



Friday Night Live

Guide to Engaging Youth in Community Assessment



July, 2012

Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit provides concrete examples of how young people can engage in research, uncover community needs, and use their data to drive Friday Night Live community projects. It is designed to complement, rather than replace, Module 2 (Miles 5 and 6) of the Friday Night Live Roadmap.

This toolkit will provide three examples of community assessment projects that FNL youth may implement to provide data to drive FNL work: focus groups, surveys (either developed from scratch or YLI's Youth Alcohol Access Survey), and archival data.

For all projects, the last step will be to use your data for action. The last part of this toolkit has some ideas to get you started. There are more resources for this in your FNL Roadmap as well.

Why engage youth in research?

- **Action research can be a powerful tool to engage youth in community problem-solving.** Through action research, youth participate in a youth development framework and are engaged in a meaningful process to bring about community change.
- **Youth participation ensures that the research is more relevant to their peers.** Whether in information gathering (i.e. surveys, focus groups) or in mobilizing their peers for action, youth researchers are often more credible than adults in the eyes of their peers and can secure their interest and buy-in more readily.
- **Youth research can provide the community with fresh new data.** Their findings and recommendations often reframe issues, bring about new conversations and lead to innovative solutions that have the potential to transform and reshape programs, policies and resource allocation related to youth opportunities and supports in schools and communities.
- **Data related to youth-serving systems collected by youth themselves mobilizes a community response.** When the research focus is on youth-serving systems and is conducted by youth, local officials and community members are often more motivated to respond and take action to address their findings.
- **Participation in research is a powerful youth development experience for youth.** Action research projects themselves are youth development programs, as they provide real skills and a positive developmental experience to participating youth.

Before You Jump In

Determine your research questions

What do you want to know? Some examples of research questions:

- How do high school youth access alcohol in our community?
- What are the barriers to parents restricting alcohol to youth?
- For underage social access to alcohol, who do youth most often get alcohol from?
- For underage commercial access to alcohol, where do youth most often get alcohol from?

From whom or where do you need to get this information?

Examples: parents, high school youth

Do some brainstorming about what research methods make sense

In your FNL Roadmap there is a table that presents the pros and cons of different research methods (also provided here in the Appendix, on p. App-2). When thinking about choosing one of the three projects in this toolkit, consider:

1. What resources do you have? Do you have money to provide food or other incentives to focus group participants? Are there any upcoming school or community meetings where you could give out a survey or conduct a focus group?
2. How much time do you have? For a focus group, you will need time for skill development, and for surveys you will need time for data entry.
3. Who is your audience? What type of data will influence your audience the most? One basic question to ask: will your audience be more swayed by statistics from larger numbers of people reporting on surveys (perhaps policymakers) or by personal stories and richer data collected through focus groups (perhaps the media or community members)?
4. What method do you think will best answer your questions? If you must ask sensitive questions, what methods will make people feel most safe?
5. How will you reach your population (the people you want to ask questions of)? How will your population respond to taking a survey versus participating in a focus group?

In this Toolkit:

Project 1: Conduct a Focus Group • p. 1-1

Project 2: Administer a Survey • p. 2-1

Project 3: Use Data Already Collected About Your Community • p 3-1

Plus, find resources for implementing these projects in the Appendix.

Project 1: Conduct Focus Groups

Overview

A focus group is a group interview with a small group of participants from similar backgrounds. A moderator asks questions that are determined in advance and participants discuss the focus group topic.

What makes focus groups different from interviews is the use of group discussions to generate data. Focus groups sacrifice details about individuals in favor of having participants actively compare their opinions and experiences. So you have to decide: Are the group discussions from focus groups a more efficient way to get at what you want or a loss of information about individual participants?

A couple of things that focus groups are NOT:

Unfocused: Focus groups are not casual discussions among just any group. Focus groups are well planned to invite the right participants and ask the right questions. They are also carefully moderated with group dynamics well managed. You might hear a wide range of opinions at a public forum or open meeting, but these are too unstructured to be called a focus group. Similarly, if a group is not well managed, there may not be a coherent discussion and the group might not provide high quality data.

Lacking Discussion: When the moderator asks for a separate response from each participant, this may be referred to as a “serial interview.” Asking for separate responses from each participant is fine (and may be necessary, depending on the group dynamics) and may still produce useful data. The only problem is if the moderator purposely blocks group discussion.

When Should You Use Focus Groups for Your FNL Assessment Project?

You consider collecting information through focus groups when you want to collect very in-depth information in a short period of time. You can gain a rich and insightful view of a community issue through focus groups. Focus groups are not appropriate for topics such as sensitive personal or illegal behaviors.

Focus groups will provide good information for many FNL projects. If you think your project might involve convincing community leaders to act in some way, be sure to explore what kind of data will sway them; some people will be moved by rich, detailed information and personal stories from a small group of individuals, while others will be more convinced by “hard” numbers that come from a large number of people (surveys or existing community data such as arrests, school discipline data, etc.).

Focus groups require preparation and skill building, so be sure to read this section thoroughly before you begin, so you know what to expect!

Advantages of Focus Groups

- Produce large amounts of concentrated data in a short period of time.
- Produce rich information and may provide insight - not just what people think, but why. There is opportunity to explore reasons behind people's responses
- Reveal consensus and diversity of participants' perceptions
- Allow people to build on each other's ideas

Disadvantages of Focus Groups

- Loss of information about individual participants
- Group dynamics can be tough – outspoken people may dominate the conversation
- Depending on how you sample participants, you may not be able to generalize to larger population
- Focus groups may not be appropriate for personal or sensitive topics. Because you cannot guarantee that participants will keep each other's responses private, you should not choose focus groups to collect information about illegal behaviors or highly sensitive topics.

How Many Focus Groups Should You Conduct?

A typical number of groups is 3-5, but it depends on the complexity of the topic and the diversity of the study population

Doing too few groups may cause you to miss information or jump to conclusions too soon, but doing too many wastes time and money. Deciding on the right number of groups is a matter of hearing what there is to hear. If everyone seems to be saying the same things after a few groups, you'll know to stop.

How Long Does a Focus Group Last?

Focus groups typically last for 1-2 hours when you have adult participants with strong motivation to participate (either because of interest in the topic or because they are offered a desired incentive, such as money).

You should tailor the length of the group to your participants and any setting constraints.

- Younger participants may find groups lasting 30 minutes easier to manage.
- High school age participants may participate well in 45-50 minute groups.
- You can plan on groups lasting an hour or more for adult participants.

Because the main purpose of focus groups is to generate discussion, be sure to ask fewer questions if your group is shorter in length.

Overview of Steps for Project One

Step 1: Get Ready • p. 1-4

- Create an interview guide
- Choose and invite your participants
- Make sure you have all of the materials and equipment you need

Step 2: Conduct the Focus Group • p. 1-7

- Listen
- Probe
- Focus
- Group Management
- Take Notes

Step 3: Summarize, Analyze, Write-Up • p. 1-10

The next steps are to summarize and interpret the results of your focus groups, and then write a report of all of your findings.

Step One: Get Ready

1. Create a Focus Group Guide

To create your focus group interview guide, you will need to a) write an introduction to welcome your participants and let them know the purpose of the group and what they should expect, and b) create your questions.

Write an Introduction to the Focus Group:

(See Introductory RAP Example handout in the Appendix on p. App-4)

- Introduce facilitators
- Inform of focus group purpose and length
- Let participants know about their rights –
 - Confidentiality- their answers will be kept private. You will not identify anyone by name in your write-up, and you will destroy any recordings after you finish your write up
 - Voluntary Participation– they have the right to leave the group or “pass” on answering any question.
 - Ask for permission to record the group
- Icebreaker – if you have enough time, come prepared with a brief, simple icebreaker to help create a relaxed and comfortable environment
- Group Agreements - you can: 1. Let the group develop them. This is more time consuming. 2. Come up with them yourself and review them with the group. Some proposed ground rules might be:
 - YES: Speak your truth, Listen to hear what others have to say, Talk with respect for others and yourself, Follow the facilitator’s guidance about time and whose turn it is to talk; Agree to not talk about what people say during the focus group once the group is over (“what is said during the focus group, stays in the focus group”)
 - NO: Interrupting, Calling names, Gripe sessions, Personal Attacks
- Let participants know what will happen after the group – will you send them a summary? What do you plan to do with the information?

Guidelines for Creating Focus Group Questions

When you are brainstorming your interview questions, first think about what you want to know and what you hope to be able to say when you are done.

In groups lasting an hour or more, you might ask 6-8 questions. Ask fewer questions if you want participants to be more involved, if participants are younger, or if your focus group length needs to be shorter.

- **Ask positive questions before negative questions**
- **Use open-ended questions.** Open-ended questions promote discussion, for example, what is your favorite thing about this program? What are the reasons youth don't make it to school? How do teachers react when they see students fighting?
- **Avoid yes or no questions.** Yes/no questions discourage discussion.
- **Avoid "why" questions.** "Why" questions are tricky. They can make people feel threatened because they sometimes imply that they are wrong for doing or thinking a particular way.
- **Keep questions simple**
- **Be cautious about giving examples.** Examples can sometimes sway answers.
- **Stay short and focused.** You can really only have 6-8 questions for most focus groups (depends on length of group) so you have time to delve into them, ask follow-up questions and encourage participation from all participants. This means you have to prioritize and make sure you are asking the questions that will get you the information you need.
- **Ask general before specific questions**
- **Do not ask questions about highly sensitive topics or about illegal behaviors.** You cannot guarantee that participants will keep each other's responses private, so do not ask questions that might cause problems for participants once they leave your group.
- **Note:** If your focus group mostly focuses on opinions about community issues or about other people's behaviors and only one or two sensitive questions, consider putting the 1-2 sensitive questions in an anonymous survey for participants to complete at the end of the group. For example, if you are mostly asking parents what they think about a social host ordinance and about the challenges in reducing underage social access to alcohol, but you also want to know if they provide alcohol to their children, ask that question in a survey.

Sample Questions: We want to be able to say whether parents would support a social host ordinance, what they think the challenges are for parents in not providing alcohol access to youth, and what they think community leaders need to know if they want parents to be behind a Social Host Ordinance (SHO).

Some questions you might ask:

- Can you tell me some of the challenges parents face when it comes to their child and drinking?
- In your experience, what are some of the reasons why parents allow youth to drink in their homes?
- What would be your reaction or thoughts to your child drinking with a friend's parent or being provided alcohol by their friend's parent?
- (Review the key points of proposed SHO) To what extent do you think parents

would support this SHO? Probe: What are some of the reasons why parents might support the SHO? What are some of the reasons why parents might object to the SHO?

- Can you tell me what it would take for parents to support a SHO?
- What are some ways that the community could take parents' needs into account when it comes to reducing youth access to alcohol?

2. Choose and invite your participants

Who Should Participate in Your Focus Group?

There are typically 6-10 participants who come from similar backgrounds

- Have smaller groups when you want more participant involvement

Choose participants according to your project goals – think about who you are asking questions about. Parents? Community decision makers? Youth who attend traditional high schools? Disengaged youth?

Personally invite your participants, put up flyers, announce the focus groups at school or meetings, ask people with connections (your school principal or other school administration, community organizations, etc.) to help you select participants.

- Think about challenges: school, work, other obligations, financial constraints
- Meet them where they are located
 - Example: For high school participants, host a group during lunch and bring pizza
 - Example: For parents, ask school administration if you can host a group during a school parent event
 - Example: For community stakeholders, consider including time for focus groups within a town hall meeting or other community meeting.
- Build alliances with partner organizations
- Use direct and appealing language
- Offer incentives (particularly food)

Be sure to remind participants of the focus group date, time, and location as the date draws closer.

3. Make sure you have all of the materials and equipment you need

- Recording device: this can be a tape recorder or the audio recording function on a smart phone or video recorder
- Tapes (if you are using a traditional tape recorder), batteries and/or charger
- Pens
- Copies of interview guide and extra paper
- Food

- Any non-food incentives you are offering for participation (money; gift cards; simple gifts such as pens, bags, hats, notebooks, etc.)
- Name tags
- Watch or clock

Step 2: Conduct the Focus Group

Before the Focus Group

1. Set up the space:
 - Show up early to set up the space. Arranging chairs in a circle will probably work best.
 - Set up food.
2. Review your questions and think about the information you want to get
3. Check your recording equipment
4. Turn off your phone
5. Greet participants, give them a nametag, and let them know if they should get food now or wait until after the group.

During the Focus Group

Introduce yourself, facilitate icebreaker, and set group agreements. Turn on recorder if participants say it is okay to record.

Begin asking questions and facilitating the group:

See the following handouts to help build focus group moderating skills (in the FNL Roadmap Project Guide, and here in the Appendix):

- Freeze 'N' Go Activity (p. App-5)
- Follow-Up Questions Exercise (p. App-6)
- Guidelines for Interviews and Focus Groups (p. App-9)

The key things to remember when you are facilitating a focus group are to listen closely, probe for more information, stay on track, and try to make the participants comfortable.

Listen closely

- Stay focused on the person and his/her responses.
- Show them you are listening with body language and verbal cues.
- Reflect what you are hearing by periodically saying what you heard and checking that with them.
- If you think you might not have heard something or understood what the person said or meant, ask them to say it again.

Probe for more

- Know exactly what information you want to collect in the focus group. This will help you ask the right probing questions.
- Don't ever ask leading questions (don't give the person the answer in the question).
- Be patient. Sometimes people need a second to think, and remaining silent will help them do that.
- Repeat what the person said to probe further. For example, "So you came to Friday Night Live one time and you felt a little uncomfortable...."
- Be ready with follow-up questions so you get good information and examples.
 - Can you give an example?
 - Can you say more about that?
 - What do you mean by _____?"
 - Could you explain _____ a little more?"
 - Would you mind saying that again? I want to make sure I got it all.
- Think about how you get information from friends and come up with other strategies to probe.

Focus/Stay on track

- Keep the person focused on what you want them to talk about. This isn't always easy. You can repeat the last thing they said that was on track. *You mentioned that you are interested in getting help with your school work.....what kind of help do you want?*
- If they talk about things that aren't related to your questions, you can also say "I am interested in what you're saying/What you're saying is important, but I would like to come back to _____."
- If they said something on track and then moved quickly to something else on track, but you want them to go back to the other topic to say more about it, you can say "You mentioned something a second ago that I would like to ask you more about. Before we keep going with (what you are talking about now) can you say more about (the thing they said quickly)?"
- If someone goes into a lot of detail about something that isn't necessary, you can get back on track by saying something like, *I can see how that impacted you. I would like to shift to another topic to make sure I get the whole picture.*
- If they state something later in the interview that is different from what they said earlier, you can say "You said that _____ earlier, but then you mentioned _____ just now. Could you explain what you mean because I want to make sure I have it right?"

Make the participants comfortable

- Try to stay neutral and non-judgmental. You want people to feel comfortable sharing opinions, feelings and experiences. Remember that your facial expression and body language can say a lot.
- Keep your tone neutral when you ask questions and follow-up questions. Don't let the person know how you feel by the tone you use.

Manage the Group

If you form group agreements and have a quiet environment free of distractions and focus group participants who are interested in the topic, chances are all will go well. However, research does not always go smoothly, and you should be prepared just in case!

If several people are not participating or if one or two people are dominating the discussion:

- Ask, “Does anyone else have something to add?” “Do others agree with what is being said?” Turn to someone who is being quiet: “What do you think about this? Do you feel comfortable sharing?”
- Say something about how while no one has to answer any question that they do not want to, you would like to hear more about what others in the group think.

If some participants behave in a disruptive manner during the group:

- Refer to the group agreements about how participants agreed to participate.
Example: “It seems like we are getting off track from the good discussion we were having. Remember, we agreed to (insert behavior here – not interrupt each other, step up and step back, not call each other names, not have side conversations, participate as best we can). Can we recommit to that or agree to that again?”
- If the behavior continues, you may need to say something like, “We have (X) minutes left for this focus group and we need to have an environment where people who want to participate are able to. Please stop (insert behavior) or I will need to ask you to (decide in advance – go back to class? Leave the room and go with a teacher?). Thank you.”
- It is helpful to decide in advance what you will do if the behavior of one or more participants is consistently disruptive to the group.
 - Can the person leave the room and go with a teacher?
 - How many warnings will you give before that happens?

Take Notes During the Group:

- A co-facilitator can take notes, turn on the recorder once participants agree to be recorded, and check periodically to be sure the recorder is working
- Be sure to get down the main ideas
- Get the first few words of each new speaker – this will help with transcription
- The note taker should also maintain neutral words and expressions

After the Focus Group

- Thank participants and give out any incentives
- Thumbnail the session (see Step 3 for details)

Step 3: Summarize, Analyze, Write Up

The next steps are to summarize and interpret the results of your focus groups, and then write a report of all of your findings.

Summarize each meeting

Be sure to check your tape after each focus group to be sure the recorder and tape worked. If there is a problem with the recording, you will be able to write a more complete and accurate summary if you do so immediately after the focus group.

Even if the recording is complete, you should write a brief summary of the group and compare your impressions with any co-facilitators. (Use the Facilitator Summary Sheet in the Appendix, p. App-11)

Transcribe any notes as soon as possible. You will need a summary of each group so you can analyze your data when you are done with all of your focus groups.

Analyze all of the focus group summaries

Once you are done with all of the focus groups, it is time to review and interpret all of your summaries. At least two people should work separately to read all of the summaries and use highlighters, pens, and post-it notes to mark themes and startling comments.

Themes are comments that are repeated across several groups.

Startling comments are ones that you may not have expected. You may not see these “surprises” across multiple groups, but they may show exceptions and provide additional information to your themes.

The tone of comments is also important. Be sure to note if a theme seems to be talked about in a negative way or if participants became emotional while talking about an area.

After each person working on the analysis is done reviewing and marking the summaries, compare all themes and startling comments. Themes and startling comments that overlap among reviewers can be kept without much discussion. Reviewers should discuss any themes or startling comments that were identified by only one person, and these should only be kept if both reviewers agree.

Write a report of your findings

Your report should include the following information:

- Purpose of the focus groups and report
 - Why the groups were conducted
 - Focus group questions

- Focus group details
 - Number of groups conducted
 - Who facilitated the focus groups
 - Dates and locations of focus groups
 - Information about who participated in the focus groups
 - How participants were recruited
 - Number of participants in each group
 - Participant characteristics, such as age or grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. Be sure you do not record information that could be used to identify the participants!

- Focus group results
 - Themes (include quotes that represent typical comments)
 - Startling comments (include quotes to illustrate these)

- Overall conclusions about what you found

Project 2: Administer a Survey

(Use YLI's Youth Alcohol Access Survey or Create Your Own)

Overview

This section will help you either use the YLI Youth Alcohol Access Survey or create your own survey for your FNL Assessment Project.

When should you choose a survey for your FNL Assessment Project?

Advantages of using a survey:

- Quick and easy to administer
- Inexpensive
- Allows for high degree of confidentiality compared to other methods
- Can be conducted anywhere
- Easier to get viewpoints from enough people so you can say your findings represent the entire population you are interested in (all high school students or all parents in your town)
- Surveys allow results to be quantified and presented numerically (ex. 45% of respondents reported that...)

Disadvantages of using a survey:

- Less depth of information compared to other methods
- You cannot ask respondents for feedback or clarification, or ensure that respondents understand questions
- Respondents may not read questions carefully or may have difficulty reading or understanding questions
- Difficult to use for “why” or “how” questions
- Poorly worded or inappropriate questions or incomplete survey response options will yield inaccurate data

Overview of Steps for Project Two

Step 1: Get Ready • p. 2-3

- Use YLI's Youth Alcohol Access Survey or create your survey questions

Step 2: Administer Your Survey • p. 2-7

- Decide how you will choose your survey participants and how many people you will survey
- Plan the logistics
- Administer your surveys

Step 3: Enter and Analyze Your Surveys • p. 2-10

- Use SurveyMonkey to enter your surveys
- Come up with your findings

Step 1: Get Ready

Use the YLI Youth Alcohol Access Survey or Create Your Own Survey Questions

Use the YLI Youth Alcohol Survey

This survey measures community underage alcohol access points, community norms and messages, and other aspects of underage alcohol use, including:

- What types of alcohol are young people using?
- What kind of messages do young people see and hear about alcohol?
- What are community norms around underage drinking?
- Why are young people using?
- How are young people able to access alcohol (social and commercial access points)?

Why Use This Survey?

- Fits very well for Assessment component of FNL Roadmap Implementation
- Provides information to drive FNL Action
- Survey has already been tested and used in FNL Counties
- Survey is already developed and available for your use
- You can get your results very quickly

Survey Details

- Can be administered by FNL chapters to your school populations – High School and Middle School Youth:
- Has about 40 questions, including demographic questions
- Originally developed by the Marin Youth Health Advisory Council

How to Get Started

- Contact YLI to get the current survey link or pdf
- Administer surveys (and enter into SurveyMonkey if you gave out hard copy surveys)
- Ask YLI for your results

Create Your Own Survey: Tips for Writing Good Survey Questions

- **Use complete and clear sentences**
- **Avoid abbreviations**
- **Use simple language.** Don't use technical terms or slang that everyone might not understand. You should try to make your survey questions read at the 6-8th grade level.

If your topic is sensitive, include more details to put the behavior or attitude you are asking about in context and encourage honest answers.

Ex. How many times during the past 30 days did you drive after drinking alcohol?

Revision: Many teens never intend to drink and drive, but they find themselves in situations where they have been drinking and don't have another ride home and they are too afraid to call their parents, and so they end up driving home after drinking.

How many times during the past 30 days did you drive after drinking alcohol?

- **Write items that include only one idea**, otherwise you may confuse participants and you won't know which idea they are responding to.

Ex. Have you ever kept silent about witnessing bullying because you didn't know what to do and because you thought that adults at school wouldn't help?

Yes _____ No _____

Revision: Have you ever kept silent about witnessing bullying?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, why did you keep silent? (check all that apply)

_____ *I didn't know what to do*

_____ *I didn't think adults at school would help*

_____ *Another reason; please list: _____*

- **Be sure your response options do not overlap and are exhaustive.**

Ex. How much time do you spend each week in your program?

_____ *Less than 30 minutes*

_____ *An hour or less*

_____ *1-2 hours*

_____ *2-3 hours*

_____ *4 hours or more*

Revision: How much time do you spend each week in your program?

_____ *Less than 30 minutes*

_____ *30 minutes to 1 hour*

_____ *More than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours*

_____ *2-3 hours*

_____ *More than 3 hours*

- **Be sure to define key terms.**

How many times did you binge drink over the past 14 days? _____

Revision: “Binge drinking” refers to consuming 5 or more drinks (male) or 4 or more drinks (female) in about 2 hours. A “drink” means half an ounce of alcohol (that is, one 12-oz beer, one 5 oz glass of wine, or one 1.5 oz shot of distilled spirits).

How many times did you binge drink over the past 14 days? _____

- **Make sure your questions are specific.**

How often do you usually drink alcohol? _____

Revision: On how many occasions did you consume at least one drink of alcohol over the past 14 days? (A “drink” means half an ounce of alcohol - that is, one 12-oz beer, one 5 oz glass of wine, or one 1.5 oz shot of distilled spirits). _____

- **Use ranges when asking about income.** Rather than asking respondents to list their exact income, you should provide ranges that are tailored to the population you are surveying.

For example, the upper end of the range for middle to higher income respondents might be 250K or more. A survey of people with lower incomes might look like:

_____ \$0-19,999

_____ \$20,000-39,999

_____ \$40,000-59,999

_____ \$60,000-79,999

_____ \$80,000 or more

- **Don’t use value-laden or biased words in your questions.**

Ex. Do you support the prohibitionist decision of the legislature to halt new liquor licenses? _____ Yes _____ No

Revision: Do you support the decision of the legislature to halt new liquor licenses? _____ Yes _____ No

- **Be careful about the response options you provide.**

For example, if you ask respondents if they prefer to listen to music or read, they will only consider these two options. If you make this an open-ended question and ask them to write in what they enjoy doing, they will be able to respond with all the activities they enjoy.

However, one advantage of including a list of options is that you may help respondents think of activities they might not have remembered right away. To develop an accurate and complete list of options, it is important to know your topic and your population well. One way to do this is to do some interviews and focus groups with your population in order to figure out what your response options should include.

- **Avoid using the word “not,” if possible.** People tend to read survey questions quickly and may miss “not” and answer your question incorrectly.
Ex. How often do you not drink the night before an exam?
Revision: How often do you avoid drinking the night before an exam?
- **Highlight** words that are important and might be missed.
Ex. How often do you not report bullying when you witness it?
Revision: How often do you not report bullying when you witness it?
- **Use closed questions instead of open-ended questions.** For example, use yes, no, sort of questions, scales or develop response categories that mean people will check a box rather than write in their own response.
 - Scales like these are examples of closed question responses:
 - strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree
 - always; sometimes; never
 - really true; true; sort of true; not true
 - Response categories like these are also examples of closed questions:
 - Bring my lunch; buy school lunch; buy lunch off campus; don't really eat lunch
 - Sports; student government; theater; job; community service
 - When developing response categories be sure they do not overlap and make sure you have thought of everything.
 - Overlap example: rock; country; rap; R&B; hip hop (rap and hip hop overlap)
- **Include the “Other” category.** When you are developing response categories, it's a good idea to add an “other” category as a choice. This allows you to collect the best data you can. It avoids a forced choice response that might not reflect the person's real answer or feeling about the issue.

For example, if someone asked, “Who is your favorite musician?” and gave you the options: a) Kanye West, b) Missy Elliott , and c) Britney Spears, what would you choose? Would you choose the one you most like among the three choices? What if Kid Rock is your favorite? The survey has no way of gathering that information, unless it adds: d) Other: _____
- **Give clear instructions to respondents.** You may want respondents to check all of the responses that apply or you may want them to pick the response that is most important or happens most often. If you look at the two response category examples above, you may want to know how they most often eat lunch; and for the second example, you may want to know all of the extracurricular activities they did last year. Whatever it is that you want to know, be sure to make it clear.
- **Pilot test the questions with potential respondents.** This will give you a chance to get feedback on the questions and to see whether anything was confusing or unclear.

- **Be sure to include demographic items.** Depending on how you will be administering the survey and your goals with your project, you may want to include more or fewer demographic items, however it is a good idea to have some basic ones like age, gender, socioeconomic status (eligibility for free or reduced lunch is a good way to get that information), grade, zip code, school, language spoken at home, ethnicity or another demographic you are interested in collecting. Again, it depends what kinds of comparisons you may want to do, for example comparing youth responses by gender, age, neighborhood or school. It is a good idea to put demographic questions at the end of the survey because it can be off-putting to some people to have them right at the beginning. Keep in mind that people usually don't like responding to too many demographic items, especially if they are less familiar with your group. If you can determine some of these things yourself or through your data organization system, then try to ask fewer questions. For example, if all of the students at a particular school qualify for free lunch, then you can eliminate the question. Or you can organize and code your survey envelopes by school and grade to avoid asking their school and grade.

The following source was consulted for writing this section and may be helpful to you:
Konicki Di Iorio, C. (2005) *Measurement in Health Behavior: Methods for Research and Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass; San Francisco, CA.

Step 2: Administer Your Survey

A. Decide how you will choose your survey participants and how many people you will survey

How do we choose whom to survey?

Time and cost will keep you from collecting information from the entire population (ex. all high school students in your community or all parents of high school students in your community), so you will choose a sample (a smaller group) of people to survey. The idea behind using a sample is that you want the findings you get with your sample to reflect the larger population (all kinds of high school students), so you need to select your survey participants carefully.

Example: Say you are interested in knowing how all juniors and seniors at your high school access alcohol.

Brainstorm: What are some of the qualities that make up the body of juniors and seniors at your high school?

It's hard to name them all, but here are a few....gender, race/ethnicity, socio economic status, how long they've lived in your community, level of school achievement, social group (jocks, goth...whatever groups apply to your school), whether they have a job, if they are single or are in a relationship, if they have a car, if they get involved in school activities....you get the idea!

How might these qualities influence their answers to your questions? Your goal is to survey a group of juniors and seniors that have a range of these different qualities and represent all the juniors and seniors at your school. *However you choose to survey people, ask yourselves how they might be different from the entire population you are interested in.*

Example: You decide to set up a table in front of the cafeteria at your school and ask people to fill out your survey.

- Ask: do all students at your school eat lunch in the cafeteria?
- If yes, this may be a good strategy. To make it better, offer an incentive to survey participants, such as free snacks, so that you are more likely to get all types of students and not just the ones who volunteer because they want to be helpful or because they are friends of students in your FNL group.
- If not, how might students who eat lunch at school differ from students who leave campus? Are they more involved in school? Are they less likely to have cars? You may need to choose another strategy to get people to take your survey.

Example: You decide to survey students in selected classrooms.

- To make this option work best, ask: what classes are required for juniors and seniors? These are most likely to have all types of students.
- If you choose elective or specialized classes, you will only get certain groups of students and not all (ex. leadership or honors classes will have students who are very engaged in school, and students who are very engaged in school may have different experiences with alcohol than those who are less engaged.)

How many people do we need to survey?

Try to survey, at a minimum, between 5% and 10% of the group you are researching (ex. 9th grade students, parents of seniors – whoever you are interested in getting information from). This sample size will give you more credibility when you are presenting your results to community members or decision makers.

B. Plan the logistics

Now that you have decided whom and how many people to survey, it is time to do a little bit of planning for survey day. It is a good idea to create a written plan so you know who will do what, and when!

Some things to consider:

- Who will give out the surveys? Will you give out paper-pencil surveys, or will you administer the survey online?
- When and where will you administer surveys?
- Do you need to get permission from anyone to give out surveys?
 - You may need to get permission from your school administration, and you should check whether surveys with students require parent permission.

- What will you tell participants about the survey? Be sure to prepare something in advance that you will either read to a classroom before you hand out the survey, or tell participants as you hand them the survey. Some things to include are:
 - Who you are
 - Why you are giving out the survey
 - What you plan to do with the information
 - How long the survey will take
 - Why honest answers are important
 - Participation is voluntary and they can skip any question they do not want to answer
 - Their answers are anonymous/private

- What will you do with completed paper surveys until you can enter them into a computer program and get your results?
 - One option is to bring large manila envelopes and label the envelopes with the location where you gave out the survey and who administered the survey.
 - Another option is to bring a box for participants to place their completed surveys. Make it colorful and appealing!
 - You should bring the surveys to a secure location as soon as possible. A locked file cabinet is ideal.

C. Administer your surveys

Make sure you have everything you need to administer your survey. Some supplies you may need are:

- Enough copies of your survey
- Pens or pencils
- Incentives, such as snacks or other small gift items
- A box or large envelope to hold completed surveys
- If you are giving out surveys in a public location such as a school entrance or outside of the school cafeteria, you may want a table, some signs to advertise the survey, and some eye-catching decorations. If you can get permission, music can create a fun environment.
- Be sure to have enough members of your team administer the surveys. If you are recruiting survey participants in a public location, assign some team members to greet people and urge them to take the survey and others to give out the survey and incentives and make sure people actually fill out the survey and give it back to you.

Step 3: Enter and Analyze Your Surveys

Use an online program such as SurveyMonkey to enter and analyze your survey data

You can use spreadsheets or online programs to put your survey numbers into a format in which they can be analyzed and you can get your results – averages, percentages, etc. This toolkit covers one option – using the online survey program, SurveyMonkey. You can open a free account if you have a short survey or you can pay a small monthly fee if you have larger numbers of surveys. SurveyMonkey will store your data and provide simple statistics and charts.

Opening a SurveyMonkey Account

1. Go to www.surveymonkey.com
2. There are four types of accounts offered. You probably can use either the free or the lowest cost option:
 - Basic (free) which includes: 10 questions per survey, 100 responses per survey, 31 survey templates, 15 types of questions
 - Select (\$17 per month, billed \$204 annually): unlimited questions and responses; 51 survey templates & 15 types of questions; custom survey designs and URLs, enhanced security, skip-logic options and excel export and printable PDFs of survey results.
3. Once you have selected which account you would like to use, click on either the “Sign up for a FREE account” or “Sign up for Premium” button.
4. Create a username (up to 50 characters with no spaces), password and enter your contact email. Then click on “sign up”. Note: you may also choose to create an account using your Google or Facebook account using the options on the right side of the screen (this will link your accounts and allow you to sign in using your Google account).

Putting Your Survey on SurveyMonkey

To get started, click on the green “+Create Survey” button.

1. Enter the title of your survey and click ‘continue’.
2. There are 3 different options you can use to create a new survey.
 - Create a new survey from scratch- a blank survey form will be created that you can use to add your own questions.
 - Copy an existing survey- can be used to create a copy of a survey form you have already created.
 - Use a survey template- allows you to select from our list of pre-designed survey forms that you can customize.

3. The first step is to design the survey with the questions you would like to ask. You will see a box in the center of the page with the tab 'Edit Page Options' above it. Click on the drop-down menu and select 'Edit Page Information' to enter a name and description for the page. Click 'Save Page' to enter and return to the survey.
4. To begin entering questions, click the '+ Add Question' button.
 - To choose what type of question you want (multiple choice with only one answer, comment/essay box, Matrix of Choices with only one answer per row, etc.), select from the 'Choose Question Type' drop-down menu.
 - Write the question in the 'Question text' box.
 - Enter the question answers on a separate line.
 - Click on 'Save and Close' to return to the previous screen or click in 'Save & Add Next Question' to keep creating questions.
 - When you create a survey, the default Edit Survey page opens to page #1. Click the [Add Page Before/After] button to add a new page to your survey. In this page you can choose to insert a title for your page and include text for an introduction or description of the page. Click the [Split Page Here] button before any question to create a page break in your survey and divide the questions onto separate pages.
5. Click on the survey settings tab on the left

Administer Your Survey Online

Click on the 'Collect Responses' tab on the top. You can select the method you would like to use to collect responses. These include:

- Web-link: a web link will be created that you can send via email to respondents who will be directed to survey monkey.
- Email: a custom email invitation will be sent out to respondents
- Website: embed the survey on your website.
- Share on facebook

Choose Your Survey Settings

When you are on the 'Collect Responses' page, click 'Change Settings' (button is on left side of page). Here you can make decisions about:

- Whether or not you will allow multiple responses per computer.
 - Click 'Yes.'
- What you want to happen when a survey is completed.
 - Choose 'Loop to start of survey to allow another response.'

Enter Paper Surveys Into SurveyMonkey

Click on the 'Manual Data Entry' button on the left side of the page. Once there, click the 'Add new response' tab on the right-hand side. Enter the responses for each survey.

View Your Results

After all of the surveys have been entered, you can view the results by clicking on the 'Analyze Results' tab.

For each survey question you will see:

- The number of survey participants who chose each answer
- The percentage of respondents who chose each answer
- The most popular answer will be highlighted
- You can click 'Create Chart' if you want to see the responses displayed in a pie chart, line graph, or other visual format

Come up with your findings

Come up with some 'startling stats'

- What data stand out to you as most important?
- What are the main things you found out about your research questions?
 - What are the top alcohol access points for youth?
 - What community norms support underage drinking?
 - What are some things your community can do to support parents to restrict alcohol access?
- How can you restate the facts in a way that is meaningful and impactful?

Create several findings

- How would you summarize the important data in a way that people can relate to and understand?
- What story does the data tell?

Project 3: Use Data That Has Already Been Collected in Your Community

Overview

For your FNL assessment project you also have the option to examine surveys and data that have already been collected for your community. You may be able to find a variety of data that has been collected by schools, community coalitions, nonprofit organizations, and other groups. This toolkit will focus on two sources of data that are available for all FNL communities: The Lucile Packard Foundation's KidsData.org website and California Healthy Kids Survey data.

Please note that you can access comprehensive training on how to use KidsData.org for your FNL Community Assessment from the California Friday Night Live Partnership.

When Should You Choose to Examine Already Collected Data for Your FNL Assessment Project?

A major advantage of this approach is that this is your quickest community assessment option! You may decide to choose this method if many groups in your community have already collected strong data on underage drinking, if you have a very limited amount of time for assessment, or if your FNL group is new and has little experience with research.

Some disadvantages of this approach are that a) existing data may not answer all of the research questions you have, and b) you cannot ask focus group or survey respondents to clarify their responses, so you may have questions about how to interpret the data.

Overview of Steps for Project Three

Step 1: Get Ready • p. 3-3

- Gather your data
- Decide how you will present the data to your FNL group

Step 2: Examine the data • p. 3-5

Step 3: Come up with your findings • p. 3-5

Step 1: Get ready

Gather your data

You likely have many existing sources of data about community underage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug access, norms, messages, and use. Check with community coalitions and organizations to find your local data.

Data is especially helpful for assessment when you can examine trends over multiple years, when you can see data for your overall county as well as cities and school districts, and when you can compare data from your community to statewide data and even data from similar communities. Two sources of data provide this type of information for all FNL counties are : 1) Lucile Packard Foundation’s website kidsdata.org and 2) California Healthy Kids Survey.

First, get county, city, and state data on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use from kidsdata.org (contact CFNLP for comprehensive training)

1. Go to <http://www.kidsdata.org/>
2. Click on “Region” and select your county
 - You may be able to see data for your county, school districts, and cities
 - You can see the same data for the entire state

KidsData has data on a wide range of issues, including:

- Child and Youth Safety: Bullying and Harassment at School, Dating and Domestic Violence, Gang Involvement, School Safety
 - Children with Special Health Care Needs: Local Prevalence of Disabilities
 - Demographics: Demographics, Family Structure, Immigrants, English Learners
 - Education & Child Care: College Eligibility, High School Dropouts, Math Proficiency, Pupil Support Service Personnel, Reading Proficiency, Truancy, Suspensions & Expulsions
 - Emotional & Behavioral Health: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs, Disconnected Youth, Emotional & Behavioral Health, Juvenile Arrests, School Connectedness
 - Family Economics: Family Income and Poverty, Free/Reduced Price School Meals, Housing Affordability, Unemployment
 - Physical Health: Health Care, Nutrition – Breakfast, Physical Fitness, Weight
3. For your FNL Assessment Project, start by clicking ‘Emotional & Behavioral Health’ and then on ‘Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs.’ Click which data you want to review from the following options:
 - Alcohol Use (Current), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
 - Alcohol Use (Lifetime), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School

- Alcohol Use (on School Property in Past Month), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Alcohol Use (How Much Students Report Drinking), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Binge Drinking, by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Drinking and Driving or Riding with a Driver Who Had Been Drinking, by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Cigarette Use (Current), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Cigarette Use (Lifetime), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Cigarette Use (on School Property in Past Month), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Inhalants Use (Lifetime), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Marijuana Use (Current), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Marijuana Use (Lifetime), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Marijuana Use (on School Property in Past Month), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School
- Marijuana or Other Drug Use (How High Students Report Getting), by Gender and Grade Level, Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, and Level of Connectedness to School

Click to create data reports for your county, any city or school district data, and for the state

Next, get additional data on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug access, norms, and perceptions of harm from California Healthy Kids Survey (Wested)

Go to <http://www.wested.org/chks>

Download reports for the state, your county, and any available cities and school districts:

Module C: Sources for Alcohol and School Policies and Programs

HS Question C16: How do most kids at your school who drink alcohol get it? (Mark all that apply.) (A) At school. (B) At parties or events outside school. (C) At their own home. (D) From adults at friends' homes. (E) From friends or another teenager. (F) Get adults to buy it for them. (G) Buy it themselves at a store (convenience store, liquor store, grocery, mini mart). (H) Other. (I) Don't know.

HS C15. In your opinion, how likely is it that a student will be suspended, expelled, or transferred if he or she is caught **on school property** using or possessing alcohol or other drugs?

HS C14. In your opinion, how likely is it that a student would find **help** at your school from a counselor, teacher, or other adult to **stop or reduce** using alcohol or other drugs?

MS C6. During the past **12 months**, did you receive any information or education about using alcohol or other drugs in any of your school classes?

Module A: Additional information about Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use, Perceived Harm of Use, Perceptions of Peer Disapproval of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Marijuana Use, Perceptions of How Often Peers Use Alcohol, Tobacco, or Marijuana, Perceptions of How Easy Or Difficult it is to Access Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana

Decide how you will present the data to your FNL group

Kids Data will provide you with state, county, and other local (selected cities and school districts) data in the format you choose – tables with percentages, pie charts, line graphs, etc. Spend some time looking at your options and choose what works best for your group.

You can download separate state, county, city, and school district reports for California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data. If it is available, download the most recent year's reports and any reports from prior years.

A suggested format for viewing CHKS data is to use Excel to create line graphs. Create a separate line for each level (city, school district, county, and state) that shows the data over time.

Step 2: Examine the data

- Compare city, county, and statewide data - differences of 5% or more between city, county, or state data are probably significant.
- Look at your data over time - rates that have been steadily increasing are probably significant.
- Determine the values held within your community – for example, is it acceptable in your community for 75% of high school students to believe that it is easy to obtain alcohol?
- Look at subgroups of people – is there a group that is most in need for change to occur?
- Are there any numbers that surprise you?

Step 3: Come up with your findings

Come up with some 'startling stats'

- What data stand out to you as most important?
- What stands out as an area of need when you compare your local data to state data?
- Do you see any increases in ATOD access, norms, messages, or use when you look at multiple years of data?
- What are the main things you found out about your research questions?
 - What are the top alcohol access points for youth?
 - What community norms support underage drinking?
 - Which substances are easiest for youth to access in your community?
 - Which substances do youth in your community perceive as acceptable to use or unlikely to cause harm?
- How can you restate the facts in a way that is meaningful and impactful?

Create several findings

- How would you summarize the important data in a way that people can relate to and understand?
- What story does the data tell?

What Next? Using Your Data for Action

This section has information to get you started on using your data to take action with your FNL group. Please also consult the FNL Roadmap for additional guidance, as it contains information on how to translate your findings into action. The Assessment Module includes a section called “Use Your Data for Action” that contains much of the information presented here. The FNL Roadmap Planning Module also covers the steps of choosing a solution based on the data you collect and planning for action.

To get started, discuss what you have found in your assessment. Some questions you might ask yourselves are:

- What do we know about the problem now, compared to when we started this process? What new information do we have?
- Are any of the findings conflicting? If so, what do you think is causing the difference? What do we think is the most accurate source of information?
- Do we think we have learned enough to be able to propose some solutions?
- What are some of the solutions we have learned about so far? Of these solutions, what would make sense for us to possibly take on as a project? Do any of the solutions address root causes of the problem?
- Do we need any additional information? If so, what do we need to do to get that information?

Next, you can develop recommendations for your school or community, decide which findings or recommendations your group might take action on, and brainstorm who else needs to hear about your findings and recommendations:

1. What do you recommend?
 - What kinds of changes would you suggest to address the issues that came up in your research? You can recommend more than one change.
 - Do these recommendations target the root problem?
 - Who will be the target of your recommendations?
 - By when do you want these recommendations to happen?

A suggested format for each recommendation is:

We recommend that _____ (Group or person targeted)
take the following action _____ (Recommended Change/action)
by _____ (Timeframe during which recommendation should be implemented)
based on _____ (Evidence from data and proven strategies)

2. What might your FNL group take on?

- After you complete your FNL Community Assessment, you will use your data to choose an action project for your group. Please use the “Choose a Solution” section of the FNL Roadmap to choose a project.
- As you brainstorm your recommendations and decide who else needs to hear about your findings and recommendations, be sure to also consider: Is anyone in the school or community already working on some of the changes we would like to see? Can FNL partner with them on this work?

3. Who else needs to hear about your findings and recommendations?

- What groups or people in your school or community need to hear about your findings?
- Who has the power to make some of the recommended changes?
- Who else would be interested in hearing about your work? Is anyone doing similar work and would benefit from hearing what you found?

Appendix

This appendix includes the following resources for use in engaging youth in community assessment:

1. Pros and Cons of Different Research Methods* • p. App-2
2. Introductory RAP Example* • p. App-4
3. Freeze N Go Activity* • p. App-5
4. Follow-Up Questions Exercise* • p. App-6
5. Guidelines for Interviews and Focus Groups* • p. App-9
6. Focus Group Summary Sheet • p. App-11

* From the FNL Roadmap Chapter Project Guide

Pros and Cons of Different Methods

Method	Pros	Cons	Combine With...
<p>Surveys</p> <p>Usually written questionnaires with both questions and responses to choose from</p>	<p>Quick and easy to administer</p> <p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Allows for high degree of confidentiality compared to other methods</p> <p>Can be conducted anywhere</p> <p>Easier to sample enough respondents to represent a population compared to other methods</p> <p>Surveys allow for breadth of information so results can be quantified and presented numerically (ex. 45% of respondents reported that...)</p>	<p>Less depth of information compared to other methods</p> <p>Researcher cannot ask respondents for feedback or clarification, or ensure that respondents understand questions</p> <p>Respondents may not read questions carefully or may have difficulty reading or understanding questions</p> <p>Difficult to use for “why” or “how” questions</p> <p>Poorly worded or inappropriate questions or incomplete survey response options will yield inaccurate data</p>	<p>Try conducting a few focus group discussions or interviews with your target population first to help develop meaningful and accurate survey questions and response options.</p> <p>If you have difficulty understanding your results after you get your surveys back, try holding some focus group discussions with members of your target population and ask them to interpret your findings.</p>
<p>Interviews</p> <p>The person being interviewed is asked for details about his/her perspective on an issue or about his/her experiences and opinions.</p>	<p>Allow for more confidentiality than focus groups</p> <p>Provide in-depth information about an individual's perspective</p>	<p>Time-consuming</p> <p>Require a private, quiet space</p> <p>Need to be recorded</p> <p>Allow for less confidentiality than surveys</p> <p>Require skilled interviewers</p>	<p>Try administering surveys to a broader segment of your population so you can have a wide breadth of data along with the in-depth qualitative information from a smaller number of interview respondents</p>
<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Qualitative method in which one or two facilitators hold a discussion on a research topic with a group of 6-10 (max 12) respondents</p>	<p>Good for gathering information on social norms or to gather views to evaluate services for a given population</p> <p>Yield more in-depth information than surveys</p> <p>Yield a large amount of information in less time than interviews</p>	<p>Require highly skilled facilitators</p> <p>Participant confidentiality is difficult to ensure</p> <p>Often not appropriate for personal or sensitive information</p>	<p>Conduct follow-up telephone or in-person interviews or surveys with your focus group respondents for more sensitive topics</p>

Method	Pros	Cons	Combine With...
<p>PhotoVoice</p> <p>Community members take pictures to document and analyze their community's strengths and needs. Large and small group discussions build on community members' insider knowledge of their communities and poise groups to take action.</p>	<p>Participatory method builds on valuable insider knowledge of community members and engages them in assessing and changing their own communities</p> <p>Photographs can make a powerful statement for creating change</p>	<p>Ethical considerations – Permission may be needed to take a picture, viewpoints of community members are discussed in groups and are not confidential</p> <p>As with other methods, requires a skilled facilitator so all participants are heard</p> <p>Expense of cameras and developing film</p>	<p>Try combining with some archival data about your community (ex. Unemployment or graduation rates, housing information, or any other information relevant to your study) or survey data to supplement the rich qualitative information provided by the photos and community member participation and analysis</p>
<p>Community Mapping</p> <p>Community members construct a visual representation of the needs and resources of their community</p>	<p>Community members share knowledge & conduct analysis of their community</p> <p>May provide a powerful visual tool to advocate for change</p> <p>Inexpensive and quick</p>	<p>Requires a skilled facilitator to ensure that different groups participating in the mapping are heard</p> <p>Difficult to ensure confidentiality of participants</p>	<p>Archival statistics may help to further explain the mapping findings</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups may provide in-depth information to highlight the needs shown by the map</p>
<p>Archival Data</p> <p>May include official records, meeting minutes, attendance records, grades, and other “official statistics” such as arrest rates, treatment admissions, etc.</p>	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Often readily available and collected regularly</p> <p>Provides breadth of information – results are quantifiable and may be presented numerically</p>	<p>May not represent your entire desired population</p> <p>High degree of reporting error for some archival sources</p> <p>Ex: self-reported delinquency rates (surveys) are higher than arrest rates because many crimes are never reported. In addition, arrest rates are influenced by law enforcement policies and the social and political climate, and racial and ethnic minorities are over-represented due to issues such as greater police surveillance and tendency to arrest rather than warn minority adolescents.</p>	<p>Combines well with all other methods</p>

Introductory Rap Example

Read over this introductory rap and see whether it covers the five areas. Put it into your own words, figure out a good ice-breaker to use and practice the whole intro with your team.

Introductory Rap

My name is _____ and my co-facilitator's name is _____. We are here as representatives of _____, a program that _____. The reason we asked you to talk with us is that we want to find out more about what youth think of our program and what activities we could offer that would make the program more interesting to youth who aren't part of it. We are going to be talking to other youth, too, to get lots of information about _____ . Your answers will help us _____ .

We think that this group will take about _____(amount of time). There are no right or wrong answers- we really want to know what you think. If you don't want to answer a question, feel free to skip it. Your participation is completely voluntary- in other words, you don't have to answer a question if you do not want to. Some of the comments and information you share could go into a report we will write, but your name will not be included. Your responses will not be connected with your name or with other distinguishing characteristics. Also, we ask that you don't discuss information that participants share here with other people.

Is it OK with you if we record this? Do you have any questions? There will be time at the end to ask questions.

Ice-breaker

Pick an ice-breaker to do after you have gone over this intro- it is better for the focus group participants to have a chance to get comfortable before you jump into the questions. It can be a good idea to use one that is somehow related to your area to get the group thinking about it, but be sure to make it fun.

Freeze 'n' Go

Purpose:

To familiarize participants with facilitating interviews and focus groups and to ensure that they are prepared to skillfully probe interviewees for more information.

Materials:

Interview or focus group protocol with introduction

Time Needed:

30 minutes to an hour

Start:

Have your group sit in a circle with the 'hot' seats in the middle. (Two hot seats if you are practicing interviews and more if you are practicing focus groups.)

How It Works:

The interviewer/facilitator sits in the hot seat and begins the interview/FG from the start. This means he/she should give the introduction then begin with the questions. If it is a focus group, it is a good idea to give each focus group participant a role to play on a piece of paper (the cooperative person, the interrupter, the shy person, the challenger, the person that wants to talk about his/her weekend, the cooperative person). Especially in the beginning it is good to have a couple of supportive participants along with the more challenging roles, at least until group members' skills are more developed.

The role of the rest of the group (those that are not role playing or acting as the interviewer or facilitator) is to determine when enough information has been gathered for each question.

When the participants on the OUTSIDE circle think it is time to move to the next question, they raise their hands. Once all hands are up the interviewer can move on.

The idea is to be sure enough probing (enough follow-up questions) has happened and the information gathered is sufficient to answer the question.

If the hands are not all up and the interviewer feels stuck, he/she can say 'freeze' and call on anyone OUTSIDE the circle to take his/her place in the hot seat. The replacement person has to pick up where the previous interviewer left off and continue probing until all hands are up. Once they are all up, the interviewer moves to the next question.

At any time the adult staff person can say 'freeze' to point out an especially skillful technique that the interviewer used or to point out an approach he/she could have used.

In addition, another young person can say 'freeze' to insert her/himself into the hot seat.

Follow-Up Questions

Purpose:

This exercise uses scenarios to help participants develop follow-up questions for an interview or focus group context. Following the scenarios, participants discuss how they developed their questions in order to get additional information.

Materials:

Follow-up questions

Worksheet

Pens/pencils

Time Needed: Approximately 30 minutes

Suggested Steps

1. Hand out worksheet to participants. Explain that this exercise will help to develop follow-up questions to get additional information in an interview context. Walk through the first example together. Discuss together what kind of additional information the interviewer is able to obtain with the follow-up questions.
2. Divide participants into pairs and instruct them to work through the rest of the examples together. Encourage them to try and choose questions that will get direct, descriptive information. Allow 5-10 minutes for pairs to work together.
 - Alternatives: You can also choose to do this as a group, or, if you have limited time, you can delegate the examples and allow pairs/small groups to work for 2-3 minutes before sharing back.
3. When pairs are finished, ask them to share one example of the follow-up questions they developed. Ask each pair what kind of information they hoped to gather by asking the follow-up questions. If you have time, ask for the follow-up questions developed by other pairs.
4. Once everyone is finished, ask a few summarizing and reflective questions on the process:
 - Did you notice any patterns when you developed follow-up questions among the examples? If so, what kind of patterns? (i.e. participants might point to patterns of probing questions that begin with who? What kind of? How..? etc.)
 - As you went along, did you find better ways to ask the question? Can you give an example? What additional information were you able to get by changing your question?
 - What was most helpful to you about this exercise? How do you think it will affect your interviews?

Worksheet for Follow-Up Questions: Getting the Information You Want

Example One

Interviewer: Why did you get involved?

Interviewee: 'Cause one day there was a DJ thing at lunch and the lady said I could join the Club Live meeting on Friday.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about why this person joined?

For Example:

1. What did she say about it that made you interested?
2. What kind of a DJ thing?
3. Had you gone to meetings before or was this your first time?
4. What did you think you might get out of it if you went?

Example Two

Interviewer: Why do you stay involved?

Interviewee: 'Cause it's fun and you can learn and meet new friends.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about why this person stays involved?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Example Three

Interviewer: Why do you stay involved?

Interviewee: Well, I like the feeling of being a leader and I want to help other people to have better life styles. Help them stay away from drugs and alcohol.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about why this person stays involved?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Example Four

Interviewer: Do you feel there is a diversity of membership?

Interviewee: What is diversity?

Interviewer: (Explains.)

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee: Because it has to be equal to everyone.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about this person's feelings about whether there is diversity?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Example Five

Interviewer: Do you feel that staff follow through on your suggestions?

Interviewee: Yes. It's like teamwork, we all wanna share so whatever we say, we put it together and make it happen.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about what this person means?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Example Six

Interviewer: Do staff ask for suggestions at meetings?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Example?

Interviewee: Like what we can do so people could join.

What follow-up questions would give you more information about what this person means?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Guidelines for Interviews and Focus Groups

Listening

1. Pay close attention to the person answering your questions. Focus on the person being interviewed.
2. Let the person know you are listening to him/her.
3. Do not be judgmental. Find out and record the opinions, knowledge and experiences of the person being interviewed.
4. Check out what the person said by asking him/her to repeat it or you repeat it back to him/her for confirmation.
5. Ask the person to repeat for clarification if you aren't sure.
6. Don't ever ask leading questions (don't give the person the answer in the question).
7. Make sure you record what people say as soon as you can so you don't forget. Write down words to help you remember.
8. Add your own rules here:

Probing

1. Make sure you know what information you want to collect in the interview.
2. Ask good follow-up questions.
 - Can you say a little more about that?
 - What do you mean by ____?
 - Could you explain _____ a little bit more?
 - Would you mind saying that again— I want to make sure I got it all.
3. Repeat what the person said to probe further. For example, “So then you came to one meeting at the Live Spot...” “So you came to the dance and you felt a little uncomfortable.....”
4. Sometimes, staying silent gives the interviewee some time to think and continue.

Focusing

Do your best to keep the person you are interviewing on track.

1. If he/she starts talking about things that aren't related to your questions, you can say, “I am interested in what you are saying/What you are saying is important, but I would like to come back to _____.”
2. If he/she states something later in the interview that is different from something that was said earlier, you can say, “You said that _____ earlier, but then you mentioned _____ just now. Could you explain what you mean because I want to make sure I have it right?”
3. If the person says a lot of things at once or doesn't say enough about something, you can say, “You mentioned X and then moved on to Y. Can you tell me a little more about X before we move to Y?”

Right before the interview or focus group

- Review tips and guidelines.
- Review the questions you are going to ask.
- Think about what information you want to get.
- Turn off your cell phone and/or pager.

During the interview or focus group

- Use nametags (for focus groups, number them to mix up the seating).
- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the project.
- Let the group know about informed consent, confidentiality, ground rules, and how long the group should take.
- Do an ice-breaker (for focus groups).
- Start the tape recorder.
- Start questions.
- When you are done with the questions, give out candy.
- Thank group members for participating.
- Remember:
 - Don't worry about asking every follow-up question on the list—be creative and flexible. Be ready to change it up.
 - Keep in mind what information you are looking for—don't rush.
 - Be yourself.
 - Have a positive attitude.

Right after the interview or focus group

- Think about how it went, what worked, what was challenging.
- Write down your answers to the reflection questions.
- Transcribe the interview/focus group within a week.
- If you have any questions about something that came up during the interview/focus group, let your group know. Your tip or question may end up helping other evaluation team members.

Focus Group Summary Sheet

Date:

Facilitator (s):

Location of Group:

Number of Participants:

Participants Characteristics:

Gender:

Age or Grade Levels:

Race/Ethnicity:

1. What were the main themes and discussion points brought up in this group?
2. What did you learn to help you understand questions or issues related to the purpose of the focus groups?
3. Did participants seem to understand and respond to each question? Did they appear to be confused by any of the questions?
4. Did any outside interferences or distractions with the setting or participants influence the focus group? Did anything happen during this group that was unexpected?
5. Based on what you learned from this group, do you need to change anything for the next session? (ex. modify how you explain a question or the purpose of the groups)
6. Any other comments or observations?
7. Add your transcript here:

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