

# **Guide to Using the Analytic Memo to Surface Themes & Form Focus Group Questions**

**Introduction:** There is no one right way to use the analytic memos to generate relevant, useful focus group questions. There will be many viable approaches and types of focus group questions that can be generated, so this guide is meant to provide a starting point for using the information in the analytic memo to inform your generation of focus group questions.

## **Tips for Organizing the Analytic Memo to Help Themes Emerge:**

1. If you find similar types of statements in your memo, you can group them together and create a subheading for that section. If you find one statement seems to belong in more than one group, you can copy and paste it so it appears in more than one place of the memo.
2. Look at other codes that appear along with the codes of interest to you for ideas on how to group the data by these other codes. Create a subheading to identify what the data in that group share in common.
3. Summarize the data that is grouped together under the same subheading in a single sentence for the Overview at a Glance.

## **Tips for Generating Focus Group Questions:**

- A. Verify your interpretation of a pattern or phenomenon that you suspect you might have found. This can be done by converting the Overview at a Glance into a question so we can see whether the participants agree with your interpretation.
- B. Take a statement, theme, topic, problem, or solution from your Overview at a Glance and design a question to surface:
  - 1) the most important aspect of that issue;
  - 2) the greatest challenge related to that issue;
  - 3) other facets of the same issue, or other related issues; or
  - 4) the cause or consequences related to that issue.
- C. Pose a specific solution or strategy from the memo in order to generate feedback from the focus group members. You could aim for a reaction in terms of: how many of you already do this, how many of you would be willing to try this strategy if you received training on it, what do you find difficult about using this strategy, etc.
- D. If you see multiple perspectives on a given issue from different participants, you can ask focus group members to prioritize the issues. This can be done through offering a checklist of all relevant issues identified by the participants in your memo, and asking them to check all items that apply and to then circle their top two choices, for example.
- E. Find a statement that you find stands out in some way as being insightful or intriguing. Ask a follow up question to get more information on that topic or perspective.

**Remember:** These tips are meant to get you started in the process, or past a dry spell if you're stuck for ideas. Don't limit yourself to them.