

4-H ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM EVALUATION

Focus Group Protocol

Focus groups will be conducted in selected counties with *active* participants in the 4-H Arts and Communication Program in order to gather in-depth information on the personal meaning of their arts and communication experience. The purpose of the focus groups is to deepen the understanding of what participating in the 4-H Arts and Communication Program means and the difference it can make for young people.

Sample: Youth who have been active in A&C for 3 years or more. This might include youth who have been engaged in different activities and those who have stayed with one activity. AND, ideally one of the following:

- Youth who also are in school (or other) arts and communication programs/activities
- OR Kids who are “really” engaged: kids who seem to be really getting a lot out of their A&C experience, i.e., learning a lot; doing a lot; never miss a meeting/event/expectation; changing and growing; taking different roles; promoting the activity

Number per focus group: 5-7 youth (2 groups/county)

WELCOME

Introductions

Purpose of our meeting – why we are here

Overview and process

Sign-in sheet (record gender, ethnicity, county)

Name tags

Consent form: Pass out and review.

Preface: We will be talking about 4-H Arts and Communication Program – this includes ALL activities/projects/events/teams in any of the visual, performing and communication arts.

Ask kids to fill out sheet (listing of activities). Notice if kids are involved in multiple activities or a few

Ground rules: Review

First question: Let's get started....

GROUND RULES

- Everyone's opinion is important; we want to hear from each of you
 - Let everyone talk; but not at the same time
 - This isn't a test – no right or wrong answers; your opinions count
 - We'll use first names
 - We'll listen respectfully
 - We won't interrupt or cut in but neither will we dominate the time
 - We are taping the session just so we are sure to correctly capture what you say
 - No names will be identified with any remarks
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- Let's make sure all cell phones, etc. are turned off

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Let's get started...

1. First, let's get to know you a little bit...

- a. Why did you get involved in doing arts/communication project? What made it look interesting?
- b. Are you involved in other 4-HYD activities?
- c. Are you doing any arts or communication projects/activities elsewhere? in school, private lessons, church choir/community choir/theater; family

2. Now, let's talk about your projects...

Tell us about the arts and communication projects you currently and previously have been involved in (refer to sheet – list of activities)

- a. What is/are the project(s)?
- b. How long have you doing that project?
- c. About how much time – hours -- each week do you give to that activity/project? Is that year-round or seasonal?
- d. Why did you select/become involved in that project?

[Ask individual about 3a or 3b to mix it up, before moving on to the next person so we can keep track of the project.]

If there are participants who have focused on 1-2 activities vs. others who have done a lot of different activities, find out why...]

3. Now, let's focus on the elements of the A&C project(s) that motivates you to keep/stay involved [alternative wording - let's focus on what makes the A&C project special; that motivates you to do it]

- a. What do you like about it?
Probe for key/critical elements: social, expressive, performance; competition, self-improvement; leadership; teaching others; self-direction; personal interest; mentor relationship; adult leader expertise; only opportunity; self-direction

- b. You've been doing A&C for 3 years, that's a long time...what keeps you involved? Why do you keep doing these activities?
 - c. What is the difference between x activity and y activity (another arts activity or another project area altogether)?
 - d. Which do you like better – why?
 - e. If you could change it in any way, what would you change?
 - f. What are the parts that we should do more of?
4. Now, let's talk about what you gain from your A&C project...
- a. What do you think you get out of doing this project?
 - b. What are you able to do here?
 - c. What have you learned? (probe:
 - d. What skills have you developed? (probe: decision making, responsibility, time management, presentation/public speaking, decision making, technical skills, ...
 - e. How are you different as a result of doing this/these activities?
 - f. If you were to explain to a friend, what this means to you, how would you describe it?
 - g. What makes this better/different from something else you don't like so much?
 - h. What do you get out of ... that you don't get in any of your other activities?
 - i. Do you think x activity has made you different? A better person? How are you different/better? What about the activity really helped make that difference for you?
5. Are you involved in A&C type projects in school, church, other clubs/groups, community, private lessons?
- a. Are there a lot of these types of opportunities available?
 - b. How is the 4-H A&C project different from school, church, or private art and communication activities?
 - i. *Probe for key elements that are alike/dissimilar (draw from 3a)*
 - c. How are they similar?
6. Anything else you'd like to add???