

Focus Group/Key Informant Interview Discussion Guide

Focus Group Make-ups: 6-12 people (8-10 ideal), minimum of 6 participants. At least 10 focus groups. With Google Meets.

Key Informant Interviews: Completed via Google Meets.

Introductory Script

- Hi, my name is _____ and I work for the St. Mary's County Health Department and am here on behalf of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership. Thank you for participating in this discussion today. We really appreciate your time and feedback.
- We are completing a community health assessment to set priorities for health improvement in St. Mary's County.
- We are conducting focus groups with community members like yourselves to understand different perspectives about health issues affecting the communities you belong to or serve.
- I want everyone to know there are no right or wrong answers during our discussion. We want to know your opinions, and those opinions might differ. This is fine. Please feel free to share your opinions, both positive and negative. We greatly appreciate your honesty and openness with us so we can paint as accurate a picture as possible for the assessment.
- Our discussion will last about one hour. What we learn through these discussions will help guide the county health assessment and planning process, and key themes will be incorporated into the health assessment report. No names or organizations will be connected to anything that any one person said in the discussion. Any quotes we put in the report will be presented anonymously. Additionally, nothing sensitive that can be connected to any organization or individual will be discussed in the report.
- Do you mind if we record audio of our session today so we can make sure our notes are accurate? This is optional, so if this makes anyone feel uncomfortable, we will just take handwritten notes. [HAVE ALL PARTICIPANTS RESPOND YES OR NO]
- Do you have any questions before we begin? Again, thank you for being here and sharing feedback with us. Let's get started.

Introductions & Ice Breaker

Let's start by getting to know one another. Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please tell me: 1) your first name, 2) how long you have lived in St. Mary's County, and 3) an activity you like to do in your spare time.

[AFTER ALL PARTICIPANTS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES, FACILITATOR TO ANSWER INTRO QUESTIONS]

Defining the Community

How would you describe St. Mary's County?

Probes: How would you describe the economic status of residents? Education levels and opportunities? Community resources? Social opportunities?

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COVID-19

What is your most important concern right now regarding COVID-19?

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you and your community?

Probe: Has it affected your physical health? Mental health? Has it affected you economically?

Identifying Top Health Issues

What do you see as the major health-related problems in our county?

Probe: Are chronic diseases or conditions, mental health, substance abuse, trauma, violence, tobacco use, access to healthy food, the environment, or health care access top issues for your community?

How have these health issues affected your community?

Probe: Are some people or populations more affected by these health issues than others? In what way?

Thinking about the top health issues you mentioned, what is currently being done to address those issues for the community? What do you think could be done to address these issues?

Staying Healthy in Our Community

What makes it harder for you or those you serve to be healthy?

Are there significant barriers to being healthy or making healthy choices in your community? What are those barriers?

Do members of your community experience barriers in accessing health care services? What are those barriers?

Probes: Are there insurance concerns? Can you access all of the medical professionals you need? Do community members know where to find resources?

How confident are you that you could get advice or information about health or medical topics if you needed it?

Probes: Where would you go for this advice/information?

Conclusion

Thank you so much for your time and sharing your opinions. We really value your feedback and help in making this health assessment successful. Before we end the discussion, is there anything that you wanted to add that you did not get a chance to bring up earlier?

On behalf of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership and the St. Mary's County Health Department, I want to thank you again for your time.

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Focus Groups (Google Hangouts):

1. Youth (High School/Middle School) - arrange through SMCPs
2. College Students - arrange through CSM & SMCM
3. Hispanic Population - arrange through Judy Center/Grupoo Bienstar/Angela Horn
4. Senior Population - arrange through DAHShrough Minority Outreach Coalition
5. Religious Leaders - arrange through Intertfaith Council
6. African American Population - arrange
7. Active Duty Military - Arrange through NAS Pax River
8. Educators - Arrange through SMCPs & Private schools
9. Health Care Providers - Arrange through MSMH/LHAN [Should include Drs (PCP, pediatrician, behavioral health) & nurses or can do 2 separate focus groups]
10. Veterans - Arrange through NAS Pax River, VA clinic, and Charlotte Hall Veterans Home
11. Law Enforcement/First Responders - Arrange through MSP, SMCSO, and Emergency Services
12. Parents - arrange through SMCPs
13. Low Income Adults - arrange through DSS
14. Young Professionals - arrange through young professionals group

Key Informant Interviews

1. Dr. Brewster
2. Sheriff Cameron
3. Captain Cox or Head of Base Clinic
4. Dr. Bridget or a County Commissioner
5. Alexis Zoss
6. Dr. Michaels or Lori Werrell
7. Superintendent Smith
8. Nat Scroggins
9. Veteran's Association
10. Chamber of commerce President
11. CSM or SMCM
12. Dennis Nicholson
13. John Deitrick
14. Seedco rep
15. Detention Center
16. Rep from court system?
17. Art Shepherd