

Conducting Professional Focus Group Research

THE FOUNDATIONS

Agenda

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DAY I

8:30-9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Continental Breakfast

- Registration and Submission of Questions

9:00-10:00 a.m.

DEMONSTRATION FOCUS GROUP

- Preamble
- Introductions
- How should focus groups be used?
- Advantages and disadvantages compared to other methods.

10:00-10:30 a.m.

Uses of Focus Groups

- A social scientific approach to focus groups
- Ethical issues, technical issues, defining the purpose of research
- Relationship between focus groups, surveys, and other methods
- Limitations and generalizability

10:30-10:45 a.m. *Break*

10:45-11:30 a.m.

Research Design Issues

- Survey first or focus groups first?
- Breaks and number of groups
- Homogeneous vs. heterogeneous groups
- Sample size and types
- Maximum/minimum size of the groups
- Duration and timing
- Recruitment and screening of participants

11:30-12:30 noon

Teams Develop Research Design for DAY II Mock Focus Groups

1. Select a key research question
2. Create an appropriate research design to answer the question
3. Decide on population, sample, recruitment, and number of groups
4. Write a screener

12:30-1:30 p.m. *Lunch and Critique of Research Designs*

1:30-2:00 p.m.

Development of the Moderator's Guide (Protocol)

- Refining the research question (outcomes/hypotheses)
- Mapping the flow of questions
- Designing productive questions
- Idea generation versus debate generation
- Probes and elicitation techniques
- Building in flexibility and reliability

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Teams Develop Moderator's Guide

3:00-3:15 p.m. ***Break and Trainer Critique of Team I Moderator's Guide***

3:15-4:30 p.m.

Moderation Theory and Techniques

- Ice-breaking procedures
- Facilitating toward even participation
- Controlling dominants and dealing with difficult participants
- Keeping on task and ensuring even coverage of questions
- What to do when a question has been answered in a previous question
- Coping with complex questions
- Deflecting questions about "facts"
- Avoiding politicization of the process
- Termination procedures

Communication Theory

- One-way versus two-way communication
- Listening for meaning
- Modes of listening

DAY II

8:00-8:30 a.m. ***Continental Breakfast and Critique of Moderator's Guides***

8:30-9:00 a.m.

Logistical Issues

- Working with community-based groups; working in different and multiple languages
- Using interpreters, simultaneous translation
- Informed consent agreements
- Single vs. co-moderators
- Note taking, audio vs. video-taping; GroupWare; Using laptops in the field

9:00-9:50 a.m.

FOCUS GROUP: TEAM I (2 moderators @ 25 minutes each)

- 9:50-10:20 a.m. ***Processing Focus Group I***

10:20-10:35 a.m. **Break**

10:35-11:00 a.m.

Working with Qualitative Data I

- Debriefing sessions
- Using transcripts
- The place of quantitative data in focus groups
- Structuring, coding, blocking, reorganizing data
- Using the word processor in qualitative data analysis
- Types of computerized text data analyzers

11:00-11:50 a.m.

FOCUS GROUP: TEAM II (2 moderators @ 25 minutes each)

- 11:50-12:30 p.m. ***Processing Focus Group II***

12:30-1:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:30-2:20 p.m.

FOCUS GROUP: TEAM III (2 moderators @ 25 minutes each)

- 2:20-2:50 p.m. ***Processing Focus Group III***

2:50-3:00 p.m. **Break**

3:00-4:00 p.m. ***Report Writing and Presentation***

- Structuring the report
- Executive summaries vs. in-depth reports
- Highlights and recommendations/implications

4:00-4:30 p.m. ***Wrap Up Focus Group and Workshop Evaluation***

NOTE: Those who have completed THE FOUNDATIONS may take THE ADVANCED WORKSHOP immediately or at a later date.