



checklist

- Why have I decided to use focus groups? Will focus groups provide me with the most appropriate type of data to answer my research questions?
 - Will I use focus groups on their own or in conjunction with other methods? At what stage of the research process will I use focus groups?
 - What level of moderation do I need to adopt in order to get the type of data I need to answer my research questions?
 - How comfortable do I feel about leading a group discussion? How will I encourage participants to interact with each other?
 - What criteria will I use to recruit participants? Where will I recruit my participants from? How will I recruit them?
 - How many focus groups do I need to run?
 - Have I allowed sufficient time to organise the focus groups and to recruit participants?
 - Is the focus group venue the most appropriate one? Is it both physically and socially accessible for participants?
 - What equipment do I need to take to the focus group?
 - Does my focus group schedule cover the maximum number of relevant topics that need to be covered? Does my focus group schedule enable participants to raise their own topics and ask questions? Are my questions open-ended?
 - Does my focus group schedule consist of an appropriate number of questions for each stage of the process?
 - What sort of problems might I encounter in a focus group? What strategies will I use to deal with them?
 - How will I analyse my data?
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project

The following project is designed to help you become more sensitive to the issues faced when planning a focus group. Specifically, you should be thinking about basic preparation issues (see section 16.3).

The social research topic to explore is the 'vulnerability of young people'. Produce a small report of around 1500 words which outlines how you would design this small research project. In particular, you should initially pay attention to the topic ('vulnerability') and the membership of the focus groups, that is, who 'young people' are and to what degree it makes sense to have a different mix of young people within the focus groups (e.g. different ages, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, etc.). Then go on to consider the most appropriate size of group, the sampling strategy to be used to recruit the young people, and finally the most appropriate venue and location.
