

## *Sample Youth focus group questions*

1. What do you like to do in your spare time now?
2. Where and when do you like to do it?
3. what stops you from doing these things?
4. Is there anything you would like to do in your spare time that you don't?  
Why?
5. What can we (the CF community youth team) do to help you participate?
6. Are you aware of the programs and services we offer?  
If so, how did you find out about us?  
If not, what can we do to help raise your awareness?
7. Before this focus group, had you ever participated in any activities we  
have  
offered?
8. What kinds of programs and services do you think we should be offering?
9. Do you feel like you get enough information about what is going on in the  
community.
10. What is the best way for us to get the word out?

## *Preparing for a Focus Group*

- 1. Identify the major objective of the meeting.*
- 2. Carefully develop/select five to six questions*
- 3. Plan the sequence of your session*
- 4. Get in touch with potential volunteers to invite them to the session. Remember that having a good representation from all groups of youth is essential.* Send them a follow-up invitation with a proposed agenda, session time and list of questions the group will discuss. Plan to provide a copy of the report from the session to each member and let them know you will do this.
- 5. About three days before the session, call each member to remind them to attend.*

## *Developing Questions*

- 1. Develop five to six questions* – Focus sessions should last one to 1.5 hours - in this time, one can ask at most five or six questions.
- 2. Always first ask yourself what problem or need will be addressed by the information gathered during the session* e.g., better understand the

needs of the youth in your community, examine if a new service or idea will work, further understand how a program is failing, etc.

3. ***Focus groups are basically multiple interviews.*** Therefore, many of the same guidelines for conducting focus groups are similar to conducting interviews.

### **Planning the Session**

1. ***Scheduling*** - Plan meetings to be one to 1.5 hours long. Over lunch seems to be a very good time for other to find time to attend.

2. ***Setting and Refreshments*** - Hold sessions in a conference room, or other setting with adequate air flow and lighting. Choose a location where participants will feel comfortable. Configure chairs so that all members can see each other. Provide name tags for participants, as well. Provide refreshments and food.

3. ***Ground Rules*** - It's critical that all members participate as much as possible, yet the session move along while generating useful information. Because the session is often a one-time occurrence, it's useful to have a few, short ground rules that sustain participation, yet do so with focus. Consider the following three ground rules: a) keep focused, b) maintain momentum and c) get closure on questions.

4. ***Agenda*** - Consider the following agenda: welcome, review of agenda, review of goal of the meeting, review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, wrap up.

5. **Membership** - Focus groups are usually conducted with 6-10 members who have some similar nature, e.g., youth living in a particular area, etc. Select participants who are likely to be participative and reflective. Attempt to select participants as possible who don't know each other.

6. **Plan to record the session with either an audio or audio-video recorder.** Don't count on your memory. If this isn't practical, involve a co-facilitator who is there to take notes.

### **Facilitating the Session**

1. Remember that the **Major goal of facilitation is collecting useful information**

2. **Introduce yourself and the co-facilitator, if used.**

3. **Explain how you are going to record the responses.**

4. **Follow the agenda**

5. **Carefully word each question** before that question is addressed by the group. Allow the group a few minutes for each member to carefully record their answers. Then, facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time.

6. **After each question is answered, carefully reflect back a summary of what you heard (the note taker may do this).**

**7. *Ensure even participation.*** If one or two people are dominating the meeting, then call on others. Consider using a round- table approach, including going in one direction around the table, giving each person a minute to answer the question. If the domination persists, note it to the group and ask for ideas about how the participation can be increased.

**8. *Closing the session*** - Tell members that they will receive a copy of the report generated from their answers, thank them for coming, and adjourn the meeting.

### **Immediately After the Session**

**1. *Verify if the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the session.***

**2. *Make any notes on your written notes,*** e.g., to clarify any scratching, ensure pages are numbered, fill out any notes that don't make sense, etc.

**3. *Write down any observations made during the session.*** For example, where did the session occur and when, what was the nature of participation in the group? Were there any surprises during the session?