

# PATH Focus Group Moderator Guide

## Electronic Nicotine Product Modifications

### Overview

Thank you for agreeing to participate this evening in a discussion about the use of electronic nicotine products. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be leading the session tonight. With me is \_\_\_\_\_, who will be taking notes and helping me with the discussion. \_\_\_\_\_ and I both work for Westat, a company based in Rockville, MD that conducts research on many different topics for a variety of government agencies. Westat has been contracted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop materials and questions for a study known as the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health, or “PATH”. PATH is a national study that will look at how people use tobacco (or don’t) over a period of many years. Data collected during the study will help provide the scientific background for the development of product regulations to reduce tobacco-related illnesses and deaths in the United States.

Today, we’ll be asking you questions about your experiences with e-products you have modified, such as e-cigarettes, mods, vape pens, hookah pens, personal vaporizers, and e-cigars. Our discussions today will help us develop questions to include in the PATH Study

Before we get started there are a few things I should mention. This is a research project, and your participation is voluntary. You may leave at any time during the session. You will receive \$500 as a thank you for participating in tonight’s discussion.

Your participation is also anonymous. Our report to NIH and the FDA will include the ideas that you all share with me today, but not your names. They are interested in *what* gets said, not *who* said what. Sometimes we do include quotes from groups like this, but we never use participants’ names in any reports. We also won’t share your names with NIH or the FDA, except as required by law.

Behind me is an observation room. Sitting in there tonight are [Westat staff and NIH or FDA staff]. They are also here to learn from you. Towards the end of the group, I’ll go back and see if our discussion raised any questions that they would like me to ask you. Because they are part of the research team, they also cannot attribute what they hear tonight to any one of you in particular. In fact, they only know your first name as it’s written on your name card.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 86 minutes 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: NIH, Project Clearance Branch, 6705 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7974, Bethesda, MD 20892-7974, ATTN: PRA (0925-0675). Do not return the completed form to this address.

In addition, we need to audio record this focus group session. This helps \_\_\_\_\_ and I; I can listen better to what you are saying, and the recording will help \_\_\_\_\_ be sure that her notes are complete. We will destroy the file and any identifying information when the project ends.

I will look at your name tags and call on you by your first name. However, when studying the transcripts from today's session, it is helpful for me to know when we change speakers. So, please identify yourself when you speak so that we have that on tape. Also, please try to speak one at a time.

If you need a restroom, they are located \_\_\_\_\_. Please feel free to step out if you need to, but don't all leave at once!

Does anyone have any questions? [ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS]

In front of you is a form that says I've fully explained what we're doing today, and what your rights are as participants in this discussion. Please take a moment to read it and let me know if there is anything on the form that you do not understand. If you understand and are ok with what we're doing this evening, please sign and date one copy of the form and give that to \_\_\_\_\_. The other copy is for you to keep. It has contact information for the study director at Westat, in case you should have any questions later on. [COLLECT ALL FORMS]

If everyone's ready, we're going to start recording the session now.

## Introductions

Let's start off by going around the room: state just your first name and tell us something interesting about who you are - a hobby you may have, a unique experience, something like that.

## Electronic Nicotine Products

Now that we've done our introductions, I'd like to move on to discussing e-products that you have modified. One at a time, tell me about your product and either show me the product you brought or pick one out on the table that is closest to what you use.

[DURING THIS TIME, THE NOTE TAKER SHOULD BE WRITING A LIST OF THE MENTIONED PRODUCTS ON THE WHITE BOARD OR PAD.]

- How often do you use your product?
- How long have you been using it?

## ENP Categories

We are interested in finding out the best way to tell apart different types of electronic nicotine products.

Currently, we have four different categories of electronic nicotine products [HAVE CATEGORIES WRITTEN ON WHITE BOARD]:

- Non-refillable disposable e-products (sometimes called “cigalikes”, includes brands such as NJoy, Blu, Vuse, etc.)
- Non-refillable e-products with cartridges
- Refillable e-products with cartridges
- E-products with a refillable tank system

Where does your product fit in these four categories?

Do you feel these categories work for your product? Why or why not?

Can you think of any electronic nicotine products that wouldn't fit into these categories?

## Device Type

### Atomizer

[HAND OUT UNLABELED PICTURES OF DEVICE WITH ATOMIZER AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO LABEL PARTS. DISCUSS AS GROUP.]

Does anyone here use a product that looks like this? How does it work?

What do you call this part? [INDICATE ATOMIZER ON IMAGE OF DEVICE] Is there more than one name for this part? What do you think is the most commonly used term? [WRITE TERMS ON BOARD]

IF NEEDED, Do you call this part an atomizer?

If someone were to ask, how would you explain what an atomizer is?

Are there different types of atomizers?

IF NEEDED, What is the difference between atomizers with filler and atomizers without fillers?

## Cartomizer

[HAND OUT UNLABELED PICTURES OF DEVICE WITH CARTOMIZER AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO LABEL PARTS. DISCUSS AS GROUP.]

Does anyone here use a product that looks like this? How does it work?

What do you call this part? [INDICATE CARTOMIZER ON IMAGE OF DEVICE] Is there more than one name for this part? What do you think is the most commonly used term? [WRITE TERMS ON BOARD]

IF NEEDED, Do you call this part a cartomizer?

If someone were to ask, how would you explain what a cartomizer is? Is a tank cartomizer different?

## Clearomizer

[HAND OUT UNLABELED PICTURES OF DEVICE WITH CLEAROMIZER AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO LABEL PARTS. DISCUSS AS GROUP.]

Does anyone here use a product that looks like this? How does it work?

What do you call this part? [INDICATE CLEAROMIZER ON IMAGE OF DEVICE] Is there more than one name for this part? What do you think is the most commonly used term? [WRITE TERMS ON BOARD]

IF NEEDED, Do you call this part a clearomizer?

If someone were to ask, how would you explain what a clearomizer is?

## Product Usage

### Dripping

Is anyone here familiar with the act of “dripping”?

(IF YES) What is dripping? How do you do it? Does anyone here ever drip? Why do you drip? Where did you learn how to do it?

What are the differences between dripping and using a cartridge?

Do e-cigarettes meant for dripping have a tank? Do they have a cartridge?

### Modifications *[FOCUS MUCH OF DISCUSSION HERE]*

What does it mean to modify an electronic nicotine product?

Have you ever modified your electronic nicotine product? How did you modify it?

Where did you learn how to modify your product?

Did you need additional parts? If so, where do you get the parts needed to modify your product?

What other kinds of modifications have you heard of people making to their products?

### Voltage

Have you heard of people changing the voltage of their electronic nicotine products?

What does it mean to change the voltage of electronic nicotine products?

#### PROBE AS NEEDED

- Have you ever changed the voltage of your electronic nicotine product?
- How did you change the voltage?
- Why did you change the voltage?
- Why do you think people change the voltage of their electronic nicotine products?  
IF NEEDED, To increase or decrease the amount of vapor? To affect the flavor? To change the temperature of the vapor?

IF NEEDED, Do you ever change the size of your battery? What effect does this have?

## Disposal

When you are finished with a disposable e-product or an e-product cartridge, what do you do with it?

Are there parts you keep?

Are there parts you throw away? Where do you throw it away? Do you usually throw them away in the same place or does it vary? [PROBE FOR MULTIPLE LOCATIONS TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL RANGE OF PLACES RESPONDENTS MAY DISPOSE OF E-PRODUCT PARTS]

## Close

Those are all the questions I have for you, but let me check with my colleagues behind the glass to see if there are issues you all raised about which they have additional questions. [CHECK WITH OBSERVERS, RETURN AND ASK ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, AS APPROPRIATE]

Thank you for your thoughts and your time today.  
DISTRIBUTE INCENTIVE OR DIRECT RESPONDENTS TO FRONT DESK.