



Qualitative Research to Better Understand the Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Minority Service Members

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Agency Disclosure Notice

The public reporting burden for this collection of information, OMB Control Number: 0704-0644, is estimated to average 90 minutes per focus group. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or burden reduction suggestions to the Department of Defense (DoD), Washington Headquarters Services, at whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dd-dod-information-collections@mail.mil (OMB Control Number: 0704-0644). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

Privacy Advisory

This study assesses the participants' perspectives regarding experiences related to gender discrimination, racial discrimination, racial harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or any combination of these adverse events. Study members will participate in a 90-minute focus group. Your name and contact information are only used for scheduling the focus group. Your responses to the questions will allow the DoD to better understand the experiences of racial/ethnic minority Service members. The focus group is confidential, and your individual responses will be kept private to the fullest extent allowed by law; however, direct threats to yourself or others may be reported to the appropriate authority. If you indicate a direct threat to harm yourself or others within responses during the focus group or communications about the focus group, because of concern for your welfare, OPA may notify an office in your area for appropriate action. Participating in this focus group is voluntary. There is no penalty to you if you choose not to participate.

Additional Information

Qualitative Research to Better Understand the Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Minority Service Members derives from guidance from the 2021 Independent Review Commission (IRC) which called for the need to: improve data collection, research, and reporting on sexual harassment and sexual assault to better reflect the experiences of Service members from marginalized populations—including LGBTQ+ Service members, and racial and ethnic minorities. For more information see <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Jul/02/2002755437/-1/-1/0/IRC-FULL-REPORT-FINAL-1923-7-1-21.PDF>.

Participation in this study is limited to racial and ethnic minority Service members. This focus group is expected to last for approximately ninety minutes. If you agree to participate, you and other participants will be asked questions in a small group setting about your experiences as a Service member with gender discrimination, racial harassment, racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. You may also be asked about how your Service and people within it have addressed these issues. This focus group will be recorded so that it can be transcribed for data analysis. Personally identifiable information (PII) will be redacted from these transcripts prior to analysis.

There will be discussion of topics that are sensitive in nature and may be upsetting to you. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to, and are free to end your participation at any time. We ask that you not reveal details of specific sexual assault incidents. Some participants may be mandatory reporters, and it is possible if you reveal these details that such a participant would be required to report that incident. We request that you respect other participants' responses and their privacy, by not discussing their responses outside of this focus group.

No direct benefits to you are expected from your participation. However, the results of this project will be used to inform and improve DoD policies and procedures in relation to racial, ethnic, and sexual harassment and assault. These changes may ultimately benefit yourself and other Service members by reducing these types of incidents and improving DoD's responses to these incidents for racial/ethnic minority Service members. In no case will individual identifiable responses be included in our reports; all responses will be anonymized. Identifying information will be used only by government and contractor staff working on this project, specifically for the purposes of identifying potential participants and contacting those individuals to schedule the focus group. The government and its contractors have policies and procedures to ensure the data are safe and protected. For example, no identifying information (name, address, Social Security Number) is ever stored in the same file as responses.

Your responses will be handled in accordance with the Federal Register System of Records and the Privacy Act of 1974. Response data may be shared with DoD personnel or organizations outside the DoD who are conducting projects related to DoD Service members and employees. In many cases, these personnel will be provided with participants' responses containing limited demographic information (for example, Service/component and gender). OPA performs a disclosure avoidance analysis to reduce the risk of there being a combination of demographic variables which can single out an individual. Personnel approved for access to these datasets must adhere to strict procedures, including - but not limited to - data sharing agreements, secure transfers of data, destruction of files upon completion of the project, and authorization to reuse data. In addition, receipt and use of these datasets must adhere to all DoD information assurance, security, and other data use policies. Some findings may be published by the Office of People Analytics (OPA) or in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences.

A participant who experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault may experience discomfort and/or other emotions while participating in the focus group. Contact information is provided below for those who experience such discomfort.

If you are a victim of sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, or a person who wishes to prevent or respond to this crime, you may want to contact a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA). To reach the DoD Safe Helpline 24/7 for restricted/unrestricted reporting and established DoD Sexual Assault Services, call a hotline number:

Toll-Free: 1-877-995-5247

DSN: 94-877-995-5247

Worldwide: <https://www.safehelpline.org/> or www.sapr.mil/

If you have other questions regarding this project or your participation in it, please contact this study's Project Manager, Callie Chandler, by email (callie.j.chandler.civ@mail.mil) or phone (831.241.2273).

You may withdraw your participation at any time. If you choose to withdraw your participation, your responses will not be used in the analysis of data and you will not be contacted for further participation.