

# Just ASK™

**INCREASING DIVERSITY IN CANCER CLINICAL RESEARCH  
AN ACCC-ASCO TRAINING PROGRAM**



**TRAINING FACILITATION GUIDE**

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## FACILITATOR PREPARATION

### Framing the Discussion:

#### ACCC-ASCO Implicit Bias Training Program Goals

Thank you for agreeing to facilitate the discussion following the Just ASK™ training! Peer-to-peer discussion encourages and reinforces success in implementing a Just ASK™ strategy to promote equitable clinical trial participation. Discussion participants may include any member of the cancer care delivery team who has completed the Just ASK™ program. This could include study investigators, clinical staff, research and non-research staff, administrators, and/or any members of the multidisciplinary team who are involved with clinical research within your cancer program.

The Just ASK™ program was developed to address the lack of diversity in clinical research participation. This lack of diversity has been primarily viewed as a patient issue. However, the program highlights the number one reason why most patients do not participate in clinical trials—especially patients who are African American/Black and/or Hispanic/Latinx: Patients are simply not asked.

Studies show that our learned biases, assumptions, and stereotypes often stop us from asking African American/Black and/or Hispanic/Latinx patients to participate in clinical research. Yet when patients in historically under-represented racial/ethnic groups are offered the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial, they agree in equal proportions, regardless of race or ethnicity. Conversely, the primary reason why most people do participate is because someone informed them about clinical trials as a potential treatment option in an unbiased and culturally sensitive way.

As a result, we need to acknowledge our own biases as cancer care team members and researchers, identify best practices to mitigate these biases, and promote diversity, inclusion, and equity to improve the enrollment and retention of patients from African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx and other groups who have been historically under-represented in clinical trials.

The **Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)** and the **American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)** are committed to establishing equitable access to clinical trials for all people with cancer, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and many other factors.

To this end, the goals of this facilitation guide are to:

1. Explore what participants learned from the Just ASK™ training.
2. Identify feasible action steps to support implementation of a Just ASK™ strategy in your cancer center/program.
3. Solicit a personal, doable commitment to equity statement.

## Facilitator Role and Characteristics

It is recommended that the facilitator is an individual who has previously taken the Just ASK™ training. As a facilitator, you are not expected to be an expert in implicit bias and its role in sustaining disparities in clinical trial participation. If you have recently participated in the Just ASK™ training and are committed to the goal of establishing equitable access to clinical trials for all patients with cancer, you already have a solid foundation for facilitating discussion.

Your role is two-fold:

1. Support an honest conversation with your peers; and
2. Encourage consensus about steps that you and your peers can take as individuals to widen the opportunities for patients from Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and other under-represented groups to participate in clinical trials.

In addition to bringing your desire to address inequities in access to clinical trial participation, an unbiased perspective, and empathy to your role as facilitator, the following practices will also support effective facilitation:

- Provide a safe space for open sharing, listening, and learning within the group.
- Ask questions from a place of respectful curiosity versus judgement.
- Keep the discussion moving and on target. As much as possible, bring the focus of the conversation back to the clinical research context.
- Hold others accountable for following the ground rules (see Appendix).
- Encourage engagement and participation from all members of the group, but also respect that some members of the group may prefer not to speak up.
- When repeating back a participant's thought, avoid interpreting or making assumptions.
- Value all opinions and feedback.

While you do not need to be an expert in group facilitation, it will be helpful if you are comfortable thinking about and managing the following potential scenarios:

- Participants that try to dominate the discussion.
- Commentary that seems disrespectful, unproductive, or negative.
- Group silence.

## Facilitation Guidance

We offer the following guidance to support discussion in the fullest possible way.

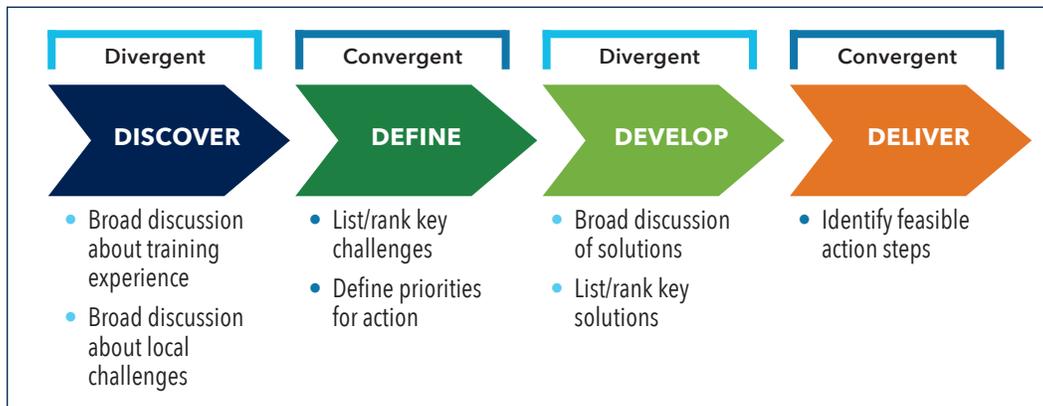
1. Begin with a short ice breaker. We have provided an example in this guide, but feel free to use a different ice breaker that might be a better fit for your group.
2. Co-create ground rules. Establish an agreement with participants about how to ensure a safe, judgment-free discussion that respects diverse values, beliefs, and ideas. See the Appendix for ground rule ideas.
3. Stay neutral throughout the discussion. Pose questions with curiosity to better understand participant perspectives.
4. Capture responses. It's helpful to involve another participant or colleague in this task.
  - *In person.* Flipcharts or whiteboards help document discussion in a visible way.
  - *Virtual.* Whiteboarding tools help visualize documentation of key decisions or discussion points (see the Appendix for Facilitation Tools).
5. Ensure that all participants are heard. Options for inviting non-verbal responses will depend on whether your discussion is in-person or virtual. Response options include:
  - *In person.* Invite participants to write responses or ideas on Post-It notes or index cards and post to a board. Potentially explore themes in small groups or as a team for further discussion.
  - *Virtual.* Encourage participants to use chat functions (or other collaboration tools) in the virtual platform.

## Facilitation Framework

Use this guide to structure your discussion. The questions are designed to encourage participants to identify initial steps they could take as individuals to address implicit bias. However, the discussion could also occur at a team level. Therefore, some questions invite participants to explore steps that “you or your team” could take.

Questions are open-ended (how, what, why, tell me, describe) to cover as much ground as possible in the time available.

- Divergent thinking requires an open mind and broad discussion about problems and solutions.
- Convergent thinking involves condensing information and prioritizing problems and solutions.



The time allotments are suggestions only. Please be flexible with the timing depending on group needs.

## WELCOME SCRIPT: 10 MINUTES

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this 90-minute discussion on the role of implicit bias in cancer clinical research participation.

### Introductions

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you are moderating the post-training discussion.
2. Invite group introductions. Please share your name, role, and institution.

**Ice breaker** (optional – See the Appendix for example)

### Goals of the Just ASK™ Post-Training Discussion are to:

1. Explore what we learned from our experience of Just ASK™ training.
2. Identify feasible steps we can take to support a Just ASK™ strategy in our cancer program/practice.
3. Lead toward a personal, doable commitment to equity statement.

Are there any questions before we begin?

## DISCOVER: 20 MINUTES

1. What were the key “aha!” moments for you—what stood out for you most in the Just ASK™ training?
2. Have you already used any approaches or strategies that you learned in the Just ASK™ training? If so, please share examples of what you have tried and whether it worked or didn't work for you.
3. Drawing on what you/we learned from the Just ASK™ training, where do you currently see implicit bias showing up in your practice setting?
4. In what ways could a Just ASK™ approach mitigate these biases in your/our work?
5. What specific barriers do you see to using a Just ASK™ approach in your practice setting? [Examples might include lack of medical interpreters; low access to transport resources; patient/community mistrust; limited leadership buy-in or commitment; stringent clinical trial eligibility criteria]

## DEFINE: 20 MINUTES

1. Thinking about your current workflow and practice setting, what are the opportunities for you to discuss clinical trial participation with patients?
2. How can you encourage colleagues and team members to discuss clinical trial participation with patients?
3. Which other steps could you or your team take to incorporate a Just ASK™ strategy in your practice setting?
4. Based on your responses to the last three questions, please rank the top two to three areas for action.
  - Invite participants to share the action areas they identified.
  - If your group is comprised of more than eight participants, consider breaking into two smaller groups for this activity.

## BREAK: 5 MINUTES

## DEVELOP: 20 MINUTES

1. What changes could you or your team make right now to engage patients in your own top ranked areas?
2. What existing resources could you or your team use to make these changes?
3. What additional resources would you or your team need to be able to make these changes?
4. Thinking beyond your personal actions, what steps could your cancer center/program take to engage patients in considering clinical trial participation as a policy or standard operating procedure? [See the Appendix for examples.]

## DELIVER: 15 MINUTES

### Commitment to Equity

Invite participants to write a short statement on one action they are willing to take to implement Just ASK™ in the next three months and be partners in building equity in clinical trial participation.

- If participants do not feel ready to commit to equity, invite them to write a short statement on an action they would like to take in the future.

## SUMMARY: 5 MINUTES

Thank you for participating in the discussion of the Just ASK™ training.

## APPENDIX

### Ice Breaker Example

Poll: Are you an early bird or a night owl?

1. Early bird
2. Night owl

### Discussion Ground Rules

Following introductions, share discussion ground rules with participants. Here are some suggestions.

1. If discussion is virtual: Please turn cameras on. We learn best when we can see each other.
2. Discussion will be documented via notetaking/audio recording
3. All responses are valid—there's no right or wrong
4. Respect the responses of others even if you don't agree
5. Be present and engaged
6. Listen actively and don't interrupt if someone is speaking
7. What is said here, stays here—what is learned here, leaves here
8. No one knows everything; together we know a lot
9. Seek to understand
10. Be mindful to define terms and share context
11. Make sure we hear all voices in the room
12. Notice your experience, emotions, and feelings as you share and listen
13. Speak from the "I," not for the group

### Facilitation Tools

Whether your discussion is virtual or in person, you will need tools to support documentation of discussion points and decisions and to ensure that all participants have opportunities to contribute to the discussion. The following tools are valuable adjuncts for both in-person and virtual meetings. If you do not have access to any of these tools, and you are meeting in person, use Post-It notes, sticky easel pads, butcher paper, or index cards to capture ideas.

- Collaboration platform for responses (e.g., Zoom, Teams, Google Hangouts, Howspace)
- Whiteboarding/Post-Its (e.g., JamBoard, Cardsmith, Mural, Stormboard)
- Participant engagement (e.g., Mentimeter, Sli.Do, Stomrz)

- Note-taking (e.g., Evernote, Onenote, Google Docs)
- File storage and sharing (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox)

### Potential Just ASK™ Policies and Standard Operating Procedures

Designate a Just ASK™ champion	Seek support from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resources at your institution, if available.
Collect baseline organizational data to identify barriers to clinical trial discussion and enrollment	Establish a pilot program focused on building equity in clinical trials enrollment
Solicit patient perspective on clinical trials via surveys and other methods	Conduct a community needs assessment to identify specific barriers to clinical trial participation
Develop a script for healthcare providers to use to introduce clinical trials to patients	Screen patients for clinical trial eligibility prior to discussion with treating physicians or PIs
Engage with community organizations and initiatives, including patient advocacy groups	Use environmental messaging to encourage patients to ask about clinical trial participation
Provide tear sheets in waiting areas with information about disease-specific clinical trials to prompt patients to discuss with their cancer care team	Develop a patient peer-to-peer educational program

A publication from the ASCO-ACCC Initiative to Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Clinical Trials. To learn more about this initiative, please visit [accc-cancer.org/asco-accc](http://accc-cancer.org/asco-accc).

The **Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)** is the leading education and advocacy organization for the cancer care community. Founded in 1974, ACCC is a powerful network of 30,000 multidisciplinary practitioners from 1,700 hospitals and practices nationwide. As advances in cancer screening and diagnosis, treatment options, and care delivery models continue to evolve - so has ACCC - adapting its resources to meet the changing needs of the entire oncology care team. For more information, visit [accc-cancer.org](http://accc-cancer.org). Follow us on social media; read our blog, ACCCBuzz; tune in to our CANCER BUZZ podcast; and view our CANCER BUZZ TV channel.

Founded in 1964, the **American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc. (ASCO®)** is committed to the principle that knowledge conquers cancer. Together with the Association for Clinical Oncology, ASCO represents nearly 45,000 oncology professionals who care for people living with cancer. Through research, education, and promotion of high quality, equitable patient care, ASCO works to conquer cancer and create a world where cancer is prevented or cured, and every survivor is healthy. Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation, supports ASCO by funding groundbreaking research and education across cancer's full continuum. Learn more at [www.ASCO.org](http://www.ASCO.org), explore patient education resources at [www.Cancer.Net](http://www.Cancer.Net), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

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