

## Appendix II

### **Restaurant Menu Labeling Focus Group Research Project**

Moderator's Guide

October 29, 2010

#### I. Ice-breaker: Eating Out Patterns

*Questions will address frequency of eating at fast food and other types of restaurants; occasions (breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc.); eating out with or without children; social vs. individual occasions.*

Tonight we will talk about your experience with eating at restaurants. I will ask you to talk about experiences with eating at chain restaurants, including fast-food restaurants and sit-down restaurants.

1. To begin with, what types of restaurants have you visited?  
[Probe for: chain fast-food restaurants, chain sit-down restaurants, buffets, cafeterias, salad bars, cafés, etc. Briefly ask about names of most frequented restaurants.] [Moderator: write down types and names of establishments mentioned by participants on a chart.]
2. Which of these types of restaurants do you go to most often? Why is that? What about least often? Why is that? What are some of the names of the restaurants where you go most often?
3. How often do you eat at the restaurants that you mentioned?
4. What foods or drinks do you typically order at fast-food restaurants and are they usually for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snack? Do you usually order your foods or drinks inside from a menu board, or do you usually use the drive through? Typically, do you go there alone or with other people? Do you go there with your children?
5. What about the sit-down chain restaurants you mentioned? What foods or drinks do you typically order at these restaurants and are they usually for breakfast, lunch, or dinner? Typically, do you go there alone or with other people? Do you go there with your children?

[Moderator: From this point on, probe frequently for whys, reasons, motivations.]

*Questions will explore factors that influence food selection and how choices are made.*

Now, let's talk about foods or drinks you order in fast-food or sit-down restaurants ...

6. What do you mostly take into consideration when you make your order? [Probe for: habit, craving, appetite level, color, flavor, nutrition, is it healthy, meal occasion, price, etc]
7. What, if anything, makes it difficult to decide on your order?
8. What, if anything, would make your decision easier? [If calories or nutrition mentioned, ask if they have seen the information in a restaurant, how useful the information is if they have seen it, where and when they would like to have this information provided if they have not seen it.]

## II. General Understanding of Daily Calorie Needs and Nutrient Needs

*Questions will examine current behaviors related to calorie intake, such as when and where participants use calorie information; what prevents them from using it; how they use calorie information; what tools they are currently using or whether they feel a need for such tools (Weight Watchers, Nutrition Facts label, restaurant Websites, brochures, menu listing and menu board labeling, other); how participants understand the relationships between age, gender, level of physical activity and daily calorie needs.*

1. How easy or difficult is it for you to decide which items offered by a restaurant are better (healthier) for you than others?
2. If you want to select healthier items at a restaurant, what information would make it easier for you to select?
3. How many calories are in foods or drinks that you typically order in restaurants? [If anybody knows, ask] Where did you get this information? How about other nutrients, such as fat, sodium, carbohydrates, etc.?

[Ask participants to write answer to Q4. on a piece of paper individually without sharing with the rest of the group. Then ask everyone to read their answer.]

4. How many calories do you need to consume per day? What about people of different ages, children, elderly, men vs. women, active people vs. sedentary?
5. Where did you learn about how many calories you need to consume? [Probe for: Weight Watchers, NF label, Websites and which ones, menu listing or menu board, in which restaurants.]
6. How easy or difficult is it for you to know how many calories are in a food or a drink? What about the total amount of calories in all the foods and drinks you have in a day?

7. Have you seen any calorie information in a fast-food restaurant or a sit-down restaurant? What do you think about the idea of displaying calories for foods and drinks on menu boards in fast-food restaurants? Why? What about sit-down restaurants?

III. Reactions to and level of understanding of calorie information for different flavors, varieties and combo meals

*Questions will examine their understanding of ranges, averages and other methods of presenting calories for single items such as shakes, ice cream, soft drinks, and combo meals; which choices would they make and why; and which presentation formats would be most/least helpful for them when making a choice.*

[Moderator: Show examples of menu boards A through D to participants and ask the series of question after showing each example. Rotate the order of examples between the groups.]

Example A: a menu board that displays calories in wide ranges;

Example B: a menu board that displays calories in wide and narrow ranges;

Example C: a menu board that displays calories in different formats: ranges and averages;

Example D: a menu board that displays exact calories for items that come in different flavors and/or sizes. [See Appendix III]

Please look at the way calorie information on this menu board is displayed...

1. If you wanted to make an order from this menu board, how easy or difficult would it be to choose healthier items? What helps? What makes it difficult? Do you think the calorie information displayed is enough for you to choose healthier items? Why yes and why not?
2. Is there anything unclear or hard to understand? Why is it unclear or hard to understand?
3. What about the way calories are displayed on this menu board, how clear and understandable are they? Why?
4. If you wanted to know the amounts of calories in various items, would you be able to figure it out by looking at this menu board? How accurate could you be?
5. If what way this menu board could be helpful in your food and drink choices? What about planning your daily diet?

6. Would you recommend any changes to the way calories are displayed on this menu board to make the information more useful to people who want to choose healthier items? What changes?

IV. Reactions to and understanding of different versions of a succinct statement regarding total daily caloric intake

*Questions will explore participant reactions to alternative versions of a “succinct statement” regarding total daily caloric intake required by the law. Section will begin by eliciting participants’ proposals for calorie declaration in the context of daily calorie needs by using projective techniques (sentence completion, collage).*

TASK 1

[Pass around sentence completion exercise sheets and ask participants to complete the following six sentences. Discuss their responses.]

- a. On average I should consume ..... calories per day.
- b. When it comes to daily caloric needs they are ..... for everybody.
- c. Women should consume ..... calories per day.
- d. Men should consume ..... calories per day.
- e. Young children should consume ..... per day.
- f. Caloric needs mainly depend on .....  
.....

TASK 2

[Moderator: Show the following four examples (a-d) of a succinct statement to participants one at the time and ask a series of questions after showing each statement. Rotate the order of statements between the groups.]

1. What is this statement mainly trying to say?
2. How would you say it in your own words?
3. How well does this statement explain calories on the menu board? Why? Would this statement help you make an order from the menu board? In which way is it helpful?
4. What about making a plan for the rest of the day, how helpful would it be for that?

Test Statements:

- a. “Using 2000 calories per day as a reference point, consider how the menu item you select fits within your total daily calorie needs, which may be higher or lower depending on age, physical activity, gender.”
- b. “A 2,000 calorie daily diet is used as the basis for general nutrition advice; however individual calorie needs may vary.”
- c. “A 2,000 calorie daily diet is used as a general reference point for nutrition advice. Individual calorie needs vary depending on age, physical activity, gender.”
- d. “Typical daily caloric intake for women is 1600 to 2000 calories, for men is 2000 to 3000 calories and for children (ages 4 to 14) is 1800 to 2500 calories. Be sure to include the calories of the menu item you select as a part of your total daily caloric intake.”

V. Reactions to the written information with nutrient disclosures for additional nutrients

*Questions will explore how they interpret the information regarding the nutritional content of different menu items and what approach they find easiest to use. What do they like/dislike about different displays? Are these displays clear, understandable? Is there anything missing? What improvements could be made?*

[Moderator: Show two examples of written information for additional nutrients, Nutrient Information A and B one at the time. Rotate order between the groups.]

Nutrient Information A: shorter version listing only required nutrients

Nutrient Information B: longer version listing required nutrients and more

[See Appendix IV]

1. If you wanted to choose healthier items in a restaurant, how helpful would this information be?
2. How easy or difficult would it be to choose healthier items? What helps? What makes it difficult?
3. Is there anything unclear or confusing? Why is it unclear or confusing?
4. Would you recommend any changes to the way nutrient information is shown here?

6. Expectations of behavior change as a reaction to calorie display in restaurants

*We will explore whether and how participants would change their choices with the calorie information.*

1. How, if at all, would displaying calories on menus change how you choose foods or drinks in a restaurant? Would it change how much you order an item? Would it change how often you eat at these restaurants? [Ask about menu board and menu listing in sit-down restaurants separately.]
2. What about planning what to eat in the course of the day--would this information change how you do your planning? How?