

**Appendix F:  
Strategic Prevention  
Framework: Youth  
Focus Group  
Questions  
(15- to 24-Year-Olds)**



---

## **YOUTH FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS ON RETAIL AVAILABILITY, SOCIAL AVAILABILITY, PERCEPTION OF RISK, AND SOCIAL NORMS**

Directions: Convene at least six focus groups with youths in your communities to discuss the following questions. Focus groups generally work best with six to eight participants. Conduct at least one focus group with 15- to 17-year-olds (in high school), one with 18- to 20-year-olds (underage for buying alcohol and of college age), one with 21- to 24-year-olds (of legal age), at least one group with Hispanic males, and, if a substantial portion of the population of your community is Native American, one group with Native American males.

Steps to running a focus group:

1. **Find a community leader who is comfortable talking in front of groups to lead the discussion.** Some things to look for when choosing a discussion leader are
  - experience leading discussions,
  - knowledge of the topic to be discussed, and
  - ability to relate to the group participants.
2. **Find a note-taker.** A lot of important information will be discussed at a fast pace, so you'll need someone experienced at taking notes to make sure important information is not lost. Also, try to tape record the group discussion so you can go back and listen to it.
3. **Invite people who represent the community you're working with.** Select people that are similar to the population or community you are working with (e.g., age range, education level, smoking status). This will help ensure that you get opinions that are representative of the different subgroups within the community. Other things to consider:
  - Divide participants into groups based on gender, race, education level, or other characteristics that may affect their ability to speak openly and honestly. This can be an issue when discussing sensitive topics, such as sex. For example, some women may be uncomfortable talking openly if men are present.
4. **Decide whether to give incentives.** Depending on your budget, you may choose to reward people for

participating. This can be money, a gift certificate, or something else of value to your audience.

**5. Plan the group meeting.**

- Day: What is the best day to hold the group session? Are certain days of the week not very convenient?
- Place: The meeting should be held in a central location that is easy for people to get to.
- Time: What time of day is best? Do members of the community generally work day or night hours?
- Length: Groups should be scheduled for 1 to 2 hours, depending on the amount of material you have to cover.
- Number of groups: It is a good idea to conduct a minimum of two groups with each set of people (if you are conducting separate groups with men and women, you will want to have at least four groups—two with men and two with women).

**6. Prepare for the topics you want to discuss ahead of time.** You should always make sure you have a discussion guide that the leader refers to in the group. A discussion guide usually consists of a list of topics and some questions you want to be sure to ask

**7. Use the information that you gain.** After the session is over, it is helpful for the leader and note-taker to meet briefly to discuss how the group went and compare observations. The next step is to review the notes and tapes to look for patterns in what participants said.

*INSTRUCTIONS TO READ TO PARTICIPANTS: I am going to ask you some questions around drinking alcohol. You will not be asked questions about your own behavior, but rather your views about what people your age in your community think and do.*

1. When you think about people your age, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol?

**PROMPTS**

- a) a liquor store
- b) a grocery store
- c) a bar
- d) a restaurant
- e) friends
- f) parents
- g) other family members
- h) strangers

2. How easy would it be for people your age to get alcohol from those sources?

PROMPTS: Reflect sources they mentioned in Q1.

3. If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that people would find out?

PROMPTS

- a) parents
- b) other family members
- c) the police
- d) teachers at school (if applicable)
- e) your employer (if applicable)

4. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink?

PROMPTS

- a) your parents
- b) other family members
- c) your friends
- d) teachers at school (if applicable)
- e) your employer (if applicable)

5. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

6. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

PROMPTS

- a) parents
- b) other family members
- c) your friends
- d) teachers at school (if applicable)
- e) your employer (if applicable)

7. If you were to drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?

PROMPTS

- a) the police would catch you
- b) you would get a ticket and pay a fine
- c) (FOR MINORS) your parents would find out and punish you in some way (such as taking away your car)
- d) anything else?