

NINDS HEALTHY BRAIN FOCUS GROUP MODERATORS GUIDE

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Study Purpose

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), part of the National Institutes of Health, is in the process of developing a new campaign related to cognitive impairment, stroke and heart attack prevention. Nine 90-minute focus groups will be conducted in September across three cities in the Stroke Belt. Participants will be men and women, ages 45-65, who have high blood pressure, a significant and modifiable cardiovascular risk factor. African Americans and Hispanics will be over-represented because of high rates of hypertension within these communities. The purpose of the research is to identify optimal messaging and target audience insights to ensure that concepts and materials resonate with the target audience.

Intended Outcomes

The research findings will help determine which campaign concept appears to have the potential for the greatest impact on audience awareness, attitudes and behavior as they relate to high blood pressure in an effort to manage risk of cognitive impairment, stroke and heart attack.

Introduction and Ground Rules

Hello, thank you for coming today. My name is Pat Marzi and I'm the moderator for today's discussion. I work for a research company and have been hired by an outside consultant. My role is completely objective, with no affiliation with outside organizations. The purpose of the discussion is to get your opinions about information related to health and wellness.

We'll be doing several things today:
Participating in a group discussion
Sharing ideas and concerns about health and wellness
Looking at several health-oriented campaigns

Feel free to make positive or negative comments about any of the things we'll be discussing. This is a free-flowing discussion and there are no wrong or right answers. Your responses will not be shared publicly.

Disclosures

Mention microphones, mirrors, observers, and audiotaping.

The team that produced the campaigns is watching and learning today, and they may take the opportunity to ask more questions before the end of this session.

The session is being taped so I can write an accurate report not of "who said what," but "what was said."

Your name will not be used in the report. As you have been told previously, your participation here and everything you say will not be shared publicly.

Guidelines

In order to make this a productive research session, there are some guidelines we need to follow:

Please talk one at a time and in a voice at least as loud as mine.

Avoid side conversations with your neighbors.

I need to hear from everyone in the course of the conversation and to the degree possible, let's have equal "air time," so that everybody talks the same amount of time – nobody talks too much and nobody talks too little.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I ask – there are different points of view. It's valuable for me to hear all points of view, so it's especially important to speak up when you disagree with what someone else has said. Also, please remember that I did not develop any of the material you're going to see, so feel free to make any comments you may have.

I may need to move on to another area of discussion sooner than you are ready, and may have to cut a conversation short in the interest of time. If I interrupt you, it is not personal; I just want to get everything covered on the agenda that is planned. You're welcome to speak to me after the group session so that I can be sure I get all your thoughts and comments.

Self Introductions

Before we get started, let's introduce ourselves. Let's go around the room and state:

Your first name

Where are you from

What you enjoyed about your summer

Background Discussion

When you are thinking about your own health and wellness, what are you thinking about?

What are the things you do to keep yourself healthy?

What are the things you do to prevent illness?

Where do you typically get messages, information, and the latest news on health and wellness? Of these, which are your most trusted sources? PROBE: General media, social media, other.

What are the health risks (e.g., conditions, diseases) you are most concerned about? Anything else?

What steps do you take, if any, to lower your risk of the above?

What about high blood pressure? Is that something you think about? How serious a concern is it for you? Is it something you actively manage? Please explain.

What are the health risks or consequences you associate with high blood pressure?

What does brain health mean to you?

Is your brain health or the health of your mind something that you manage? Please explain.

Is losing your ability to make decisions independently something that you worry about? What about losing your ability to learn new things? Losing your memory? Losing other brain functions? Please explain. How prominent is it in your list of health concerns?

Reactions to Campaigns

Now I am going to show you some campaigns related to the subjects we've been talking about. I will present a single campaign to you, and we will discuss it together before moving on to the next campaign. These messages might show up in magazines, on posters, out-of-home on billboards or bus shelters, and online on Facebook or Twitter, etc.

MODERATOR WILL PRESENT THE FIRST OF FOUR CONCEPTS, STARTING WITH A SINGLE EXECUTION. CONCEPTS WILL BE ROTATED BETWEEN GROUPS TO OFFSET ORDER BIAS. CONCEPTS INCLUDE:

1. Concept 1
2. Concept 2
3. Concept 3
4. Concept 4

What is your initial reaction to this idea?

What stands out about it? What did you note as important? Why?

How do you relate to this personally? Does it speak to you? Please explain.

How do you feel about the language used? What does it make you think about? Please explain.

What effect, if any, does seeing this have on you? Does it change the way you think at all? Any effect on your behavior, do you imagine?

Was there anything that was unclear or confusing? Anything you disagreed with?

Is there anything else about this idea I should hear from you?

Where might you expect to see this idea? Where would it be most helpful for you to get this information?

What is the main message of this campaign overall?

How important is this message? Please explain.

How effective is this message? What effect does it have?

MODERATOR TO REPEAT THE SAME DISCUSSION FOR EACH CONCEPT. DURING DISCUSSION, SPECIFIC PROBES WILL INCLUDE:

What is the best language to employ when talking about brain health and mental function?

What is the more effective call-to-action--"check your blood pressure" versus "control" it?

In "Concept X," which statement is more motivating?

- "But you have the power to keep your brain and heart functioning at their highest possible levels"
- "But you have the power to prevent a loss of brain function - and ward off heart attacks and strokes too"

Comparing and Contrasting Concepts

ONCE ALL CONCEPTS HAVE BEEN FULLY DISCUSSED, MODERATOR WILL ASK:

Of the campaigns discussed here today, which one does the best job of getting your attention and motivating you to manage your high blood pressure?

PARTICIPANTS WILL WRITE DOWN THEIR ANSWERS INDIVIDUALLY BEFORE DISCUSSING. MODERATOR WILL THEN TALLY ANSWERS AND DISCUSS REASONS WHY.

ONCE LEADING CONCEPT HAS BEEN DETERMINED:

What makes this campaign most effective? What are its key strength(s)?

Are there any watch-outs (concerns, considerations, weaknesses, etc.) with this campaign going forward?

Where would you expect to see this type of messaging? Where should they put messages like this to get your attention and affect your opinions?