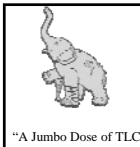



Their Voice; Our Programs: How to Develop Student Programs Using Student Focus Groups
Tufts University Health & Wellness

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Program



**Tufts Community Cares:
 Project Staff**



- **Principal Investigator:**
 Michelle Bowdler, MSPH
 Director, Health Services
 P: 617-627-3766
Michelle.Bowdler@tufts.edu
- **Clinical Director:**
 Marilyn Downs, LICSW
 Counseling and Mental Health Service
 P: 617-627-3360
Marilyn.Downs@tufts.edu
- **Project Co-Directors:**
 Julie Ross, Ph.D
 Director, Counseling and Mental Health Service
 P: 617-627-3360
J.Ross@tufts.edu
- **Evaluator:**
 Dawn Geronimo Terkla, Ed.D
 Associate Provost, Institutional Research and Evaluation
 P: 617-627-3274
Dawn.Terkla@tufts.edu
- Ian Wong, MSPH
 Director, Alcohol and Health Education
 P: 617-627-5495
Ian.Wong@tufts.edu
- **Project Coordinator:**
 Bonnie Lipton, MPH
 Alcohol and Health Education
 P: 617-627-5140
Bonnie.Lipton@tufts.edu



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Tufts Community Cares



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Program Details



- What do you want to learn more about?
- What questions do you have for the group?



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Qualitative Analysis



What is qualitative analysis?

- Not to get answers to questions, test hypotheses, or evaluate...
- but to “understand...the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience”

(Seidman I. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, 2006, 3rd Edition).



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Qualitative Analysis



Why hold a focus group?

Ask Yourself:

- What do you want to learn from your focus group?
- What do you hope to accomplish from the focus groups?
- What are the key cultural mental health issues on your campus?
- What data do you already have?



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Cultural Sensitivity



- Different populations have varied attitudes towards mental health services
- The diversity within each cultural groups is often overlooked
- Need to be aware of cultural influences that affect utilization of mental health services
- Focus groups are a great way to learn this information!



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Tufts Student Focus Groups



- Our objective: help create culturally sensitive and relevant mental health programming
- Themes Explored:**
- Knowledge and perceptions regarding student mental health problems on campus;
 - Attitudes and beliefs about informal help-seeking;
 - Attitudes and beliefs about mental health/counseling services;
 - Attitudes and behaviors about helping peers; and
 - Ideas about enhancing help-seeking for mental health problems.



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Tufts Focus Groups Continued



Demographic Summary

Group	Date	# Participants
Latino Students	March 11th, 2009	7
Africana Students	March 12th, 2009	10
LGBTQ Students	March 24th, 2009	6
Asian American Students	March 30th, 2009	10
Female Students	April 1st, 2009	11
International Students	April 2nd, 2009	9
Total		53

<u>Gender:</u>	Female	Male	Transgender	Other
	68%	32%	0%	0%

<u>Class Year:</u>	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate
1st Year	32%	13%	21%	2%



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Review Data



- What data do you already have? (qualitative and quantitative)
- What would you like to find out?
 - (Example: Tufts Healthy Minds survey from 2007 showed that Asian, Latino, and international students are less likely to utilize counseling services. Why?)
- Are there populations on your campus that you need to learn more about?



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Build Relationships



Connect with members of your campus community for their insights on the different populations on your campus.

Examples:

- Directors of Culture Centers
- Dean of Students
- Academic Advisors
- Institutional Research (IRB)
- Residence Life
- Athletics Director
- Students/Student Groups



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Culturally Sensitive Focus Group Questions



- Ask students and cultural center staff to review questions
 - Make sure they are clear, not condescending, and respectful of students' cultural/ethnic identities.



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Student Recruitment



- Know how students advertise events
 - If most events are advertised on the school website, use that!
- Use multiple advertising methods!
 - Website, flyer, Email Listservs
- Work with campus cultural groups staff
 - Help you recruit
 - Ask them to look over ads to make sure culturally sensitive



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Know Your Limitations



- Focus group moderator
- Focus group Length
- Number of focus groups conducted
- Time needed for organizing/set-up



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Process Evaluation: What Tufts Did



- Collected anonymous demographic information at focus group
 - Race, ethnicity, international status, school year
 - Section for comments
- Sent follow-up survey using Survey Monkey
 - Asked about focus group process: did students feel respected, did questions make sense, did they like moderator, etc.
 - Section for comments



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Tufts Evaluation: Focus Group Process Feedback



Focus Group Feedback:

- 89% felt the questions were respectful of their culture and identity.
- 97% felt the moderator listened to what they were saying.
- 92% felt comfortable speaking about mental health topics in front of other people.



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Tufts Evaluation: Focus Group Process Feedback



As a result of these discussions:

- 70% agreed that they are more likely to refer a friend to counseling if they felt s/he needed to talk to someone.
- 62% agreed that they are more likely to go to counseling if they needed to talk to someone.

Comments:

- *"This was the first time I talked about mental health issues in a public setting. It was unnerving at first but I became more comfortable after a short while."* (Asian students focus group participant)



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Transcript Analysis: What Tufts Did



- Transcript analysis
 - Developed analysis plan
 - Had 2 people read each transcript
 - Made summary document of findings



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What We've Learned: Focus Groups



- Feelings of not fitting in
 - Either because of race/ethnicity/sexual identity, 1st generation, international status, or just transition from high school to college
- Students most likely to turn to family, then friends when in distress
- Reasons students unlikely to seek help include religion, culture, stigma, pride (feel should be independent), perceived cost, time commitment, don't want to take medication



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Focus Groups: Quotes



On Culture: *just adapting to the different cultures here, the different races here. Because I know I come from a predominantly Hispanic region, so I'm just totally not used to any other culture. So when I come over here, it's just very difficult. And I talk about this to my friends and sometimes we have just -- we just feel like we can't really relate to other races. And just minorities, in general, tend to stick to one another and, you know, Caucasians tend to stick to one another. . . I feel like there's no culture diffusion, in a sense. And that kind of like puts stress -- like just kind of makes it awkward sometimes. (Latino)*

On Being 1st Generation: *[My mother] never finished high school. She doesn't know what it's like to be in school. She doesn't know what it's like to go on to college.,like when I'm talking about schoolwork or something like related to that, she just can't empathize with me, because she's just never been there and she just doesn't know how it is. (Latino)*



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Focus Group: Quotes



On Stereotypes and expectations: *So a lot of times, when people are used to doing well in high school and they come to college and then they're met with the stereotype of being an overachiever -- but sometimes they don't achieve that, in terms of what they expected they would, compared to high school. So sometimes that adds to their stress. . . . stereotypes . . . that Asian-Americans have to be academic overachievers. (Asian-American)*

On Gender roles: *So a lot of women feel like they have to take on the role of -- especially in an extended family, if there's, you know, that mother figure. You know, she might be stressed out because of everything else that's going on in the family but she also feels like she can't allow herself to be vulnerable. (Africana)*



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What We've Learned: Focus Groups



Student Suggestions to Enhance Help-Seeking:

- Make Tufts Counseling more visible in campus life
- Hear more "success stories" about going to counseling
- More information about benefits of counseling
- Work more closely with Cultural Centers
- Talk about mental health at orientation and during 2nd semester (but shouldn't be mandatory)



Our Programs



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- Cultural Centers Programming
 - LGBT Center: awareness campaign and programming for students struggling with coming out
 - Africana Center: Workshop series on taking care of yourself and preventing stressors
 - Latino Center: Formation of support group for first-generation students
 - Asian American Center: Presentations on effect of stereotypes
 - International Center: Programming related to cultural adjustment issues
 - Women's Center: Workshops on disordered eating; sexual assault
- Gatekeeper trainings—incorporate what we learned
- Creation of posters and informational materials



Lessons Learned



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- Took longer than we expected
 - Took time to build/expand on community relationships
- Know your own preconceptions
- Groups not included in focus groups may feel excluded/get upset
- Talk to your IRB before you submit your protocol!
- Don't underestimate students
- Don't over-think it



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Discussion



- Worksheet
- Questions

