

APPENDIX A

BASELINE CONSUMER NARRATIVE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

MHCC AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT

Introduction

[Complete informed consent]

This interview is an opportunity for you to tell the story about your experiences living on the streets or in a shelter and your experiences with the mental health system. We're interested in learning about what life has been like before and after you started living on the streets or in a shelter. You've been asked about some of these issues in the previous interviews. This interview is an opportunity for you to share those experiences and to talk about your life using your own words. All of this will help us learn how the project works, so we can help make lives better for people who have been homeless. Take the time you need. For most people it takes about 90 minutes, but how much time we take to do the interview is up to you. We can take a break if you wish.

Just as a reminder, please be aware that your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can decide not to participate, to withdraw your participation at any time, and to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Also, your decision to participate or not participate will not affect the services or support you receive. You may find some of these questions sensitive or disturbing. We will only proceed with the interview today if you feel comfortable doing so. We are interested in hearing about your life. Please keep in mind though that this is a research interview and not a clinical or therapeutic interview. If you do have concerns and questions about resources or support, we will be able to provide you with information after the interview. We will hold everything that you say in confidence. Please note that your name will not be associated in any way with your responses. You will receive a written summary of the findings when the research is completed.

Do you have any questions before we get started? I'm going to start the recorder now – is that still okay with you?

Part I: Story of Living on the Streets or in a Shelter

I'm interested in learning about your experiences with your housing situation. Now I'm going to ask you about that.

Theme 1: Pathways into Homelessness (or Precarious Housing)

a. Life before Homelessness

Tell me please what life was like before you started living on the streets or in a shelter.

Tell me about the first house or apartment that you remember.

(probes: things that kept you housed prior to homelessness; things that kept you housed;)

b. How the Person First Became Homeless

Now, I'd like to hear the story about how you first became homeless. (issues or experiences that led to you living on the streets or in a shelter [e.g. relationships, poverty, health, exclusion, requirements for medication compliance/sobriety, re-hospitalization, etc.]

c. Recurrent Experiences of Homelessness

Have you been homeless more than once? If so, when you think of your various experiences with homelessness, please talk about any common barriers that stand in the way of your attempts to find and keep housing.

d. Most Recent Experience of Homelessness

Tell me please about your most recent experience of becoming homeless.

(probes: how you found the housing your most recent housing; issues/experiences related to living on the streets or in a shelter; issues that prevented you from finding housing.)

Theme 2: Life on the Streets or in a Shelter

Now, I'd like to talk about what life has been like for you while you've been living on the streets or in a shelter.

a. Typical Day

First of all, I'd like you to tell me about what your average day is like. For example, if yesterday was an average day, tell me about what your day was like.

(probes: where did you sleep, places visited, people met with, nature of encounters with people, etc.)

b. Services, Supports, and Community Organizations

Now, I'd like you to tell me about the services, supports, or community organizations that you have used while living on the streets or in a shelter.

(probes: what they're like; types of services/supports/community organizations found to be most helpful [e.g., services, family, friends, church]; types of services/supports found to be least helpful; sort of involvement in the community while living on the streets or in a shelter?)

c. Experiences with Housing

Now I'd like you to tell me more about your experiences with housing during the period of time when your housing situation has been unstable.

(probes: places lived [quality, safety, support]; relationships with landlords, superintendents or neighbours; experience of stigma,

discrimination or other barriers in relation to services and housing; any positive experiences)

d. Vision for Housing for the Future

Now, I'd like you to talk about how you envision your housing situation in the future and how you might get there.

(probes: what does home mean to you; what would be an ideal housing situation [individual vs. shared living situations; landlord relationships; location; safety issues]; the kinds of challenges that would have to be addressed to allow you to achieve a more ideal housing situation);

Only for those in one of the housing interventions – What do you think of the “At Home” intervention project in which you will be involved?

(probes: hopes, fears, challenges)

e. Life on the Streets or in a Shelter

I want to ask you a few general questions about life on the streets or in a shelter.

How has your life changed since you started living on the streets or in a shelter?

(probe re: feelings about oneself, relationships, family, friends, health, involvement in the community, poverty, stigma, addictions)

What has been *hardest* since living on the streets or in a shelter? (probe re: feelings about oneself, relationships, family, friends, work, health, involvement in the community, poverty, stigma, addictions);

What keeps you going?

(probe: what do you enjoy doing?)

Theme 3: Experiences of Mental Health Issues and Mental Health Services

In this part of the interview, I'd like to hear more about your experience with mental health issues and the mental health system.

a. First Experiences

First of all, please talk about when you first remember thinking that something was different, or that something was not quite right.

(probes: what life was like at that time; feelings about oneself, relationships, family, friends, physical health, involvement in the community, poverty, stigma, addictions)

b. Experiences with the Mental Health System

What have been your experiences with receiving help from the mental health system?

I'm interested in hearing about your experiences with the relationships that you've had with mental health professionals and service-providers.

(probes: first experiences; experience with mental health services and with mental health providers since that first time; current experiences; did services or providers meet needs; inadequate or unfair treatment; any changes or improvements needed)

c. Recovery

What would recovery (or healing) mean in your situation?

What kind of support would you need to realize this idea of recovery or healing?

Part II: High-, Low-, and Turning Point Stories

In the final part of the interview, I'd like to ask you about some of the key moments in your life. So, I'm now going to ask you to highlight a high-point, a low-point, and a turning-point from your life. What would you like to start with? a high point, a low point, or a turning-point¹?

Note to Interviewers: Make sure that the participant addresses all of the following questions, especially ones about impact and what the experience says about the person. Do not interrupt the description of the event. Rather ask for extra detail, if necessary, after the participant has finished initial description of the event

¹ If the participant has already recounted a high-, low-, and/or turning-point story earlier, there is no need to ask about this again here at the end of the interview. However, be sure to clarify that the stories are high-, low- or turning- point stories for the participant, rather than assuming that they are.

a. High Point Story

I would like you to reflect on a high point in your life, what you might think of as the best moment in your life. It could be a moment or time in your life where you experienced very positive feelings, such as joy, excitement, happiness, or inner peace. Does an event or time like this come to mind? Describe it for me in detail. Make sure to tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened in the scene? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is it an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today?

b. Low Point Story (*note to interviewer: you may want to check in with person as to whether they've already told a low point story, especially if what they've already talked about sounds traumatic; however, you should leave the choice up to the participant about what topic constitutes the low point they choose to talk about*)

Think back over your entire life and try to remember a specific experience or event where you felt really low: it could involve emotions such as deep sadness, fear, strong anxiety, terror, despair, guilt, or shame. You might think of this as the worst moment in your life. Please describe this scene for me in detail. Again, tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? What happened? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today?

c. Turning Point Story

In looking back on your life, are there any big “turning points” that come to mind? This could be times when you experienced an important change in your life.

IF YES: Please choose one key turning point scene and describe it in detail.

IF NO: Describe a particular time in your life that comes closer than any other to qualifying as a turning point – a scene where you changed in some way.

Again, tell me what led up to the scene. What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today?

Ending the Interview

- How are you feeling right now?
- Is there anything that we have not covered that you think is important for me to know about how being homeless has affected your life?
- What are your plans for the future?
- What did you think of the interview?
- Did you feel comfortable doing this interview?
- Is there anything we can do to improve the interview?
- Do you have any questions of me?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview. I appreciate your willingness to share your story with me – this is an important part of the project.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR

FOLLOW-UP CONSUMER NARRATIVE INTERVIEW

MHCC AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT

Introduction

[Complete informed consent]

This interview is an opportunity for you to tell the story about your experiences over the past year. We're interested in learning about your life experiences, personal changes, housing, and supports. You've been asked about some of these issues in the previous interviews. This interview is an opportunity for you to share those experiences and to talk about your life using your own words. All of this will help us learn how the project works, so we can help make lives better for people who have been homeless. Take the time you need. For most people it takes about 90 minutes, but how much time we take to do the interview is up to you. We can take a break if you wish.

Just as a reminder, please be aware that your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can decide not to participate, to withdraw your participation at any time, and to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Also, your decision to participate or not participate will not affect the services or support you receive. You may find some of these questions sensitive or disturbing. We will only proceed with the interview today if you feel comfortable doing so. We are interested in hearing about your life. Please keep in mind though that this is a research interview and not a clinical or therapeutic interview. If you do have concerns and questions about resources or support, we will be able to provide you with information after the interview. We will hold everything that you say in confidence. Please note that your name will not be associated in any way with your responses. You will receive a written summary of the findings when the research is completed.

Do you have any questions before we get started? I'm going to start the recorder now – is that still okay with you?

PART I: LIFE STORY FOR THE PAST YEAR

I would like to hear about your experiences over the past year ... I will ask you some questions about some of your experiences.

Theme 1: Life Changes, Typical Day

a. Life Changes

1. First of all, in general, please tell me about how your life has been over the past year.
2. What has your housing situation been like over the past year?

b. Typical Day

1. Tell me about what your average day is like or what you do on a typical day. For example, if yesterday was an average day, please tell me about what your day was like.
 - a. What did you do?
 - b. What places did you go to?
 - c. Who did you meet?
 2. How, if at all, has the way you spend your typical day changed over the last year?
 - a. Why do you think this has changed?
 - b. What are your favourite places to go in the community?
 - What do you do there?
 - How often do you go to these places?
 - c. How easy or hard is it for you to get around your community?
 - d. Who do you typically spend time with in the community?
 - e. Tell me about any experiences of discrimination or stigma that you have experienced in the community in the past year?
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Theme 2: Recovery/Mental Health/Well-being, Relationships, Material Situation

a. Recovery, Mental Health, and Well-being

1. Please describe any personal changes that you have experienced over the last year with regard to your health or well-being.
2. What has been helpful to your health or well-being over the last year? What keeps you going?
3. What have you had difficulty with that has gotten in the way of your health or well-being over the last year?
4. What mental health issues were you experiencing at the start of the At Home Project? How have you been coping/dealing with these issues over the past year?

b. Relationships/Social Support

1. Tell me a bit about your relationships over the past year. Have there been any important changes in your relationships during this time?
 - a. Changes in relationships with family, friends or acquaintances (including new or renewed relationships)
 - b. Changes in sense of community
 - c. Changes in feelings of stigma
2. Over the past year, who in the community have you been able to trust or count on for support?
 - a. How have they supported you?

For participants who are parents For participants who are NOT parents, proceed to section c: Material Situation below

- b. How has housing instability affected your roles as a mother/father?
- c. (This question should be asked only of those parents who have obtained housing.) How has stable housing affected your role as a mother/father?

c. Material Situation

1. Tell me about your situation with money. Has it improved, stayed the

same, or gotten worse over the past year?

- a. Probe about any changes
2. Tell me a bit about your financial responsibilities. How have you been managing those responsibilities over the past year?
 3. How have you been eating over the past year ?
 - a. Probe about the quality of food and access to food

Theme 3: Housing

For the Treatment as Usual participants who have successfully obtained housing

1. How were you able to find your current housing?
2. What do you think of your housing?
 - a. Privacy
 - b. Quality
 - c. Location
 - d. Choice
3. What do you like most about your housing?
What do you like least about your housing?
4. What is your understanding of your responsibilities as a tenant?
5. What have been your experiences with your landlord(s)?
6. How do you like your neighbourhood? (What do you like/not like about it?)
7. What has helped you to keep your apartment? What are the challenges in keeping your apartment?
8. Can you tell me about anything you find yourself missing about the way your life was before you became housed?

2. For all Treatment as Usual participants

1. What do you like most about your housing situation? (Note that this question might not be appropriate for participants who are still living on the street or shelter)
2. What do you like least about your housing situation?
3. If not housed, what are your current challenges?

3. For the Housing First intervention participants

1. What do you think of the housing that you have obtained through the At Home/Chez Soi project?
 - a. Privacy
 - b. Quality
 - c. Location
 - d. Choice
2. How did you select your apartment?
 - a. Did you accept the first apartment that was presented to you? Why or why not?
 - b. Would you make the same decision today? Why or why not?
3. What do you like most about your housing? What do you like least about your housing?
4. What is your understanding of your responsibilities as a tenant?
5. What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the At Home/ Chez Soi project?
6. What have been your experiences with your landlord(s)?
7. How do you like your neighbourhood?
8. What has helped you to keep your apartment?
9. What are the challenges in keeping your apartment?
10. Can you tell me about any aspects of your life before you became housed that you miss now that you have housing?

Theme 4: Mental Health Services

***Section differs depending on client group (ACT, ICM, TAU - see below)**

I'd like to hear about your experiences with people working in the mental health services system during the past year. Tell me about the support and treatment that you have received from mental health service-providers during the last year.

For ACT clients (ask about):

- 1. Services/supports received through the team**
 - a. Which services offered in the last year have been the most helpful?
 - b. Which services offered in the last year have been the least helpful?
 - c. What other kinds of services have you been using in the past year, and what have your experiences been like with them?
 - Relationships with service providers
 - Experiences with medications
 - Types of information and support provided
- 2. Clinical supports, i.e. hospital-based care or treatment received outside of the team**
 - a. What has been helpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - b. What has been unhelpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - c. Relationships with service providers
 - d. Experiences with medications
 - e. Types of information and support provided
- 3. Other community services received outside of the team**
 - a. note: This information may be available through the service inventory so qualitative interview would be used to probe existing information rather than asking this question again
 - b. I'd like to hear about your experiences with people working outside the health services system during the past year
 - Relationships with service providers

- Experiences with medications
- Types of information and support provided

For ICM clients (ask about):

- 1. Services received directly by their case manager**
 - a. What has been helpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - b. What has been unhelpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - c. Relationships with service providers
 - d. Experiences with medications
 - e. Types of information and support provided
- 2. Community services brokered through their case manager**
 - a. What has been helpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - b. What has been unhelpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - c. Relationships with service providers
 - d. Experiences with medications
 - e. Types of information and support provided
- 3. Hospital/treatment-related services received outside of the team**
 - a. I'd like to hear about your experiences with people working outside the health services system during the past year
 - b. What has been helpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - c. What has been unhelpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - d. Relationships with service providers
 - e. Experiences with medications

- f. Types of information and support provided

For TAU participants (ask about)

- 1. Any mental health services/supports that they have received**
 - a. What has been helpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - b. What has been unhelpful about the mental health services that you have used during the last year?
 - c. Relationships with service providers?
 - d. Experiences with medications?
 - e. Types of information and support provided?

Theme 5: Hopes for the Future

- a. Plan for the Future**
 - 1. What are your plans or goals for the coming months or further in the future?
 - a. Social/relationship goals
 - b. Occupational/work/school goals
 - c. Other personal goals
 - 2. What do you need to accomplish your future plans or goals?
- b. Vision for Housing for the Future**
 - 1. Now, I'd like you to talk about how you envision your housing in the future and how you might get there.
 - a. Ideal housing situation
 - b. Challenges to obtaining ideal housing
 - c. Pets

Part II: HIGH, LOW, AND TURNING POINT STORIES

In the final part of the interview, I'd like to ask you about some of the key moments in your life over the past year. So, I'm now going to ask you to highlight a high-point, a low-point, and a turning-point for the past year. What would you like to start with? a high point, a low point, or a turning-point²?

Note to Interviewers: Make sure that the participant addresses all of the following questions, especially ones about impact and what the experience says about the person. Do not interrupt the description of the event. Rather ask for extra detail, if necessary, after the participant has finished initial description of the event

a. High Point Story

I would like you to reflect on a high point in your life over the past year, what you might think of as the **best moment in your life over the past year**. Is there a high point that comes to mind?

Describe it for me in detail. It could be a moment or time where you experienced very positive feelings, such as joy, excitement, happiness, or inner peace. Make sure to tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context.

- **What** happened?
 - **Where** and **when** did it happen?
 - **Who** was involved?
 - What were you **thinking and feeling**?
 - Why is it an **important** event?
 - What **impact** has this event had on who you are today?
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² If the participant has already recounted a high-, low-, and/or turning-point story earlier, there is no need to ask about this again here at the end of the interview. However, be sure to clarify that the stories are high-, low- or turning- point stories for the participant, rather than assuming that they are.

b. Low Point Story (*note to interviewer: you may want to check in with person as to whether they've already told a low point story, especially if what they've already talked about sounds traumatic; however, you should leave the choice up to the participant about what topic constitutes the low point they choose to talk about*)

Think back over the past year and try to remember a specific experience or event where you felt really low. You might think of this as the **worst moment in your life over the past year**. Is there a low point that comes to mind?

Please describe this scene for me in detail. It could involve emotions such as deep sadness, fear, strong anxiety, terror, despair, guilt, or shame. Again, tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context.

- **What** happened?
- **Where** and **when** did it happen?
- **Who** was involved?
- What were you **thinking and feeling**?
- Why is it an **important** event?
- What **impact** has this event had on who you are today?

c. Turning Point Story

In looking back on your life over the past year, I would like you to think of a particular time when you experienced an important change. Is there a big “turning point” that comes to mind? .

Describe it for me in detail. This could be one particular event or a moment or time where you experienced change or when you changed in some way. Again, tell me what led up to the scene.

- **What** happened?
- **Where** and **when** did it happen?
- **Who** was involved?
- What were you **thinking and feeling**?
- Why is it an **important** event?
- What **impact** has this event had on who you are today?

Concluding Remarks

Consider asking participants if there is anything they would like to add regarding how their lives have been in the past year.

Before we bring this interview to a close, I would like to ask if there is anything you wish to add about what your life has been like in the past year.

I would also like to know about your experiences (how you feel, what you are thinking) about having participated today/tonight. What was it like for you to participate in this interview?

Is there anything we could do to improve the interview?

I am now shutting off the recorder. What questions do you have of me?

Thank you very much for your participation in this interview. I appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me.