

QUICK START GUIDE

Processes + tools to help move ideas quickly through communities who have demonstrated readiness

Focus Groups I Concept + Facilitator Protocol

Purpose

1.) To collect the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of a cross-section of youth (ages 3 - 23) and those who care about youth using a variety of techniques. Youth insight will be collected around what they would like to see from government and community to support their goals for success, with special consideration to their views and experiences on the effects of the recession. 2.) To identify the general themes emerging from the voices of youth to share with agencies, policy makers, program and service providers, and the private sector, 3.) To offer a diverse variety of methods and formats to present our findings and to provide a strong avenue for the voice of the experts -- our youth.

The goal is to capture emerging themes, especially among our youth in the valley, to ultimately affect the policies that can help keep them from getting lost in a challenging economy. We hope to provide data that will inform policy-makers and programs around the unique circumstances of a recession time with this pilot project in the Treasure Valley.

Collection and Analysis Team

(Bios Available)

Linda Jensen, Director, Idaho Kids Count, Mountain States Group (Small Faces Initiative Director)

Susan Berning, President Portico Group, (Qualitative Project Director and Focus Group Coordinator)

Harriet Shaklee, University of Idaho, Associate Professor, Extension Family Development Specialist (Social Scientist and Quantitative Data Director)

Judy Brown, Director of the Idaho Center on Budget & Tax Policy (Advisor)

Elizabeth Morgan, Boise State University, Director of the Family Studies Initiative (Advisor)

Focus Groups

Focus Groups ~ 15 Sessions ages 6 - 23, providers, teachers, parents

Relaxed sessions with youth who represent a variety of situations: cultures; income levels (especially low and middle); opportunities; in or out of schools, homeless, with children, and those with a stated interest in policy.

Group Types: 1.) High School senior Government or Civics classes, leadership groups, 2.) Graduating College Seniors, 3.) Non school young adults, 4.) Elementary children between 6 - 11 years 5.) Ethnic and Marginalized youth, refugees, 6.) Jr. High School, 7.) Providers 8.) Teachers 9.) Youth in alternative programs, 10.) Youth in community programs

Additional Qualitative Efforts

- 1.) Interviews ~ Up to Twelve People: One-on-One or Combination Sessions
- 2.) Public Sound Off Opportunities ~ Public Discussion
- 3.) Target Groups Feedback ~ up to 20 Specialists
- 4.) On-going Virtual Collection Networks

Presentations & Products

This qualitative phase of the Initiative will produce the following products to communicate findings and disseminate to appropriate users through a variety of channels. Formal presentation of findings will be at Idaho Kids Count Academy in September 2009:

- 1.) Organized, raw data.
- 2.) Findings report and executive summary
- 3.) Video
- 4.) Final communications, technical, and document materials packet (materials)
- 5.) Quotes and photos (where appropriate) booklet.

Working Materials

Release waiver; specially tailored invitations for each event and for each population; video, recorder and facilitator protocols; focus group schedules and outline; interview schedules and outline; virtual events outline; online content scripts; project concept paper; participant packet -- where appropriate.

Focus Group Protocol & Questions

Focus groups for 13 - 23 year olds are 1.5 hours long, and for children 6 - 12 are one hour long. We one protocol and question set for 6 -12 year olds and a slightly adjusted set for older youth. Questions for your review

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Groups meet for 1.5 for older youth, and 1 hour for younger children.
- Groups will ideally contain 7 - 9 members although variations will be accepted (such as a classroom).
- Group members can be selected randomly or intentionally.
- Selection method will be documented in the data analysis.
- The goal for group composition is to find individuals who are highly representative of the total.
- Supervisors, teachers, parents and other "authorities" will *not* be mixed with the youth or employees.
- The "power relationship" in a group must be as close to absolutely flat (i.e., peer) as possible.
- Balance of power will be the goal, avoiding "experts" unless it is a group of experts.
- Groups will have two evaluators -- an interviewer and a recorder who also observes group behavior.

PRE-MEETING CHECKLIST

- Room set up 30 minutes before event
- Sound check for recorder
- Table for snacks and sign-in
- Room set up: one table or in semi-circle of chairs – not spread out
- Make sure that the stakeholder group are the *only* ones in the room. (release teachers if it is a youth group, etc.)

RECORDER'S GUIDE

- Arrive 1/2 hour early to help with set-up
- Keep track of any changes or deviations to the questions.
- Mark the time on the recorded notes at regular intervals.
- Keep time and give a clear signal when there is a ½ hr, 15 min, 10 min, and 'time's up.'
- Take notes (word for word for quotes, and essence during descriptions).
- Record only comments. While typing, do not record names, titles, or other indications of identity.
- If there is a name or other identifier on the electronic recording, don't transcribe the identifier into the notes.
- Operate recording equipment. (The recorder is only used as a back up in case the computer capture fails).

- Ask questions when invited.
- Note non-verbal communication and record nodding, or other signs of communication.
- Do not participate in the discussion.
- If there is a participant that keeps repeating their point, simply put their initials next to the statement so the calculations can be weighed correctly. Or if a participant is notably dominant, place a note next to their comments.
- Debrief with moderator.
- Contribute to analysis for reports.

FACILITATOR'S SCRIPT

Introduction

Hi, my name is _____. I work with people called "Idaho Kid's Count" and we want to know what you think so we can tell people like your Mayor, and Governor your ideas. We want to know more about what kids in your situation notice or think so that we know what types of laws to suggest to government and communities. Working with me today is _____ who will help out. Thank you for talking with us!

Confidentiality

You've probably noticed the recorder. We're recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we can't write fast enough to get them all down. We will be on a first name basis today, and we won't use any names in our reports.

Purpose & Outcomes

We are researchers doing an evaluation of how you feel about your lives in Idaho, especially during hard times. *Our most important goal is to get information that may help our lawmakers understand your thoughts.*

Our evaluation report will be available early September. Please indicate on our sign up sheet if you would like to be informed of the findings. There is also a place on the sign up sheet to indicate if you would like to share your thoughts further through video. We will not be able to get to everyone, but if we have time, we'd like to call you if you have an interest. Everyone needs to sign in.

About Focus Groups

When people get together like this it's called a focus group because it focuses on one topic or a few related topics. I will be asking questions and we will both be taking notes so that your ideas aren't missed. Remember, we aren't recording your names, just the things you say.

Introductions & Ground Rules

- Let's quickly go around the room and tell us your first name.
- **Is your cell phone off?**
- Please speak up so we can hear you.
- We really want to hear from each of you, so I encourage you all to participate actively.
- This is an open discussion. You're free to respond to each others' comments, but remember this discussion is between Susan and you, rather than among you all.
- We're NOT looking for everyone to agree on answers the more different opinions we get the better.
- We're not looking for any particular answers, no "rights" or "wrongs", just your ideas, whatever they are.

- Please do not hesitate to ask me a question if my questions or comments are not clear. This is not a test! I want you to be comfortable and clear about what I am asking and saying.
- Because the time is short and I have a number of questions, ***I may need to interrupt you to give everyone a chance to speak, or to get to all my questions.***
- Again, thanks for sharing with us your experience and opinions.

Notes for Facilitator

[Remember, the moderator remains neutral. Avoid saying “excellent” or “that’s a good answer.]”

[To get more information, use 5 second pauses and probes such as: "Would you explain further?" "Would you give an example?" "I don't understand].

QUESTIONS for 6 - 13 YEAR OLDS

Introduction: Look at this scale we have up here on the wall. The number ten is high and the number one is low, so let's say that “10” means that life for you is VERY GOOD, and “1” means life is “NOT SO GOOD.” Now, I don’t mean just today, I mean that usually, most days, or most of the time, is life for you very good or not so good or somewhere in the middle? What number would you point to that gives the answer for you? Everyone gets a dot, so go now and put your dot on or between the number you want. This will help me know what you are thinking about life.

What makes you unhappy?

What makes you happy?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

- 1.) Why did you put your dot where you did? What would “10” look like to you? What does “1” look like to you?
 - a. What made your number as high as it is? (*who or what helped you feel as good as you do?*)
 - b. What kept your number from going lower? (*What places or programs do you go to that make you feel better when things are tough for you? What happened or who helped you that made it so you weren't LOWER on the scale?*)
 - c. What keeps it from being a “10?” (*What else do you need, or what could people do to help you to push that number even higher?*)
- 2.) Some people are talking about how money is hard to get lately. What do you think?
 - a. Do you, or your friends or family worry or talk about money more now than you used to?
 - b. What have you heard about jobs and work? Has anything changed lately?
 - c. Do you have everything you need for school?
 - d. Have your responsibilities changed in the past year or so? (older children only)
- 3.) What worries you (or your family or friends)?
 - a. What kinds of people or places or things to do would help you solve your worries?
 - b. What would you like to do for people to help them solve their worries?
- 4.) What do you want to do or be when you grow up?
 - a. Do you need any help to reach your dreams?
 - b. Who or what would help you? What do you need in your neighborhood?
 - c. Is what you need already there for you or do you need more help?
 - d. Do you need more help getting to where you want to go in life, to make it so ALL your days are really good?

- 5.) What is the ONE thing that you would like people to do to help you:
- a. Learn better in school. *(Is there anything that makes it hard for you to learn? What can people do to help?)*
 - b. Feel more safe and secure. *(What would help make it a "10" in feeling safe? What could people do to help you feel more safe?)*
 - c. What would help you get even MORE healthy? *(What stops you from being a "10?" What makes you strong?)*
- 6.) Now, pretend YOU are the President! What would you change if you were in charge?
- a. For you?
 - b. For your family?
 - c. For your friends?
- 7.) What is the ONE thing you would do if you were Mayor?

***Thank you so much! What you said today will help us
make things better for kids everywhere!***