**Who participates?**
- Key informants – have first-hand knowledge of the program, or topics important to the program

**What kind of information are we looking for?**
- What works well
- What doesn’t work so well
- Why certain target populations are not using the program
- Recommendations for improvement
- Stories of change

**Example from Eastern Ontario Health Units Tobacco Cessation Program evaluation plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>30 - 60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of Sessions</td>
<td>One per interviewee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Program developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program staff and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of data</td>
<td>Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(including tone of voice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Audiotape</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formats for Reporting</td>
<td>Selected quotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic content analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How do we conduct a ‘semi-structured’ interview?**
- Write a set of open-ended questions
- Interviewer is free to elaborate on these to explore further
- Conversation style generally better than rigid Q&A
- Make sure to ask beforehand if you intend to record the interview

**Limitations**
- Time consuming to organise, conduct, and analyse
- Risk of bias – interviewer might unintentionally ‘steer’ responses
**Forming interview questions**

Make sure questions are open-ended – avoid questions that can be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’

- Did you enjoy the workshop?
- What was it like doing the workshop?

Follow up short answers to get more details

- Q: What was it like doing the workshop?
  - A: Good
- Q: What was it like doing the workshop?
  - A: Good
  - Q: How was it good?

Ask for the information you are seeking directly and clearly

- What was the easiest part about giving up smoking?
- What made your effort to quit smoking a success?

Be careful to not be too forward or pushy – it is best to begin with broad questions and carefully get more specific as you go

- How’s your health been? Tell me more about your smoking habit.
- How’s your health been?

**Analysing interview data**

- Organise the data – create a transcript or detailed set of notes from the interview
- Review the data – looking for common and recurrent themes. Discard or cross out irrelevant dialogue to make the data less bulky. If possible, use two or more reviewers to bring additional perspective.
- When analysing multiple interviews, consider a coding process
  - Assign a code to each key theme – for example ‘Referral gap’
  - Codes can also be used to note elements of information you are seeking in the data – for example, + or – for positive or negative aspects of TIS activities
  - Use the codes to look for patterns, similarities and contrasts in responses
  - Think about key stories, quotes, and themes – what do they mean for the project?

Tip: Memorise key questions before the interview so you can focus on the interviewee more than your notes.
Tip: Make sure to thank interviewees for giving their time, writing thank you notes where appropriate.