

Seat Belt Use in Rural Communities

Moderator's Guide for Focus Group with Community Members

I. INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATION

A. Moderator - _____

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used for formative purposes only in order to develop an educational, enforcement, and communications program designed to increase seat belt use in a rural community and reduce the number of unrestrained traffic-related injuries and deaths. Public reporting burden is estimated to average 90 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We will not collect any personal information that would allow anyone to identify you. Please note that a federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The OMB generic control number for this collection is 2127-0682.

B. Informed Consent

1. Title: Seat Belt Use in Rural Communities Focus Group
2. This project is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or "NHTSA." We, Preusser Research Group, Inc. or "PRG", are contracted with the NHTSA to collect local data on driver knowledge, attitude, behavior and beliefs regarding traffic safety issues—particularly seat belts. NHTSA wants to know how they can reduce unrestrained traffic fatalities, injuries, and crashes. We have decided to conduct focus groups in different rural communities to get this information.
3. Your participation in this project is voluntary – you can quit at any time.
4. We are simply going to have a discussion. We want to know what you think about a couple of traffic safety issues. This should take approximately 90 minutes of your time.
5. Snacks/Lunch has been provided as a token of our appreciation. Thanks for participating in this project. Again – your participation today is greatly appreciated – as today's discussion will be very useful for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) in addressing traffic safety, specifically seat belt use, in your community and others.
6. The information collected here today is completely confidential. Your identities and responses are confidential.
7. Lastly, you should feel free to contact me or NHTSA with any questions you have about this project.

C. Goal & Scope-

Focus group explanation - A focus group is a discussion with a group of people referring to a specific topic. The discussion is led by a group facilitator who introduces the discussion topics and assists the group in moving forward with discussion. The basics of today's focus group:

1. We are interested in what you think.
2. This is a research project. There is no hidden agenda – we simply want to know about your viewpoints.
3. You should feel free to discuss things among each other. You do not need to address me only.
4. Everyone can talk – you don't need to raise your hand. Please try to talk in an orderly manner without interrupting.
5. There are no right or wrong answers.
6. Please be honest and know it is ok to have an opinion that is different from the majority.
7. We are interested in hearing what all of you have to say. Do not be shy!
8. Are there any questions before we begin?

II. DISCUSSION GUIDE

A. Community

1. Tell us about your community? What makes it special, different, unique concerns?
2. What do people do for a living?
3. What do people do to socialize? (Explore: Fairs, Sports, Bars, etc.)
4. What is the community's relationship with police?
5. What organization or agency do you trust to help you in a time of need?
6. Any special political situation? (Explore: Scandals, Excitement, etc.)
7. How do you think this community is doing from an economic standpoint?

B. General Seat Belt Use

1. How do you think people in your community regard seat belts? Do they generally wear them? (Explore: age, gender, economics, rural/urban, etc.)
2. Do you think the seat belt is effective at reducing injury and death in a car? Why or why not?
3. Are there situations where you or people in your community are more likely or less likely to wear a seat belt? (Explore: distance, time of day, with kids, out of state, rural roads, speed, community specific scenarios, rural versus urban, etc.)

4. When people in the community don't wear their seat belts, what are the impacts (if any) to the community? (Explore: costs, loss of work, using community resources)
5. Why do you think people in this community choose to wear or not wear their seat belt? (Explore: health, safety, costs, children, habits, forgetfulness, annoying, not worth it, etc.) (If not answered earlier)
6. Do you require other passengers in your car to use a seat belt? (Probe: Are there other factors that influence your decision whether or not to require other passengers in your car to use a seat belt? Front seat vs. back seat? Age of the passenger? Setting? Distance? Other?)
7. Do you think people make certain judgements about individuals who wear or don't wear their seat belts? (What are those judgments). (Probe if respondents are confused by the question: Are non-seat belt users stigmatized or looked down on in any way? Or is not using a seat belt considered a normal, acceptable form of behavior?) How might your community differ from other communities in this regard? Do you think cities would be different than a rural area?
8. Is there anything about the nature of this community specifically that affects seat belt usage?
9. Is there someone who might influence your seat belt use? (Explore: someone in this community, someone who could encourage non-use.) In the event that participants focus their comments strictly about personal relationships, probe: Apart from your family members and friends, are there other people in your community (for example, public officials, local celebrities, other community leaders, a particular organization or agency) who could encourage you and other people in your community to use their seat belt?
10. What are the potential downsides if you do not wear a seat belt? (Explore: risk of death or injury to oneself, risk of death or injury to other passengers, impact of injury or death on the family, financial costs to both the individual and the community, loss of work, using community resources, etc.)
11. Are there any broader societal costs for not wearing a seat belt?
12. Which of the following is most persuasive to you in considering whether or not to use a seat belt:
 - Risk of your own injury or death?
 - The impact of your injury or death on your family/friends?
 - Risk of a loved one's injury or death?
 - Risk of being ticketed?
 - Personal financial costs (fines, medical expenses, loss of work following an injury)?
 - Costs to the community?
 - Anything else?

C. Seat Belt Use Messaging

Now, we're going to shift gears and talk about how public activities (such as advertisements, public service announcements, information about enforcement policies, etc.) might be used to educate people about the importance of seat belt use and to motivate them to use their seat belts. As we did in our earlier discussion, let's focus our attention specifically on what you think would or wouldn't be effective in your own community.

1. Have you heard or seen any advertisements from the DOT or other organizations regarding use of seat belts? What? Where? (Examples: Click it or Ticket, Buckle Up in Your Truck, etc.)
2. Do you think these advertisements are effective? What would you change? What makes them effective or not?
3. There are economic costs to society when fatal or injury crashes occur. ***Keeping in mind that seat belts are proven to prevent (or reduce the risk of) serious injuries and/or fatalities in a crash***, we would like you to share your thoughts on whether the following statistics would affect your attitudes regarding seat belt use:
 - You lose an average of 96 days of work when you're involved in a vehicle crash and you're not wearing a seat belt. If you're wearing a seat belt, you lose an average of 10 days.
 - One study found that because of non-seat belt use, ***every driver*** pays about \$51 extra in taxes and insurance premiums to help cover the health-care costs of injured, unbelted occupants.
 - Police spend less time investigating non-injury crashes than injury crashes. Seat belt use reduces injuries therefore freeing up law enforcement's time for other priorities and saves money on overtime costs.
 - The distributed cost of fatal and injury crashes in the U.S. costs ***each person*** \$784 annually. (How many people are in your family? How much does this cost your family?)

(Probe: Do any of these costs resonate with you? Do you think they could convince others to wear their seat belt? How might a person's level of health insurance (underinsured or no insurance) impact attitude regarding these items? How do you think each of the previous statements would influence seat belt use in your community if disseminated?)

4. What is the best way to reach people in your community with information about seat belts? (Explore: social media, tv, radio, road signs, checkpoints).
5. If you had to, how would you make your friends and family wear their seat belts?
6. How familiar are you with the state seat belt law? (Explore: fine, law type – primary, secondary, etc.) (Probe: For those of you who were already familiar with the law in your state, has knowing this influenced your seat belt use? For those who were not already familiar with the law, do you think that knowing your state’s law will influence your seat belt use in the future?)
7. Has anything or anyone ever convinced you to change your personal seat belt use habits? If so, what/who convinced you to change your habits? Were you convinced to start or stop wearing a seat belt?
8. Have you (or anyone you know) ever gotten a ticket/warning for not wearing a seat belt? (Probe: For those of you who have been ticketed in the past, did receiving a ticket affect your seat belt usage? For those of you who haven’t been ticketed, does the knowledge that you might be ticketed influence your seat belt usage?)
9. Does your employer/organization encourage people to wear their seat belt? How? (Explore: seat belt policy) (Probe: For those of you who answered yes, how has this influenced the seat belt usage of you and your fellow employees?)

III. CLOSING REMARKS/THANKS

We have had a good discussion. I am going to wrap up the discussion – is there anything additional anyone would like to end with? Thank you.