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Developing 4-H Needs Assessment through "Focus Group" Interviewing

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Introduction

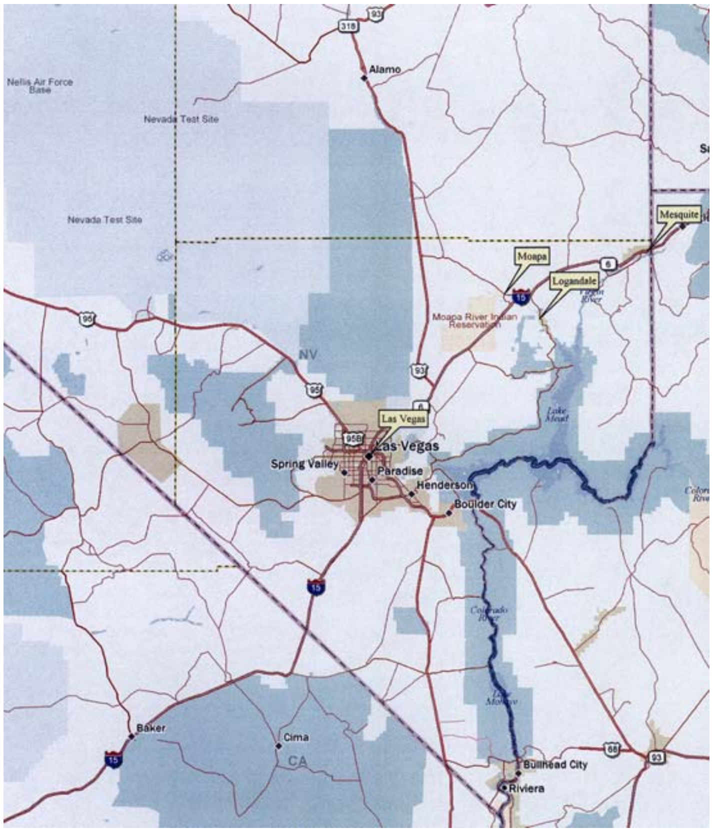
The success of any program is dependent on the outcomes of identified needs. In the Clark County Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program, local support is essential for successful outcomes. When people are involved in identifying the needs that would solve the issues and concerns in their communities, they are more likely to engage in the strategies that would result in success. Needs assessments provide opportunities for positive outcomes in communities. Several methods have been used in identifying needs, and focus groups are just another way to achieve this. They can also be used as a complement to other methods. Focus group interviewing is not new to Extension. It has been used in several Extension programs and in developing other organizational direction (Krueger, 1988; Lachapelle 2008; Rennekamp & Nall, 2004; and White et al. 2008). The focus group method has been around since the 1940s and has made some contributions to social science research. The most prominent of its original use focused on U.S. troop morale during World War II (Rennekamp & Nall, 2004). Later, in the '80s, it gained popularity in marketing strategies (Kidd & Parshall, 2000) used often by sociologists, program developers, decision makers, program evaluators and a few other program coordinators or administrators (Ansay, Perkins & Nelson, 2004; Holland, 2004; Plax & Cecchi,1989). Most recently, focus group interviews were used to evaluate youth development program direction (White et al. 2008) and in Extension program needs identification (Malek, 2002). This special publication is designed to focus on the identification of needs and program direction for Clark County's 4-H Youth Development Program.

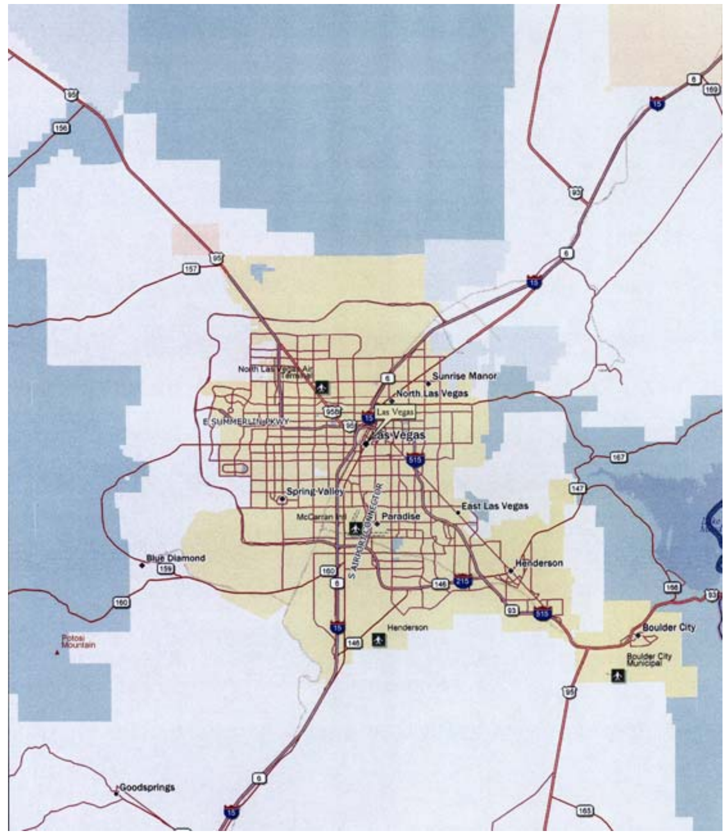
Background Information

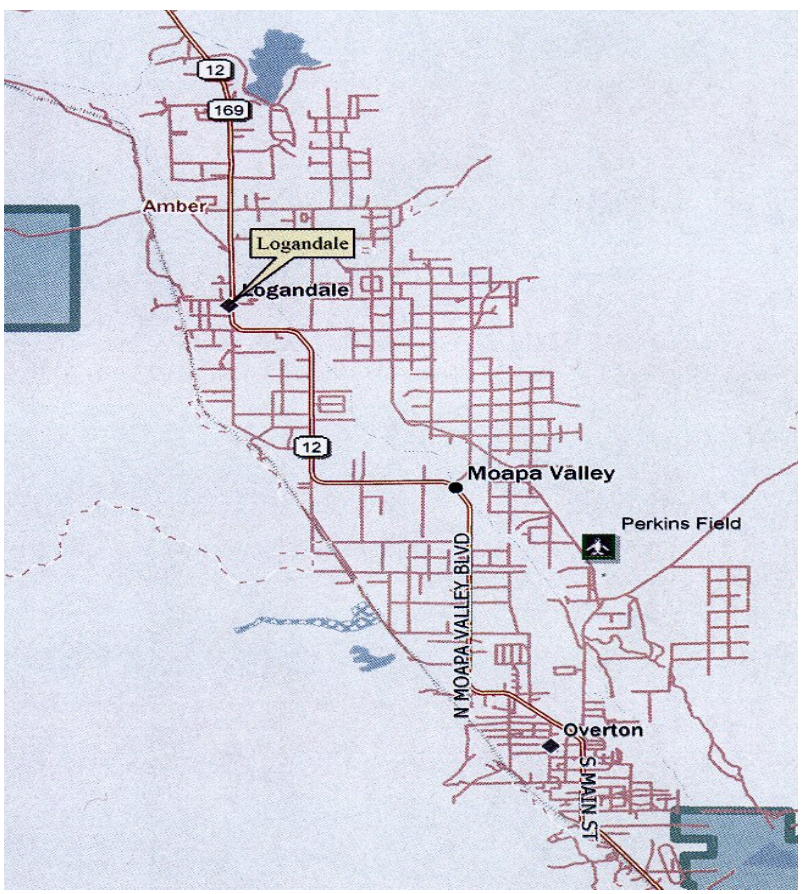
According to census data, Clark County had a population of 1,796,380 between 2006 and 2007. There are 4-H sites in Clark County: Logandale, Overton, Moapa and Mesquite (maps on page 4). 4-H is currently expanding into Henderson and other parts of the city of Las Vegas. The County is diverse with ethnic groups living in different areas of the county. About 28 percent of the population is within the 1-through 19-year age group.

Clark County 4-H is both urban and rural. The number of other youth organizations that partnered with the Clark County 4-H over the past three years has increased. Beginning with the cities of Las Vegas and Henderson, the partnership has expanded to include the additional cities of Logandale, Moapa and Mesquite. Five faith-based sites, community centers and 15 after-school locations have been established.

Clark County







What is the role of 4-H in Clark County?

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) 4-H continues to respond to its youth customers in Nevada. It is part of the 4-H mission as a land-grant institution. Its role is to continue to develop life skills through educational, research-based programs within the 4-H youth development framework.

While 4-H continues to provide a major role in Nevada's youth development, there are still great challenges ahead such as:

1. strategies for expansion of the program
2. networking and collaborating with other youth agencies and organizations
    a. Boys and Girls clubs
    b. Big Brothers and Big Sisters programs
3. Schools and businesses
4. Volunteer programs and leadership development
5. Funding and other sources of involvement

Although challenging, the examples mentioned above will assist in the development of capable, positive and responsible youth. For this reason, the needs assessment becomes a critical first step.

What is Focus Group Interviewing?

Focus group interviewing methodology is one of several tools that educators can use to generate rapid, valid information for the direction of programs, communities and organizations. It is a structured group process used to obtain detailed information about a particular topic. The number of individuals involved in group discussion varies between four and 12 that are mainly homogeneous. Three to four interview groups provide a lot of qualitative information.

Focus group interviews can be two types: face-to-face and/or telephone. Face-to-face is considered to be a more effective method as certain nonverbal communication such as body language is evident and can add to the validity of the process. "Head nodding," as an example, will be unnoticed in a telephone interview (see example of telephone screening questionnaire, page 7).

Focus group interviews should not be confused with other types of group activities such as town meetings, advisories, brainstorming sessions, community forums and so forth. It is an interview and not a discussion (Patton,1987).

Why Use Focus Groups in Needs Assessment?

Focus group interviews are not the only way to conduct a needs assessment, but it adds to the process. It brings a human dimension to the process by allowing individuals who are exposed to the issues and concerns to express their views in detail and to hear from the others who participate (LaChapelle, 2008). It is a qualitative form of research. They vary in depth and depending on how intense you need the information of the focused topic, they can either be expensive or inexpensive, simple or detailed. Selection of participants and identification of a skillful moderator can be challenging. Because of the limited number of participants, generalizations cannot be made. In almost all cases, focus groups can provide a wealth of qualitative information.

Characteristics of Focus Group Interviews

The successes in focus group interviewing are dependent on several characteristics:

1. Careful recruitment of participants
2. Proper meeting environment
3. Skillful moderator and assistant moderator
4. The interview process
5. Appropriate analysis
6. Reporting the results
7. Other necessities that contribute to successful interviews

1. Careful recruitment of participants

The recruitment of participants is critical to the process. It is also very challenging. Getting individuals to commit and getting them together are the two greatest challenges. When recruiting participants for interviews, a systematic procedure should be followed. Individuals who participate must be of similar type, working in the same discipline or sharing passion in the same issues and concerns. For the purpose of this paper, *Youth Development of Individuals 8 to 15 Years Old* would be used to define the common area of similarity or to develop homogeneity of the individuals that make up the group. Homogeneity is the selection of individuals with the same concerns about the issues that face them. It is always best if the individuals not know each other prior to the interview’s introduction. Five to 10 individuals are sufficient for a group. Three to four groups will deliver adequate results. Recruitment should be as diverse as possible, especially if the outcomes are to be relevant to a diverse audience. The first step of the recruitment is done through a telephone screening to ensure homogeneity of participants. It is always a good idea to have documentation of the recruitment process to ensure homogeneity.

The sample below (Fig 1) shows a method to achieve homogeneity. The telephone selection of individuals can be randomized from a list of organizations sharing common goals or it can follow a snowball sequence. Other things to consider when recruiting are incentives, meeting location and strategies to encourage participants' attendance.

Telephone Screening Questionnaire
Clark County 4-H Youth Development Needs Assessment

Name ____ Date _________________

Address ______________________________________ Phone ( ) __________________

Hello, my name is _____________________ and I'm calling for University of Nevada Cooperative Extension 4-H program. We are conducting a short survey of issues, concerns and resources of youth development of heads of youth development organizations. Would that be you?
{IF YES CONTINUE. IF NO ASK FOR HEAD OF ORGANIZATION}
We are conducting a "needs assessment" survey that will take less than 2 minutes for youth development organizations in Clark County. Is it ok to begin?

1. Would you say that most of your working time is dedicated to youth development?

   [ ] Youth Development [CONTINUE]
   [ ] Non Youth Development [TERMINATE]

2. How many hours do you spend with youth development a week?

   ( ) Less than 20 hours a week [TERMINATE]
   ( ) Over 30 hours a week [RECRUIT AT LEAST 4]
   ( ) More than 40 hours [RECRUIT AT LEAST 6]

3. By observation is the respondent

   ( ) Male
   ( ) Female

We are asking selected people to join us for a discussion about youth development programs in Clark County. The discussion will be at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension office at 8050 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89123, and will last for one and one-half hours. Lunch will be served. Would you be able to join us at this time?

( ) Yes, Name __________________________.
( ) [IF NO] Thank you for answering the questions.
[IF YES] I will be sending you a letter confirming this information. Should I use the address of _______? [CONFIRM ADDRESS]. We will send you the directions to get to our office. Please call our office at ( ) _____ ___________ if you need additional directions.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Fig 1
Telephone screening letter for recruitment

As soon as the telephone screening part is completed, a letter of confirmation should be sent to the qualified or the selected participants. Below (Fig 2) is a sample notification letter that was used in a recent telephone screening recruitment. The final step for the recruitment process is to confirm with participants their intention to attend and their choice of time for the interviews. This can be done with a postcard (Fig 3, page 9). It is best to begin this process at least a month prior to the interviews. Because of a timeline for the interviews, a follow-up reminder can be sent to the accepted interview attendee a day prior to the interview date and time.

University of Nevada
Cooperative Extension

CONFIRMATION LETTER

Date:
Name:
Address:
Dear Mr. /Ms.

Thank you for accepting our invitation to attend the discussion at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension on (day) (Year) (Time). Our discussion will be held in Classroom "A." As you enter the building, please check at the front desk for directions to the classroom. We will begin at (time) and end at (time). Lunch will be served.

The discussion group will be composed of about 8-10 individuals from the County. We are interested in your opinions and thoughts about the issues, concerns and resources for youth development in the County. This is strictly a research project and no sales or solicitations will be made.

Since we are talking to a limited number of people, the success and quality of our discussion is based on the cooperation of the people who attend. You are one in 10 selected from Clark County, Las Vegas and Henderson for this discussion. We are looking forward to your participation. If for some reason you find you are not able to attend, please call and let my associate, (name) know as soon as possible. The number is (702) 257-5538.

We are looking forward to seeing you on (date).

Sincerely,

Fig 2
Confirmation letter

Thank you for accepting our invitation to attend the discussion on youth development at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Please indicate the session, listed below, you plan to attend.

I plan to attend:

- __. September 22, 2009 session
- __ . September 23, 2009 session
- __. September 24, 2009 session

An EEO/AA Institution

Fig 3
Acceptance of invitation

2. Proper meeting environment

The meeting environment requires a neutral setting, possibly a location that is not familiar to any of the participants but with easy accessibility and adequate accommodations. It should be free from distractions. It is always good to have a well-defined seating arrangement. Circle or square seating seems to provide a great way (Fig 4) for people to interact, have an open discussion and talk freely.

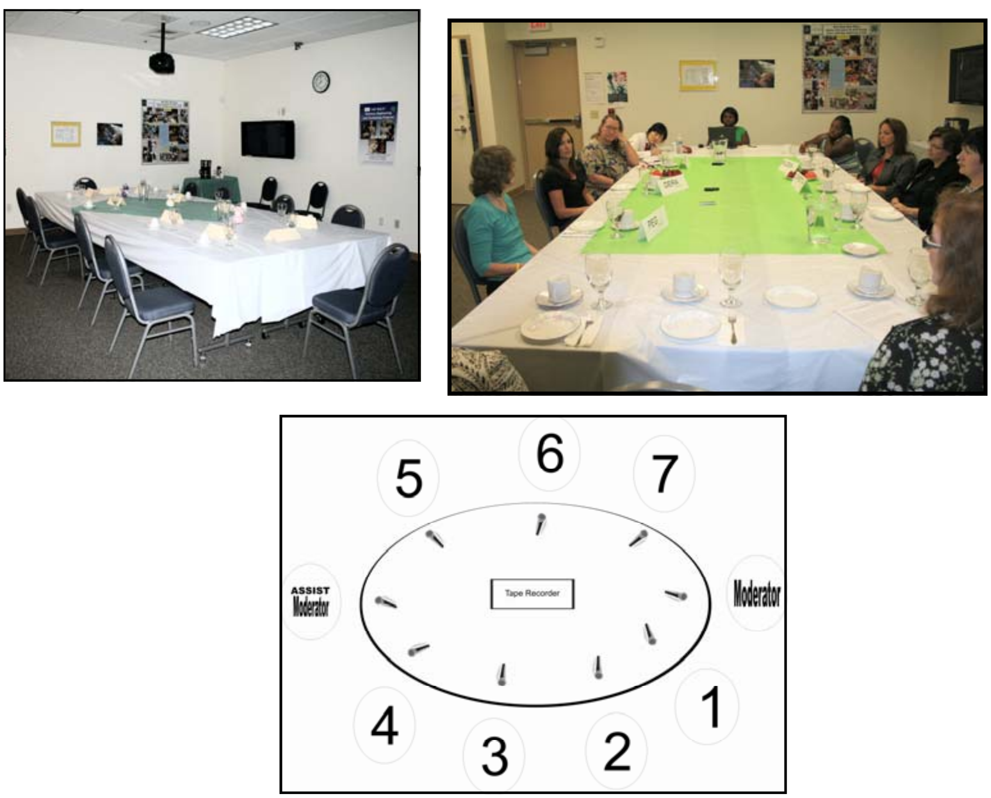


Fig 4
Meeting room layout for focus group

The seating arrangement should be such that no one can tell the differences among those present. They should not be able to identify the moderator or assistant moderator, among those present. People should only be identified by their first names. A tape and/or video recorder is essential as part of the focus group interview. Participants should be notified of the intent to record and/or videotape their conversation prior to doing so. To reduce intimidation, it is always best to say: “We would like to capture your thoughts and would not like to miss anything that will be important to this session. To ensure this happens, we are using a tape recorder."

The walls of the room may carry information or highlights of the subject of the concerns and/or issues for interviewing. In this example, posters and other informational materials on youth development were used. This adds to the interviewing atmosphere by focusing attention to the topic of the focus group.

3. Skillful Moderator and Assistant Moderator

A skillfully trained moderator brings greater positive outcomes to interviews. A list of pre-determined questions is always useful. The moderator should be able to establish an accommodating environment. Although adequate knowledge of the topic by the moderator can be an asset, the moderator should not show any knowledge of the subject matter in question as this will inhibit or obstruct participants’ involvement. The moderator should appear as one of the participants to those who are in the interviewing process. While the moderator’s role is to guide the process, the assistant moderator has to take care of the logistics. The specific role is to take adequate notes and monitor the effective use of the recording equipment. Some focus groups have only one assistant moderator, but if necessary, a second and sometimes even a third moderator will enhance the interview process. Beyond equipment management, the assistant moderator can observe and record notes of other general observations such as body language, instances of affirmation or rejection and other forms of nonverbal communication. An additional assistant moderator can add greater advantage to the process by helping to focus on these nonverbal responses.

Both the moderator and assistant(s) have to be mentally prepared. They have to operate in an environment that is warm and friendly, remain alert to distractions, observe the participants' seating arrangements, exercise high levels of listening and familiarize themselves with the questioning route. Most importantly, the moderator has to have full control of the process and encourage full participation.

Moderator Skills

The moderator must possess skills in small group dynamics and group processing. He or she must be able to facilitate cooperation by understanding what is happening within the group and being aware of different personalities as they affect the group. The moderator should establish the basic roles for focus group interviewing. These include the roles for the assistant moderator and participants from self-introductions of all present, definitions of ground rules; communication of confidentiality and conclusion of the interviews.

4. The Interview Process

Pre Interview

It takes practice with focus group interviewing for one to have the confidence and expertise to conduct interviews. To develop that confidence, it is advisable to conduct several mock rounds with individuals, staff, peers and friends. These practice sessions should run over a two- to three-month time span.

The Assistant Moderator

The assistant moderator is the individual who takes care of the logistics of the interviews. The duties include:

a. Taking responsibility for all equipment including tape recorders, microphones and other forms of electronic equipment.

   Ensuring the equipment is in working condition. In the years passed, this was very critical especially when using the mini cassette recorders. With today's technology, the MP3 IC recorder is much simpler and allows fewer errors.

b. Taking responsibility for refreshments.

c. Arranging the audio and video application in the room.

d. Setting up all equipment and verifying working conditions.

e. Welcoming participants.

f. Sitting in a designated location. It is best for the assistant moderator to sit outside the circle or the group of participants, opposite the moderator and close to the door. If someone arrives after the session begins, it is the assistant moderator's responsibility to meet the person at the door, take them outside the room and give them a short briefing as to what has happened and the current topic of discussion. Then bring the late participant into the room and show him or her where to sit.

g. Taking notes throughout the discussion. The assistant moderator, while taking notes, must be attentive to the following areas of concern: well-stated comments, capturing word-for-word as much of the statement as possible, listening for the sentences or phrases that are particularly enlightening eloquently express a particular point of view. Because of the scope of this requirement, sometimes it is a good idea to have a second and even a third assistant moderator. This individual can capture nonverbal communications such as head nodding for affirmation, and so on.

h. Constant monitoring of equipment to ensure its fullest working condition. Occasionally glance at the tape recorder for continued operational function. Digital tape recorders are very capable and effective. There is no need for tape changes and the recordings go very smoothly. Some digital recorders also provide labeling through a numbering process.

i. One of the great “NOs” for assistant moderators is not to participate in the discussion! Because of the knowledge of the issue or concern at the interviews, there will be times when assistant moderators feel the urge to say or mention something that is aligned with the issue. Extreme care must be taken not to say anything. Assistant moderators can talk only if invited by the moderator. They should exercise control of all communication styles—verbal and nonverbal as well. This should be maintained throughout the interview no matter how strongly they feel about an issue.

j. Asking questions when invited. At the end of the interview, the moderator will invite assistant moderators to ask questions for amplification or clarification.

k. Handing out the incentives. It is the assistant moderator’s role to handle any kind of incentives and then to thank all for attending.

l. Following the focus group, the assistant moderator should participate in the debriefing with the moderator. This should recap all that was covered during the interviews, including all additional notes made by the assistant moderators.

m. Reading and providing feedback on the analysis. With the length of work to be done by the assistant moderators, it may be necessary to have more than one but no more than three.

Developing the questions

Questions should be developed that yield the most powerful information. Here are some suggested guidelines that will help to develop questions.

1. Use open-ended questions, for example:
   What did you think of the program?
   How did you feel about the conference?
   Where do you get new information?
   What do you like best about the proposed program?

2. Be cautious of phrases such as “how satisfied” or “to what extent.” These approaches would give you short, mainly one-word, answers.

3. Avoid dichotomous questions.
   These are questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.”

4. Avoid questions that begin with “why.” Often it makes people defensive and may not be likely to answer. When you ask why, people usually respond with attributes or influences. It is better to ask what prompted or what features did you like?

5. Carefully prepare focus questions.
   Identify potential questions.
   Four types of questions:
   a. Opening question (round robin)
   b. Introductory question
   c. Transition questions
   d. Key questions

Consider this process. Again, experiences from prior class work and practice training have helped to:

First:	Identify potential questions. Write down as many questions as you can think of. Brainstorm. Don’t worry about precise wording—just get the ideas.
Second:	Highlight key questions. Often one or two questions are most critical or key to the study.
Third:	Arrange questions in a logical sequence. General to specific—imagine a funnel. Think about the flow of the conversation.
Fourth:	Establish context. People must get mentally ready to respond. Consider use of visuals, handouts and surveys.

6. Use “think back” questions.
   Take people back to an experience and not forward to the future.

7. Focus the questions.
   Start first with general questions then move to specific questions.

The Interview Process:

The environment should be free of distractions. Questions should be developed prior to the interviews. This takes time and modifications for clarity. This can be done by dry running the interview several times. For the purpose of this publication, the approaches for an actual focus group interview were used. Considerable time and effort were spent, using the above guidelines to develop, practice and finally execute the process. Fig 5, page 15, shows the completed focus group interview process: the introduction, definition, questions that guided the interview and ending of the interviews.

The interview itself lasts approximately 60 to 120 minutes. At this time, the moderator and assistant moderators should be mentally prepared and ready to begin a smooth questioning session. They should be familiar with the questioning route and ready for the probing questions. It is the assistant moderators' role to welcome the participants and to escort them to their assigned seats. After seating, there is a short introduction by the moderator and then by the participants; an overview of the issue or topic in question would be done by the moderator. Following this, a list of the ground rules (Fig 6, page 16) will be read. Then finally, the first round of questioning will take place.

Questions for Needs Assessment for Clark County 4-H Youth Development Program - Focus Groups

Good evening and welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion about the community. My name is _______________ . We have invited a number of residents to share their ideas about issues, concerns and resources for youth development. This is one of a series of discussion groups for local residents to share ideas about youth development in their community. We will be tape recording your comments because we do not want to miss any of your ideas or suggestions.

This is strictly a research project. Please speak up. It is helpful if only one person speaks at a time to avoid garbling the tape. Later, we will be preparing a report that describes the concerns of residents. No names will be included in this report. Our discussion will last about an hour and a half. We'll be on a first name basis. We have assigned a fake name to everyone. These names are placed in front of you to help you remember the names of others in the group.

There is no right or wrong answers, just differing points of view, and we are interested in all opinions. __________ is assisting us by taking notes and operating the tape recorder.

Description of 4-H:
4-H is a Youth Development Program that uses research-based educational programs to develop life skills, in youth ages 8 to19. These life skills include: decision making; critical thinking; problem solving; interpersonal and social and other skills that would allow them to become healthy contributing members of society. 4-H is often considered a program for rural youth because most of the programs were once agricultural in nature. In Clark County, we are currently expanding the 4-H experience to urban youth and would like you to share your feelings as to how we can best do this.

1. If you could describe youth development in your community in just a few words, what would those words be? What do you see as the challenges for developing youth during out-of-school time in Clark County? Can you think of any successes or positive developments that help support youth in Clark County?

2. Think back when you were younger: "What thoughts did you have regarding how to help to develop life skills in youth in your community?" "What ideas do you have that would help youth development programs attract youth and keep their interest in urban settings?"

3. What do you think is needed to expand life skills programming among youth in your community?

4. What type of issues and topics should youth development programs address (risk factors, help with school work, life skill development, S.E.T. programming, leadership skills, social skills, etc.)?

5. What type of program delivery strategies are needed (after-school programs, life skills groups, sports, mentoring, cross-age teaching, summer camps, more 4-H clubs on urban topics, etc.)?

6. What elements need to be in place to fully attract and retain urban youth to such youth development programs?

7. 4-H is a volunteer-driven program. In order to expand the 4-H experience, there would be a need for volunteers. What ideas/strategies do you think might help to achieve and maintain a 4-H volunteer program in Clark County?

8. To expand the 4-H program would require a communitywide approach. Do you see opportunities for 4-H to partner with other programs or organizations to create programming? How would you suggest to us the ways we can work with other youth development groups (schools, faith-based organizations, youth development programs, etc.) in the community?

9. 4-H has several initiatives or programs to promote life skill development among youth. Take a few minutes and read each of the initiatives. Could we quickly go through this list and give me your thoughts about the importance and need for this programming in Clark County?

   4-H National Science, Engineering and Technology (4-H S.E.T.)?
   4-H Healthy Life Styles?
   4-H Volunteer Leader training program?
   4-H Afterschool provider training?
   4-H Clubs?

10. Any other ideas/comments/concerns you would like to share about how to develop and promote a strong 4-H urban program?

Summarize key points.

Invite questions from assistant moderator.

Thank you for coming and adjourn.

Fig 5
Focus group process

FOCUS GROUP GROUND RULES

This interview session will last 60 minutes.

Only one person speaks at a time.

Please avoid side conversations.

Everyone doesn't have to answer every single question, but I'd like to hear from each of you today as the interview progresses.

This is a confidential interview. We will not report your names to University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Names of participants will not be included in the final report about this meeting. Except for the report, everything that is said in this room will remain in this room. We look forward to an open interview.

There are no "wrong" answers just different opinions. Express your opinion even if you are the only one who feels that way.

Let us know if you need a break. The bathrooms are located at [locations].

Fig 6
List of the ground rules

5. Appropriate Analysis and Reporting

Analysis of Data – STEP 1

Transcripts from Focus Group Interviews

Appropriate analysis and reporting consist of three critical components for the analysis: (1) a systematic analytical approach; (2) effective, verifiable procedures and (3) an appropriate reporting method.

1. Typically, a focus group interview will last for 60 to120 minutes. In the past, C-90 tapes were usually used, and at times the interview might spill over a second tape. If this process is used and if two tapes are used, they should be labeled as Tape 1 and Tape 2. With today's electronic digital recorders, a MP3 IC recorder is a suitable option. It is digital and lends itself to hours of numbered recordings and thus allows for a systematic transcription.

2. The moderator should prepare a diagram of the seating arrangement for the transcriber. This is valuable in connecting voices with names. With today's electronic technology, digital imaging of the setup and final seating can be made. The first question in the focus group is likely the only question where participants go around the table giving their answers in a round-robin manner. The transcriber should listen carefully to the voices as participants respond to this first question so that names can be attached to later comments. Only first names should be used when typing responses.

3. A quiet, nondistractive room should be used for transcription of the data analysis. The transcriber should avoid tape players with small speakers as the voices are often distorted and the sounds are difficult to hear. Earphones might be considered. Focus group interview tapes always have background noise and participants will speak with different tones and voice levels—therefore these tapes will require concentration and the best quality play-back equipment that can be obtained. Transcriptions must be done without any interruptions. It's difficult to answer the phone, greet visitors, etc., while transcribers are concentrating on preparing a transcript.

4. Type the transcripts on a word processor. This enables the analyst to later modify the margins or use the word processing software to assist in the analysis process.

5. Type the name of the speaker followed by the comment. If you cannot distinguish the name, place a "?" in the transcript. Single space the comments and double space between speakers.

6. Type the comments word-for-word. In real life, people do not talk in complete sentences and when typing the transcripts, avoid the temptation to add or change the words, correct the grammar, etc. If some of the words are unintelligible then type an ellipsis". . ." to indicate that words are missing from the transcript.

7. Usually, it takes at least 8-10 hours to type one focus group transcript, but the time will vary depending on typist speed, the quality of the tape recording, the length of the session, the experience of the typist with focus groups and the complexity of the topic.

8. When the typist is finished with the transcript, the following steps should be taken: make a backup copy of the transcript on another disk; print a hard copy of the transcript with numbered pages; and forward a disk copy and a hard copy to the analyst.

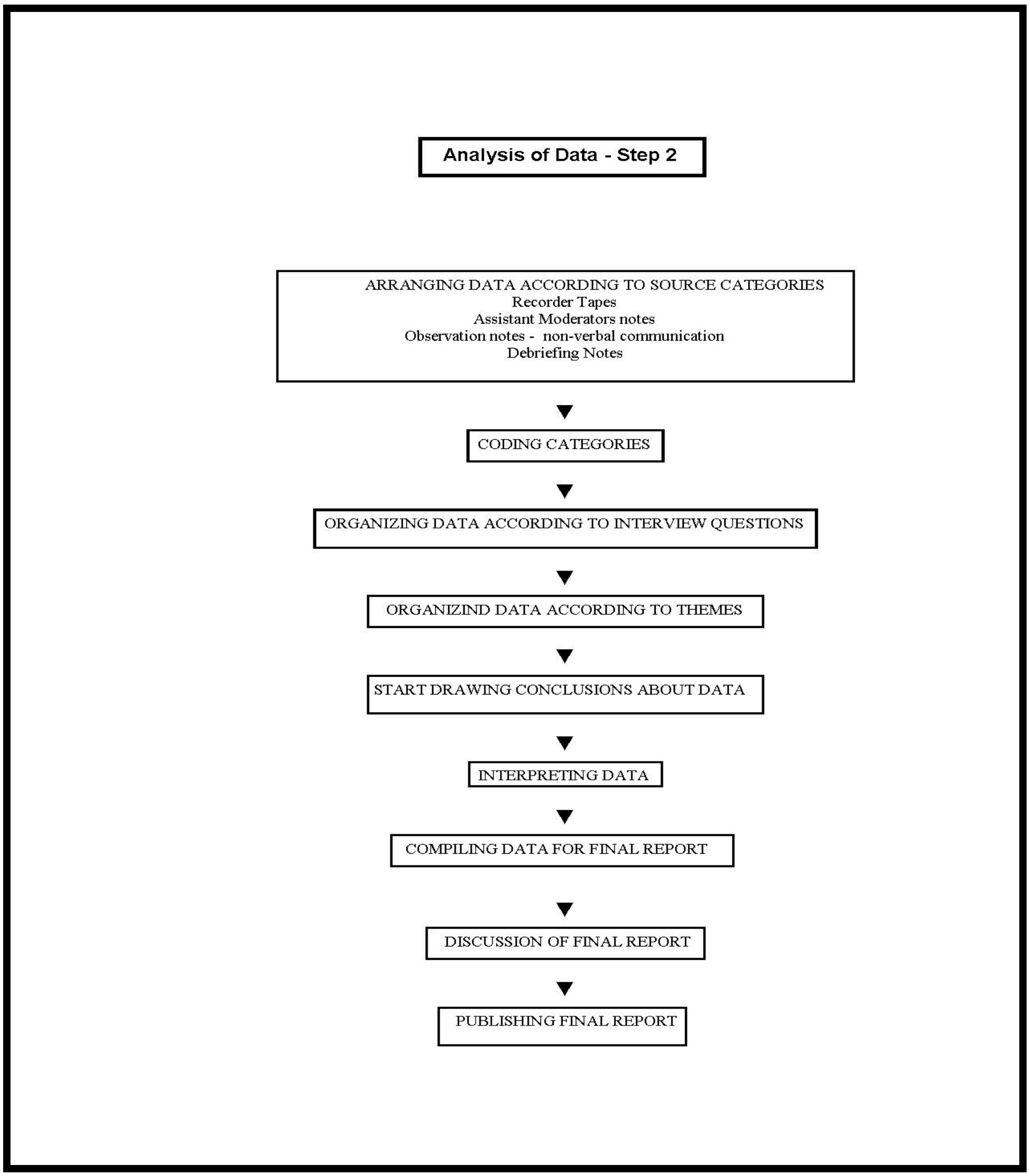


Fig 7
Flowchart of data analysis

Analysis of Data – STEP 2

Arranging Data According to Source Categories

There are several kinds of sources that can be used to collect information from focus group interviews. Assembling the needed categories is always a good first step. In addition to the recorded information obtained by a tape recorder, other information sources may include assistant moderators' notes; observation of behavior, especially the nonverbal, such as body language, head nodding, sounds of sigh and so on. Each source must be placed in the order of relevance and importance. Use the chart, Fig 7, page 18, as a guide for part 2 of the analysis.

1. Coding of Categories:
   Each source should be coded. For example, sources of information may be coded as TR (tape recorded), or moderators' notes may be coded as MN (moderators' notes). There are also possibilities of subgrouping such as coding according to the focus interview questions. This may be coded as FG1; FG2; FG3 and so on. Whatever symbol is used to differentiate the information sources will be relevant as you group the responses to the questions.

2. Organizing Data According to Interview Questions:
   All transcription has to be completed before this is done. It can be done by the transcriber. List all the responses including the probing question responses to questions together. The probing question responses must be arranged under the main question and must also be arranged according to respondent.

3. Organizing Data According to Themes:
   As you read the transcripts, look for themes. Compile a list of themes alphabetically. Write short descriptions of each theme, then follow those quotes that describe the theme.

4. Start Drawing Conclusions About Data:
   When all of the above steps are completed, it is time to begin summarizing, comparing, elaborating and analyzing the results of the focus group interview. An example of how this is done:

   Example: The focus group question is *What do you think is needed to expand life skills programming among youth in your community?* To complete this question, group all the themes that arise, then discuss the themes and finally put them together.

5. Interpreting Data:
   Interpreting focus group interview data is to look for patterns among the various participants. The greater the patterns exist, the greater the interpretation. Compare these patterns with other data sources including anecdotal data and other known information about the topic or issue that the focus group seeks to answer. Look for comparisons between the results of the focus group interview and what was the suspected result. Look to see also if the results confirm the assumptions of the issue in focus.

6. Reporting the Results

A. Compiling Data for Final Report:

The final step to completing the focus group interview is to create a report. A final verbal and written summary is important and should adhere to the following outline:

- Objectivity—be very objective about the findings and draw conclusion from the findings regardless of the outcome.
- Leave out all preconceived and personal opinions. Let the analysis speak for itself.
- As a rule of thumb, do not use quantitative references on the results. Remember the number of participants required for focus groups is very small, and as such no statistical inferences can be made.
- Be as concise as possible. Get the high points and do not elaborate.
- Use direct quotes to illustrate the points.
- Maintain confidentiality.

B. Discussion of Final Report

While quantitative research results may require a report featuring graphs and tables, focus groups, on the other hand, rely on spoken words coming from the participants. Because of this, focus group interviews fall under the qualitative paradigm of research (Creswell, 1998). The report consists of a pattern of themes or perspectives. The results must show specific patterns of spoken language. Numerical analysis is not a preferred technique, and is inappropriate to report the results of focus groups by percentage. Instead, a focus group result should include themes such as *"another theme noted in focus groups on 4-H Science, Engineering and Technology was the value of schools in partnership with 4-H."*

C. Publishing Final Report

Do an executive summary, and use the "active voice" with an informal writing style. Executive summaries contain: (1) the background (2) the highlight of key themes and (3) the facilitators' summary of observations.

7. Other necessities that contribute to successful interviews

It is always a good idea to conduct a simple exit survey (Fig 8, page 21) that would provide interviewers with additional ideas that can increase the successes of focus group interviews.

EXIT SURVEY

This survey is voluntary and anonymous. That means you can skip any question that you don't want to answer and you should NOT write your name anywhere on this survey. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Focus group interviewing methodology is one of several tools that educators can use to generate rapid, valid information for the direction of programs, communities and organizations. The results of this interview will give us information that will guide the direction of the 4-H program in southern Nevada.

Listed below are questions developed as an exit to the interview. Please read each question carefully. Your feelings prior to the interview are indicated to the LEFT, while your feelings after the interview are to the right of each question. With "1" being the lowest and "5" being the highest, please CIRCLE the number that best represents the degree to which you feel your participation has helped.

A.

1	2	3	4	5	My overall feelings about focus group	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	What help can you bring to the interview	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	My understanding about 4-H Youth Development Program	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	My knowledge about 4-H	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	My understanding about "focus group" interviews	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	My understanding about the topics to be discussed	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	My knowledge about University of Nevada Cooperative Extension	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	What help can you bring to youth development	1	2	3	4	5

B.

1. During the focus group session, were you confused about the discussion?

   - ☐ a. totally confused
   - ☐ b. somewhat confused
   - ☐ c. not confused at all

Fig 8
Exit survey

2. During the focus group session, how much did you feel you could “open up” or trust the focus-group leader?

- ☐ a. I did not trust the focus group leader at all
- ☐ b. I somewhat trusted the focus group leader
- ☐ c. I completely trusted the focus group leader

3. During the focus group session, how comfortable did you feel about participating?

- ☐ a. uncomfortable
- ☐ b. somewhat uncomfortable
- ☐ c. comfortable

4. During the focus group session, how well did you understand the topics discussed?

- ☐ a. I did not understand the topics at all
- ☐ b. I understood the topics a little
- ☐ c. I completely understood the topics

5. How old are you?

- ☐ a. 20- 30
- ☐ b. 31- 40
- ☐ c. 41 -50
- ☐ d. 51+

Fig 8
Exit survey

6. What is your race?

- ☐ a. White/Anglo/Caucasian
- ☐ b. Black/African American
- ☐ c. Hispanic
- ☐ d. Asian-American or Pacific Islander
- ☐ e. Native American/Alaskan Native/Aleut
- ☐ f. Multi-ethnic/Multi-racial; parents are from 2 different groups
- ☐ e. Other (write in): __________________________.

7. During the focus group session, was there something you thought about but didn't say?

8. What are your overall feelings about “focus group” interviewing?

Fig 8
Exit survey

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