

## **Goal of the “Focus Group Activity”**

*One of the principal goals of using qualitative research focus group is the in-depth investigation of specific points of interest that cannot be addressed by quantitative research.*

*Since we have the SBN questionnaire for collecting data on bio-psycho-social aspect of neck pain office employees (a tool recently developed by the Coordinator’s research upon office employees), our basic concern is to specify the office employees’ needs and ideas on current gaps in workspace for coping with neck pain. Thus, we need to enable them to talk about (key-points of investigation):*

- 1. What is the biggest problem with neck pain? And to what extent it affects their daily life?*
- 2. What causes the problem?*
- 3. Ways of dealing with the problem (prevent or cope with neck pain) on site*
- 4. Need for appropriate exercise at workspace in parallel with management of stress on site.*

## **Focus Group Methodology**

*An effective interviewer-fascilitator asks main questions, follow-up questions, probes, and prompts. They dig beyond top-of- mind answers. They expand and get important details.*

*For that reason, we will follow a four-question sequence consisted of four parts.*

- 1. Main question (open-ended)*
- 2. Follow-up questions*
- 3. Probing questions*
- 4. Prompted questions*

### *Here is how it works:*

*You start with a main question and listen for its answer.*

*Then you follow up and inquire about the answer.*

*Then you probe to clarify.*

*And, if necessary, you prompt. A prompt is a cue or aide.*

## ***In our case I suggest the next Discussion Guide:***

### ***1<sup>st</sup> Key problems and extent to which it affects their daily life:***

***The specialists define the Main Question (open-ended)*** (Main question is an open-ended question. It starts a discussion about a subject. This way we can discover unknown topics and explore them. They can produce rich, deep, and unexpected answers.)

- *When you think about neck pain, what is the first thing that comes to mind?” or “What are the biggest problems with neck pain?”*

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Causes of problem and level of significance:**

**The specialists set a follow-up question inquiring about the answer to the main question.**

- *How significant is the problem?*
- *What causes the problem?*

*In general you can use phrases such as*

*"What does that mean?"*

*"How did it happen?" "What causes the problem?"*

*"*

*(The interviewer writes follow-up questions in the interview guide. Or improvise follow-up questions during the discussion).*

**3<sup>rd</sup>: Ways of dealing with the problem at home, at work other (e.g gym, outdoor activities, mental work etc)**

- *What did you do in order to deal with neck pain?"*

**Use a Probing Question for clarifying such as**

- *"Please tell me more."*
- *"Please give me an example."*
- *"Please help me understand."*

Besides probing questions you ask, you can also use silent probes.

- Remain silent.
- Nod your head.
- Use a puzzled facial expression.

**4<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Use a prompt as a cue or aide.** Prompts aid recall by triggering a memory association.

*Prompts help respondents talk about something you are interested in, but they have not talked about voluntarily.*

Important: *In our project prompts are:*

- therapeutic exercise and*
- stress management.*

***This means that we will achieve a very successful focus group if we manage to get from the respondents their need for physical and psychological cope with neck pain.***

*So we use the following cues:*

- *"You mentioned therapy or rehabilitation or physical therapy. What about exercise?"*
- *What about stretching? E.g do you want to stretch your neck?*
- *What about strengthening?*

**and**

- “You mentioned stress or anxiety or need for psychological intervention. What about stress management techniques?” e.g breathing etc
- What about relaxation? E.g close your eyes and imagine...
- What about strengthening?

*Dear Partners,*

*I suggest practicing the procedure until you become comfortable. With enough practice, you'll be able to improvise the four-question sequence on the spot.*

*Try it on friends and family and don't forget to record the procedure!*

**REMEMBER** to keep it simple...maybe some participants don't know what strengthening is or relaxation. I suggest you describe it in many ways, so they understand!!!