

Focus Group Opening

Below is an example of an opening for a focus group. Comments are included to identify elements of the opening.

“Good evening and welcome to our session. Thanks for taking the next 90 minutes to join us to talk about educational programs in the residence halls. My name is Gavin Henning and assisting me is Ann Bracken. We both work in the Office of Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation, and Research here at the College. The Office of Residential Education has asked us to gather information the programs that are done in the clusters. They want to know what you learned from these programs. We are having several discussions like this in all of the clusters.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:13 PM

Comment: State how long it will be.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:14 PM

Comment: Review names and supplement with name tags.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:15 PM

Comment: Who commissioned focus group.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:15 PM

Comment: The specific topic.

“You were invited because you had participated in at least on of the educational programs in the clusters this year.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:15 PM

Comment: Why student was invited.

“There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. It is important for us to hear all of the perspectives. Keep in mind that we’re just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are most helpful.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:23 PM

Comment: Encourages discussion.

“You’ve probably noticed the microphone (or laptop, or both). We’re recording this session because we don’t want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we can’t write fast enough to get them all down. We will be on a first name basis tonight, but we won’t use any of your names in our reports. You can be assured of our complete confidentiality. We ask that you also maintain the confidentiality of our conversation, but not sharing with your friends what specific individuals have said. This is a small campus as you know. The reports will be given to the Office of Residential Education to help them plan future programs.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:47 PM

Comment: Discussion of confidentiality.

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:22 PM

Comment: How info will be used.

“Well, let’s begin. We’ve placed name cards on the table in front of you to help us remember each other’s name. Let’s find out some more about each other by going around the room. Tell us your name and where you live.”

Gavin Henning 2/18/08 3:23 PM

Comment: Helps build community and helps moderator facilitate discussion.