



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A Practical Guide

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outline

- * Definition of FGD
- * Decision to use FGD
- * Conducting Focus Group Discussions



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What is a Focus Group Discussion

- * A focus group is a small group of six to ten people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator.
- * The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out.

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What is a Focus Group Discussion

- * MODERATOR nurtures discussions
- * DURATION of a focus group is 45 to 90 minutes.
- * Predetermined questions – no more than 10
- * A homogeneous group of strangers
- * About 3-4 focus groups on any topic



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A focus group is not

- * A debate
- * Group therapy
- * A conflict resolution session
- * A problem solving session
- * An opportunity to collaborate
- * A promotional opportunity
- * An educational session


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Deciding to use Focus Groups

- * Focus groups:
 - * are time-consuming
 - * Result in mountains of data.
 - * Rely on everyone showing up at the right time
 - * it is the appropriate design for your study???
 - * 'What do I expect to get out of this research?'

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Deciding to use Focus Groups



FGDs	Other methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * An understanding of..... * An insight into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Make comparisons between * Know actual behaviours of * understand recent changes

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Deciding to use Focus Groups




- * Research Questions:
- * How can policy makers support
- * How do patients view.....

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Deciding to use Focus Groups




- * **Responses from participants**
- * to share and compare their experiences with each other?
- * develop and generate ideas?
- * explore issues of shared importance?
- * **Yes use a FGD**

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Conducting the focus group

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Focus Groups



- * Optimal size: 8-12
- * Skilled facilitator guides discussion and encourages participation
- * Issues to consider:
 - * Ground rules
 - * Dominating personalities
 - * Setting
 - * Recording
- * How many people do I recruit for each focus group?
 - * Rule of thumb: more than you need (2x)



Order of Operations



- * Welcome
- * Informed Consent
- * Ground Rules
- * Demographic questionnaires
- * Start recorder
- * Focus group discussion
- * Stop recorder
- * Thank you & Incentives

Logistics: Space

- * Visit the space...venue?
- * Check **acoustics**
- * Consider **accessibility**
- * Ensure **privacy**
- * Plan for **transportation**
- * Make **signs** clear & discrete



Logistics: Time

- * **How long** will FG/interview last?
- * Plan to start **15-20 minutes** after tell pts to arrive
- * Keep early arrivers **busy** (informed consent, demographics qs)
- * What time is optimal to hold the FG/I?



Logistics: Recording

- * Bring **2 recorders** (back up)
- * **Memory**
- * **Microphone**
- * Extra **batteries** (insert new before interview)
- * Learn how to use it before your 1st interview
- * **Test** ahead of time
- * **Check** your recording afterwards



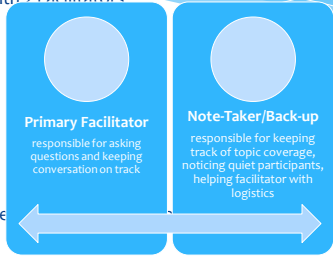
Logistics: Food & Incentive

- * When selecting:
 - * Think about your population
 - * Seek advice of local partners
 - * Use local vendors
- * **Food** (Pros & Cons):
 - * Logistics, cost, etc.
- * **Incentives:**
 - * Transportation \$
 - * Cash vs. gift cards



Logistics: Facilitation Team

Ex. FG with 2 Facilitators



Primary Facilitator
responsible for asking questions and keeping conversation on track

Note-Taker/Back-up
responsible for keeping track of topic coverage, noticing quiet participants, helping facilitator with logistics

Clearly defined

Setting Ground Rules for FG

- * Confidentiality:
 - * Try not to use names or tell personal stories
 - * What happens in FG stays in FG
- * Try to use words that people will understand
- * Respect other people's opinions
- * Speak one at a time (and also speak loudly for the recording)
- * **Turn off cell phones**

"Is there anything we should add?"




Facilitation skills





Body Language: Body



- * Open and inviting **posture**
- * Be aware of your **position** in the room
- * Avoid distracting motions (pacing, bouncing, tapping)



Body Language: Face




Grrrrr... Fear my wrath.




Body Language: Face

- * Keep facial expressions **neutral**
- * Show that you are paying **attention** (nodding, verbal cues) without positively or negatively reinforcing answers
- * **Eye contact**



Body Language: Voice



- * Practice projecting your voice
- * Set the standard for how loud people need to speak to be heard on the recording
- * Show interest with your voice
- * Pace (moderate-not too fast or too slow)



Guiding Conversations





- * Give neutral responses and use neutral language
- * Build transitions through questions
 - * Well designed guides will help do this
 - * **Redirecting** can be used
- * Probes
 - * Tell me more about that...
 - * Does anyone else feel that way or feel differently?




Strategies to keep people engaged




- * Treat your participants as **experts**
- * Act as if you hearing what they are telling for the first time (even if it's the 20th)
- * Keep the conversation **flowing** smoothly
 - * Managing dominant talkers
 - * Encourage quieter people to speak
 - * Allow people to respond to each other, not just the facilitator


- * After the interview ...



Transcription



- * Who?
- * When?
- * Quality assurance?
- * Translation? What gets translated
- * Back translation
- * Transcription protocol?
- * Language of transcription
- * Notes?



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