



SAMPLES OF YOUTH INTERVIEW / FOCUS GROUP GUIDES

YOUTH INTERVIEW GUIDE SAMPLE #1

Introduction

- Thank them for coming out
- Introduce self and your role—to generate dialogue about your XXX experience so that the program can learn how to improve
- Discuss purpose of evaluation
- It is important to explain that feedback from youth is very important. It will help improve the program model. We value your willingness to share your insight on your experience. By participating, you are helping us to determine the program’s strengths and areas for improvement
- Review concept of informed consent. All youth have completed informed consent (either through parental consent or self-consent).
- Ask if they understand their rights (confidentiality, anonymity, security, voluntary participation) and responsibilities (respecting other’s opinions and privacy after the focus group).
- Discuss structure of interview/focus group
 - If doing a focus group, icebreaker/warm-up activity may be useful (e.g., Rose and Thorn, round table introductions, ‘if you could be any food, what would you be?’, ‘if you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?’)
- Outline that there are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. We ask for you to be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group.
- Ask if they have any questions?
- Ask permission to begin recording. Explain why you are audio-recording

Commencement of the Interview

1. How did you find out about XXX program?

- How did you first hear about XXX PROGRAM?
- How did you get involved?

2. What made you participate in XXX PROGRAM?

- What did you expect of XXX PROGRAM before signing up?
- In the end, what was the biggest factor that made you join?
- Tell me more about that...

3. Can you tell us about the first time you attended a XXX PROGRAM event or meeting?

- What sticks out the most for you about that memory?
- Why does this stand out?

4. What are the things that have you kept coming back to XXX PROGRAM?

- What made you feel comfortable here?
- What made you feel uncomfortable here?
- If you ever thought about not coming back, why did you feel this way?

5. Some youth have left XXX PROGRAM. What do you think some of their reasons for leaving were?

- What are some things that XXX PROGRAM can do to encourage people to stay?

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

6. What stands out as being the most important thing you have gained/learned from XXX PROGRAM?

7. How would you describe your experience of working with other youth, staff, etc.?

- What is good about this?
- What is difficult about this?
- How has it changed the way you understand university education?

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

8. How could someone possibly change through being part of XXX PROGRAM?

- Please explain or give an example.

9. Have you felt this kind of change personally?

- If yes, please explain or give an example.
- If more than one change, what is the most important change?

10. Before you became involved in XXX PROGRAM, was there anything different about how you feel about yourself?

- Probe for concrete examples
- Since XXX PROGRAM, do you feel better, worse or the same about yourself? How?

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT¹

11. Before you became involved in XXX PROGRAM, was there anything different about how you approached school?

- Since XXX PROGRAM, any changes with your school work, social life at school, relationships with teachers
- Probe for concrete examples.
- Has your level of participation in class changed? (do you put up your hand to ask more questions, etc.)
- Are you more involved in school? How?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

12. Think back to before XXX PROGRAM and your community involvement. Now think of your experiences during the last year with XXX PROGRAM. Is there anything different about how you feel about your ability to contribute to changing things in your community?

- Probe for concrete examples
- How is this different or the same?
- Has your understanding of the community changed? How?

13. Do you feel that you are more involved in your community now that you have participate in XXX program?

- How so?

GENERAL

14. What has been the best part about participating in XXX PROGRAM for you?

- Tell us more about why this is the best part?

¹ Note. Academic engagement is different than academic *achievement*. Engagement implies linking the world outside school to inside school – schoolwork is meaningful. You are emotionally and intellectually invested in learning. You understand the benefit of investing in schoolwork.

15. What has been the worst part/most difficult part about participating in XXX PROGRAM for you?

- Tell us more about why this is the worst/most difficult part?

16. If you were asked to write a story about your XXX PROGRAM experience, what would be the title of that story?

- Is there anything about your XXX PROGRAM story that you will want people to know about?

CONCLUSION

17. What was your biggest highlight from participating in XXX PROGRAM?

18. If you could make XXX PROGRAM better, what would you do?

19. If there was one thing that you could keep the same about XXX PROGRAM what would it be?

20. Would you sign up for XXX PROGRAM again next year?

21. Is there anything else you would like to share? Are there any questions we forgot to ask?

CLOSING: Thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions with us today!

Prompting Questions:

- Given what we have discussed today is there anything else you would like to say?
- Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
- Can you give me an example of what you mean by...?
- Are there other ideas you have?
- That is really interesting, can you tell me more about that?

YOUTH INTERVIEW GUIDE SAMPLE #2

- A. Introduction, overview of purpose of interview, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity
- B. Demographic Information: Age, length of program participation, etc.

Sample Process Evaluation Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about the program you participated in?
2. How did you get involved in the program/organization? (parents?, own choice?)
3. How long have you participated in [name of program]? If this is not your first year, how did this year compare to other years?
 - a. Things you liked better? Liked less?
4. Do you think being in the program for two (three, four, etc.) months/years has helped you develop skills even more? Examples.
5. Thinking back, what were your expectations coming into the program?
 - a. Were your expectations met, or are they currently being met? i. If not, why not?
6. Was the program a positive experience, a negative experience, or a little of both? Explain.
 - a. What was your favourite part of the program? Why?
 - b. What was your least favourite part of the program? Why?
7. What were your three biggest highlights or favourite parts of [program name]?
8. What other programs are you involved in?
 - a. How does this program compare to others? Like more/less? Similarities/differences? Why?
9. Was this program a positive thing for youth? Why or why not?
10. What was your experience like working with the program leader(s)?
 - a. What leaders did you really connect with?
11. What was your relationship like working with the program leaders? In what ways?
 - a. Respect, support, trust, acceptance, open, caring, listened, understood, positive
 - b. Did the leaders challenge you to get better/develop new skills?

- c. Were the leaders encouraging?
 - d. Did you feel the leaders provided you with choices and options throughout the program? In what ways? Examples.
 - e. Do the leaders encourage you to ask questions, be engaged in decision-making? Example?
12. Do you want to continue participating in this program in the future? For what reason?
13. Do you plan on returning to the program next year? Would you recommend this program?
14. What suggestions to do you have for improving the program?
15. Is there anything you hoped would have happened in or after the program that did not happen?

Sample Outcome Evaluation Interview Questions

1. Do you enjoy participating in this program? Does it make you feel good about yourself? How so?
2. In general, would you say that being involved in this program helped your development as a person?
3. What did you learn in the program? Give Examples
 - a. Probe for program-specific outcomes
 - b. Life skills such as teamwork, respect, emotional regulation, communication, leadership, confidence.
 - i. Can you give me an example of how you learned that skill (probe for each skill youth identifies)?
4. Did you learn about how to set goals during your participation in this program?
 - a. Can you give me an example of a goal(s)?
5. Do you think this program helped you learn how to manage your emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, or excitement)? Examples?
6. Did you challenge yourself to learn new skills to improve your abilities?
 - a. If yes, example?
7. How would you describe your relationships with other youth in the program?
 - a. Did everyone get along?

- b. Did you make new friends?
8. Through your participation in this program, did you learn about leadership?
- Did you help other teammates during the program? (youth mentoring). In what ways?
 - Did the staff provide you with opportunities to lead/mentor?
9. What do you believe has impacted you the most during this program?
10. Do you believe your attitudes have changed regarding [program focus]?
11. Did this program make you think differently about your future? In what ways?
12. What do you believe you learned about yourself throughout this program? Explain.
13. Do you plan to use the life skills (repeat the skills they stated earlier) you've learned in the program in any areas of your life (school, home, with friends)?
- How do you think that skill will help you at school, home and with friends? Examples?
 - What makes it difficult to use the skills outside of the program?
14. What would you consider your biggest improvement to be from participating in this program?
15. How have your perceptions of your community (e.g., family, friends, neighbourhood) changed as a result of your participation in this program?

Prompting Questions:

- Given what we have discussed today is there anything else you would like to say?
- Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
- Can you give me an example of what you mean by...?
- Are there other ideas you have?
- That is really interesting, can you tell me more about that?

YOUTH INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDE SAMPLE #3

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

How did you first get involved with XXXXX??

How did you hear about it?

What made you decide to apply in the first place?

What was it like for you when you first came to XXXXX?

What was it like meeting the XXXXX staff for the first time?

TRANSITION QUESTIONS

How have the staff members made a difference to your experience at XXXXX?

How would you describe your relationship with XXX?

How has your XXX made a difference to your experience at XXXXX?

How would you describe your relationship with your XXX?

Which parts of the program were most useful to you?

What is it about [name of aspect] that you liked?

Which parts of the program didn't work for you?

What didn't you like about it?

KEY QUESTIONS

How did you do in achieving the goals that you set for yourself in the program?

Is there anything that prevented you from achieving your goals during your time at XXXXX (or participating in the program more)?

In what ways has XXXXX made a difference in your life?

What has changed in your life since you first got involved in XXXXX?

What has stayed the same?

LAST QUESTIONS

What kind of support do you need now to achieve your goals?

Is there anything else that you want to tell us about XXXXX that we haven't talked about already?

Why do you think XXXX issue is important to youth like yourselves?