

**Moderator's Guide:**  
**Consumer Knowledge and Perceptions about Tobacco Products**  
(Created 11/17/2011)

**I. Welcome and ground rules (5 minutes)**

MODERATOR: Welcome and thank you for participating in tonight's discussion. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Tonight, I am interested in hearing your opinions about tobacco products. You have been asked to participate in tonight's discussion because you use some of the various types of cigarettes and other tobacco products that we are going to look at and discuss tonight.

Before we begin, I want to go over a few ground rules for our discussion tonight, which will last about 90 minutes.

- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to not answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time.
- If at any time you are uncomfortable with my questions, you can choose not to answer. Just let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- Everything we discuss today will be kept private to the extent allowable by law. Your name and contact information, which only the study staff knows, will not be given to anyone else and no one will contact you after this interview is over.
- Tonight's discussion will be audio and video recorded. The recordings will help me write the final report and will be kept in a secure location and then destroyed at the end of the study. No names will be mentioned in the final report created from these interviews.
- Some of my coworkers are viewing our discussion. They're watching to make sure that I ask you all of the questions I have for you today. Near the end of our conversation, I'm going to go into the back and see if they have any last minute questions for you.
- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. I want to know your opinions. I do not work for the people sponsoring this research and I didn't write the questions we're going to look at, so don't hold back on giving me your honest opinions.
- I'm not a medical doctor or an expert on smoking or tobacco, so I can't answer specific questions. At the end of our discussion, however, I have some materials that you can take with you if you'd like.
- Please silence your cell phones.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

**II. Tobacco products introduction (5 minutes)**

You are here tonight because we would like to hear your thoughts about tobacco products. There are many types of tobacco products on the market. Some you smoke, some you chew, some you keep tucked in your cheek, and some dissolve in your mouth.

1. **[For current and light users]** Let's go around the room and have everyone tell us your first name, what type of tobacco products you currently use, and how long you have been using those tobacco products.

2. **[For former users]** Let's go around the room and have everyone tell us your first name, what type of tobacco products you used to use, and when you quit.
3. **[For smokers]** Why do you/did you like to smoke? What do/did you enjoy about it?  
**[For users of other tobacco products]** Why do you/did use smokeless tobacco products? What do/did you enjoy about it?

### **III. Ranking different types of cigarettes and smokeless products in terms of harm to health (35 minutes)**

Now I'm going to put on the table a number of different brands of cigarettes as well as some smokeless tobacco products. Some of them may be familiar to you. *[Pass out the 6–8 examples and let everyone handle them and look at them]*

4. *[Pass out handout with list of products.]* On the handout, under each product list the first word or phrase that comes to mind for each product. *[After participants have finished the exercise, choose 3–4 products and ask...]* What word or phrase came to your mind when you looked at [insert product]? *[List product/words on white board.]*
5. Which products, if any, have you used before or are familiar with?
6. Which products, if any, have you not used before or are not familiar with?
7. In front of you is a sheet of paper with numbers. I'd like you to take a few minutes and rank these products from the least harmful to your health (which would be #1) to the most harmful to your health (which would be #X). Feel free to pick them up and look at them if you want to. I also have a list of the products up here on the easel.
8. I want you to know that I don't know what the correct ranking is, or if there is a correct ranking. I just want to hear your opinions about what makes some brands or types of cigarettes and other tobacco products more or less harmful to your health.

*[After participants have finished the individual rankings, randomly choose 3–4 products and ask...]* Where did this product fall in your ranking? Why?

*[Remove products from table.]* Now I'm going to put another set of cigarettes and some smokeless tobacco products on the table. *[Pass out the 6–8 examples and let everyone handle them and look at them]*

9. Which products, if any, have you used before or are familiar with?
10. Which products, if any, have you not used before or are not familiar with?
11. I'd like you to take a few minutes and rank these products from the least harmful to your health (which would be #1) to the most harmful to your health (which would be #X). Feel free to pick them up and look at them if you want to. I have a list of the products up here on the easel.
12. Again, I don't know what the correct ranking is, or if there is a correct ranking. I just want to hear your opinions about what makes some brands or types of cigarettes and other tobacco products more or less harmful to your health.

*[After participants have finished the individual rankings, randomly choose 3–4 products and ask...] Where did this product fall in your ranking? Why?*

#### **IV. Discussion about ranking different types of cigarettes and smokeless products in terms of harm to health (25 minutes)**

Ok, we have just ranked two sets of different cigarettes and smokeless products from the least harmful to your health to the most harmful to your health. *[Put all products on table.]*

13. Now let's consider these four products. *[Select two products from each ranking exercise, one that was ranked high and one that was ranked low].* How would you rank these four products from least harmful to most harmful? *[Engage the group with the following questions as they do the ranking.]*
  - a. Which products do you consider to be most harmful to your health? Why?
  - b. *[If not mentioned]* Is there anything about how the product looks that helped you decide how harmful it is? If so, what?
  - c. *[If not mentioned]* What about the way it's packaged?
  - d. *[If not mentioned]* What about things you've heard about the product in the past?
  - e. Which products do you consider to be least harmful to your health? Why?
  - f. *[If not already discussed]* When doing the rankings, how were you thinking about the phrase "harmful to your health"? In your own words, explain what this means to you. *[Probe]* When doing the rankings, were you thinking of harm to yourself personally or harm to others?
  - g. *[Ask a few people]* Do you consider the product you currently/used to use to be more or less harmful to your health compared with the other products we've looked at tonight? Why?
14. What did you think of the ranking exercises? Did you find it easy or hard to rank the products from least to most harmful to your health? Explain why it was easy or hard.
15. Which do you think are more harmful to your health, cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products? *[Probe]* Why do you think that? *[If general consensus, ask if all of the one type are more harmful than all of the other type. Take care to not presume that users believe smokeless to be less harmful than cigarettes.]*
16. Do you think tobacco product manufacturers would market a product as being less harmful to your health? Why or why not?
  - a. Are you aware of any tobacco products that are currently marketed as less harmful to your health?
  - b. If yes, which products? Why do you think these products are less harmful to your health? *[Probe on product labels or advertisements.]*

**V. Discussion about novel tobacco products (20 minutes)**

Great job everyone. I think we're all done ranking for the night. But before we leave, I want to show you a few tobacco products that you may not have come across before. Some of the products are not available in many areas of the country.

*[Moderator shows each product individually, passes it around, and then asks the following questions for each.]*

17. Please raise your hand if you have heard of or seen this product before.
18. Please raise your hand if you have used this product.
19. For those of you who are not familiar with the product, what are your initial thoughts about the product?
20. For those of you who have heard or seen this product before:
  - a. What have you heard about this product?
  - b. Where did you get this information? *[Probe: magazine ad, Internet, friend]*
  - c. Where have you seen this product?
  - d. For those who have used the product, describe how to use the product. What did you think about it? Would you use it again? Why or why not?
21. If you've never used the product, how likely would you be to try it? Why or why not?
22. *[After discussing all the new products]* How harmful to your health are these new products compared with the traditional products we discussed earlier? *[Probe]* Why are these products more or less harmful?

**VI. Debrief/Closing**

23. Do you have any questions before we conclude?

Our discussion has brought up a lot of questions about the health risks of tobacco use. As I mentioned, I have some brochures available here that you're welcome to take with you if you like.

Thank you for participating in tonight's discussion. I appreciate your time and effort.

## Description of Stimuli

| Stimuli Set 1     | Stimuli Set 2                  | Type   |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Marlboro Red      | Camel Gold                     | Full flavor major brand cigarette  |
| Camel Blue        | Marlboro Silver                | “Light” major brand cigarette  |
| Newports          | Salems                         | Menthol major brand cigarette  |
|                   | Liggett Select                 | Discount brand   |
| American Spirit   | Nat Sherman                    | Claim (natural, organic, etc.)   |
| Virginia Slims    | Ultra Slim                     | Female groups only   |
| Black and Mild    | Swisher Sweet or Dutch Masters | Flavored little cigars/cigarillos – for groups with African American men and young men |
| Copenhagen        | Grizzly                        | Short cut snuff  |
| Red Man           |                                | Long cut   |
| Skoal wintergreen |                                | Flavored smokeless   |
|                   | Skoal Bandit (very mild)       | Includes a descriptor (e.g., mellow)   |

| Novel Tobacco Products                              |
|---|
| Camel or Marlboro snus                              |
| Electronic cigarettes (NJoy or bluCigs)             |
| Dissolvables (Ariva, Stonewall, Camel, or Marlboro) |