



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

---

## Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Research and Development (ORD)

---

### Soliciting Feedback on VA Research Communication Focus Group Moderator Guide

---

OMB 2900-0770

**The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995:** This information is collected in accordance with section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Accordingly, we may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. We anticipate that the time expended by all individuals who participate in this focus group will average 90 minutes. This includes the time it will take to process and respond to moderator questions. The purpose of this focus group is to discuss Explore how VHA ORD outreach products can link to core values (health, family, etc); assess Veterans' interest in and likelihood of using VHA ORD's outreach products. The results of this group discussion will lead to improvements in the quality of service delivery by VHA and the ORD. Participation in this focus group is voluntary and failure to respond will have no impact on benefits to which you may be entitled.



## Moderator's Guide

---

**Date and Time: TBD (March 2012)**

**Location: Metropolitan Areas (City A & City B)**

Objectives:

- Explore how VHA ORD outreach products can link to core values (health, family, etc)
- Assess Veterans' interest in and likelihood of using VHA ORD's outreach products, and how to make them more appealing to Veterans
- Get feedback on design elements for selected products

Script

<p>A. Intro</p> <p>[10 minutes for Intro through Disclosures]</p>	<p>Good Afternoon. My name is XXX, and I'm the moderator for today's 90 minute group discussion. This is my colleague XX, who will be observing and taking notes for us today.</p> <p>I am very pleased you could join us today. Thank you for fitting this session into your schedule.</p> <p>Our purpose today is to talk about what you know about VA Research, and what impressions you have of the way it's communicated. We are here on behalf of the Veterans Health Administration to help them develop communications materials to better serve Veterans and their families.</p>
<p>B. Agenda</p>	<p>Today we will be conducting a group discussion. This is a free flowing discussion, and there are no right or wrong answers. I'm looking for different points of view. We want to know your thoughts and attitudes, as well as the reasons for the decisions you and only you have made.</p>
<p>Moderator Information:</p>	<p>We work for Booz Allen Hamilton, a government contractor based in McLean, Virginia. We conduct research like this with a wide range of people on a variety of subjects.</p>
<p>DISCLOSURES:</p>	<p>The session is being recorded to make sure we capture everything you say. Likewise, as previously mentioned, XX will be taking notes as a backup. We are taping this session so we can accurately report your responses and opinions. We will not report who said what, but will focus exclusively on what was said.</p> <p>The informed consent you signed in the reception area states everything I've just told you, including that you will be recorded and that everything you say will remain private. Are there any questions about the informed consent?</p>



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

C. Permissions/ Logistics	[Bathroom location]. I just ask that only one person be up or out of the room at a time.
D. Guidelines  [10 minutes with Group Introductions]	And finally to make the best use of everyone's time, there are just a few guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Please talk one at a time – we want to accurately record and hear everyone's responses.</li><li>○ Please aim toward equal "air time" so that no one talks too much or too little. I might ask you to hold your thoughts if there are others who have not gotten the chance to speak. If I do cut you off please understand that I have so many questions and so little time.</li><li>○ Please give us your honest opinions. We care about what you believe, whether or not anyone else agrees with you – there really is no wrong answer.</li><li>○ Please note that any information shared here is private, and we therefore ask you not to discuss anything shared here outside this room.</li></ul>
Group Introductions	Just so we can get to know each other a little better. Let's start with some quick introductions.  Let's go around the table starting on my right. Please tell us your name and your service branch.
Issue A  Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes  [15 minutes]	O.K., so now that we've gotten to know each other a little bit, let's talk about the Veterans Health Administration. Please do not feel that you have to reveal any personal information that you would not feel comfortable telling us. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. [On flipchart] What comes to mind when you think of the Veterans Health Administration? For the purpose of our discussion tonight, please think of the Central office in Washington D.C., not your local office.</li></ol> <p>[ask for preferred name—VHA or VA health, for example. Use this term for the rest of the discussion]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Are there things that VHA does well? Things to be proud of? [probe for research]</li><li>3. What do you know about the type of research that goes on at VA? Can you give an example of research or medical products that were developed from the VA?</li><li>4. Over the past 4 years, has your awareness of VA Research increased, decreased, or stayed the same?</li></ol>



UNITED STATES  
**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. If there has been a change in your awareness, why? What did you see or hear about VA research?</li><li>6. In your mind, how does VA research compare to research conducted at universities or hospitals? Who does the best medical research?</li><li>7. Would you say the quality (or rigor) of VA research is better, worse, or about the same as research conducted at other institutions?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [On flipchart: with named group in middle] Where on this scale would you put VA Research for producing “quality” research?</li></ul></li><li>8. Is the research more “cutting edge,” less, or about the same as research in other institutions?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [On flipchart: with named group in middle] Where on this scale would you put VA Research for being “cutting edge?”</li></ul></li><li>9. In your opinion, do you see a connection between the research and patient care? How might research help with the care patients receive? How might it hinder patient care?</li><li>10. What does the research mean for you personally? Does it help you or your family?</li></ol>
<p>Issue B [cut from this section if time is running short]</p> <p>Identification of Needs and Improvements</p> <p>[15 minutes]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. If you’re aware of VA Research, where have you heard about research from VA. [probes: through your senior officers? on TV?, etc.]</li><li>12. If you’re not aware of VA Research, where have you heard about new medical breakthroughs or research to help Veterans (injuries, PTSD, etc.)</li><li>13. To what extent are you interested in research from VA?</li><li>14. What type of research information interests you (for example, new technology to help injured Veterans? Health and wellness for VHA servicemen/women and their families?)</li><li>15. How can VA Research do a better job of informing someone like you about their research?</li><li>16. Where should VA Research put this information? For example, is there a bulletin or newsletter you read? The local newspaper? Their website?</li></ol>



UNITED STATES  
**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

<p>Branding and general information publications</p> <p>[20 minutes]</p>	<p>Now I want to get your feedback on some design aspects used to communicate information on research. I'll show you some materials or logos, and ask some questions about each one. [show logo, templates VHA ORD materials one at a time]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>17. What is your first impression? What do you like/dislike? [probe for colors, graphical elements, use of white space, overall layout]</li><li>18. Is it easy to read?</li><li>19. Who do you think they are trying to reach? Is this for someone like you or someone else?</li><li>20. [if for someone else] What changes would you make so that it seems more like materials directed to you?</li><li>21. [for print example] How likely are you to read this? Why or why not?</li><li>22. What, if anything, would you change to make this more interesting or appealing to you?</li></ol>
<p>Research Week and MVP materials</p> <p>[15 minutes]</p>	<p>These are some materials for upcoming campaigns or events. [show Research Week templates, MVP products one at a time]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>23. Have you ever heard of this event? If so, where did you hear about it?</li><li>24. Who do you think this product is aimed at? Is this for someone like you or someone else?</li><li>25. How likely is it that you would read this? Why or why not?</li><li>26. Is there anything that could be changed to make it something you would read?</li><li>27. What is your overall impression of the format? [probe for layout, font, colors, etc.]</li></ol>
<p>Issue C</p> <p>False Close and Wrap Up</p> <p>[5 minutes]</p>	<p>I'm going to check with my colleagues to see if they have additional questions that they want me to ask you. While I'm out, please think about this question: What's the single most important thing the people in VA Research should do to reach out to you?</p>
<p>Closing</p> <p>[1 min]</p>	<p>That concludes our questions. Thank you very much for your participation today. One of the outcomes of our work will be enhanced VA Research communication products, and your feedback will help tremendously as we develop those materials.</p>