

Focus Group Conversation Guide for Mine Managers and Health and Safety Professionals

The following is a conversation guide to be used by the focus group facilitator to explore mine managers' and health and safety professionals' perspectives and experiences with different hazards and risks related to minework. The guide is just that, a guide, and will not necessarily be followed verbatim, but serves more as a roadmap for the facilitator.

Before beginning a focus group, researchers/facilitators will verbally explain to participants the information included in the informed consent form, reminding them about the potential for discussing sensitive topics and making it clear that they do not have to respond to any question they feel uncomfortable with and may leave the focus group at any time.

Introductory Questions

1. Let's start by going around the room and doing some basic introductions. Please tell us what type of mine you work at and generally where it's located (regionally), your job title, and how long you've worked in mining. [Facilitator starts goes first to provide an example]
 - a. Probe for commodity, setting, etc. if participant doesn't specify
2. To set the stage for the rest of this conversation, what's your definition of a miner? (For example, are geologists, engineers, office workers included?). Would you consider yourself to be a miner?
 - a. Potential probes:
 - i. How many miners work at each participant's site
 - ii. How many of those mine workers are women
 - iii. What jobs women mine workers tend to perform
3. Tell me about your roles and responsibilities in your current position / job title. [What do you do as...?]
 - a. Probes
 - i. How often do you visit mine site(s)?
 - ii. How often do you interact with mine workers?
 - iii. In what ways do you interact with mine workers? (e.g., during training, audits, inspections)

Hazards and risks

Let's talk about some of the jobs/tasks that our women mine worker participants have told us are the most hazardous or risky for them to perform. [*The facilitator will list a selection of jobs/tasks identified as being more hazardous/riskier by women mine workers*].

Let's talk about Job/Task ___ first.

4. What hazards are mine workers exposed to during Job #?

[*The group lists out all the different relevant hazards for that job and a notetaker writes them on the whiteboard/flipchart*]

- a. Potential probes:
 - i. Can you give an example of a situation where or when a mine worker has experienced that hazard?

- ii. Has [insert hazards] prevented women mine workers from doing [insert job name]?
 - 1. If yes, what were the reasons for women mine workers had to stop performing the job/task?
- iii. Has [insert hazard] changed the way women mine workers do that job?
 - 1. If yes, how?
 - a. Did your company:
 - i. Provide health/safety training
 - ii. Change procedures
 - iii. Change equipment/tools/job aids
 - iv. Change PPE
 - v. Implement other changes
- iv. Has [insert hazard] affected women mine workers' willingness or ability to do [insert job]? Has it affected their ability to do the job safely?
- v. Has [insert hazard] changed the way women mine workers do that job?

Mitigation

- 5. If you had the power/authority/opportunity to make changes, what would you change or do differently to mitigate or manage the hazard/risk? (Alternative: How can Hazard A/B/C be eliminated or mitigated so women mine workers can do their job safely?)
 - a. Potential probes:
 - i. In your opinion, why aren't efforts made to mitigate or manage the hazards/risks described above? Probe: What is the level of difficult to implement change for small populations of workers?
- 6. Is there anything else you want to talk about or would like us to know about jobs, hazards, and mitigation strategies based on your experience working in a mine?
 - a. Potential probes:
 - a. How work gets done
 - b. Tools and equipment currently available
 - c. Work environment (noise, dust, temp/humidity etc.)
 - d. Frequency of training (annual/task/pre-shift) and topics you cover
 - e. Communication (active and passive [e.g., between people; signage])
 - f. Co-worker/manager support, trust, teamwork
 - g. Safety Culture / Organizational Justice
 - h. General health
 - i. Turnover
 - j. Preparedness of new workers starting a mining job

Wrap-up

Before we end, we want to discuss the hazards and mitigation measures we've discussed in the context of cultivating a more diverse workforce.

Potential probes:

- a. For the jobs and hazards discussed above, do you feel men and women have the same experiences or are exposed to hazards differently? Please elaborate.

- b. For the hazard mitigation strategies discussed, do you feel the same strategy is applicable to both men and women equally?
 - c. Are there jobs that women tend or prefer to do as compared to men? Are there jobs that women tend to be excluded from or prefer not to do as compared to men?
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A list of general probes for the facilitator:

- Tell me more about ____
- When you say ____, what exactly do you mean?
- So are you saying [paraphrase their response]?
- Walk me through ____
- What does that look like?
- Can you give me an example?
- Tell me about a time when you ____
- How is ____ related to ____?
- Do you have anything else to add?
- Help me visualize what you mean
- How would you describe ____?
- Has anyone had a different experience?
- Can anyone offer a different perspective on ____?