

Appendix A: Individual Interview Guides

Patient Interview Guide

1. Can you start by telling me a little bit about yourself?
 - a. Where are you staying now?
 - b. How long have you been without a home?
 - c. What led to you to being in this situation?
2. Can you tell me about your experience getting care at the COVID assessment centre/mobile testing unit?
 - a. What led to you being tested for COVID?
 - b. What happened after you got the test? Where did you stay while you waited for your test result?
 - c. Did you test positive?

If yes:
 - i. What went through your mind when you found out? What happened next? Where did you go?
 - ii. What was your experience like at the isolation shelter? How long were you there? Where did you go next?
If no:
 - iii. What went through your mind when you found out? What happened next? Where did you go?
3. We've heard in the news about the experience of people who are homeless during COVID. What has been your experience?
 - a. What has been different from pre-COVID?
 - b. What are some of the challenges?
 - c. What supports do you wish were in place?
4. We know that sometimes people who are homeless don't have good access to healthcare.
 - a. Do you have medical conditions that you need to see a doctor for?
 - b. Do you have a family doctor you see regularly?
 - c. What experiences did you have with the healthcare system during COVID-19?
 - d. What do you think the healthcare system could do to improve the care it provides to people who are homeless?
5. Is there anything else you want to share with me?

Healthcare Worker Interview Guide:

1. To start, can you tell me what your role is in the COVID Assessment Centre or ED?
Approximately how many times have you worked there since the start of the pandemic (mid-March 2020)?
2. Tell me about your experiences caring for people experiencing homelessness at the COVID-19 Assessment Center and/or ED at St. Michaels Hospital
 - a. Are there any stories that stand out?
 - b. Was there anything surprising or unexpected that happened?
3. What were some of the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness during COVID? Were there any examples of these being overcome?
4. What were some of the challenges you or colleagues faced providing care to people who were homeless? How were these addressed?
5. What short-term supports could help support people who are homeless during the COVID pandemic?
 - a. What role do you think the healthcare system should play vs. government vs. others?
6. What are your thoughts on long-term supports for people who are homeless?

Healthcare Leader Interview Guide:

1. Can you describe your leadership role at St. Mike's during the pandemic?
2. What role did the St. Mike's [COVID Assessment Centre/Emergency Department] play in supporting people experiencing homelessness early in the pandemic?
 - a. What were some of the early observations that led to how the hospital responded?
 - b. What were some of the initial challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness? How were these addressed?
3. How did St. Mike's role evolve over time? Can you walk us through the timeline?
 - a. How did the rules/protocols for the ED and CAC change over time? What prompted these?
 - b. What new challenges arose? What challenges remain?
 - c. What gaps have you observed about how care was delivered? Inside the institution? Outside the institution (broader system)?
 - d. How has the hospital's approach to supporting homeless individuals changed? What prompted the change?

- e. What do you think St. Mike's did well? What do you wish could have been done differently?
4. What were some important collaborations that supported people who were homeless?
 - a. Tell us about the partnership with Ontario Health - Toronto Region? Toronto Public Health? Inner City Health Associates (ICHA)? Other hospitals? The shelters themselves?
 - b. What partnerships and/or collaborations were difficult? Can you elaborate on what challenges there were and how that affected patients?
 - c. What partnerships were productive/helpful? How did these benefit patients?
5. What are some of the key challenges facing people experiencing homelessness?
 - a. Challenges accessing healthcare?
 - b. Social challenges? Other challenges?
6. What short-term supports do you think could help support people who are homeless during the COVID pandemic?
 - a. What role do you think the healthcare system should play vs. government vs. others?
 - b. Are there some things we've seen work well in some settings that we should spread/scale?
7. What lessons can we draw from our experience during COVID, when we think about supporting homeless individuals in the long-term?
 - a. What role can the health care system play? Municipal or provincial government? Other actors?
8. Who else on the SMH leadership team would you recommend we speak to for perspectives on this issue?
 - a. Outside the leadership team?
 - b. We will also be doing focus groups with physicians and staff who worked in the CAC and ED – are there any physicians and staff would be important to include in these focus groups?

Shelter Leader Interview Guide:

1. Can you describe your role at the shelter during the pandemic?
2. What role did the shelter play in supporting people experiencing homelessness early in the pandemic?
 - a. What were some of the initial challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness? How were these addressed?
 - b. How is the shelter operating now, at this point in the pandemic?
3. How did the shelter's role evolve over time? Can you walk us through the timeline?
 - a. How did the rules/protocols change over time? What prompted these?

- b. What new challenges arose? What challenges remain?
 - c. What gaps have you observed in how homeless individuals were cared for, with respect to COVID protocols such as testing, isolation, and transportation between facilities? Inside the institution? Outside the institution?
 - d. How has the shelter's approach to supporting homeless individuals changed? What prompted the change?
 - e. What do you think your organization did well? What do you wish could have been done differently?
 - f. What was this like for you, from an individual perspective? What challenges did you face?
4. What were some important collaborations that supported people who were homeless?
 - a. Can you tell us about the partnerships between your organization and St. Michael's Hospital? With other hospitals? Other shelters? With ICHA? With Toronto Public Health?
 - b. What partnerships and/or collaborations were difficult? Can you elaborate on what challenges there were and how that affected patients?
 - c. What partnerships were productive/helpful? How did these benefit patients?
 5. What are some of the key challenges facing residents/clients experiencing homelessness in terms of accessing healthcare services during a pandemic?
 - a. Any other challenges?
 - b. Are there any particular clients that stand out for you? What were their stories? Why were they memorable?
 6. What short-term supports do you think could help support people who are homeless during the COVID pandemic?
 - a. Are there some things we've seen work well in some settings that we should spread/scale?
 7. What lessons can we draw from our experience during COVID, when we think about supporting homeless individuals in the long-term?
 - a. What role can the health care system play? Municipal or provincial government? Other actors?