**KEY INFORMANT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PLAN**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Interviewers must have an interview plan to successfully conduct a semi-structured interview. This section presents a sample semi-structured interview plan adapted to the context of safety diagnoses. It begins with a few instructions on how to use the plan.

**Always bear in mind that this interview plan should be used in a flexible manner.** It can be adapted, if necessary, to the topics the interviewer seeks to explore, the type of informant being interviewed, and so forth.

The proposed plan begins with a section entitled "Introduction of the interviewer,” which can easily be adapted. The important thing is that the interviewer introduce him or herself and remind the respondent of the topics that will be discussed during the interview. In this way, the respondent knows exactly what the interviewer's expectations are.

The second section is the main part of the interview plan. It indicates which topics are to be discussed and suggests possible questions. Two series of questions are proposed, one on safety problems and the other on the assessment of public services.

Contrary to the situation with a closed questionnaire, interviewers do not have to ask all of the questions proposed in the interview plan. They merely have to follow the general outline. In regard to safety problems, it is important 1) to obtain information on the safety problems encountered in the area under study and 2) to encourage the respondent to identify the problems he or she considers most worrisome. As for the assessment of public services, the main purpose is to gauge the level of satisfaction with these services and to pinpoint perceived problems.

To make the interview flow more easily, it can be useful to summarize each topic just discussed before moving on to the next one. The interview will also flow better if interviewers ask the main questions first whenever they introduce a new topic. In any event, the interviewer must choose questions with which he or she is at ease and which are adapted to the interviewee. The questions have to be formulated in different ways depending on whether the person being interviewed is a citizen, a community organization worker or a mayor.

In the sample interview plan shown here, three clarifying questions are proposed in the event that interviewers would like the respondent to explain certain things in more detail. Interviewers must keep a few different versions of these questions in mind so that they can encourage the respondent to talk and can thus keep the discussion going.

If a respondent has difficulty identifying safety problems, the interviewer can give some examples, but without suggesting any answers (see Appendix 4).

The third section of the sample plan is aimed at concluding the interview and suggests two questions for this purpose. The goal is to enable interviewers to make sure that the topics they wished to explore have been covered as completely as possible. Obviously, not all key informants will be able to talk about all of the safety topics selected. For example, during an interview with a respondent who works on a specific problem or with a specific clientele, certain topics may not be discussed because they have no bearing on that problem or clientele. Therefore, it is important to decide what topics are pertinent when the interview is being prepared. However, interviewers must try to cover as many topics as possible when interviewing informants with a general knowledge of the area under study.

**Sample interview plan**

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| **Introduction of the interviewer** | | |
| Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I have been asked to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  During the interview, I would like to discuss the following topics: crime and victimization, disorder and incivility (nuisances), the perception of safety or the feeling of safety and the assessment of public services. With these topics in mind… | | |
| **Safety problems** | | |
| **Main questions** | **Additional questions** | **Clarifying questions** |
| * Can you tell me about the safety problems encountered in your area?   OR   * Which safety problems affect your area? | * How did you learn about the problem? * Why is it considered a problem? * Under what circumstances does the problem arise? * What is the scope of the problem? * Which places are most affected by the problem, when does it usually occur and who are the main victims? * Have you noticed any changes in the situation over the past few years? * Which safety problems give rise to complaints? * How do you explain the problem? | * Can you expand a little on this? * Can you tell me anything else? * Can you give me some examples? |
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| * In your experience, which safety problems bother people the most?   OR   * In your opinion, what are the most worrisome safety problems in your area? | * Why? |
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| **Assessment of public services** | | |
| **Main questions** | **Additional questions** | **Clarifying questions** |
| * Generally speaking, are people satisfied with the services offered by the municipality? | * If not, what are the main problems that you have witnessed or heard about? | * Can you expand a little on this? * Can you tell me anything else? * Can you give me some examples? |
| OR   * In your opinion, how satisfied are people with the public services available?   OR   * Do you know of any groups who are dissatisfied with certain services? |  |
|  |
| * If so, ask the key informant a question dealing specifically with this. |  |
| **Conclusion of interview** |  |
| * Are there any other safety problems that we have not discussed and that you find worrisome?   OR   * Do you want to add anything on safety problems or public services? |  |

**This interview plan is available in MS Word format on the Web site of the Québec Safety Promotion and Crime Prevention Resource Centre/Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (crpspc.qc.ca).**