Developing Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning

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Our Vision and Mission

- To learn from Duke students and faculty focus groups about the effects of trauma in the learning environment
- To contribute to Duke's efforts to build a trauma-informed teaching and learning culture
- To promote a learning environment in which all students, including trauma survivors, can flourish

Our Principles

TIC (Trauma-Informed Care) is a framework that promotes:
- Trauma awareness
- Safety
- Choice and empowerment
- Strengths-based approach
- Awareness of cultural context

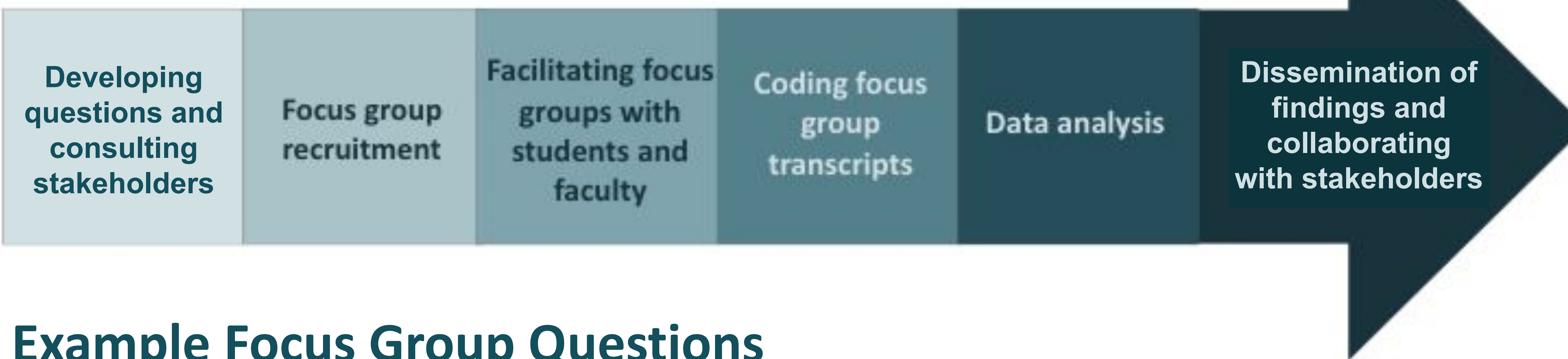PAR (Participatory Action Research) brings researchers and participants together based on:
- Collaboration
- Incorporation of local knowledge
- Diversity
- Case orientation
- Emergent process
- Linking scientific understanding to social action

Example Comments from Undergraduates

"Il feel like maybe giving students [the] ability to do Zoom in the future after [the] pandemic... I mean, [professors] should have every session recorded so if students are sick, or really have justified reason to stay home…[they] can still catch up."

"A lot of the policies in the school that are surrounding attending [to] people with these kind[s] of problems are kind of hard to access and they have too many rules surrounding them."

Our Path

Developing questions and consulting stakeholders → Focus group recruitment → Facilitating focus groups with students and faculty → Coding focus group transcripts → Data analysis → Dissemination of findings and collaborating with stakeholders

"I feel like something that a professor could do is to ask, how can I help? Even just asking them will help a lot…Is there something, [like a] two day extension on homework, or something like that, that would really make the student's day and hopefully they'll feel better."

Example Focus Group Questions

To Undergraduates:
"What practices have you seen implemented effectively to promote academic thriving for trauma survivors at Duke?"

To Divinity Students:
"What have you found helpful or unhelpful about the way that professors have selected readings, structured assignments, discussed self care or other things related to the structure of class?"

To Medical Students:
"How would you describe the institutional culture and norms around mental health and trauma in Duke School of Medicine?"

Next on Our Agenda

Undergraduate: Sharing findings, write manuscript and op-ed

Divinity School: Data analysis, develop a thematic network map

Medical School: Data analysis, sort codes into categories and themes

Faculty: Collect data through focus groups