

# Moderator Guide: In-Depth Interviews

## Objective:

To conduct interviews with racial/ethnic minority Service members who have experienced sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial harassment, racial discrimination, or gender discrimination to better understand their experiences and their perceptions of the military climate as it relates to prevention and response.

### NOTE TO REVIEWERS:

This moderator guide is not a script and, therefore, should not be read verbatim. These questions will be used as a roadmap and the moderator will probe as needed to maintain the natural flow of the conversation. Participants will be asked to confirm which type of adverse event(s) they have experienced, and most of the interview will be spent discussing that topic. The interview will take approximately 45–60 minutes. The timing of these interviews will be dependent upon the number of incidents that each participant would like to discuss. Each participant will be provided the opportunity to discuss their experiences with gender discrimination, racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. If a participant wishes to discuss more incidents or incident types than may be covered in the 60 minutes allotted, they will be given the option of extending the interview past 60 minutes or participating in a second interview.

Topics	Objective	Time
<b>I. Introduction, Informed Consent, and Discussion Guidelines</b>	To explain the purpose of the interview and set the ground rules	3–5 Minutes
<b>II. Participant Background, Role, and Adverse Events Experienced</b>	To act as a warm-up, establish rapport, and confirm type/s of adverse event/s participant experienced	5–8 Minutes
<b>Adverse Event Experienced</b>	<b>Each session will focus primarily on one of the four topics below</b>	
<b>III.a. Gender Discrimination</b>	To better understand the participant's experience with sexual assault	10–15 Minutes
<b>III.b. Racial Discrimination</b>	To better understand the participant's experience with sexual harassment	10–15 Minutes
<b>III.c. Sexual Harassment</b>	To better understand the participant's experience with racial discrimination	10–15 Minutes

<b>III.d. Sexual Assault</b>	To better understand the participant's experience with gender discrimination	10–15 Minutes
<b>Persistence, Climate, Reporting, Additional Adverse Events, and Support</b>		
<b>IV. Perceptions of Persistence</b>	To better understand reasons behind the persistence of SA/SH/GD/RD	5–10 Minutes
<b>V. Reporting and Support</b>	To better understand the thought process behind deciding whether to report an adverse event and be able to provide support to those who experienced an adverse event	5–10 Minutes
<b>VI. Intersectionality of Adverse Event Types</b>	To provide participants with the opportunity to discuss relationship among adverse event types	5–10 Minutes
<b>VII. Closing</b>	To ask any questions from observers, capture final thoughts, and thank the participant for their time	2 Min
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>		45-60 Min
<b>Appendix</b>	Definitions of gender discrimination, racial discrimination, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault (including abusive sexual contact and aggravated sexual contact)	

## **I. Introduction, Informed Consent, and Discussion Guidelines (3–5 Minutes)**

Thank you for joining me today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am here today on behalf of the Office of People Analytics, sometimes called OPA. We've asked you to come today to hear about the experiences you may have had while serving in the military.

Sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial harassment, racial discrimination, and gender discrimination are contrary to military core values and a detriment to the trust required for mission success. Our goal is to better understand the experience of military members who identify as a racial/ethnic minority and who may have been a victim or experienced these behaviors and your perceptions of the climate and attitudes around these behaviors. In understanding these experiences, our goal is to help inform improvements to DoD policies and processes to prevent such incidents from occurring or mitigate the harmful effects of such incidents.

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

- ❖ Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from this interview at any time.
- ❖ There are no wrong answers today. You are the expert on your experiences. Our whole purpose for being here is to hear what you think.

- ❖ I understand that the experiences we discuss today can be emotional and traumatic. We are sensitive to that. If I ask any questions that you do not wish to answer, you do not have to answer them. You may also end the interview at any time. Choosing not to answer a question or ending the interview will not affect your job or position within the [SERVICE BRANCH].
- ❖ Our discussion should take about 45–60 minutes. I appreciate the time that you set aside to be here, and I want to be respectful of that.
- ❖ I would like to record today's conversation. We take your privacy seriously. The recordings will only be used to confirm our notes. Nothing you say will be tied back to you.
- ❖ Your name and any identifying information will not be used in any of our reports. None of your responses will be shared with your superiors or managers.
- ❖ This interview is being conducted for research purposes and is not part of any official harassment or assault report. We request that you do not use names or other information that could identify a specific individual.
- ❖ There may be a couple of folks from the research team listening in today. They won't interact with us, but they may send me some clarifying questions along the way.  
[Moderator will introduce the observers by name and organization]
- ❖ At the end of this discussion, you will be provided with contact information for the SHARP office, SAPR office, DoD SAFE Helpline, Military Crisis Line, and MEO office should you wish to reach out for additional support.
- ❖ Before we continue, can you confirm that you are in a location that provides you with privacy? We will be discussing potentially sensitive topics and I want to ensure that you are able to speak freely and privately. If you are not in a location that gives you privacy, we can pause while you relocate or reschedule your interview.

Do you have any questions before we begin? [ANSWER QUESTIONS, OTHERWISE:] Do you consent to being recorded? Great, I'll start the recording now.

[BEGIN RECORDING]

## **II. Participant Background, Role, and Adverse Event(s) Experienced (5–8 Minutes)**

I'd like to start off my questions by getting to know you and your experience in the [SERVICE BRANCH] a bit more.

1. Tell me about your current role and some highlights of your military career.

Probe: What are your current day to day responsibilities?

Probe: How long have you been in this role or similar roles?

2. In the next few questions I will be asking you if you have had any experiences with certain types of incidents and if so, would you be comfortable answering some questions about those experiences.
3. Please review the definition of gender discrimination we have provided to you which is also shown on screen (if virtual interview). Did you have any experiences in the military with gender discrimination? (If "No," skip to Question 4)
  - a. [If yes] Would you be comfortable answering some questions about your experiences with gender discrimination? (If "No," skip Section III.a.)
4. Please review the definition of racial discrimination we have provided to you which is also shown on screen (if virtual interview). Did you have any experiences in the military with racial discrimination? (If "No," skip to Question 5)
  - a. [If yes] Would you be comfortable answering some questions about your experiences with racial discrimination? (If "No," skip Section III.b.)
5. Please review the definition of sexual harassment we have provided to you which is also shown on screen (if virtual interview). Did you have any experiences in the military with sexual harassment? (If "No," skip to Question 6)
  - a. [If yes] Would you be comfortable answering some questions about these experiences? (If "No," skip Section III.c.)
6. Please review the definition of sexual assault that we have provided you which is also shown on screen (if virtual interview). Did you have any experiences in the military with sexual assault? (If "No," skip to Question 7)
  - a. [If yes] Would you be comfortable answering some questions about these experiences? (If "No," skip Section III.d.)

7. Thank you for reviewing those definitions and letting me know which incident type(s) you have experienced and are comfortable answering questions about. Based on the responses you provided, we will be discussing [INSERT ADVERSE EVENT TYPE(S)] during this interview. We have 60 minutes allotted for this discussion but want to make sure that you have enough time to fully share your experiences. If you wish to take longer than 60 minutes, or to schedule a second interview to continue this discussion, you will be given that opportunity. [If participant indicates experiencing none of these incident types, skip to section IV].

### **III.a. Gender Discrimination (10–15 Minutes)**

1. What are your experiences in the military related to gender discrimination?
2. Do you feel like you were a target for gender discrimination because of your identity as [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority group]?
  - a. [If yes] What are some reasons that you feel like you were targeted because of your gender or racial identity?
3. Were there ever incidences of gender discrimination that you experienced that may be attributed to your race or ethnicity?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about how that racial harassment played a role in the gender discrimination that you experienced?
4. Did you know the person or people who did this to you prior to the gender discrimination incident?
  - a. [If yes] How long did you know them before the incident?
5. Where was the person(s) that did this to you in relation to your chain of command?
6. Was there someone in the DoD you trusted to tell about this incident?
  - a. [If yes] Without giving a name, would you tell me about who you talked to about this incident?
7. Did you choose to report this incident?
  - a. What was your thought process when deciding whether to report?
  - b. [If participant did report the incident] How do you feel about how you were treated when you reported?
8. What do you think are some reasons that gender discrimination continues to happen in the military?
9. What role do you think organizational leadership [Service specific examples] plays in the occurrence of gender discrimination?
10. What levels of leadership [Service specific examples] do you think have the most influence on whether or not gender discrimination occurs?
11. Outside of leadership, what else influences Service member attitudes about gender discrimination?

### **III.b. Racial Discrimination (10–15 Minutes)**

1. What are your experiences in the military related to racial discrimination?
2. Do you feel like you were a target for racial discrimination because of your identity as [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority group]?
  - a. [If yes] What are some reasons that you feel like you were targeted because of your gender or racial identity?
3. Did your experiences with racial discrimination in the military also involve racial or ethnic harassment?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about how that racial harassment played a role in the racial discrimination that you experienced?
4. Did you know the person who discriminated against you prior to the racial discrimination incident?
  - a. [If yes] How long did you know them before the incident?
5. Where was this person in relation to your chain of command?
6. Was there someone in the DoD you trusted to tell about the incident?
  - a. [If yes] Without giving a name, would you tell me about who you talked to about this incident?
7. Did you choose to report this incident?
  - a. What was your thought process when deciding whether to report?
  - b. [If participant did report the incident] How do you feel about how you were treated when you reported?
8. What do you think are some reasons that racial discrimination continues to happen in the military?
9. What role do you think organizational leadership [Service specific examples] plays in the occurrence of racial discrimination in the military?
10. What levels of leadership [Service specific examples] do you think have the most influence on whether or not incidents of racial discrimination occur?
11. Outside of leadership, what else influences Service member attitudes about racial discrimination?

### **III.c. Sexual Harassment (10–15 Minutes)**

1. What are your experiences in the military related to sexual harassment?
2. Do you feel like you were targeted for sexual harassment because of your identity as [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority group]?
  - a. [If yes] What are some reasons that you feel like you were targeted because of your gender or racial identity?

3. Do you feel like the harassment that you experienced was racially or ethnically motivated?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about that?
4. Prior to the incident did you know the person who sexually harassed you?
  - a. [If yes] How long did you know them before the incident?
5. Did the harassment involve another Service member?
  - a. [If yes] Where was this Service member in relation to your chain of command?
6. Was the person who sexually harassed you under the influence of any substance, peer pressure, or other influence at the time of the incident?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about that?
7. Where did the harassment take place?
8. Was there someone in the DoD you trusted to tell about the incident after it occurred?
  - a. [If yes] Without giving a name, would you tell me about who you talked to about this incident?
  - b. [If no] Was there anyone outside of DoD you told about the incident after it occurred? If so, what was your relationship to that person or people?
9. Did you choose to report this harassment?
  - a. What was your thought process when deciding whether to report?
  - b. [If participant did report the incident] How do you feel about how you were treated when you reported?
10. What do you think are some reasons that sexual harassment continues to happen in the military?
11. What role do you think organizational leadership [Service specific examples] plays in the occurrence (or prevention) of sexual harassment?
12. What levels of leadership [Service specific examples] do you think have the most influence on whether or not incidents of sexual harassment occur?
13. Outside of leadership, what else influences Service member attitudes about sexual harassment?

### **III.d. Sexual Assault (10–15 Minutes)**

1. What are your experiences in the military related to sexual assault?
2. Do you feel like you were targeted for sexual assault because of your identity as [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority group]?
  - a. [If yes] What are some reasons that you feel like you were targeted because of your gender or racial identity?
3. Do you feel like the sexual assault(s) was/were racially or ethnically motivated?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about that?
4. Did you know the person who did this to you prior to the sexual assault incident(s)?
  - a. [If yes] How long did you know them before the incident(s)?

5. Did the sexual assault(s) involve a Service member(s)?
  - a. [If yes] Where is this Service member in relation to your chain of command?
6. Was the person who did this to you under the influence of any substance, peer pressure, or other influence at the time of the incident?
  - a. [If yes] Would you tell me more about that?
7. Where did the assault(s) take place?
8. Was there someone you trusted in your unit or installation to tell about the incident after it occurred?
  - a. [If yes] Who in your unit or installation did you talk to about this incident?
9. Did you choose to report this assault?
  - a. What was your thought process when deciding whether to report?
  - b. [If participant did report the incident] How do you feel about how you were treated when you reported?
10. What do you think are some reasons that sexual assault continues to happen in the military?
11. What role do you think organizational leadership [Service specific examples] plays in the occurrence (or prevention) of sexual assault?
12. What levels of leadership [Service specific examples] do you think have the most influence on whether or not incidents of sexual assault occur?
13. Outside of leadership, what else influences Service member attitudes about sexual assault?

#### **IV. Perceptions of Persistence (5–10 Minutes)**

Next, I'd like to discuss perceptions about gender discrimination, racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault persisting in the military.

1. Which racial/ethnic minority Service members do you think might be at greater risk of experiencing any of these four types of events?
2. What has the military done to reduce [insert adverse event(s) that participant discussed during the interview: SA/SH/GD/RD]? Of those things the military has done, what has worked? What are some reasons that you feel that this has worked?
3. What has not worked? Why did this not work?
4. What could be done to help prevent or reduce the harm caused by these incidents?

#### **V. Reporting and Support (5–10 Minutes)**

Now, I'd like to discuss your experience of reporting this behavior and the support you received after reporting.

1. What are some reasons that [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority] Service members may choose to not report incidences of [insert adverse event(s) that participant discussed during the interview: SA/SH/GD/RD]?

2. What are the barriers to reporting these incidents for [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority] Service members?
3. What would be the best way for the military to provide support for [insert gender and racial/ethnic minority] Service members who have experienced [insert adverse event(s) that participant discussed during the interview: SA/SH/GD/RD]?

## **VI. Intersectionality of Adverse Event Types, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity (5–10 Minutes)**

1. We have been discussing several types of incident types during our discussion. We have briefly discussed how these might be related but want to be sure we are fully capturing your thoughts on how these might be related to each other. Do you feel like these incidents were related, or do you view them as separate incidents?
  - a. [If participant feels that incidents were related] Which incidents were related? How were they related?
  - b. [If participant feels that incidents were separate] What makes you feel like these were separate incidents?
2. Were these incidents connected to your gender or racial/ethnic identity in any way that you have not yet shared?
  - a. [If yes] Please tell me more about how these incidents were connected to your identity.

## **VII. Closing (2 Minutes)**

Those are all the questions I have for you. I really appreciate your feedback. Before we wrap up, I am going to consult with my colleagues to see if there is anything I missed to ask or if there are any follow-up questions.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today and participate in this interview. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments anonymously. We will not tie your name or any other identifying information to the specific comments you made today.

Do you have any questions for me or is there anything that you would like to share that you didn't have the chance to share yet?

## **Appendix**

**Gender discrimination:** Gender discrimination is included in DoDD 1350.2 under the definition of unlawful discrimination, as discrimination based on sex that is “not otherwise authorized by law or regulation” (DoDD 1350.2, 2015, p. 18). In this report, we refer to gender discrimination to describe comments, insults, or other behavior directed at a service member because of their gender. To be considered gender discrimination, these incidents must negatively affect or limit

the service member's career. (RAND in a report for the US Army, [https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/images/pdf/RAND\\_RRA1385-1.pdf](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/images/pdf/RAND_RRA1385-1.pdf) )

**Racial discrimination:** (included in a broader definition of discrimination): (US Army) Any act or failure to act, impermissibly based in whole or in part on a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, and/or reprisal, that adversely affects privileges, benefits, working conditions, results in disparate treatment, or has a disparate impact on employees, former employees or applicants for employment. (US Army EEO: <https://eeo.amedd.army.mil/programs/DCP/definition.html> )

**Racial harassment:** A hostile environment can be comprised of various types of conduct. While there is not an exhaustive list, examples include offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance. The conduct need not be explicitly racial in nature ... There are two requirements for race-based conduct to trigger potential liability for unlawful harassment: (1) the conduct must be unwelcome; and (2) the conduct must be sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the terms and conditions of employment in the mind of the victim and from the perspective of a reasonable person in the victim's position. (US EEO Commission: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/section-15-race-and-color-discrimination> )

**Sexual harassment:** 9 CFR 1604.11 definition of sexual harassment: a Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a individual's employment.
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Sexual assault:** Intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent. The term includes a broad category of sexual offenses, including rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy (forced oral or anal sex) or attempts to commit these offenses.

**Aggravated sexual contact** (Article 120 UCMJ); engaging in "sexual contact" with another person or causing sexual contact with another person: by force, or by causing grievous bodily harm, by threats or creating fear of death, grievous bodily harm or kidnapping, or rendering another unconscious, or administering a drug or other intoxicant.

**Abusive sexual contact** (Article 120 UCMJ); causing another person to engage in “sexual contact” by using threats of or creating fear of bodily harm or other harm less than death, grievous bodily harm or kidnapping.