Course Title: Focus Group Research Strategies

Dates: June 23 – 27, 2007
Instructor: Richard Krueger, PhD Professor at Univ. of Minnesota
USF Course number: PHC 6706 CHES event #: 1119
Place: Sheraton Sand Key on 6/23/07;
For 6/24-27/07: COPH room: LRC 108

Description:
This course is an intensive overview of focus group procedures in the public and non-profit environment. Attention will be placed on question development, moderator skills, analysis strategies and planning critical logistical details of focus group interviews, and analyzing results of focus group interviews. The course will examine unique methodological characteristics of focus group interviews, identify emerging trends, and explore areas of appropriate and inappropriate use.

Objectives:
At the conclusion of the course, the participants will be able to:
1. Know the process and procedures for planning successful focus group studies;
2. Develop ability to skillfully moderate focus groups;
3. Create workable and useful questions for focus group studies; and
4. Know several alternative strategies for analyzing focus group results

Requirements and Student Evaluation:
1. Two written assignments. 30% of course grade.
2. Quiz on readings. 40% of course grade
3. Class discussion and in-class assignments. 30% of course grade

Text:

Class Dates:
June 23: 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm
June 24 - 27: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Course Outline

Saturday, June 23 -- Overview of Focus Group Interviewing
Introduction to focus group interviewing
Demonstration of focus group interviewing
Moderator skills
Role and expectations of the assistant moderator
Brief overview of planning, moderating, developing questions and analysis.
Assignment for Sunday: Develop introduction to a focus group
Readings for Sunday:
  Chapter 1: Overview of focus groups
  Chapter 5: Moderating skills

Sunday, June 24 -- Application of Focus Group Skills
Quiz on Chapters 1 and 5
The critical first few minutes of a focus group interview
Capturing the information from a focus group
Giving an oral summary
Application exercises
  1. Introducing a focus group interview
  2. Participating in a focus group interview
  3. Taking notes during a focus group
  4. Giving an oral summary of a focus group
Readings for Monday:
  Chapter 2: Planning the focus group study
  Chapter 3: Developing a questioning route
  Chapter 4: Participants in a focus group

Monday, June 25 -- Advanced Moderating Skills
Quiz on Chapters 2 - 4
Planning the focus group
Sampling strategies
Strategies for asking questions
Problems that emerge during focus groups
Focus groups with special audiences
(youth, communities of color, low income audiences, etc).
Resources needed for the focus group study
Assignment for Tuesday: Developing a questioning route
Readings for Tuesday:
  Chapter 8: Styles of focus groups research.
  Chapter 9: Adapting focus groups to audiences and environments.
  Chapter 10: Modifications of focus groups
Tuesday, June 26 -- Involving the Community in Focus Group Studies
Quiz on Chapters 8-10
Theoretical basis of involvement
How to involve volunteers or staff
Preparing the team
Learning exercises
Assignment for Wednesday: Self-reflection
Readings for Wednesday:
Chapters 6 Analyzing focus group research
Chapter 7 Reporting.
Chapter 11: Answering questions about the quality of focus group research

Wednesday, June 27 -- Focus Group Analysis Strategies
Quiz on Chapters 6-7, 11
Systematic analysis
Analysis with transcripts, tapes, notes, memory
Reporting results
Reflection and diagnostic inventory
Course evaluation

Course Assignments

1. Three written assignments, including:
Assignment 1: Develop introduction to a focus group
Assignment 2: Develop focus group questions
Assignment 3: Develop focus group questions for telephone or Internet
(one page recommended, two pages maximum)

2. In class exercises:
Present introduction to a focus group
Note-taking in a focus group
Moderating a focus group
Developing a plan for a focus group
Solving problems that occur in a focus group
Recruiting for a focus group
Pilot-testing focus group questions
Analysis of focus group results
Course Readings


Additional Readings


