

Development of Focus Groups

(Points – Refer to last 2 paragraphs of this document)

Focus groups are a method for collecting qualitative data in social work research. In focus groups, a trained facilitator uses organized discussion with a small number of participants to obtain information on the opinions and attitudes regarding a specific topic.

The development of a successful focus group requires careful planning. Elements to be addressed in planning a focus group include the following:

1. Careful definition of the topic to be addressed
2. Selection of trained facilitators
3. Selection and invitation of participants
4. Decisions about the length and number of sessions
5. Location of meetings
6. Development of an informed consent for participants to sign
7. Development of an introductory statement to be used at the beginning of each group
8. Development of focus group questions
9. Data collection
10. Data analysis
11. Preparation of a written report

A sample focus group report, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in the District of Columbia: Focus Group Report, can be found at

<http://www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting/info-2003/aresearch-import-477.html>

Reference: Krueger, R., and Casey, M., Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. Sage Publications, (2000).

The planning, implementation, and preparation of a written report analyzing the data generated by the focus group is a major project and can be completed in place of the required five assignments for the semester. The field instructor and the field liaison must **pre-approve** this assignment.

Students who **assist** with specific elements of a focus group can negotiate the use of these individual involvements to count for a minor field assignment (Points to be determined by Field Liaison).