## Notetaker template for story analysis by focus group

*Access full guide and tools at* [*communitystoriesguide.org*](http://www.communitystoriesguide.org/)

Instructions: Customize the note-taker template below to fit your project requirements and ensure it reflects the final flow of the facilitator guide.

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of Note Taker:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |
| **Focus Group Discussion Name:** |  |

*Instructions:* Provide brief summarized comments to each prompt below, which follows the flow of the facilitator guide. Do not record personally identifiable information or attribute specific quotes to specific people. Focus on how the discussion evolves from topic to topic and question to question.

### Welcome and introductions

Welcome to this focus group discussion about stories of the [health topic] collected as part of a community storytelling project in [community of focus]. I’m [facilitator name], and I will be your facilitator today. [note taker name] and [note taker name] will be your notetakers. They will be taking notes as we talk today and we will record this session for their reference.

We’re glad you’re here! You all have agreed to join as participants in this focus group discussion and we have received your consent form for participation. If you do not agree to participate, you may disconnect now, or may leave at any time. We will be spending approximately two hours together here in this room, analyzing the stories about [health topic] in [community of focus] that have been submitted and hearing your thoughts on what stories best represent the sum of experiences of this community. Before we dive into housekeeping and discussing the stories you have received, let us do a round of introductions. Please provide your name, where you’re from, and a fun fact about yourself.

Welcome! You are all here because you are from the [community of focus where health topic is being investigated] and you are best placed to discuss and analyze the stories of people like you who may have had similar experiences on [health topic]. Let’s jump in.

### Housekeeping and rules of engagement

For some technical housekeeping, keep the following in mind (Time estimate: 5 min):

* You’re welcome to turn on your camera if you feel comfortable
* Some of us may be in places with poor bandwidth, so if the call drops, feel free to reconnect. You can also turn off video or call in as well.
* We will be using this video conferencing room for discussions but also using a digital whiteboard to help organize our thoughts. If you are on your phone now, you may want to use a second screen like a tablet or laptop, if you’d like to join in the whiteboard use. Otherwise, I’m happy to add things to the whiteboard at your instruction
* Please use the chat feature if you’re experiencing audio or technical issues. Please try and keep the discussion verbal instead of written because it is difficult otherwise for the notetakers to take everything down when it is said.
* We have participants joining us from all over, and not everyone’s first language may be English, so try and speak slowly and clearly, as this will also help the notetakers.
* Please avoid interrupting others. You can use the hand raise feature if you’d like to be called on.
* There are no right or wrong answers here, so we welcome your questions, your opinions and your frank comments. We only ask that we are respectful of one another and respectful of the stories and the people they represent.

Any questions before we begin?

### Overview of story discussion and analysis

*(Time estimate: 10 min)*

Today, we will be reading the stories on [health topic] from [community of focus]. We had shared some background materials with you previous to this focus group, but to summarize, we want to synthesize the experiences of many people through the stories they have submitted by reading and discussing those stories and choosing a small number of stories of impact that best represent the experiences of everyone in this community.

[Provide more detail about the project, the community of focus].

Every good story features a moment of change, has tension, a problem that is seeking resolution. The stories we will discuss today are those submitted to [organization] as part of a storytelling project. They were originally submitted in [languages] and in sum total, can be used to identify some of the challenges that people have faced related to finding information and discussing [health topic] in [community of focus]. Together, we can analyze them to understand what common themes there are, and from those themes, what recommendations would you make on how to address challenges so that we can help make the health system and/or community work better to address people’s information needs.

The way today’s discussion will work is that all of you have received a small number of stories to read for homework. Each of them has a descriptive title. Remember what that title is, because we will use story titles to organize our thoughts on the virtual whiteboard later on.

### Reading and relating to the stories

*(Time estimate: 30 min)*

We will start by going around the room and each person describing the stories they have read. Consider and share some of the following:

* Who is telling the story? How did the information environment affect them?
* What is the problem or challenge?
* How did the storyteller address the challenge?
* How did the storyteller feel?
* Does this story resonate with you or is similar to other stories you have heard today?

Now, let’s start drawing connections between the stories you have all shared. (Time estimate: 20 min) Let’s go to the whiteboard and start organizing our thoughts. As we talk, I will create sticky notes with themes and topics you mention.

* What were some common types of stories you heard?
* Where there any common challenges? Were there any common solutions?
* Did any of the storytellers mention similar difficulties or enablers in overcoming the challenge?
* Are there any words or themes that stood out to you?
* Are there any stories that are outliers? That represent a perspective that we haven’t heard much of today?
* Are there any perspectives or stories you expected but may be missing? What are they?

### Connecting stories to themes

*(Time estimate: 15 min)*

Each of you have a section labeled with your name where you will find a sticky note with every story title and story linked to it for all your assigned stories. Now, you can move your assigned story stickies around as we discuss them. We can add tags if we want as well, but first, let’s see if we can map every story to a topic or theme.

### Whittling down stories to top 2-3 stories

*(Time estimate: 30 min)*

Now comes the harder part. We have to whittle down these stories to only 2-3 stories that best represent the experiences of this community–positive and negative (Time estimate: 30 min). These stories should showcase the diversity of challenges and solutions and the types of experiences people have with the information environment and our [health topic]. As a group, how would you like to go about choosing your top 2-3?

(Facilitator to prompt if they can’t decide) If you’re stuck, here are a few techniques:

* Start with the label that has the most stickies and choose one and go from there
* Go around the room and ask for everyone to nominate a story and explain why
* Consider a more demographic perspective and choose stories that represent different geographies, institutions, or challenges

### Explaining top 2-3 stories were chosen

*(Time estimate: 10 min)*

Now that you have chosen your top 2-3 stories, I want you all to explain your choices why you landed on these stories. Why do they best represent the experiences of this community?

### Making recommendations for action

And finally, after having read and analyzed all these stories:

* What recommendations do you have to [organization] and others working in health on how to improve the information environment for [community of focus] and address their information needs?
* What tools or strategies are needed to help community members to better navigate their information environment on [health topic]?

### Closing

*(Time estimate: 5 min)*

Thank you for all of your hard work and discussions today. As we had mentioned before, the discussions will be summarized in an upcoming report, as well as the featured stories you chose. Are there any other questions before we close?

Thanks for your participation and have a good day!

### Rapid note taking summary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overall participant interaction – what was the mood and interaction of participants like?** |  |
| **If used: Participant experience of technology (video conferencing, whiteboard) – any challenges?** |  |
| **What were the major themes/topics that were added as labels to the whiteboard?** |  |
| **What were the 2-3 stories of change that were ultimately chosen? List titles** |  |
| **Any other major observations of the FGD?** |  |

Participant List: