

## Interview Guide

### Verbal consent

Hi \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to chat with me about your experiences during this COVID-19 crisis. Thank you for all the hard work you are doing to serve the public in these difficult times. What you are doing is really important, and this is exactly why we want to take some time to archive your thoughts and reflections on your experience.

I'm turning on the recorder now.

So, just a little bit about myself... My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a research associate at McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences. This project was reviewed by the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board. We anticipate this study will result in scholarly paper and abstracts, but all of your data will be analyzed en bloc with data from other participants.

I am just going to read through the consent information that we emailed you [reads the interview consent document].

The interview will take 30–60 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded on my end. All audio recordings will be used for the purpose of better understanding of the effects of pandemics like COVID-19 as well as improving the quality of your experience as a clinician. All data is being collected by myself and will only be listened to in its raw form by our transcriptionist. We will respect your privacy. Anyone or any institution you mention in this interview will not be disclosed. No information about who you are will be given to anyone or be published without your permission. Subsequent and secondary scholarship may be produced, but all efforts will be made to ensure that your identity is kept anonymous. That said, sometimes very specific incidents will make it possible to identify you, so we caution you against providing highly detailed accounts of specific encounters.

Do you consent to this audio recording?

<participant responds>

Now, I just have two portions of our consent that I will review with you now.

Firstly, you can stop at any time without providing a reason, and you may choose to answer only certain questions. We guarantee that your employment will not be affected by participating in this study. Due to our analytic technique we are using (constant comparative method), once you have provided the information to us, it may become very difficult for us to excise your data from others' data. Therefore, withdrawal from the study must be initiated within 3 weeks of today's date. Do you understand?

<participant responds>

Secondly, at a future date, you may be contacted to confirm that we interpreted your responses accurately. This will be in a form of an email with key bullets of what you and other participants have shared. You can clarify points with us or let us know that all the information is correct. By doing this, we are making sure that we captured your responses accurately. But if you do not wish to be contacted again after this interview, that's fine too. So, would you agree to be contacted one more time after this interview?

<participant responds>

Great. Do you have any questions for me?

Do you consent to taking this interview?

<answers questions, if any>

Ok, now let's get started.

### Interview script for physicians

We are going to start off with some questions about yourself and your role.

1. Can you please tell me a bit about your healthcare provider role?
  - a. When did you start this role?
  - b. If you hold multiple roles – which one is most important? That's cool, why is that the most important role?
  - c. What sort of training did you take to get here?
  - d. What were your previous roles?
  - e. How has it been to fulfil these roles during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What would you consider are your other work-related responsibilities? If any?
  - a. Do you have any leadership roles?
  - b. Do you have any educational roles?
  - c. How has it been to fulfil these roles during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. We anticipate that there have been members of your group who have had to miss shifts or became ill. Have members of your physician group missed shifts? What were the reasons they missed shifts?
  - a. How did you feel about your colleagues missing these shifts?
  - b. What measures have been taken to ensure coverage for these physicians who were not able to work?
4. Have you yourself missed any shifts during the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - a. Can you tell me a bit more about why you missed these shifts?
  - b. What happened to those shifts you could not attend?
  - c. How did it make you feel to miss these shifts?
5. [ONLY for those who have been self-isolated or quarantined] Can you describe your experience with self-isolation or quarantine?
  - a. What did your day look like?
  - b. How did you feel during this experience? (Both emotionally and physically)
  - c. How long did you have to do this?
6. [ONLY for those who have been diagnosed with COVID] Can you describe to me about your experience with being infected by COVID-19?
  - a. Did you become ill?
  - b. How did you feel during this experience? (Both emotionally and physically)
  - c. How long did you need to recover?
7. Can you describe how your clinical environment changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - a. Was there a shift in the culture? If so, what was the culture like before? How did it change?
  - b. Any changes you want to make to this culture you describe?

Great. This is very helpful information.

For the next set of questions, I'd like to ask you to think about your views on your wellbeing, health, and safety during the pandemic.

8. How has COVID-19 impacted the way you view clinical work?
  - a. Have your perspectives on approaching clinical work changed? How so?
  - b. What did you learn about clinical work that you did not know before?
9. Can you tell me about some of the personal challenges you have experienced in regard to working in the emergency department during this pandemic?

10. Do you think you have developed any new coping strategies to help you in your work life?
11. The following is a series of questions based on a standardized tool known as the ASQ.<sup>1</sup> I will be describing some symptoms that you might experience, and I will ask you to rate each symptom on a scale of 0 to 10. 0 = none, 1-3 = mild, 4-6=moderate, 7-9 = severe distress, 10 = extreme distress.
- a. Think of your time thus far during the pandemic – what would you rate the following along that 0-10 scale?
    - i. Anxiety
    - ii. Nervousness
    - iii. Worrying
    - iv. Irritability
    - v. Muscle Tension or Tightness
    - vi. Trouble Relaxing
    - vii. Trouble Falling or Staying Asleep (rate the most troubling symptom)
    - viii. Fatigue or Lack of Energy
    - ix. Problems with Concentration or Attention
    - x. Trouble Remembering Things
    - xi. Shortness of Breath, Chest Tightness/Pain, Pounding/Skipping/Racing Heart
    - xii. Stomach Upset, Nausea, Constipation, Diarrhea, or Irritated Bowels (rate the most troubling symptom)
    - xiii. Numbness, Tingling, Excessive Sweating, Flushing, or Frequent Urination rate the most troubling symptom)
    - xiv. Feeling restless, Keyed Up, or On Edge
    - xv. Anticipating or fearing something bad might happen
    - xvi. Trouble functioning at home, work, or society due to anxiety (rate the most troubling symptom)
12. Now we are changing course. This time we will have a slightly different scale. During the pandemic. This time we will ask you to describe the frequency of various symptoms. 0 = Never, 1-3 = occasionally, 4-6 = often, 7-9 = usually, 10 = all of the time
- a. Anxiety
  - b. Nervousness
  - c. Worrying
  - d. Irritability
  - e. Muscle Tension or Tightness
  - f. Trouble Relaxing
  - g. Trouble Falling or Staying Asleep (rate the most troubling symptom)
  - h. Fatigue or Lack of Energy
  - i. Problems with Concentration or Attention
  - j. Trouble Remembering Things
  - k. Shortness of Breath, Chest Tightness/Pain, Pounding/Skipping/Racing Heart
  - l. Stomach Upset, Nausea, Constipation, Diarrhea, or Irritated Bowels (rate the most troubling symptom)
  - m. Numbness, Tingling, Excessive Sweating, Flushing, or Frequent Urination rate the most troubling symptom)
  - n. Feeling restless, Keyed Up, or On Edge
  - o. Anticipating or fearing something bad might happen
  - p. Trouble functioning at home, work, or society due to anxiety (rate the most troubling symptom)
13. How has the COVID-19 changed your leadership capacity? How so?
14. Did the COVID-19 change the way you view yourself as a clinician? Why or why not?
- a. Did COVID-19 change the way that your work integrated with your life?
15. What are some of the improvements that can be made in pandemic planning for your physician group?
- a. If you could dial back time, what things would you change?
  - b. Were there any innovations that you heard about that you wished you had implemented at your location?

16. Do you think that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed your work environment or physician group? If so, how?
17. Thank you for all your suggestions and input on this. Are there any last points you'd like to add to improve the pandemic response and planning in the future, or any comments about it in general?

We have reached the end of the interview. Thank you once again for taking time out of your busy schedule. Your information is very valuable because it will help us evaluate and further develop better responses to pandemics in the future.

Do you have any questions for me?

**REFERENCE**

- 1 Baker A, Simon N, Keshaviah A, Farabaugh A, Deckersbach T, Worthington JJ, Hoge E, Fava M, Pollack MP. Anxiety Symptoms Questionnaire (ASQ): development and validation. *Gen Psychiatr*. 2019 Dec 18;32(6):e100144. doi: 10.1136/gpsych-2019-100144.