

Overview of the Process of Conducting a Focus Group: Resources

Center for the Study of Student Life

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INTRODUCTION

These are the resources that are referred to in the webinar, [Overview of the Process of Conducting a Focus Group](#).

RESOURCE LIST

- [Asking Questions and Encouraging Participation](#)
- [Focus Group Ground Rules](#)
- [Focus Group Sample Agenda](#)
- [Example Consent to Participate Form](#)
- [Pre Focus Group Checklist](#)
- [Suggestions for the Moderator](#)
- Richard A. Krueger, *Analyzing Focus Group Interviews*. Available at [cme.hsc.usf.edu/smph/fs/5%20%20Journal%20article%20Analyzing%20focus%20group%20interviewswop.pdf](#)
- Richard Krueger, *[Focus Group] Analysis*. Available at [tc.umn.edu/~rkrueger/focus_analysis.html](#)
- Richard Krueger, *Analyzing & Reporting Focus Group Results*. Preview available at [books.google.com/books?id=C10e4o1rvWQC](#)

ASKING QUESTIONS AND ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE QUESTION STEMS

- If you could say just one thing about...
- What is the most important thing about...
- What stood out as particularly good...
- Suppose you were in charge and could make one change...
- Suppose you were advising a first year student about... What would be your best piece of advice that you would pass on?
- What is your opinion of...

PHRASES FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

- "Can you give me an example?"
- "Can you elaborate?"
- "Does anyone else want to talk about that?"
- "Does anyone have a different opinion or experience?"
- "Tell me more about that idea."

FOCUS GROUP GROUND RULES

- Do not use other people's names (roommates, RA's, neighbors) or unique identifiers (addresses).
- Turn off cell phones. Limit any distractions (e.g. getting up to leave a lot).
- Try to use "I statements". For instance, "I disagree" rather than "You're wrong".
- Stick to the topics at hand, as much as possible.
- This is an environment where people are free to share their honest thoughts. There are no right/wrong answers—only different points of view.
- You don't need to agree, but you must listen respectfully.

FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE AGENDA

- Welcome
- Introduce participants
- Introduce scribes
- Introduce the space (i.e. bathroom locations; know who is in your sample- gender neutral bathroom locations?)
- Review the purpose of the research
- Review confidentiality
- Signed statements
- Ground rules
- Questions
- “Is there anything I missed?”
- Paper and pen available for additional comments
- Debrief with research team

EXAMPLE CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

CONSENT FORM

[Name of Institution] Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title:

Researcher:

Sponsor:

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:

Procedures/Tasks:

Duration:

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with [Institution].

Risks and Benefits:

Confidentiality:

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies; [the institution's] Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices; The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

Incentives:

[List of incentives]

Participant Rights:

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at [Institution], your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at [Institution] reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Contacts and Questions:

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact _____.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact [Name] in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at [telephone number].

If you are injured as a result of participating in this study or for questions about a study-related injury, you may contact _____.

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Printed name of subject	Signature of subject
	AM/PM
	Date and time
Printed name of person authorized to consent for subject (when applicable)	Signature of person authorized to consent for subject (when applicable)
	AM/PM
Relationship to the subject	Date and time

INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCH STAFF

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Signature of person obtaining consent

AM/PM

Date and time

PRE FOCUS GROUP CHECKLIST

- Obtain a recorder
- Obtain extra batteries
- Obtain a laptop or notebook for scribe's note-taking
- Make copies of the questions
- Follow-up with the reserved space
- Locate the nearest bathrooms (including gender-neutral, if appropriate)
- Obtain paper, pens, and manila folder for additional comments
- Obtain name badges

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MODERATOR

- Ask the questions, guide the conversation, and listen carefully
- Build rapport early on with participants
- Never be judgmental or stifle the opinions of the group
- Be conscious of balance: keep things moving while allowing for conversation
- Don't be afraid of silence; if no one responds to a question give them a few moments to formulate thoughts
- Before moving on to next question, try to summarize the discussion
- Don't ask yes-or-no questions—word them open-ended to elicit more information
- Don't ask leading questions
- Move from general to specific questions
- Follow your script, leading the group into further exploration of the topic
- Encourage others to talk with each other or simply agree/disagree
- Encourage examples
- Ask follow-up questions; these can get one speaker to go more in-depth, gain clarification, or provoke the group to offer comments