

Focus Group Protocol

Step 1: Welcome and thank everyone for coming. Introduce yourself (as the focus group facilitator), the note taker, and the recorder. Ask participants to introduce themselves.

Script: "Hi, I'm [name] and I'll be facilitating our focus group today. I would like to introduce you to the individual who will be helping me with this process; taking notes and recording our session. {State the name of the co-moderator} I'd like to find out who you are, so let's go around the circle and have each person introduce themselves to the rest of group."

Introductions

Step 2: Why we are asking for their input. Purpose of the assessment. Review and collect informed consent forms.

Script: "Before we start there are a couple things that we need to do, and I'd like to tell you a little bit about why we are here and how we will conduct the focus groups. We've got some forms that we are going to pass out to you now. These forms tell you a little bit about the purpose of this focus group and this process. We will need your signature on the form, which states that you are consenting to participate in this focus group, but before you sign them, I'd like to review them with you."

Pass out informed consent

Script: "Okay, now I'm going to read through the informed consent form with you. If you have any questions please stop me at anytime."

Read through form, sign, and collect

Step 3: Review the procedures and process for the focus group. Some of this may be repetitious from the informed consent.

Script: "In a minute, I'm going to ask you some open ended questions and I'd like you to share your responses to them. Please share only information with this group you are comfortable sharing. Everything you say is strictly confidential – your real names will not be used at any time during this assessment project. Please remember that you can leave at anytime."

Script: "At this time, I'd like you to write down your first name only on your name card. By only using your first name, it will help keep your identify confidential."

Now have group members write down their first name on the name cards.

Script: "I'd like to ask that before you make a comment, if you would please tell us your first name and then make your comment. This helps us when we are transcribing the conversation from the recording to identify who is making a specific comment; sometimes it can get difficult to differentiate voices. For example, if I wanted to make a comment on one of the questions or what one of my peers had said, I would say, I'm [facilitator insert your name], and I agree with what Jim had to say about that, but I'd like to add..."

Note: If they forget to state their first name, don't remind them because it will disrupt the flow of the group. Just make sure the note taker is making notations for who is talking.

Script: "OK, are there any questions or concerns before we begin?" Address any questions or concerns.

Turn on Recorder

Step 4. "We will now begin and [name] will turn on the recorder."

Step 5. Start asking the questions. One at a time. Use your judgment in deciding when to move on to the next question. Watch your time. Once the recorder is on you might start by saying:

Script: "Again I would like to extend our appreciation for your participation here today. Our first question is...."

Q1.

Q2.

Q3.

Q4.

Q5.

Q6.

Q7.

Q8.

Q9.

Q10.

Script: "That was our final question. Is there anything else that anyone would like to add or any additional comments concerning what we have talked about here today?"

Allow time for comments

Script: "This concludes our focus group. Thank you for coming and participating. Once we have conducted all of the focus groups and analyzed the transcript, you will receive an e-mail asking you to comment on the conclusions we have drawn based on our analysis of the comments made during the group discussion. If you have any questions at any time please contact [name]."

Step 6. Once everyone has left, briefly review the notes with the note taker.