FIELDWORK DESIGN TEMPLATE
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Community focus groups.

Content of the Activity:

Research Statement (50-100 words): Summarise the fieldwork activity, including information about target groups. This will be used as part of promoting fieldwork. Please draft in appropriate terms.

The That's Me! Project are recruiting Global Majority participants in regional community groups to take part in focus groups for approximately one hour and thirty minutes. The focus groups will focus on participants' thoughts and opinions about university; experiences they or others they know may have had at university. The focus groups will also initiate and facilitate conversations about participants' views about postgraduate studies and doctoral research study.

Contribution to project outputs:

Output	Output description
2	Workshops held to explore barriers – 1 for HE, students, employers and 1 for parents, relatives and communities
3	Report on barriers (stand-alone and interrelated)
4	Set of recommendations for new approaches according to intersectionality

Design:

Facilitation Plan: Describe the planned approach for facilitating the fieldwork, including a structure (e.g., introductions, question themes and prompts, role of the moderator and any physical or virtual prompts or stimuli to be used).

The That's Me! Project aims to assess barriers to postgraduate research study and it is therefore important to identify community groups' preconceptions, beliefs and experiences of/about university and doctoral study. Prior to attending the focus group, the facilitator (EA) will share the Participant Information Sheet, consent forms and demographic information questionnaire (optional) with community group contacts to be shared with participants.

The recruitment criteria are:
  » Adults aged 18+, living locally
  » People of Global Majority heritage

The project will aim to engage with a participant from a mix of genders, educational backgrounds, and household sizes.

Community group members will be identified through the Active Wellbeing Society, a member of the That's Me! Employer Board.

Focus Group Structure
Each focus group will have a similar structure.

Introductions
EA will ask participants if they are happy to be recorded. EA will make note of any names that do not wish to be included in the transcription. EA will begin recording and notify focus group participants. EA will introduce herself to begin to build rapport with participants. Following this, participants will introduce themselves and EA will explain the purpose of the session. EA will introduce the That's Me! Project and the purpose of the focus groups. EA will share and read consent forms for participants to sign and complete short demographic questionnaire (optional).

EA will begin the Focus Group: 'I would like to hear about your true thoughts, feelings and experiences (if any) about university and studying further, after an undergraduate degree. There are no right or wrong answers, and everything discussed here will remain confidential. We value your thoughts and feelings and consider them important."

Facilitation Plan continued:

Initial Thoughts on University

» *Do you have experience of studying at university (yourself /family members such as children or grandchildren)?*
» If so, what was good /bad about that experience? *(getting in, workload, financial pressures, belonging, etc.)*
» If not, do you have any aspirations for university study -for yourself, family members, etc.? *Why /why not?*
» What is the benefit of studying at university to (individual /family /community)?
» Do you think people from your community go to university? If yes, why? If no, why not?
» Do you think that people in universities reflect the community you are from? *If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?*
» Do you know anything about postgraduate level study in universities (Master's, PhD) - do you know anyone who has done that? *(any specific barriers or positive experiences.)*
» To begin the next section, EA will steer the discussion to prompts and project related questions by setting the scene about the differences between postgraduate taught and postgraduate research:

Doctoral research

» Our project is about postgraduate research (doctoral level). Do you know anyone who has done doctoral studies?
» *Any friends or anyone in your community? Any lecturers, staff or role models? What was their experience like?*
» What do you think doctoral students do?
» What sorts of people are doctoral researchers?
» What do you think doing a doctoral study involves – what do doctoral students do?
» What sorts of challenges do you think you'd face (or member of your family) in doing a doctorate?
» Do you think that people from your community or family should aim to study at doctoral level?
» *How do you think you get in to do a doctorate?*
» What sorts of challenges might you [or have you] (or a family member) face in starting a doctoral degree (getting in, etc.)?
» What sorts of careers do you think people do after finishing a doctoral degree?
» Do you think doctoral research brings any benefit to communities like yours? *Why /why not; what sort of research would be of benefit.*
» *Could being a researcher or taking part in research bring benefits to your community or workplaces?*
» What sort of support or information would you like to see about doctorates for your community? *About opportunities/About applying/About studying?*
» How can doctoral research degrees be made more appealing or accessible to you/ people from your community? *What sort of information or support could be available?*

Close

At the end of the focus group, EA will remind participants of their right to withdraw and the last day to do so. EA will thank all participants for their time and involvement and stop the recording. Participant vouchers will be distributed either by EA and/or community group staff.

Delivery Information:

Location: Specify the location(s) where the fieldwork will be conducted, including any details about the venue or facilities.

Focus Groups will be held at community organisation spaces.

Logistical Requirements: [List any logistical requirements for the fieldwork, such as equipment, seating arrangements, refreshments, creative resources etc.]

Communications via main community group contacts.

Delivery team: Identify the members of the research team involved in delivery of the fieldwork, along with their roles and responsibilities.

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Budget: Provide an overview of the budget for the fieldwork, including any expenses related to participant compensation, materials, etc.

Participant vouchers in line with the project's budget protocol.