

Moderator's Guide: Focus Group  
Obesity in America  
October 2009

INTRODUCTION

Hello. I would like to welcome you all here today for our focus group discussion about weight control in America. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I will be moderating our discussion today. Our other co-moderators are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Today we are here to discuss what you, the community, think about obesity in America, what you think the causes and potential solutions might be, and how effective or ineffective media messages regarding weight loss, healthy living and obesity are.

We want to hear all the positive and negative comments and/or suggestions that you may have. We would like your comments to be frank and honest; there is no right or wrong answer. We are looking for your thoughts and insights. You are the experts, and we want to learn from you.

GUIDELINES

Here are a few guidelines. This is a relaxed and informal discussion [Refreshments are served on the table, so please feel free to help yourselves.]

This session is being recorded, so please allow one person to speak at a time. Your comments are entirely confidential. The discussion should last about an hour. Afterwards, you will receive a \$10.00 Publix gift card as a token of appreciation for your participation and time. Are there any questions at this point? If not, let's get started.

Let's begin by going around the room and introducing ourselves. Tell us your first name and your major.

1. First, let's talk about the problem of obesity in America today. Do you think there is a problem with obesity in America today? (*In all cases, wait for open, volunteer responses; call on people who look like they have something to say. When necessary, PROBE for the following specific questions to guide the conversation:*)
  - a. How is it a problem?
  - b. Are you/have you been personally affected?
  - c. How has it influenced other aspects of your life? Family, job discrimination, social reactions, physical health, mental health?
2. Next, what do you think the causes, in general, of obesity are? What were the causes for you personally? (*Wait for open responses and then PROBE for the following items:*)

Death of loved one

Eating habits

Graduation

Health issues

Kids

Money/Financial concerns

Motivation

Scheduling conflicts

Significant life event

Time

Work

3. Now that we have talked about possible causes of obesity, what do you think the solution to the problem of obesity is? (*Wait for open responses and then PROBE for the following information:*)
  - a. Are you currently doing these things? Why/why not?
  - b. Are they effective? Why/why not?
  - c. What did it take for you to get started?
  - d. What does it take to keep up the good work? What keeps you motivated in your actions or behaviors **or** what might motivate you?
  - e. What are some obstacles?
  
4. We are getting close to the end now. We have just a few more questions to go. Have you seen any media messages regarding weight loss, healthy living or obesity? (*Wait for open responses and then PROBE for the following information:*)
  - a. What do you think of them? Do you like them, dislike them?
  - b. What makes them so effective or motivating? Why do you dislike them?
  - c. What would make them more effective? What would you want to hear?
  
5. Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding the problem of obesity in America today that we have not discussed?

## CONCLUSION

We want to thank each of you for participating in our group discussion this evening. The information you have provided us is of enormous value. Does anybody have any questions before we wrap things up? Okay, feel free to pick up any leftover pizza, and don't forget to get your \$10.00 Publix gift card from me before you leave. Thank you for coming.