

**Topic Guide: Baseline Focus Group
For Community Members / Leaders**

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important discussion of health, mental health, and overall well-being within the Black community.

As part of our hypertension program at NYU, we are interested in providing Black patients with tools to manage stress caused by experiences of racism/racial discrimination, in order to help improve blood pressure control. Would you mind if we discussed some of your personal observations of racism and racial discrimination within your community, and how this has affected physical and mental health, and wellness in your community? You are also welcome to share any personal experiences with racism and discrimination and how this has affected your own health, if you feel comfortable.

Part 1: General Health Issues / Blood Pressure

1. What are some of the major health issues in your community?
2. Do you think high blood pressure is a problem in your community? How do you think it is a problem / why do you think it is a problem? How does it affect you / your community?
 - a. [Or, if it was mentioned in response to question #1:]: Let's talk about high blood pressure. How do you think it is a problem / why do you think it is a problem? How does it affect you / your community?
3. How do you or members of your community deal with high blood pressure?

Part 2: Community Experience of Stress, Racism, and Racial Discrimination

Now, I'd like to talk a little about stress, and the experience of stress on health and wellness:

4. What impact has COVID had on stress, your health, or the health of your community?
5. Do you think racism/racial discrimination is a problem among the Black community? Why or why not?
 - a. *Probes: What are your thoughts on the racial climate within the US right now? Do you think this influences experiences of racism/racial discrimination within your community? What about within your community?*
6. Do you think stress due to racism/racial discrimination impacts you or your community's ability to access the services that they need? Why or why not?
 - a. *Probe: How does racial discrimination impact access to resources for healthcare? For hypertension management, and other conditions?*

7. Do you think stress due to racism/racial discrimination negatively impacts your own or your community's health, mental health and overall well-being? Why or why not?
8. Can you recall a time when you or someone you know experienced a racist encounter in the community? Or while assessing healthcare? Can you tell me about it?
9. How do you or members of your community cope with stress due to racial discrimination? Are there any specific coping strategies?
 - a. *Probe: (i.e, strengthening social connections, building trust, faith/religious teachings, etc.)*
 - b. *[If participants are members of a faith-based group]: How does your faith or religious teachings help you to cope with racial discrimination / racism?*

[Part 3: Complete if participants are members of a community-based or faith-based organization only, otherwise go to Part 4]:

Now, I would like to learn more about your organization / congregation and get your thoughts on partnering with outside organizations, such as NYU Langone Health, for research initiatives to help improve the health of your community.

Part 3: Partnership and Future Collaboration

10. Tell me more about the organization / congregation you belong to? What is the make-up of the community members / clients served by your organization / congregation?
 - a. *Probe: Are members from the local geographic area or are they attending from elsewhere? Can you talk briefly about the racial/ ethnic make-up and or the social economic status of these members, etc.?*
11. What, specifically, would you hope to get out of a partnership with NYULH for your organization / congregation?
 - a. *Probe: What can we provide for your organization/congregation to make the partnership mutually beneficial (health and community resources, training/educational opportunities, etc.)?*

Part 4: Closing

12. Would you be interested in receiving any health education materials? What topics would be most useful? Format? Anything else?
13. Are there any other topics that you would like to discuss?

Thank you for sharing your valuable insight with us today.