in the future will help your program retain clients?**

   a) Yes

   b) No

   c) Unsure

/ **Share why you chose your answer in the chat!**

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Q&A

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Considerations for specific settings

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Youth: The switch to virtual

Once school shifted online, grantees' access to students varied

- Most grantees continued delivering programming to students
- Grantees were unable to continue serving some schools when teachers stopped communicating with them
- Some schools stopped programming due to competing priorities

Grantees described creative approaches to operating virtually in schools

- Grantees used a range of approaches to deliver programming
- Facilitators had to learn how to use multiple software platforms based on what schools were using

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Youth: Retaining and engaging students

/ **Facilitators recommended making attendance part of the students' grade for the class the HM program was embedded in**

/ **Facilitators suggested avoiding early morning sessions if possible**

/ **Facilitators often sent reminders to attend sessions**
- Facilitators usually texted students individually or used the Remind app

/ **Facilitators included several different workshop components to keep students engaged**
- For example, social media, educational software programs, and hands-on activities
- Facilitators also recommended providing breaks

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Reentering fathers: Virtual services

/ **Virtual services have been very rare in correctional facilities**

- Barriers include security, technology, and staffing

/ **Where virtual services have been feasible**

- Extensive planning began well in advance; close coordination continued throughout the program
- Facilities had robust technology in place, such as conference rooms for virtual court hearings, and allowed some additions such as microphones
- Workshop facilitators adjusted activities to engage clients, such as pair and share with cellmates
- On-site staff acted as proxies to support workshop setup and delivery
- A CQI approach was used to assess and refine virtual services

/ **Going forward, a hybrid model allows for in-person data collection and virtual delivery of content**

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Resources

/ **Stay tuned for an email that will provide links to these slides and a tip sheet summarizing the information we shared today!**

/ **As a reminder, consult with your FPS when considering new strategies for virtual service delivery.**

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Open Q&A