

Black and Hispanic Americans' perspectives on science and society

Moderator Guide for focus groups, July 2021

Introduction (5 min)

[Notes for moderators: We're especially interested in hearing **people's experiences** –including positive experiences and influences in their lives that encouraged more involvement with science as well as experiences with discrimination or microaggressions – things that turned them away from science. As much as possible, we'd like to hear their sense of why or reasons for their perspectives. We're also interested in the reasons for people's trust and mistrust in scientists across these settings. There are a lot of probe ideas here to help get people talking about those experiences. A few required probes are in bold.]

- Moderator Intro: Ethnicity; 90 minutes; confidentiality; recording for documentation purposes only; observers. Sponsor Pew Research Center, purpose to hear your thoughts and experiences regarding science. Don't need any special knowledge about science.
- What is your first name or what name do you want to be called? Who lives with you? What makes you [Black/African American or Latino/Hispanic]? About preferred terms [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino Americans]: acknowledging that people think about this differently and may come from a range of backgrounds

RQ1: Experiences during the coronavirus pandemic and views of scientific advice for ways to protect health, stop the spread of the virus (15 min)

- Tell me a little about your experiences with the coronavirus outbreak – how concerned have you been about the risk to your own health or that of friends and family? What is your thinking now?
- What did you think of scientific advice about how to protect your health and stop the spread of the disease? Did you think they “got it right”? Was there a particular source that you trusted that you feel got it right?
- Was there some advice that seemed wrong or that you didn't believe? Who or what influenced your thoughts about this? Was there a person or a particular source of information that you dismissed as not reliable or not trustworthy? What makes this source not reliable or not trustworthy?
- What do you think about vaccines for COVID-19? How much do you worry about the safety of the vaccines or how effective they will be in preventing the coronavirus?
- **[REQUIRED] Did you hear anything about [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino Americans] being reluctant to get a coronavirus vaccine? Were you surprised by that? Why do you think that is?**

RQ2: Experiences in medical and health care settings, for treatment of minor health issues and, separately, for treatment of serious health issues (20 min)

Let's talk about your experiences getting routine health care for checkups, preventive care or treatment for minor issues:

- Do you have a regular health care provider?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of medical care you get? Why do you feel that way? Are your concerns heard? Have you had any experiences where you were unhappy with the quality of medical care?
- **[REQUIRED] Are there people in your life or sources of information that you often turn to for advice about treatment for minor health issues? Who do you talk with first when you are thinking about what to do for these kinds of issues?**

Let's turn to thinking about your experiences getting medical treatment for serious health issues

- Do you have experiences with this either for yourself or a loved one? Who did you trust to help guide you about what to do in this situation? (Probe to specify health care providers, family/friends or specific websites, apps or other sources of information, language preference for these services)
- How did you feel about the quality of medical treatment you or your loved one received? Did you feel you had to advocate for yourself or a loved one to get better quality care? What led to that?
- Sometimes people say it's hard to get health care professionals to take **pain seriously** for [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino Americans]. Have you had any trouble getting pain treatment when you needed it for yourself or your loved ones when dealing with a serious health issue? Has something like that happened to someone you know?
- In these kinds of medical treatment situations have you ever felt dismissed because of something about who you are – your race or ethnicity or something more specific about how you look or the way you speak? Do you think these experiences are something that tend to occur for lots of patients or is this something that is particular to experiences for [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino] patients? What do you do when this happens?
- Have you ever volunteered to participate in a medical research trial where they are testing new, experimental treatments to see if they are safe and effective? What was your motivation? Have you ever been asked to take part in a medical research trial? Who approached you? What do you think about taking part in medical research trials for experimental treatments? For others who have not been approached, would you do it? Reasons?
- **[REQUIRED] What's your take on the discussion that the [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino Americans] community is less trusting of medical scientists? Do you have a sense of whether that's true? If so, why is that? What do you see as contributing to lower trust? What do you think would help?**

- **[IF IT HASN'T COME UP]** Sometimes people talk about concerns or worries about being experimented on by medical researchers. Is that something that you think about or worry about when you have needed medical care for a serious condition? Tell me more about where that concern comes from for you.
- Does it make a difference if health care provider looks like you? Tell me more about why that matters or doesn't matter.

RQ3: Experiences with other aspects of science in our daily lives, other ways people think about science and perceptions of jobs in science (10 min)

Now, thinking more generally about science or related areas in technology, mathematics and engineering – the way things work – and your own life ...

- What's something about science that you find exciting or impressive? Or interesting?
 - What are some ways that you see science having an influence on your own life, or the lives of people in your community? Give an example. Is this a good thing or bad thing?
- **[REQUIRED] Are there problems in your community where you think the work of scientists or science might be helpful? Tell me more about what you are thinking.**
- What's your impression of jobs in science?
 - Do you see these jobs as desirable? What are the chief downsides of those jobs? Are there particular upsides or downsides to doing those kinds of jobs?
 - Do you see this an area where [African Americans/Black Americans or Hispanic/Latino Americans] are welcome – or not welcome – or treated about the same as other people? What makes you say that? Do you think this is something unique to jobs in science or common in a lot of different jobs?
 - Did you ever pursue a job in these fields? Tell me about that experience.

RQ4: Experiences in educational settings with a focus on science in high school or after high school/college (15 min)

- Who has been the biggest supporter or cheerleader in your life (for what you did in school or where you were headed when it was time to look for jobs)?
- Let's talk for a minute about science education in high school or after high school (such as college or technical schooling). Was there anything or a particular time in your life when you were especially interested in science? Tell me about that. Was there anything or a particular time in your life when you were especially disinterested? Tell me about that. Can you think of anything that would have helped to make you more interested or enthusiastic about science classes at that time?

- Thinking back to when you were in high school or in schooling after that, did you have anyone in your life who encouraged you to take more science in high school or after high school? Anyone who discouraged you? Tell me more about what happened at those times. (Probe to specify teacher/family/friends etc.)
- **[REQUIRED] Do you see science classes in high school and after high school as an area where [African American/Black American or Hispanic/Latino American] people feel welcome, not welcome or something in between? How do you come to that idea? Is this something that also occurs in other areas or is this different for science classes?**
- How many of you had teachers who were [African American/Black or Hispanic/Latino]? Does that make a difference? Tell me more about why that matters or doesn't matter.
- For those of you involved in a church or other religious group: Did you have any concerns about whether science classes were compatible with your religion's teachings? Did you have any experiences with people in your church community that made you feel encouraged to pursue science in high school or after high school? Or experiences that made you feel there was a tension between your religious community and pursuing science in school?

RQ5: Experiences engaging with media and social media for information and connection with science (10 min)

- How much do you pay attention to news about science or scientific developments? If a lot/some: What kinds of news do you have in mind? What makes those areas interesting to you? If not much/none: What makes it something that you tend to pass over?
- Can you think of a time where you felt wowed by or marveled at news about scientific developments?
- Do you watch any television programs or documentaries (English or Spanish) that you would consider to be science-related? Which ones? What makes it interesting to you?
- How often are people you know or friends talking about or posting on social media platforms about science topics? What kinds of posts do you have in mind?
- **[REQUIRED] We're interested in when and why people get involved with science news or science-related activities and what turns people off from those activities. How would you describe your own interest and involvement with science news? Can you say more about anything that made you more or less involved with science news in the past?**

RQ6: Perspectives on the effects of science on society, scientists and areas we've missed (10 min)

- We have been talking a lot about science topics. Are there other science topics that come to mind which we have not discussed that are important to you?
- **[REQUIRED] What's your overall feeling? Do you see science as helping improve the quality of people's lives or not helping or some of both? Why do you say that? If negative or a mix of positive and negative, tell me more about why you say that. If needed, also explain what kinds of "science" people have in mind.**
- **[REQUIRED] Some people say that "they trust science, it's the scientists they don't trust." What do you make of that statement?**

Closing thoughts (10 min)

- **What needs to happen for more [African American/Black or Hispanic/Latino adults] to have more confidence in science and scientists?**