

HENRY COUNTY FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Groups



Purpose

A focus group is a qualitative tool that brings together a small group of people to answer questions in a moderated setting. The group is chosen due to predefined demographic traits, and the questions are designed to shed light on a topic of interest. Observations of the group's dynamic, their answers to focus group questions, and even their body language can guide future research on consumer decisions, products and services, or controversial topics.

Focus groups are often used in marketing, library science, social science, and user research disciplines. They can provide more nuanced and natural feedback than individual interviews and are easier to organize than experiments or large-scale surveys.

Methodology

Henry County Health Partners developed a 10-question focus group survey for Henry County residents. In an effort to gather information from various populations within Henry County, focus group survey questions were asked of the following groups:

- Hispanic
- Mothers of young children
- Henry County Township residents

A total of 48 Henry County residents participated in the focus group survey. Some surveys were asked in a focus group setting of 2-8 people. In all cases, the same 10 questions were asked, and answers were recorded. All focus groups were conducted in 2022.

Data Limitations

While efforts were made for focus group survey respondents to generally reflect Henry County residents, it is important to note that the sample is not a representative sample.

Key Findings

Focus Group/Individual Interview Demographic Information

Demographic Information	n	%
Gender		
Men	15	25%
Women	33	75%
Don't know	0	0
Refused	0	0
Sexual Identity		
Gay	0	0
Straight, not gay	44	92%
Bisexual	1	2%
Something else	0	0
Refused	3	6%
Race		
White	45	94%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	0	0
Black or African American	0	0
Native Hawaiian	0	0
Other	3	6%
No answer	0	0
Of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin?		
Yes	30	
No	18	
Marital Status		
Married	32	67%
Divorced	3	6%
Widowed	5	10%
Separated	1	2%
Never married	5	10%
No answer	2	4%
Educational Attainment		
Less than H.S.	14	29%
H.S./GED	20	42%
Some college	8	17%
Bachelor's	2	4%
Post-graduate	3	6%
No answer	1	2%
Annual Household Income		
<\$10k	8	17%
\$10k-14,999	1	2%
\$15k-19,999	5	10%
\$20k-24,999	1	2%
\$25k-34,999	9	19%
\$35k-49,999	3	6%
\$50k-74,999	6	12%
\$75k-99,999	3	6%
\$100k-149,999	6	12%
\$150k+	1	2%
Don't know	0	0
No answer	5	10%

Note: Category percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

The following findings represent an overview of major themes derived from the focus groups and individual interviews. The common themes – *the central topics or recurring ideas that emanated consistently during community engagement* – are bulleted below and are arranged within the focus group question set, with examples underneath. They are not, however, the only conclusions or themes that one might extract from the entire process. All focus group and individual interview data are on file at Henry County Health Department.

Note: these broad categories are not mutually exclusive—if a respondent reported “nice community that offers senior support” they are counted as responding in reference to “community” and “resources.”

Tell me about Henry County, what is it like to live here?

- Community 58%
 - Feels safe, friendly, and caring people, good place to raise kids, small towns, church life important
- Environment 25%
 - Fresh air, centrally located, rural farmland, quiet, peaceful
- Equity 10%
 - Language barriers, need English classes

What is it about Henry County that provides a sense of community?

- Connection 43%
 - Neighbors, family, volunteers, working together, helping each other, church, school
- Recreation 18%
 - Events, festivals, parades, Henry County Fair, sports, clubs
- Education 18%
 - School is very active and keeps kids doing things, events, and activities, great education, small
- Inequity 16%
 - Discrimination, fear regarding health care

What brings the community together?

- Serving others 27%
 - Charitable events for those in need, volunteering, donating
- Recreation 24%
 - Festivals, events, activities, parks
- Connection 22%
 - Churches, neighbors, schools

How does living in Henry County impact your health?

- Resources 35%
 - Places to walk, nice parks, Senior Center, Meals on Wheels, Henry County Transportation Network
- Health System 20%
 - No health care offices in outlying townships, great physicians and staff locally
- Environment 18%
 - Clean air, clean water, green space, quiet

What has happened in the past to influence the quality of life and health in Henry County?

- COVID-19 Pandemic 34%
 - Loss of socialization, disagreements on masking and vaccination
- Community 34%

- Local physician offices closed; grocery stores closed
- Environment 16%
 - Cleaner water, concerns for quality of water

What are the biggest threats to the quality of life and health of Henry County?

- Community 57%
 - Language barrier, drugs, unhealthy eating, lack of exercise
- Economics 24%
 - Businesses closing, medical care costs
- Environment 8%
 - Loss of land due to mega livestock farming, solar fields

What concerns do you have that impact the health of everyone in Henry County?

- Substance Misuse 21%
 - Drugs, alcohol, vaping
- Healthcare access 19%
 - Access to mental health services, language barrier, cost
- Environment 16%
 - Sewage systems outside of municipal areas

If you could do one thing to improve health in Henry County, what would it be?

- Access to Health Care 23%
 - Bilingual health services, affordable healthcare, health services in rural communities
- Community Resources 21%
 - Recreational/exercise opportunities for all ages
- Childcare 13%
 - Affordable, 2nd and 3rd shift, licensed

When you think about the people who make a difference in the community, who are they and why?

- Community minded people 41%
 - Volunteers, business owners, service clubs: Lions, Legions, churches, etc. who provide and support events, and programs
- Social Services 27%
 - Provide assistance to those in need, parenting support
- Health care providers 15%
 - Provide emergency services, provide low-cost health care services

If you had the opportunity to help, what would you do?

- Connect with the community 22%
 - Serve others, educate on resources
- Provide activities for children 19%
 - Programs for youth: reading, leadership, exercise
- Support community resources 19%
 - Fire and EMS, Community events and activities

Overview of Emerging Themes

The biggest sentiment expressed from those living in Henry County was the importance of community. There is much

pride felt from everyone regarding how Henry County connects with each other and serves one another. The community was described as friendly, cooperative, and a great place to raise a family. There was concern regarding the loss of this connection because of the COVID 19 pandemic affecting socialization and conflicting viewpoints which caused discord. Most people felt the sense of community was slowly returning through events, school activities, and church fellowship.

When asked to share their concerns regarding health two themes rose to the top: lack of health care access for all and increasing drug and alcohol misuse.

When we asked what they would do to improve health; increased health care access for all, opportunities for community events and exercise rose to the top. The participants were also asked what they would do if they had an opportunity help Henry County and the responses focused on supporting community connections and resources.