

The **Session Discussion Notes** are designed to capture key themes from group discussions, identify participants' referral needs, and highlight challenges related to facilitation and group dynamics. The insights collected help guide the planning of future sessions and support both participant well-being and facilitator effectiveness.

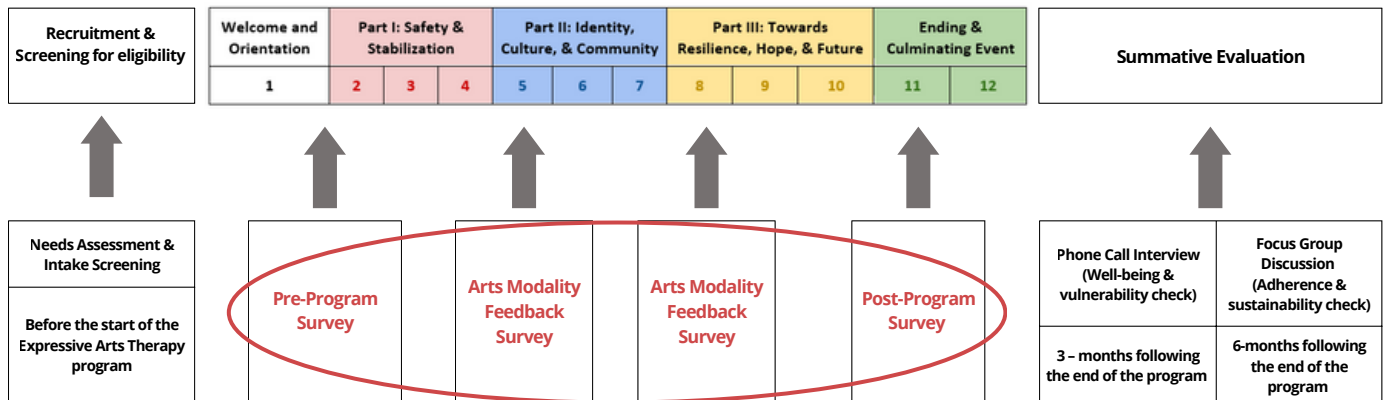
Notes are taken during in-person group discussions by a student volunteer or a member of the research/facilitation team.

Key Themes: Referral Needs, Facilitation Technique, Session Improvements

Special Considerations

- Note-takers should be mindful of cultural expressions, norms, and communication styles. Misinterpreting or over-interpreting culturally specific behaviours can lead to inaccurate conclusions.
- Observations must remain objective and free of bias, do not infer motivations or diagnoses.
- After each session, the note-taker should debrief with the facilitation team to clarify observations, check for bias, and ensure consistent interpretation.

Program & Evaluation Cycle



Reference: Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (2025). Tool: Discussion Notes.

This tool is produced for the project titled: "HEAL - Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life" funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (Arrangement # 2223-HQ-000042) for Preventing and Addressing Family Violence for a period of 4 years. This project is approved by the REB of the Community Research Ethics Office (Canada) Corp., c/o Centre for Community Based Research, 190 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G5 (CREO REB file # 277). Email: creo@communitybasedresearch.ca. Telephone: 1-888-411-2736.

This checklist serves as an initial guide for key considerations in utilizing the HEAL Discussion Notes Template. It is not an exhaustive list, but rather a tool to spark dialogue and support individuals and organizations in developing or enhancing program evaluation efforts.

Preparation Phase

- Let participants know, a volunteer or student will be taking notes throughout the session to help us remember the main activities and discussions. The information gathered will be kept confidential and used to inform program tailoring.
- The notetaker is recommended to use a pen and paper to take notes. Do not use a computer during the session as it can cause suspicion and fear among participants.

Implementation Phase

- Discussion notes are recorded during the session on paper using a clipboard.
- It is crucial that the note-taking process does not distract or disrupt the participants, either visually or audibly, and does not interfere with their open participation. The notes should be taken discreetly by a silent observer.
- The notes/observations are to be recorded in a clear, concise format, with a focus on insights that can inform improvements for future sessions.

Wrap Up Phase

- Be sure to store data collected as outlined by your agency data storage regulations.
- Conduct facilitator debrief to document the highlights, challenges, and improvements of the tool. Questions may include What were highlights from the session? What do we want to continue implementing? What are areas of growth? How can we make the tools more accessible for participants? Any questions or comments?
- Notes are scanned or transcribed by the notetaker and shared with the group. The program coordinator stores the notes in a secure place to uphold confidentiality and data security.

Materials

- Discussion notes template
- Pen and paper
- Clipboard

While this checklist provides a helpful starting point, tailor this tool to meet the diverse needs of your facilitator teams. Adopt and make this tool relevant to your context. Reflect and learn together.

TOOL : Session Discussion Notes

Session Number:	Date of Session:
Location:	Number of Participants:
Name of Staff, Students, and Volunteers in Attendance:	

General Observations:

Check-In Activity:

Session Observations:

TOOL : Session Discussion Notes

Key Topics	Theme/Comments

Check-Out Activity:

Observations/Comments on Facilitation:

TOOL : Session Discussion Notes

Referral Needs:

Participant	Support Updates & Referral Actions

Suggestions for Improvement:

Any Additional Information: