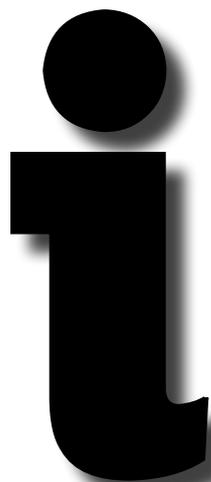


What is a Focus Group? (page 1 of 2)



What is a Focus Group?

A focus group is an organised discussion with a small group of people, no more than 12, using their experiences, feelings and beliefs, to talk about a particular subject.



Why hold a Focus Group?

The main aim is to collect information from a range of people who have used a service or had a particular treatment. These views or comments will help us to improve the ways in which we support patients and organise their care.

What happens in a Focus Group?

The group is asked to talk about the subject in a particular order. An independent trained facilitator, who is not involved with the service or treatment being discussed, usually leads the discussion.

There may be health care professionals present. They will be taking notes of all that is said. This is usually written down on flip charts. Occasionally it may be taped as well. All of the notes taken will be used with strict confidentiality.

The notes taken will be written in such a way that it would be impossible to identify who has made the comment or comments. No names are used when they are put into a report.

None of the health professionals helping with the meeting have had anything to do with you or your treatment and care. They are present for support and to help with recording the comments.

Each meeting varies. Most last about 1½ hours but some can be planned for longer. You will be told how long your meeting will be expected to last.

Occasionally, members of the team looking after you, may be present at the start of the session, to say hello and thank you, but will then leave. Please be totally assured that anything you say would be used in the strictest confidence.

What happens if I don't want to take part?

- You do not have to take part if you do not wish to do so.
- If you decide not to attend it will not affect your treatment in any way.
- If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time will not

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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

affect the standard of care you receive.

Do I need to sign any forms? Can I be sure that I will remain anonymous?

- If you do take part, anything you say will remain anonymous and will not affect your treatment or care.
- By attending the meeting you will be giving consent that any comments made can be fed back to the teams to help improve or change their services. This means there will be no forms to sign.

What happens after the Focus Group?

This depends on the time, place and reason for the group. Light refreshment is provided or sometimes supper. This gives everyone time to relax before going home. Being part of a focus group can be tiring.

The comments made during the session are put into a report, usually under headings such as key themes or issues. This report is then given to the health professionals involved and then discussed. They will then make an action plan with time limits.

This action plan will be reviewed regularly to make sure the team is on target. Any changes made will also be carefully monitored to make sure they are improving the service.

Anything else I should know?

Focus groups can be great fun, but can also be emotional at times. Especially when people are talking about their experiences. This is also why there are other health professionals in the room. They are there for support and also to be with anyone who decides to leave the group.

Taking part in a group like this helps the people who look after you in hospital design the service to suit your needs. Without people like you helping them to make changes the service would not develop so quickly.

Your contribution to the discussion will benefit future patients needing the same or similar treatment and care in the future

Teams will, if asked, send you a copy of their action plan. So remember to ask if you want to see a copy of it.

If you do decide to take part, we hope you find it fun and interesting.

Thank you for reading this and we hope it has helped you to reach a decision about attending.

