IRB Approved As Modified at the Study Level

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**Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Servicemembers who Identify as Hispanic or Latino/Latina**

**0007.5644.E791.30**

**Tab A: Focus Groups Facilitator’s Guide**

FACILITATOR:

Hello. My name is [NAME], and I will be leading today’s interview. My colleague, [NAME], is also here to take notes and help the interview run smoothly.

I want to thank you for joining us today and for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Before we get started, I just want to tell you a little bit about ourselves. We work for CNA (the Center for Naval Analyses), in Arlington, VA. CNA is an independent, civilian-run, federally- funded research and development center.

We are here today to talk to you about your opinions and experiences regarding the military recruitment, retention, and promotion processes and general experiences you have had throughout your career. For this particular effort, the Department of Defense’s Office for Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity Policy is interested in understanding how these experiences might be different for Servicemembers who identify as Hispanic versus those who do not. They want to better understand why there may be representation differences by ethnicity at various points in the career, and which policies and practices would be most helpful in closing any identified representation gaps. We’ve invited you here today to discuss your career experiences, as well as any thoughts you might have on how to increase Hispanic representation among Servicemembers. This focus group will last about [60 MINUTES FOR RECRUITER GROUPS / 90 MINUTES FOR ALL OTHER GROUPS].

This session will be most useful if people feel comfortable to speak freely. To that end, I want to remind everyone that your participation is *completely* *voluntary*. You may choose not to participate, and you should also feel free to leave the session at any time. Your decision will not lead to any penalties, loss of benefits, or have any negative impact on you or your career.

While we will be taking notes to capture what is said during today’s session, we will not be recording any personally identifying information, including your names, locations, or installations. We will be recording this session (audio recording for in-person groups and audio/visual recording of the Zoom or Microsoft Teams sessions for virtual groups), in order to later supplement our notes, and for that reason we ask that you not say your name, others’ names, or any other personally identifiable information aloud during this focus group. In the event you mistakenly refer to another participant or any personally identifiable information, that information will not be documented or attributed to any individual in our reports. All recordings will only be accessed by the CNA study team and will be deleted at the end of this study. In addition, information that is collected today will be summarized and combined with the information we gather in the other sessions we are holding with Servicemembers from across the country. All the information discussed today will be considered confidential by CNA, and we ask that you all also refrain from discussing today’s session, and what was discussed, with others outside of this session. With all of this in mind, please know that every attempt will be made to ensure confidentiality, but it cannot be guaranteed.

Before we get started, we ask that you [FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS: We have provided a research subject information sheet for you to read about this research. If you have not read it, please read it now and ask any questions you have. You may also take with you in the event you have questions about the study, or need to contact us after you leave. (take a brief moment to fill out the intake form in front of you) OR FOR VIRTUAL GROUPS: We have provided a research subject information sheet for you to read about this research. If you have not read it, please read it now and ask any questions you have. You may also keep it in the event you have questions about the study, or need to contact us after the focus group is over. (take a brief moment to fill out the online intake form if you haven’t already done so. You can access the online intake form by visiting the link in the calendar invite we sent out for this focus group session)]. We are going to use the information on the intake form to categorize the responses we get in these sessions, but nothing we do will be directly attributed to any single individual.

**Before we move forward with our** **questions, I want to confirm that everyone is comfortable with participating in today’s session. If you aren’t, please know that you should feel free to leave at this point or at any point during today’s session. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have.**

Ok, so let’s get started. We will begin recording now. (FACILITATOR: turn on audio recorder (in-person) or begin recording the Zoom/Microsoft Teams session (virtual))

**Junior Enlisted (those just completing recruit or entry-level training)**

Reasons and motivations for joining

1. What were the biggest reasons or motivations for you joining the [enter Service here]?

PROBES:

Personal challenge

Wanted to serve your country

Was inspired by some(one) who previously served

Wanted to travel and see the world

The lifestyle

The community

The pay and benefits

Education and training opportunities

Lack of other employment opportunities

Other

1. Can you describe anything (else) related to your background, race, or ethnicity that shaped your decision to join the [enter Service here]?
2. What other benefits/aspects were most appealing about the [Service]?
3. What was your biggest concern about joining the [Service]?
   1. How did you overcome that concern?
4. Who else played a role or had an opinion about your decision to join the [enter Service here]?
   1. Were they in favor or opposed to you joining?
   2. If in favor, why? If opposed, why?
5. What were the biggest challenges associated with the enlistment process?

PROBES:

Testing

Medical evaluations

Time

Other mental/physical performance aspects

Other

* 1. Is there anything you wished was different about the enlistment process? If yes, please describe.

1. What was your interaction with your recruiter like [if applicable]?
   1. How much did they influence your decision to join?
   2. What information did they provide that influenced your decision to join?
   3. Was your recruiter able to answer all your questions and address all of your concerns?
   4. Is there anything you wished was different about your interaction with your recruiter? If yes, please describe.
2. What types of goals do you want to achieve while in the [enter Service here]? These can be goals related to education, leadership opportunities, training and certifications, work ethic/structure, or any other personal or professional goals.

PROBES:

Education

Leadership opportunities

Training, certifications

Work ethic/structure

* 1. What are the potential challenges and barriers to achieving your goals in the [enter Service here]?

1. Were you able to choose your occupation before joining?
   1. If so, why did you choose the occupation/specialty you chose?
      1. Can you describe anything related to your background, race, or ethnicity that shaped your choice of occupation/specialty?
2. Which decision came first: desire to be in the [Service] or your occupational/specialty choice? Why?
3. How did financial considerations affect your choice of occupation or your decision to join the [enter Service here]?
4. Were there occupations that you wanted to pursue that were not available to you for some reason?
   1. If so, will you elaborate?
5. What has been the biggest surprise about your experience in the [Service] that you wish you would have known before joining? These can be good or not so good surprises.
6. What do you wish members of your community knew about military service that they do not know?
7. Do you feel that your military experience was at all shaped by factors related to your background, race, or ethnicity? These can be these things you consider positive or negative. Please explain.
   1. Have you experienced any form of discrimination or prejudice while in the military or during recruitment? If you are comfortable with sharing, can you please describe those experiences?
   2. Anything related to interactions with peers, colleagues, or leadership, or anything else?
8. Is there anything else you would like to discuss today related to your recruitment and in-Service experiences? What have we missed that you think it is important for us or DOD to know?

Closing

At this time, we want to thank you again for your time and participation in this focus group. However, before we close, does anyone have any final thoughts, concerns, or recommendations?

If you were unable to complete the intake form at the start of this session, please take a moment now to complete it. Thank you again.

**First term enlisted approaching reenlistment decision**

All the questions from the other junior enlisted groups plus…

1. What factors have influenced your thoughts about whether you are going reenlist?
   1. Can you describe anything related to your background, race, or ethnicity that have shaped your thoughts about reenlisting?
      1. Have you experienced any form of discrimination or prejudice that have made you reconsider whether you’d like to reenlist?
   2. Are there reasons you may want to stay, but can’t?
   3. Have your expectations about Service differed from the reality you have experienced in any major way?
      1. If so, has that influenced your reenlistment decision?
2. Have you had any professional mentors while in Service?
   1. If yes, how did you find that person and what types of things did they mentor you about?
   2. If no, did you want a mentor?
      1. If you wanted a mentor but haven’t found one, what have been the barriers to finding a mentor?
      2. If you did not want a mentor, why were you not interested in getting a mentor?
   3. Have your experiences in finding the right mentor been affected by factors relating to your background, race, ethnicity, and/or experiences with discrimination or prejudice? Please describe.
3. Can you please describe any particular challenges or obstacles you have faced or experienced in the promotion process?
   1. Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination or prejudice in the promotion process?
4. Did you receive any advice on how to navigate the promotion process? If yes, who provided the advice?

Closing

At this time, we want to thank you again for your time and participation in this focus group. However, before we close, does anyone have any final thoughts, concerns, or recommendations.

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**Recruiters**

1. In your recruiting process do you have different methods for targeting certain demographic groups?
2. When recruiting Hispanic Servicemembers, are there aspects of your typical recruitment process that you do differently? Or are their certain aspects of the process where you focus more attention?

PROBES:

Incentives you promote?

Events you attend?

How you prospect, in general?

Family engagement?

1. In what types of settings do you have the most success recruiting Hispanic Servicemembers?

PROBES:

Rural/urban

High schools/community colleges

Community events

* 1. Where is it most difficult?

1. Have there been any particular recruiting-related efforts at your command or higher headquarters focused on increasing Hispanic representation?
   1. If so, have those efforts been successful? Why or why not?
2. Do you partner with any Hispanic community groups?
   1. What do you achieve from those partnerships?
   2. Do you partner with any community groups associated with any other specific demographic group?
   3. How do you determine which groups to partner with?
   4. Can you describe the process for establishing those partnerships? Any barriers or obstacles?

Do you have more success in recruiting from specific Hispanic communities than others? If yes, please describe. What do you think contributes to these differences?

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**Junior officers**

1. What were the biggest reasons or motivations for you joining the [enter Service here]?

PROBES:

Personal challenge

Wanted to serve your country

Was inspired by some(one) who previously served

Wanted to travel and see the world

The lifestyle

The community

The pay and benefits

Education and training opportunities

Lack of other employment opportunities

Other

1. Can you describe anything (else) related to your background, race, or ethnicity that shaped your decisions to join the [enter Service here]?
2. What other benefits/aspects were most appealing about the [Service]?
3. What was your biggest concern about joining the [Service]?
   1. How did you overcome that concern?
4. Who else played a role or had an opinion about your decision to join the [enter Service here]?
   1. Were they in favor or opposed to you joining?
   2. If in favor, why? If opposed, why?
5. What was your commissioning source and what were the biggest challenges associated with the commissioning process?

PROBES:

Testing

Medical evaluations

Time

Other mental/physical performance aspects

Other

* 1. Is there anything you wished was different about the commissioning process? If yes, what, and why?

1. What were your interactions with your recruiter like [if applicable]?
   1. Did you experience any form of discrimination or prejudice during recruitment? If you are comfortable with sharing, can you please describe those experiences?
2. How much did they influence your decision to join?
3. Is there anything you wished was different about your interactions with your recruiter? If yes, please describe.
4. What types of goals do you want to achieve while in the [enter Service here]? These can be goals related to training and certifications, leadership opportunities, furthering your education, or any other personal or professional goals.

PROBES:

Training, certifications

Leadership opportunities

Further education

1. What do you perceive as potential challenges and barriers to achieving your goals in the [enter Service here]?
2. Did you get to choose your occupation before joining?
   1. If so, why did you choose the occupation/specialty you chose?
   2. Can you describe anything related to your background, race, or ethnicity that shaped your choice of occupation/specialty?
3. Which decision came first: desire to be in the [Service] or your occupational/specialty choice? Why?
4. How did financial considerations affect your choice of occupation and/or joining the [enter Service here]?
5. Were there occupations that you wanted to pursue that were not available to you for some reason?
6. If so, will you elaborate?
7. What factors have influenced your thoughts about whether you are going to remain longer than your initial service obligation?
   1. Have any experiences with discrimination or prejudice in the military influenced your thoughts about staying past your initial obligation?
8. What factors do you think may have prevented your peers or others in your cohort from promoting to your current rank? What do you view as the most important considerations for promotion to your rank? And what about for promoting to the subsequent rank?
9. Do you believe that experiences with discrimination or prejudice played a role in the promotion process for any of your peers?
10. Have you experienced any of these hurdles in your career?
11. If not, do you expect that you will be subject to any of these hurdles as you continue in your career?
12. Did you receive any advice on how to navigate the promotion process? If yes, who provided the advice?
13. What has been the biggest surprise about your experience in the [Service] that you wish you would have known before joining? These can be good or not so good surprises.
14. What do you wish members of your community knew about military service that they do not know?
15. Is there anything else you would like to discuss today related to your recruitment and in-Service experiences? What have we missed that you think it is important for us or DOD to know?

Closing

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