

PRRI Generation Z Focus Group Guide Conducted Oct 16-19, 2023

STAGE I: INTRO AND OPENING [5-10 minutes]

I want to set some guidelines for our session today so that we can be as productive as possible.

- Please only speak one at a time.
- Please speak up so that we can all hear you
- We want to hear from everyone, so please speak up if you haven't spoken much, and maybe take a break if you feel like you are talking a lot
- Remember that there are no right or wrong answers; we allow for different views here
- Please give your opinion, even (and especially) if it is different from what others have already said
- Because our time is short, I might have to move us along or cut you off – please do not be offended, it's just to make sure we cover everything.

Before we jump into our topic, let's get to know each other a little. Please introduce yourself to the group and tell us:

1. Your name
2. A tv show, movie, or book you have enjoyed lately
3. In a word or two, who would you define as your community?

Who wants to start us off?

STAGE II: Issues and State of the Nation [20 minutes]

1. We're going to be talking about issues in your community and in the country more broadly.
 - a. What issues are you focusing on today? What is keeping you up at night?
2. We're also going to talk a lot about generations—groups of people who are around the same age.
 - a. When you think about your generation, what unique concerns or challenges do you think younger people face today?
 - b. Thinking about your parents or grandparents, what went well for them that isn't for you? What goes well for you that didn't for them?

[PROBE AS NEEDED:] American dream; finances; home ownership; student loan debt; guns; crime; racial justice; LGBTQ rights; more opportunities for people of color and women

3. When you think back to your parents' or grandparents' generations, what values or beliefs or attitudes do you want to bring forward into your life? What do you want to leave behind?

STAGE III: Government, Political Parties, and Institutions [15 minutes]

1. We often hear a lot about what the government is doing wrong. What about the government do you think is **working**?
2. What issues do you think local or state government does better than the federal government? Where do they do worse?
3. What about other institutions? What do you trust?
[PROBE:] What about religious institutions—Churches, faith leaders, etc.
4. How can institutional leaders build trust with young people?

STAGE IV: Religion and Spirituality [15 minutes]

1. Let's talk about your religious upbringing, were you raised with any particular religion?
 - a. Did you continue? Did you leave that behind?
 - b. What made you decide to stay or even change religions or leave religion behind?
[PROBE AS NEEDED]: Here are some reasons that Americans have changed their relationship with religion: Treatment of LGBTQ people, hypocrisy, too much politics; time commitments, views on gender issues, too focused on old members, etc.
2. How do you practice your faith? Does it involve a community, or is it more personal?
3. What about spirituality that's a little more non-traditional than organized religion? Are there practices you do that aren't related to a set religion?
[PROBE AS NEEDED:] Faith groups, social media, volunteering, music/art, yoga, tarot, sports, etc.
4. Where do you find deep meaning in life? Does that involve religion?

STAGE V: The Media and Democracy [15 minutes]

1. Let's talk a little bit about democracy in America.
 - a. What does democracy mean to you?
 - b. What are the threats to democracy today?
[PROBE, AS NEEDED:] January 6th insurrection, election integrity, access to voting, 2024 election
2. For purposes of our discussion now, we are going to think about democracy as a form of government that is open to all views and participants. How do you engage with "democracy?"
 - a. What kinds of activism is effective? What kinds are less effective?
 - b. Does your generation have a voice in democracy?
3. **[IF TIME REMAINING]:** Is democracy different for you than it was for your parents or grandparents?
4. **[IF TIME REMAINING]:** Where do you turn to news?
 - a. How do you know you can trust it?
 - b. How often do you think you come across "fake news?"
 - c. Is social media more helpful or harmful for finding information or news?

STAGE VI: Diversity and Gen Z [15 minutes]

1. This generation, Generation Z is the most diverse American generation in a lot of different ways.
 - a. What does diversity mean to you? How does it play out in your life?
 - i. **[[PROBE]:** friend circles? Dating?
 - b. Has it improved your life? Harmed it?
2. Do you think our government or political parties or institutions are diverse enough? Will they ever be? Where do they fall short?
3. Have you personally felt hostility or discrimination recently? Why do you think that happened?
 - c. Has this improved or worsened compared to your parents or grandparents?
[PROBE, BASED ON GROUP COMPOSITION:] Discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, gender, class, religion, etc.
[IF LIMITED PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:] Even if you personally haven't experienced discrimination, do you think any of the groups we've talked about face discrimination?

We've reached the end of our discussion topics today. Anyone have any last thoughts they'd like to share with the group?