

## **Inter/generational Dynamics – Interview Topics and Themes**

### **Interview 1**

#### **Demographics/Social Characteristics**

Age

Marital status (*now and in past*)

Children

Occupation/employment status (*now and in past*)

How long lived here (*in house and in area*)

Ethnicity

### **TOPICS**

#### **Age – physical and mental (topic)**

Do you have any health issues? (Hearing, sight, illness, etc).

What other physical changes have you noticed as you've aged? *E.g.*

- Energy levels, changes in physical activity and to physical ability
- Do you take part in any activities (sport, hobbies, work, etc) that make you feel less able or fit than you used to be?
- Do you watch your diet? Eat any Health foods? Do you think you should? (if so, why?)
- Do you get much exercise? (to stay healthy or for appearance?) Do you think you should? (if so, why?)
- Do you take any medications? Vitamins? For how long? How has this changed over time?

Do any of these physical changes affect the way people act with you? (*e.g. if they get impatient with you not hearing things, being slower, etc*)

Feelings about age related illnesses (screening programmes, seeing more of care workers and health professionals?)

How do you feel about your appearance? (weight, body shape, grey hair, baldness and thinning, hair styles, wrinkles, etc)

Do you colour your hair? Have you ever?

Do you use face creams? Have you ever? Do you use the same ones you did in the past?

Do you put on make-up?

Has the way you dress changed over time? Do you keep up with fashions? (*Did they ever care about fashion or 'dressing well'?*)

What do you think of fashion/clothes that are available (for your age group)? Do you dress up to go out? Where do you shop? How do you decide what to wear? What you look good in?

What would you wear if you were younger? Say in your 20s or 30s? (40s and 50s?)

Is there anyone your age that you compare yourself to in terms of appearance, fitness, achievement, etc? (e.g. *famous people, friends*).  
Is there anyone you definitely don't want to be like?

How do you feel about your mental abilities? Have they changed? (Memory, concentration)

Do you think you have aged differently to your parents?  
(*Can probe in terms of appearance, attitudes, seeming 'old', etc*)

Do you ever compare the way you are now – physically/mentally/ personality – with yourself when younger?

Do you remember when you were younger (20s and 30s?) and what you thought about people who were your current age?

Do people (*who?*) treat you differently as you've got older? How has that developed?

What are the advantages/disadvantages of being the age you are now?

### **Technology, commodities – people's relationships with things (topic)**

Do you buy or own many new gadgets / pieces of technology / consumer items? What ones? Why not others?

Do you keep up with new technologies (any field)? Do you have much of an interest? *Can ask specifically about, texting and mobile phones, adjusting to digital TV, DVDs, MP3 players, using email and internet (e.g. shopping online).*

Are new technologies made for people around your age? [*and maybe culture*]?

Do you think a lot of gadgets / consumer items are a waste of money? Do people spend too much on luxuries?

What about furniture styles and design? Do you have much interest in current trends, etc?

**What people do and/or are interested in (topic). How they spend their time?**

Questions about things that people do.

E.g. going to work, going to the pub, staying in, going shopping. Watching TV, listening to the radio. Also, news and current affairs.

Major interests? Activities? Always interested?

Do you follow much new music / film / books/ etc?  
Why / why not? What? How?

**Probe:** all themes, especially generation

**Generation (topic)**

Do you feel that you are part of a generation? Who else is?  
(*if answer yes: 'have you always felt that way? How has that developed?'*)

What do you mean by generation? (*Only if they use or respond to the term*)

Do you have things in common with people of your generation? Do you have things in common with people of your age? What?  
What about other people (Younger? Older? Local? Same class?).  
Who don't you have much in common with?

Do you think other people (*which people?*) see you as part of a generation (*which one*)? How do you react to that?

Do you ever find yourself getting nostalgic about the past? If so, about what topics? Do you often talk to your friends or family about the past?

Do you think of yourself as having an 'era'; a time when your tastes were formed (and maybe stuck)?

What period in your life has seen the most change?  
(*both personal and socio-cultural*)

## **THEMES**

### **Generation (theme)**

Your sort of age, older, younger?

Your generation, another generation – which?

Probe different meanings of the term generation – including birth cohort, sense of affiliation and identification, historical generation, genealogical generations.

Familial - try to establish numbers of generations, up and down, and respondent's position within this.

Tolerance and understanding between generations (or lack of it). In relation to what? Respect, being patronising. Naivety of young. Advice, knowledge and experience – how do these work between generations in your experience?

### **Change (theme)**

How has that come about? How did that develop?

What has changed and how? What is the same?

Historical change – how it used to be

Cohort change – how it differs or doesn't for people of similar ages in different historical times

Future – predictions, prospects, hopes and fears

Need to pick up losses – of people, places, things etc that are 'ex' in some way.

### **Sensory/Material/Physical (theme) – the multidimensionality of experience**

Specifically probe sight, sound, smell, touch.

Questions like - what's it like? What does it feel/look like/sound like? What's there? What people are like, look like, including self. What things feel like. What places look like, sound like, smell like. What it feels like to walk down the road. What it feels like to be older than you used to be. What age feels like, looks like.

Appearance – own and how others see you, other people's (in different generations etc).

Physical, natural and built environments (important when we ask about neighbourhoods). 'What's there now? What was there then?' Things and objects.

What's it like to get around?

## Relationships (theme)

Different types:

Family – disaggregate, so we know which relatives, not just ‘family’ or ‘relatives’

Neighbours,

Friends

Colleagues, ex colleagues

Acquaintances, people in the street (where their presence impacts)

Professionals, social care workers,

What are they like?

What do you do with them? What does the contact involve?

Get on with them? Difficult relationships? Wish you’d have more/less contact?

Wish they weren’t there, didn’t come. Wish they were there?

Close/important?

Use **relationship map** to prompt about key relationships we want to pursue including e.g. if there seems to be no or little contact with a son/daughter or similar.