



Project name:

**"Mild Health Conditions Optimization through Vital  
Exercise and Unwind Program"**

Project number and acronym:

**101184444 – MOVE UP**

**D2.1 Report on chronic health conditions and sports  
involvement\_focus group framework**

Deliverable 2.1 under Work Package 2 consists of various components:

1. A **focus group framework** to guide the planning and execution of focus groups across the consortium.
2. A **definitions document** which defines the criteria and framework for selecting participants for sports programmes and events and organising focus groups within the MOVEUP project.
3. A report of **desktop research** which provides a review of current literature and evidence relating to the use of sport and physical activity in the prevention, management and treatment of chronic health conditions.

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# Focus Group Framework

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## Introduction

This focus group framework is a key component of Work Package 2 (Study on Sport and Chronic Health Conditions), specifically supporting Task 2.2: Focus Group on Barriers and Facilitators for Engaging in Sport.

Focus groups (FGs) will take place in each country and will gather qualitative insights from people living with chronic health conditions (CHC), such as diabetes and hypertension, to understand their challenges, facilitators, motivations and needs regarding participation in sports generally and more specifically in adapted sports (walking football, walking basketball and catchball). The findings will inform the development of tailored sports programmes, coaching strategies and policy recommendations to enhance inclusivity.

Each FG will be conducted in the language of the participating clubs to ensure clear communication and cultural relevance. Transcripts of the FG discussions will then be translated by the International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDFE) team into English for cross-country analysis, with translations reviewed for accuracy by the consortium members who conducted the FGs.

By fostering a well-moderated, open dialogue, FGs are a great tool to gain a better understanding of perspectives, experiences and attitudes of a target audience.

This document serves as a comprehensive guide to planning and executing FGs easily and in a way that will allow for a level of uniformity and data comparison across the consortium.

The framework is designed to help consortium members organising FGs to:

- get an overview of the FGs' aims and objectives
- select and recruit participants
- guide an effective discussion
- effectively capture the data necessary for programme development
- report findings in a way that will help IDFE analyse them



### Timeline and roles

The following table can be used to write down all the tasks that need to be completed to set up and complete the FG. Tasks could include sending out invitations, appointing a moderator, sending the FG transcript to IDFE and approving its translation (more information in the last section of this document).

Consider the amount of time each person can commit to the project.

Task	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep

### Moderator/scribe selection

Selecting a FG moderator requires careful consideration of their expertise, comfort level and ability to create a trusting environment for participants. The ideal moderator should have experience in facilitating discussions, particularly in healthcare or social science contexts and should have a strong understanding of the topic at hand.

They should also be skilled in active listening, managing group dynamics, ensuring inclusivity and allowing people to feel heard. Comfort in the role is crucial, so the moderator should have prior experience or training that allows them to confidently guide conversations and handle sensitive topics with empathy.

Additionally, participants are more likely to feel comfortable sharing their experiences with someone who demonstrates neutrality, relatability and a deep understanding of their lived experiences. Creating a safe space where participants can share their thoughts is important.

For the FG recording and transcription, it is suggested to use the AI supported programme fathom.ai. Fathom automatically records, transcribes and summarises meetings (such as on Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams) in real time. It is then possible to review the transcriptions, highlight key points and provide comments.

### Population

Please refer to the “definitions” document for a breakdown of the target participants.



### Focus group schedule and locations

Below is a table that will make it easier to plan one or several focus groups. This table can be shared with team members who organise the focus group. The following table also needs to be filled in when sending the focus group transcript to IDFE.

Date	Time (up to 2.5 hours)	Location	Number of Participants (8-10)	Facilitator	Scribe	Notes (e.g., food, incentives)

### Invitations and Incentives

Invitations should be sent at least one month in advance to give people adequate time to express an interest. A draft invitation letter is provided in the appendix. This can be adapted to the local needs and translated into the local language.

When organising focus groups, incentives may be offered to encourage participation and enhance engagement. Incentives can take various forms, including monetary compensation, gift cards, vouchers, or non-monetary rewards (e.g., free products, certificates etc.).

Benefits of Incentives:

- Increased Participation: incentives motivate individuals to join, particularly hard-to-reach demographics.
- Higher Engagement: participants may be more attentive and willing to share honest feedback.
- Fair Compensation: acknowledges participants' time and contribution, especially if the session is lengthy.

If participants incur any out-of-pocket costs (e.g., travel expenses to the focus group location), these should ideally be reimbursed to ensure fairness and remove barriers to participation.

### Focus group set up

Room layout is important (e.g., ease of finding it, accessibility, unlocking the doors, room temperature, technology, potential noise issues, food placement, document placement, where the facilitator and scribe will sit). Chairs should be set out, creating a semicircle or circle so everyone can see each other. Paper/small notebooks and pens should also be provided for people to write notes during the focus group. A whiteboard may be useful to gather all viewpoints and present them coherently.



While an in-person FG up would be the ideal set up, certain circumstances might require an online FG instead. This requires determining technology needs, troubleshooting strategies and roles.

After sending invitations, a reminder message should be sent to the participants a week before the scheduled FG.

The FG questions are extensive. This means the FG session is expected to last for up to two and a half hours. Therefore, it is suggested that a 30-minute break be included (with refreshments if in-person) to ensure participants are comfortable and the session is not too exhausting.



## Focus group Script

### Introduction

The session should start with an explanation to all participants of the purpose of the MOVEUP project. Participants should also be informed that the session will be recorded and that only members of the project team will have access to these raw data. The recording will be used to inform written material that might be published, but all data and names will be anonymised. A proposed introductory text is provided in the appendix which should be used to ensure consistency between the various FGs.

After the session has been introduced, it will be useful to start the FG with a warm-up and ice-breaker questions:

#### *Warm-up Questions:*

- Can you briefly introduce yourself and share one hobby or a type of physical activity you enjoy?
- Can you state your favourite childhood sports game?

#### *Icebreaker Question:*

- What comes to mind when you think about being physically active while managing your condition?

*For all questions, it is important not to prompt (with the information/additional questions in brackets) until participants have first had enough time to discuss what comes to their mind.*

### Facilitators

#### *External Factors:*

- Are there any specific factors that encourage you or make it easier for you to be active? (e.g., supportive staff, tailored programmes, accessible facilities, going with friends)
- Do you prefer group or individual activities?

What do you think are the positives and negatives of each?

#### *Motivation and Encouragement:*

- What motivates you to participate in physical activity (even when it's challenging)?
- Are there specific moments/people or experiences that help(ed) you overcome barriers? (such as going to a sports event with a friend/family member)



## Barriers

The first question will focus on the potential barriers to sport participation. Questions have been organised by type of potential barriers.

### *Perceived Challenges:*

- What are the biggest personal challenges you face when trying to be/stay physically active? Things that relate to your own personal circumstances. (moderator: as appropriate prompt for time, energy levels, accessibility, motivation, pain or symptoms)

### *Environmental Barriers:*

- Do factors such as transportation, facilities or equipment affect your ability to engage in physical activity? If so, how do they?
- Is affordability a factor in your choice of a sports programme or a factor in your ability to engage in physical activity?

How important would you say this is, generally and compared with other barriers?

### *Physical Barriers:*

- Does your body image or aspects of your body play a part in your ability/willingness to take part in group activities?
- Does your general state of fitness play a part in participating in group activities?

### *Social and Emotional Barriers:*

- Have you experienced any social or emotional challenges when it comes to being active? (e.g. feeling isolated or unsupported,)
- Do you feel comfortable participating in group settings or public spaces for physical activity? Why or why not?

### *Programme-Specific Barriers:*

- Have you faced any challenges in finding programmes that accommodate your specific needs or condition?
- Are there any aspects of existing programmes that don't work well for you?

Are there any other factors that we have not yet discussed that would deter you from undertaking physical activity?

## Other incentives

### *Role of healthcare professionals:*

- Have healthcare providers (HCP) played a role in encouraging you to be more active? If so, how?
- Does having an HCP on site make a difference in your motivation to participate in sport activities?



- Does having a coach that is an expert in your condition motivate you to participate in a sports activity? (Follow up: would you prefer a coach of a specific gender?)

*Condition-specific programmes:*

- Is participating in sports programmes targeted at people with your CHC of particular interest to you? (Prompt: would you prefer not to be identified with your condition?)

*Gendered programmes:*

- Would you like to participate in a co-ed group (men & women), or would you only consider a gender specific programme? (e.g. women's handball, women/men only groups)

*Adapted Sports Programmes:*

**Provide the definition of adapted sports programmes:** adapted sports programmes are structured physical activity initiatives specifically designed to meet the needs of people living with disabilities or chronic health conditions. These programmes modify rules, equipment, environments or playing conditions to ensure inclusivity, accessibility and equal participation.

- Have you heard of adapted sports programmes before?
- Are adapted programmes something you consider when deciding on a sports programme?
- Do you believe you might have a preference for adapted sports programmes over non-adapted ones?

*Ideal Programme Features:*

- If you could design the perfect programme for people living with chronic conditions like yours, what would it look like?

*(Get participants to write key features on a Post-it note, and then when all post-it notes have been posted, try to categorise them and define the perfect programme with the participants.) This is an activity which is likely going to take a bit of time, but is worth seeing through to completion.*

*Final Suggestions:*

- Is there anything else you'd like to share that we didn't cover?
- Do you have any advice for organisations looking to improve physical activity programmes for people with chronic conditions?

*Summary and Key Takeaways:*

- What's one thing you learnt or felt was important during this discussion?



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## Post -Focus group work

Please send the recording link with the transcript from fathom.ai to:

[marian.brennan@idf-europe.org](mailto:marian.brennan@idf-europe.org)

Within a couple of weeks, you will receive a translated transcript of the focus group session, which will need to be checked for accurate translation. More information to follow at a later point in time.

If you have any questions about this document or about organising a focus group, please don't hesitate to reach out.



## Appendix

### Focus Group Invitation Letter

Dear [name],

As part of the Erasmus+ funded EU project, MOVEUP, you are invited to participate in a focus group discussion about promoting participation of people with chronic health conditions in sports.

The purpose of this focus group is to understand the barriers to and facilitators of physical activity for people living with chronic health conditions to improve and adapt sports programmes across Europe.

**Details of the focus group are as follows:**

When: [Day, date of focus group]

Time: [time and duration of focus group]

Where: [address of the venue and any other access information]

Please contact [Name of organisation's contact person] to accept this invitation no later than [date].

For any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact [contact details].

Kind regards

[name]



## Introductory Script for Focus Groups

*“Welcome to our focus group about the participation of people with chronic health conditions in sports. My name is...[introduce yourself and others in the room].*

*[Run through ‘housekeeping’ (i.e., location of bathrooms, length of session (up to 2.5 hours long), timing of breaks, emergency procedures/exits)]*

*The purpose of this focus group is to understand the barriers to and facilitators of physical activity for people living with chronic health conditions to improve and adapt sports programmes across Europe. These focus groups form part of an Erasmus funded EU project called MOVEUP.*

*We would like to remind you that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty and without harming your relationship with the organisation.*

*During the session, we will be asking you to share your opinions and experiences related to participation in physical activity. You can choose not to answer any question, at any time. We encourage you all to discuss these questions and comments among the group but ask that you allow other participants to speak and finish their statements and not attack or judge anyone based on what they share. We also ask you to keep any information from or about fellow participants confidential.*

*A reminder that this session is being recorded. Only members of the project team will have access to the recordings. The recordings and transcripts will be used to inform written material that might be published, but all data and names will be deidentified.*

*Are there any questions before we start?”*



## Consent Form

Below you will find a consent form should your organisation not have one already. We urge you to have every participant fill in a consent form that informs them of the purpose of the focus group and how their data will be handled.

### Introduction:

You are invited to join a focus group discussion about the participation of people with chronic health conditions in sports as part of the Erasmus-funded EU project, MOVEUP. The purpose of this focus group is to understand the barriers to and facilitators of physical activity for people living with chronic health conditions to improve and adapt sports programmes across Europe. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty and without harming your relationship with the organisation.

### Procedures:

- The focus group will last approximately 2.5 hours.
- You will be asked to share your opinions and experiences related to participation in physical activity.
- The session will be [in-person/virtual] and will be audio/video recorded for the purpose of this project. Recordings will be used to generate transcripts and not used in any other capacity.

*[If your session is not in person or you have no access to whiteboards, you could use a collaboration tool such as Miro (insert link) to structure notes and comments visually for participants]*

### Risks and Benefits:

Discussion may involve personal opinions, but you may choose not to answer any question. We encourage discussion among participants but ask that you allow other participants to speak and finish their statements and not attack or judge anyone based on what they share.

### Confidentiality:

- Your identity will remain confidential and recordings/transcripts will be anonymised.
- Only the project members will have access to the data, which will be stored securely until the end of the project.
- We also ask you to keep any information from or about fellow participants confidential

### Compensation (if applicable):

You will receive [mention compensation, e.g., a gift card, cash] for your participation.

### Voluntary Participation:

You may leave the study at any time without penalty and you may ask the organisers of the focus group to delete any data pertaining to you. Withdrawing will not harm your relationship with the organisations involved.

For questions, contact [Name of the FG organiser] at [Email/Phone].

### Consent Statement:

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the consent form and agree to take part in this focus group.

[Signature] [date]