

SAFETY DIAGNOSIS TOOL KIT  
FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

# Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews With Key Informants

2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION

[ charting a course > to safe living ]

vol. 11



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*Institut national  
de santé publique*

Québec 

In cooperation with:  
• Ministère de la Sécurité publique

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

*This document was published as part of the project "Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for RCMs and Municipalities." This project is funded in part by the National Crime Prevention Strategy of the Government of Canada. Its funding and implementation were recommended by the ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec.*

**Canada**

**Québec** 

*This document is available in its entirety in electronic format (PDF) 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) at [www.crpqpc.qc.ca](http://www.crpqpc.qc.ca), as well as on the Web site of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) at [www.inspq.qc.ca](http://www.inspq.qc.ca).*

*Ce document est aussi disponible en version française sous le titre de Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales – Guide d'organisation d'entretiens semi-dirigés avec des informateurs clés — 2<sup>e</sup> édition. Il est accessible dans chacun des sites Internet mentionnés ci-dessus.*

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Legal Deposit – 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2012  
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec  
Library and Archives Canada  
ISSN: 1917-8492 (Printed version)  
ISSN: 1917-8506 (PDF)  
ISBN: 978-2-550-62680-0 (French printed version)  
ISBN: 978-2-550-62681-7 (French PDF)  
ISBN: 978-2-550-64539-9 (Printed version)  
ISBN: 978-2-550-64540-5 (PDF)

## The [ charting a course › to safe living ] collection

This document is part of a collection prepared to foster and support safety promotion in life settings. Volumes 6 to 12 are the main components of a safety diagnosis tool kit developed for local communities. To date, the following volumes have been compiled for this collection. To date, the following volumes have been compiled for this collection:

*Please note that the following list of volumes in the [charting a course to safe living] collection is different from the one provided in volumes 6, 10, 11 12 and 13, which were published prior to 2011.*

### **VOLUME 1**

Renée Levaque, Laurence Le Hénaff and Pierre Maurice. *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

### **VOLUME 2**

Josephina Alvarez. *Réalisation d'un diagnostic de sécurité. Trousse à l'intention des collectivités locales – Les diagnostics locaux de sécurité: une étude comparée pour mieux comprendre et mieux agir*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

### **VOLUME 3**

Julie Laforest. *Indicateurs de vulnérabilité associés à la sécurité d'un territoire*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2007.

### **VOLUME 4 (forthcoming)**

### **VOLUME 5**

Louise Marie Bouchard, Monique Rainville, Pierre Maurice and Mélanie Tessier. *Survey on Personal Safety and Victimization in Life Settings - Questionnaires and Instructions for Using a Computerized Data Capture, Processing and Analysis Tool*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (forthcoming in 2012).

### **VOLUME 6**

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice and Monique Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Safety Diagnosis Handbook*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 7**

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice, Daniel Rochette and Robert Lavertue. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Developing a General Portrait of Life Settings*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 8**

Louise Motard. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Analyzing Crime Using Official Statistics - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 9**

Catherine Goulet-Cloutier, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Conducting Surveys on Personal Safety in Life Settings*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 10**

Monique Rainville, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Organizing Focus Groups - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 11**

Julie Laforest, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews With Key Informants - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

## **VOLUME 12**

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice and Monique Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities - Guide to Direct Observation of Community Safety - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2012.

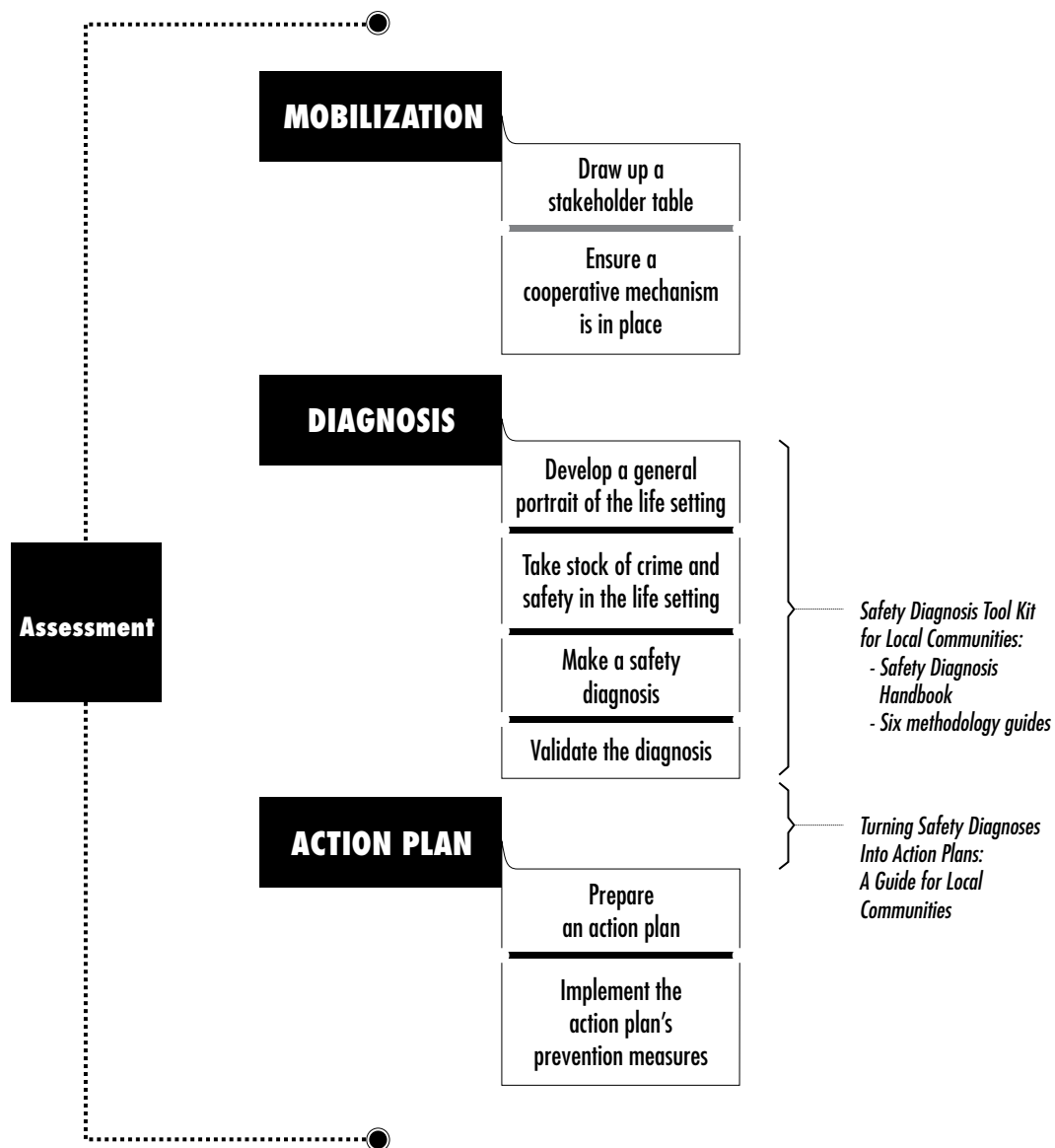
## **VOLUME 13**

Julie Laforest, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2010.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE...

Promoting safety and preventing crime through a setting-oriented approach requires a structured procedure for planning the various activities to be carried out. The procedure involves mobilizing the population and intersectoral partners, making safety diagnoses and drawing up action plans. The *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities* was prepared to assist with this procedure. It comprises several tools, including the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook* and six methodology guides. The document *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities* was prepared in addition to the tool kit, to facilitate the process of translating diagnoses into effective action plans.

### Structured activity-planning procedure



The present document, *Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews With Key Informants - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, is one of the methodology guides included in the *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities*. It is designed to assist with the process of identifying crime and safety problems as they are perceived by key informants. These people are consulted because of their expertise, their experience or their role in the community and the useful knowledge they can contribute to safety diagnoses. Semi-structured interviews with key informants differ from telephone surveys in that they can be used to gather essentially qualitative data from a small number of people.

Although this guide was prepared with a view to making safety diagnoses, the procedure it describes may also be used for other purposes provided an appropriate interview plan is designed.



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## **Semi-structured interviews – A general overview**

Like discussion groups, direct observation and literature reviews, semi-structured interviews can be used to gather qualitative information. Interviews of this type are suited to working with small samples and are effective for studying specific situations or for supplementing and validating information derived from other sources used for making safety diagnoses. In addition, since they provide access to perceptions and opinions, they are useful for gaining insight into problems that are not perceptible immediately or are more difficult to observe, but that nonetheless cause concern in certain areas or in certain segments of the population.

During safety diagnoses, semi-structured interviews should be used to explore crime and safety problems perceived by representatives of the population, safety experts or other key informants. In planning the interviews, it is essential to take into account decisions about your vision and objectives, the life setting under study, the target population and the topics to be discussed. We suggest that the interviews focus on the following topics in particular: crime and victimization, disorder and incivility (nuisances), the perception of safety or the feeling of safety and the assessment of public services (see Appendix 4 for examples of topics to be considered in making safety diagnoses).

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## **Main characteristics of semi-structured interviews with key informants conducted within the context of safety diagnoses**

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### **Objectives**

- Assist with the process of identifying crime and safety problems as they are perceived by representatives of the population, safety experts or other key informants.
- Highlight viewpoints that are more explicit or more deeply rooted in a specific context than information gathered through closed questionnaires.
- Elicit the opinions of several stakeholders.

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### **Advantages**

- Capture perceptions about the causes of the situations observed.
- Provide an opportunity to determine if key informants are interested in participating in future stages of the project.
- Provide a means of contact with groups represented by key informants, where applicable.
- Make it possible, due to their open-ended format, to capture key informants' perceptions while keeping interviewers' influence to a minimum.
- Can be organized at little cost.

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### **Disadvantages**

- Do not necessarily provide a representative portrait of the life setting concerned.

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### **Comments**

- Due to the subjective nature of opinions, should be conducted with key informants likely to express the full range of viewpoints found in the life setting under study.
  - Require specific expertise for analyzing qualitative data.
  - Entail variable costs depending on the number of interviews conducted and the expertise available for analyzing the qualitative data collected.
-

## Organization of the guide

THIS DOCUMENT IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS

The first part discusses the planning of semi-structured interviews with key informants.

1

PLANNING

The second part explains how to carry out the interviews in order to obtain the desired information.

2

IMPLEMENTATION

The third part describes the method used to process and analyze the data gathered in order to identify key findings.

3

ANALYSIS

The guide concludes with suggestions for additional reading, a sample semi-structured interview plan, a sample consent form and a list of topics to consider in making safety diagnoses.

APPENDICES



# Planning interviews

## IDENTIFYING RESPONDENTS

Key informants from the life setting under study are "privileged witnesses, or people who, because of their position, activities or responsibilities, have a good understanding of the problems to be explored. These witnesses are not necessarily members of the population targeted by [your diagnosis] but they all have a major interest in that population."<sup>1</sup> [*Translation*] In addition to being privileged witnesses of specific problems, they may represent specific client groups and areas, have administrative responsibilities in a municipality or community organization, be experts in a particular field, and so forth.

If semi-structured interviews are carried out as part of a safety diagnosis, the members of the safety diagnosis committee can suggest organizations that could act as key informants, or even be selected to play this role themselves. Prospective informants can also be identified by referring to your stakeholder table<sup>2</sup> or list of community organizations. It can be useful to draw up a list of potential respondents before launching the recruitment process.

## NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS

It is hard to determine the exact number of interviews that have to be done for a safety diagnosis. However, several factors should be taken into account in planning the number of interviews you wish to conduct:

- *Data sources.* During a safety diagnosis, semi-structured interviews may be the only method used to collect data or they may serve to supplement other methods. In the latter case, it may be sufficient to conduct only a few interviews with key informants; however, if semi-structured interviews are the sole source of information, more interviews should be conducted.
- *Range of viewpoints represented in the diagnosis.* Semi-structured interviews can also be a way of capturing concerns and perceptions of groups that have not been contacted through other data collection methods.
- *Available time and resources.* At least two days are needed to prepare, conduct, transcribe and analyze a semi-structured interview. We recommend, therefore, that the number of interviews scheduled take into account available time and resources. It is also important to consider the fact that key informants are often stakeholders that are in high demand and therefore not always available. As well, you have to allow for possible delays during the data collection phase.
- *Data saturation.* Data is saturated when interviews do not provide any new or additional insights because the information being gathered is repetitive. Under optimal conditions, data collection from key informants should end once data saturation is achieved.

1. *Séance d'information dans le cadre du Diagnostic local de sécurité*, p. 25. Available on the Internet at [www.vps.fgov.be/doc/syllabusFr.pdf](http://www.vps.fgov.be/doc/syllabusFr.pdf).

2. For more information on the concept of stakeholder table, see the section "A clearly defined group" in the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook of the Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities*.

## **PREPARING INTERVIEWS**

Even though semi-structured interviews are flexible, they require rigorous preparation. It is essential to define their objectives, devise an interview plan and draw up a consent form. Below are some of the steps involved in the preparation phase:

- Study the interview plan (see the section "Key informant semi-structured interview plan" in Appendix 2), decide which questions are most appropriate for the respondent or prepare new ones.
- Decide which topics you want to discuss in greater depth during the interviews (If necessary, consult the list of sample safety topics given in Appendix 4).
- Draw up a consent form specifying the rules of the interview and containing a commitment regarding the confidentiality of sources, or adapt the sample form given in Appendix 3.
- Contact the respondent: explain the goal of the interview and the safety diagnosis project, obtain his or her permission, schedule an appointment and agree on where the interview will be held. The place selected should be neutral, inconspicuous, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondent.
- If necessary, send the consent form and the interview plan to the respondent.
- If necessary, prepare equipment for recording the interview.
- Contact the respondent again to confirm the date and location of the interview.



## Conducting interviews

Semi-structured interviews should last from 45 to 90 minutes. Sixty-minute interviews are perfectly acceptable and ensure that neither the interviewer nor the respondent lose their concentration.

### INITIATING INTERVIEWS

An easy way to start an interview is to introduce yourself to the respondent and then remind him or her of its goals and projected length and the topics to be discussed. It is important to tell the respondent that he or she will be interviewed as an expert or as a representative of a group of people or an organization.

We highly recommend that interviews be taped (with a digital or other type of tape recorder), even if they will not be transcribed in full. Note that taping can only be done with the prior approval of respondents. Such consent may be given verbally or in writing (see the sample consent form in Appendix 3). If participants opt to provide verbal consent, it has to be recorded during the interview. Should any participants object to the taping of an interview, notes will have to be taken instead, even though this is more difficult than making a recording.

### CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS: A FEW TIPS

- Start the interview with a general, open-ended question.
- Ask as few questions as possible; the respondent should do most of the talking.
- Make reference (without mentioning any names, of course) to statements from other interviews or to findings based on other data sources so as to encourage respondents to express themselves. This can also be a good way to validate information already gathered.
- Respect the respondent's pace and do not be afraid of pauses or silences.
- Interviewers should not judge what respondents say. They must keep the interview focused on the topics previously defined (see the key informant semi-structured interview plan in Appendix 2), refrain from suggesting answers and be careful not to ask leading questions.
- Be careful not to ask closed questions that leave respondents no room to elaborate and that can slow the interview's pace.
- Be sure to cover all of the pertinent topics included in the interview plan.
- Ask clear and direct questions using How? Where? When? Who? What? Why? How much? How many?<sup>3</sup>
- If necessary, formulate questions so that informants answer on behalf of the people they represent.<sup>4</sup>

3. Based on Part III of Appendix 1, Assessment and Planning Tools, of the *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes*, I-11 to I-15, [<http://www.unhcr.org/44c487872.html>]

4. Ibid.

- Listen carefully to all answers and ask more questions to obtain additional information.<sup>5</sup>
- Ensure that key informants thoroughly understand each question.<sup>6</sup>

## **CONCLUDING INTERVIEWS**

Since semi-structured interviews do not consist of closed questions, it may be hard to end them. When interviewers feel that all topics have been discussed and that the time set aside for the interview is up, they can ask the respondent if he or she has anything to add. The interview plan given in this guide suggests two questions for ending interviews, and interviewers may use either one. Once an interview is over, the interviewer must then thank the respondent for participating, explain how the rest of the safety diagnosis project will proceed and mention that the results will be sent to him or her once the diagnosis is complete.

Soon after the interview, we recommend that you summarize what the respondent said and that you write down your impressions and any things that stood out. This will make it easier to transcribe and analyze the interview later on.

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5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

## Processing and analyzing the information gathered

Notes and recordings made during interviews provide information in the form of words and phrases. To be useable, this information has to be summarized with an appropriate method, namely, qualitative analysis. The method involves examining all of the data collected in order to determine which information is meaningful.

Generally speaking, it consists of three steps:

- assembling and codifying the information gathered;
- identifying and classifying the meaningful information;
- analyzing the statements in order to identify key findings.

### ASSEMBLING AND CODIFYING THE INFORMATION GATHERED

If you have conducted several interviews, we recommend that you classify them by assigning a code to each one. The code may consist of a number, a letter or both. For example, the code I1 might be assigned to the first interview, the code I2 to the second and so on; the same codes should also be assigned to the pieces of meaningful information drawn from each interview. These codes must be used throughout the processing and analysis phase so that you can associate each piece of information with the appropriate source. This is important as it will enable you to return to the raw data gathered during the interviews should you need more information.

### IDENTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING MEANINGFUL INFORMATION

During this step, the information gathered during the interviews must be classified by safety topic.<sup>7</sup> To that end, you must carefully listen to or read what was said during the interviews in order to identify all of the statements containing an idea linked to safety. You may choose either of the following options for this purpose:

#### *Option 1*

You can decide which topics<sup>8</sup> will be used to group the data before you start to examine it.

#### *Option 2*

You can decide which topics will be used to group the data as you examine it, based on the statements that contain an idea linked to safety.

Both methods produce satisfactory results. The first one is perhaps easier to apply if you are not familiar with qualitative analyses. Indeed, it is easier to identify information likely to shed light on the safety of the study area as you consult the interview recordings or notes if you have already defined the topics that interest you. However, defining topics beforehand does not mean that you have to group the information

7. If the interviews were conducted as part of a safety diagnosis, it is highly likely that the topics that will be used to group the data were already discussed during the planning of the diagnosis as a whole. In that case, those topics must be taken into account in processing the information gathered.

8. Sample topics are presented in Appendix 3.

according to only those topics. If necessary, you can add other topics as you examine the data. The second method, for its part, involves writing down all of the information you find interesting, deciding which safety topics emerge from the data and then going over the information again in order to group it according to those topics. The method thus requires reviewing the collected information at least twice.

Regardless of the method you choose, you have to process the information gathered. For this purpose, you must decide **which information is meaningful** in the context of the safety diagnosis. This information must then be grouped according to the different safety topics you have selected. You can do this in various ways: for example, you can transcribe and classify the meaningful information by hand as you listen to the interview tapes or you can underline the information on the handwritten notes taken during the interviews or on the full transcriptions of the tapes. Several tools can help you with this task, including text analysis software, electronic spreadsheets and word processing programs. Example 1a on the next page illustrates the use of an electronic spreadsheet for processing the meaningful information drawn from four interviews.

### Transcription of recordings

It can be expensive to transcribe interview recordings in full. A less costly and equally effective approach is to listen to the tapes and take notes on statements of interest.

In Example 1a, we have indicated not only the safety topic associated with each piece of meaningful information but also the place and the clientele. In this case, the clientele consists of the people who are affected by the problem rather than those who cause it. The meaningful information contained on the spreadsheet can easily be grouped by topic, clientele or place using the appropriate filters. If you do not have access to software for grouping information *a posteriori*, it is a good idea to group the information by topic as it is being transcribed. The number of pieces of meaningful information provided in Example 1a has been limited for practical reasons. In a real interview situation, there would no doubt be more.

Even though semi-structured interviews with key informants are not designed for this, some respondents use them to point out the cause(s) of certain problems and the factors that might exacerbate the problems. This information should be compiled separately as it can be used for making the safety diagnosis (see the section "Make a diagnosis" in the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook*). Certain respondents might also use the interviews to suggest possible solutions to problems. Once again, we suggest that you compile this information separately as it will be useful for turning the safety diagnosis into an action plan (see *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities*).

**Example 1a Meaningful information derived from interviews with four key informants<sup>9</sup>**

Meaningful information	Topic	Clientele	Place
“You know, there isn’t a week that goes by without our having to refer a child who is upset by the atmosphere at home to the social worker... 9 times out of 10, the children’s parents are physically violent with each other.” [I1]	Conjugal violence	General population	South District
“Intimidation is widespread at school. For example, I had to intervene at least three times during recess last week because a third grader was being beaten up by older kids!”[I1]	Intimidation	Young people	South District/School
“I have parents who want to transfer their children to another school because the children are afraid of some of the older students.” [I1]	Intimidation	Young people	South District/School
“They want us to encourage children to walk to school, but parents don’t let their children do so because they claim there are no crossing guards at certain intersections and traffic is too chaotic near the school.” [I1]	Road safety	Young people	South District/School
“A security system is not a guarantee against theft, especially when a house is unoccupied six months a year!”[I2]	Theft	Seasonal residents	North District/ Lake sector
“Yes, there’s a theft problem in cottages, but the police officers on my team are kept busy responding to complaints about shoplifting in stores on the town’s main street.” [I2]	Theft	Seasonal residents	North District/ Lake sector
“Yes, there’s a theft problem in cottages, but the police officers on my team are kept busy responding to complaints about shoplifting in stores on Main Street.” [I2]	Theft	Store owners	Commercial district
“I’m willing to keep an eye on traffic near the school, but whenever we do radar checks, we catch mainly parents of children who attend the school.” [I2]	Road safety	Young people	South District/School



9. These excerpts are from fictitious interviews with a school principal, a police chief, the president of a merchants’ association and the president of a golden age club. The codes at the end of each excerpt – I1, I2, I3 and I4 – indicate which interview the statements are from.

**Example 1a Meaningful information derived from interviews with four key informants (cont.)**

Meaningful information	Topic	Clientele	Place
“Ever since the media reported that an elderly couple was assaulted, we’ve been receiving phone calls from people who are now afraid to be at home alone.” [I2]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality
“Citizens call the police regularly to ask them to do radar checks on Main Street.” [I2]	Road safety	General population	Commercial district
“People who do drugs have no choice but to steal in order to buy what they need.” [I2]	Theft	General population	Municipality
“Our members (Main Street Merchants Association) regularly report losses of about 5% due to shoplifting. There’s been a steady increase in the past 10 years!” [I3]	Theft	Store owners	Municipality
“Building owners in the area complain about noise. They say the noise is so bad they have trouble renting their apartments and keeping tenants.” [I3]	Disorder	General population	Commercial district
“Restaurant owners in the South District complain that people often use their washrooms to do drugs.” [I3]	Disorder	General population	Commercial district
“People drive too fast on the streets next to Le Manoir (autonomous seniors’ residence).” [I4]	Road safety	Seniors	Commercial district
“Seniors don’t participate in activities very much during the evening as they’re afraid of going out alone.” [I4]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality
“We can’t organize activities for seniors after six o’clock in the evening because they’re afraid to go out.” [I4]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality

## ANALYZING MEANINGFUL INFORMATION IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY KEY FINDINGS

Key findings reflect important realities that should be singled out. The importance of these realities derives from their frequency (the number of times they occur, their repetitive nature or the fact that they are mentioned by many people), the perceived seriousness of their consequences, the fact that they represent a trend (e.g. an ever-growing problem), their unusual nature and so forth. When several pieces of meaningful information are linked to the same topic, segment of the population and place, it is often a good idea to summarize them in one key findings statement. Such statements can be formulated in different ways, referring to the When? What? Where? Who? or How? For instance, Example 1b on the next page organizes by topic the meaningful information shown in Example 1a and presents key findings statements reflecting one or more pieces of meaningful information tied to a particular topic, population segment and place. Note that some of these statements are based on a single piece of meaningful information (nos. ③, ④, ⑦ and ⑩) while others are based on several (nos. ①, ②, ⑤, ⑥, ⑧ and ⑨). Still others need to be validated with data collected through other methods (nos. ①, ⑦ and ⑩).

Formulating key findings statements requires the ability to synthesize information, as well as good judgment and in-depth knowledge of the life setting concerned. Therefore, it can be useful to enlist the participation of several people. Ultimately, the key findings that emerge from semi-structured interviews must be added to those identified with other techniques, if applicable, during the safety diagnosis. Transversal analysis of all the key findings will enable you to highlight the main problems that should be singled out in the diagnosis (see the section "Take stock of crime and safety in the life setting" in the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook*).



### ***In short...***

Semi-structured interviews make it possible to obtain important information from people who have a good knowledge of the main safety issues in a particular life setting. Moreover, they can be conducted within a fairly short time and at relatively little cost. However, such interviews must be carefully planned and systematic if the information they gather is to be summarized objectively. In addition, it is strongly recommended that several people take part in analyzing the data because of the type of information involved and the method used for this purpose.

**Example 1b Key findings derived from interviews with four key informants**

Meaningful information	Topic	Clientele	Place	Key findings
“Buildings owners in the area complain about noise. They say the noise is so bad they have trouble renting their apartments and keeping tenants.” [I3]	Disorder	General population	Commercial district	❶ Possible disorder problem in the commercial district: check to see if the problem emerges from data collected using other methods. [I]
“Restaurant owners in the South District complain that people often use their washrooms to do drugs.” [I3]	Disorder	General population	Commercial district	
“They want us to encourage children to walk to school, but parents don’t let their children do so because they claim there are no crossing guards at certain intersections and traffic is too chaotic near the school.” [I1]	Road safety	Young people	South District/ School	❷ Concerns expressed by parents from the South District about road safety, particularly because of speeding and chaotic traffic near the school. [I]
“I’m willing to keep an eye on traffic near the school, but whenever we do radar checks, we catch mainly parents of children who attend the school.” [I2]	Road safety	Young people	South District/ School	
“Citizens call the police regularly to ask them to do radar checks on Main Street.” [I2]	Road safety	General population	Commercial district	❸ Speeding on Main Street. [I]
“People drive too fast on the streets next to Le Manoir (autonomous seniors’ residence).” [I4]	Road safety	Seniors	Commercial district	❹ Speeding in the commercial district near Le Manoir (seniors’ residence). [I]
“Ever since the media reported that an elderly couple was assaulted, we’ve been receiving phone calls from people who are now afraid to be at home alone.” [I2]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality	❺ Feeling of insecurity among seniors when they are at home or go out after dark. [I]
“Seniors don’t participate in activities very much during the evening as they’re afraid of going out alone.” [I4]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality	
“We can’t organize activities for seniors after six o’clock in the evening because they’re afraid to go out.” [I4]	Feeling of safety	Seniors	Municipality	



**Example 1b Key findings derived from interviews with four key informants (cont.)**

Meaningful information	Topic	Clientele	Place	Key findings
“Intimidation is widespread at school. For example, I had to intervene at least three times during recess last week because a third grader was being beaten up by older kids!” [I1]	Intimidation	Young people	School/South District	⑥ Young people subjected or exposed to various types of violence at school or at home. [I]
“I have parents who want to transfer their children to another school because the children are afraid of some of the older students.” [I1]	Intimidation	Young people	South District/School	
“You know, there isn’t a week that goes by without our having to refer a child who is upset by the atmosphere at home to the social worker... 9 times out of 10, the children’s parents are physically violent with each other.” [I1]	Conjugal violence	General population	South District	⑦ Possible conjugal violence problem: check to see if the problem emerges from data collected using other methods. [I]
“A security system is not a guarantee against theft, especially when a house is unoccupied six months a year!” [I2]	Theft	Seasonal residents	North District/Lake sector	⑧ Breaking and enterings in secondary residences, according to key informants. [I]
“Yes, there’s a theft problem in cottages, but the police officers on my team are kept busy responding to complaints about shoplifting in stores on Main Street.” [I2]	Theft	Seasonal residents	North District/Lake sector	
“Yes, there’s a theft problem in cottages, but the police officers on my team are kept busy responding to complaints about shoplifting in stores on Main Street.” [I2]	Theft	Store owners	Commercial district	⑨ Shoplifting problem in certain stores on Main Street. [I]
“Our members (Main Street Merchants Association) regularly report losses of about 5% due to shoplifting. There’s been a steady increase in the past 10 years!” [I3]	Theft	Store owners	Municipality	
“People who do drugs have no choice but to steal in order to buy what they need.” [I2]	Theft	General population	Municipality	⑩ Some thefts due possibly to a drug use problem: check to see if the problem emerges from data collected using other methods. [I]



## **Appendix 1**

### **Suggested additional reading**



## Suggested additional reading



Part III of Appendix 1, Assessment and Planning Tools, of the *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes*, I-11 to I-15, [<http://www.unhcr.org/44c487872.html>].



*The in-depth interview*  
[http://www.pra.ca/resources/indepth\\_V4\\_e.pdf](http://www.pra.ca/resources/indepth_V4_e.pdf)



## **Appendix 2**

### **Key informant semi-structured interview plan**





## 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

### 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me about the safety problems encountered in your area?</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which safety problems affect your area?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you learn about the problem?</li> <li>• Why is it considered a problem?</li> <li>• Under what circumstances does the problem arise?</li> <li>• What is the scope of the problem?</li> <li>• Which places are most affected by the problem, when does it usually occur and who are the main victims?</li> <li>• Have you noticed any changes in the situation over the past few years?</li> <li>• Which safety problems give rise to complaints?</li> <li>• How do you explain the problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you expand a little on this?</li> <li>• Can you tell me anything else?</li> <li>• Can you give me some examples?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your experience, which safety problems bother people the most?</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your opinion, what are the most worrisome safety problems in your area?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	

### Assessment of public services

Main questions	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally speaking, are people satisfied with the services offered by the municipality?</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In your opinion, how satisfied are people with the public services available?</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you know of any groups who are dissatisfied with certain services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not, what are the main problems that you have witnessed or heard about?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If so, ask the key informant a question dealing specifically with this.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you expand a little on this?</li> <li>Can you tell me anything else?</li> <li>Can you give me some examples?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion of interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any other safety problems that we have not discussed and that you find worrisome?</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you want to add anything on safety problems or public services?</li> </ul>		

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).



## **Appendix 3**

### **Sample consent form**



## Consent form

PROJECT: "ENTER THE NAME"

Project context:

Define the context of the project

I agree to participate in this project, whose conditions are as follows:

- The aim of this project is to make a safety diagnosis. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants [**from the municipality, neighbourhood, etc.**].
- Each interview will last for about [**number of minutes**] and questions will deal with the safety problems encountered in the study area and with the assessment of available public services [**in the neighbourhood, municipality**].
- The interview I give and the information it contains will be used solely for the purposes defined by the project.
- At any time, I can refuse to answer certain questions, discuss certain topics or cease to participate in the interview without prejudice to myself.
- The interview will be recorded to make the interviewer's job easier. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect the confidentiality of sources. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be kept under lock and key and will be destroyed at the end of the project.
- For information on the project, I can contact [**enter the name and contact information of the person in charge**].

Respondent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Person to contact if you have any questions:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the person

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone number

This consent form 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).





## **Appendix 4**

### **Sample safety topics**



## Sample safety topics

### Crime and victimization

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#### According to the terms used in the *Criminal Code*:

- Offences against the person**
  - Homicide
  - Criminal negligence and other offences
  - Attempted murder or conspiracy to commit murder
  - Assault (except sexual assault)
  - Other sexual offences
  - Kidnapping or forcible confinement
  - Robbery or extortion
  - Criminal harassment
  - Threats
  - Other
- Offences against property**
  - Arson
  - Breaking and entering
  - Motor vehicle theft
  - Theft over \$5 000
  - Theft \$5 000 and under
  - Possession of stolen property
  - Fraud
  - Mischief
- Other *Criminal Code* offences**
  - Prostitution
  - Firearms
  - Justice
  - Acts contrary to public morals or disorderly conduct
  - Harassing or indecent telephone calls
  - Other
- Offences related to the operation of a motor vehicle**
  - Impaired driving
  - Failure to stop or remain
  - Other
- Drugs and narcotics offences**

**In lay terms:**

**Discrimination**

- On religious grounds
- On ethnic grounds
- On linguistic grounds
- On grounds of sexual orientation
- On grounds of disability (physical or intellectual)
- On grounds of physical appearance
- On grounds of poverty
- On grounds of age
- On other grounds

**Intimidation/harassment**

- Bothering people on the street
- Intimidation by groups or individuals
- Intimidation by gang members

**Fraud**

**Violence (excluding sexual assault)**

- Conjugal violence
- Suffering an assault in one's life setting
- Street fighting among gang members
- Violence by or against young people
- Violence in youth dating relationships
- Violence at school
- Taxing at school
- Violence and intimidation on school buses
- Violence against seniors

**Sexual assault**

**Theft**

- Break-ins
- Automobile theft
- Theft of automobile parts or accessories
- Theft of objects
- Theft of bicycles
- Attempted theft

**Vandalism**

**Disorder and incivility**

**Physical disorder**

- Lack of cleanliness in public places (presence of litter, syringes, pieces of glass, etc.)
- Abandoned or dilapidated buildings
- Graffiti on buildings or equipment
- Vandalism on private or public buildings or equipment
- Sound nuisance caused by traffic or by people driving at speeds not adapted to traffic

- Incivility (social disorder)**
  - Nuisances related to alcohol consumption in public places
  - Nuisances related to drug dealing or use
  - Nuisances related to prostitution activities
  - Aggressive or annoying behaviour by itinerant or homeless people
  - Inappropriate behaviour by people who are intoxicated or whose mental health is impaired
  - Conflicts between groups of individuals or residents (ethnic, religious, etc.)
  - Other nuisances related to noise
  - Disruptive gatherings of people in public places
  - Bothersome, loose animals
  - Nuisances caused by motor vehicle "races" or speeding
  
- Perception of safety and feeling of safety**
  - Perceived safety**
    - Perception of the safety of one's life setting
    - Perception of one's own safety
  - Perception of safety risks in one's life setting**
    - For oneself
    - For one's family or children
    - For other specific clientele: women, seniors, young people, etc.
  - Perception of safety risks in a particular place**
    - For oneself
    - For one's family or children
    - For other specific clientele: women, seniors, young people, etc.
  - Perception of risks related to the built environment**
    - Boarded-up buildings
    - Isolated spots
  - Perception of risks associated with crime problems in one's life setting**
  - Perception of risks related to unsettling behaviour by certain individuals**
  - Avoidance behaviour**
  - Protective behaviour**
    - Taking an object along for protection when going out
    - Making sure that no intruders are in one's car before getting into it
    - Not opening the door to strangers for safety reasons
    - Keeping the doors to one's house locked
    - Having a dog for protection
    - Having an alarm system that one activates regularly for protection
    - Taking self-defence courses for protection
    - Keeping a firearm in the house for protection
    - Having a functional smoke detector on every floor
  - Perception of physical health risks**
    - Perception of one's own health compared to that of other people the same age

- Social cohesion (protective factor)**
  - Housing stability
  - Level of confidence among the residents of a life setting
  - Climate of mutual aid among neighbours
  - Surveillance of houses by neighbours
  - Involvement in an organization or committee concerned with the safety of a life setting
  - Involvement in municipal council meetings
  - Involvement in a neighbourhood or borough council
  - Involvement in a citizens' committee
  - Involvement in community, mutual aid or volunteer activities
  - Involvement in local social, cultural or sports activities
  
- Accidents**
  - Road accidents**
    - Speeding
    - High number of road accidents
    - Traffic conflicts
  
  - Risk of injury in public places**
  
- Public services**
  - Police services**
    - Police presence (visibility)
    - Satisfaction with/effectiveness of police work in a particular life setting
    - Satisfaction with police work targeting young people
    - Satisfaction with police work in road safety
    - Satisfaction with police work to resolve delinquency/ disorder problems
    - Confidence in police services
    - Quality of police work in prevention
    - Quality of police response to complaints
  
  - Fire service**
    - Quality of fire service response to calls
  
  - Layout and maintenance of roads, streets and sidewalks**
    - Safety of certain intersections
    - Appropriate road signs and traffic signals
    - Satisfaction with the maintenance and repair of roads and streets
    - Satisfaction with the maintenance and repair of sidewalks
    - Snow removal from streets
    - Snow and ice removal from sidewalks
    - Lighting in public places (streets, sidewalks, parks, etc.)
    - Cleanliness of streets and sidewalks
    - Complaints filed

- Maintenance of parks and public spaces**
  - Cleanliness of parks and public spaces
  - Cleanliness of facilities
  - Cleanliness of public spaces
  - Night-time lighting in parks and public spaces
  - Safety of public spaces
  - Safety of play equipment in parks
  - Safety of facilities in parks
- Maintenance of public buildings, equipment and parking lots**
  - Maintenance of public buildings and equipment
  - Night-time lighting around public buildings, equipment and parking lots
- Recreation services**
  - Existence/availability of services
  - Assessment of services offered
  - Maintenance of premises
  - Surveillance of premises
  - Safety of facilities
- Other services**
  - Quality of pre-hospital emergency services
  - Quality of the environment or drinking water
  - Presence of community services
  - Public knowledge of services
  - Other







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