Bullying Focus Group Questions - EEO

Note: The questions below have been developed to assist leaders in identifying and understanding the impacts of bullying within the organization. Select those that fit your situation and modify or add to them as desired.

Introduction Questions (Surveying for Knowledge about Bullying)

- What is your understanding of bullying?
- What is the definition of bullying for DoD civilian employees or equal employment opportunity (EEO)?
- Are you aware of the official EEO policies regarding bullying?
  - If so, please describe what you know.
- Do you believe the DoD EEO definition of bullying is clear and comprehensive?
- Have you received any formal training or information sessions on bullying?
  - What did this training include?
- How do you differentiate between bullying and other forms of harassment?
- What is the difference between bullying and hazing?
- What are the consequences of bullying?
  - How do these affect individuals?
  - How do these affect the work environment or culture?
- What resources are available to you if you want to learn more about bullying or report an incident?
- Have the policies on bullying changed during your time as a DoD civilian employee?
  - If yes, how so?
  - How do you feel about these changes?
  - How do you feel these changes have affected you and your job as a DoD civilian employee?

Individual Experience with Bullying and Climate-Related Concerns

- Have you ever witnessed or experienced bullying during your time as a DoD civilian employee?
  - Please describe the incident.
- How did you or others respond to the bullying incident at the time it occurred?
- How prevalent is bullying within your immediate work environment or organization?
  - What forms does it typically take?
  - Do you, or have you ever participated in a bullying act as a person doing the bullying?
- Can you share any observed impacts of bullying on individuals or your working team's cohesion and effectiveness?
- What do you think motivates individuals to engage in bullying?
- In your observation, how do new employees typically react to bullying?
- Are there particular times or events when bullying is more likely to occur?

- Have you ever felt pressured to participate in bullying?
  - How did you handle that situation?
  - What factors influenced your decision on how to respond?

Bullying Prevention and Bystander Intervention

- Are you familiar with strategies or protocols for intervening in a bullying incident?
  - Please explain the strategies you know.
- How comfortable do you feel about intervening in future bullying incidents?
  - What support or resources did you have to support you?
  - What support or resources would increase your comfort level?
- What barriers exist that might prevent someone from intervening in a bullying situation?
- How effective do you think current training is in preventing bullying, specifically as a bystander?
- Can you provide an example of an effective bystander intervention you've witnessed?
- What role do you think leaders play in encouraging or discouraging bystander intervention?
- What additional training or resources would you suggest to enhance bystander intervention efforts within your organization?

Culture, Climate, and Perceptions of Leaders and Supervisors

- How would you describe the overall climate in your working environment regarding bullying?
- What is the attitude of leaders and supervisors toward bullying?
- Do you think leaders and supervisors are adequately trained to handle bullying allegations?
- How effectively do you think leaders uphold the values and policies against bullying?
- What impact do leaders and supervisors have on the climate of acceptance or rejection of bullying?
- Are there cultural aspects within the military working environment that you believe contribute to bullying?
  - How can they be addressed?
  - What barriers do you think make it difficult for them to be addressed?
- How does the perceived culture within your work environment or team influence individual behavior towards bullying?
- What changes would you recommend for fostering a more resistant culture to bullying?

Other Bullying-Related Questions

- What do you believe is why bullying occurs within the work environment?
- How do you think leaders and supervisors could address and prevent bullying more effectively?
- What long-term effects do you think bullying has on civilian employee personnel and their careers?

- What improvements would you suggest to enhance the effectiveness of current bullying prevention programs?
- How does the occurrence of bullying affect the recruitment and retention of personnel?
- Have you noticed any changes in bullying behaviors over your time as a DoD civilian employee?
- What role do peers versus superiors play in perpetuating or preventing bullying?
- What measures could be taken to reduce the secrecy or "code of silence" surrounding bullying?