

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

Session 14

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

Youth will create interview questions for their research project and interview each other for the purpose of practicing, testing, and revising their protocol.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

- Butcher paper, tape, and markers.
- Paper, pens, and clipboards.
- Paper or cloth bag.
- List of any previously brainstormed interview questions.
- Copy the *Interview Protocol Components* (Master Copy 3.14a), the blank *Interview Protocol Design* (3.14b), and the *Interview Note Taking Sheet* (Master Copy 3.14c) before the session: one copy of each for each participant.
- Write silly interview subjects on scraps of paper for youth to use in the What is a Protocol? activity.
- Review *Steps to a Good Interview* (Master Copy 3.13a).
- Optional: tape recorders with batteries, cassette tapes.
- Optional: copies of *Helpful Hints for Successful Recording* (Master Copy 3.14d).

**I. OPENING: ATTENDANCE, SNACKS,
ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGENDA OVERVIEW (5 MINUTES)**

Opening statement (Around the World): What is the most significant event of our time and why? (Give youth a few minutes to think about this and even to write down their answer.)

II. WARM UP: COMMONALITIES (5 MINUTES)

Ask youth to pair up with someone they do not know very well. Ask them to make a list of things they have in common (e.g., neighborhood, personality trait, experience, ability). After a few minutes, go around the room and ask pairs to share with the group their most surprising commonality.

Facilitation Tip:

Refer to the root causes identified in Sessions 6 and 7 to help youth think carefully about who is impacted and has insight into their topic.

Look back at your work on Allies, Opponents, and Decision Makers from Session 9 to help youth think about their interview subjects.

Interview Protocol Development

III. DECIDE ON INTERVIEW SUBJECTS (10 MINUTES)

Explain that the point of doing interviews is to get information that will help youth learn more about their research topic. That means youth need to talk to people about what they have identified as the root causes.

Brainstorm: Who will we interview? Record the answers.

- Who is impacted by your issue or topic?
- Who could help you better understand your issue?

Ask the students if all people would be asked the same questions.

- Should there be different protocols for different people or groups of people?
- Does one group take priority over another?

Ask the students if it is important to ask about a person's background (e.g., age, race, gender).

- In what situations would it help to know about the background of the people you are interviewing?

IV. WHAT IS A PROTOCOL? (10 MINUTES)

Step 1: Brainstorm: If you were interviewing someone, where would you start? What types of questions would you ask? What do you think would get you the most information?

Step 2: Hand out and review the *Interview Protocol Components*. Ask for more examples for each question category. Highlight the importance of using the same set and order of basic questions to get consistent data.

Step 3: Divide into pairs and give each pair a blank interview protocol worksheet. Have each pair draw a random topic from a hat or come up with one of their own. You can make the topics silly and fun. Based on the topic drawn, have pairs come up with questions.

Step 4: As a group, go over the questions that each pair came up with, and ask the group to listen carefully. Make sure the questions fit with the category and look for leading questions.

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V. DRAFT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (25 MINUTES)

Step 1: In new pairs, have youth create interview questions for their research project. If youth decided that several different sets of questions are needed for different audiences, assign an equal number of pairs to each audience. Remind the students to write open-ended questions. Use another blank *Interview Protocol Design* worksheet to support students in structuring their interview questions.

Step 2: Create a draft interview protocol: As a group, have youth share their questions under each category. Ask for additions or revisions. Agree on the interview protocol(s). Explain that after practicing this protocol, youth may see changes they need to make.

VI. PEER INTERVIEW PRACTICE AND QUESTION REVISION (30 MINUTES)

Inform participants that they will now practice by interviewing each other using the questions they just agreed to. Encourage them to think about what it means to be a good listener when they are conducting the interviews. Before starting, review the *Steps to a Good Interview* handout. Highlight the importance of getting consent – either as a written form or as a statement on audio tape.

Step 1: Split the group into pairs (different partners than before). Ask the youth to take turns interviewing each other using the questions on which they've agreed. Have youth take DETAILED notes on what the other person says in their interview (see the *Interview Note Taking* sheet for an example). Discuss

the importance of taking clear notes in a consistent format.

Step 3: As a whole group, have a discussion about the interview process. How comfortable did youth feel conducting the interview? Did they get the answers they had hoped? How can the group improve the questions? Make sure there is agreement on any changes made to the protocol.

VII. CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Have each youth give a prop (e.g., compliments, praise, thanks for their work today) to the person on their right.

 **Facilitation Tip:**

- *It is important to record the gender and ethnicity of the people interviewed. Always do this at the end of an interview or survey so that it is clear this is just demographic information rather than information used to judge. For example, youth may have expressed interest in knowing how different groups in the community think, or where different groups hang out and spend their time. Knowing the gender and ethnicity will help with this information.*
- *If they are fluent in a language other than English, youth should feel comfortable interviewing peers in a language they have in common.*
- *Remind youth that the interview protocol is just to get the conversation started. It is important to add follow-up questions like, "Can you tell me more about that?" From time to time, repeat back to show understanding ("It sounds like you're saying... do I have that right?").*
- *Having good questions is more important than having lots of questions!*
- *It is important to have a clear and consistent format for taking detailed notes during interviews. This will help with coding and analysis.*

**Optional Take-Home Assignment:**

- *Interview at least one person who is not part of your YELL group or class using your finalized questions.*
- *Ask probing questions and follow ups.*
- *Take detailed notes on what the person says, or use a tape recorder.*
- *Immediately after the interview write down the following:*
 - *What went well? Not so well?*
 - *Did I have enough follow-up questions? What could I have done or said to get more information?*
 - *Do any of the questions need to be changed or improved?*
 - *What was the most interesting or surprising thing that the person said?*

Bring your notes and your post-interview reflections to the next session.

Interview Protocol Components

PARTS OF AN INTERVIEW	PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
INTRODUCTION	The interviewee understands the purpose of your project, how the information will be used, and what to expect from the interview.	Hi, my name is X, and I am from the YELL project. We are trying to find out X, and your experience and thoughts will help. This is confidential, which means no one but me will know you actually said this. Please answer honestly, and you don't have to answer anything you don't want to answer.
BODY: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS		
1. ICE-BREAKER QUESTIONS	The interviewee feels comfortable. You get basic information you need and a sense of the person's mood.	What is your name? How long have you lived here? What is your favorite band?
2. "GRAND TOUR" QUESTIONS	Allow interviewee to tell you a story about the topic in their words.	Tell me about a typical day at your school.
3. SURVEY QUESTIONS	Get answers to specific questions related to your area of interest.	What sorts of after-school programs would you like to see at your school? Why?
4. HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS	Gives you insight into what people would want if they weren't limited to what they think could be real.	If you could make one wish that would come true – and you had to make it about your school – what would it be?
CONCLUSION	Wrap up and let the person know that their time and opinions are really appreciated. Allow the person to add anything else that you didn't ask.	That is my last question. Is there anything you would like to add? Thank you for your time.

 Interview Protocol Design

Research topic: _____

INTRODUCTION	
BODY: INTERVIEW QUESTION	
ICE-BREAKER QUESTIONS (2-4)	1. 2. 3. 4.
"GRAND TOUR" QUESTION (1)	1.
SURVEY QUESTIONS (5-8)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.
HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION (1)	1.
CONCLUSION	