



# WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



COMMUNITIES  
IN COMMUNICATION  
THROUGH  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

## WHY FOCUS GROUPS?

COMMUNICATION, CONNECTION,  
RELATIONSHIPS

### Focus Group Definition:

A focus group is when one or two facilitators lead a discussion with a group of people who are asked about their attitudes or insights towards a concept, product, or idea.

**Nominal Group Technique (NGT)** is a type of focus group and is the method highlighted in this overview.

NGT encourages participation from all group members, while avoiding pressure to conform to others' opinions. It generates a high quantity of creative ideas and unique perspectives.

When approached restoratively, focus groups can effectively assess community needs and elevate the voices of those most impacted. For example, focus groups with students, parents, and teachers can be used to inform a school safety plan.



# STEPS OF A FOCUS GROUP

To note: these are the general steps to a NGT focus group.



**Generate Ideas:** present the question to the group and then provide 5-10 minutes for the group to silently write their ideas down (on question sheet provided by facilitator(s)).



**Record Ideas:** collect each question sheet and read them aloud. As you read them aloud, write them on the table. *Reference Figure 1.*



**Discuss Ideas:** with the group, discuss each recorded idea. Prompt the group to elaborate on the ideas recorded.

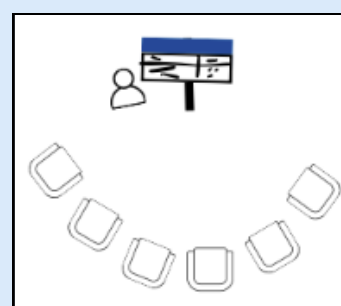


**Prioritize Ideas:** Have each group member write out their top 3 ideas on one index card. *Reference Figure 1 and 3.* Prompt the group by asking which ideas they think are most accurate when thinking about the original question.

Question: What discipline practices do not address the root of student behavior?

Idea	Rating
1. <u>Suspension</u> for fighting	II
2. <u>Detention</u> after school	IIII III
3. <u>Tardy Sweeps</u> for coming to class late	I
4. <u>Expulsion</u> or push out from school and community	IIII II
5. <u>School Security</u> feeling like surveillance	III
6. <u>Peer Mediation</u>	I

Table of Ideas



Room Layout

#1	Expulsion
#2	School Sec.
#3	Detention

Sample Index Card

# FOCUS GROUP RESOURCES

## ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES RELATING TO FOCUS GROUPS

---

### Qualitative Data Analysis



### Considerations & Best Practices

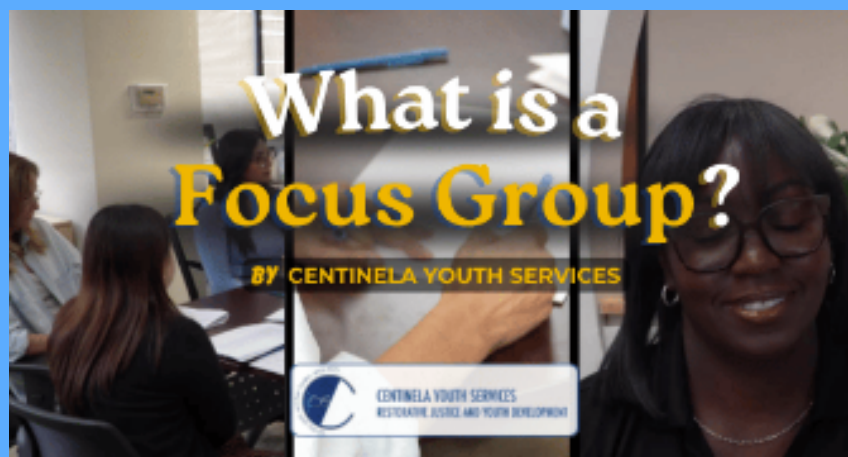


### Facilitation Techniques



INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT AN  
**ACTUAL FOCUS GROUP** LOOKS LIKE?

Watch this  
**demonstration.**



*"I appreciated this space. Parents really care about the well-being of this school, so when we are given a space like this to contribute our ideas and thoughts, it makes us feel like a part of the community."*

-Parent that took part in a school-led focus group

## PREPARING FOR A FOCUS GROUP

### PROPER PREPARATIONS SHOULD BE MADE IN ORDER TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

---

**Gather Materials:** index cards, pens, question sheets, markers, flipchart, consent agreement forms, any incentive to be given to participants.

**Opening Statement:** your opening statement should include a warm welcome, mention the importance of each member's contribution, outline how the group's output will be used, and read aloud the consent agreement form.

#### Room Setup:

- In a room big enough for 6-9 people, set up seats in a U-shape with a flip chart (or white board) in the middle facing the chairs. *Reference Figure 2.*
- On each desk, place 2 index cards, 1 pencil, and a consent agreement form.

**Focus Group Questions:** work with the appropriate people ahead of time to come up with 2 questions that will be asked during the focus group session.

### IS YOUR TEAM OR OFFICE INTERESTED IN A FOCUS GROUP

#### FACILITATION TRAINING?

CYS offers focus group facilitation training upon request. Reach out to: [info@cys-la.org](mailto:info@cys-la.org).

