Focus Groups – Basics

Focus groups are a great way to assess your organization's current services or evaluate new ideas. Focus groups are basically interviews with a group of people at the same time in the same group that can result in a great deal of information for your organization.

GETTING READY:

- Define the major objective
- Develop five to six questions that focus on the objective
- Schedule the session for one to one and a half hours in a quiet setting
- Select potential members who are likely to participate openly and who do not know each other.
- Send an invitation to members with an agenda including the questions that will be asked.
- A few days before the meeting, send out a quick reminder about the upcoming session.

GROUND RULES:

- Encourage full member participation.
- Stay focused on the questions
- Keep the meeting moving
- Get closure to each question

FACILITATING THE SESSION:

- Place each chair in a circle so participants are facing each other.
- Introduce yourself and the note-taker if present.
- Review the agenda including questions to be answered and ground rules
- Explain that meeting minutes will be taken and distributed to participants after the session.
- Ask each question one at a time and allow even participation by each member
- Summarize all of the responses to the group

CLOSING THE SESSION:

- Inform the members that they will receive a copy of the report generated from their responses

- Thank them for coming and their participation
- Record any observations and/or surprises from the session