

FOCUS GROUPS

How to Conduct a Focus Group

1. Gather a group of people (no more than 12) selected for their relevance for a particular question.
2. Get informed consent from all participants (see How to Obtain Informed Consent document in the toolkit, data folder).
3. The facilitator(s) will have a set of questions to guide the discussion and record the proceedings which will be analysed later.
4. Facilitator leads the discussion by
 - (i) Introducing the focus of the discussion
 - (ii) Sharing the reason for the focus group
 - (iii) Outlining the protocols for the discussion (time allowed, “sharing the air”)
 - (iv) Including every participant in the discussion, asking each participant to comment on the topic and on each other’s comments.
5. The facilitator will support the group as they hear and react to one another’s responses, ensuring that the more confident participants do not take over the discussion and making sure that the participants understand that their point of view is of equal value to all others.
6. There will be a second facilitator who records the discussion either in note form or as an audio recording. It is important to take extensive notes.
7. The discussion should not last longer than one hour.

Cautions in Conducting a Focus Group

1. Group dynamics may interfere with complete or accurate data.

2. The facilitator may need to probe to get more robust information for some of the questions.

3. Organization for the focus group is time consuming because of the need to fully prepare the discussion questions so that they elicit the information needed.

4. Transcription and analysis of the focus group discussion is time consuming.

For further information, consider the following:

Elements of a Good Focus Group - A Quick Overview, <http://www.yorku.ca/act/CBR/ElementsofaGoodFocusGroup.pdf>

Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group, http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf

Methodology Brief: Introduction to Focus Groups, <https://www.myctb.org/wst/iowaspsfig/Training%20and%20Webinars/A%20Discussion%20on%20Conducting%20Informational%20Groups%20and%20Surveys%20-%20May%202013/FocusGroupBrief%20Guide.pdf>

Conducting Focus Groups, <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conduct-focus-groups/main>