Researcher BN: Lovely, so if you don't mind if we could start by just stating in your age, your gender, and your role at (name of location) mosque?

SP12: So I am 37 years old, erm, I am male, and I am just an individual volunteer at the mosque. So erm, whenever erm, say non-Muslims come and they want to see the mosque, or schools, I'm the one who hosts them, answers their questions, I am sometimes the Imam when Imam not here, erm, just to fill in and erm, just general ad hoc help wherever I can basically,

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: ..outside my normal life.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So what does a day-to-day, when you're here, look like?

SP12: To be honest, I mean erm, normally I just come for the prayers, er, whenever I get a chance and that’s normally in the evening so, erm, but, day-to-day to be honest I mean, I don’t get involved as much, but as when I'm needed.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Alright so like if a, for example, a primary school wanted to make an appointment to come and visit the mosque as part of their curriculum, they'd get in contact with us and I'm the one, I'm the one that responds back to them and organises all of that, so erm, it's not necessarily a daily thing, but as and when required.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: I get you. So how long have you been a volunteer here?

SP12: To be honest, ever since, I mean I used to come here ever since I was a kid. So I mean the mosque's been opened since 1980, and I was born in ‘85 so erm, but I would say more so in the last 10 to 20 years.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Oh wow.

SP12: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: That's a long time still. Yeah.

SP12: Because I’ve been living, I’ve lived in here all my life, so, yeah so.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: And it’s the closest mosque to where I live, so yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. And so what do your day, when you're at the mosque, what do interactions look like, is it mainly with other people who come to the mosque or?

SP12: Er, I mean just general interacting like you see here. I mean what we do is, after the prayers some people just go home. Some people, you know, meet each other, greet each other, shake hands, see how everyone is doing, and everyone just goes home. I mean, that's what happens on a day-to-day basis. I mean, obviously the odd time we have functions, people come, you know, they listen to talks, erm, we have food afterwards, like a bit of a social gathering, Ramadan, that's, that’s a really busy time of the year

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: ..where erm, food is served every day, and it's quite packed in the mosque where people come. And, and that's another, er, part of socialising, but it's, it's a place of people being able to get together, erm mainly, erm, outside the prayers.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Erm, so erm, functions, social gatherings, that kind of stuff.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: And so, before or after the prayers, do you tend to have conversations with people, or is it very fleeting?

SP12: It's very fleeting just, I mean, you can, you can, people tend to, outside, they’re kind of speaking from 5 minutes to half an hour just general chit chat. Some people just saying hi how are you doing, how’s family, and then they just go off. So it depends on people’s circumstances, I mean generally, people who are free generally have a chit chat before they go, so it varies, it varies.

Researcher BN: Yeah, just varies. And so how long do those conversations tend to last again, is it just..?

SP12: God knows, it's all individual, social, I have no idea.

Researcher BN: Yeah yeah. And is there any themes that come up in what you conversate about?

SP12: Not at all, I mean hi, how you doing? How's your family? How's your business? Erm, that kind of stuff really. People talk about their, you know their private lives, their business lives, their professional lives. It's just what normal people talk about really. Erm I mean if they have any question regarding their religion they ask Imam,

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: .. so he’s the go-to person for that. But erm yeah, it's, it's like any other place to be honest with you, where people come for their prayers and talk about the normal lives, really. Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, and so do you tend to see the same people, is it quite a social group?

SP12: Generally, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah. I mean unfortunately, in this day and age, it’s mainly a lot of elderly people that come, erm the youth are not so engaging in, I think religion, universal religion anyways, erm, I think like the church, the synagogue, and other places of worship might have other, a similar problem where it’s mainly elderly people that do go there. Erm, but still erm yeah, we, we, yeah so, that's been a problem for a good while, but I guess that's a, an accepted problem should I say (laughs), you know?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Ah okay. So do conversations about health and wellbeing ever come up, so like physical activity, diet, even mental health?

SP12: Yeah, I mean a lot of people have diabetes, especially in the Asian community (laughs) and amongst the elders yeah, erm, they can talk about how they control their diabetes and what food they eat, that kind of stuff you know, erm, because in, in, especially in the Asian community, the diets are not that healthy (laughs).

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP12: I mean, because a lot of fried food. A lot of, you know, with the sweet dishes, are very sweet, erm so a lot of oily food in the curries, so you know it’s, they, they, they do tend to talk about like ‘ah, I tried to stay away from this and it's quite hard’, you know that kind of stuff, you know?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: So is it mainly diet out of things like smoking and al-, well, physical activity, mental health,

SP12: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: ..is it mainly diet?

SP12: Yeah basically, I mean yeah, I mean people I mean they still smoke (laughs), you know what I mean they, but er yeah it, it's just, when it comes to food, you generally, people who are healthy don't really talk about it as much, it’s the ones who are, they’re like, if you've got two people who are diabetic talking each other, they have something in common to talk about,

Researcher BN: Mmm, yeah.

SP12: ..whereas the person who hasn’t got it is not that interested. (laughs) Do you know what I mean?

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah. So do you tend to, do you tend to have those conversations with people, or do people initiate those conversations with you?

SP12: Erm, not really, because thankfully I'm generally quite healthy. Erm so I mean, yeah my mum's diabetic, I mean she doesn't live in (name of location), she lives down south but she's diabetic, but she sometimes does tell me a bit about it but, erm, it does make one, make yourself wary that you should still look after your health, even though you think you're healthy, you, you don't know what's around the corner, and especially if you like junk food a lot for example, then, easily, you know, turn into an illness if you don't look after yourself,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..you know erm so, but personally, not really, I don't talk about it as much because like I said, when you're not going through something, it just doesn't cross your mind as much.

Researcher BN: Mmm, yeah. And so people don't bring it up, about their own health with you?

SP12: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP12: When they, they, they can do, and you just listen. I mean, it's difficult because what, what advice can you give them? You’re not going through it yourself, and you’re thinking, well if I'm telling them not to eat this and I'm eating it myself, then I feel like a bit of a hypocrite, do you know what I mean (laughs)?

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP12: So, so you just listen, and sometimes it's not, it's not all about talking. Just listening and being there for that person, just for that time period, can have, can be quite helpful, without having to say anything.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely. And so how frequent are these conversations?

SP12: Not really, I mean because like I said, everyone’s got busy lives, sometimes, you don't always have time to talk. Like sometimes you just think, I need to pray, I need to go home, I've got stuff to do,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: I need to go shopping, I’ve got to go back to work, or whatever, I can’t have the children away from you, anything, got an, I've got an appointment, so it, it varies, I mean erm, generally it's just a hi and bye type thing, but when, on a weekend, you might, after the early afternoon prayer you might sit down, like just chat with somebody outside, you know, have a brief chit chat, but it's not that common. Erm, as what you might think,

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: ..because everyone is busy.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Everyone’s doing their own thing, you know.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: So, but it, it does happen.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. And what about, like you say, those busier times during Ramadan, for example?

SP12: Because it's that kind of month, erm, you tend to see people together more, so they do talk about these kind of things. Erm, er, obviously, while you're eating you’re not listening to what other people are talking about, but, no you can tell a lot, it's a buzz, conversations are happening all around you. You know, and they talk about everything, from sports, to politics, to what's going on in the world, to health. You know it's just er, erm, a, a load of volume just going through your ears at the time, but yeah, that, that's, at that moment especially, erm, because people are together for a bit of a longer period of time, so they, they make use of the time.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yep.

Researcher BN: And do you find that with people initiating conversations with you, personally or?

SP12: Erm, just anyone, for example the person next to you, like when you come and sit down to eat for example, in Ramadan as an example, erm yeah, even the person sitting next to you, just generally have just chit chat with them

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..how you doing, what do you do for a living, you know how it starts off with that, you know, or what work to do? How many kids do you have? You know (laughs) that kind of stuff so, these kind of con-, especially when it’s someone new,

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: ..someone new, and generally with someone new you’re not going to talk about your health,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..or you’re not, you know so. Erm but it, the conversations, I mean, I'm, personally I'm, I'm generally quite a sociable person, erm, so I'll speak to anyone. Erm, er, not everybody is the same I guess, erm but yeah, so it, it, it all depends, I mean, what the person who, the person who speaks to you, what kind of conversation they initiate.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: You know, sometimes they want to talk to you about something specific. It's never really been health related.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: So. Erm, but yeah erm, sometimes it can be general, sometimes it can be specific, depending on who the person is,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..and what, and what they want from it to be honest.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So you kind of let them initiate what they want to?

SP12: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, okay. And what about mental health? Does that ever come up as a topic?

SP12: Not socially, no.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: If that comes up it ends up being private, because people don't like to discuss those issues in public anyway. Erm, have I had people who’ve talked or spoken to me regarding mental health? Yeah, I have. And what I've found is, listening is the most crucial skill in that time. Because a lot of people like to jump and give advice, but learning from experience, growing up, listening is actually an amazing skill which, even myself at times, a lot of people lack.

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah.

SP12: Listening and taking in. Not just listening as a clos-, because you can listen and be blank (laughs) basically. You know?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Listening and taking in what they're saying, because I, yes so, I think listening, erm, especially to people with mental health erm, is extremely important.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: So when those conversations have happened, again, has it been initiated by someone?

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: And like you mentioned, you said they end up one to one, is that that you've taken them into a separate room or how’s that happened?

SP12: Generally they know that I'm involved in the mosque.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Generally. Erm, or word gets around. And I don't really advertise myself, erm, if people want to talk, they come and either, sometimes I've been approached by the (name of location) mosque, Facebook Messenger service, erm, or someone has referred me, like maybe as someone who prays, so they give me a call and say someone needs help blah blah blah. So yeah, and I meet them privately. Either I meet them or speak them or I speak to them over the phone. Obviously it's not easy always to meet because, depending on where people live and where they are, it’s usually easier over the phone. But I generally do not, erm, initiate anything because, I don’t like to pry in people’s lives.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Because what you find is that, let's just say, if you don't mind me giving an example here, you have a person who's suffering from mental health, and I know this. But I haven't told them I know this. If I was to approach them about it, it could make them defensive and reactive. But if they approached me about it, and that, and that also shows they’ve put a barrier and they don't want to listen. But it's a big difference when they come and approach you about it because they are ready to listen.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: It's a big difference.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: So that's why, that’s why I don't really initiate, especially because of mental health, I don't initiate anything. If someone wants to talk to me, they'll come and talk to me.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: And when they come and talk to me, not only will they want to speak to me, but they will be willing to listen to what I have to say. Because when you impose yourself on somebody, that's when it backfires. In my opinion.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah.

Researcher BN: So when those conversations have happened, how do you think they went?

SP12: Well, erm, I would hope positive, because I don't generally keep tabs on people afterwards either, because, I mean if they want to let me know how they're getting on, fine. Erm, and that might sound uncaring to some people, but like I said, I don't like to interfere in people's lives. Erm, it, as they've left me, or left the phone call at the time, it has seemed positive.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Because what you find with a lot of people, is that you're not always there to fix their problem. It's all, it's been about just someone that listens to them. Someone that has given them, just the attention to go through their problems, where they feel they've been neglected. Because what you find, erm, with mental health, people, I won't say patients because I’m not a doctor (laughs) but people who suffer from mental health is, it's that loneliness factor.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: They, they, they don't know who to reach out to. They, they, they, they struggle to speak to anyone regarding their problems, so when they do speak to someone who is, you could say, neutral, who doesn't know them, who is not related to them. Then it does seem a bit easier, and especially if that person is acknowledging what they're saying as well, as I said not, not just a blank face. Not, not just in one ear and out the other.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Erm, but someone who, that they feel is listening to them, that they feel valued, because that's, that, a lot of them have low self-esteem. They don't feel valued.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: They don't feel like people are listening to them. So when you listen to them, they feel that you, you actually do care.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: You know, so yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And do you find faith comes into these conversations about health and wellbeing?

SP12: It depends on the other person.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: See, I, personally, erm, faith is everything to me. Erm, but, I, even if I, if I was to speak to a Muslim who was going through mental health issues, I wouldn't bring it up as the first point of call because, first of all, you don't know what state of mind they’re in, you know. They could have, erm, misconceptions about the same religion that we both follow. Because of, for example, whatever they've been through in life. So if I, and I don't want to, and what you do not want to come across as, is a preacher.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Because when that happens, a lot of people when it comes to it, aren’t, like I said, unless they come to you, if you preach, a lot, a lot of the time, people put their barriers up and don't want to know.

Researcher BN: Even, of people of the same faith?

SP12: 100%.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Because not everybody's practicing. Just because you believe in God doesn't mean you're a practicing Muslim. You have faith, right? But it doesn't mean you practice the religion.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: There are many Muslims who do, same as everybody else, they drink when we're supposed to drink. They, they live lives as everybody else does. But point being is that, when you come across a preacher, and especially if, if they have, it's meant to be about them. Right? Then it, it just, are you more bothered about what you're saying, or are you more bothered about what they're going to say to you?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: So meaning, it, I will judge that based on how the conversation is going.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: And I'll wait, I would wait till the very end to see if they're ready for that or they're not.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Or if it's, if it's appropriate for them to listen to, I want to say appropriate I mean, are they mentally in the right frame of mind to be able to hear what I've got to say. So I would judge that based on how the conversation went.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yep.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And do you find that often goes that way?

SP12: Not necessarily. Erm, a lot of the time they just want, er someone to listen to them.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Erm, and sometimes they do ask for advice in the end, and when they ask for advice, that means their ears are now wide open. And if I do bring in like for, er, you know, erm, I mention a couple of things about the religion, they will listen to it.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: They will listen to it. So, so you have to, erm, wisdom is required in these situations because, knowledge, people can just spurt off from their tongue whatever they want. But without wisdom, it, it doesn't always help people.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So it's only if someone's asking for that kind of advice?

SP12: Yes, yes.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And what are your thoughts in terms of the relationship between faith and health and wellbeing?

SP12: Personally now, erm without thinking about anybody else, erm, for me personally, it has, it has a massive impact in, in terms of my mental wellbeing because, your thought pattern, the way you feel inside changes like for example, from, from my point of view, it says in the Quran that in God's remembrance, do hearts find peace. So maintaining that connection, hence we pray, 5 times a day, erm, maintaining that connection with your creator, puts you at peace with who you are and your surroundings. And, and gradually that peace, especially when you may be going through turmoil, you're going through hardship in life, where it keeps you grounded and, and, and calm, erm and composed. And a lot of, and the big aspect which is not ever used because obviously we're in the age of science and technology, is, people focus on the emotional, the mental, the physical side of things but, we also focus on the spiritual side of things, which has an impact on everything, the physical, the emotional and the mental aspect. And when you're at peace within yourself, whether people agree or not, but there’s a, this is just my opinion, when you’re, when you're at peace with yourself, erm, and you have that connection with your creator, then it, it has a massive impact where, you put your trust in your creator. I'll give you an example. Not stressing over things you can't control. How common is that amongst people where, they stress so much that it causes anxiety, depression, over things they can't control? When you've learned and trained yourself to not, obviously you, at the moment of whatever stress or impact hits you in life, it does bother you, but when you collect yourself and you compose yourself and then you begin to think hold on a second, there’s nothing I can do about that, then you come to that reality where, okay, and then it calms you down. So when you, so that, that's one of the best examples I give is that, not stressing, overly stressing, over things you can't control. And that has had a massive impact on my life. Huge. And it's probably made me who, the way I am today.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yep.

Researcher BN: And do you find that with the other, other people that come to the mosque?

SP12: Maybe. Not necessarily.

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP12: Everyone is different.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: I can't really speak for them. Can only speak for myself, erm, but for me, spiritual wellbeing contributes to physical, emotional and mental being.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: For me, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. That makes sense. So is there anything that would help you to have conversations around health and wellbeing that, with people that come here?

SP12: Erm, I mean, I would be open to anyone if anyone would want to speak to me about health and wellbeing, I mean I, see, well, one, another think that spirituality has taught me is self-reflection and self-rectification.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: I want to be very careful what I tell people, in case I'm not doing it myself first. Because the feeling of inner hypocrisy, I mean people can be hypocritically openly, and you will see them all the time (laughs), right? Yeah, but the inner feeling of hypocrisy bothers me.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: So that's why I don't, this is one of the reasons why I don't really initiate those conversations because, because when you're in the process of analysing yourself and, through everyday life right, self-reflection and self-rectification, you think twice before you judge somebody, or, or give someone advice. Because you think either, you follow the advice yourself first, before giving it, or don't give it at all.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: (laughs) Do you see what I mean?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: So hence, I don't really initiate these conversations.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12 But if someone comes to me for advice,

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: ..then they want my opinion,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..and I'll give whatever I can give to them, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah that makes sense. And so have you noticed any differences in the conversations about health and wellbeing before, after, during COVID, did you notice any changes in those kinds of conversations?

SP12: Well, it was difficult to have a conversation during COVID (laughs).

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah.

SP12: You know what I mean? Erm, from a personal perspective, I mean, did I go through any..? I was fine. Through COVID I was fine. Erm, but other people, I don't know. Did they miss the mosque? Yes, you could say they missed the mosque. Because like I said it was, you, you, you take, you take something for granted until it's not there.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Right? So people, of course they felt it, I mean I missed the mosque as well, because it's like your routine and you're so just literally just ripped out of your routine aren’t you?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: Yeah. So, I can imagine, you know, upset people, bothered people. I know a lot of people, not, didn't, I understand from the news etcetera, a lot of people with depression, anxiety, especially those with no family who lived alone, you know? Erm, did that ever come up? No, no.

Researcher BN: Right. Okay.

SP12: So, and no one really ever approached me in terms of, since pro COVID.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Post COVID sorry.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Got you. And so do conversations about kind of the social determinants of health, like housing, finance, employment, do they ever, do people ever bring that up with you, or do you have conversations about that?

SP12: Erm, job, like especially, I’m, I’m in the IT, I work, I work in IT, and sometimes, when another person finds out, I mean, especially if they’re from IT and I’m from IT, then we can, we have a general conversation about IT and technology. You know erm, housing, if I was to speak, because housing and finance, if, I would only ever speak about it with my friends and family to be honest.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Erm, I generally tend not to go into these conversations with people who I don't know very well, you know, because everyone's got their own levels of privacy.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: What they hold private and what they don’t hold private. Erm, finance is something that erm, I mean the general, the general discussion that everyone has, is everything is so expensive now.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Alright, everyone. That's just the, that’s not a private conversation. Fuel's gone up, gas and electricity's gone up, people complaining, you know, and that can be a social conversation as well.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: You know of their own take aways you know, meats gone up, and chicken's gone up, and vegetables have gone up,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: And, and, and drinks have gone up, and, this tax and that tax (laughs), you know, these are the conversations people are having these days, I'm gonna go to the supermarket and breads going up every week.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: Do you know so, so I'm like, so what do you do when you go home, you go home to your wife or your whoever and you say, guess what, last week the bread was this, now, and then the conversation begins like that you know. So yeah, and when it comes to finances, it's, at this moment in time, it's mainly about how expensive things are, erm, yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah, and is that here people talk about that kind of thing?

SP12: Everywhere to be honest, I mean even when I went down south to see my family, my wife’s family, anyone, they erm, (laughs) yeah it's a common conversation,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: ..hoping, my gas and electricity bills doubled, I can’t believe it’s tripled, oh my days (laughs). You know that kind of thing so.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah, so you don't find that people bring it up asking for advice or, to be listened to?

SP12: Not really, because, because you see, I think people know where to go. Like if, if like for example, if someone wants financial advice they’d go to a financial advisor.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Similar way, if they’ve got a medical issue, they’d go to a doctor. They know what we, I wouldn't say specialise in as such, but they know what we can talk, what we are erm, capable of talking about. I mean, would I want to give someone medical advice? No, I would not. Would I want to give someone advice on their cars? No, I would not (laughs), do you know what I mean?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: I'm not a mechanic. So, erm, generally people are clever enough to know who to approach. I mean, if we do have a financial advisor who comes to pray, they'll ask him. If we have a Doctor who comes to pray.., do you understand?

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP12: So, so meaning the, basically, everyone knows who to go to.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Yes, for their needs.

Researcher BN: Right. It wouldn’t be something they'd bring up to you?

SP12: With me generally, 100%.

Researcher BN: Okay, yeah, that makes sense. So is there anything that would help you have conversations about employment, housing, finance, here?

SP12: Erm, personally, would I want those conversations? (laughs) Would, see personally no, because, these are, these are, you see number one it takes a lot of your time. It can, sorry, it can take a lot of your time. And I don't like to put myself out there too much because I have children as well. And I have to balance my time.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: And balance is the key of life. It is.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Balance is the key of life. If you don't have the balance, someone's going to complain (laughs), or something is going to complain, right? Yeah? So, I, I don't like to overburden myself with too much because I have to think about everything.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: So, would I want the responsibility? No but, the reason why I wouldn't, generally would, would not want to give advice is because it's something that's a heavy responsibility for a person. For example, a mortgage, I do not want to give them the wrong advice in case they curse you afterwards. That you, even though you were good intentioned.

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP12: Do you understand? You might give wrong advice and say oh I think that rate’s better for you, and then afterward to find out that no that rate was not good, you know just as an example. So those are, those things, I mean I think a lot of people need to take respon-, if you, that's why I say, I can guide them towards those people yes, and for example, if someone said to me, oh, I've got this issue, can you help me? OK, OK I can't help you, but I know who can.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: So instead, it's like, it's like being a glorified switchboard (laughs). Do you know what I mean?

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah, yeah I know what you mean, good analogy.

SP12: Yeah, yeah. Erm, so, so yeah, if someone came, I wouldn't like reject them. But if I didn't know, if I didn't know how to help them or I didn't feel comfortable helping them, because, covering my own back, for example, then I would take, I would show them or, I would mention a name of one or two people that I might know of, or who are the people who would know, and we would help them.

Researcher BN: Yeah yeah.

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: And does that happen often, can you think of any times?

SP12: I wouldn’t say often. I mean whenever people need, like for example I need, I need someone who knows about cars. Ah okay, well you know, this person does.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Or a, do you know anyone, I'm new to the city, do you know any good doctors, or any doctors that you know? Yeah, I know this person. Do you understand, so?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Erm, the ones who live here, they know, generally, but the ones, the ones for example who are new here, they can tend to ask, like I’ve had people say, oh can you help us? We're looking for a flat. Now I'm not a landlord, so I'm like, oh well I don't know, but I know people who own flats, and rent them out.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: So I’ll give them their number, do you see what I mean?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah.

SP12: So I, I don't like leave them in the lurch, I try my best to help them as much as I can, up to whatever I can.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Yes.

Researcher BN: But not so much around health and wellbeing kind of thing?

SP12: Only if they ask.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Only if they ask. Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, that makes sense. And so have you ever received any sort of training in having conversations around health and wellbeing?

SP12: No, no (laughs). You know when you get thrown in the deep end (laughs). So not, no really I haven't erm, I mean people have suggested I take counselling courses, but then I thought, I have thought about it and I thought no, it will take a lot of my time.

Researcher BN: Again, yeah time.

SP12: It will. Because you see, counselling is not a 9-5 job, especially when you get known. If you get know. People will not stop calling you because it's 5:00 o'clock, especially if they need help.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: And what do you do? You're at home, imagine, you're spending time with your wife and children, and you get a call, and it's a bad call.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Now what do you do? Do you see what I'm saying? What do you do? And, and these are the things I think about, and you know, can I do that? What if I have to do it on a regular basis? Would I want to annoy my children on a regular basis, because, although I don't have to, I would feel compelled to. Because, you don’t know the situation of the person.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Because what happens, if you're a good couns-, I'm not saying I would be good, but I’m saying if you become a good counsellor, people become dependent on you. This is the issue as well.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: So, so anyway, going, anyway I digress a bit there, but going back to training, no I have had no training. I’ve had no training yes.

Researcher BN: So when you said you developed that, those active listening skills, was that just through experience of having conversations?

SP12: experience, yes, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah so..

SP12: You begin to realise, because when start looking through your own mistakes, and your thinking ah I shouldn’t have said that, I shouldn’t have done that, I shouldn't, okay, next time I won't do that. You develop like that.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Constant analysis of, of yourself, erm, which is unfortunately very rare these days (laughs), erm, yeah, but when you do that, only then you can fix it. If you, if you can't see your own faults, how are you going to fix anything?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Do you know what I mean so, so erm yeah, so these, so yeah, just erm, going through your own mistakes and experience, that's what you call experience.

Researcher BN: Yeah, so everything is self-taught, all of those listening skills?

SP12: Yeah, (laughs) yeah, yeah, basically.

Researcher BN: So would you like, is there any specific training you would like to receive in having conversations around health and wellbeing with people that come here?

SP12: Erm, like I said, the only thing that is next is, if I was to do counseling, and I'd have received information on it, but then I guess I had to look at the long term because, if I was to, for example, if I was, if I was to become a qualified counsellor, a fully qualified counsellor, and the people at the mosque knew about and it was advertised, then, like I said, the problem would be, it would not just be a 9 to 5 job.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: That would be the big issue that I would have.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: And for me right now, I can't sacrifice the balance that I'm aiming to achieve in my life right now, erm, for that. So, would I want further training? Probably not, because I don't, I don’t actively look to speak to people, it's as and when it's required, and does it happen often? No, it doesn't happen often. So, if I was to do it full time then yes, I would definitely would, would consider training.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP12: Because it's not full time, because it's on an ad hoc basis, I don't think it's necessary.

Researcher BN: Yeah. That makes sense.

SP12: Yep. Yeah.

Researcher BN: So in terms of any resources you might like to see to help having these conversations, is there anything that you would want in those terms?

SP12: Erm, I mean, the only resources you probably, I know this might sound very naive and basic, but the main resource that you need are these ears. You know, erm, but obviously no, you need a, a good head on your shoulders, erm, because, not everybody, although they can, they can hear, they’re not very good listeners necessarily. Erm, in terms of resources I mean, could you give examples of what you mean by resources, I mean I’m..?

Researcher BN: I mean, yeah, anything, so obviously we've been through training but something to signpost information, those kind of things?

SP12: Okay, okay. Erm, but then you’re advertising aren’t you (laughs). It’s going back to the counseling thing innit, you end up being a counsellor without qualif-, being qualified. It's true though because once you start advertising, you will start getting phone calls. And especially if they don't know you, they'll call you. People feel more comfortable speaking to a psychiatrist, psychologist, or, or counsellors that, who know nothing about them.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Why would you speak to someone who knows everything about you?

Researcher BN: (laughs) Yeah.

SP12: Do you see what I'm saying? So, this is, that’s just why I would hum and hah about hrmm, would I want some resources, hmm, probably not. But then, for, for this, you'd want someone professional.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Not from a volunteer.

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP12: Because then it would make my volunteering life a full time job, if not more. And I've already got a full time job as it is.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Do you see what I’m saying? I would agree with having resources if we had someone qualified, but the only thing is, you'd have to have someone qualified who's a volunteer, when how many people are going to want to volunteer for a full time counselling job, for not, for not getting paid either?

Researcher BN: Mmm. Yeah, yeah.

SP12: It's not gonna work is it?

Researcher BN: Okay, yeah.

SP12: Do you know what I mean? Erm, er, so it's a difficult one. Yeah.

Researcher BN: Just jumping back a bit, I don't think I asked what motivated you to volunteer here?

SP12: Erm, to be honest, I didn't really, I, I was sort of volunteered rather than.. (laughs). Erm, because, I'm almost, I'm quite close to the Imam, so whenever, as I said if he's not at the mosque or is out somewhere, then he asked me to lead the prayer and I just said yeah, and it literally just became a habit. I mean sometimes I do talks aswell, public speaking.

Researcher BN: Ah okay.

SP12: Yeah erm, and again, I didn't volunteer for that either. I was volunteered (laughs). So, erm, but I didn't mind it, because you see, like I said, it's a big difference if someone asks you to do something rather than you putting yourself forward. Because when you put yourself forward you say please take me, whereas if they want you, they'll say we want you, come her.

Researcher BN: Right, yeah.

SP12: See the difference? Because when someone wants you, it's in your hands whether you want to accept or reject, but if you put yourself forward, your putting yourself forward for acceptance or rejection.

Researcher BN: Yeah, I know what you mean, yeah.

SP12: Do you see what I'm saying? So generally, I haven't really volunteered myself for anything, I've been volunteered, and it might sound funny, but it's actually true (laughs), yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Okay. So ultimately, do you think if you did have training on having these health and wellbeing conversations, do you think that would improve the health and wellbeing of the people that come here?

SP12: Possibly, possibly because you can't guarantee anything. I mean, because, we are, as human beings, as the person who's going through, maybe mental health issues, we can only, we hope that through us, for example, or somebody else, that they will recover, and they become better. But we can't guarantee anything. We'll do our best. That's all you can do. Listen, do your best, and give the best advice you can if they seek that advice. And, yeah. That's all we can do.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP12: Even doctors can't guarantee results can they?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah so.

SP12: They have the best resources, but they can't guarantee anything. So similar, we can't guarantee, we can try our best to help them, but ultimately it is up to them if they want to be helped.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. Makes sense. Yeah. Well that was everything I had to ask you.

SP12: Okay.

Researcher BN: Was there anything you wanted to add, you feel like we haven't covered?

SP12: I, I don't think so. I don't know. I don't know (laughs). Erm no, I mean, if that's everything for you then that's fine.

Researcher BN: Yeah, that’s perfect, thank you very much.

SP12: Oh you’re very welcome.

Researcher BN: I’ll stop recording.