


Arkansas Local Advisory Council Summit
March 19-20, 2019


Focus Group & Public Forum Training

**Arkansas
Prevention
Training**

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CADCA Trainer



March 19th & 20th, 2019


Building Safe, Healthy, and Drug Free Communities 

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Objectives

- Participants will learn the difference between a focus group and community conversations
- Participants will learn the basics of selecting and implementing a focus group to gain knowledge for a deeper understanding of community issues

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Introductions

Please describe:

1. Your name(s)/Coalition/County
2. Expectations for this training



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What is a "dialogue"?

A "dialogue" is a community conversation that can take many forms.



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Why should your community host a dialogue?

- **Expand** the base of constituencies and voices.
- **Reach** common ground.
- **Surface** common issues and the resources to address them.
- **Sustain** ongoing community discussion.
- **Build** the capacity to act on ideas.
- **Launch** new initiatives.
- **Focus** corporate and organizational investment towards community benefit.



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Why should your community host a dialogue? (cont.)

- **Break through** community "turf wars" and connect fragmented resources.
- **Stimulate** action and track progress for accountability.
- **Generate** local media attention.
- **Help** leaders to see their roles in building healthy, sustainable communities.
- **Be a part** of the nationwide healthy communities movement.



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Who can participate in or host the dialogue?


- Neighborhood leaders
- Youth
- Business people
- Public health and medical care professionals
- Faith leaders
- Seniors
- Homemakers
- Educators
- Community organizers

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What makes healthy people and a healthy community?


• Engaged citizenry	Adequate and affordable housing
• Diversity	Accessible transportation
• Ethical behavior	Openness to change
• Courage	Responsiveness
• Quality education systems	Innovation
• Childhood development	Patience
• Vibrant economy	Governance
• Support networks	Dynamic faith
• Livable wages	Recreation
• Volunteerism	

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What makes healthy people and a healthy community? (cont.)

- Communities
- Culture
- Clean air
- Safe Water
- Continuous improvement
- Strong families
- Safe neighborhoods

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How do you host a dialogue?

- Access resources
- Prepare for your dialogue
- Invite participants
- Plan to record your dialogue
- Conducting the dialogue
- Concluding the dialogue and next steps

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How do you make your dialogue count?

Record your findings and use them locally, while advancing local action by getting the results out to participants and relevant organizations within ten days of the dialogue.

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What is a focus group?

A focus group is a small group discussion guided by a trained leader, used to learn more about opinions on a designated topic, and then guide future action.

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How are focus groups different from regular “groups”?


- They are focused on a specific topic.
- They have a trained facilitator.
- Members of the group are encouraged to talk openly about their opinions and respond to other members.

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When should you use a focus group?

- When considering introducing a new program or service.
- When the main concern is depth or shading of opinion.
- When you want to ask questions that can't easily be asked or answered in a written survey.


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How to Conduct a Focus Group:

Before the meeting:

- Recheck your goals
- Consider other methods
- Find a good leader
- Find a recorder
- Decide who should be invited
- Decide about incentives
- Decide on the meeting particulars
- Prepare your questions
- Recruit your members
- Review the arrangements

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How to Conduct a Focus Group:

When the group meets:

- Thank people for coming.
- Review the group's purpose and goals.
- Explain how the meeting will proceed and how members can contribute.
- Set the tone by asking an opening question and making sure all opinions on that question are heard.
- Ask further questions in the same general manner.
- When all your questions have been asked, ask if anyone has any other comments to make.
- Tell the group about any next steps that will occur and what they can expect to happen now.
- Thank the group for coming!


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How to Conduct a Focus Group:

After the meeting meets:


- Make a transcript or written summary of the meeting
- Examine the data for patterns, themes, new questions, and conclusions
- Share the results with the group
- Use the results

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Examples

- A focus group of parents of preschoolers meets to discuss child care needs. Parents share their views on local child care programs, and on what could be done to improve them.
- A focus group of senior citizens meets at the new senior center. What do they think of the programs being offered? What are their own suggestions and ideas?
- An agency wants to open a group home for developmentally disabled adults in a quiet residential area. It convenes a group of prospective neighbors. What are their concerns? Can this work?

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What are Public Forums?


- Well-publicized public meetings.
- Citizens discuss important issues.
- Facilitated discussion.
- Transcript of discussion used for subsequent planning.

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Public Forums:


- Give people of diverse backgrounds a chance to express their views.
- Are a first step toward understanding the community's needs and resources.

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Why Conduct Public Forums?

- They offer valuable insights into the community.
- They provide a database for guiding and explaining actions.
- They help link your group with people who can help.
- They provide feedback.

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Things Needed to Conduct a Public Forum:

- A meeting place
- Community members
- Easel/newsprint/markers
- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Willingness to listen carefully

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Some Questions Worth Asking:

Issues and Concerns:

- What are the problems and consequences?
- Who is affected, and how?
- Are there related concerns, and are they widespread?

Barriers:

- Who might oppose efforts?
- What are other limitations?
- How can this be overcome?

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Some Questions Worth Asking:

Resources for change:

- What resources are needed?
- Where would they be found?
- Who could contribute?

Alternatives and solutions:

- What are alternatives for addressing the problem?
- What are some possible solutions for the problem?

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Organizing a Public Forum

- Use an easy-to-find, accessible public location
- Hold it in the evening
- Publicize widely
- Recruit diverse community members to attend
- Provide transportation
- Serve light refreshments

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Organizing a Public Forum (cont.)

- Allow time for such topics as:
 - Issues and concerns
 - Barriers and resistance community resources
 - Recommended solutions
- Record discussion on newsprint
- Conclude with a summary and plan of action
- Prepare a summary to mail to participants

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Participatory Action Research



The most marginalized person has the most accurate view of "reality" with their critical viewpoint as your "partner" these experts can help create more effective solutions.

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How Do I Access These Services?



Email: training@cadca.org
Phone: 1-800-54-CADCA ext. 240
Online: <http://www.cadca.org/webform/national-coalition-institute-technical-assistance-request-form>

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