UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – PROCEDURES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Procedure No	2018_12_38_RA
Title of Procedure	Focus group/interview procedures
Name of Assessor	Ann MacPhail
Assessment date	December 2018
Does this procedure already have ethical approval ?	**Yes**
If so, enter ethical number and expiry date	**Approval No: EHSREC 10_RA01** **End Date: December 2028**

1 Please provide a brief description of the procedure

Focus groups are a qualitative method of data collection involving a group of people in a structured discussion designed to generate a rich understanding of a topic. Powell, Single, and Lloyd (1996) define a focus group as “a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research” (499).

The experiences of these participants are explored through a trained moderator in relation to a set of predetermined questions, the content being unique to a particular study. Typically, a focus group is comprised of six to eight adults or children who have similar interests and backgrounds. What participants say and discuss during the interview process is the data for analysis. Focus group interviews may be audiotaped to ease the analysis process.

Focus groups are an applied research method intended to gain in-depth information into the feelings, attitudes, and perspectives of participants. This method provides insights into why participants believe as they do and how they arrived at these beliefs. In order to gain these insights from participants, a researcher will need to determine who will participate in the group and what questions to ask. These are gained by a careful analysis of previous literature in the area.

Krueger (1998) has identified eight steps to be considered when forming interview questions for the focus group and include:

- Use open-ended questions, such as:
  - What did you think of the physical education program?
  - How did you feel about the discussion on fair play?
  - Where do you get new information about how to improve your skills?
  - Which two ideas did you like best?
  - Be cautious of phrases such as "how satisfied" or "to what extent" they tend to stifle participants' dialogue based on their experiences.
- Avoid dichotomous questions
  - These are questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no"

- Why? is rarely asked
    - Instead ask about attributes and/or influences.

    - Attributes are characteristics or features of the topic.
    - Talking about influences can prompt or cause actions
    - Use "think back" questions
    - Take people back to an experience and not forward to the future so that they can speak reliably about their past without repeating hearsay or restating someone else's opinions, values, wishes or intentions.

- Use different types of questions
    - Identify potential questions
    - Five types of questions to be used in designing the interview are:
        1. Opening Question (round-robin question for everybody to answer)
        2. Introductory Question
        3. Transition Questions
        4. Key Questions
        5. Ending Questions

- Use questions that get participants involved
    - Use reflection
    - Use examples and rating scales, such as a scale from 1-5 to indicate preference on a predetermined scale
    - Use drawings to help participants artistically display their thoughts

- Focus the questions
- Sequence should go from general to specific
    - Be cautious of serendipitous questions
    - Save for the end of the discussion

Storage of data: As focus group interviews tend to be recorded, it is critical that tapes are stored in a safe place (advisor or lead researcher's possession) at all times. Once the interviews have been transcribed they must be stored in the lead researcher's where they will be kept for up to 7 years; the audio tapes will be destroyed.

References

Barnett, J. M. (2004). Focus groups: Tips for beginners. *TCALL Occasional Research Paper No. 1.* Texas Center for Adult Literacy & Learning.

Flick, U. (2002). An Introduction to Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Moderating focus groups: Focus Group Kit 4*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Morgan D.L. (1988) *Focus groups as qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

Powell R.A., Single H.M., & Lloyd K.R. (1996) 'Focus groups in mental health research: enhancing the validity of user and provider questionnaires', *International Journal of Social Psychology* 42 (3): 193-206.

Simmons Howze, S., (2000). Using focus groups as an applied tool. *Howe's Now, 6(2).*

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

2	Location in which the procedure may take place

X	University of Limerick Buildings
X	At a location convenient to the subject

Others, please specify

X	Primary or secondary school
X	Sports club grounds/clubhouse

3	Eligibility of subject(s) to be used

X	e.g. PESS student (U.G. or P.G.)
X	e.g. University of Limerick staff or campus personnel
X	e.g. Members of the general public engaged in research projects granted ethical approval.

4	Potential risks. To be explained <u>before</u> obtaining consent

X	None, or minimal discomfort only

5	Action to be taken in the event of a foreseeable emergency

No foreseeable emergency is expected as a result of focus group/interview procedures

However, the following standard procedure should be followed in the event of an unforeseen incident / accident occurring in the PESS building / UL Facility:

1. Stop the interview. Position the subject to prevent self-injury.
2. If appropriate, raise the subject's lower limbs to improve blood flow. Should the subject fail to respond summon help immediately.
3. Check vital signs airways, breathing and circulation (ABC)
4. If required attempt CPR as soon as possible.
5. Requesting Help: Emergency Contact telephone numbers are listed on laboratory door:
   - During normal working hours 9am-5pm, use lab phone to contact the Student Health Centre on **061-20**2534
   - Outside of normal working hours, or if the Student Health Centre number is engaged/busy, use the laboratory phone to dial 3333 for UL security personnel who will then contact the ambulance service. If in PESS, contact one of the PESS First Aiders – names are listed on the PESS laboratory door.
6. When contacting the above clearly state: Location, Building, Room Number, Nature of Incident/Accident and provide a contact number.
7. Complete the UL 'Accident & Emergency' form (completed by the investigator, not the volunteer). Forms available on UL Health & Safety website

If an emergency or incident occurs offsite, follow the local procedures for dealing with such an event. **Ensure you know what the procedures are.**

6	Level of supervision required for procedure

X	Trained PESS lecturing/research staff/
X	Trained PESS postgraduate researcher

Others, please specify

X	Trained PESS undergraduates
X	Physical Education teacher

7	Other documentation required for this assessment ?

X	Participant Information Sheet and Consent form
X	Parental consent form if necessary

Others, please specify

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FOR COMPLETION PY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

RISK AssEssMf;NT FORM - PROCEQIIRES INVOLVING HUMAN Su&JECTS

In the DePortment or: _____

Procedure No EHSREC 10_RA01

Title or Procedure Focus group/interview procedures

Name of Assessor(s) Ann Macrhail **Assessment Date** December 2018

8 Approval or procedure

X	Granted
X	Subject to conditions (see below)

Others, please specity

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Comments/conditions

Informed consent must be completed. Parental informed consent will be obtained prior to participation of any individuals under 18 years. One-on-one interviews with an individual under 18 years requires that an adult, be it a coach, parent or independent observer be present during the interview.

Signed: _____ (Head of Department)

Date: 11/1/1