

Rockingham County Community Health Assessment Focus Groups

A community's definitions and understanding of health, illness, and services affect health attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Focus groups are an effective means of eliciting those definitions and understandings and identifying members' health care priorities. Focus groups allow participants to collectively articulate opinions and feelings enable observers to understand the attitudes and beliefs that influence behaviors, and gather data about a county's environment and policies that affect health. This process builds support and "buy-in" for community-based projects aimed at improving health and healthcare access (NCCHAP, 2012).

Characteristics of Focus Groups

Table 15.1

Focus Groups	
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants do not know each other
Number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group 6-12 (8-10 ideal) Minimum of 6 people (smaller group is a conversation) 10 different groups (minimum)
Recruitment of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully recruited groups of people who have something in common and are brought together for the purpose of the focus group
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7-10 with the same ones repeated at each session
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can recruit subjects based on their demographics Can bring participants together based on their interest in talking about a health topic
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to get good participation Tough to schedule Low level of trust may hamper participation

Source: NCCHAP, 2012

Between March 2011 and September 2011, the Rockingham County Department of Public Health, Rockingham County Healthy Carolinians, and community members conducted 12 focus groups throughout the county.

Trained facilitators conducted the focus groups with existing community members or convened groups that could provide insight regarding the target populations. A moderator guided the group by asking a set of standard protocol questions (Appendix L). Spanish interpreters were also available for non-English speaking participants.



Participant responses were typed, written, and recorded with permission. Transcripts of the responses were analyzed for common responses. The information gathered during the focus groups was used, along with results from the Community Health Household Opinion Survey and the secondary data to guide stakeholders in setting community priorities for the 2012

Community Health Assessment. Listed below are focus group participants representing specific target populations.

- African American Men and Women
- Faith Community (Area Pastors)
- High School Students
- Hispanic/Latino Men
- Hispanic/Latino Women
- Incarcerated Men and Women
- Recipients of Mental Health Services
- Rockingham County Homeless
- Rockingham County Unemployed
- Rockingham County Veterans
- Teen and Single Parents
- Victims of Domestic Violence

Tables 15.2 – 15.13 provide a synopsis of common responses (per question and focus group) given during each focus group session. Responses are the exact words used by the participants. Bolded responses are the common or repeated responses used throughout the sessions.

Table 15.2

1. What do you like most about living in Rockingham County?	
African American Men and Women	Quiet, Calm, peaceful community and neighborhood, Low key, Easy access to bigger locations, Beautiful county
Faith Community (Area Pastors)	Beauty of the rural area, Closer sense of community , Easier
High School Students	Calm , Close to Greensboro
Hispanic Men	Peaceful and quiet , Services for schools and community
Hispanic Women	Calm , Services for single moms, Love living here
Homeless Community	Close together, Love it here , Convenient
Incarcerated Men and Women	I grew up here, Beautiful scenery, Routine, Convenient
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Laid back lifestyle, Born and raised here, lived here all my life and still have places to go
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Quiet , Cost of living
Unemployed Community	Not a Common Wealth State, It's OK, Don't like it
Veteran Community	Trust the people, Climate, Slower pace, Little metropolitan areas
Victims of Domestic Violence	It's my home , Good collaborations, Friendliness, Can get services here

Table 15.3

2. What concerns you most about living here?	
African American Men and Women	No jobs , Limited opportunity, Lack of people taking their health seriously, Chronic disease, Access to health care
Faith Community	Desire not to progress, With change, a lot of dissatisfaction, Lot of depression, Cheaper to eat poorly than healthy, Racial exclusion
High School Students	Lots of racism, Divided communities
Hispanic Men	County is well, No concerns
Hispanic Women	Unable to get NC driver's license or ID (transportation), Lack of health insurance (access)
Homeless Community	No textile work=No jobs , Town/Services are distant, Gang banging
Incarcerated Men and Women	More activities for young people, Insufficient transportation
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Ambulance service, Economy, Job loss/Opportunity, Lack of health programs
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Jobs, Violence, Public transportation, Quality of education
Unemployed Community	Jobs, Violence, Economy
Veteran Community	Unemployment, Educational System/Miss-Education
Victims of Domestic Violence	Politics, Job market, Resources for youth

Table 15.4

3. What do you and others do to stay healthy?	
African American Men and Women	Go to the YMCA, Eat healthy, Exercise , Become educated about how to prepare foods, Go to the doctor, routinely
Faith Community	Walk , Joined the Army/High Regimen, Annual physicals, Exercise
High School Student	Use hand sanitizer, Wash my hands, Eat healthy, Go to the gym, Go to the doctor, Take my medicine , Don't watch a lot of TV
Hispanic Men	Eat healthy, Physical checkup-twice a year
Hispanic Women	Walk/Exercise , Only eat out twice a week, Children's immunizations are up to date, Use less oils and stay away from fried foods
Homeless Community	Work, Walk, Try to eat healthy, Take meds like I suppose to
Incarcerated Men and Women	Exercise, Hard work, Eat healthy , Smoke –free environment, Routine physicals, Safe sex
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Keep clear thoughts, Walk, Stay on medication, Exercise and plenty of rest, Eat right , Stay away from stress and stressful situations
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Walk , Drink plenty water, Weight Watchers, Take vitamins, Exercise, Eat fruits and vegetables
Unemployed Community	Eat/Drink right, Exercise, Walk , Good night's sleep
Veteran Community	Exercise, Work-out , Use VA services, Participate in nutrition classes
Victims of Domestic Violence	Dancing, Eat nutritious lunches, Go to the YMCA, Yearly physicals , and Preventive Health, Work

Table 15.5

4. What health problems have you and your family had to deal with?	
African American Men and Women	Cancer, High blood pressure, Diabetes, Obesity
Faith Community	Cancer, Cholesterol, Hearing Impairment
High School Student	Allergies, Cancer, Diabetes , Accidents, Back surgery, Fluid in the lungs, Lactose intolerance
Hispanic Men	Colds/Flu, Asthma
Hispanic Women	Diabetes, High blood pressure , Low Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Obesity
Homeless Community	High blood pressure, Diabetes, Cholesterol
Incarcerated Men and Women	Heart disease, Cancer , Acid reflux, High blood pressure , Anemia, Anxiety/depression, Pain
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Lack of insurance, Diabetes, High Blood Pressure , Liver problems, Asthma , Mental Health, Cancer, Heart disease , Dental problems, Brain tumors
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Diabetes, High blood pressure, Asthma, Cancer, Heart disease , Fevers/viruses, Bronchitis
Unemployed Community	Diabetes, High blood pressure, Cholesterol, Cancer , Stroke, Alzheimer's, Heart disease
Veteran Community	High blood pressure, Diabetes, Cholesterol , Smoking, Hearing loss, Eyesight, Cancer
Victims of Domestic Violence	Pollution, Asthma/allergies, Access to health care, Diabetes, High blood pressure

Table 15.6

5. What are the strengths of the health services available in Rockingham County?	
African American Men and Women	Free Clinic, Two hospitals , Council on Aging, Flu shots, Health Department, EMS/Fire Department
Faith Community	Access to clergy, Two hospitals, Free Clinic, Health Department , Leadership (Annie Penn)
High School Student	Close location, Lots of providers, Friendly providers who care , School nurse and Student Health Centers
Hispanic Men	OK, Satisfied with all services
Hispanic Women	Family Planning at Health Department , Medicaid, Discounted or free prescriptions at the Health Department
Homeless Community	Meds. at reasonable prices, Daymark Services
Incarcerated Men and Women	They're pretty good, Good, quality healthcare , Clean facilities, Decent medications, Friendly staff
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Health Department, Free Clinic , Social Services, Transportation, Goodwill, Hospitals do a good job
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Free Clinic, Free medication, Pediatric doctors are good , Youth Haven, Faith in Families
Unemployed Community	Free Clinic , Food Stamps, Lord's Pantry, Mental health services
Veteran Community	Two hospitals, EMS, Pediatric services are good, local family doctors who care
Victims of Domestic Violence	Nothing, Excellent nurses and dentists at the Health Department , Hospice, Pace Program, Child Services at the Health Department

Table 15.7

6. What do you think are some changes in healthcare that need to be made in Rockingham County?	
African American Men and Women	Not enough specialists , Need more rec. departments or YMCAs, Address sensitive issues, Long ER waiting time
Faith Community	Education has a capital with several layers, Increase awareness, Transportation , People don't know how to prepare fresh foods
High School Student	Hospitals can improve, Long wait at the hospital, Prices outrageous , Pharmacists not friendly and give wrong orders
Hispanic Men	OK, Long hospital wait , but OK because it's public service, No pharmacy in Prospect Hill
Hispanic Women	No insurance-No service , Open 2 nd Health Department in western part of county, More culturally diverse staff with better people skills, Friendlier translators
Homeless Community	Should not have to visit a doctor just because you need refill of medication, Improve hospital reputations, Have to pay for public health when you are homeless
Incarcerated Men and Women	If a person works all his life and retires, the medication should be free, Hire more staff and improve or give more education... re-educate staff
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Stop co-pay, Mental Health needs more counselors, counselors need to have a better attitude
Single Parents (Including Teens)	More jobs or opportunities to get jobs, Friendlier staff, Hire more health care providers , Provide more transportation, Hire more social workers, Hire translators with a good attitude
Unemployed Community	Stop sending hospital bills, Lower prices for medical care, Stop leaving you waiting at the hospitals
Veteran Community	Less ER time, More specialists , Doctors seeing new patients, Citizens getting same quality of care as illegals, Improve availability to preventive resources , Healthcare staff better understanding insurance different/new insurance policies
Victims of Domestic Violence	Daymark is doing the best they can, but need more mental health services, Stop letting Greensboro take over, More doctors -too busy...I want to see my doctor, not the PA, Service should not depend on insurance

Table 15.8

7. What are some health services people need that are currently not being offered?	
African American Men and Women	More screenings, More doctors, Affordable healthcare
Faith Community	Dentist, Transportation, Child delivery in the county , Publication of list of resources, Adequate shelter
High School Student	Specialized services
Hispanic Men	Dentist, Pregnant women have to go to Greensboro
Hispanic Women	Dentist, eye doctor, foot doctor, lower rates where doctors are affordable
Homeless Community	Dentist
Incarcerated Men and Women	Free eye and dental care, Give out needles for the IV users, More condoms, More specialists , More options to choose doctor
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Emergency health care workers, Increase the ACTT program, Improve Vocational Rehab
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Transportation , Help with getting Medicaid, Assistance for diabetic people, Additional/improved mental health services , Increase and improve case management services, Dental services
Unemployed Community	Better assessment tools for diagnosing mental illness , More child care services at reasonable prices so that people can work
Veteran Community	Specialists (Cardiologist; Ear, Nose and Throat; Vascular surgeon; Cardiovascular surgeon; Pediatric specialist), Treatment for strokes here in the county instead of rushing them to Cone
Victims of Domestic Violence	Transportation to doctors outside of the county, More services for the deaf and hearing impaired, More mental health services

Table 15.9

8. What do you see as the major health-related problems in Rockingham County?	
African American Men and Women	Smoking, Eating the wrong foods, Drinking, Drugs, sedentary lifestyle, People not going to the doctor, Lack of accountability
Faith Community	Smoking, Poor diet and lack of exercise, Food and nutrition , Child development (parents not understanding the real importance of bonding with their child early on)
High School Student	Eating too much , Lack of healthy restaurants, Smoking and dipping , Depression, Lack of exercise , Eating late at night (because of homework), No healthy drink options at school
Hispanic Men	Cold/Flu, Pollen/Allergies
Hispanic Women	Smoking, Soda, Alcohol abuse
Homeless Community	Drugs, Alcohol, Lack of exercise, Junk food, Greasy food, Smoking
Incarcerated Men and Women	Smoking, Drinking, Drugs (street and Rx) , Job hazards, Not being clean
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Drugs, Alcohol, Unhealthy eating, Economy (people can't afford healthy foods)
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Attitude, Stress, No jobs
Unemployed Community	Cigarettes, Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs (Rx)
Veteran Community	Not enough doctors, Stress from lack of employment, Nutrition, Smoking, Low paying jobs , Education
Victims of Domestic Violence	Not exercising, Smoking, Drugs, Alcohol , Taking PE out of the schools

Table 15.10

9. Do you think the economy/job opportunities affect health and wellness? ^(a) If so, how can it be improved? ^(b)	
African American Men and Women	(a) Yes, (b) Better prepare younger people for jobs, Become better educated, Provide programs to help felons get back into workforce , Provide jobs with benefits, Take time out for the youth , Keep teaching and praying, Learn more about the healthcare legislature
Faith Community	(a) Yes, (b) No improvement until more jobs are available, This squarely belongs to our national leaders, Change imposed policies, laws and limitations , Middle class must get stronger, Start making/creating something. RCC is a great resource, Become more innovative... our economy nor culture appreciates that, Lessen regulations imposed on new businesses, Change attitudes
High School Student	(a) Yes, (b) Lower cost of healthcare, Hard for teenagers to find a job because in this economy the adults have to take jobs that used to be for young people ,
Hispanic Men	(a) Yes, (b) More work, Bring factories back, Better employment opportunities
Hispanic Women	(a) Yes, (b) More work-less stress , Government should allow undocumented people a chance to work and pay taxes, Bring jobs back from other countries
Homeless Community	(a) Yes, (b) That's a loaded question, who's going to improve it?, More jobs-less stress
Incarcerated Men and Women	(a) Yes, (b) More jobs-less stress, Bring more factories, industries or give people a chance to grow, Create more opportunities for felons , Provide grants for new businesses, More education, training and job assistance after training , Provide classes for people while they are incarcerated
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	(a) Yes, (b) Create more jobs, More training services for specific jobs , A bigger clinic where they can offer more services, More jobs-less violence and stress
Single Parents (Including Teens)	(a) Yes, (b) Increase opportunities for more jobs , Provide transportation so you can get to those opportunities and resources
Unemployed Community	(a) Yes, (b) More job opportunities , Stop cutting unemployment checks, Provide insurance prices that you can afford to miss out coming out of your check
Veteran Community	(a) Yes, (b) Provide more jobs in the county, so people would not have to commute, Improved economy = many people can buy their medication, Improve the dropout rate, Attitude , Provide opportunities for kids to be constructive (even if there are no jobs)..., Change the mindsets, Now you're seeing senior citizens working in the fast food restaurants where it used to be mostly kids
Victims of Domestic Violence	(a) Yes, (b) Change of attitude or lazy mentality, Bring textiles back, Keep graduates from leaving the county to work somewhere else

Table 15.11

10. How do different races or ethnic groups get along?	
African American Men and Women	Not too good, Racism is alive and well , Affluent African Americans tend to turn a blind-eye, I get along good...my best friend is White and a Republican, Four different racial issues...Eden, Reidsville, western part and county as a whole , People who are neighbors or live closely in the same neighborhood will not speak if out in public at a restaurant or something, If you didn't know racism existed before, you knew after that statue was hit
Faith Community	We're in different pockets or isolated , Some have attitudes that <i>'it's good as long as you stay in your lane'</i> , See more boundary crossing in the faith community , Part of it is human nature... people will congregate with those they feel are like them , We are making progress, Faith community doing a great job but needs to do more
High School Student	A lot of racism at this school -White people, Black people...everybody is racist to everybody, At lunch, Blacks sit with Blacks, Whites sit with Whites, Hispanic, etc., It's just who we hang out with...not on purpose , There is a lot of conscious racism though, There are social racism or classism, too...the rednecks don't like the preppy kids, the preppy kids don't like the hippie kids and the emo kids don't like anybody, Crescent and Courtland Park are pretty mixed, but even there you still notice a separation, My parents are interracial and there are race issues within families
Hispanic Men	No problems with race or ethnic group , Black, White and American friends, You respect others, they will respect you and that's what I teach my kids
Hispanic Women	Good , It's not the race or ethnicity, it's the person
Homeless Community	No problem with racism or ethnic groups , just certain other groups, ex: drug dealers, Classism is a problem
Incarcerated Men and Women	They get along pretty decent , It depends on which part of county you live in, People place themselves on certain levels (like classes) and stereotype
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Don't care if you are pink as long as you have respect for others , There is still a lot of racism in this county
Single Parents (Including Teens)	We don't get along because we don't speak , I get along with everybody
Unemployed Community	Seems fine to me , I get along with everybody, Depends on how you were raised
Veteran Community	Fair , It depends on where you live, It's generational , I have White kids come join my 4-H club because the other kids invite them and you can really see them getting along
Victims of Domestic Violence	I think they get along great , We pull together like any other groups, Blacks and Whites get along , I think Hispanics are the problem

Table 15.12

11. What community organizations are active in Rockingham County?	
African American Men and Women	Council on Aging , Fire Department, Meals on Wheels , Western Rockingham Junior Service League , Eastern Stars, Women of Achievement, Cooperative Extension , Boys and Girls Club , YMCA , Boys and Girl Scout , NAACP , 4-H , Healthy Carolinians
Faith Community	Ministerial Association, Goodwill Education Center , Annie Penn, Reidsville Area Foundation, Kiwanis Club , YMCA , United Ministers of Reidsville and Vicinity, Market Square, United Way, Reidsville Outreach Center, Salvation Army , Reidsville Soup Kitchen, REMMSCO, Help, Inc. , Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center, DSS, Dan Valley Association
High School Student	Reidsville Junior Service League , Church groups , Kiwanis Club , High School groups, Fellow Christian Athletes , Art programs
Hispanic Men	Churches and schools,
Hispanic Women	Churches (Trinity Wesleyan Church), Lord's Pantry, Angel Food Ministries
Homeless Community	Churches , Salvation Army , Lord's Pantry , YMCA , Red Cross
Incarcerated Men and Women	Food Bank , Red Cross , Churches (Victory Baptist Church), Reidsville Outreach Center
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	YMCA , Community Center, Women's Resources, Goodwill Resource Center , Mental Health, AA and NA
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Teen Parent Education, Head Start, Faith in Families , Youth Haven, Young Moms Connect
Unemployed Community	4-H , Future Farmers of America, Big Brother/Sisters
Veteran Community	4-H , Boy Scouts , Veterans' Associations (Rockingham County Veterans' Coalition , Disabled American Veterans), Help, Inc. , Red Cross , Help for the Homeless , Salvation Army , Goodwill , Lillian H. McLaurin Good Neighbors Association, YMCA , Church (Zion Baptist)
Victims of Domestic Violence	Help, Inc. , Caregivers , Healthy Carolinians , Help for the Homeless , Daymark, DSS, Faith in Families , Pace, ADTS,

Table 15.13

12. What groups are you a part of?	
African American Men and Women	Lillian H. McLaurin Good Neighbor's Association, Salvation Army , Young Democratic Party, African American Caucus, Goodwill , Joblink, Omega Psi Phi, Masons, Churches , 4-H
Faith Community	Churches , Athletic Boosters, Ministerial Alliances, Mission of Mercy, Help for the Homeless , Community Baptist School, REMMSCO, Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center, YMCA , Recreation Centers, Boy Scouts , Fellowship of Christian Athletes , Kiwanis Club , United Ministers of Reidsville and Vicinity
High School Student	High School Band, Robotics Key Club, Academic Challenge Competition, Churches (Holy Infant Catholic Church, Beulah Baptist), A Team Dance, HOSA, SGA, DECA, Youth groups, Theater group
Hispanic Men	Church
Hispanic Women	Churches (Greensboro Our Lady of Grace, Church of God Emmanuel, Trinity Wesleyan Church)
Homeless Community	Church (United Christ in Ministries)
Incarcerated Men and Women	Church , Red Cross , Disabled Veterans of America, Urban Ministries, Meals on Wheels,
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Substance Abuse Intensive Outreach Program, Mental Health, Churches (Lawsonville Baptist Church, Pleasant View Baptist), AA
Single Parents (Including Teens)	Teen Parent Education, Toys for Tots, Young Moms Connect , Churches (Arc of Salvation, Bailey Town Christian Church)
Unemployed Community	4-H , AA , Salvation Army , DaVita Dialysis, Hospice, Church (Sunny Home Baptist Church)
Veteran Community	4-H , Cooperative Extension , Healthy Carolinians , Veterans' Associations (Rockingham County Veterans' Coalition, Disabled American Veterans)
Victims of Domestic Violence	Help, Inc. , Help for the Homeless , Nutrition Centers, Recreation Centers, Senior Games, Grief Share, Cooperative Extension , Caregivers , Multiple Disciplinary Elder Abuse Committee

Table 15.14 includes a list of the 12 questions and an aggregate overall response from the 12 participating focus groups.

Table 15.14

Focus Group Questions	Most Common Responses
1. What do you like most about living in Rockingham County?	Beautiful, Quiet, Peaceful, Born here/lived here all my life/it's my home, Can get service
2. What concerns you most about living here?	Unemployment/Lack of jobs/Job market-in general, Health (Access to and State of), Transportation, Racism, Resources for youth/Education
3. What do you and others do to stay healthy?	Eat right & Exercise, Annual physicals/check-ups or go to the doctor, Take medication/vitamins, Work, Become educated about how to prepare foods/participate in nutrition classes
4. What health problems have you and your family had to deal with?	High blood pressure, Diabetes, Cancer, Cholesterol, Heart Disease
5. What are the strengths of the health services available in Rockingham County?	Two hospitals, Health Department, Free Clinic, Friendly providers and staff, Free or reasonably priced medication, EMS/Transportation
6. What do you think are some changes in healthcare that need to be made in Rockingham County?	Decrease ER waiting time, Access to healthcare, More specialists and staff, Friendlier staff and translators, More pharmacy services
7. What are some health services people need that are currently not being offered?	Dental care, Additional/Improved mental health services, Transportation to doctor's appointments, More eye doctors, More child delivery options
8. What do you see as the major health-related problems in Rockingham County?	Poor diet, Smoking or dipping, Alcohol Abuse, Not exercising, Prescription and Street Drug Abuse
9. Do you think the economy/job opportunities affect health and wellness? If so, how can it be improved?	(a) Yes (b) More jobs (improve job opportunities), More programs to assist felons with re-entering the workforce, Better attitudes, Lower cost of health services, Policy changes/improvement
10. How do different races or ethnic groups get along?	Don't get along well/Lot of racism, Very territorial, More classism than racism, Races get along well, Generational
11. What community organizations are active in Rockingham County?	Churches, YMCA, Goodwill, Help, Inc., 4-H
12. What groups are you a part of?	Churches, 4-H, AA/Substance Abuse groups, Cooperative Extension, Salvation Army

References:

North Carolina Community Health Assessment Process. (NCCHAP.)(2012).
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Secondary Data.* Retrieved May 2012 from www.healthycarolinians.org.