

**Focus Group Testing to Effectively Plan and Tailor  
Cancer Prevention and Control Communication Campaigns**

**Appendix E**

**Reference Set of Example Questions for Use in Constructing a  
Focus Group Discussion Guide**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**USE THIS REFERENCE SET OF QUESTIONS TO CONSTRUCT A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EACH INFORMATION COLLECTION OR FOCUS GROUP. SELECT THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE MOST USEFUL FOR THE SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN OR TARGET POPULATION AND TAILOR THEM APPROPRIATELY. QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT SHOULD BE DELETED TO AVOID UNNECESSARY BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS.**

**Consumer General Information Gathering  
Risk Perception**

1. Is there any particular type of cancer that especially concerns you? Why?
2. Are you concerned about developing (insert cancer topic)?
3. How serious/severe do you think getting (insert type) cancer is for people nowadays?

**Prevention Behavior**

4. What do you do to take care of yourself?
5. Is there anything you do to decrease your risk of cancer? What do you do? Why?
6. Do you go to a doctor for regular checkups? How often?
7. What kinds of medical tests do you get regularly (e.g. once a year)?

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### **Cancer Awareness**

8. Are you interested in information about (insert cancer topic)? Why or why not? What type of information would interest you?
9. What, if anything, have you heard about (insert cancer topic)?
10. Who gets (insert specific cancer)? (E.g. what age, what gender, what race)
11. What causes (insert specific cancer)? Where did you learn this?
12. What are the symptoms of (insert specific cancer)? Where did you learn this?
13. Is there anything you can do to prevent (insert specific cancer)? Where did you learn this?

### **Screening Awareness**

14. What, if anything, do you know about ways to be tested for (insert specific cancer)? Who should be tested for (insert specific cancer)?
15. Has your doctor ever recommended that you have (insert name of test)? What is the purpose of (insert name of test)?
16. How often should a person be screened for (insert specific cancer) with (insert specific name of screening test)?

### **Screening Practices**

17. How long does your doctor spend talking with you about cancer screening? Which test/s did your doctor recommend? Did you have the test? Why or why not?
18. Have you ever been screened for (insert name of) cancer? How long ago did you have the screening test? What made you decide to be screened?

### **Screening Barriers**

19. If you haven't been screened for (insert specific cancer), why not?
20. If you have been screened for (insert specific cancer), but have not been screened in the last (insert specific interval recommendation [e.g. 2 years for breast cancer]), what would you say are the main reasons you did not get re-screened?

### **Media Exposure**

21. Where do you get news?
22. How much time each (specific time frame) do you spend online?

23. How much time each (specific time frame) do you spend (specify media exposure)?

24. What online services do you use?

25. What websites do you visit frequently? How often do you visit it/them?

26. Do you read newspapers? If yes, how often?

27. Do you read magazines? If yes, how often?

28. Do you subscribe to any magazines? If yes, which ones?

**Health-Information Gathering Behavior**

29. Do you trust the internet or other media, like newspapers, TV, and/or radio to give you accurate information about health? If yes, which do you trust?

30. Do you trust information from the government about health? If yes, which government agencies?

31. Where do you get information on health?

32. Where do get information about (insert cancer topic)?

33. Have you ever visited a medical or health website? If yes, what website? Why did you decide to visit it? Where did you hear or read about it? What kinds of information do you look for there?

34. Are you likely to download and print health related materials yourself? Or more likely to order a free hard copy to be mailed to you, if that option is available on the website?

35. Do you ever call 1-800 toll free numbers for medical information? If yes, which ones/why?

36. Have you ever ordered free materials that you saw advertised or heard about otherwise – whether on a website or somewhere else?

If yes,

- What were the materials?
- How/Why did you order them?
- How did you find out about the materials?

37. Have you ever searched for health information online? How often? What information have you searched for specifically? Did you search using a search engine (e.g. like – insert names of popular search engines)? Which one/s?

38. Have you ever gone directly to health website? Which one/s? Why did you like that one/those?

39. Does your doctor ever give you (insert material description)? Do you read it/them? Why or why not?

40. Do you read (insert material description) at (insert location description)? What type of materials would get your attention in this location?

### **Campaign Awareness/Recall**

41. Have you ever heard of (insert campaign name)?

42. Do you recall seeing any public service announcements – those are ads that can be on TV, radio, newspaper or magazine - about (insert cancer topic) that featured a celebrity? If yes, which celebrity/ies?

43. Do you recall seeing an ad (PSA) featuring (insert celebrity's name)? Do you remember what type of cancer the (insert celebrity's name) was talking about?

### **Consumer Hypothetical Concept Testing**

44. What would be the best way for CDC to communicate with you about (insert cancer topic)?

45. Do (insert type of communication, for example – TV public service announcements) catch your attention?

46. Would a television commercial about (insert cancer topic) catch your attention? Why or why not?

47. What would make you want to talk to your doctor about (insert cancer topic)?

48. Have you ever asked your doctor about something you read or saw in (insert media description)? What? Where did you see this information?

### **Web approaches**

49. Have you ever clicked on any online advertisement? What was the ad about?

50. Have you ever clicked on any online advertisement related to health? What was the ad about? Why did you click on it?

51. Have you ever visited a website that you saw in a (insert media, e.g. magazine) advertisement? If yes, which website? What was the (insert media) ad like? What caught your attention? Which (insert media) was the advertisement in?

52. Have you ever read or contributed to a web blog? If yes, which ones? How/why have you used them?

53. What do you know about web blogs?

**Celebrity approaches**

54. What types of people should be featured in educational materials, advertisements or public service advertisements that talk about (insert specific cancer topic)?

55. If a celebrity appeared in (insert material description) promoting awareness about (insert cancer topic), would that catch your attention? Would it be of interest to you?

56. In what circumstances might you find a celebrity advertisement believable and appealing to you?

57. Would (insert celebrity name) be believable talking about (insert specific cancer topic)? Why? What would make a celebrity believable?

58. Is there any particular approach or something a celebrity should say about (insert specific cancer screening or cancer topic)?

59. Is there anything in particular a celebrity should NOT say about (insert specific cancer screening or cancer topic)?

60. Who would be most likely to get your attention in campaign materials promoting (insert specific cancer screening test or cancer topic)?

**Consumer Materials/Concept Testing**

61. In reviewing the concepts in front of you, please grade their effectiveness (insert rating scale) and write down a few words to explain your general reaction.

62. Please describe the main idea behind the concepts presented. What is the main message?

63. Does this speak to you? Do you see yourself as part of the audience they're trying to reach? Why or why not?

64. Please describe what about this (image/text/message) is appealing and what is bothersome.

65. Is there any way that this could be made more attention getting/appealing to you?

66. What do you think you would do after seeing this concept?

67. Please take a look at each (insert item name). Is there one that would more likely to catch your attention, that you would be more likely to notice and watch/read?

68. Looking at each (insert item name) individually:

- Is this easy to read? (if a brochure/fact sheet/print ad – not to be used for broadcast concepts)
- Is it easy to understand?
- Would the information be helpful to you?
- Is the amount of information right for you? Too much? Too little?

69. After looking at the (insert item name or specific section) what is the take-away message?

70. What appealed to you about this approach?

71. What did not appeal to you?

72. Do you have any suggestions to make the (insert item name) more appealing?

73. Is this (insert item name) something that you would stop and look at or quickly disregard? \_

74. Do you think this would motivate you to (insert call to action included in the material)? Why or why not?

75. Can you think of anything that could improve the likelihood of (insert item name) prompting you to (insert call to action included in the material)?

76. How can this material be improved?

77. Comparing the (insert item name) in front of you, (insert ranking instructions).

### **Health Professional General Information Gathering**

78. Describe your practice setting. What type of organization do you work in?

79. Describe the demographics of the patients you serve.

80. Describe the location of your practice.

### **Screening Related Practices**

81. For patients at **average** risk, describe your approach to (insert cancer) screening.

82. Do you discuss modifiable risk factors and or sign/symptoms to watch out for related to (insert cancer) for average risk patients?



83. What specifically do you tell patients about (insert specific cancer)?
84. For whom do you recommend (insert specific cancer) screening?
85. Where in the spectrum of tests that you recommend do cancer screenings fit?
86. What (insert specific cancer) screening tests do you advise your patients to get routinely? How frequently do you advise them to be screened? At what age do you advise them to start screening?
87. Is there anyone for whom you wouldn't recommend screening?
88. How much time do you spend discussing preventive health/wellness strategies with patients? What topics do you typically discuss? What do you say specifically?
89. How much time do you spend discussing (insert cancer) screening? What do you say specifically?
90. What has influenced your approach to cancer screening?
91. Several groups issue screening guidelines. Do you follow any specific guidelines? If yes, which? Why?
92. What are the screening recommendations for (insert cancer)?
93. For (insert cancer) screening, what tests or procedures do you recommend for which patients – and why?
94. Do patients ever bring up the topic of screening before you do?
95. Do patients ever voice concern over a particular cancer before you do?
96. How similar or different is your approach to (insert specific cancer) screening now compared to a (insert time period) ago? How have your recommendations and practices changed over time?
97. What specifically do you tell patients about (insert specific cancer) screening?
98. Do you make arrangements for the (insert specific cancer) screening test or is it up to the patient to find an appropriate facility and make an appointment?
99. How do you know if the patient follows through with the (insert specific cancer) screening test? Do you have a reminder system in place? If yes, please describe it.
100. What percentage of your average-risk patients for whom you recommend (insert specific cancer) screening actually get screened? Has that changed in recent years?

101. What do you do if a patient is reluctant to be screened for (insert specific cancer)? Would you try to persuade them to be screened?

102. When a patient complains of symptoms that may be associated with cancer at what point do you begin to question whether the symptoms may be related to (insert specific cancer)? What kinds of tests do you recommend, if any? How do you follow-up with the patient?

103. If a patient is diagnosed with cancer, to what other specialist (by specialty) do you refer that patient?

104. If a patient asks you whether symptoms may be connected to a particular cancer and requests a specific test to find out, are you likely to conduct or order that test?

105. If a patient is underinsured or uninsured and they are not covered for certain cancer tests, are you likely to still recommend a cancer screening or diagnostic test?

106. How important are insurance reimbursement issues in relation to the tests you order? Please elaborate.

107. What reasons do you think patients do not get screened for (insert cancer)?

### **Media Exposure**

108. Has any general media coverage of a medical topic played a role in your practice? If yes, please describe what it was and the resulting impact.

109. Do you visit medical or health websites?

If yes,

- What websites?
- Why do you visit them?

110. Are you likely to download and print materials for your patients? Or more likely to order a quantity of materials, if that option is available on the website?

111. Have you ever ordered free patient education materials that you saw advertised or heard about otherwise – whether on a website or somewhere else?

If yes,

- What were the materials?
- Why did you order them?
- How did you find out about the materials?

If no,

- Have you ever seen ads or offers for free materials for your patients?
- Why don't you respond to these ads/offers?

112. Who in your office is in charge of ordering free patient education materials (as well as storing and maintaining an inventory)?

113. What are your main sources of information about (insert cancer) screening?

114. What medical journals do you read?

115. What conferences do you attend?

116. What type of continuing education do you take part in?

117. Would you be interested in continuing education on (insert cancer) screening?

118. Have you ever heard of (insert campaign name)?

119. Do you read or contribute to web blogs?

- If yes, which ones?
- If no, why?

120. Is there anything else that you would like CDC to hear about helping you promote (insert specific cancer) screening?

121. What is your general impression of CDC? Would you pay attention to a message from CDC?

122. Do you receive e-mails from journals or professional organizations now? Which ones? Do you read them?

123. Would e-mail from journals or professional organizations be a good place to include (insert item name)?

124. What is the best way to reach you with information about (insert campaign name) materials?

125. What is the best way for CDC to communicate with you about (insert cancer topic)?

126. What is the best way for CDC to communicate with physicians about (insert cancer topic)?

### **Health Professional Concept Testing**

127. What are important characteristics to consider when determining the types of people to feature in campaign materials for (insert specific cancer)? Please keep in mind this is a campaign targeted to reach health professionals like you, NOT patients.

128. In reviewing the concepts in front of you, please grade their effectiveness (insert grading instructions) and write down a few words to explain your general reaction.

129. Please describe what text is/is not appealing.

130. What would improve this concept?

### **Health Professional Materials Testing**

131. What do you think about this (insert item name)? What do you like about it? What do you dislike? How could it be improved? (Note, this may be for the health professional's own education, or maybe for the health professional to use as a resource to communicate with patients)

132. Looking at each (insert item name) individually:

- Is this easy to read?
- Is it easy to understand?
- Would the information be helpful to you?
- Is the amount of information right for you? Too much? Too little?

133. If a celebrity appeared in (insert material description) promoting (insert cancer topic), would that catch your attention? Would it be of interest to you?

134. In what circumstances might you find a celebrity advertisement believable and appealing to you?

135. Would Katie Couric be believable talking about colorectal cancer?

136. Would (insert celebrity name) be believable talking about (insert specific cancer)?

137. Is there anything in particular a celebrity should say about (insert specific cancer) screening?

138. Please take a look at this (insert item name). Would it catch your attention?

139. Please take a look at each (insert item name). Is one more likely to catch your attention? Would you be more likely to read one or the other?

140. Would these (insert item name) be helpful to you?

141. After looking at the (insert item name) what was the take-away message?

142. What appealed to you about this approach?

143. What did not appeal to you?
144. Do you have any suggestions to make the (insert item name) more appealing? More useful? Any suggestions to improve it any way?
145. Is this (insert item name) something that you would stop and look at or quickly disregard? Why?
146. Where would you expect to see this (insert item name)?
147. Would the (insert item name) motivate you to (insert call to action included in the material)? Why or why not?
148. Can you think of anything that could improve the likelihood of (insert item name) prompting you to (insert call to action included in the material)?
149. Where would be the best places to publish the (insert item name) to reach you?
150. These (insert item name/s) are designed to support your efforts to encourage screening. What do you think about these?
151. Is the information included enough or not enough?
152. Would you use something like this with your patients? Why/ why not/ in what circumstances?
153. Is the information included helpful? Would you like to see something else included?
154. How can this material be improved?
155. What would be the best way for CDC to let you know about and provide copies of this material?
156. What materials may best help support your efforts to encourage or explain (insert cancer topic) to your patients?

157. CDC would like to develop materials for you as clinicians - that is, not for patients, but information or reference tools for physicians. Please state your reactions to some of the following examples of physician tools.
158. Are there others in your practice – such as other physicians or other members of your staff – who might be involved in reviewing materials and conferring with you or each other about what the practice might adopt for use with patients?
159. Is there anything CDC needs to know about the process of getting something considered for use in your practice to encourage screening for (insert specific cancer)?
160. As a physician, do you pay attention to faxes? More so than e-mails?
161. Would faxes or e-mails be more likely to get your attention? Why?
162. Is there anything a sender might include or do differently to make it more likely that you would respond to a fax?
163. If you were to respond to received material, would you be more likely to send a return fax, by e-mail, by visiting the (insert campaign name) website and filling out something online, or by calling the number listed?
164. Can you think of other ways for CDC to reach primary care physicians and let them know (insert specific cancer) resources are available free of charge?
165. Do you currently use any patient education materials about (insert cancer topic)? If yes, what type of materials? What is the source of the materials?
166. Are you interested in using patient education materials about (insert cancer topic) prepared by CDC? Why or why not? What type of materials would be most useful?
167. Do you use (insert material description) in your practice?
168. How do you decide which (insert material description) to use in your practice, if at all?

169. Would materials in languages other than English be useful? Which languages?