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Appendix III

Moderator's Guide

Healthy Symbol Focus Groups – Phase III

SUMMARY

The Phase III Healthy Symbol Focus Groups will continue exploring the development of a symbol intended for voluntary use on the food label when the product meets the FDA definition for “healthy.” This 3rd set of focus groups will test a reduced number of revised and new “healthy” symbols.

The online groups will begin with the moderator going over ground rules, followed by participant introductions, and then an individual exercise where participants will complete a poll, selecting which two symbols visually stand out to them. Following the poll, the moderator will briefly review an information piece containing the background and purpose of the symbol. After ensuring participants fully understand the meaning and purpose of the symbol, the moderator will guide them through slides containing the symbols on two kinds of food products: a breakfast cereal and a grain bowl. After the symbol discussion, the participants will participate in another symbol selection exercise, there will be more discussion, and then the session will close.

Group #	Participant Group	Level of Education
1 & 5	Higher Nutrition Motivation	Higher
2 & 8	Lower Nutrition Motivation	Higher
3 & 7	Higher Nutrition Motivation	Lower
4 & 6	Lower Nutrition Motivation	Lower

NOTE TO MODERATOR – ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THIS GUIDE IS SCRIPTED, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PUT INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS INTO YOUR OWN WORDS. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED.

A. WELCOME AND GROUND RULES (5 min)

Thank you for taking the time to join us today. I am _____ from _____ and we are conducting a research study on behalf of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”). The purpose of the discussion is to get your thoughts about things you might see on a food label. Your feedback is very important to us. Our discussion will last about 90 minutes.

Before we start, I want to review a few important things.

- Your participation today is voluntary, and you have the right to stop being in the focus group at any time.
- None of my questions are very personal, but you can choose not to answer any of them if you are uncomfortable. Just let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- Anyone can speak out; you don't need to wait for me to call on you, just make sure you speak up and speak one at a time. This is especially important when for this discussion. If someone else is talking, just wait until they are finished before you start speaking so we can fully hear what you have to say.
- However, please keep in mind that we have a lot to talk about and materials to review, so if I don't get to you on a particular topic, please don't take offense. We just need to get through everything.
- Audio/video/observers
 - We are audio and video recording this discussion so that I can give you my full attention and not have to take notes. When writing up our findings, we will not include any information that could identify you. Your name, address, and phone number will not be given to anyone, and no one will contact you about this research after this group is over.
 - We also have team members from FDA who are observing this online discussion. Towards the end of our conversation, I may check in with them to see if there are any last-minute questions for you.
- Please give us your full attention during tonight's group by setting your cell phones to vibrate or turning them completely off. If you need to step away from the screen for a moment, please feel free to do so, but please mute your microphone before you do [describe what they need to do to mute themselves].
- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. None of these are trick questions. I want to know your opinions and about your experiences.
- I am not selling anything, I do not work at FDA, and I haven't created any of the things we'll look at, so please provide your honest opinions.
- Also, I am not an expert about the topics we are going to discuss today. You may have questions that I can't answer, but please still ask them. It's helpful for FDA to hear the types of questions you may have.
- All of your comments will be kept secure to the extent provided by law, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. I will draft a report of the focus group session, and I may include direct quotes in my report, but I will never attribute any quote to any particular person. Your name will never appear in any report I develop about this research
- If at any time you are having technical difficulties, please (INCLUDE INSTRUCTIONS HERE BASED ON THE PLATFORM WE USE)

Do you have any questions before we continue?

B. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS - WARM-UP [5 minutes]

[Moderator - Ask for first name, their favorite food and the last time they ate it.]

C. POLLING ACTIVITY #1 [3 minutes]

[Moderator, teach participants how to use the polling feature. After polling, dissuade any discussion about the symbols. *If needed*, you can let participants know they will have the opportunity later.]

Before we get started with today's discussion, we are going to do a brief activity that involves using the polling feature which is on the [e.g., upper right-hand side of this program].

Please look at these symbols and without reacting or saying anything out loud, use the polling feature to quickly select the two symbols that jump out at you visually.

D. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT "HEALTHY" AND "HEALTHY CLAIMS" [7 minutes]

Today we are going to talk about food packaging and some ways that food manufacturers try to communicate that the product is healthy.

- How many of you check the food label to see if foods are healthy? [Show of hands]
- What do you look for to determine if a food product is healthy?
- What are some of the different ways that food product labels try to communicate that the product is healthy?
 - Can you describe what you've seen?
 - What tells you that it is healthy?

E. EXPLANATION OF HEALTHY SYMBOL [10 minutes]

[THIS SECTION IS A PLACEHOLDER FOR USING ONLY IF THE HEALTHY PROPOSED RULE HAS PUBLISHED.]

[Moderator – put up information piece and ask everyone to pay attention while you read it out loud. Use the questions below to explore the information piece and to *ensure complete understanding* before continuing the discussion.]

- What is the main take-away of the message?
- This information sheet says that FDA has strict regulations about when a food manufacturer can claim that a product is ‘healthy.’ Why do you think that is?”
- Is there anything about the definition of “healthy” that is confusing? What?
- What are your thoughts about FDA having a symbol for conveying “healthy”?

[IF RULE HAS NOT PUBLISHED]

[Moderator – put up short explanation about Healthy symbol]

- This information sheet says that FDA has strict regulations about when a food manufacturer can claim that a product is ‘healthy.’ Why do you think that is?”
- What are your thoughts about FDA having a symbol for conveying “healthy”?

F. REACTIONS TO STIMULI [30 minutes]

[SYMBOLS TO BE ROTATED EVERY TWO GROUPS]

On your screen is a product made to look like a box of cereal. We put one of the symbols you saw earlier on the bottom right hand corner but the symbol could be anywhere on the box.

- What are your first reactions to this symbol?
- How effective do you think this symbol would be for helping you choose healthy products [**Probe only if not mentioned**]
 - How will a symbol help with choosing healthy foods?
 - How will the symbol help with purchasing decisions?
- What, if anything makes this symbol stand out?
- How could this symbol be improved?

[Moderator – show Veggie Grain Bowl with same symbol]

- What do you think about seeing the symbol on this product?
- [IF NEEDED] How does seeing the symbol on this product compare with having it on the cereal?

[Repeat the discussion above for each slide of the slide deck.]

G. POLLING ACTIVITY #2 [3 minutes]

[Moderators – Show page with all symbols and conduct Poll #2]

Now that we have talked about all the symbols, please look at your screen and, using the polling feature again, this time choose two symbols that you think will be the *best symbol for communicating that the food product meets FDA's definition for "healthy."*

[I'll open the discussion to anyone who would like to share their views.]

- What two symbols did you choose?
- Why did you think those two symbols would be more effective at communicating "healthy" than the others?
- Is there anything you would change about either of the symbols you picked to make them even more effective in communicating "healthy"?

H. REVIEW SYMBOL CHARACTERISTICS [10 Minutes]

[Moderator - Symbols will be clustered on sheets according to certain characteristics. Go through each sheet and get feedback. Just point out characteristic and ask what they think about it. The characteristic will be listed on the sheet.]

[Hold for later]

- How important do you think it is for the symbol to have "FDA" on it?

I. CLOSING - Moderator to check clients for additional questions.] [5 minutes]