06

Stepping Stone 6

in the CFCL Youth Participatory Action Research Series

Conduct Research

Stepping Stones

1

GET READY FOR
YOUR PROJECT

2

GET TO KNOW YOUR
PROJECT & TEAM

3

CHOOSE A FOCUS:
WHAT DO YOU WANT
TO CHANGE?

4

DEVELOP YOUR
RESEARCH PLAN

9

TAKE ACTION

8

CREATE & SHARE
FINAL PRODUCT

7

ANALYZE YOUR DATA

6

5

PRACTICE
RESEARCH SKILLS

CONDUCT RESEARCH

Finalize your
research plan

Develop a system to
support each other
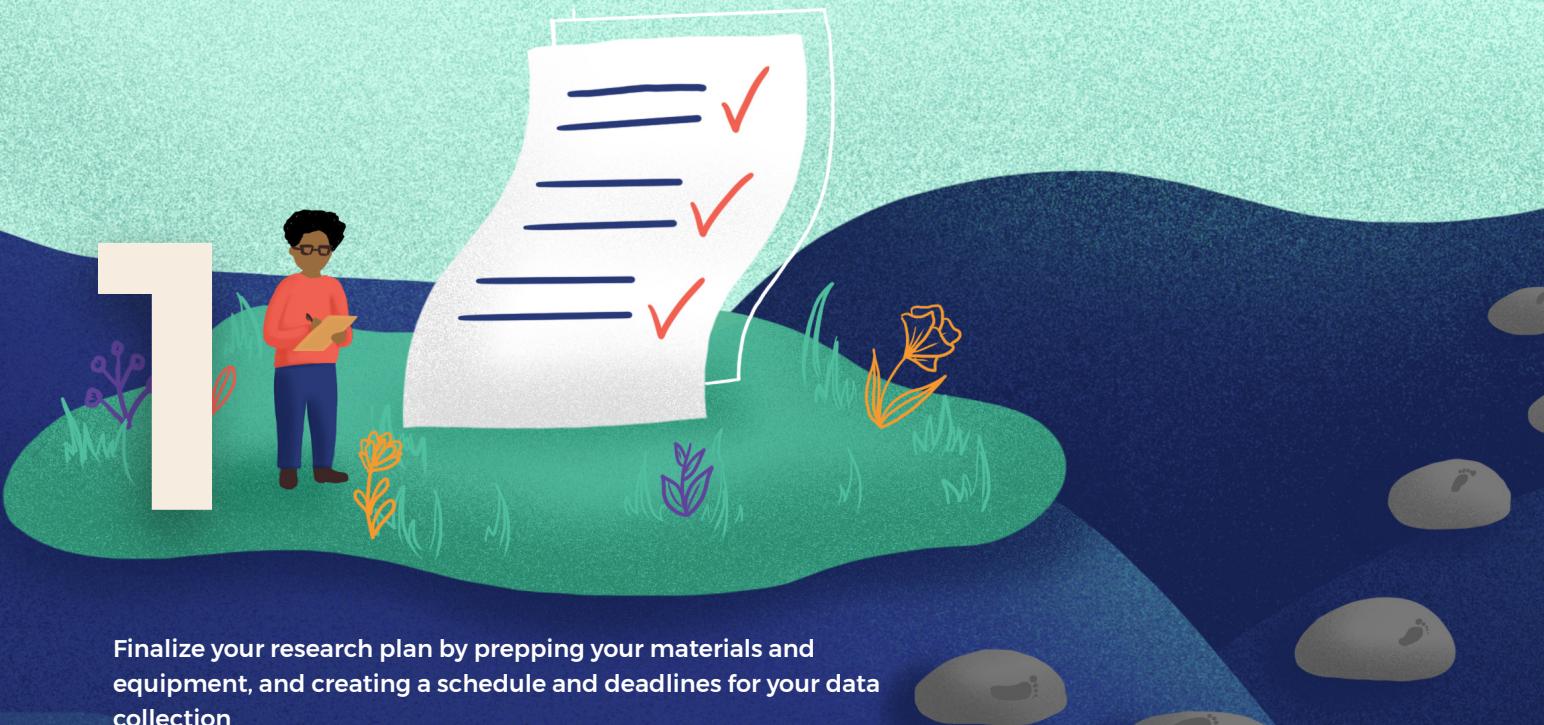
Collect data

Stepping Stone 6

Conduct Research

It's time to go out and do your research! In Stepping Stone 6 you will finalize your research plan and collect data.

1

Finalize your research plan by prepping your materials and equipment, and creating a schedule and deadlines for your data collection

» Resource 6.1: Consent Form Template (getting permission to collect information from people)
» Resource 6.2: Organizing Your Data Collection Effort (getting ready to do your research)
» Resource 6.4, 6.8 & 6.13: Task Charts for Interviews, Focus Groups and Surveys (creating a research schedule and dividing up tasks)

Stepping Stone Tips

» It's important to pay close attention to your key deadlines and commitments—it's easy to lose track of the time with everyone collecting data independently.
» Have a plan, but also be ready to be flexible so you can handle any unanticipated situations.
» You might not need regular trainings in this phase, but still try to meet weekly as a team to check-in, stay focused and support each other.

Time Commitment:
1 – 3 training sessions, 2 – 5 weeks of data collection

2

Develop a system of support to reflect on your work, support each other, and solve problems as a group

» Resource 6.3: Support Meeting Sample Agenda (holding team check-ins)

3

Go out and do your research by collecting, organizing and saving all your data

Interviews:

» Resource 6.5: Interview Checklist (identifying steps to take before and after an interview)
» Resource 6.6: Interviewee I.D. Chart (organizing and storing your data after an interview)
» Resource 6.7: Interview Immediate Thoughts Worksheet (capturing first impressions about what you heard)

Focus Groups:

» Resource 6.9: Focus Group Recruitment Talking Points (getting people to join your focus groups)
» Resource 6.10: Focus Group Checklist (identifying steps you need to take before and after a focus group)
» Activity 6.11: Get Out There: Focus Groups! (conducting your focus groups)
» Resource 6.12: Focus Group Immediate Thoughts Worksheet (capturing your first impressions about what you heard)

Surveys:

» Resource 6.14: Considerations When Using Online Survey Tools (thinking about how you will conduct your survey)

6.1
CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

(on next page)

Use a consent form to obtain informed consent from your research participants. The goal is to give people enough information about your study so they understand what is involved and can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. Informed consent is a critical part of conducting ethical research with human subjects.

Note: This is a template for a consent form that requires parent/guardian and youth consent. It is very detailed and based on a university consent form. If you need something simpler for your research participants, keep only the basics.

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The [enter youth research team name] at [insert site], in partnership with [enter name of partner/host organization], is conducting a research study to examine [enter research topic here]. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a [enter how this person is part of your sample (i.e. student at the school, community member, etc.)] and volunteered to do so.

B. PROCEDURES

If you and your parent/guardian agree, the following will happen:

» You will be asked questions in an interview or focus group setting about yourself, your experiences, and your thoughts on [enter research topic here]. Although questions about sensitive information (such as sexual behavior, violence, or [enter other information your topic may illicit)] will not be asked directly, such topics may arise in the interview or focus group and, if so, follow-up questions may be asked about them.

» You will be provided [enter incentive here] as a thank you for your participation.

» If you and your parent/guardian agree, the interview or focus group will be recorded and we will take pictures of participants. Your photograph will be used as part of a presentation of our research findings. If you prefer that your image and/or voice be concealed in the presentation, please let the researchers know. [optional]

Participation in the study will take a total of about [enter # of hours here] on the day of the interview or focus group.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Participation in research involves a loss of privacy. No names will be used in any published reports about this study. However, if you agree, your picture will be used in a presentation or report summarizing the research findings.

D. BENEFITS

You may enjoy participating in the interview or focus group. You will have the opportunity to tell us about your experiences and your thoughts on [enter research topic here]. You may gain satisfaction in knowing that your comments will be used to improve [enter potential outcomes here].

E. ALTERNATIVES

You do not have to participate in this interview or focus group if you do not want to. Once the interview or focus group has started, you may also choose to stop participating at any point without penalty.

F. COSTS

There are no costs for participating in this interview or focus group.

G. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about this study, please talk with the researchers. If you do not want to talk with the researchers, please contact [enter adult ally's name and contact info here].

H. CONSENT

STUDENT CONSENT:

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You have the right to not participate or to withdraw at any point in this study. Withdrawal will not affect your participation in [enter name of organization or school]. Please check the boxes below if you agree with the following:

☐ I agree to participate in this study.

☐ I give [enter youth research team name and site name] permission to publish in photo and/or video format my likeness or image. I release all claims against [enter youth research team name and site name] with respect to copyright ownership and publication including any claim for compensation related to use of materials.

Date _____

Signature _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT:

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You have the right to not have your child or ward participate is this study. You may request that they withdraw at any point in this study. Withdrawal will not affect their participation in [enter organization or school here]. The person being considered for this study is unable to consent for him/her/themself because she/he/they is a minor. You have been asked to give your permission to include your child or ward in this study. Please check the boxes below if you agree with the following:

☐ I agree to allow my child or ward to participate in this study.

☐ I give [enter youth research team name and site name] permission to publish in photo and/or video format the likeness or image of my child or ward. I release all claims against [enter youth research team name and site name] with respect to copyright ownership and publication including any claim for compensation related to use of materials.

Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Person Obtaining Consent _____

6.2 ORGANIZING YOUR DATA COLLECTION EFFORT

Data collection requires a lot of strategic organization by the research team. Researchers begin to work more independently as they conduct their surveys, interviews, observation, etc.

Task Charts are a way to keep your data collection methods organized. From how you are going to recruit your participants to how you are going to conduct your research, these tasks charts will help to divide jobs among team members and hold each other accountable for your responsibilities.

Process for using the materials in the following sections:

Identify the chart that matches your chosen research method and support the team in using it. This can happen by facilitating the entire process, running through each category and having the team designate answers for each box. Or, explain the chart and then turn the team loose to fill it in on their own. This will require the team to negotiate responsibilities by stepping up and stepping back on each item. Once the chart is complete, use it through the duration of your data collection phase.

6.3 SUPPORT MEETING SAMPLE AGENDA

New researchers need support and mentoring, particularly as they enter the unfamiliar world of data collection and documentation and begin to work more independently. During this phase, a strong support system for your team should include regular check-ins, debriefings, and group problem-solving.

Time Needed: 2 hours

1. **Icebreaker** (10 minutes)

2. **Examine the week's results:**
   Data Collection Activities (40 minutes)
   - What went well and what could have been better?
   - What support do we need to improve our work?

3. **Skill-building or team-building activity** (40 minutes)
   Sample skill-building activities:
   - **Role plays**: difficult interviews, good/bad interviewing, focus group facilitation
   - **Critique field notes**: how can they be strengthened? What other follow-up questions could we have asked?
   - **Photography**: critique the team's photo documentation, take photographs that relate to the team's research

4. **Review the week's schedule and answer questions** (20 minutes)
   - Confirm schedules for individual team members
   - Review the logistics for the week's data collection
   - Check materials and equipment

5. **Checkout** (10 minutes)

RESOURCES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

6.4 TASK CHART – INTERVIEWS

Category	Task	Details Of How To Do This	Who Do We Need To Talk To/ Get Support From?	Who Will Do It?	When Should It Be Done?
Recruitment	Design flyer				
	Flyer approval				
	Copy flyer				
	Flyer distribution				
	PA announcements				
	Classroom/Club announcements				
	Info for teachers/staff				
Selection	Determine selection process				
	Design selection materials				
	Distribute/collect consent forms				
Final Tool Revision	Make final edits/ changes				
	Get principal and/or other necessary party's approval				
	Test Interviews				
Interviews	Conduct interviews				
	Make demographic questionnaires				
	Incentives				
	Schedule interviews				
	Get necessary materials				
	Filming				
	Data entry/transcription				
	Interview space (find and arrange)				
	Note-taking				
	Recording				

6.5 INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Before Interview Starts:

- [ ] I am remembering to breathe.
- [ ] I am having my interviewee fill out our demographics survey.
- [ ] I have started the video camera / recording device.
- [ ] I will ask questions slowly and give my interviewee time to think about their answers and respond.
- [ ] I will take notes.

After the Interview is Over:

- [ ] I thanked my interviewee for taking the time to share their story with me.
- [ ] I have turned off the video camera/recording device.
- [ ] I have filled out the Interview Immediate Thoughts Worksheet.
- [ ] I have filled in the Interviewee I.D. Chart.
- [ ] I have filled in my notes (taken out abbreviations, shorthand, written complete sentences, etc.)
- [ ] I have turned in all of my interviewing materials to the Project Coordinator.
- [ ] I am not leaving with any interviewing materials (especially work that has my interviewee's name on it).
- [ ] I am proud of myself for all of the hard work I have put into this project!

6.6 INTERVIEWEE I.D. CHART

As you transition into the data collection phase of your project, it is very important to establish a clear system for handling and storing the data you gather. You and your team should create a central repository to keep records in one place. This could range anywhere from a physical filing cabinet to a shared digital folder on a cloud storage service. Maintaining the anonymity of your research subjects is important to keep in mind when designing your system.

Creating your own ID chart like the following example can support your data organization and storage process and help you keep track of your interviews. Assign a unique number or letter identifier to each research subject to help maintain their anonymity and keep this chart as a reference guide. Be sure to tailor the categories in the columns so they fit the characteristics you want to track to ensure you're getting data from a representative sample.

I.D.	PERSON INTERVIEWED	GRADE	AGE	GENDER	RACE/ ETHNICITY	SCHOOL	INTERVIEWER	DATE

INTERVIEW IMMEDIATE THOUGHTS WORKSHEET

I.D.: _____   NAME: _____   INTERVIEWER: _____

GRADE: _____   AGE: _____   GENDER: _____

RACE/ETHNICITY: _____   SCHOOL: _____

1. What important information did you get from this interview? What were some important themes or main points?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. What were some themes that answer your research question?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Why was this interview important?

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. If you had to summarize this interview in 3 words, what would they be?

    _____

    _____

    _____

RESOURCES FOR CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

6.8 TASK CHART – FOCUS GROUPS
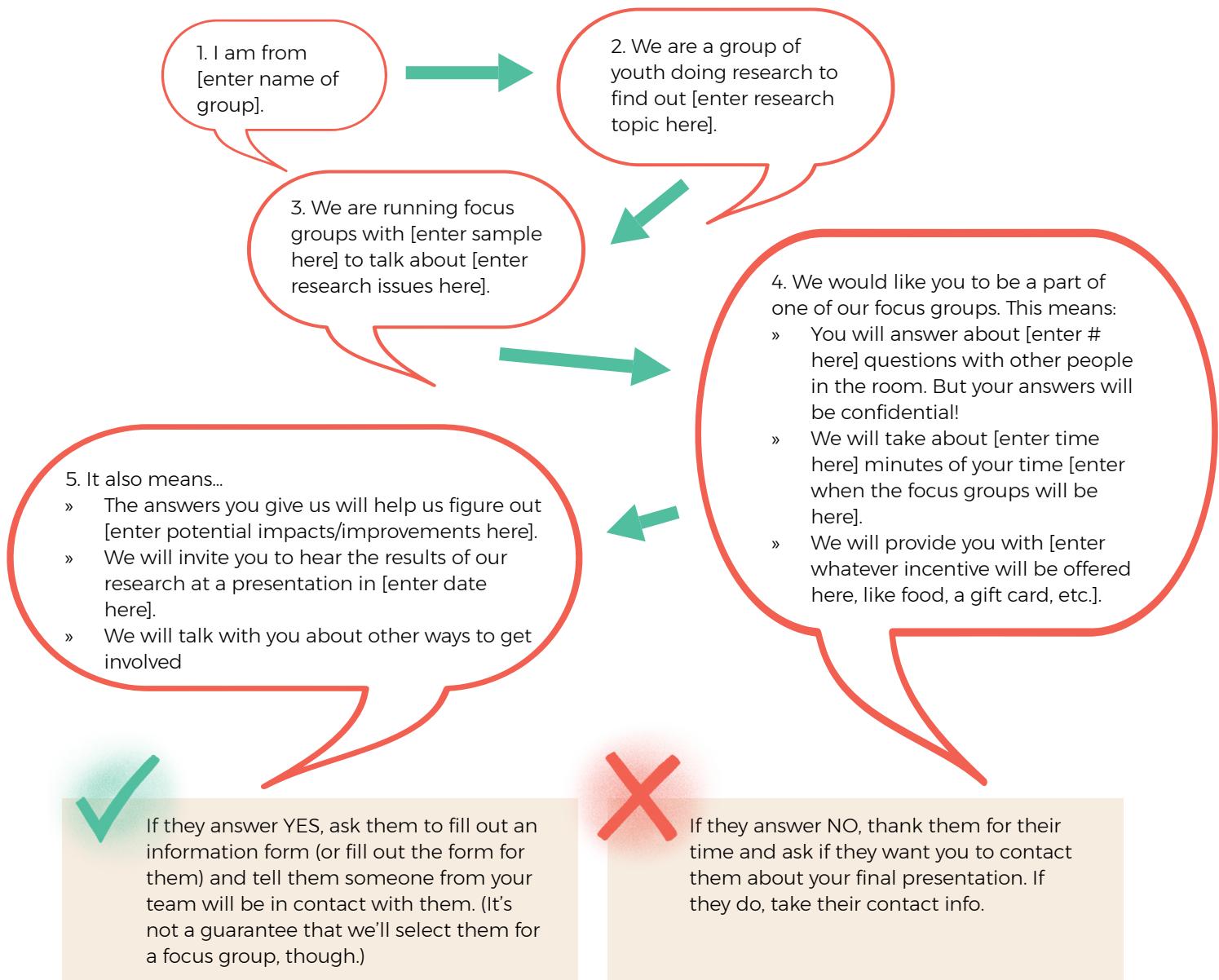
| Category	Task	Details Of How To Do This	Who Do We Need To Talk To/Get Support From?	Who Will Do It?	When Should It Be Done?
Recruitment	Design flyer				
	Flyer approval				
	Copy flyer				
	Flyer distribution				
	PA announcements				
	Classroom/Club announcements				
	Info for teachers/staff				
Selection	Determine selection process				
	Design selection materials				
	Distribute/collect consent forms				
Final Tool Revision	Make final edits/ changes				
	Get key people's approval				
	Test focus group guide				
Focus Groups	Conduct focus groups				
	Make demographic questionnaires				
	Incentives				
	Schedule focus groups				
	Get necessary materials				
	Filming				
	Data entry/transcription services				
	Focus group space				
	Note-taking				
	Recording				

6.9 FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT TALKING POINTS
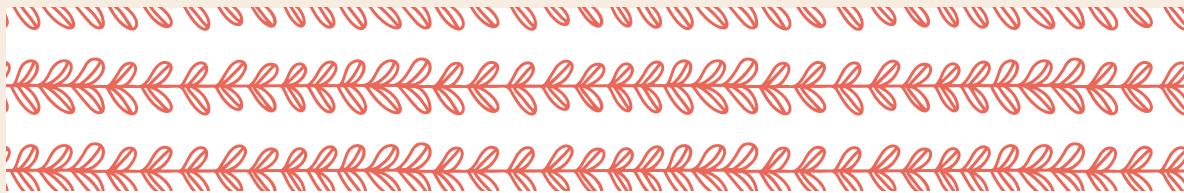
Instructions

The following script can help youth recruit people to participate in their focus groups. Be sure to customize it by filling in the highlighted areas with your group's specific details prior to distributing it.

1. I am from [enter name of group].

2. We are a group of youth doing research to find out [enter research topic here].

3. We are running focus groups with [enter sample here] to talk about [enter research issues here].

4. We would like you to be a part of one of our focus groups. This means:
» You will answer about [enter # here] questions with other people in the room. But your answers will be confidential!
» We will take about [enter time here] minutes of your time [enter when the focus groups will be here].
» We will provide you with [enter whatever incentive will be offered here, like food, a gift card, etc.].

5. It also means...
» The answers you give us will help us figure out [enter potential impacts/improvements here].
» We will invite you to hear the results of our research at a presentation in [enter date here].
» We will talk with you about other ways to get involved

✔ If they answer YES, ask them to fill out an information form (or fill out the form for them) and tell them someone from your team will be in contact with them. (It's not a guarantee that we'll select them for a focus group, though.)

✘ If they answer NO, thank them for their time and ask if they want you to contact them about your final presentation. If they do, take their contact info.

6.10 FOCUS GROUP CHECKLIST

Before Focus Group Starts:

- ☐ I am remembering to breathe.
- ☐ I am having participants fill out our demographics survey.
- ☐ I have started the video camera/recording device.
- ☐ I will ask questions slowly and give participants time to think about their answers and respond.
- ☐ I will take notes and include quotes and other important things people say.
- ☐ I will listen openly to what participants are sharing. I won't judge them for their stories or opinions.

After the Focus Group is Over:

- ☐ I thanked participants for taking the time to share their ideas and opinions with us.
- ☐ I have turned off the video camera/recording device.
- ☐ I have filled out the Focus Group Immediate Thoughts Worksheet.
- ☐ I have filled in my notes (taken out abbreviations, shorthand, written complete sentences, etc.)
- ☐ I have turned in all of my focus group materials to the Project Coordinator.
- ☐ I am not leaving with any focus group materials (especially work that has our participant(s) name(s) on it).
- ☐ I am proud of myself for all of the hard work I have put into this project!

6.11 .ACTIVITY

Get Out There: Focus Groups!

Objectives
» Gather data through focus groups
» Apply the skills, strategies, and plans developed through previous activities

Time Needed
Depends on the project, but a general plan is about 2 hours total: 1 hour per focus group, plus 30 minutes beforehand for preparation and check-in, and 30 minutes of cleanup and debriefing afterward

Materials
» Focus group guides and check lists
» Schedule of focus groups
» Paper
» Pens
» Other documentation tools (such as a recording device, a camera, and extra batteries)

Preparation

» Review the team's focus group questions, organizing plan, and documentation plan.
» Do skill-building activities with the team on asking follow-up questions if appropriate (like Activity 5.3: Red Light Green Light).
» Organize the focus group. Carefully consider its composition. Think about the questions you plan to ask, and make sure you select participants who have the knowledge to answer them. Assemble groups in ways that allow participants to talk openly about the topic. Keep your sample strategy in mind as you select participants.
» Develop a schedule of focus groups with dates, times, places, contact people and their numbers.
» Confirm the focus groups with participants before the meeting.
» Identify and reserve a quiet meeting space with adequate seating.
» Develop packets of materials that researchers will need for their focus groups including: pens, paper for notetaking, focus group guides, etc.
» Prepare:
  · any necessary equipment (recording device, batteries, camera, etc.)
  · permission forms
  · refreshments, gifts, honoraria, etc. that the team plans to provide for focus group participants
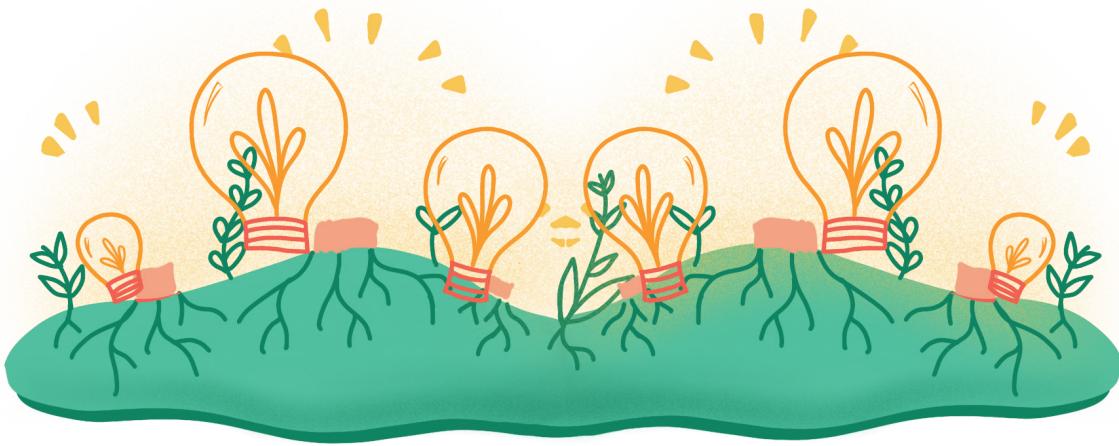
Key Vocabulary

Focus Group, Facilitator, Confidentiality, Anonymity

Process

1. **Team Check-In.**
   Meet to review the team's plans and questions well before meeting for the focus groups. Each focus group should have at least one facilitator to lead the discussion, one facilitator to take notes and keep time, and another facilitator (if possible) to co-lead the discussion and take notes. Practice the group's introductions. Check the team's materials and equipment—make sure you have everything you need, and that all equipment is working.

2. **Setting up.**
   Focus groups work best when participants are seated in a circle or around a table, with everyone facing each other. This helps ensure that the facilitator can see and hear everyone, and that all participants are part of the discussion. Take time to prepare the space you will use. Make sure that you are in a quiet room and there are no distractions. Consider having snacks at the focus group—this both shows your appreciation and helps participants relax.

3. **Record demographics.**
   This will be easiest if the note-taker has a form on which to record the date, the researchers' names, the names and roles of focus group participants, and relevant demographic background on participants (the team could also have each participant fill out a small form with this information).

You can do this as participants come in and as you wait for everyone to arrive.

4. **Introductions.**
   When everyone has arrived, briefly introduce yourselves. Explain the purpose of the focus group and the research, and what will happen with the information shared. Explain that the discussion is confidential. You can post up a general agenda of how the focus group will run, since many people aren't sure what to expect. Have everyone introduce themselves. It can help to have an icebreaker (i.e. a name game) to get everyone comfortable with each other.

5. **Agreements.**
   Often, it is helpful to propose agreements for the group, which can help to prevent problems, such as some people dominating the conversation or cell phones disrupting the flow. You can ask the group if they want to add more! (find more examples of group agreements in Activity 2.1)
   - One Mic—Only one person can talk at a time.
   - Please turn off all cell phones.
   - Be open-minded and please respect each other's views.
   - Share the Air—If you are talking a lot, hold back and allow others to speak. If you are not talking a lot, try to get a little more involved and let your voice be heard.

6. **Ask permission to record.**
   If your group plans to record, film or photograph the focus groups, the note-taker/recorder needs to ask permission (in certain cases, written permission may be necessary). Explain why you want to record audio (to help you with your notes). Emphasize that no one else will hear the recording. If anyone asks you not to record, do not record and just try to take the best notes possible.

7. **Ask an opening question.**
   The primary facilitator starts the conversation with a fairly broad but focused question. For example, if your research focuses on new after-school activities at a specific location, a focus group with activity participants might open with the question "What do you like about the after-school activities at your school?" This question opens up the conversation for students to talk about their experiences, and enables the facilitators to develop more specific questions based on participants' responses.

8. **Facilitate the discussion.**
   Once the group is talking, the facilitators need to keep the conversation going and focused, using the themes and questions developed earlier as a guide for the conversation. As participants talk, facilitators listen and ask follow-up questions to learn more details. See below for a list of facilitation tips.

ACTIVITY

Get Out There: Focus Groups! (cont.)

9. **Wrap up the discussion.**
When the conversation is winding down or time is running out, wrap up the discussion. Summarize the main points. Ask participants to "check out" and say anything they didn't have a chance to say in two sentences or less (without the limit, it opens up the conversation again). If the conversation is going strong, look for a slight break in the conversation, or a summarizing statement and then "jump in" to wrap up the conversation. Thank the participants and remind them that the information they provided will help the research.

10. **Provide information.**
Let participants know how they can contact your team for the research results, as well to pass on any other information that they didn't get to mention. Also, consider providing relevant information. For example, if you are researching after school programs, provide students with information about available programs.

11. **Debrief with researchers.**
Immediately following the focus group, debrief by discussing the process, the findings, and follow-up plans. Have researchers each fill in the "Focus Group Immediate Thoughts Worksheet." As a team, discuss the process: what went well and what could be improved? Identify and discuss the main issues that came up which are relevant to your research. Also discuss how the focus group confirmed or challenged your ideas about the topic. Finally, make plans for follow-up activities, such as documentation, thank-you notes, etc.

12. **Follow up.**
Write thank-you notes to focus group participants (if possible) and any other relevant people (i.e. like a teacher who let you meet with their students during class).

13. **Organize Data.**
Fill in any notes that need to be completed, compile any relevant materials (i.e. photos, videos, recordings, handouts), and file them in your data organizing system for the next step: data analysis.

Facilitation Responsibilities

» Stay neutral.
» Keep the conversation focused on the topic.
» Keep the conversation going.
» Encourage participation from everyone.
» Avoid letting one person dominate the conversation.
» Listen to participants' experiences rather than talking about your own.
» Ask follow-up questions to learn more details.
» Protect individuals and their ideas from attack.
» Make sure the group addresses your high priority questions/themes.
» Wrap-up the conversation in the allotted time.

Facilitation Tips:

» Clearly define your role.
» Get agreement on the topic and process before starting the group.
» Don't answer questions about the theme yourself - put them back out to the group.
» Be positive—compliment participants and give lots of encouragement.
» Don't talk too much.
» Don't be afraid to speak up to shift topics, encourage participation, and wrap up.
» Support the note taker in their role.
» Don't be afraid to make mistakes.

6.12

FOCUS GROUP IMMEDIATE THOUGHTS WORKSHEET

DATE: _____   FACILITATOR(S): _____

SITE: _____   # PARTICIPANTS: _____

1. What important information did you gain from this focus group? What were some important themes or main points?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. What were some themes related to your research question?
    Research Question:

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Were there any challenges you had in facilitating this focus group? What could be done better next time?

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. If you had to summarize this focus group in 3 words, what would they be?

    _____

    _____

    _____

RESOURCES FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS

6.13 TASK CHART – SURVEYS

Category	Task	Details Of How To Do This	Who Do We Need To Talk To/ Get Support From?	Who Will Do It?	When Should It Be Done?
Recruitment	Select survey locations (classrooms, organizations, etc.)				
	Draft note requesting access to selected survey locations (i.e. teachers)				
	Approach/follow-up with key people at potential survey locations				
	Develop detailed survey instructions for survey administrators				
Final Tool Revision	Decide whether you will use paper surveys or a specific online survey tool				
	Make final edits/changes				
	Get key people's approval				
	Create survey-taking instructions				
	Test surveys				
Surveys	Put together survey packets				
	Distribute/collect surveys				
	Store completed surveys				
	Enter data into spreadsheet or online tool				

6.14 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING ONLINE SURVEY TOOLS

Things to Keep in Mind

There are many ways to build surveys, collect and compile survey data, and run reports using online tools. When choosing between various online options or deciding between a physical survey and a digital one, think creatively about the tech tools your youth researchers and the people they're trying to reach already use or have access to. Other determining factors may include how and where you expect people to fill out the survey, the specific features offered by different tools, and whether an online site is free or requires a paid account. Some online survey tools allow users to use basic features and collect a limited number of responses with free accounts but require a paid subscription to access more advanced features and collect more surveys.

Data Analysis Features

One beneficial feature of many online survey tools is their ability to help researchers take a closer and more critical look at their data. Many tools allow you to filter data based on demographics and responses. For example, if you would like to compare how Latinx responses compared to those of African Americans, you can filter the data to look at responses by race and ethnic group. You could also review the data based on gender or responses to a specific question. This can help you analyze your data more closely to come up with more nuanced findings and recommendations.

Some disadvantages with using online surveys include lack of direct contact with the interviewer and the requirement that participants have access to the internet.

About Community Futures, Community Lore

STEPPING STONE GUIDES

The CFCL Stepping Stone guides were developed based on the original work of the Intercultural Oral History Project/Tibet, the Intercultural Oral History Project/Nepal, Community LORE, Youth In Focus and the Putting Youth on the Map program at the UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Many, many individuals, communities and projects contributed over a period of more than twenty years to CFCL's approach to YPAR (youth participatory action research). For the full set of Stepping Stone guides, YPAR stories, background on the CFCL approach, and a list of project credits visit the website: **ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu**

To download any of our publications, visit our website at: **ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu**

Suggested Reference:
Erbstein, N., Louie, B., Zimmerman, K., and London, J.K.. 2020. Community Futures, Community Lore: Stepping Stone Guides (ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu). Davis, CA: University of California, Davis.