

Building Healthy NYCHA Communities through Food

Resident Healthy Food Focus Group Guide

Date:

Researcher/Moderator Name:

Focus Group Protocol

[NOTE: The italicized text is for you, the researcher. It gives additional direction for preparation, asking questions, provides potential answers, and gives prompts that you can use to spur conversation with the interview respondent.]

Timeframe = 2 hours. Less critical questions can be eliminated for a shorter 1.5-hour session.

Materials:

- 36" x 48" map of your hot spot within your organization's catchment area.
- Flip chart markers / sharpies (10-12 dark colors)
- colored paper for name tents (fold in ½)
- Blue painter's tape (1-1.5")
- Laminated food access and use posters (UNH to provide)
- Small colored circle stickers – 3 primary colors
- Refreshments
- Sign up sheet. Capture all participants names, email addresses and/or phone numbers.

Staff: Focus group moderator and a scribe to capture feedback.

[In preparation for the workshop, post the neighborhood map [36" x 48"] and the posters on the wall with blue painters tape. Hand out markers and name tags or folded sheets for name tents. Have some blank sheets and pens on the table in case participants want to write notes for themselves.]

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome and thank you for joining us today for a discussion on healthy food in our community.

We are working to identify, plan and develop programs and places that will support increased access to and ultimately the eating of more healthy foods in our community.

We are exploring the potential for bringing more healthy foods into the community and looking at ways to increase community knowledge sharing about healthy foods - where to find them, how to prepare and store them, and budgeting for and planning healthy meals.

Today, we are here to get your feedback, which is critical to this planning process. We are going to talk about food – foods that are important to us for a full and healthy life, where you and/or your family members purchase and eat foods, how you and your family members prepare food, the affordability of food, and the potential for food to make the neighborhood a healthier place to live and work.

We will share a summary of the focus group findings with you.

Ice Breaker: (10 min)

[Go around the room and have participants introduce themselves and answer the icebreaker.]

1. Please tell us your name,
 - a. Adults - Share a favorite food memory or your favorite food.
 - b. Youth - Tell us where you go to school and share your favorite food.

[To warm up the room, go around the room for the first one or two questions. Then, ask for volunteers to answer questions. Try to get 3-4 people to respond to each question. If at some point no one responds to a question, you can try to rephrase the question or just move on. If participants quiet down, on the next question, go around the room again.]

[Also, if questions have been answered along the way, skip them.]

Food Routines (20 min)

We are going to start by talking about some of your food routines:

2. Describe your last breakfast and dinner – what did you eat and where? In general, Are you preparing foods at home or purchasing prepared foods.
3. Are you responsible for feeding others? If yes, who?
4. Describe how you or your family members shop for food. (Where do you buy your food? Describe what you like and don't like about the experience? How often do you shop, what are your top priority/staple foods.)
5. Talk to us now about fresh food (fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, etc.) – how are these items incorporated into your cooking and eating routines? Where do you (or your parents) shop for these? Tell us about any special places you shop (or acquire) these foods, and about any challenges to purchasing fresh foods right in your neighborhood.
6. Do you feel you can afford to buy the foods (or healthy foods) you want to?

7-9 FOR YOUTH ONLY:

7. Describe your typical lunch during the week?
8. Tell us why you do or do not eat school meals? Or what you like and don't like about school meals?
9. Describe your ideal healthy and delicious school meal.

Food Options in Our Neighborhood [15 minutes]

[Direct participants to the map on the wall of the neighborhood. First, have participants write the names of the food places they rely on (stores, CSA pick-up sites, restaurants, coffee shops, take out spots, farmers markets, food carts, pantries...)]

10. Write your favorite food places on the map with a marker – could be grocery stores, farmers markets, restaurants...What are your favorite places and what do you like about them?
11. How near to your home are the “best” or your favorite places to purchase groceries in your community?
12. What are the worst?
13. If you could open the ideal “healthy food place” in your community, what would it be and what products and services would it provide? Where would you put it?
14. Where in the community do you eat, gather and relax with your family or friends? If there is not a place in the community to do this now, tell us what a good, safe place for gathering around food would look like?

Workforce Development + Jobs (OPTIONAL) [10 min]

15. How interested in food-related jobs are you – or would members of your family be? What would you need to be successful at getting/keeping these jobs?
16. Would you or someone you know be interested in participating in job training programs – culinary, food retail, farmers market management for example? If yes, what types of jobs would be most appealing? For example, food retail training would help you learn about the industry, cashiering, product recognition, data entry and inventory tracking, food safety, and stocking.

Health [15 min]

17. Do you or a family member have health issues that you know or believe can be helped by eating certain foods? What are these?
18. If you’ve been told (by a doctor or other health professional) to eat differently, do you? Why/ why not? (We’re looking for behavior change as a result of medical diagnosis as well as success/barriers in accessing the foods.)
19. Where inside and/or outside the community do you go for health services (health centers, hospitals doctors offices)?

20. Where locally can you get information about healthy eating or healthy foods? Is the information healthful? If no, what else would you like to have available? (eg. nutrition education, cooking techniques and recipes, other)?
21. If you are interested in participating in healthy food skill building programs, what specifically do you want to know more about? (*food preparation, diet for diabetes, – label literacy, budgeting for food, shopping tips. Label literacy helps decipher the jargon found on nutrition labels and various components of a nutrition labels such as Carbohydrates, Protein, Sugar, Fiber, Sodium, etc and their effects on the body.*)

Poster Session [20 min]

Post the food access and use posters on the wall at eye level. Explain each concept to the group. Ask the group to rank their top 3 favorite concepts using the round colored stickers (for example, green is #1, blue is #2, red is #3).

Discuss the top concepts. What do participants like about them? What do they perceive might be challenges to getting them off the ground?

Summary [10 min]

22. Are there ways you would like to be involved in improving the availability of healthy foods or helping community members make healthier food choices?
23. Is there anything else you would like to say about food and your community?