



Let's care

BUILDING SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS
TO FOSTER EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION
AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

WP3. Data collection and analysis

T3.2. Qualitative and collaborative data collection with teachers

DOSSIER FOCUS GROUP

Based on the European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights
recommendations



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1. Conceptualization, purpose and aim of focus group

What is a focus group and what is it for?

A focus group is a **qualitative research technique** in which a group of participants with certain characteristics is brought together to discuss and identify their perceptions on a specific topic.

Focus group discussions provide an opportunity for participants to express their views in detail and to hear the opinions of others. It is a technique used to delve on the perceptions about a specific topic and tailor a negotiated solution on it. Generally, is a technique to provide understanding and generate meaningful insight of practices and behaviour patterns embedded in real-life contexts. Thus, unveils key aspects of the topics and systematizes them giving rationale of how they unfold and interact in a specific context.

The focus group dynamic is built with the aim of reducing a participant's possible doubts or reservations about speaking about the specific issue. The facilitator should encourage the expression and **understanding** of both consensual and contentious issues.

Within the framework of the Let's Care Project, the discussion groups will be made up of a group of teachers, who will have **the objective of discussing the competences, barriers and key facilitators for safe teaching**.

In this case, **the participants in the focus groups will be teachers from two of the three schools in CoS**. Each participating country (Spain, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria and Poland) will carry out two focus groups (one per school), with **5 to 7 teachers** each **during the months of April and May**. Ideally, each school should correspond to an educational level (EAPI, primary, secondary), as well as be diverse in both ownership (public, private) and context (rural and urban). It is also important that **at least one teacher per focus group has experience working with vulnerable populations**.

It's better to carry out focus groups on-site. It will help you to build a good relationship with teachers, which will be important in the training on observation and safe educational practices which will take place next school year. **However, if it would be necessary, they can be executed online**.

The focus group templates and the information request will be sent to Promaestro in English via the following email: letscare@promaestro.org before 9th of June.

How will it be carried out?

- The group will be facilitated by a facilitator, who will be in charge of asking open questions and directing the discussion through a previously prepared script.
- It is essential that the facilitator knows the focus group script in advance to direct the discussion.



- The depth of the discussion will depend on the interventions and the level of engagement of the participants as they share their points of view.
- The focus group will be recorded through audio recording.

Resources and Materials needed

- Informed consent of all participants duly signed.
- Focus group script.
- Facilitator registration template.
- Audio recording

For more information on focus group:

- Bisquerra, R. (2014). Metodología de la Investigación Educativa. La Muralla, S.A.
- Morgan, D. (1996). Focus groups. Annual Reviews Inc. 22, 129-152.
- Moser, A. and Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. European Journal of General Practice, 24(1), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>



2. Recommendations for the focus group facilitator

a) Preparing for the focus group

- **Select a facilitator** ahead of time in charge of carrying out the focus group. The facilitator is **responsible for leading the focus group discussion**, covering all the issues requested, keeping the discussion on track, and encouraging all participants to contribute.
- **Select schools and participants.** Focus groups will be conducted in **two of the three CoS schools of each country (2 focus groups per country)**. Each school will select between 5 and 7 teachers for the focus group. Ideally, each school should correspond to an educational level (EAPI, primary, secondary), as well as be diverse in both ownership (public, private) and context (rural and urban). **It is also important that at least one teacher per focus group has experience working with vulnerable populations.**
- **Get in touch with the school's main contact** in advance to prepare the focus group, provide the necessary information for implementation (space, number of participants, etc.) and arrange the date and time with them.
- The facilitator can **send the information letter about the project and the consent form** to participants before the actual focus group, but should **NOT send the focus group schedule beforehand**.
- **Suitability of the facilities.** The place in which the focus groups are held can contribute considerably to facilitate an open discussion. It should therefore be checked before starting the discussion. Whenever possible, focus groups should be conducted in a location affording a maximum degree of privacy to participants. This decision should be made by someone who is familiar with the local area and cultural context.
- The facilitator must **read the focus group dossier beforehand** and master the script.
- The objective of the focus group is to **identify competencies, barriers and facilitators of safe teaching.**
- **Have the instruments for audio (recording) and written (log template) recording.** It is important that the facilitator makes hand-written notes and observations during the discussion, which also serves as a “back-up” in case something goes wrong with the recording equipment.
- **Have duly signed the legal consent forms of the participants before beginning of the focus group.**
- Arrange for **refreshments** (water, tea, coffee, biscuits) adapted to the context.
- Get confirmation from the participants and send a **reminder two days prior to the scheduled meeting**. If the facilitator does not have the contacts of participants, he/she must send the reminder to the school's main contact.



- **Remember to bring:**

- Several pens (for the facilitator to take notes; for participants to sign/initial the consent forms);
- Paper to take notes (in case of problems with the recording);
- Check the recording equipment before conducting the focus group:
 - Recorder
 - Extra batteries
- Focus group guide (this document);
- The following documents:
 - Consent forms for signing (translated). Make sure to bring two copies for each participant;
 - Consent forms to be left for the participants to take with them;
 - Information letter about the project (translated)



b) During the focus group

Opening and introduction: The way the discussion is opened plays an important role in creating an atmosphere of trust. In addition to the points listed below, you are encouraged to use the text provided at the beginning of the questionnaire.

- **Arrive at the focus group location a few minutes before** participants to organise the room and your materials.
- **Sit in a circle.**
- **The space for the focus group at the school should be comfortable,** spacious and private, ensuring no interruptions. Check whether the room chosen for the discussion ensures confidentiality. Participants should feel safe there. And **ensure there are no passersby.** Their presence might prevent participants from speaking freely.
- **Welcome focus group participants.** Before beginning, it is important to make a brief introduction to the research (highlighting the rights of the participants) and its objective and purpose (to identify competencies, barriers and facilitators of safe teaching). It will provide a sense of trust for the participants.
- **Make sure that participants are informed of the scope of the focus group discussion** and the issues that will be covered from the beginning.
- It is important **to thank the teachers for their participation** in the focus group and address any questions that may rise. It is also important to create an atmosphere where participants feel comfortable.
- Explain **why the participant's involvement is important** and explain **how the information collected during the focus groups will be used.**
- **Take information about the Let's Care project with you** (e.g. web).
- **Introduce yourself and explain the role** which you are going to perform. **Ask participants to introduce themselves as well.**
- **Always address the participants directly** and by 'I and you' terms and wording.
- **Explain the consent form,** specifically state the **confidential and voluntary nature of the participation** in the study and explain that the focus group will be recorded.
- **Make sure to underline the confidential nature of the discussions** and the commitment to protect them and their personal data and to not disclose any sensitive information. Also, clarify the need for **each participant to respect confidentiality** of what is said by others. **Ask participants not to reveal what other participants say during the discussion afterwards, or to reveal the identity of any individual present once they leave the focus group site.** Remind them that in the informed consent agreement, you have pledged not to disclose anything concerning their participation in the study with anyone other than the research team.



- Obtain **the signatures of participants for the consent forms**. If a participant refuses recording, he/she will be excluded from the focus group.
- **Gathering of individual information**. In order to the research team to be able to analyse the information, it is of utmost importance to ascertain certain characteristics of the participants, such as length of service in the profession, educational level at which they teach, etc. The information will be anonymised when it is systematised and sent to the research leader.
- **Use initials or numbers to identify participants**; provide materials for making name cards, if necessary. And make a seating chart to identify speakers in your notes.
- Tell participants **where the bathroom is and offer refreshments** according to the custom of the country.
- Make sure you have all the information needed **to fill in the three tables at the end of the focus group guides**, i.e. "Information about focus group facilitator and setting" "Information about school where focus group is developed", and 'Socio-demographic information about focus group participants'.
- **Invite participants to ask questions or make their concerns known before the discussion begins**.
- **Record the discussion** taking into account that the recorder should not move, and the space should have good acoustics so that the recording is adequate.
- Explain **the purpose of note-taking (taping)**. Do not put the recorder on the table from the start, but only after having asked the participants for their consent.
- **Start audio recording**.

Execution of focus group and discussion recommendations

- **All participants must intervene at least once in the discussion**. The focus group dynamic depends on the contributions of the participants, so the facilitator should encourage those who don't participate or participate little. It is important that everyone participates.
- **All questions in the script must be addressed during the allotted time**. Time management is essential to be able to cover everything that the script contemplates.
- **What is said is as important as what is not said**. As well as facilitating the discussion, the facilitator must observe what is happening (nonverbal language, climate) and the silences.
- Ensure your **verbal and non-verbal communication** (e.g. the way you sit) is suitable.



- Be aware of **group dynamics** (e.g. presence of community or group leaders) and show **empathy**.
- **If the topic deviates from the script, you have to return to it.** The facilitator is in charge of keeping the discussion on topic and redirecting it when the object of conversation moves away from the information that is expected to be obtained.
- Do not transform the focus group into a questioning session but do **draw the issues for discussion** (e.g. instead of asking a question that may suggest the answer, repeat something said by one of the participants and ask for a better explanation or ask another participant what he/she thinks about it). Use **open-ended questions** allowing participants the opportunity to explain their position, feelings and experiences.
- **The facilitator will not state their point of view, but rather raise questions and broaden the discussion of the participants.** He/She will control and moderate the interventions and point out what is necessary to encourage participation. **Limit your own participation** to the minimum once the discussion begins.
- Throughout the discussion, **check regularly if you have understood the participants' point of view correctly.** In this regard is useful to remind mirroring and synthesise conclusions when the discussion of a topic is closed.
- The focus group **must be properly recorded for transcription.** Please, be aware of the usual recommendations for a good audio recording: [How to record a focus group for transcription](#) / [How to properly record Focus Groups](#).
- Each focus group should **last a maximum of 90 minutes** but it lasts less time it is not a problem.

Closing

- At the end, ask participants **how they experienced the focus group discussion**
- Close by **thanking participants, informing them that the results will be published** at the end of 2025, and explaining how they can access them.
- .At the end of the focus group, **complete the registration template in its entirety**, collecting the reflections and observations of the facilitator. It should be as detailed as possible.

Ground rules

Taking time to establish ground rules at the start of the focus group can save the facilitator (and sometimes the entire project staff) much grief later on. All parties will be better positioned if participants are kind to one another during the focus group and if they respect one another's privacy afterward. Laying ground rules is your opportunity to assert what kind of behaviour is desirable and what is unacceptable.



- **Listen:** listen carefully to the other speakers; take turns to speak, respect others' views, etc. Ask that participants speak one at a time. A facilitator may prefer to have participants speak in turn according to seating, in the order in which participants indicate that they have something to say, or according to no particular arrangement. Speaking one at a time lets everyone hear and react to each contribution; it also makes the note-taker's job easier.
- **Respect:** accept the validity of another viewpoint even if you disagree; ask participants to treat one another with respect. This means not doing anything that could cause another member of the group to feel uncomfortable, such as singling out an individual for criticism, name-calling, or making pejorative comments about any given contribution. All participants need to feel free to express their opinions without fear of being attacked by the group.
- **Speak up:** Share your views thoroughly and honestly with everyone.
- **Privacy/confidentiality:** This is a group to better understand what Safe education means in practice, the information shared here and the own and other's contribution is limited to the scope to this aim.



c) Guidelines for the collection, systematization, and storage of data

- Before starting any data processing activities related to the focus groups, the support partners must sign the data processing agreement with Fundacion Promaestro. The data processing agreement will be shared with the support partners.
- The support partners must inform on data processing to the participants and then ask for their consent through the consent forms provided in this dossier. It is mandatory to inform the participants in their own language, so the support partners must translate the consent forms into the language of the participants.
- The transfer of personal data outside of the EU is not planned. For this reason, support partners should not transfer personal information outside of the EU.
- The support partners, as data processors, should follow Promaestro instructions, as Data Controller. It is also required the support partners:
 - To collect only the information needed of the participants and not more than that.
 - To commit to confidentiality.
 - To inform in writing if third parties is involved in the processing of the personal information and provide the identity and contact details of the third party (for example, If you involve a third party to record the focus group discussion on your behalf.).
 - To enter into a written agreement with the third party (sub-processors). The data processing agreement lays down the specific requirements for support partners when involving third parties.
 - To adopt appropriate technical and organizational measures to ensure the security of personal information and compliance with the GDPR requirements.
 - To inform Promaestro in writing of the above-mentioned measures at the first request.
 - To inform Promaestro, in event of a personal data breach within 48 hours.
 - To delete or return any personal information processed in relation to focus groups to Promaestro, at the explicit request of Promaestro.
- Once the focus groups have finished, the information will be transcribed and translated into English, following the Registration Template
- Label all recordings with the appropriate unique identifying code. Each focus group is to be identified by a unique identifying code to be placed on the recording, consent form, transcript, reporting template and any other document relevant to that interview. Please follow the examples below:



Country	Country code
Italy	IT
Poland	PL
Portugal	PT
Spain	ES
Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG

*Country/FG/No. (i.e. '1' or '2') e.g. IT/FG/1 for Italy and the first focus group.

- All the material (signed informed consents, recordings, transcriptions...) will be guarded by the institution in charge from each country. The partners are required to adopt the appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the personal data collected,
- It will be necessary to send the focus group recording template and information about moderator and participants into English to Promaestro via the following email: letscare@promaestro.org

IMPORTANT: Only the focus group recording template in English and the moderator's logs of each focus group held (Registration Template) will be sent to Promaestro.

- Promaestro can provide additional instructions to support partners related to personal data processing at any time.



3. Indications and legal issues: consent forms

1. Before starting the Focus Group:

- You must translate the consent forms (**find it as Appendix 1**) into the language used by the participants.
- **In case you are going to conduct the Focus Group online**, it is also necessary for the participants **to sign the media consent inform (find it as Appendix 2)**. Therefore, you should translate it into the language and hand it to the participants to sign together with the general consent inform.
- You should explain the consent and hand out the consent forms for signature.
- If there is a participant who, after being informed and reading the consent form, does not want to sign, then he/she will not be able to participate in the Focus Group and will have to leave the room.

2. Instructions on consent:

- Hand out the consent forms.
- Allow time for reading and for them to ask questions.
- Explicitly ask them to sign the consent form if they agree.
- Collect the signed consent forms.

3. After the Focus Group:

- Scan the signed consent forms and email them to letscare@promaestro.org for archiving and safekeeping.

4. Some questions you may be asked:

- **Who is the Promaestro Foundation?** The Promaestro Foundation is a Spanish NGO that participates as a partner in the Let's Care project. It leads the qualitative research of the project with the teachers and, therefore, its responsibility is that of a **data collector**. For this reason, it has the responsibility to ask for consent, record it and keep it for the next five years.
- **What is the role of your organisation?** The role of your organisation is that of **data processor** for the Promaestro Foundation. Your responsibility is to apply the Focus Group method, collect the data from the participants and to keep a record of the Focus Groups according to the methodology explained in this dossier which you will then send to Promaestro for the elaboration of a research report.



4. Guide for focus groups with teachers about Safe Teaching

Basic outline

1. Welcome and introduction (10 min)
2. Definition of attachment and bonding dimension (15 min)
3. Definition of Safe Teaching (15 min)
4. Safe Teaching enablers (15 min)
5. Safe Teaching barriers (15 min)
6. Closing: other comments and questions (10 min)
7. Acknowledgments (5 min)

Instruction symbols	Meaning/purpose
<i>[Text in italics; highlighted beige]</i>	General Instructions for the facilitator and for reporting back to the research group.
<i>[Text in italics; highlighted light blue]</i>	Instructions for the facilitator to check understanding or probe – e.g. if participants are not sure how to answer the question or just give very brief statements.
Text highlighted in green	The central question - introduces the full spectrum of issues to be discussed. The questions that follow are the guide for the facilitator to probe on an aspect/issue.
Text in bold	Key core of the question which the interviewer should emphasize.

WELCOME (10 min approximately)

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH** (see also point 2. Recommendations for facilitator of focus group on “Preparing for” and “During focus group”)

The following script aims to guide you through the issues that are intended to be addressed during the discussion group. These themes are focused on the Let's Care Project and seek to identify the perceptions of the participants regarding the competencies, barriers, and key facilitators for safe teaching.

Facilitator, please stick to the script below as much as possible.

Good morning/afternoon/evening

My name is _____. I'm working on behalf of an educational organization that is participating in an European project, named “Let's Care”. This project aims to



comprehensively understand and improve the caring dimension of educational instruction to promote inclusion and school success.

The project's main objective is to identify the determinants affecting students' feelings of safety as a root cause of underachievement, disengagement and school dropout, at 4 different ecological levels: individual, relational, community and political. LET'S CARE will create a theoretical and practical framework to foster Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe Schools and Safe Education on each level as an approach to break the chain of transgenerational transmission of educational and social exclusion. It is expected that this approach will lower the rates of school failure and early school leaving, and improve learning outcomes for students.

The main breakthrough of this proposal is considering a relational response to educational exclusion and inequality, resulting in a model for understanding the importance of security to address underachievement and early dropout, and a relational approach to inclusive practices at school that will be translated into tools, recommendations and guidelines for action, from ECEC to secondary and Second Chance schools.

For this project it is essential to take in account teachers' experience about bond dimension in the classroom and to understand what enablers and barriers teachers find to developing Safe Teaching in their professional practice. Discussions like the one we are having today provide the people responsible for educational policies with evidence to help design effective measures to foster Safe Education systems. So, this is a chance for teachers like you to provide your own views and experiences, and I would like to thank you very much for joining the discussion, which will last about 90 minutes - your input is very important for us. And here, I want to reassure you that everything you say today will remain anonymous.

After the research is completed we will write a report. The report will be based on the views, experiences and needs of teachers – such as yourselves. The ideas are extracted in a general way and in no case, they will be linked to a proper name that can identify the identity of the person.

[Facilitator should ask for approval to audio record the interview. Please stick to the script below as much as possible].

With your permission I will be recording and taking notes to help me remember the things which you say here today. No one will hear or see these except for me and the researchers writing the report with our research findings. So to confirm that you're okay with this, could you please sign or initial this form?

[Facilitator should then hand out and read information for informed consent and obtain the participants' signatures (or just their initials)]. [NOTE: Oral consent is also allowed and should be given as an option if respondents are reluctant to sign – this should be noted on the consent form].

Many thanks – so let's get started!



[Facilitator should explain the ground rules (listen, respect, speak up, etc. – see Annex 2). Facilitator should ask participants to introduce themselves, and then start audio recording once he/she and the participants are ready to begin the discussion.]

PART I (30 min approximately)

[AIM: *There are two important aspects which the facilitator should be collecting information about: 1) how do teachers understand the student-teacher bond dimension in their job?, and 2) how do teachers define and understand safe teaching? Then use the questions below to probe for this information.]*

2. IMPLICATIONS OF ATTACHMENT AND BONDING DIMENSION AT SCHOOL

We would like to start by talking about attachment in the school context. From attachment theory, we understand that children can form secure or insecure attachments with their parents or teachers. To have all the same definition, Secure attachment is the bond that allows the child to ask for help when he/she is in distressed and to be comforted and regulated by others that provide security, reassurance, comfort, explanations, that is, they function as a haven of safety.

And at the same time, children with secure attachment can explore and discover the world by trusting in his/her own abilities, relying on others who offer him/her security to explore, that is, they function as a safe base.

[Example of dysregulation in a child could be crying, sadness, slowing down exploration, fidgeting, etc, and when he/she feels like that, he/she is able to emit signals that he/she needs help. Some ways of offering affective security: welcome discomfort, remain calm, allow emotional expression, soothe, offer comfort, respect their rhythms and spaces, give explanations, etc.]

Examples of exploration: The child wants to play, open something, approach new objects, test their physical or intellectual abilities, do things on their own, etc.]

Ways to offer security in exploration: Accompany, participate, remain physically and/or psychologically available, respect their time and space, etc.]

Well, now that we all have the same definition of attachment:

2.1. For what or why do you think secure attachment is important in a school environment?

[Probe if necessary/group silent- the relevance of secure attachment in a school environment. What kind of benefits do you think secure attachment has for the school? And for the students? On whom does it depend on developing secure attachment at school?]

[Facilitator continues to probe the participants about the relevance of safe attachment in school, their relationship with school failure and the stakeholders involved in it.]



2.2. Is there a relationship between attachment quality and school failure and early school leaving?

[If not mentioned, the facilitator explains the relationship between a secure attachment and a good learning experience for the students.→ There is evidence on how student insecurity is a root cause of underachievement, disengagement and school dropout. In addition, the caring dimension or relational approach from a safety perspective can improve inclusion and school success].

2.3. Which stakeholders and elements are involved in this secure attachment in a school environment?

3. DEFINITION OF SAFE TEACHING

Taking this into consideration, now let's talk about how secure attachment is developed by teacher-student relationship.

Thinking about your own experience:

3.1. What do you understand by safe teaching (in order to develop secure attachment in the students)?

3.2. What are the main characteristics of safe teaching? [Everyone mentions three]

[Facilitator asks participants for their input – if the group is silent – explain/probe a bit.]

[Probe if necessary/group silent- the definition about safe teaching. How do you define it? What kind of words does safe teaching prompt?]

With these characteristics that you define as safe teaching:

3.3. For what or why is it important to develop safe teaching in your classroom?

3.4. What competencies does a teacher need to develop safe teaching? What actions must they carry out in order to so? And what actions hinder safe teaching?

3.5. What actions must be taken by teachers when a difficulty appears in the attachment in the students?

[Probe if necessary/group silent- the relevance of safe teaching in the experience of each participant. What kind of benefits do you think safe teaching brings to your students? What does it entail? What kind of actions, reflections and emotions do you have to develop?]



[Facilitator collects the main ideas from teachers and defines what safe teaching is to introduce part II about enablers and barriers].

PART II (30 min approximately)

[AIM: Here, the facilitator is looking for information about enablers and barriers for teachers to develop Safe Teaching and to bond with their students in a safe and secure way. So: 1) What are the enablers for the development of a safe teaching approach?; 2) What are the barriers to developing a safe teaching approach? Then use the questions below to probe for this information..]

4. SAFE TEACHING ENABLERS

Let's move on to exploring the specific way in which you develop safe teaching with your students. First, we are going to look for the enablers/facilitators that you encounter in your day-to-day job to develop safe teaching with your students. With that in mind and taking in account your own experience, I ask you:

4.1. What are the main enablers that you find in your school for developing safe teaching with your students? And with families?

4.2. In the classroom, in what situations do you feel it is easier to offer safe teaching? *[Collect two or three examples]*.

[Facilitator asks participants for their input – if the group is silent – explain/probe a bit.]

[Probe if necessary/group silent- Present an example in which teachers can meet the needs of their students for a safe haven (the student is sad or very tired and they don't follow along with the class; the student needs a hug before playing with other kids...) and also for exploration (creativity, carrying out a complex task, speaking in public, going to the toilet in kindergarten...)]

I want to explore in a deeper way what happens in these situations,

4.3. How do you usually get to connect with your students and attend to them in a personal way? What actions do you take and what results do you obtain? What are your emotions?

4.4. What elements do you highlight when you get to perform in a secure way with your students?

[Probe if necessary/group silent- How do you feel? What kind of actions do you perform to meet your students' needs in a personal way?]

And last, I want to know if you think that there are other agents that influence whether you can develop a secure attachment in your students. That is:



4.5. How do other stakeholders, like families, school administrators, colleagues, and public administration influence the secure attachment in your students?

[Probe if necessary/group silent- Which is the contribution of other stakeholders in creating a safe school environment? (e.g. open dialogue and cooperation with families, talking with colleagues about each student...)]

[Facilitator makes explicit the difficulty that teachers usually find in developing safe teaching with all students and mentions that it's the last issue that we are going to explore].

5. SAFE TEACHING BARRIERS

To conclude, let's move on to exploring the day-to-day difficulties that you have in developing a secure attachment in your students.

5.1. What are the main difficulties that you find in your school in developing safe teaching with your students? Are there certain students who have a challenging relationship with the teacher?

5.2. In the classroom, in what situations do you feel it is more difficult to offer safe teaching? *[Collect two or three examples].*

[Facilitator asks participants for their input – if the group is silent – explain/probe a bit.]

[Probe if necessary/group silent- Present an example in which teacher may feel more difficulty in bonding with his/her students (a kid who cries a lot and it's impossible to console, an angry child who suddenly starts breaking materials; a teenager who has behavioral difficulties: aggressiveness, disrespect...)]

[In addition, it's important to explore if there are some determinants of students (gender, ethnicity, migrant background, socioeconomic status (SES), (dis)ability and (non)parental care) that make it more difficult to establish the bond or safe attachment]

I want to explore in a deeper way what happens in these situations,

5.3. What usually happens? How do you feel? What are your emotions?

5.4. What do you need to perform in a safe way with those students with whom it's more difficult for you to do so?

[Probe if necessary/group silent- How do you feel? What kind of actions do you perform when you have difficulties bonding with your students?]

Finally, let's talk about what you need from other stakeholders to be able to develop safe teaching in your classrooms and with your students. Specifically,



5.5. What do you need from....

5.5.1. your school management team and your colleagues?

5.5.2. the families?

5.5.3. public administration and policies?

[Facilitator asks participants for their input. Try to encourage participants to present concrete ideas and proposals and if possible, to prioritize (from among those discussed) which are most important.]

CLOSING (10 min approximately)

6. OTHER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Thank you very much for your valuable time. Is there anything else that you would like to add? *[Facilitator invites a final round of input]*

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Facilitator thanks the group.
- He/she let people know their participation was important and useful, and that he/she appreciates their time. Restate how the input will be used.
- Ask for participants' feedback on the discussion.
- Inform participants of the possibility to contact Let's Care consortium with any further questions on the research or the project, or with anything they would like to add.



5. Focus group reporting template (filled in by the facilitator)

Competencies, barriers and facilitators of Safe Teaching.

Identification code for Focus Group Country/FG/No. (i.e. '1' or '2'):

ES/FG/1

Instructions:

Please follow **these steps** to fill in the focus group reporting templates.

- 1) Conduct the focus group and afterwards, take *notes* under each thematic section of the focus group reporting template. Notes should reflect the content of the discussion, as well as any salient observations of nonverbal behaviour and group dynamics.
- 2) Listen to audio-recordings of each focus group and transcribe them.
- 3) Fill out this template on the basis of the transcripts and integrate the *notes* you took on the focus group reporting template after the focus group took place (step 1. Information about facilitator and participants).

3) When completing the reporting templates, please:

- Identify any **key themes** and **summarise the discussion** under each section;
- Provide (at the end of each section) commonly **participants' quotes** to illustrate the outcomes in each section, taking into account:
 - all quotes should be preceded by an introduction, and they should be an exemplary illustration of a research finding/statement. Some quotes should also be included which are useful towards reaching an understanding of the research objectives: e.g. such as identifying the factors that facilitate and hinder the development of safe teaching, what are the difficulties teachers have in establishing bonds with their students...
 - each quote should be reported in both original language and in English;
 - direct quotes from informants often don't parse grammatically, or are not completely taken out of context. It is up to the researcher to edit them so that they are perfectly clear.
 - please clarify who is the author of each quote (e.g. 'Participant 1'; Participant 2' etc.)
- Keep in mind the research objectives of:
 - 1) Identifying the **competencies** that teachers need to develop safe teaching
 - 2) Identifying **enablers** and facilitators of safe teaching
 - 3) Identifying the **barriers** and difficulties to safe teaching.
 - In this regard, please ensure to reflect on these issues in the templates.
- Please record whether replies are based mainly on direct experience of the participants (i.e. their own experience), indirect experience (stories/situations they know of) or whether their replies are mainly opinions (not based on their own experiences or the experiences of others).
- Use all the space you need to provide an exhaustive answer; do not limit yourself to the space provided in the template.



1. Welcome and introduction

Comment on any issues that have arisen that you think are relevant to this part of the focus group.

2. implications of attachment and bonding dimension at school

2.1. Summarise views on the relevance of secure attachment at school (outline the benefits mentioned).

2.2. Summarise views on the relationship between attachment quality and school failure and early school leaving.

2.3. Name those agents that teachers consider to be involved in the development of secure attachment in the school environment. What reasons did they give for the importance of these agents?

2.4. Provide here at least 1-2 exemplary direct quotations used by the interviewees (please report them in national language and English, and refer to instructions on page 1 of this template).



3. Definition of Safe Teaching

3.1. Summarise the given definitions of safe teaching.

3.2. Extract the keywords that have emerged regarding the characteristics of safe teaching.

3.3. Summarise views on the relevance of safe teaching (outline the benefits mentioned).

3.4. Summarise what participants said about the competencies and actions that teachers need to take/carry out to teach safely.

3.5. Summarise what participants said about the teachers' actions which hinder safe teaching.

3.6. Summarise what participants said about the actions teachers should take when a difficulty in the attachment in their students arises.

3.7. Provide here at least 1-2 exemplary direct quotations used by the interviewees (please report them in national language and English, and refer to instructions on page 1 of this template).



4. Safe Teaching Enablers

4.1. Extract the keywords that have emerged regarding the enablers teachers find at school to develop safe teaching (differentiate bonding with students and with families).

4.2. Summarise what participants said about the situations in which teachers feel it is easiest to offer safe teaching (provide two or three examples).

4.3. Summarise what participants said about teachers' actions and their results when they bond safely with their students.

4.4. Summarise what participants said about teachers' emotions when they bond safely with their students.

4.5. Extract the keywords that have emerged regarding the elements that teachers highlight when they talk about secure attachment in their students.

4.6. Summarise what participants said about how other actors influence the secure attachment in their students.

4.7. Provide here at least 1-2 exemplary direct quotes used by the interviewees (please report them in national language and English, and refer to instructions on page 1 of this template).



5. Safe Teaching Barriers
5.1. Extract the keywords that have emerged regarding the difficulties teachers find at school in developing safe teaching (highlight the characteristics of students with whom teachers find it most difficult to bond with).
5.2. Summarise what participants said about the situations in which teachers feel it is most difficult to offer safe teaching (provide two or three examples).
5.3. Summarise what participants said about teachers' actions when they have difficulty bonding safely with their students.
5.4. Summarise what participants said about teachers' emotions when they have difficulty bonding safely with their students.
5.5. Extract the keywords that have emerged regarding the challenges that teachers highlight when they talk about their difficulties developing a safe attachment to their students.
5.6. Summarise what participants said about what they need from other agents to develop safe teaching with their students (differentiate between the different actors).
5.7. Provide here at least 1-2 exemplary direct quotations used by the interviewees (please report them in national language and English, and refer to instructions on page 1 of this template).



6. Closing

Summarise any additional comments by participants.

Facilitator's observations and general assessments of focus group

Briefly highlight what you consider the major key points brought up in the interview and the 3-4 recurring themes, if any.



6. Information about facilitator and participants

Following the focus group, the facilitator should discuss their impressions and notes and provisionally fill in the focus group reporting template under each thematic section (the below will form part of the reporting template – i.e. there is a separate template for this).

Information about focus group facilitator and setting
Please fill in the information about the facilitator(s) of the focus group. Tick all boxes that apply.
Date:
Country:
City/area:
Location of focus group (School name):
On-site or online?
Number of participants:
Language of focus group:
Focus group recorded?
Name of facilitator:
Organisation:
Comments on the focus group , taking into account atmosphere, level of trust and openness, interruptions, etc.:



Information about school where the focus group takes place
Please fill in as much information as possible about the school where the focus group takes place
Educational levels provided at the school (pre-school, primary, secondary (general and vocational), second chance education centres)
Presence of disadvantaged populations (ethnicity, especially Roma children, migrant background, SES, (dis)ability; (non)parental care)
School Ownership (public/private/charter school)
Geographical situation/ context (urban, countryside, outside a big city).
Brief description of the school. Write a paragraph or two about the context of the school, neighbourhood, size, functioning, organisation, types of students, etc.



Socio-demographic information about focus group participants

Please fill in as much information as possible about the people being interviewed as part of the focus group. Please reproduce this template and complete it for each participant (for 5-7 participants). For that **you can print this template and give it to each participant with the consent form for they fill it.**

You must send to Promaestro summary tables with the information of all participants, it is age, sex, educational level of all and not the information specifically of each participant)

Participant 1				
Age of participant				
Sex of participant	Male			
	Female			
	Not reported			
	Other			
Educational level of teaching	Pre-school			
	Primary			
	Secondary (general)			
	Secondary (vocational)			
	Second chance education centres			
Years as a teacher				
Years working at this school				
Is the participant part of the management team/ school administration?	Yes		No	



Appendix 1

Informed consent for the LET'S CARE focus group.

Responsible LET'S CARE partner:

Organisation: Fundación Promaestro (CIF: G87051058)
 Address: Plaza Descubridor Diego de Ordás 1, esc. 2, 6º A (28003, Madrid, Spain)
 Contact person: Jorge Úbeda (Director)/ Macarena Verástegui (Project Manager)
 Email: letscare@promaestro.org
 Phone: +34 91 441 43 29

Support LET'S CARE partner: [Add name and contact details of organisation and the specific person in charge for LET'S CARE].

Dear teacher,

You are receiving this information because we would like to invite you to take part in the focus group for the LET'S CARE research project.

LET'S CARE aims to comprehensively understand and improve the caring dimension of educational inclusion and school success.

With the information below, we want to make sure that you understand the purposes of this project and the importance of your involvement.

Please read all information carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question you might have to the LET'S CARE researchers who are present.

If you want to participate after having read the information below, you can sign this document to say so.

By signing this document, I agree to participate in the LET'S CARE focus group. I confirm:

- That I have read the below information sheet.
- That I understand the information presented there.
- That I had the opportunity to ask questions and that all my questions have been answered.
- That I have received sufficient time to take the decision and that I did not feel pressured to make a choice.
- That I am aware that participation is completely voluntary and that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent to participate at any time. This includes stopping my participation even when I already started. I understand I do not have to provide any justification.

Name:
Signature:
Date:



Information sheet

Here we answer the following questions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Do I have to participate? What happens if I say no, and can I change my mind? | 2 |
| 2. | What do I do if I have questions? | 2 |
| 3. | What is the LET'S CARE project? | 2 |
| 4. | What is the focus group? What is the goal of the focus group? | 3 |
| 5. | Is there a benefit for me in participating? | 3 |
| 6. | Is there a risk involved for me in participating? | 3 |
| 7. | What information will you collect about me? | 3 |
| 8. | Why do you need that information? | 3 |
| 9. | What will you do with that information? Who has access to my information? | 4 |
| 10. | How long will you keep my information? | 4 |
| 11. | Do I have rights? How can I exercise them? | 4 |

1. Do I have to participate? What happens if I say no, and can I change my mind?

Your participation in the focus group is free and voluntary. You can say no and reject our invitation. Nothing will happen if you say no.

Also, if you agree to participate, you can change your mind and stop at any time.

Note that you do not have to tell us why you do not want to participate or want to stop (but you can if you want).

2. What do I do if I have questions?

If you have any questions or suggestions, you can tell them to the LET'S CARE researchers who are present or contact us later at letscore@promaestro.org / +34 91 441 43 29 (Jorge Úbeda, Fundación Promaestro) [Add name and contact details of organisation and the specific person in charge for LET'S CARE].

3. What is the LET'S CARE project?

LET'S CARE is a European research project. The main goal of this project is to comprehensively understand and improve the caring dimension of educational inclusion and school success.

The project aims to identify what are the factors that affect student security and how these factors cause underachievement, disengagement, and school dropout, at four (4) different levels: individual, relational, community, and political.

Based on the results of the research, LET'S CARE will create a theoretical and practical framework to foster Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe School, and Safe Education at each of the above-mentioned levels, with the purpose to break the chain of transmission of educational and social exclusion.



4. What is the focus group? What is the goal of the focus group?

For the project, it is essential to take into account teachers' experience about the bond dimension in the classroom and to understand what enablers and barriers teachers find to develop Safe Teaching in their professional practice.

Discussions in the focus group can provide people who are responsible for educational policies with evidence that will help them design effective measures to foster Safe Education systems. Therefore, this is a chance for you (and other teachers) to provide your views and share your experiences.

5. Is there a benefit for me in participating?

The results of the focus group work will be published on the project website (letscaresproject.eu) and any participant who wishes will have granted access to further research details.

6. Is there a risk involved for me in participating?

We think there is no risk involved for you. We tried to create a safe environment for all participants. Also, we value all experiences and opinions. Remember that if you feel that you want to stop your participation, you may always do so.

7. What information will you collect about me?

We will collect the following information:

- Some of your identifying information, such as age, gender.
- Your professional information, including your professional role, position at school, years of teaching, years of work at school, and educational background.

Also, the discussion in the focus group will be audio or video recorded and then transcribed. Therefore, your answers to the questions, testimonies and any contribution made during focus group discussions will be recorded.

8. Why do you need that information?

We believe that your experience as a teacher is essential for the goals of our research project. Your inputs will contribute to:

- To identify more precisely the variables involved in the object of study of Let's Care: secure attachment bonding at school.
- To gather the necessary elements to develop an observation tool of educational practices in Safe teaching to be used in a later phase of the project.



9. What will you do with that information? Who has access to my information?

We will only share the summary of the discussion and your personal information with the LET'S CARE research partners, particularly, with those who work on the development of the Safe Teaching, Safe Learning, Safe School, and Safe Education frameworks.

As a research project we will also sometimes share information with other researchers so they can benefit from the work we have done. Sometimes, we even have to share such information when publishing an article in a scientific journal. We will make sure that you cannot be identified in any way in this information when we share it for other research activities.

The LET'S CARE partners are all in the European Union. We do not plan to share any of your data outside the European Economic Area.

10. How long will you keep my information?

We will keep the information until five (5) years after the end of the project. The project ends in September 2025, so we will keep your information until September 2030. We will keep it for so long because we have a contractual obligation to do so.

For as long as we use your information, we will respect the laws that tell us what we can and cannot do with your information.

11. Do I have rights? How can I exercise them?

Yes, of course. In the first place, you can always decide to stop your participation.

In addition, you have other rights, such as:

- You can ask us for more information.
- You can ask us to know what information we have on you.
- You can ask us to delete information.
- You can ask us to make correct the information.
- You can ask us to see the data we have collected and obtain a copy.

However, since we are not asking for your name, we will most likely not be able to identify which testimony, and/or inputs provided during the discussion are yours. For this reason, it will be difficult to make corrections or to delete information afterwards.

If you have questions about this, you can contact us in this way: by email to letscare@promaestro.org or by phone at +34 91 441 43 29 (Jorge Úbeda, Fundación Promaestro)

If you contact us and you are not happy, you can submit a complaint to the competent national data protection authority, in this case, the Spanish DPA (<https://www.aepd.es/es>). Because of language barriers, you could ask your local data protection authority (you can find your local data protection authority contact details following this link: https://edpb.europa.eu/about-edpb/about-edpb/members_en#member-at) for help.

Nevertheless, we will always try to avoid that you need to do this, by answering your questions and helping you out whenever we can.



Appendix 2

Media Informed Consent

Dear teacher,

We would like to inform you that the focus group activities may be video recorded.

The video recording will be used to create the summary of the activity.

[Summary of what will be shared] will be shared with other partners of the LET'S CARE project.

We would need this material for produce the Focus Group report that will be used for the Safe Teaching research included in the Let's Care project.

Finally, the video records will not be shared or made public.

By signing this document, I agree to video recording. I confirm that:

- I understand and agree that videos and sound recordings may be taken during the focus group activities.
- I agree that those videos can be used for the LET'S CARE project's above-mentioned purposes.
- I understand that I will always be informed when the recording is taking place.
- I understand that the video recordings will not be made public.

Name:
Signature:
Date: