Module 2: Recruiting focus group participants

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• Fogerty International Center/ NIH/ NIEHS/NIOSH
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• Two NIOSH-funded Projects at UMASS Lowell:
  – Safe Home Care Project
  – Project SHARRP (Safe Home Care and Risk Reduction for Providers)
Recruiting focus group participants

• Purposeful sampling
• Participant inclusion criteria
• Ethical concerns in participant recruitment
• Successful recruitment strategy
  – Examples of recruitment materials used
• Essential immediate follow-up tasks when participants have been selected
What is a purposeful sampling design strategy?

• Applied in qualitative research

• Selecting information-rich study participants
  – Gain insight about the phenomenon
  – Not empirical generalization to a larger population

• For focus groups: homogeneous sampling
  – In-depth study of a particular subgroup
  – Bring together people of similar backgrounds & experiences

Participant inclusion criteria for focus groups

- The study purpose guides whom to invite

- Homogeneity criteria
  - Potential participants have something in common that is essential to the study (e.g. job/occupation)

- Be mindful about your data analysis though
  - **REMEMBER**: If you aim to compare different types of people’s views, you must separate different types of people into separate focus groups

Ethical concerns when recruiting focus group participants

• Participants must volunteer
  – Not because they feel obliged to participate
    • Do not mix supervisors and subordinates in the same focus group
  – Fair opportunity to be included in the participant selection

• Maximum number of participants in one focus group
  – Recommendation: no more than ten participants
  – Fair selection of participants
Successful focus group recruitment strategy

- Offers incentives to participate
- Applies systematic, structured, personalized, and repetitive approaches
- Describes the study and its benefits carefully


Learning with Purpose
Focus group recruitment materials used at Project SHARRP in UMASS Lowell

**Focus Group - Volunteer Card**

Project SHARRP at UMASS Lowell

Are you:

* a Nurse or Rehab Staff who participated in the SHARRP survey?
* at least 18 years old?
* interested in being in a focus group to help interpret survey results?

We will give $50 cash and a $25-gas card to each of 10 volunteers who will meet for 1½ hours to discuss survey results. The focus group will be at the Project SHARRP Office on Thursday, June 19, 2008, at 4 pm. If interested, please return this card to Project SHARRP by Friday, June 13, 2008. 10 participants will be randomly selected from the cards returned.

Questions? Please contact Pia Markhamen at 978-934-4314 or email: sharrp@uml.edu.

Print Name: ____________________________

Nurse [ ] Rehab Staff [ ]

Street Address: __________________________

City, Zip: __________________________

Phone number: __________________________

Email: __________________________
Focus group recruitment brochure used at the Safe Home Care Project, UMASS Lowell

**Recruiting & selecting participants**

The focus group can include up to 10 participants. If more than 10 people volunteer, we will randomly select 10 names from those who return the enclosed Reply Card.

If you are interested in participating and you are:
- a home health aide or homemaker; and
- at least 18 years of age.

please return the pre-paid Reply Card to Safe Home Care Project by **Monday, February 14, 2011** or by fax at 978-452-5711. Upon receiving your reply, we include you in the lottery to select randomly 10 focus group participants from the [NAME OF THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION]. Selected participants will be notified.

**Questions? Whom to contact?**

Safe Home Care Project:
Pia Markkanen
One University Avenue
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Lowell, MA 01854
Tel: 978-934-4314
Fax: 978-452-5711
Email: Pia_Markkanen@uml.edu

[NAME OF THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION]:
[NAME, ADDRESS, TEL., EMAIL OF THE CONTACT PERSON AT THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION]

**INVITATION TO VOLUNTEER FOR A RESEARCH STUDY**

**Focus Group about the Nature of Home Care Work**

for Home Health Aides and Homemakers

A study being conducted by the Sustainable Hospitals Program
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Focus group recruitment brochure used at the Safe Home Care Project, UMASS Lowell

About the Safe Home Care Project

Title of Research Project: Safety & Health for Home Care Workers in Social Assistance and Healthcare

Goals of the Safe Home Care Project

- Protect the rapidly growing population of home health and home care practitioners in Massachusetts by improving safety and health in the home care workplace.
- Identify the magnitude and nature of the occupational safety and health issues unique to the home care environment.
- Develop educational materials based on research findings.

Who is funding the Safe Home Care Project?

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Safe Home Care Research Team

- School of Health and Environment, UMASS Lowell
  - Department of Work Environment
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
  - Occupational Health Surveillance Program

What is a focus group?

- A research method: an interview in a group.
- Ideally, 5-10 participants in a group.
- The moderator asks open-ended questions to generate an information-rich discussion on the focused topic, essential for the research.
- The participants share their experience and views about the topic.

We are looking for 10 volunteers to tell us about home care work. Please come and participate in a research study: the focus group discussion!

Purpose of this focus group

- Participate in a research study to educate the Safe Home Care Team about home care work and working conditions.
- Discuss safety and health issues that are specific to home care.
- Help to develop a questionnaire for a large survey among home care aides in Massachusetts.

When and where?

- Tuesday, March 1, 2011, during 2:00-3:30 pm
- A meeting room at the [NAME OF THE AGENCY ORGANIZATION]

Compensation and the length of time

- $40 for participation.
- Maximum—1.5 hours.

Participants

- At least 18 years of age.

How will information be collected?

- The focus group will be recorded and transcribed (made into a typed copy).

Confidentiality of the focus group

- The focus group discussion is confidential.
- Your agency will not listen to the recorded tapes or read the typed transcripts.
- Your identity will not be disclosed in the results.
- We will ask for your written consent to participate.
Focus group volunteer reply card used at the Safe Home Care Project, UMASS Lowell
When focus group participants have been selected

- Send a personalized follow-up letter
- Make a reminder phone call
- Friendly reminder phone call one day before the focus group
Thank you!

Questions?

Contact Pia Markkanen at Pia_Markkanen@uml.edu

Friendly reminder – the next GoToMeeting Project conference call on
June 7, 2013 at 8:30 AM Bangkok time
June 6, 2013 at 9:30 PM Boston time