

# WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

## Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

**Sébastien Dallaire**

Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs

May 24-25, 2018

9:00am – 4:30pm

### Summary

This two-day workshop will provide students, researchers, and practitioners, interested in using focus groups and interviews for their projects, with the basic skills and rules to follow in order to collect high quality data that meets their research needs.

Conducting successful interviews and focus groups is not as easy as some may think and it requires careful preparation and training, to avoid many important pitfalls that can negatively affect the quality of the data collected. This workshop will present some of the key challenges facing researchers and offer practical advice on how to design, conduct and analyze qualitative research projects using focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

Vice President at Ipsos Public Affairs, Sébastien Dallaire has extensive field experience that he will draw upon. He will begin by discussing theoretical research design principles and then take participants through the details of designing, administering, and analysing focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

This workshop will also provide opportunities for participants to apply their knowledge through practical exercises.

### Outline

1. Review: theoretical research design principles
2. Common pitfalls and misconceptions when interviewing subjects
3. Best practices when conducting focus groups
  - a. Designing the tools
  - b. Administering the group
  - c. Collecting and analyzing the data
4. Tricks for conducting semi-structured interviews
  - a. How are they different from surveys
  - b. Types of questions you can and cannot ask
  - c. Other important factors to consider
5. Practice



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## Required Readings\*

- Bryman, Alan. "Interviews in Qualitative Research" in *Social Research Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 468-499 <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21CC>
- Bryman, Alan. "Focus Groups" in *Social Research Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 500-520 <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21CD>
- Stewart, David and Prem M. Shamdasani, *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Los Angeles, Sage 2015  
E-book: <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?u-http%3A%2F%2F0-dx.doi.org.mercury.concordia.ca%2F10.4135%2F9781412991841>
- Webster Course Reserve Room (3 hour loan)

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)

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