

Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative



PROXY INTERVIEW GUIDE

Notes for the interviewer

Interview Goals:

- To use a narrative approach so that the research participants can share their story without our asking (only) specific questions about risk and safety.
- To invite research participants to reflect on and share their experiences, and describe the efforts of the victim to assess/manage risk and/or plan/enhance safety.
- To learn about victims' help-seeking behaviours, barriers to seeking help, and the kind of help that may have been more helpful.
- To allow the participants' knowledge of the victim's experiences of risk/safety to provide context for the risk factors that we identify in the CDHPVIP database and Key Informant interviews.

Framing:

Focus is on actions taken and/or strategies (used by victims on their own, by formal services/systems/supports, and/or with informal supports) aimed at managing risk and enhancing safety rather than the actual violence itself.

Hello. My name is _____.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research interview on risk assessment, risk management and safety planning regarding domestic violence. If you are interested, we can provide you with more information about these terms, however, the overall hope is to learn more about what worked and did not work when trying to be safe, and what might help other people experiencing domestic violence. This interview is being conducted as part of the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations. The Co-Directors are Dr. Peter Jaffe and Dr. Myrna Dawson, and the Co-Investigator for this region is _____.

Some questions I will ask may trigger emotional responses. You may choose to take a few moments to yourself before deciding whether you would like to continue. You may find that the things you talked about during this interview may leave you feeling unsettled

and may affect your well being, which is why we provided you with a list of regional/local agencies during the screening process. If you have not already done so these agencies can help you work on a care plan. This list includes local crisis lines should you need someone to speak with outside of business hours.

Before we begin, I want to make sure we have gone through the Letter of Information and Consent Infographic and that you have had an opportunity to have any questions addressed.

Prompt: Review the Letter of Information and Consent Infographic.

Do you have any questions? Do I have your permission to audio-record your consent now and then begin the interview? YES NO

If no, explain that audio-recording their consent and interview is a criteria to participate in an interview. If they are not comfortable being audio-recorded, thank them for their time.

Now that it is audio-recording, do you agree that:

- You have been given the opportunity to read and understand the Letter of Information and the Consent Infographic describing this research project.
YES NO
- All of your questions have been answered, if not what remaining questions do you have?
YES NO
- Agree to participate in this research project and to have the interview audio-recorded.
YES NO
- Agree to allow direct quotes and the insights from your interview to be used in reports and publications with your personal identifying information removed.
YES NO

This interview will take about one to two hours to complete. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time. If we run out of time, and you wish to complete the interview, do I have your permission to contact you at a later date to complete the interview?

YES NO

Are there any other concerns or anything else you need in order to feel comfortable before we begin?

Is the audio clear?

I just want to remind you that if you feel like you need to, please feel free to let me know if you would like to take a break and remember you can take time to reach out to your supports that you spoke about during the screening process or to contact any of the agencies from the regional/local lists we provided to you.
Thank you.

INTERVIEW TEXT: INTRODUCTION

Now that we have reviewed the consent form, I would like to introduce the interview in a bit more detail. I understand that you volunteered for this interview because you lost someone close to you as a result of domestic violence. I know how difficult it can be to reflect back on your loss and the traumatic events that occurred, so thank you for volunteering to talk to me today. Myself, the research team, and the project as a whole recognize how difficult it can be sharing these experiences and are grateful for you sharing your experiences with us today.

PAUSE

During our interview, what name would you like me to use when referring to the person or people you lost? [write victim's name(s)] (If you know the name of the victim prior to the interview, say "I know the victim's name is _____, is that how you would like me to refer to him/her throughout the interview?") **Note to transcriber: Please do NOT transcribe the victim's name as it is strictly here to guide the interviewer)

I am not going to be asking specific questions about the violence [name] experienced, but as you answer the questions, if the violence comes up, that is fine. As we talked about in the consent process, we'll be exploring issues related to risk and safety.

We want to hear about what people do to try to stay safe or reduce risk when faced with a range of harmful behaviours, including physical or sexual violence, or emotional abuse. We understand that every person's situation is different.

I am going to invite you to tell me a few stories about times that [name of the victim] did something to feel or be safer. This could include something they did on their own or a time when they looked for support elsewhere. The supports might have been informal, such as family and/or friends, or more formal supports from agencies and/or community services. You can tell me about times they reached out to services, family, friends, or co-workers – whatever experiences come to mind.

I am going to ask for a few different stories depending on the time and how long you would like to continue the interview. For each story, I am going to ask you some questions about the story, and what the story meant for you.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

CONTEXT

First off, can you tell me a little about your relationship with [name] and the experiences that brought you to participate in the study?

Note for interviewers: This question is aimed at having some context about the violence but there is no need to probe for details. Remember, the interview is not specifically about the violence. Just let the participant say as much or as little as they would like about the violence.

STORY PROMPT

I'm going to invite you to think of a specific time when [name] did not feel safe. I'm interested in hearing what they did to feel or be safer. Can you describe what happened?

Note for interviewers: This question is the “story prompt”—it’s intended to solicit a narrative or an anecdote about something that happened. We hope that the prompt will solicit just one specific experience but sometimes participants will tell several stories in one. You should try to tease out individual stories and ask the subsequent questions about each one. If you do get more than one story here then follow up when the participant seems to have finished talking by saying something like the following: “I am hearing a few distinct stories here so let’s see if we can talk about them each individually—it sounds like there is one story about [fill in the details], another about [fill in the details] [and so on . . .].” Then let the participant know that in your next questions you would like to talk about each story, one at a time.

You may have to ask questions to keep the narrative going (e.g., “and then what happened?” or “can you describe what happened next or what [name] did next?”)

STORY EXPLORATION

Note to interviewers: Ask the following questions about this specific experience.

In your story, you talked about [*mention the actions described*]. Do you have a sense of whether [*victim’s name*] found this more helpful or unhelpful in reducing their risk or enhancing their safety?

- *If the experience was more **helpful** at reducing their risk or enhancing their safety, ask:* What about this experience do you think made them safer and/or reduced their risk?

- *If the experience was more **unhelpful** in reducing their risk or enhancing their safety, ask:* How would you change this story to make them safer and/or reduce their risk?

Note for the interviewer: If the proxy states that the victim did not reach out for help or was not offered help, ask the question below:

You stated that [name] did not reach out for help or they were not offered help, can you tell me why that may have been? For instance, what barriers do you think they may have faced in receiving support?

Was there anyone else, formal or informal, you think should have been involved at this point?

- *If yes:* Who should have been involved? How do you see that they could have become involved and what should (or could) they have done?
- What might have prevented [name] from accessing supports?
- What might have prevented supports from providing assistance to [name]?

You've lived through this from the perspective of a friend or family member and your insights are very valuable. Based on this story, what advice would you give to another person who is in similar circumstances as [name]?

Based on this story, what advice would you give to the people involved around providing effective support to reduce risk and increase the safety of the victim?

- *Prompt for formal support services:* For instance you mentioned [agency/service involved in case] was involved with [name]?
- *Prompt for informal supports:* For instance you mentioned [e.g., family, friend, neighbour involved in case] was involved with [name]?

STORY INTERPRETATION

The next question is to help me understand what this experience means to you. I am wondering, if you were going to write about the experience you described, what would the title be? The idea is to think of a way to sum up the story you've just shared in a few words. You could try to think about a book title, a song title, or maybe a newspaper headline.

Note for the interviewer: This question is designed to gain an understanding of the research participant's interpretation of their own story. This follows principles of narrative research whereby we try to avoid asking about opinions and instead probe the participant's interpretation of their own story. We are interested in what they think their story is about. Some people may find it difficult to come up with a title, while others really like thinking about this question. Be sure to pay attention to whether they are struggling to think of something and to let them know that it's sometimes hard to do this. Watch for the participant's reaction as there is a tremendous amount

of guilt among the survivors (eg. I didn't get her out) and it could trigger that type of a reaction. Let them move on to the next questions and say that they can let you know anytime if they think of something.

REPEAT STORY PROMPT, EXPLORATION, AND INTERPRETATION

Note to Interviewer: Repeat the story prompt to generate another experience and ask the follow up exploration and interpretation questions. The questions could be repeated as time and energy allows (approximately 2-3 stories or up to 90 minutes).

Thank you for sharing these stories with me.

Note to Interviewer: Ask the question below if all the stories were helpful or if they were all unhelpful. We want to make sure we capture both positive and negative stories, if they had both kinds of experiences, so we can learn about effective strategies as well as missed opportunities.

Do you have knowledge of whether [name] felt these strategies/interactions with agencies were helpful or unhelpful to their experience with domestic violence? If so, can you share your knowledge of the helpful and unhelpful experiences and explain why [name] felt this way?

- *If yes*, repeat questions regarding this experience.
- *If no*, invite another story, whether helpful or unhelpful.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

I have a few questions about your experience as a whole:

What overall advice would you give to another person who is in similar circumstances as [name] to help them stay safe?

Now I'd like to have you think of a scenario where a victim of domestic violence has approached your friend asking for help. What advice would you give to your friend based on your own lived experiences with trying to support [name]?

Prompt if needed: I'm thinking here of informal supports, like family and friends [or others referred to in the interview], or more formal supports, like [say formal supports referred to in interview but if no formal supports involved, say police or social workers as examples].

If you could make two or three changes to help support people going through what [name] went through, what would they be?

Thank you for sharing your advice and ideas for changes that would help support people going through what [victim's name] went through. Your advice and suggestions are really valuable. If you would like the opportunity to review your transcribed interview to make sure that it accurately reflects what you said, please reach out to me by [30 days after interview].

DEMOGRAPHICS

I'm going to ask some demographic questions that will help me understand a bit more about [victim's name] and their circumstances at the time of the experiences you described. The information we're asking here is for background purposes only. We won't use any identifying information in any reports, articles or presentations. We would just like some demographic information about the people whose stories we have heard, but understand that you may not actually know the answers to some of these questions. It's fine if you don't know.

Note to Interviewer: Ask all questions as open-ended questions. Options below are included in case the participant needs options to answer the question and so you can check the appropriate response(s) instead of writing out the answers to each question. Check more than one box if needed. If there was more than one victim, ask each question about each victim.

If you are aware, what year was [name] born? _____ *[if unknown, ask how old they were and what year that was, and then calculate to determine the year they were born]*

How did [name] identify their gender identity?

- Woman
- Man
- Trans woman
- Trans man
- Genderqueer / gender variant / gender fluid
- Non-binary
- Two-Spirit
- Participant identified as: _____
- Preferred not to answer

Which ethnic or cultural group did they identify most with?

- Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit, other Indigenous)
- White/Caucasian (Including European decent)
- African, Caribbean or Black
- Latin American
- Arab
- East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)

- South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Filipino, etc)
- West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- Other, please specify: _____
- Preferred not to answer

What was [name]’s relationship with the person who harmed them during the time of the experiences you described?

- Dating
- Married/common law and living together
- Married/common law but not living together
- Divorced/separated
- Other _____

What period of time is covered by the experiences you described? (not exact dates, but years/months) _____ to _____

[For immigrant and refugee victims only] **At what point did the domestic violence start in [victim’s name]’s migration journey? _____**

Did [name] have any children at the time they were being harmed?

- Yes
 - How many children? _____
 - What were their ages at the time of the stories you described? _____
 - Who were they living with at the time of the stories you described?

 - Were the children exposed to the domestic violence or did they experience violence themselves? (if indicate children had experienced violence ask to what level to determine if homicide occurred)

- No

In what city/community and province did the stories you described take place? As a reminder, the name of the city/community will not be identified in any reports or papers. You can also share if it was a rural community/farm or city if that is more comfortable.

PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCE

We are coming to the end of the interview. These last questions ask about your experience doing this interview and participating in this study.

1. How do you feel about participating in this research study, now that you have completed the interview?
 - *Probe:* Were there any questions that prompted negative feelings or difficult emotions for you? Were there any positive feelings that came up?
2. If you had known in advance what participating in this research interview would feel like, would you still have agreed to participate? Please explain. [Note for interviewer: Report any negative participant experience responses to the Regional Coordinator.]

We have now come to the end of the interview. We appreciate you taking the time to participate in an interview for this research project. Your contribution is important and will be used to educate service providers and the wider community on helping other people who are experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of [the care plan and] the list of local and regional agencies that are available to provide you with further support and we encourage you to connect with them after the interview.

Thank you.