

Focus Group Guide: Preferences, needs, experiences, and expectations of visitors who are blind or have low vision

Welcome and Introduction

- Thank participants for coming
- Introduce yourself to the group:
 - Your name
 - What you do at your museum
- Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves:
 - Name
 - Why they came
- Purpose of the focus group:
 - To learn about art museum experiences for people who are blind/have low vision
 - To gather feedback from you before we develop new programs
- How focus groups will run:
 - One person speaks at a time
 - Honest conversation – so both positive and negative comments are encouraged
 - No right or wrong answers
 - We want to hear from everyone here today!
 - Anonymity – we will not associate your name or any identifying information with what you say today, and we ask all participants to keep this conversation confidential
 - If words you don't understand / speaking too fast / can't hear let us know
 - Bathroom location, other comfort considerations
- Questions?
- Introduce focus group outline:
 - First, we want to hear about prior or current museum visits
 - Then, we want to hear your thoughts about potential future museum visits

Focus Group Questions

[Numbered and lettered questions are the ones you should definitely ask. Bulleted items are probes you might if your initial question is not answered.]

We are going to begin with a set of questions about your current museum experiences

1. How many of you have been to [your museum] before?
 - a. Ask them to raise their hands if they've visited [your museum] before
 - b. Count aloud the number of hands raised [so that the group knows how many people raised their hands]
 - c. If some participants do not raise their hands, ask the group to raise their hands if they've visited another art museum, but not [your museum]
 - d. Count aloud the number of people who raise their hands again

2. Before you visit a museum, what do you do to plan your trip?
 - *If participants do not discuss where they get information to plan their visit:*
Where do you get information about the museum?
 - From the museum
 - Website, phone call, radio or TV ads
 - From other sources
 - Newspaper articles, friends/family
 - *If participants do not discuss how they get to the museum:*
Do you need to make any transportation or other arrangements?
 - *If participants do not discuss who they plan trips with:*
With whom do you plan your visit?
 - *If participants do not discuss helpful resources:*
What resources could the museum provide that would help plan your trip?

3. When you are visiting the museum, what do you do?
 - *If participants do not mention any of the following elements, and your museum is interested in them:*
 - Gift shop?
 - Cafeteria?
 - Participate in special programs?
 - Audio guides?
 - Visit specific exhibitions?
 - Take a tour?

4. What, if anything, do you usually do as a follow-up to your visit?
 - *If participants do not mention any of the following elements, and your museum is interested in them:*
 - Talk about the experience with others?
 - Continue learning about topic?
 - Go to the museums Web site?
 - Connect with other visitors you met at the museum?

5. In general, what prevents you from visiting this museum more often?
 - *If participants do not mention any of the following elements, and your focus group is interested in them:*
 - Price?
 - Location/convenience of transportation?
 - Lack of interesting programs/exhibits?
 - Lack of accessible programming?

This second set of questions relates to possible future experiences in art museums

1. Describe what an ideal experience for you would be like in an art museum.
 - *If participants do not discuss visiting group:*
Who would you visit with?
 - *If participants do not discuss specific experiences:*
What would you experience during your visit?
 - *If participants do not discuss what they would like to learn:*
What would you learn during your visit?
 - *If participants do not discuss interactions with staff or other visitors:*
What types of conversations would you have while in the art museum?
 - *If participants do not discuss issues of physical comfort:*
What services or accommodations would the museum offer that would make you feel physically comfortable? (Resting places, restrooms, temperature, etc.)
 - *If they do not mention how they go through the museum:*
During your visit, would you take an organized tour or view the galleries on your own/with your group?

2. Describe the worst possible art museum experience you could imagine.
 - *If participants do not discuss visiting group:*
Who would you visit with?
 - *If participants do not discuss what they would or would not experience:*
What would you experience or not experience during your visit?
 - *If participants do not discuss what learning opportunities they would miss:*
What wouldn't you learn during your visit?
 - *If participants do not discuss interactions with staff or other visitors:*
What types of conversations or interactions would you have that would upset you while in the art museum?
 - *If participants do not discuss issues of physical comfort:*
How might the museum make you feel physically uncomfortable? (Resting places, restrooms, temperature, etc.)
 - *If they do not mention how they go through the museum:*
During your visit, would you take an organized tour or view the galleries on your own/with your group?

3. I'm going to describe [three or four] different kinds of programs [your museum] might develop in the future. We'll then go through each example one by one, and I'll ask you what you like most and least about it.
[Examples are below – each museum will write their own, Christine & Anna will review the descriptions at least a week before the focus group]
 - A verbally described tour of our watercolor collection that includes touch exploration of the artist's process tools, such as brushes, paints, paper, etc.
 - A series of sculpting classes inspired by Greek ceramics.
 - Exploration of Rodin's work through touch, scale models, and reenactment.
 - A verbally described tour of our furniture collection with touchable scale models, carvings, and tools.
 - Verbal descriptions of multi-media installations that explore environmental issues followed by a discussion or artist talk.
 - [For each program, re-read description and ask:]
 - What did you like best about this program? What did you like the least?
4. Out of everything that has been discussed here today, what are some of the experiences [your museum] could offer that would make you want to...
 - a. Visit again?
 - b. Bring family or friends?
 - c. Become a member?

Conclusion

- Thank participants again for taking the time to provide you with feedback
- Share information with the group about any existing programs or exhibits you think they might be interested in [Note: DO NOT do this before the focus group begins or during the focus group discussion]
- Encourage them to contact you again if they have any further suggestions or questions.