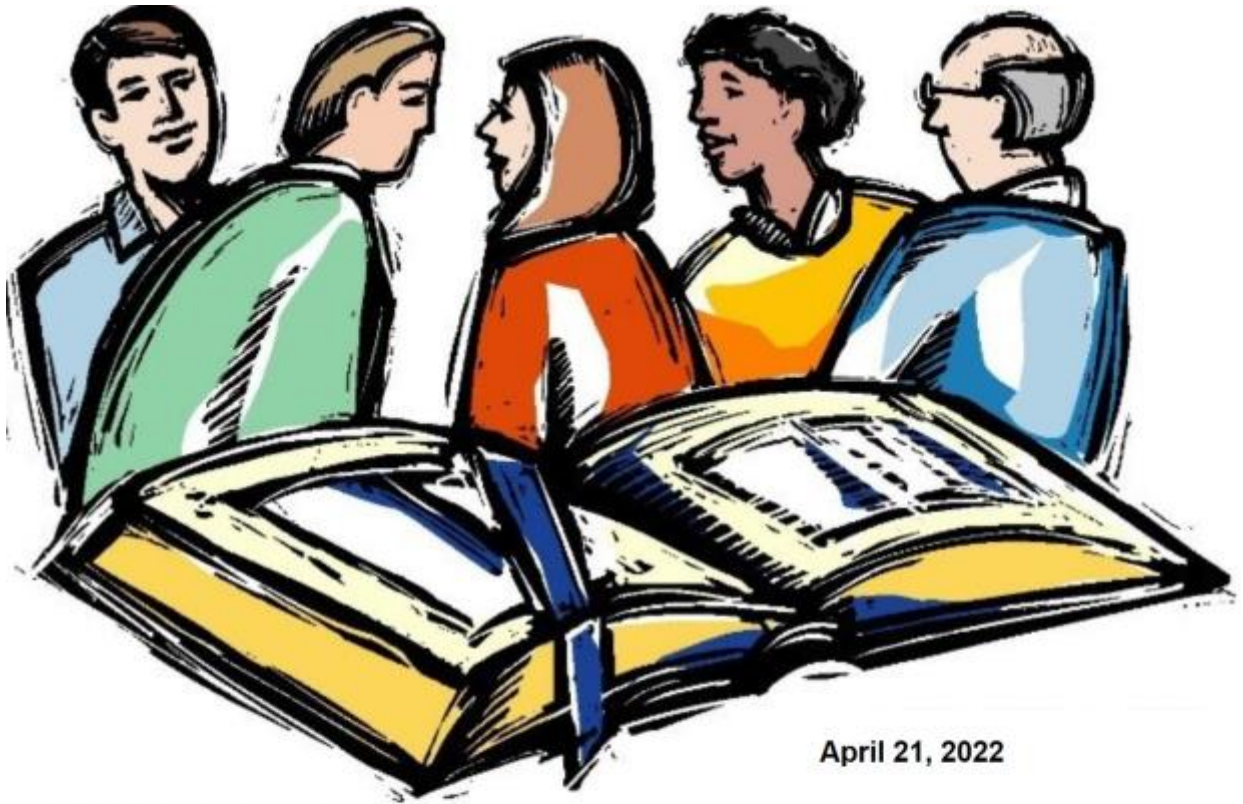




April 2022 Quality Improvement Forum
Call: "How to Run a Focus Group"

How to Run a Focus Group



April 21, 2022

Presenters

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Qualitative



Quantitative

QUALITATIVE VS QUANTITATIVE

QUALITATIVE

Cannot be counted
Focuses on:

WHY

QUANTITATIVE

Can be counted
Focuses on:

WHAT

At APHL, we collect data through **surveys**, **focus groups**, polls and interviews.



You just finished training 80 employees. You want to ask **all** participants how effective your training was and use the lessons learned for the session. How do you gather the data?



Survey! But why?



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- *You want to reach out to every beneficiary;*
 - *You have mostly quantitative data to collect; and*
 - *You want to keep the respondents' anonymity.*
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You just shared a toolkit with the US public health workforce. It has received 800 unique views. You want to improve the toolkit based on viewer feedback. How do you collect data?



Yes, you can do a focus group!



Why a focus group?

- **You are looking for in-depth information;**
- **You want to get more information in lesser time;**
- **The target population is very big; and**
- **You do not have enough information about them.**

A focus group is a structured group interview designed to answer a specific research question.



Compared to other methods, focus groups make it possible for researchers to observe the interaction among participants.



To run a focus group, you should go through three phases: Planning, Implementation (Event) and Closing

Before planning, **decide whether focus groups are appropriate**; use when the goal is to generate an explanation or you want to do a deep dive on a particular topic.



1. Planning



What method will you use?

Virtual vs. in-person meeting (IPM). Considerations:

- Ideal size for IPM: 8-12. Ideal size for virtual: 8
- If virtual, we recommend facilitator and all participants keep video camera on.
- Call on individuals to ensure everyone has opportunity to be heard.
- Prompt participants to expand on their thoughts.

Develop and send out an announcement for call for volunteers or call for nominations. Include information about:

- People: Who is the target population? Point out that their participation is voluntary, and their responses will remain anonymous.
- Purpose: What information are you seeking and how will the results be used? How the results will be used.
- Logistics: date and location of event, participant time commitment, travel arrangements if an IPM. Make sure you have printouts ready, such as an information sheet, consent form, etc.

Use Survey Monkey to collect names and characteristics of volunteers to match your target population.

Select the Target Population

- Years of experience (less than 3 yrs, 3-9 years, 10+).
- Role in the organization (supervisor vs non, technical vs admin, support).
- Familiarity/knowledge of the topic (none, some, extensive/expert).
- Geographical distribution across the US (eg. consider the 7 regional consortia).
- DEI representation (70% of PHL workforce is female).
- Identify potential candidates, notify and confirm participation.
- Send agenda with questions, copy of consent form, and travel arrangements, if applicable.
- Send thank you to those candidates not selected.



Year - Focus Group Title

Informed Consent for Participation in Focus Groups

Add an introductory paragraph about the focus group topic, date, time and location.

If you decide to join in the discussion, here are some things you should know:

- The focus group questions will be sent to you in advance.
- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- Your name will not be used in any reports about this discussion group. We will be taking notes during the discussion about what was said, but any written reports of the information shared will not identify who made specific comments.
- The discussion may be audiotaped so that when we write our report and so we can make sure we capture everything that was said. This will be for APHL purposes only.
- You may discontinue participation at any time, either by leaving the discussion group or not answering a question.
- Any questions you have about this discussion group and the study will be answered before we begin our discussion. Contact information is provided below for any questions that arise after you agree to participate.
- There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. We ask you to be honest even when your responses may not agree with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential.

Contact information: If you have any concerns about your participation in this discussion group or have any questions about the study, please contact <Name>, <Title>, <Program Name>, APHL by email at email@aphl.org or phone 240.485.xxxx.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above and agree to participate in this group.

Print your name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Witness: _____

Developing Focus Group Questions: Ask questions that will bring you powerful information.

- *Avoid Yes/No questions and use open-ended ones to get more information with "what" and "how"*

- *Create a flow in your questionnaire*

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- *Opening question*
 - *Introductory questions*
 - *Key questions*
 - *Closing question*
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- *Sequence your questions: go from general to specific.*
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2. Implementation (Event)



In-Person Focus Room Set-up

- **Can people easily find the room? Good signage is important!**
- **Is the room comfortable (temperature)?**
- **Participant seating set-up**
- **Have materials ready: handouts, flip charts**

Facilitation

- *Has some knowledge of the topic, but is not a direct stakeholder on the outcome.*
 - *Has strong verbal skills - direct, unbiased, unjudgmental.*
 - *Creates and maintains an environment based on comfort and trust.*
 - *Establishes ground rules.*
 - *Encourages everyone in the focus group to participate.*
 - *Asks for clarity or more information.*
 - *Implements parking lot as necessary.*
 - *Note: Make sure to have an assistant moderator who monitors the time and handles the logistics.*
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Note-Taking

- **Designate one person ahead of time (not a participant) to be the note-taker. Decide if someone else (also not a participant) will be writing notes on a flip chart.**
- **Record the conversation using a digital recorder.**
- **Ask for clarification if you do not understand something.**
- **Capture major themes, not a transcript.**
- **Clean your notes and add or complete reflection notes after the focus group.**

3. Closing

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- If time allows, review the major discussion points.
- If in-person, offer an opportunity for a group photo for future presentations.
- Identify next steps. Ask participants if they would like to be involved in any follow-up activities. (They are now invested and might be eager to help.)
- Develop a final report of findings using notes, white paper, and audio recording.
- Develop an action plan to implement improvements.



1 - Millennial Focus Group - Fall 2019



2 - Thank You! Any questions?



3 - Tina will send out an evaluation survey to all the call participants. The webinar file and PPT will be uploaded to the Quality Improvement Forum call archive.

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