

Step 4

What do focus group prompts (questions) look like?

These are focus group prompts that a TjC team in Newark, New Jersey developed.

This can help your class in at least two possible ways:

- 1) *Design*. When thinking about what method is best to answer your question it is often helpful to see what the method looks like in action *before* making a design decision.
 - Your students might ask: Why did these students choose to use a focus group? What would be the biggest *disadvantage* of using this method for our question?
- 2) *Tools*. When creating research tools, it is often helpful to see examples that other high school students have developed.
 - Your students might identify parts of this focus group strategy that surprised them. Discuss conversations they have had in their lives that remind them of this conversation. Ask themselves what makes a good and/or bad focus group prompt?

Research question: *How does community and family impact young people in Newark and what can be done to improve these relationships?*

Notes to Interviewers:

- If you hear something that surprises you, you might say, “Will you tell me more about that?”
- You might have to give a personal an example: “My views about God are shaped by my family; but my views about fashion are shaped by community.”

Focus Group Prompts

Welcome:

Welcome everyone. Feel free to contribute as much or as little as you feel comfortable with, but we do hope that each of you will speak up. We very much want to know what you honestly think, believe or feel. So, there are no right, wrong or best answers. Please respect others in the group, as this is a discussion, not a debate. Remember that although we will be audio recording this session, we will not be publishing any information that identifies you individually.

To the participants: “We want you to think about your families as you are answering the first set of questions”:

Prompt 1: facilitator: “We all know that the old/traditional view of family (Dad, Mom, kids) has changed in America and in Newark. There are more single heads of households and household with grandparents, aunts, uncles and LGBT parents. I come from a household with . . . What about yours?”

Prompt 2: Facilitator: “I feel my family’s influence most in terms of religion, what about you guys where do you feel your family’s interest most? Least?”

Prompt 3: What part of you is shaped by family; what part of you is shaped by community?

Prompt 4: What are your educational goals?

Prompt 5: What has been most important in motivating you to pursue these goals: community, family, role models, other?

Prompt 6: From your perspective as a young person, we want to ask a few questions about the families in Newark that you know. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Families in Newark exert a positive influence on their children.”

Prompt 7: What do you think are the biggest challenges facing families in Newark?

Prompt 8: Imagine you have been asked by the Mayor Baraka to help him strengthen families in the city, what specifically would you urge him to do?

Closing to participants:

We want to thank you for participating in this focus group. We care about our families and our community and we believe that it is important that leaders, administrators and educators in Newark hear our voices. We are glad that the RU Ready to Work program is giving us the opportunity to make this possible. We will also share our final report with you. Do you have any questions or comments?

If there are address them and then “Thanks again”

If not, “Thanks again”