

# **Focus Group Moderator's Guide: Young Adult Perceptions about New and Emerging Tobacco Products**

## **I. Welcome-Introduction-Ground Rules (3 minutes)**

Thank you for coming here today. Your participation is very important. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm from RTI, a non-profit research organization. I am working with a federal health agency on this research. The purpose of this focus group is to learn about what you know about some new tobacco products. I do not work for a tobacco company. Your thoughts are very important to us and your time today is appreciated. We will have about two hours for our discussion.

As we begin, I want to review a few ground rules for our discussion.

- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- You have probably noticed the microphones and/or tape recorder in the room. They are here because we are video-taping our discussion. I want to give you my full attention and not have to take a lot of notes. The files will be transcribed and your name and other personally identifiable information will be removed. At the end of our discussion, I have to write a report and will refer to the tapes when writing the report. Additional project staff may view the tapes at a later date. All tapes will be destroyed at the end of the project.
- Behind me is a one-way mirror. Some of the people working on this project are observing this discussion so that they can hear your opinions directly from you and take notes so that your opinions are accurately captured. However, your identity and anything you personally say here will remain private. Your name, address, and phone number will not be given to anyone and no one will contact you after this interview is over.
- Please turn your cell phone and pager to vibrate or silent mode. The discussion will last no more than two hours.
- Ok to disagree with each other, but must remain respectful
- Try to speak one at a time
- For the purposes of time, may need to end parts of the discussion before everyone has had a chance to speak—will allow time at the end for final thoughts and questions.
- If you need to go the restroom during the discussion, please feel free to do so.
- Most importantly, there are not right or wrong answers. We want to know your opinions and what you think about the issues we will be discussing. Just a reminder, we are not selling anything and I do not work for the people who make these products or who are sponsoring this research, so don't hold back from giving me your honest opinions.
- This conversation is private, which means we won't share anything you say with anyone outside of the project team.
- Occasionally, we'll talk about who uses tobacco products. In these cases, I don't want you to use the person's name but rather their relationship with you. For example, instead of saying "James" say "my friend" or "my neighbor."

Do you have any questions before we begin?

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## II. Warm up (5 minutes)

I would like to begin our discussion by having you tell me a little bit about yourself. Tell me what you would be doing this evening if you weren't here.

## III. General Discussion about Tobacco Products (10 minutes)

Can you tell me about your experience with cigarettes and other types of tobacco products? What types do you currently or have you used?

*[Probes]*      *How long have you been using them?*  
*What made you start using?*  
*When do you usually use them?*  
*If you use more than one type of tobacco, describe when you use each and why.*  
*Describe tobacco usage among your friends and family.*

### Environmental Use

How many of you all are taking classes on a college campus? [Get count]

How many of you are working outside of the home? [Get count]

I want to hear about tobacco use on your college campuses and workplaces. Can you describe any smoking or tobacco policies?

*[Probes]*      *Did you know whether your campus/workplace had a policy before you went there? Did that knowledge impact your decision to go there?*  
  
*Do people follow the policy?*  
  
*How do people—both smokers and non-smokers—feel about the policy?*  
  
*Are you aware of other tobacco users onsite?*  
  
*How/where do tobacco users use their products?*

### List Activity (10 minutes)

Ok, now we're going to talk about tobacco products other than cigarettes. Other than cigarettes, can you tell me about other tobacco products you have heard of?

**[INTERVIEWER LISTS THE TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON A FLIP CHART AND SEPARATE THEM ACCORDING TO SMOKED AND SMOKELESS -- DON'T PROVIDE A HEADER ABOVE THE COLUMNS]**

*[If they state a brand, ask them if they know what type of tobacco product it is. If participant provides a description or brand of a tobacco product but does not know the type of product, refer to the table below to identify the product type. This table is for your reference only and should not be shared with participants.]*

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Cigarettes [Do <u>not</u> include cigarettes in list]</li><li>○ <u>Common Brands</u>: Camel, Marlboro, Newport, Kool, Salem, Virginia Slims, Winston, Parliament, Pall Mall</li></ul> |
|---|

- Cigars
- Cigarillos
  - Description: Also called ‘puritos’ or ‘chicos’, these are small, thin cigars that are wrapped in tobacco leaf rather than paper, and are made by machine or handrolled.
  - Common Brands: Black and Mild’s, Swisher Sweets Cigarillos, and Phillies Blunts
- Pipes
- Hookahs or water pipes
  - Description: Flavored tobacco that is smoked from a water pipe; can be smoked alone or in groups (e.g. hookah bars)
- Snus
  - Description: Snus is a moist, smokeless tobacco, usually sold in individual or pre-packaged small pouches that are placed under the lip against the gum. This smokeless product doesn’t require spitting.
  - Common Brands: Marlboro, Camel
- Chewing tobacco/dip/snuff
  - Definition: finely ground, moistened smokeless tobacco that is placed between the gum and lip. This smokeless product requires spitting.
  - Common Brands: Skoal, Copenhagen, Grizzly, Husky, Kodiak, Longhorn, Red Man
- Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes)
  - Definition: plastic, electronic device that uses heat to produce vapor and simulate smoking; device contains nicotine.
  - Common Brands: Blu, NJoy, Green Smoke
- Dissolvable tobacco products
  - Definition: tobacco product that is placed in the mouth and dissolves. The product comes in different shapes and sizes, including orbs, strips, sticks, and lozenges.
  - Common Brands: Camel, Marlboro, Ariva, Stonewall, Skoal

Looking at this list, are all of these tobacco products? Are there any you think are not or that you are unsure of? [Mark these] How do you know if something is a tobacco product?

Now let’s talk in more detail about these products [**Point to the smoked products column**]

How are these products used? [*Pick out different ones listed and ask specifically how they are used and how they may differ from the other in the column. For example pipe vs. a cigar*]

Do you know anyone who uses these types of tobacco product? Which ones?

Do you use or have you ever tried using these types of tobacco products?

**[If yes]** Can you tell me about it?

**[If no]** Do you ever think about trying these types of tobacco products? Why or why not?

Why do you think people use these types of tobacco products?

Now let’s move onto the products in this column [**Smokeless products**]

What kind of tobacco products are these?

How are these products used? *[Pick out different ones listed and ask specifically how they are used and how they may differ from the other in the column. For example snus vs. dip]*

Do you know anyone who uses these types of tobacco product? Which ones?

Do you use or have you ever tried using these types of tobacco products?

**[If yes]** Can you tell me about it?

For those of you who haven't tried or don't currently use these products, do you ever think about trying any of these tobacco products? Why or why not?

Why do you think people use these types of tobacco products?

#### **IV. Risk perceptions (10 minutes)**

**[INTERVIEWER USES THE MARKER AND ADDS CIGARETTES TO THE LIST-  
DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ENTIRE LIST OF PRODUCTS]**

Looking at all of these types of tobacco products -- and now I am going to include cigarettes -- let me hear your overall thoughts about tobacco products as they relate to health.

Have you ever thought one type of tobacco product as being safer or less harmful than another? Why or why not? If yes, which ones? What makes you think that it's safer?

What does it mean to be safer or less harmful?

#### **V. Dissolvable Tobacco Products—General Concept (15 minutes)**

Now I'm now going to show you some new products. **[INTERVIEWER SHOWS PHOTOS OF PRODUCTS STRIPS, STICKS, ORBS, LOZENGES ONLY – NO PACKAGING]**

What do you think these products are?

*Probe: Do you think these are tobacco products? Why or why not?*

What are these products called?

Are they all the same kind of product or different products?

How many of you have ever seen or heard of these before? [Get count] Which ones?

**[If yes]** Where did you hear about them?

*[Probes]*

*Friends*

*Magazine or newspaper*

*Radio*

*Internet*

*Mail*

*Events like a sporting event*

*In stores-store advertising*

What do you know or have you heard about these products?

*[Probes]*

*What brands are these products?*

*How are these products described? (e.g. shape, use)*

How do you think they are used?

How are they similar or different to other products you use or know of? How about other tobacco products?

What can you tell me about the health risks of these products compared to other tobacco products?

## **VI. Dissolvable Tobacco Products—Packaging (25 minutes)**

**[INTERVIEWER SHOWS EMPTY PRODUCT PACKAGES FOR PRODUCTS STRIPS, ORBS, LOZENGES, AND STICKS]- CAMEL, MARLBORO, STONEWALL, AND ARIVA BRANDS**

**[If answered never seen or heard of these before]** Now that you know what the packages look like, have you ever seen or heard of these before?

**[If yes]** Where did you hear about them?

*[Probe]*

*Friends*

*Magazine or newspaper*

*Radio*

*Internet*

*Mail*

*Events like a sporting event*

*In stores-store advertising*

Do you use or have you ever tried one of these products?

**[If yes]** Can you tell me about it? Do you remember the first time you used one of these products? Can you tell me about it?

*[Probes for User Triads]*

*How often do you use dissolvable tobacco?*

*In what circumstances do you use dissolvables?*

*Are you allowed to use them on your campus/workplace?*

*If you use other tobacco products (e.g. cigarettes or smokeless tobacco), has your use of dissolvables changed your tobacco habits? If so, how?*

*Why did you first try dissolvables?*

*Describe how you obtained your first dissolvable (e.g. bought, received sample, friend)*

*If you've used dissolvables more than once, why did you continue to use them?*

*If you only used dissolvables once, why didn't you continue to use them?*

*Do you think you will continue to use dissolvables? Why or why not?*

**[If no]** Have you ever thought about trying these types of tobacco products?

*[Probes]*

*Why or why not? What do you think using this product would be like?*

*What would make you want to try this product?(e.g. friends offer it to you, got a coupon or free sample/giveaway, price of product)*

Do you have friends or someone you know who use these products?

Why do you think people would use these types of tobacco products?

*[Probe]* *Describe a situation when someone might want to try these products?*

Now let's focus on the packaging.

What comes to mind when you see these packages?

*[Probes]*

*How are they different or the same as other tobacco products you have seen and/or use?  
When you see these packages, would you know that they are tobacco products? Why or why not?*

*Do you have any thoughts about why they might be packaged this way?*

*How does this packaging make you feel about the product?*

*How does this packaging make you feel about other tobacco products?*

*How does this packaging make you feel about tobacco?*

## **VII. Dissolvable Tobacco Products—National Advertising (15 minutes)**

I'm now going to show you some advertising for some of these types of dissolvable tobacco products.

### **[INTERVIEWER SHOWS 3-4 PRINT VERSIONS OF CAMEL ADVERTISEMENTS FOR DISSOLVABLES]**

Have you seen any of these advertisements?

What comes to mind when you see these advertisements?

*[Probes]*

*Who do you think these products are for? What makes you think that?*

*How are they different or the same as other tobacco product advertisements you have seen?*

*Do you have any thoughts about why they might advertise these products this way?*

*How do the advertisements make you feel about the product?*

*How do these advertisements make you feel about other tobacco products?*

*How does this advertising make you feel about tobacco?*

If you saw one of these in a magazine, would you know that they are advertisements for tobacco products? Why or why not?

Now think about your tobacco product. How does what you've seen here today—the product, packaging, and advertising—make you think about your own product?

## **VIII. Dissolvable Tobacco Products-Perceptions about Safety (5 minutes)**

**[If not talked about in earlier section on risk perceptions]** We talked earlier about how safe or dangerous you thought different tobacco products were. Where do dissolvable tobacco products fit in? How safe or harmful do you think they are? Why do you think that? *[Probe for thoughts on safety related to packaging, advertising, product size/shape]*

## **IX. Dissolvable Tobacco Products Activity (15 minutes)**

Now, I want you to take a minute and create an image of a person who uses dissolvable tobacco products in your mind. Think about what this person might look like, what they might do, and what their personality might be like.

Ok, now let's hear what people thought of.

*[Probes]*

*How old did you imagine the person to be?*

*Do they use these products around other people?*

*Do they want other people to know that they use these products? If yes, why and who?*

*What do they do during the day?*  
*What other kinds of tobacco might they use?*  
*Why do they use these products?*  
*What do you think of when you think of these dissolvable tobacco products?*  
*What do they do in their free time?*

Now think about someone who smokes. What do you think are the main differences and similarities between a smoker and a person who uses a dissolvable tobacco product?

*[Probes]*

*How are they different than cigarette smokers, if at all?*  
*Are they the same person (someone who uses both products)?*  
*Is there an age difference?*  
*Is there a difference between men and women?*  
*Is there a difference in the amount of money they have or if they work?*  
*Is there a difference in how social they are?*  
*Is there a difference in the number of times they use these products?*  
*Does one type of user care more or less about their health than the other?*  
*What about the health of others around them?*

#### **X. Closing (5 minutes)**

Based on everything we discussed today, do you have any other thoughts or comments?

Give me a few minutes to step out of the room to ask the other people who are working on this project if they have any further questions they would like to ask you.

#### **XI. Debriefing (2 minutes)**

I would like to thank you for coming here today and participating in this discussion. This research was sponsored by the Food and Drug Administration also known as the FDA. Our discussion will be very useful helping the FDA understand people's reactions and thoughts about new tobacco products. The FDA wants you to know that there is no safe tobacco product including the dissolvables shown here today. They advise anyone using tobacco products of any type to stop. There are many ways to help users quit. Here is a pamphlet with information on how users can quit. Feel free to share this pamphlet with tobacco users you might know.