

Focus Group Moderator Guide (to be used by focus group moderator)

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Thank you for joining us today. I'm _____ and I'm from Banyan Communications, a public health communications consulting firm. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is sponsoring this project. The purpose of this discussion is to hear your views and opinions on important health topics concerning foodborne, waterborne, and fungal disease safety. Your insights are very important to us, and your time today is appreciated. We will have about 60 minutes for our discussion.

Before we begin, I want to review a few ground rules for our discussion.

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Some notetakers from Banyan and observers from CDC will be observing to hear your opinions directly and take notes so that your opinions are accurately captured.
- Your identity and anything you personally say here will remain secure and no one will contact you after this interview is over.
- If at any time you do not want to answer a question, you can choose not to answer.
- Be sure to only use first names during the discussion. Please do not use your last name. Also, if you bring up a friend or other person you know as an example in our discussions, please do not use their last name either.

Some Zoom considerations:

- Please mute your mic if you aren't speaking.
- Please do not speak over each other and wait until someone is finished before speaking. However, if mistakes happen, no worries.
- Let's use the "raise your hand" feature, especially if you can't get into the conversation. It's the button on the reactions panel. Let's give that a test.
- Please use the chat! If someone is speaking and you really need to get your idea out there, put it in the chat. We will get to it.
- Please leave your camera on. It's helpful to see your faces!
- If you need to go to the restroom during the discussion, please do so. No need to inform us. Simply turn off your camera and mic before you get up.
- Please turn your cell phone to vibrate or silent mode.

- Please do not answer your phone during this group unless it is an emergency.
- We ask that you please not drive or operate a vehicle while you are in this group as it is dangerous.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

- The session will be recorded and recordings will be destroyed after project completion.

If I have your consent to participate and record this session, we can begin [wait for consent of each participant]

FGD facilitator note: focus groups will be divided into different demographics (see table 1 in Supporting statement B for the list of different demographics). Certain questions will only be used for specific demographics. That is noted throughout this document.

Today, we're going to talk about foodborne, waterborne, and fungal disease safety, specifically for [INSERT FG DEMOGRAPHIC HERE]. Let's go around and introduce yourself - tell us the name you'd like us to call you and your pronouns. It's wonderful to meet you—let's get started.

[Health and Wellness Focus Group]: Today, we're going to talk about information concerning specific food topics. Let's go around and introduce yourself - tell us the name you'd like us to call you and your pronouns. It's wonderful to meet you—let's get started.

Section A: Wellness Discussion Questions [HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOCUS GROUPS ONLY]

Knowledge and Awareness

1. What do you know about [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Anything they've heard or learned in the news, from friends, family?
2. What do you know about [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
3. Can you tell me why you choose [INSERT FOOD TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Any difference in health benefits, nutrients, safety, taste.
4. What benefits do you think come from [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
5. Are there any health claims about [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC] that resonate with you?
6. Are you aware of any health risks associated with [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probes: Any personal experience with illness after [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]? Experience from others? Maybe something they've heard or read online or on social media, on TV or on the news?
7. Are you aware of any recent outbreaks related to [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - [If yes] What did you hear? Where did you hear this? Did you have any concerns?

Wellness Norms, Perception, and Concerns

8. Are there any specific regulations or guidelines about the production and sale of [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC] that make you feel more confident in its benefits compared to alternative options?
9. Do you have any specific concerns about the safety of [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Are there any particular health risks that worry you?

10. Are there any health concerns that would make you [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC] entirely?
 - Probe: Certain health conditions, immunocompromised, pregnant.

Wellness Behaviors

11. How often do you drink/eat [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC] or products made from it? Why?
 - Probe: Ease of access? Cost? Health benefits?
12. What factors would you consider if choosing [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Are quality and source important motivators?
13. Have you encountered any experiences or situations that discouraged you from [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Can you share those experiences?
14. What would you need to hear to feel convinced to choose [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
15. What information would you need to feel assured about the quality and safety of [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probe: Any certifications on packaging?

[INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC] Information Seeking

16. Where (if anywhere) do you get your information about [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC]?
 - Probes: Online, tv news, radio news, newspapers, social media, family or friends, people in your community?
 - Probes: Which specific websites? Online sources? TV stations, social media channels?
 - Probe: news? Google? Health departments?
 - Probe: Any specific individuals online or on social media? Celebrities, influencers?
17. When it comes to the safety and quality of [INSERT FOOD RELATED TOPIC], who do you trust as a reliable source of information?
 - Probe on local: Local farmers, local news station, newspapers,
 - Probe on government agencies: CDC/FDA/USDA, foodsafety.gov, and other organizations, or healthcare professionals
 - What makes them a trusted source of information about milk?
 - Does anyone not trust these organizations?
 - Why/why not?
 - What about family or people in your community? What about people who work in health food stores or other places where natural foods might be sold?

Section B: Message Testing [ALL FOCUS GROUPS]

Now I would like you to look at a few messages about foodborne, waterborne, and fungal disease prevention. I'll read the message aloud and then we will discuss it.

*[Facilitator will rotate materials to every participant out of the materials noted in **Attachment 15 Messages and Materials for Testing** and ask the series of questions 1-8 below for each of the materials. Repeat a sequence of questions until all materials have been reviewed. If time permits additional messages will be rotated randomly through the demographic categories (**Supporting Statements A and B**) to ensure messages are seen by various high-risk participants and other demographics.]*

1. In your own words, what is the main idea that this message set is trying to get across?
2. How effective do you think the message set is in getting that message across?

- Probe: What made it effective? What made it ineffective?
3. How new was this idea for you? Have you ever heard anything like this before?
 4. How likely are you to do [INSERT BEHAVIOR]?
 - Why would you consider doing [INSERT BEHAVIOR]?
 - What might keep you from doing [INSERT BEHAVIOR]?
 - What might make you more or less likely to [INSERT BEHAVIOR]?
 - Who or what might influence your decision to [INSERT BEHAVIOR]?
 - Probe: certain demographics (e.g., parents, socioeconomic status, occupational status), certain psychographics, those with certain pre-existing conditions
 5. How easy was it for you to understand these recommendations?
 - What, if anything, makes the recommendations difficult to understand?
 - Are there easier ways we could present this information?
 6. What is confusing, unclear, or hard to understand about this message?
 - Probe [if needed]: Are there any words or phrases that bother you or that you think should be phrased differently? How might you rephrase the message?
 7. How could this information be improved?
 8. Who do you think this message is trying to reach?
 - Probe [if they say themselves]: What in the message suggested it was talking to you?
 - Probe [if they say anyone but themselves]: Why don't you think this was meant for you?
 - Probe [if they say anyone but themselves]: Why do you think this was meant for that audience?

Section C: Presentation of web pages, social media messages and/or materials [ALL FOCUS GROUPS]

Now I would like you to look at a few [INSERT MATERIAL] that discuss information on foodborne, waterborne, and fungal disease safety. I'll have you look at the website and then we will discuss it.

[Facilitator will screenshare the material and give participants a few minutes to read the page and then ask the questions 1-6 below. Repeat until participants have reviewed all predetermined webpages (Attachment 15). If time permits the facilitator may ask participants to review other pages listed in Attachment 15. Pages will be rotated randomly through the demographic categories (Supporting Statement B) to ensure pages are seen by multiple high-risk participant categories.]

1. How would you sum up in a few words your first impression of this [INSERT MATERIAL]?
 - Do you like it? Dislike it?
 - What makes you say that?
2. What is the main idea that this is trying to get across?
3. Is there anything confusing, unclear, or hard to understand?
 - If yes: What?

- Probe (if needed): Are there any words or phrases that bother you or that you think should be said differently?
- 4. What do you think about the length?
 - Probe (for webpage): What do you think about how long you have to scroll?
 - Probe (if needed): Is it too long/short?
- 5. How do you feel about the color choices and graphics?
 - What do you like/dislike about them?
- 6. Is there anything you want to know about this topic that this does not tell you?

Section D: Closing [ALL FOCUS GROUPS]

Okay, that's all the time we have for today. Do you have any final thoughts?

Excuse me for one moment so I can check with our notetakers to ensure no additional questions need to be asked.

Thank you for your participation. We value your time and appreciate your feedback on how to improve information and messages about food safety. Have a good day/evening.