NOAA Baseline Heat: Focus Group Instrument

Denver, CO

Principal Investigator: Micki Olson, College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, University at Albany, SUNY

- Notes
  - Allow time for follow up to specific people and ask why questions as well as how questions (e.g., how do you know this? Point to specific things in the message AND reference specific things from their experience to come to these conclusions)
  - Allow time to ask what things mean/they think it means. This will help us move beyond "this is confusing" and focus on meaning/understanding
  - Questions in red should be asked only if there is time

Introduction

- Good morning, my name is _____. The purpose of this focus group is to understand your experiences with extreme heat and your thoughts on some messages about extreme heat conditions.

- (The consent form has been provided and agreed to by the participants)

- Before we begin the focus group, I need to make sure you understand your rights as a participant. First, I can assure you that all information will remain confidential and nothing you say will be attributed to you without your permission. Second, we ask to respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content discussed during the study. Third, these focus groups will be recorded and transcribed, but we will not identify you in any way nor will your name or identity appear in our written reports or publications.

- Do you have any questions? (Answer any that are asked)

- If this is OK with you, I will start recording now (using Zoom). Recording is very important because it gives me much more accurate notes than I can take by hand. As I said in my email, the focus group will take up to approximately 90 minutes.

EXTREME HEAT EXPERIENCE

Notes to facilitator:

- No Tweet associated with this question
- Limit discussion to ~10 minutes

Let's first discuss some of your experiences with heat.

- Tell me about your last experience with extreme heat in your community?
  - What were some of the impacts/consequences?
  - What strategies do you use to stay cool and manage the heat when it's really hot?

UNDERSTANDING OF HAZARD INFORMATION

Tweet 1

Notes to facilitator:

- Allow enough time to allow people to read and digest Tweet in its entirety.
- Discussion of this Tweet should last ~15 mins.

Tweet 1 Terms: Heat advisory, humidity, heat index, apparent temperature

Now, I would like to turn your attention to a few messages.

- What are your thoughts about this message?
- What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that you find to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- What do you think about the term *heat index*?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What do you think about the term *apparent temperature* (as seen in the legend)?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What do you think about the term *heat advisory?*
  - What does that mean to you?

Tweet 2

Notes to facilitator:

- Allow enough time to allow people to read and digest Tweet in its entirety.
- Discussion of this Tweet should last ~15 mins.
- People may need to be reminded that they have already seen "heat advisory." If necessary, ask if this changes the way they think about it.

Tweet 2 Terms: Extreme heat warning, heat advisory

Now, looking at a different message

- What are your thoughts about this message?
- What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that you find to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- What do you think about the term *extreme heat warning (as seen in the legend)*?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What do you think about the term *heat advisory*?
  - What does that mean to you?

Tweet 3

- Allow *more* time for people to read and digest Tweet in its entirety.
- Discussion of this Tweet should last ~15 mins.
- People may need to be reminded that they have already seen "extreme heat warning"

Tweet 3 Terms: Major heat risk [or other categories], excessive heat warning,

Now, looking at a different message

- What are your thoughts about this message?
- What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that you find to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- What do you think about the term *Major HeatRisk?*
  - What does that mean to you?
- Is anything confusing in the legend/levels?
- How do these categories compare with the previous messages?

Tweet 4

Notes to facilitator:

- Allow *more* time for people to read and digest Tweet in its entirety.
- Discussion of this Tweet should last ~15 mins.
- People may need to be reminded that they have already seen "heat index" "humidity" or "apparent temperature." If necessary, ask if this changes the way they think about it.

Tweet 4 Terms: Heat index, apparent temperature, relative humidity,

Now, looking at a different message

- What are your thoughts about this message?
- What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that you find to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- At what point (or color) in the chart do you feel you need to be careful?

UNDERSTANDING OF HAZARD IMPACT & VULNERABILITY INFORMATION

Tweet 5

Notes to facilitator:

- Allow *more* time for people to read and digest Tweet in its entirety.
- Discussion of this Tweet should last ~20 mins.

Tweet 5 Terms: Heat wave, extreme heat, heat illness, vulnerable

Now, let's talk about a final message.

- What are your thoughts about this message?
- What stands out to you?
- Is there anything that you find to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- What do you think about the term *heat illness*?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What do you think about the term *extreme heat*?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What do you think about the term *vulnerable*?
  - What does that mean to you?
- What are your thoughts on the term *elderly*?
  - How do you define this population?

- What are your thoughts on the term *chronic illness*?
  - How do you define this population?
- Is there anyone missing from these categories that are not described in this tweet?
- In what way(s) do you identify with any of the groups listed on this slide?
- Now thinking back to the previous heat index slide, does this change the way you think about people's risk in the yellow or caution zone?
- Who do you think this message is directed at?
- What is your personal understanding of how extreme heat can impact *your* health?

WRAP UP

Now that we're nearing the end of our discussion….

- Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic?

End/Thanks

✓ Thank you very much for your time.