

Focus Group Conversation Guide for Women Mine Workers

The following is a conversation guide to be used by the focus group facilitator to explore women mine workers' 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 flexible 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, we'd like to hear your definition of who a miner is? (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. Potential probes:
 - i. Where do you work most often?
 - ii. What tools/equipment do you use while you work?
 - iii. What is the physical environment like?
 - iv. How many people do you work with?
 - v. Who do you report to? What is your proximity to your frontline supervisor?

Hazards and risks

4. In your specific job, what are the most common hazards or risks you face?
 - a. Potential probes:
 - i. Can you give an example of a situation where or when you (or someone you know) has experienced that hazard?
 - ii. Has [insert hazard] prevented you or other women mine workers from doing that job?
 1. If yes, what were the reasons for why you had to stop performing the task?
 - iii. Has [insert hazard] changed the way you or other women mine workers do that job?
 1. If yes, how?
 - a. Did your company provide:
 - b. Health/safety training
 - c. Change in procedures
 - d. Change in equipment / tools / job aids

- e. Change in PPE
- iv. Has [insert hazard] affected your/mine workers willingness or ability to do the job? Has it affected your ability to do the job safely?

Mitigation

In terms of addressing the hazards and risks you face while doing your job...

5. If you had the power/authority/opportunity to make changes, what would you change or do differently to mitigate or manage the various hazard/risks you experience? (Alternative: How can Hazard A/B/C be eliminated or mitigated so women mine workers can do their job safely?)
 - a. Potential probe:
 - i. In your opinion, why aren't efforts made to mitigate or manage the hazards/risks described above?

Wrap-up questions

6. We've talked about the jobs/tasks you're currently perform in mining, but if you had the opportunity, what tasks/jobs would you like to perform at the mine? What's your dream job at the mine?
 - a. Potential probes:
 - i. Have you pursued that job? Why or why not?
7. We've come to the end of our discussion. Before we wrap up, is there anything else you want to talk about or would like us to know about your experience as a woman working in a mine?
 - a. Potential probes:
 - i. How you do the work
 - ii. Tools and equipment available/provided to you
 - iii. Work environment (noise, dust, temp/humidity etc.)
 - iv. Training (annual/task/pre-shift)
 - v. Communication (active and passive [e.g., between people; signage])
 - vi. Co-worker/manager support, trust, teamwork
 - vii. Safety Culture / Organizational Justice
 - viii. General health

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 ____?