

Youth Focus Groups: Appendix B

FOCUS GROUP FACILITATION GUIDE

Preamble:

Hi everyone, thank you so much for joining us today. Before we get started, I want to introduce myself. My name is Hanna, I'm a student working with Synergy on this project and I will be the facilitator today. Also joining us today is [second Synergy staff], introduction...

I would also like to recognize the land that we are on today by offering a land acknowledgement: I acknowledge the Treaty 7 territory - ancestral lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika as well as the Tsuu T'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley. This territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. I acknowledge the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who have cared for these lands for generations. I am grateful for the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. I make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we are all fortunate to live within.

We have consent forms from all of you that your parents/caregivers signed, but we also want to give you an opportunity to provide consent. I'm going to give a brief overview of the research project, what you are involved in and what you will be doing here with us today, and based on that, you can consent or choose to leave the session. You are not required to participate, even if your parents/caregivers signed a form. This research project is organized by the Chestermere and Area Community Coalition. The goal of this project is to learn more about the safety and wellbeing of youth so that we can make changes to support youth. This session is the second part of the Youth Survey project, which involved students throughout the schools in Chestermere, Langdon, and Indus. Some of you may have done this last year. Based on the results of this survey, we had some more questions and wanted to hold focus groups with youth to dig into some of the pieces we were interested in. A focus group is a group discussion between the group of us here. I will ask a question about your safety and wellbeing, and then you can respond if you would like – you can share your thoughts, opinions, or any experiences. There are no correct answers, and you do not have to respond (you have the right to pass). If you choose to participate now, but change your mind either during the focus group or after, you can still withdraw by either leaving the room or letting us know after. We will also be recording the focus group using Zoom so we can create a written version of our discussion for looking at after. Lastly, we are asking that you agree to keep what is shared in this group private, so please don't share what we talked about with anyone outside of this session. This is to protect and respect everyone's privacy.

We are holding focus groups in other schools in the area as well, so what you share will be combined with what students in the other school share, which will all be put into a report to summarize what youth think about safety and wellbeing. This information will then be used to make decisions and change in our communities. This also means that you agree to not share what we talk about in this next hour. Based on all of the information I shared with you – would you like to participate? Please your hands if you would like to.

[Hanna makes note of those who respond yes, and if anyone does not agree, they can exit the room].

Ground Rules:

To allow our conversation to flow more freely, I'd like to go over some ground rules.

1. Only one person speaks at a time. This is doubly important as our goal is to make a written transcript of our conversation today. It is difficult to capture everyone's experience and perspective on our audio recording if there are multiple voices at once.
2. Please avoid side conversations.
3. Everyone doesn't have to answer every single question, but I'd like to hear from each of you today as the discussion progresses.
4. This is a confidential discussion in that I will not report your names or who said what outside of this room. Names of participants will not even be included in the final report about this meeting. However, we have a legal and ethical obligation to disclose and follow up on anything regarding risk to self or others and to protect you or others from harm of any kind. If there is something you would like to disclose to any of us in private, we will be available right after the meeting, and you will have our contact information in case you would like to contact us afterwards for ANY reason.
5. We stress confidentiality because we want an open discussion. We want all of you to feel free to comment without fear your comments will be repeated later and possibly taken out of context.
6. There are no "wrong answers," just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you're the only one who feels that way. Please do not let the group sway you. But if you do change your mind, let me know.
7. Let me know if you need a break or must go to the bathroom.
8. If you need to leave the room because you are uncomfortable or feel triggered by anything that is said, we will be following you to ensure you are okay.
9. Are there any questions?

Great, thanks everyone. We'll begin the recording now. We are going to get started by first reviewing what "safety" and "safe spaces" mean. These definitions were created from the survey results. These definitions are what we mean when we talk about safety and space spaces going forward.

Review definitions

Questions:

1. What places in [Chestermere/Langdon/Indus] do you feel safe? Why do you feel safe here?
 - a. Prompt: are there specific times of the day/week when you do feel safe here
2. What are the places where you do NOT feel safe? Why do you NOT feel safe here?
3. In the survey, we found that lots of youth talked about their physical safety. We want to learn more about what youth think about their physical safety. What makes you feel physically safe?
 - a. Prompt: why does this make you feel physically safe?
 - b. Prompt: where do you feel physically safe? Is it all the time, or only during certain hours that you feel safe in these locations?
4. What makes you NOT feel physically safe?
 - a. Prompt: why?
 - b. Prompt: where do you NOT feel physically safe? Is it all the time, or only during certain hours that you feel safe in these locations?
5. Stigma is the sense that someone is different than you and that difference is negative. A set of negative and often unfair beliefs that people have about something. Stigma adds to feelings of shame, hopelessness, and isolation (feeling alone). Do you feel that there is a stigma around talking about mental health?
 - a. Rephrased for the younger kids – do you feel that people are judged when talking about their mental health and/or wellbeing?
 - b. Prompt: do you feel judged for talking about mental health?
 - c. Prompt: Why/why not?
 - d. Prompt: have you had any personal experiences with stigma when talking about mental health?
4. What makes it easier for you to ask for help?
 - a. Prompt: who do you ask for help?
 - b. Prompt: Why do you ask this person/these people for help?
 - c. Prompt: What makes them good people to go for help?
5. Can you tell me about your experiences with bullying?
 - a. Bullying – not teasing. Bullying is done with the intention to hurt that person and make the bully look better/stronger. It is done repeatedly and can become a constant in the victim's life. It can become threatening. If the victim gets upset, the bully typically won't stop. In comparison, teasing is more playful, it is not constant, and the teaser will likely stop when asked.
 - b. Follow-up: can you tell me about safety online/cyberbullying?
6. What is something you would like to see in your community that would improve your wellbeing?
 - a. Prompt: why do you want to see this?
7. Any final thoughts?

Debrief:

Great, thank you everyone for that discussion. You all shared some very important thoughts. That's the end of the questions and now there are a few things we need to cover to wrap up, and after you will be free to go.

1. Review purpose of the research
 - a. I mentioned at the beginning, the purpose of having this discussion was to gain a deeper understanding of the Survey results from youth.
2. What they can expect next
 - a. Your parents will be sent a short evaluation and demographic survey from the school admin. You can fill this out at home with their help. Just like participating in this group, the survey is entirely optional, but still useful information so we can make sure we are collecting information from a diverse group of students. You also have the chance to give us feedback about this session.
 - b. Next steps for us will be transcribing the recording and holding more focus groups with other schools. We will analyze everything and send your parents a draft report in Dec/Jan that you can look at, you can provide any thoughts or feedback you may have at that point. After, the report will be shared with the wider community.
 - c. You can get in contact with us at any point or ask your parents to contact us if you decide to withdraw participation.
3. Lastly, we just want to remind you to please not share anything that we spoke about today. This is important to respect and protect everyone's privacy. Based on everything we talked about, and what you shared – if you want to withdraw what information you shared today, please come speak with us afterwards, send us a message, or have your parents/caregivers contact us.
4. Does anyone have any questions or concerns?
5. Thank you everyone for your time and for sharing your thoughts, this was a great conversation and you all have helped to make your community a better place.
6. Before they leave, give students the Chestermere and Area Mental Health Coalition resource & Synergy's contact info.