

Web-based HIV Behavioral Surveillance System:

Focus Group Interview

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Moderator's Guide

Online & In Person Focus Groups with MSM

Logistics

Areas of exploration

1. History of research participation
2. Recruitment
3. Comfort level
4. Trust
5. Introduce Study & Study Specific Questions
6. Show Existing Ads and Get Feedback
7. Show Survey Examples and Get Feedback

1. History of research participation

Have you participated in an online research study before?

Tell us about your experiences: how were you recruited, (Probe: Online? If online, did you see an ad? What website was it on? Or are you a member of an online panel? Other method?)

What kind of research study was it? what did you have to do? what did you like or dislike about participating?

What kinds of topics did the research focus on? Products? Health issues?

Why did you agree to participate? (Probe: incentive? Interest in topic? Ease of doing it? Bored? Other reason?)

2. Recruitment

OK, now we are going to talk about being recruited for future online research projects that may involve filling out an online survey.

What would be the BEST way to ask you to participate? Email invites? Letter? Phone call? Attractive online ad? If an ad, then are there particular websites that the ad should be placed on for you to click through? Are there any websites that you wouldn't look at the ads or click through?

Are there aspects of the ad that would specifically appeal to you? In thinking about a print or banner ad, what types of ads appeal to you? what catches your attention?

Do you like the idea of being part of a large-scale research project involving other guys like yourself? Would being part of something like a research study influence you to participate or not?

What would make you NOT want to participate? Topic? Length of time?

What made you decide you wanted to participate in this focus group?

3. Comfort Level

We have talked a bit about your experiences and why you would participate in an online research study and what may keep you motivated to do research. Now we would like to know how you feel about a specific topic for a research study?

What topics do you like to explore online in general? Health issues? Politics? News? Gossip?

Of the following topics, would any of these make you feel uncomfortable answering questions about online? Drugs? Smoking? Alcohol? Sex? Sexuality? Relationships?

Would you feel comfortable answering questions about some of the issues we mentioned? Why or why not?

Have you ever been part of an online research project on a sensitive topic, like something related to your health, relationships or sexuality?

If you were asked to participate in an online research project that asked questions about sex-related issues, would you be ok with it?

Is there anything about sex-related issues that you wouldn't want to be asked? How could the researchers make you feel comfortable with giving your honest answers and opinions?

4. Trust

Ok, now we would like to ask you about how you feel about your level of comfort with participating in an online research in general and whether or not you feel uneasiness about the information you are giving.

What would assure you that your responses were anonymous? If the researchers told you that your answers were anonymous, would you trust them? Why or why not?

What would you need to see or be told from study sponsors to make you feel comfortable and to enhance trust?

Do you see any difference between answering questions online or answering questions on your cell in terms of anonymity?

5. Introduce Study & Study-Specific Questions

INTRODUCTION: Provide an overview of the study and state that we are here to garner their opinions and feedback on the survey, especially issues pertaining to recruitment and participation.

- 1) What do you think about this survey?
- 2) Do you feel like this is an important survey?
- 3) Can you think of any issues or factors that might affect recruiting for participation in this survey?
(Probes: non-monetary incentives, time factor)
- 4) What factors do you think would make it easier for people to participate in this study?
(Probes: sites; study branding, altruism).
- 5) What reservations do you have to participating?
- 6) What advice do you have for us regarding this research project?
- 7) What are some online locations that we should visit to recruit MSM?
- 8) What are some advertising techniques that might better engage MSM?
- 9) We want to make this study a success and make sure the community is supportive. Is there anything else that we are missing? Is there anything that you would like to add?

6. Show Existing Ads & Get Feedback

Now, we would like for you to take a look at several ads and tell us what you like about these ads or don't like about these ads? Can you also tell us whether any of these ads would appeal to you if used for an online survey? Why or why not?

-----show ads-----

7. Show Potential Survey Format: Look/Design & Get Feedback

Now, we would like for you to take a look at what the survey might look like.

-----show survey-----

We are interested in your opinions about the design of the survey rather than the actual questions. For example, tell us what you like about the look/design of the survey or don't like about the look/design of the survey? Can you also tell us whether the formats appeal to you? (For example: grouped table, stand alone questions, pull down menus, checkboxes.) Why or why not?

Take a look at what several other elements or aspects of our online survey might look like.

- Is the font size acceptable?
 - o If not, how can we improve it? Change size? Change actual font? Bold?
- Is the presentation of the response options easy to read?
- Is the survey difficult to figure out?
- Should there be more questions on each page? Fewer?
- Is the survey easy to follow?
- Is it easy to understand what to do next at each page?
- What is your overall impression of the survey?
 - o Does it look professional?
 - o Does it look like a survey that would be easy for you to complete?