



# Youth Focus Group Protocol

## IPS Toolkit: Data & Research



## Youth Focus Group Protocol (AOD)

### Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work at an organization called [researcher org/your agency]. I will be the facilitator for today's focus group. This is \_\_\_\_\_ and s/he also works with me at [researcher org/your agency] and will be the note taker.

We are here today because we are working with a group called [your organization]. They have asked us to talk to people living in the [community] area to learn more about the role of alcohol and drugs in this community. As part of this project, we would like to understand how youth in [community] access alcohol and other drugs. When I say alcohol and drugs, keep the following definitions in mind.

*[Definitions will also be written on a white board/large paper]*

- DRUG means any substance, including pills and medications, used to get "high" ("loaded", "stoned", or "wasted") other than alcohol or tobacco.
- Questions about alcohol DO NOT include drinking a few sips of wine for religious purposes.

Before we begin, have any of you participated in a focus group before?

A focus group is a group of people that get together to talk about their ideas on a specific topic. Everyone in the group is considered an expert because you are the ones that know the most about happens in your schools, communities, and what people your age think.

For those of you who have not participated, there are a couple of guidelines that will help make the conversation easy for everyone to talk and share their thoughts and opinions.

- Remember you are the expert! You are the most knowledgeable of what it's like to be a youth living in [community] right now. That's why you have been chosen to participate today.
- There is no wrong answer, just your ideas. Please respect that others might disagree with you. It is perfectly fine to have a different opinion from others in the group, and you are encouraged to share your opinion even if it is different.

- Everyone should have an equal chance to speak, and no one should dominate the conversation. Please speak one at a time and do not interrupt anyone else.
- It's ok if you don't have an answer or opinion about a particular question. It is important for us to know that too. "I don't know" is an ok thing to say.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions if you are not sure what we mean by something.
- Because time is short and we have a lot of questions to get through, I may need to interrupt you to give everyone a chance to speak, or to get through all of the questions.
- Everything we discuss today is completely confidential. What this means is that we will not tell your parents, teachers, or anyone associated with the program about specific comments you make. No names or identifying information will be shared; we will say something like "one focus group member said."
- We are required, however, to report comments that are about harming yourself or others.
- Our note taker will be taking notes but it's only to make sure that we get your comments as accurate as possible. We will not be writing down your name or any information that may be used to identify you.
- We will also be recording our discussion. The recording will only be used to help us fill in our notes. Only staff at [researcher org/your agency who are working on this project will have access to the recording, and we will destroy the recording as soon as the project is complete.
- Your participation in today's focus group is voluntary which means you do not have to participate or answer any questions you do not feel like answering.
- I know you guys are probably busy and have a lot of things to do so everyone will get \$20 target gift card for taking the time to come here today. Our discussion should last about 2 hours.

Does anybody have any questions before we begin?

## Focus Group Questions

Great, let's start by going around the room and introducing ourselves.

Please tell us your first name, age and what school you go to.

**\*start recording after introductions\***

I am going to ask you some questions about alcohol. You don't have to tell me if you drink or not, you can just say "I have friends who..." or "I know people my age who..." We'll talk about where people your age get alcohol, where they tend to drink, how much they tend to drink, and if others know about their drinking.

First, just raise your hands if you know people at your school who drink alcohol.

Ok, now raise your hands if you have friends your age who drink

- 1) When you think of other students at your school, who you know drink alcohol, **where do they usually get alcohol from?**

Prompts:

- From parties or events outside school

- From their own home - Can ask question 6
- From adults at friends' homes - Can ask question 6
- From friends over 21
- From friends under 21- Clarify where they get it
- From adults who buy it for them - Clarify if they are known adults or strangers they proposition with money
- From bars, clubs, or gambling casinos
- From a store (convenience store, liquor store, grocery, mini mart) - Clarify if bought with a fake ID or stolen

2) You mentioned X, X, and X.

- a. Why do you think they go to X to get alcohol? (repeat question for each place)
- b. How easy is it for people your age to get alcohol from those places/sources?

3) Sometimes, youth get alcohol from one place and drink it somewhere else. In your opinion, where are the most common places for people your age to drink at?

Prompts:

- At school
- At school-related events outside of school
- At parties
- At their own home
- At a friends' homes
- At bars, clubs, or gambling casinos

- a. Why are those popular places to drink?

4) So, drinking at X, X, and X tend to be the most common places to drink because ----- . Let's talk a little more about what kind of drinking is happening at X.

- a. Can you paint me a picture of what you have heard drinking at X would be like? (Probe to get a sense of how much drinking is taking place. Is it bingeing? Is it social? Who is doing it? Etc.)

5) It sounds like people your age tend to drink (fill in with adjectives that they used to describe the drinking). Given this, how likely is it that people who are not your age know about this type of drinking event/behavior? What do you think they know? (Probe to gain understanding of who knows and what they know).

Prompts:

- Parents
- Other family members
- Teachers
- Employers

6) Related, and some of you many have mentioned this before when I asked about where people your age get alcohol, do you know friends whose parents or other family members give them permission to drink?

- a. Do they have to follow rules when drinking- like only drink at home or you can drink, but don't drive? Can you tell me more about that.

Okay now we are going to switch topics to questions that related to drugs- but many of the questions will be very similar. Now, I may not know all the different kinds and names of drugs so please be patient with me.

- 7) What substances do you think are used the most by your peers (friends and people at your school)?

Prompts:

- Marijuana (pot, weed, grass, hash, bud)
- synthetic drugs (such as K2, Spice, Bath Salts, etc.)
- prescription drugs to get high

- 8) When you think about people your age or your friends at school, **where do they usually get X from?** (repeat for each drug they noted as problematic)

Prompts:

- From parties or events outside school
- From their own home
- From adults at friends' homes
- From friends over 21
- From friends under 21
- From adults who buy it for them
- From bars, clubs, or gambling casinos
- From a store (convenience store, liquor store, grocery, mini mart)
  - a. **Why do you think they go to X to get X?** (repeat question for each place)
  - b. **How easy is it for people your age to get X?**

- 9) Let's take a little more about X. **Where are the most common places for people your age to do X at?** (repeat for each drug named)

Prompts:

- At school
- At school-related events outside of school
- At parties
- At their own home
- At a friends' homes
- At bars, clubs, or gambling casinos
  - a. **Why are those popular places to do X?**

- 10) Knowing that we are trying to better understand your generations' perspective about alcohol and drugs, **is there anything else you can think of that we should know?**

Those are all the questions I have.

Thank you for your participation in today's group. Your feedback is very helpful!