

MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for being here today. My name is _____ and I will be the person talking with you this evening. This session will last about 60 minutes. We also have _____ from _____ who will be taking notes as you speak tonight. In addition, we will audio record our discussion so that the conversation can be listened to again and can be typed into a transcript. These allow us to catch important information you share that we might have missed along the way.

Before we start I am going to give you some background information. What we are doing here tonight is a small project that will help us understand the best ways to communicate with people about a study called the National Children's Study, or the NCS. Before we ask people to join the NCS, it is important that we know what draws them to it and what information we need to keep in mind to tell them about the study.

The National Children's Study will be largest and most detailed study in history looking at children's health and development in the US. The goal of the National Children's Study is to identify ways to improve the health of our children. Project teams will work with doctors, nurses, community leaders and public health officials in communities like [PRIMARY SAMPLING UNIT] and surrounding towns to collect information from mothers AND from fathers. They will collect information about the places children live, the people in their lives, and their health from before they are born until their 21st birthday.

Now you know a little bit about the National Children's Study. I want to make it very clear that you are not being asked to participate in the National Children's Study and right now we do not know if your community will be selected for the Study.

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You have been asked here today to share your thoughts, feelings and attitudes about things that we should consider when we talk with people about the National Children's Study. Information that you share with us today will help us explain the National Children's Study in the future so that parents will feel comfortable hearing more about the study and getting involved. Any questions?

Ground Rules

I will ask some questions that I would like you all to discuss among yourselves. NOT everyone has to answer every question, but it is important that we hear everyone's point of view by the end of the meeting. It's important that we hear everything that each one of you is saying, so please speak one at a time; remember that everyone's opinion is valuable, so please respect each other's point of view, even if you don't agree; and finally, we would like everyone to agree not to share any information you learn about other group members with anyone outside of this group. You each have a table tent card in front of you. You can write your name on it, or if you would like to keep your name private, you can use an alias or nickname.

Start Digital Recorder

1. The first thing I want to do is show you a video to introduce you to the National Children's Study. *(Use most recent NCS promotional video.)*
 - a. Now that you have seen the video, how would you describe the study to someone else in your community?
 - b. What did you like about the video? Was there anything you disliked about the video? What stood out in your mind from the video?
 - c. What questions do you have as a result of watching this video?

2. A major part of our discussion today is to explore how we can best communicate with families to interest them in becoming a part of the NCS.
 - a. First, how can we best make [FOCUS GROUP POPULATION], such as yourself aware of the study;

- b. Second, how can we communicate with [FOCUS GROUP POPULATION] to encourage them to support the study and perhaps enroll their own families?
3. So how can we build awareness about NCS? When people hear about the NCS for the first time, they often hear about it through some kind of advertising – like a newspaper or radio ad, billboard, brochure, or maybe even by going to a community meeting and seeing the video you just watched. We are going to show you professionally-developed advertising which has been created for cities and counties where the National Children’s Study has already begun. We will talk about each ad to find out how well it catches your attention, how much information it provides, and how effective it is in (motivating you) or (motivating those to whom you provide services) to seek more information about the NCS and possibly to enroll in the study. Let’s look at print media.
4. (Show the materials – approach to this can be individualized by site) – present these outside of the focus group session with the same format asking them to comment/rank each as described below (sticker examples on those most attractive, or individually list their thoughts putting them into categories, etc.) as they come in and/or while they are waiting through the consent process.
 - a. Do these (name type of material; i.e. Billboard, poster, etc.) make you want to look at them? Do you think (sub-population) would look at them?
 - b. If these ads are seen many times and in different places, would they make (you) or (sub-population) want to know more about the study?
 - c. What sorts of questions would you have?
 - d. Do the ads leave a positive impression?
 - e. What would make them better?
5. (Show the materials.)
 - a. Do these (name type of material; i.e. radio ads and video) get your attention?
 - b. Do you think (sub-population) would look at them?
 - c. If you heard or saw them frequently, would they get a message across? What message would that be?

- d. What other ways (designs, formats) would work just as well or better, but are not represented here?
 - e. How would you go about telling someone in your neighborhood about the study? What documents might you use? What would you tell them?
6. Now we are going to show you some videos. These videos were developed just to get your opinions about how recruiters can do a good job providing information to POPULATION about the NCS. The scenes are portrayed by actors. I'd like your initial reaction to each. Then, I'll ask a question or two before we move to the next video..
- a. Overall, was this a realistic conversation?
 - b. Was the recruiter's approach effective for you?
 - c. What did the recruiter do best? What got your attention?
 - d. Were there things in the conversation that you would find annoying, and if so what were they?
 - e. Would this approach be effective?

(Show video of mother and recruiter with father. Sample script appends.)

- f. Do you think that the responses of the parents are realistic?
 - g. What do you think the common response of the mother, father, and family members would be based on this information? Explain why they would react that way.
 - h. How might [FOCUS GROUP POPULATION] help spread the word in a positive way about the NCS?
 - i. If you were the staff member, how would you be sure to include all of the important information but make it easier for the woman, father, and family members to understand?
7. Imagine a woman is considering participation in the NCS. How might her husband or partner influence her decision?

- a. What information would be useful to [FOCUS GROUP POPULATION] about the study? For instance, how could the recruiter best explain to the family what to expect when the NCS visits the home?
 - b. How accurately does the video represent the concerns a husband or partner may have about participating in the NCS?
 - c. How could the staff member help relieve these concerns?

8. Now, let's talk about what it would take to get a commitment from [FOCUS GROUP POPULATION] to enroll in and want to stay in the NCS study.
 - a. From the initial explanation we gave and the media you have seen, how do you think that the NCS can encourage women to participate in the study?
 - b. How should the NCS engage the baby's father?
 - c. How should the NCS help a woman to feel comfortable and committed to the long-term activities of the NCS?

9. Finally, let me summarize what we have discussed so far (hit key points about poster and print ads, radio, and video). Now, is there anything else that we need to think about as we go out into the community to spread the word about the NCS? How about when we encourage women and their families to join the NCS? Are there things we should think about when putting together print materials or radio or video announcements?

Thank you for attending. I am going to stop the recording now.

Stop Digital Recorder