

INNOVATION NUTRITION PROGRAM FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Non-meal site participants

Introduction (to be read by moderator)

Before we begin today, I would like for each of us to state our first names only. These will not be recorded.

The general purpose of this focus group is to capture your thoughts about the congregate meal program. This discussion is expected to take about 90 minutes to two hours. Before we begin, there are a few guidelines and ground rules. These will help us hear everyone’s thoughts while allowing us to complete the discussion on time.

- a. Everyone’s participation is valuable and we want you to feel free to say whatever you think.
- b. Please speak one at a time and not in side conversations. It is okay to agree, but it is also okay to disagree.
- c. There are no right or wrong answers. Your best responses are those that are true for you.
- d. Keep in mind that we are just as interested in negative experiences and perspectives as positive ones.
- e. We must all agree to a very strict level of confidentiality to the information presented during this discussion. Some quotes from this discussion may be shared in presentations and publications, but the quotes will not be linked to any specific person.

To make sure we get everyone’s comments, the discussion will be audio -taped and then transcribed at a later time by an independent party who will not know who participated in today’s session.

_____ will also be taking notes. You can refuse to answer or respond to any question, and you can choose to stop participating in the focus group discussion at any time. I will be reading the questions from my notes because we want to ask the same questions to our focus groups. However, where we go with responses to questions is pretty much up to all of you.

What questions do you have?
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There is a lot of experience and wisdom around this table and I hope you’re willing to share some of it with me today. If some of the questions we ask today don’t seem to apply to you, think about a friend or family member who the question may apply to and answer from that perspective.

In the field of aging we often use the term successful aging. By definition successful aging refers to physical, mental and social well-being in older age. Take a moment to think about what successful aging means to you. Describe how aging successfully looks and feels? What do you or others who are age 60 and older need in order to accomplish this (e.g., community resources, support systems, financial)?

Questions intended to understand barriers and motivators to choosing the congregate meal program.

You’re here today because you don’t participate in a congregate meal program. The Heritage Area Agency on Aging and the Iowa Department of Aging want to better understand why. I’d like to hear more about things that get in the way or prevent you and your friends from attending the local congregate meal program?

Innovative nutrition program focus group questions for non-meal site participants

We know there are many restaurants available to go to locally. What could we do to entice you to choose the congregate meal program over other restaurants and/or meal options?

Questions intended to help with menu ideas

If you were given the money and the authority to create the perfect meal program for adults age 60+, what would it look like? Who would come? What events would occur? What would keep people coming back?

Food is very personal, with everyone having different preferences. It is also a cornerstone of the congregate meal program. Let's imagine that cost was no issue and you were asked to create the meal program menu. Describe the foods and/or meal options that would excite you and your friends?

Questions intended to help identify environmental influences and programming preferences

Eating out for many is a part of life. Describe the factors you take into consideration when choosing a restaurant. (*Prompts: food selection, choice of menu items, variety of foods offered, location, ambience*)

Think about a time when you really enjoyed a meal. What about it made it so enjoyable? (*Prompts: people present, type of food served, environment, location*)

Every community offers different types of events. These events could be through local government agencies, Extension, churches, libraries and many others. Think about the community programming, like a class, seminar, concert, art festival, you enjoy attending. Describe how you learn about these programming opportunities. What helps you decide whether to attend?

In addition to the meal, the congregate meal program also provides an opportunity to learn. What topics are you passionate about? What types of programs/learning opportunities would motivate you to attend a congregate meal program? How would these programs look to you?

What final comments or questions do you have?