

UNCOVER EH Focus Group Facilitation Guide

Objective

Conduct focus groups with environmental health (EH) professionals to describe current and emerging issues impacting the EH professional and programs at state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) health departments.

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for participating in this focus group as part of the Understanding the Needs, Challenges, Opportunities, Vision and Emerging Roles in Environmental Health (UNCOVER EH) initiative. The overall purpose of this focus group is to assess current and emerging challenges impacting EH professionals and programs at STLT health departments. Collecting this information EH professionals working at STLT health departments is essential for ensuring EH programs are prepared and EH professionals are equipped and ready to address future challenges.

My name is [facilitator name], and I am with [agency or organization], which is one of the agencies/organizations supporting the UNCOVER EH initiative and facilitating this focus group. I'm here to listen to you and what you have to tell me, and it doesn't matter to me how you answer my questions, I'm interested in hearing your thoughts. Today, we would like to hear from you about how you think and feel about issues and challenges impacting state, tribal, local, and territorial health department EH programs and professionals.

Participating in this focus group is completely voluntary and takes approximately 90 minutes. There are no known risks or direct benefits to you from participating or choosing not to participate, but your responses will help inform the challenges EH programs face and describe the types of actions or resources that could help health departments and EH professionals address future needs.

For this focus group, we will discuss [insert topic listed in Attachment E]. I will provide a few details about the theme and related information obtained from the UNCOVER EH web-based assessment. We will then further discuss the topic while answering several questions. To ensure we capture all of the valuable information you provide, we will be taking notes. Any results reported or shared with the public will be in aggregate form only, and we will not publish or share your name or release any information that could identify you.

To ensure a productive session and to maintain a safe space for dialogue, please follow the ground rules:

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers.

CDC estimates the average public reporting burden for this collection of information as 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data/information sources, gathering and maintaining the data/information needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing burden to CDC/ATSDR Information Collection Review Office; 1600 Clifton Road NE, MS D-74, Atlanta, Georgia 30333; ATTN: PRA (0920-0879).

- When you do have something to say, please do so. There are many of you in the group and it is important to obtain each of your views.
- Everyone's perspectives will be heard and respected.
- Each participant will maintain the privacy of the participation and responses of others in the group.
- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to stop participating in this group at any time.
- Please place all cellular phones on silent. If you cannot and you must respond to a call, please do so as quietly as possible and rejoin us as quickly as you can.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Questions

I'd like to start our conversation by presenting themes identified from UNCOVER EH web-based assessment results about [insert topic]. Then I would like everyone to spend a few minutes thinking about these aspects of [insert topic] and how they are currently or might in the future impact your EH program.

1. Do you have any thoughts about this topic, observations, or related impacts to your health department's EH program?

Thank you for sharing that feedback. Now I would like to ask several questions and engage the group in discussion.

2. Of the issues listed and discussed, which do you believe are the 5 most important or having the most impact on your health department's EH program? (Record the number of times each issue is mentioned and then identify the 5 priorities based on the highest counts)
 - Do these issues apply to all health departments, large or small, rural or urban, or depending on geographic location?
 - Do you agree with the overall ranking of these issues?
 - How could these 5 issues be presented as problem statements?
3. What resources or assistance could help EH programs address these top 5 priorities? (Write the input on the flip chart. Examples to share with the group might include guidance documents, grants or other funding sources, and increased support from decision makers)
 - Which of these resources are currently available?
 - Which of these are not currently available?
 - Who should provide these resources?
4. What resources or types of support could help EH professionals be better equipped and prepared to address these top 5 priorities? (Write the input on the flip chart. Examples to share with the group might include training courses and building professional competencies or availability of equipment or technology)

- Which of these resources are currently available?
- Which of these are not currently available?
- Who should provide these resources?

Conclusion

This has been a very helpful and insightful session. Thank you so much for taking the time to share your perspectives and experiences. Before we wrap up, is there anything else that you would like to share or that we might have missed?

Ok, thank you again for your time. Are there any final questions? If not, you are free to go. Have a wonderful day!