
Planning a Focus Group: The Details

This handout for youth and adults gives an overview of focus group planning and is also a worksheet you can use.

Where to have your focus group?

Choose a location for your event. It can be a:

- School classroom
- Meeting room in a community center
- Recreation room at a church
- Someone's living room – as long as an adult who lives there is at home and the room is big enough.

Things to consider:

- Do you need to reserve the space?
- Must you pay a rental or custodial fee? (If so, perhaps offer a trade. For example, your group could mow the facility's lawn in exchange for free space.)
- Can the location provide chairs, tables, a bathroom?

Tip: The simplest way to hold a youth focus group may be to do it on a weekday, in a classroom, shortly after school lets out. That way your participants are already there and won't get lost. Plus, the school probably won't charge you for the room – as long as you clean up.

Write down possible locations:

Who in your group will call those locations to request/confirm space:

When to have it?

You must also decide when to hold your focus group. On a Saturday? After school? In the evening? This decision in part depends on **where** your event will be. Before calling potential locations, make a list of potential dates and times that work for you.

Tip: Don't forget to check the calendar for national, religious, or school holidays.

Write down potential dates and times:

What supplies will you need?

Things you might need to include:

- Soft drinks and light snacks (cookies or chips)
- Cups and napkins
- Chairs and a few long tables
- Trash bags
- Poster board for signs
- Masking tape and markers
- Camera and film
- Notepaper for you to take notes

What else? Make your list of needed supplies:

Who will bring?

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Setting up:

What must you do to set up?

Who will do it?

Arrange tables and chairs.

Lay out snacks, drinks, cups, and ice.

Put up signs so people can find you.

Go over your questions and agenda.

What could go wrong?

Think in advance about potential problems, and plan for them. Do you need to remind a custodian to unlock the room? Are you sure the cookies won't melt in your trunk before the event? Don't forget ice! Arrive early!

Make a list of things that could go wrong and what you will do to prevent them:

Use a separate piece of paper to take additional planning notes.

Recruiting Focus Group Participants

No matter how well you have planned the logistics, your event will be a flop if people don't show up.

Your target: 6-12 participants. We suggest you *over-recruit* since some people will probably back out at the last minute.

Getting people to sign up

There are several ways to recruit participants:

- Flyers and posters (see sample on next page)
- Classroom announcements
- Canvass your neighborhood (go door-to-door)
- Tell other community groups
- Offer a raffle or drawing to encourage people to come. (Like a \$10 gift card to Blockbuster, The Gap, etc.)

Your approach?

Choose a few recruitment approaches from the list above, or add your own. Write them below, along with who will take the lead:

Do what?

Who will do it?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Getting people to SHOW up

The day before your event, do a few of the following things to make sure people remember to come:

- Call people at home to remind them
- Put up reminder signs at school
- If participants signed up from a particular classroom, make an announcement in class.

Your approach?

Can you think of other ways to make sure people show up? Make your list below, along with who will take the lead:

Do what?

Who will do it?
