

Planting Seeds for Success- FULL Focus Groups

The background is a solid teal color. On the right side, there are several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent pie chart with three segments, and several smaller, semi-transparent pie charts of varying sizes scattered around it. At the bottom right, there is a bar chart with four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, each with a semi-transparent teal fill.

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Goals for Today



In this presentation we will cover:




1. What focus groups are and how they can help your library engage community members
2. Tools and tips for designing focus groups and gathering participants
3. Skills for conducting inclusive, traumainformed focus groups

**Have you ever hosted a
focus group for your
library before?**

If so, feel free to share about it in the chat





Digging in: Focus Groups and their Value

- Focus groups consist of several selected participants that partake in an intentional conversation directed by a moderator in order to gather community input.
- They are used to answer open ended questions, share diverse perspectives, and foster creativity and discussion.

For example –
conducting focus groups
to engage caregivers
with children’s summer
program planning



Planning with Purpose



- **A symbiotic relationship** - participants get to voice their input, and you gain knowledge and insight on what they value
- Involve the community and foster collaboration early in your research with focus groups
- Prevent unforeseen pitfalls in your planning before it is too late
- Ensure you are asking the right questions as you move forward


When NOT to Conduct Focus Groups



- If you are not able to incorporate any suggestions you may receive
- You are trying to apply your findings to a much larger population
- The topics are sensitive and personal
- If you don't have the time to do it right

**For what purpose would
you host a focus group
for your library?**

Please share your answers in the chat



Design Tools and Tips: Recruiting Participants

- Be intentional and try to utilize existing partnerships and connections in the community
- Consider barriers to the discussion such as the power structures that may influence the conversation
- Try to gather 4-8 people
- Offer incentives
- Make sure participants can give informed consent






Ground Rules

- Introductions
- Set the tone
- Explain the project
- Ask participants to speak to each other, not only to the moderator
- Speak, listen, and act respectfully



**Do you have plans to
host a focus group for
your library in the
future?**



Cultivating Your Questions

- Question structure is key
 - Don't overcomplicate questions
 - Ask follow up questions
 - Be creative (reflections, examples, ratings, or even drawings could be included)
- Have a designated note taker
- Record it
- Be considerate of everyone's time



How can you ensure your participants feel comfortable?

Please place your suggestions in the chat.



Fostering a Safe Sharing Environment



- Demonstrate verbal and nonverbal listening cues
- Ask for clarification before assuming what someone means
- Be flexible if important, unanticipated points arise
- Exemplify confidence
- Stay neutral
- Always be respectful of differing opinions
- Try to give everyone an equal chance to share
- Avoid leading questions
- Steer the conversation back on topic if it goes astray



The Challenges

Consider potential problems and prepare your response beforehand.

- Experts / dominant talkers
- Shy participants
- Ramblers
- Groupthink

Practice!





A Trauma - Informed Lens

- Host your focus group in a safe, friendly space
- Be transparent
- Have empathy and respect
- Offer connections and resources



**Are there any other
experiences or thoughts you
would like to share?**

If you have participated in a focus group before you can raise your hand
or share about your experience in the chat.

Questions?

Thank you!



Resources

[https://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger - FocusGroupInterviews.pdf](https://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf)

[https://researchdesignreview.com/2020/02/16/focus - groups - heterogeneity - vs - homogeneity/](https://researchdesignreview.com/2020/02/16/focus-groups-heterogeneity-vs-homogeneity/)

[https://learningspacetoolkit.org/needs - assessment/data-gathering - tools - 2/focus-groups-things-to-consider/index.html](https://learningspacetoolkit.org/needs-assessment/data-gathering-tools-2/focus-groups-things-to-consider/index.html)

LRS Resources

[https://www.lrs.org/2022/06/15/reading - and - recording - the - room - focus - groups/](https://www.lrs.org/2022/06/15/reading-and-recording-the-room-focus-groups/)

[https://www.lrs.org/2022/07/07/planting - seeds - for - success - full - focus - groups/](https://www.lrs.org/2022/07/07/planting-seeds-for-success-full-focus-groups/)

[https://www.lrs.org/2021/08/18/nothing - about - us - without - us - equitable - evaluation - through - community - engagement/](https://www.lrs.org/2021/08/18/nothing-about-us-without-us-equitable-evaluation-through-community-engagement/)

[https://www.lrs.org/2022/07/28/a - trauma - informed - lens - communities - libraries - and - research/](https://www.lrs.org/2022/07/28/a-trauma-informed-lens-communities-libraries-and-research/)