

Submission 0920-13ABP under  
0920-0840 Formative Research and Tool Development

**Attachment 2j: Exploratory- HIV Prevention  
Focus Group Interview Guide**

Public reporting burden of this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to CDC/ATSDR Reports Clearance Officer; 1600 Clifton Road NE, MS D-74, Atlanta, Georgia 30333; Attn: OMB-PRA (0920-0840)

## Attachment 2j: Exploratory- HIV Prevention Focus Group Interview Guides

### Welcome

Thank you for coming today. Your participation is very important. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm from RTI, a non-profit research organization. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is sponsoring this research. The purpose of this interview/focus group is to hear your views and opinions on important health topics concerning HIV/AIDS. Your insights are very important to us and your time today is appreciated. We will have about 2 hours for our discussion.

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

- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. We want to know your opinions and what you think about the issues we will be discussing. I do not work for the people who are sponsoring this research, so don't hold back from giving me your honest opinions.
- You have probably noticed the microphones in the room. They are here because we are audio taping. I want to give you my full attention and not have to take a lot of notes. At the end of our discussion, I have to write a report and will refer to the tape when writing the report.
- 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 secure to the extent allowable by law. Your name, address, and phone number, which only the facility knows, will not be given to anyone and no one will contact you after this interview is over.
- There may be some sensitive questions asked during this discussion. If at any time you are uncomfortable with my questions, you can choose not to answer. Simply let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- Be sure to only use first names during the discussion. Please do not use your last name. Also, if you bring up a friend or other person you know as an example in our discussions, please do not use their last name either. So, whenever you mention a name, it should only be a first name and never a last name.
- Please turn your cell phone or beeper to vibrate or silent mode. The interview/focus group will last no more than 2 hours.
- If you need to go to the restroom during the discussion, please feel free to leave, but please return as soon as possible.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

## **Warm-up**

Before we begin our discussion, let's spend a little time getting to know one another.

1. Please tell me your first name, where you're from and your favorite X.

## **Community**

Sometimes people refer to groups of people who have certain things in common as communities. They may have things in common like race, age, gender, location, beliefs, culture or values. Examples of communities could be the black community, gay community, online community, or the church community.

2. Do you see yourself belonging to a particular community(ies)? If so, which community(ies)? [If not mentioned ask: Is there also an [X] community? If so, do you feel as though you are a part of that community?]

## **Sexual Health**

3. *What comes to mind when I say "sexual health"?*
4. *What does sexual health mean to you?*
5. *Have you ever thought about your sexual health? Tell me a little about that.*
6. *What can you tell me about men's/women's priorities when it comes to health, relationships and sex?*
7. *What can you tell me about concerns men/women may have related to sexual health?*
8. *What aspect of your sexual health is most important to you?*

## **HIV Awareness, Knowledge and Attitudes**

9. What questions do you have about HIV? What would you like to know more about?
  - How to prevent transmission
  - How it is transmitted
  - How it affects your body
  - How it can be treated
  - Difference between HIV and AIDS
  - Difference between treatment vs. cure

10. How is HIV spread?
  - What are common ways HIV is spread?
  - What are less common ways HIV is spread?
11. How can a person prevent himself/herself from getting HIV?
12. Do you ever talk to your friends about ways to prevent or avoid getting HIV? If so, what do you talk about?
13. How is a person at risk for HIV?
  - Give me an example/scenario of someone who is at high risk for HIV? Medium risk? Low risk?
14. Do you feel like you are at risk for HIV? Have you ever been at risk? Why?
15. How much do you worry about HIV? Why?
  - Have you ever made a change in your life because you were worried about getting HIV? What did you do?
16. Can you think of times in your life when you went from not [being careful to being careful]? What prompted you to do that? How long did it last?
  - Fear
  - An HIV “scare”
  - Getting an STI
17. If you were to test positive on a future HIV test, would you be afraid that you would be thought of or treated differently? How might you be thought of or treated differently, and by whom? [If necessary: How would your family react if you tested positive? How about your friends?]
18. Do you feel like HIV is more or less serious today than it used to be? Why?
19. How is HIV viewed within the gay community? How about the [insert] community? How about the community at large?

20. Knowing that having sex has both risks and benefits, how does one weigh those risks and benefits in deciding to have unprotected sex? In deciding to [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?
  - What do people think about unprotected sex? Is it common? Not common?
21. How common is it for people to have more than one partner at a time/more than one partner that overlap in time? Under what circumstances does that occur?
22. How would you describe your role in protecting yourself from HIV? How about your partner's role in protecting himself/herself? How about your partner's role in protecting you?

### **HIV Prevention Strategies/Risk Reduction Approaches**

23. When you hear [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic], what do you think of?
24. What can you tell me about [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?
25. How common is it to use/do [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]? Is it more common among some people than others? Tell me more about that.
26. How hard or easy is it to [HIV risk reduction strategy/risk reduction topic]?
27. What are the pros or advantages of [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?
28. What are the cons or disadvantages of [HIV prevention/risk reduction topic]?
29. What are some things that might keep people from [HIV prevention/risk reduction topic]?
  - Do you think the cost of [HIV prevention/risk reduction topic] might keep people from using/doing it?
  - Do you think the availability/accessibility of [HIV prevention/risk reduction topic] might people from using/doing it?
30. What are some things that might convince or motivate people to [HIV prevention/risk reduction topic]?
31. What differences, if any, do you see in attitudes about [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction strategy] between the gay community and the straight [or heterosexual] community? What about between HIV negative gay men and HIV positive gay men?
32. In your opinion, how effective is [prevention strategy] at preventing HIV/AIDS? Why do you say that?
33. Have you ever personally considered [prevention strategy] to prevent HIV/AIDS? Why or why not?
34. How feasible is it that you would [try to] do this? Please explain.
35. What makes it hard to do this?
36. Who in your opinion would be against trying this? Why?
37. How appealing is it to you as a way to control your HIV risk?
38. How do you think your partner(s) would react to the idea of using/doing [HIV prevention strategy/prevention topic]?

39. What would make this easier for you to do?
40. What are the good things about trying this? What might be some negative things about trying this?
41. I'm going to pass around a sheet that gives you some descriptions for [HIV prevention strategy]. Please review these descriptions silently, and circle those that seem most doable. Cross out any that don't seem do-able.
42. As you look at these behaviors or strategies, are there two or three that you would be most likely to do? (FG: Moderator takes a hand count) Which behaviors or strategies would you be least likely to do?
43. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being definitely not [feasible] and 5 being definitely [feasible], how [feasible] is it that you would try to do this? Please explain.
44. On as scale of 1-5 with 1 being definitely not [appealing] and 5 being very [appealing], how [appealing] is it to you as a way to control your HIV risk?
45. [From the top three behaviors or strategies] As you look at these behaviors or strategies, does any one of the three stand out to you as the one that you would try first? Which one? Why?

### **Communication with Providers**

46. Do you have a health care provider? Where do you usually go for your care?
47. Has a health care provider ever talked to you about HIV or STDs? What did your health care provider say? What do you think about what your health care provider said?
48. Did they talk about prevention for HIV or STDs? What did they say?
49. Did they talk to you about [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] or offer [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] to you? Tell me more about this.

### **Sexual Partners and HIV Prevention**

50. Do you currently have a main sex partner, that is, a partner you would call your spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, significant other, or life partner?
  - How long have you and your main partner been together?
  - Is your main partner male, female or transgender?
  - Do you know your main partner's HIV status? Does your main partner know your HIV status?
51. Do you do/use [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] with your main partner? Why or why not?
  - Who gets to decide on whether [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] is used or not? Why is that? How do you feel about that?
  - What would you do if your main partner did not want to do/use [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?

- How is doing/using [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] negotiated between you and your partner?
52. Do either of you have other sex partners outside of the relationship?
- Is your relationship open? Are there certain rules you have to follow with other partners? Tell me about them.
53. Do you currently have or have you recently had any casual sex partners, that is, acquaintance(s) or friend(s) that you have hooked up with for sex?
54. Do you use [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] with these partners? With some and not others? What makes you decide when it's OK to use [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] or not?
- o Are they top or bottom?
  - o Look "healthy?"
  - o Recently tested negative
  - o Are both positive
  - o Where they met or found them (bar, internet, sex club, party, social, etc)
55. Do you talk about your own HIV status or ask about theirs before having sex? Why or why not?
- o How do you go about starting the discussion?
  - o What happens if you and your partner are the same HIV status?
  - o What happens if you and your partner are not the same HIV status?
56. Tell me about any times when you felt uncomfortable bringing up [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] with a sex partner? What made it uncomfortable for you? How did you handle it?
57. Tell me about any times when you felt judged for wanting to use/do [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic] when your partner did not? Why do you think that was?
- o What about times when you did not want to use/do [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?

## Information Sources

58. How would you feel about getting [topic] information in the following places?
- Community health clinic
  - Doctor's office
  - Church
  - Health fair
  - Work
  - Sporting event
59. What other places can you think of that would be convenient places to get information about [topic]?

60. In general, how much do you trust information about health or medical topics from the following sources? Would you say a lot, some, a little, or not at all?
- family and friends?
  - newspapers or magazines?
  - the radio?
  - the Internet?
  - television?
  - community-based organizations?
  - government health agencies?

[IF NEEDED: Government health agencies include the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local health departments.]

61. Who do you NOT trust to give you health information? Why?
62. Who do you think would be a good spokesperson to use to convince you and your friends to [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic]?
63. If you were trying to make up your mind about [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic], who would influence you?
64. If you were trying to influence a friend to [HIV prevention strategy/risk reduction topic], what would you say?
- **PROBE** for benefits and ways to overcome barriers
65. How do you feel about CDC as the source of information?
66. What if the CDC was to say something like this? Would that change the way you look at these statements? Would it make any of them more or less believable? More or less appealing? Motivating?
67. Where do you get your information about HIV/AIDS?
- **PROBE** for sources such as media, family, friends, church
68. What are some of the ways you have gotten information about HIV/AIDS prior to today?
- o **PROBE** role of media, word-of-mouth, other.

## Closing

Okay, we are pretty much out of time. Do you have any last thoughts?

Excuse me for one moment while I see if the people observing have any questions that I have not asked. I will be right back.

Thank you for your participation. There is a brochure for you to take with you if you would like. It has information about HIV/AIDS and locations where you can get further information. Have a good day/evening.