

Attachment 5

Youth Interview/Focus Group Guide

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Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) High School Student Focus Group Discussion Guide

Moderator Initials: _____

Focus Group Start Time: _____

Date of Focus Group: _____

Focus Group End Time: _____

Welcome and Overview:

Thank you again for coming to our discussion today. We are _____ & _____ from ICF International, a research and evaluation company that is helping your school district learn more about your health course. We appreciate your willingness to talk openly about your health class and the sexual health lessons that were taught by your teacher. We know that some of the things we are going to talk about may be sensitive so we would like to encourage everyone to respect each other. For us, that means (1) giving everyone in the group a chance to speak, (2) not criticizing other people or their ideas, and (3) keeping everything we discuss private (not telling other students or teachers what your classmates may have said during this focus group).

During the focus group today, I will be asking the group different questions. You are really the experts on what your class experiences have been like, so we would like to hear from all of you. We want to hear your opinions about the health lessons that covered HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention as well as better understand how students your age feel about these topics. We will be recording the discussion and _____ will be taking notes to help me remember what we discussed. But, no one will be able to put your name with any of the comments you make so what you say will stay confidential.

At the end of our discussion today, you will receive a \$30 gift card as a thank you for your time.

Before we get started, let's go over a few ground rules. [**Note to moderator: Refer to pre-written ground rules (on flip chart or board) and go over aloud with group.**]

- Give your complete attention to the group (e.g., no cell phone use, no side conversations)
- Participate as much or as little as you want
- Allow everyone to participate
- Don't judge other people's comments - they may have a different experience than you did
- Try to speak up, speak clearly, and speak one at a time

- Keep things private – what is said in the group stays in the group. Please do not share what is said with others outside of the group.
- Please do not use the real names of other students in our discussion

OK, before we start, do you have any questions?

[Note to moderator: Answer any questions posed by participants]

Great, I will now turn on the recorder and we will get started. **[Note to Moderator: Start audio recorder.]**

Ice Breaker

We are going to begin our discussion today by talking about your experiences in your health class this year and how different sexual health topics were presented such as abstinence, HIV/STDs, pregnancy prevention, condom use, and HIV and STD testing. After, we will spend the rest of the discussion talking about how the material may have impacted you or other students in your class.

So, how many of you know the game “hot potato”? To warm up, we are going to play a quick game. I am going to pass the ball to someone and I want you to tell me one thing that someone your age can do to stay healthy. After you answer, I want you to pass the ball to someone else. Remember, you must answer and toss the ball quickly so that your hand does not burn up from the hot potato!

Let’s begin.... **[Note to Moderator: Begin game and allow group to play for a few minutes. Remind participants to answer quickly and that there are no wrong answers if they are holding the ball for too long. If possible, try to incorporate answers students gave throughout discussion where there is a natural fit.]**

Excellent, you gave some really good answers. Those were all great examples of things that young people can do to stay healthy.

General Sexual Health

Since all of you are taking health this year, I know there are a number of different topics that you cover. For now though, let’s think about sexual health, in particular. For our discussion today, whenever we say “sexual health” we mean the lessons that taught about the reproductive system and all the different things you can do to prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs.

1. When you found out you were going to talk about sexual health in your health class, how did you feel? What were you hoping to learn?

Quality of Delivery of Sexual Health Lessons

The way you learn and what you find useful from a class is often influenced by your teacher. So, I want to talk for a while about your health teacher. I realize you may have different teachers, which is why it is important for us to hear from a variety of students. Your experiences might be the same, or they might be very different. We won't tell your teacher or the school district what is said about any specific teacher, so you can be as honest as you want to be.

2. Did you like the way your teacher taught health? Why or why not? (Take into consideration the way he or she teaches all kinds of health topics—not just those related to sexual health).

Probe: What makes him or her a “good” or “not-so-good” health teacher?

3. How comfortable was your teacher discussing sexual health, including the different things that you can do to prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs?

Probes:

- a. Was this any different (better, worse, about the same) from teaching general health topics? In what ways?
 - b. Did your teacher seem embarrassed or act weird about any of the topics? How so?
4. How comfortable were you asking questions about any of the topics covered by the sexual health lessons? Was it easy or hard to ask questions? What made it easy or hard?
 5. Did the teacher make the classroom a comfortable place to talk about these things? How so?
 6. Did you feel like your teacher was able to answer the questions you and your classmates had about sex and about the different things you can do to prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs?
 7. Were there any questions that your teacher either would not or could not answer? Tell us about that. (What were the questions about? Did they forget to answer them or just not want to answer them?)
 8. What were some different ways that your teacher helped you learn the material? For example, did you have small group discussions or class exercises like role plays—or was it always the teacher just talking to you?
Probe: What did you think of the homework assignments or activities in the workbook or student journal? Was this something your teacher used often?

9. Did your teacher give you time to practice helpful skills – like how to make decisions or talk about difficult topics? For example, from the lessons you covered in class [**Note to Moderator: Remind the group of a specific lesson or practice activity from class and have them describe if enough time was provided to complete the activity.**]
10. Thinking about everything that was covered in class related to sexual health, was there a topic you wanted to spend more time on or something you wanted to learn that wasn't talked about?
11. If you could give your teacher one piece of advice for how to help next year's students learn more about sexual health, including the different things you can do to prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs, what would you tell them?
Probe: What could they do to deliver the information better?

Student Attitudes/Perceptions about HIV, STD, and Pregnancy Prevention

Okay, so now we are going to shift gears. We've been talking about your health teacher and how they presented different sexual health topics in class. Thinking about all the material that you discussed and everything that was learned, we are now going to focus the last part of our discussion on how the sexual health lessons may have changed your attitudes about HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention or the attitudes of other students in your class.

12. Let's talk for a minute about abstinence. Regardless of whether you have or have not had sex, we want to hear your opinions about abstinence. Overall – how easy or hard do you think it is for high school students to be abstinent? Why?
13. Do you think any of the information you learned in health class changed your class's attitudes about waiting to have sex until you are older? If so, what information?
14. Did anything you learned in health class make you more confident in your ability to wait to have sex until you are older? If so, what did you learn that helped make you more confident?

Thanks for sharing. Now let's talk for a minute about your views on other ways to avoid pregnancy and STDs, including HIV.

15. When you think about preventing STDs and pregnancy, in what ways do you feel that your health class has prepared you to do this?

16. Do you feel like you have more knowledge about STDs and pregnancy prevention now that you had health class? What do you know now that you didn't know before the class?
17. Did anything you learned in health class change your beliefs about the importance of getting tested for STDs/HIV? If so, what did you learn and how did your beliefs change?
18. Did your health class teach you about where to get tested for HIV or other STDs or help you feel more confident in your ability to get tested? If so, how?
19. Did anything you learned in health class change the way you think about condoms? If so, what did you learn and how did your attitude change?
20. Did your health class teach you how to use condoms correctly or help you to feel more confident in your ability to use condoms? If so, how?
21. Did anything you learned in health class change the way you think about birth control? If so, what did you learn and how did your attitude change?
22. Do you think there are benefits to waiting to have a baby until you are older?? Did you always feel this way or was there something you learned in health class that changed your feelings? Please explain.
23. Do you know where to get birth control if you would ever need it? Did you learn about this in health class?
24. Overall, do you think you are more likely to try to avoid HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy after taking the health class at your school? Why or why not?

Final Thoughts and Closing

Thanks so much for spending your time with me today and sharing all your ideas and experiences. This wraps up our focus group discussion. Do you have any questions or anything extra you would like to share? **[Note to Moderator: Allow sufficient time/pause for group to answer.]**

We appreciate your time and input. It has been extremely valuable. **[Note to Moderator: Turn off audio recorder and provide incentive.]**