

In-person Focus Groups Checklist



American Association of
NURSE PRACTITIONERS®

Pre-step | Determine if Your Project Could Benefit From a Focus Group

✓	Steps
	Define the research topic and question(s).
	Outline the project goals and objectives.
	Set up a meeting with project stakeholders to decide if a focus group would be beneficial.
	Discuss why a focus group could be a beneficial method for collecting data for your specific research project.
	Consider if another form of data collection would better suit your needs (e.g., surveys with open-ended questions, one-on-one interviews).

Stakeholders should include members of the target population, experts on the research topic and any other key personnel.

Review the [Focus Groups: A Quick Guide](#) for tips and tricks at aanp.org!

Step One | Plan for Your Focus Group With Your Stakeholders

✓	Steps
	Draft the focus group questions.
	Identify participant eligibility requirements.
	Determine the number of ideal participants.
	Decide how many focus groups should be conducted based on the ideal number of participants.
	Outline a budget based on the number of focus groups requested. <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Incentives: Determine if participants will receive an incentive (e.g., gift card, membership discount).b. Venue: Investigate costs associated with focus group space (e.g., electricity, equipment, furniture).
	Determine when and where to conduct the focus group(s).
	Review the list of current stakeholders and determine if anyone else needs to be included in the planning process.
	Schedule a meeting with all stakeholders to finalize focus group questions, eligibility, budget and timeline.

A 90-minute focus group should have no more than 10 open-ended questions.

Carefully consider dates, times, locations and length of time for each focus group. If there are several moderators and notetakers, multiple focus groups can be conducted at the same time.

Keep track of participant contact information within a secure file that is password protected.

You should consider adding an icebreaker question at the beginning of the focus group that is related to your topic (e.g., What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think of nurse practitioners?).

Step Two | Prepare and Recruit Participants

✓	Steps
	Outline the recruitment process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Generate a random sample from your target population.b. Establish a recruitment method (e.g., emails, flyers, postcards).
	Assign a set number of participants per group.
	Begin the recruitment process.

Have a colleague review the moderator guide for clarity.

Step Three | Develop the Moderator Guide

✓	Steps
	Draft the moderator guide, which should include finalized focus group questions and the total number of participants and focus groups.
	Review and finalize the moderator guide.
	Assign a moderator and notetaker to each focus group.
	Draft a consent and confidentiality form that each participant will sign.
	Review and finalize the consent and confidentiality form.

You can use the same moderator and notetaker for multiple focus groups.

A Guide to [Informed Consent](#) (U.S. Food and Drug Administration).

Optional | Submit Your Proposal to an Internal Review Board (IRB)

✓	Steps
	Find an IRB and review their requirements for submission.
	Gather your recruitment material and moderator guide(s) for submission.
	Complete the IRB application and turn it in six to eight weeks before you plan to conduct your focus group(s).

Most colleges have an IRB; however, if you do not work at or attend college, ask your colleagues and peers if they have any IRB recommendations.

Step Four | Confirm Focus Group Logistics and Send out Reminders

✓	Steps
	Send out a reminder to all participants before the focus group will take place.
	Confirm your venue, equipment, furniture and other rentals.
	Gather materials (e.g., extra copies of moderator guides, batteries for a recorder, copies of consent forms, pens, incentives).

Focus groups conducted for the purpose of qualitative research that intends to be published needs to go through an IRB.

If you are sending a reminder email, send it two to three days before the focus group is set to take place. If you are sending a reminder postcard, send it out at least a week prior to the date of the focus group.

Step Five | Day-Of Moderation Checklist

✓	Steps
	Printed moderator guides.
	Printed consent and confidentiality forms.
	Pens for the moderator(s), notetakers(s) and participants.
	Recorder and extra batteries or chargers.
	Incentives.

Keep track of all contracts and agreements in a secure folder.

Step Six | Conduct the Focus Group

✓	Steps
	Thank participants for coming.
	Have them sign the confidentiality agreement.
	Remind them of the purpose and goals of the focus group.
	Set ground rules.
	Encourage a positive, respectful and relaxed group dynamic.
	Turn on the recorder.
	Open with a short ice breaker question that is related to the research topic.
	Ask each question one at a time in the same tone from the moderator guide.
	Remain neutral and do not express any personal opinions.
	Turn off the recorder.
	Thank participants for coming.
	Handout or email incentives.

Print out at least two consent forms per participant because participants will need one form to sign and another form to keep for their records.

Make sure to test all recording equipment in advance.

Step Seven | Analyze and Disseminate the Data

✓	Steps
	Develop a transcript of the group from the recording.
	Analyze the data for themes and patterns.
	Develop and communicate deliverables to stakeholders.
	Utilize the results.