

Development of EU wide Certified Diabetes Educator Course (EU-CDEC)

(a Leonardo da Vinci TOI Project)

Focus Groups

1. Information explaining Focus Groups

1.1 What is a focus group?

A focus group is a special type of group discussion. The purpose of a focus group is to listen and gather information. It provides a means of understanding how people think and feel about an issue or service. The participants for a focus group are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the purpose of the focus group. The person leading the focus group (moderator) should be a skilled interviewer who is an experienced communicator. S/he creates a permissive and non-threatening environment that encourages participants to share points of view, without pressurising participants to agree with one another or reach a consensus. Ideally, there should be between 6 and 8 participants in a focus group. More than one focus group should be conducted with similar types of participants, in order to identify patterns and trends. Careful and systematic analysis of the focus group discussions will provide insights as to the content of the new EU-CDEC and how this should be developed.

1.2 Whom do I select to participate in a focus group?

The aim of the project is to ascertain the key characteristics that make a good Diabetes Educator (DE). Therefore, a range of health care professionals need to be selected to participate in a focus group, including nurses, doctors, dietitians, psychologists, social workers, etc. In addition, it is important to speak with National and Local Diabetes leads and Academic and Education leads. Finally, children and young people (CYP) who have T1DM, and their families, need to participate in a focus group. Once you have decided who to select to participate in a focus group, invite people to participate. You will need to consider when would be easiest for people to come and where would be the best place to hold the focus group.

In summary, there are four types of focus groups in this project:

- 1. Health care professionals;**
- 2. National/Local Diabetes leads**
- 3. Academic and Education leads**
- 4. CYP and families**

1.3 What happens at the focus group?

For all four types of focus groups, repeat 1 to 4 below.

1. Establish the focus Group 'Rules':

- Explain the purpose of the project and the focus group;
- Set ground rules with the group. Ensure you tell the participants that:
All the issues discussed in the focus group are confidential;
Everyone who participates in the focus group will remain anonymous;
Everyone has a right to speak and others should respect their point of view;
Speak one at a time and listen when someone else is talking;
Anyone can leave at any time.

2. Check with the participants that they are happy for the focus group to be recorded. It is helpful to have a second person to assist with the focus group. This person usually sits to one side of the group and takes written notes. At the end of the focus group, they may need to ask questions to clarify certain points and to verify information.

3. Begin with a 'warm-up' activity:

- Ask the group to introduce themselves, for example, "Tell us all a little about yourself".

4. Begin asking the main questions. These are designed to explore key themes around the main characteristics and skills of a DE. Questions are typically open-ended to elicit as much information as possible.

Thank you for your time and help, it is very much appreciated