



Wave 2 Foundational Focus Group Discussion Guide – Unvaccinated Adults

Research Objective: Examine attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors related to vaccine hesitancy for those who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine.

NOTE TO REVIEWERS: The discussion guide is written in a purposefully colloquial style to better engage with participants. Question probes are below some main questions and may change. These are suggestions for the moderator to follow and will be used as deemed relevant and necessary in the natural flow of discussion. The discussion guide is developed for a 90-minute session. Moderator instructions are highlighted in yellow and bracketed.

Guidelines and Introductions	10 MINUTES
COVID-19 Context	15 MINUTES
Vaccine Attitudes	10 MINUTES
Information Sources	5 MINUTES
Vaccine Hesitancy and the Environment	20 MINUTES
Family Dynamics	15 MINUTES
Communications and Messaging	10 MINUTES
Wrap-Up	5 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME	90 MINUTES

GUIDELINES AND INTRODUCTIONS (10 MIN)

Guidelines

Thank you for speaking with me today. My name is _____, and I work for a private research company. Today we want to get your thoughts and opinions about COVID-19.

Before we begin, I want to go over a couple of things:

- There are no wrong answers. Our whole purpose for being here is to hear what you think, so please speak up, especially if what you have to say is different than what someone else is saying. You may represent what a lot of other folks think.
- There may be times I ask you to clarify or ask you to tell more about what you just said. This is simply to make sure I understood and accurately capture what you think, not because I'm challenging your point of view.

- Your participation is voluntary. If I ask any questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to answer them.
- We want to hear from everyone, but I ask that you speak one at a time, although I understand it can be difficult, especially online. I simply want to make sure I hear everything that everyone says.
- Nothing you say will be tied back to you. Your name and any identifying information will not be used in any of our reports.
- There are some other people listening in who are helping me take notes so that I can fully focus on our conversation and be respectful of your time. At the end of the group, they might have a couple of clarifying questions for us.
- I'll be video recording our conversation; it will only be used to confirm our notes. Only the research staff will have access to this taping and no personally identifiable information will be used in connection with the recording. Does everyone agree to be recorded? **[ASK FOR AGREEMENT THROUGH A SHOW OF HANDS OR HEAD NOD]** I am going to start the recording now.
- Our discussion should take no more than 90 minutes. I appreciate the time that you carved out to be here, and I want to be respectful of that, so I may interrupt us so that we stay on track.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductions/Ice Breaker

I'd like to start by getting to know each of you a bit better. So, I'm going to have everyone go around and share their first name, where you live, and something new you've enjoyed doing during the pandemic.

I can go ahead and get us started.

[MODERATOR INTRODUCES SELF, ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS, AND THEN HAS EACH PARTICIPANT INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND RESPOND TO THE ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS.]

[MODERATOR TO PROBE AS NEEDED TO GET PARTICIPANTS COMFORTABLE AND TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT.]

[MODERATOR: FOCUS ON THE BOLDDED QUESTIONS. QUESTIONS IDENTIFIED AS PROBES SHOULD BE USED AS NEEDED TO OBTAIN/CLARIFY INFORMATION. SUBQUESTIONS NOT IDENTIFIED AS PROBES SHOULD BE ASKED AS TIME PERMITS.]

COVID-19 CONTEXT (15 MINUTES)

Thank you for sharing. Before we begin, I'd like to confirm something.

- **You were all asked to participate in this focus group because you indicated that you had not received a COVID-19 vaccine. Is that still true?**
[MODERATOR: IF ANYONE IS VACCINATED, THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME, AND ASK THEM POLITELY TO LEAVE THE CALL. THEY WILL STILL RECEIVE THE INCENTIVE.]
- **Let's talk about how COVID-19 affects your daily life right now. I'd like each of you to briefly describe your daily routine and then tell me how COVID-19 does (or does not) affect what you do each day. Please include your occupation, if you are comfortable sharing, and what your work day is like.**
[MODERATOR: WE ARE INTERESTED IN HEARING ABOUT CURRENT DAILY ROUTINES, NOT FROM EARLIER TIMES IN THE PANDEMIC. RE-FOCUS PARTICIPANTS IF THEY ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT CURRENT DAILY LIFE.]
 - **[PROBE IF PARTICIPANTS DID NOT MENTION ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF WORK]:** What kinds of activities do you in your free time, and how has COVID-19 affected those activities, if at all?

Thank you all. Let's talk now about any personal experiences you may have had with COVID-19.

- **Have you or anyone you know personally ever been diagnosed with COVID-19? [IF YES, PROBE LIGHTLY FOR WHO THEY KNOW WHO HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19—SELF? FAMILY MEMBER? FRIEND? ALSO PROBE ON THE EXPERIENCE WITH COVID-19; HOW SEVERE WAS ILLNESS, ETC.]**
- **How concerned are you personally about getting COVID-19? [PROBE ON REASONS WHY CONCERNED OR NOT.]**
 - How concerned are you about family getting COVID-19? Children? Friends? Community members?
- **[FOR THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD COVID-19]:**
 - **Have your concerns about COVID-19 changed since getting the virus?**
 - **Are you concerned about contracting the virus again?**
 - **Have your thoughts about the COVID-19 vaccines changed since getting the virus?**
- **How have your concerns about getting COVID-19 changed since the beginning of the pandemic, if at all?**
- **What kinds of things do you do, if any, to protect yourself from getting COVID-19?**
 - How much control, if any, do you feel you have in protecting yourself from getting COVID-19?

COVID-19 VACCINE ATTITUDES (10 MINUTES)

Let's talk now about COVID-19 vaccines.

- **How likely are you to get a COVID-19 vaccine?**
 - What are some of the things on your mind when you're deciding if and when to get vaccinated?
 - [FOR THOSE WHO ARE LIKELY]: How long do you intend to wait to get vaccinated?
 - [FOR THOSE WAITING]: What are some of the reasons you are waiting to get vaccinated?
- **What do you think are the benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine, if any?**
- **What do you think are the risks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine, if any?**

- **What questions or concerns do you have about getting a COVID-19 vaccine?**
 - [PROBE IF NOT MENTIONED]: What questions or concerns, if any, do you have about:
 - Side effects?
 - Potential long-term effects?
 - Safety?
 - Effectiveness?
 - Boosters?

- **Are you up to date on routine vaccines, such as the Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine, the human papillomavirus vaccination (HPV), or the annual flu vaccine?**
 - [IF YES FOR SOME OR ALL]: Did you get the vaccine(s) when they were recommended by your doctor? Why or why not?
 - What questions or concerns did you have about the vaccine(s)?
 - What helped you make the decision about whether you should receive the vaccine(s)?
 - [If not mentioned above]: How often do you get an annual flu shot? What are the reasons you usually do or don't get the flu vaccine?

INFORMATION SOURCES (5 MINUTES)

- **Who do you trust most to provide you with accurate information about COVID-19 and vaccines?**
 - What makes you trust them?
 - What kinds of information do you look for from these sources?
 - Would recommendations from certain individuals or groups impact your decision; for example, your personal doctor or public health officials?
 - For those who have a personal doctor, can you tell me about your relationship with them? For example, how long you have been seeing them and how much you trust them for medical information.

- **How often do you see information about COVID-19 and vaccines on social media platforms?**
 - Which platforms?
 - What information have you seen shared? [PROBE FOR A RECENT EXAMPLE, IF POSSIBLE.]
 - Who is sharing the information?
 - How trustworthy do you find information about COVID-19 to be on these platforms? How do you determine if information is trustworthy or not? [MODERATOR: YOU CAN CALL BACK TO ANY OF THE EXAMPLES PARTICIPANTS MAY HAVE SHARED.]

- How often do you seek out additional information after you see something shared on social media?
- **How often do you see information about COVID-19 and vaccines on health-related sites?**
 - Which sites?
 - What information have you seen or sought out?
 - How trustworthy do you find information about COVID-19 to be on these sites?

VACCINE HESITANCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT (20 MINUTES)

Let's talk now about how COVID-19 is impacting your community.

- **I'd like you each to tell me briefly how you feel about the COVID-19 situation in your community. For example, do you feel the cases are high or low compared to other communities in your state or the country? Do you feel vaccination rates are high or low compared to other communities?**
 - Are there mask mandates in your community?
 - How often do people in your community wear masks and practice social distancing?
- **How does the COVID-19 situation in your community affect your decision about whether to get vaccinated?**
 - [PROBE]: How does the number of COVID-19 cases and/or vaccination rates in your community affect your decision about whether to get vaccinated, if at all?
- **Is anyone currently required to get a COVID-19 vaccine due to a mandate? This could be a vaccine mandate from your employer, school, or someone else.**
 - [IF YES]: What are your thoughts about the vaccine mandate? How has this affected your decision about whether to get vaccinated?
 - [IF NO]: How would you feel if you became subject to a COVID-19 mandate? How would this affect your decision about whether to get vaccinated?
- **Has there ever been a time when you have not been able to participate in an activity or attend an event because you are not vaccinated against COVID-19?**
 - How did this make you feel?
 - How does this affect your decision about whether to get vaccinated, if at all?
- **Have you or anyone you know attempted to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment or go get a COVID-19 vaccine? If so, did you**

experience or hear about any issues scheduling an appointment or going to get a vaccine? [PROBE IF NEEDED]: Issues with technology/Internet, language, transportation to/from vaccine sites, work commitments, childcare, etc.

- [IF NO]: If you wanted to get a COVID-19 vaccine today, what steps would you take?
- **What, if anything, would motivate you to get vaccinated?**
 - Specific data or information about COVID-19 vaccines?
 - Workplace mandates?
 - Ability to attend in-person activities and events, such as concerts, live theater, or sporting events?
 - Ability to travel?
 - Increasing number of COVID-19 cases in your area?
 - Something else?

FAMILY DYNAMICS (15 MINUTES)

Now let's talk about immediate and extended family.

- **In general, how many of your immediate and extended family members are vaccinated against COVID-19? [MODERATOR: PARTICIPANTS CAN RESPOND GENERALLY; E.G., ALL, MOST, SOME, NONE.]**
 - How did your family members' decision to get vaccinated (or not) affect your decision about vaccination?
- **[FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN A HOUSEHOLD WITH OTHERS]: Who is the primary health care decision maker in your family or household?**
 - [IF SELF]: What kinds of conversations have you had about others in your household about the COVID-19 vaccines?
 - [IF SOMEONE ELSE]: How much influence, if any, do they have on your decision about whether to get vaccinated against COVID-19?
- **What kinds of conversations about COVID-19 are happening in your community? For example, among your friends and neighbors, community leaders, church congregations, etc.**

COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING (10 MINUTES)

- **What advertisements have you seen about COVID-19, if any? Where have you seen or heard these ads? [PROBE IF NEEDED]: Television, radio/podcasts, print, social media?**
 - Do you recall who created these advertisements?
 - How trustworthy do you find information about COVID-19 to be in these media sources?
 - [If someone mentions "We Can Do This" Campaign, PROBE]: Where have you seen or heard these ads? What do you remember about them?

- **What would you like to see or hear in an advertisement about COVID-19?**
 - What kinds of information would be useful to you?
 - Who would you trust as a source for a COVID-19 advertisement?

WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

- Those are all the questions I have for you. I just want to check to see if any of my colleagues have any final questions.
- Is there anything you would like to share that you have not had the chance to before we wrap up?
- Thank you very much for participating in this discussion. I appreciate your time, and your feedback has been extremely helpful. Please remember not to share anything we've discussed here today.