



Professional Development Workshops

Systematic Focus Groups for Academic and Policy Research: An Introduction

Thursday, October 17, 2019

1:00—5:00pm

Portland, Oregon: Embassy Suites Washington Square



Janet Mancini Billson, PhD

Dr. Janet Mancini Billson is Director of Group Dimensions International and former Professor of Sociology at The George Washington University. Since 1981, Dr. Billson has conducted social policy research and served a variety of clients on international development, including the World Bank Group and the United Nations Office of Inspection and Evaluation, on education, health, and environmental issues. Her work has contributed to shifts in social policy and program redevelopment nationally and internationally. Dr. Billson has published numerous books and articles, including chapters on black male identity formation in inner cities, women in development, Inuit resettlement, and using sociological research with focus group methodology to effect social policy and change.

This interactive workshop helps participants identify the uses of systematic focus group discussions as an important qualitative research tool in research, monitoring and evaluation, and policy analysis. After an in-depth exploration of group facilitation theory, volunteer participants will use their new knowledge to moderate a mock focus group with feedback from the workshop leader and other participants. Discussion of how to approach focus group data analysis rounds out the session.

Participants who complete the workshop will understand:

1. The basic principles of focus group research design for solving problematic data analysis and generalizability issues,
2. The guidelines used to develop a powerful interview guide capable of generating dialogue,
3. The uses of successful focus group research in a wide variety of cultural settings, with an eye to producing reliable scientific data, rather than just “interesting information,” and
4. The value of linking group dynamics and methodological theory to enhance qualitative research.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$25/person or \$75 for 5 organization/company members. Free for conference attendees. A post-workshop networking reception will be held on site, with food included in the registration cost.