Interview Guide

Master’s Candidate: SJ Alexander
Faculty Advisor: Karen Fisher
Project Title: Life in the Round for Eastside Homeless: Information and Human Service Needs and Pivotal Interventions

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

I appreciate you taking the time to help me. I’m going to school to become a librarian. My final project is a research study and talking to you is part of the study. What I’m studying is how people get the information they need to make decisions and improvements in their lives, and what information they feel is missing. I want to talk to people who are staying in shelters to see what information they believe would help them improve their situations. I want to find out what information is missing so that social service agencies will have a better idea of how to help people in emergency shelters.

Procedures

Before we start, I want you to know that if there are any questions you don’t want to answer, just say so. You can stop the interview at any time. There are three sections. At the beginning of each section, I’ll explain the kinds of questions I’m going to ask and why I’m going to ask them. You can decide whether you want to go on.

Another thing it says in the consent form is that when I write my paper based on these interviews, no one who reads it will be able to tell that I’m talking about you. I may use some of your words, but I’ll use made-up names for you and anyone you mention.

The questions are easy and none of them are too personal. If you think a question is too personal, just say you don’t want to answer. I’m not looking for anything but your honest opinion about whatever you feel comfortable talking about.

I would like to audiotape our conversation, so I can be sure that I get your words, exactly as you said them. If you do not want me to audiotape our conversation, then I would like to write notes about what you say. When we are finished with the interview, I will give you ten dollars for your time and trouble.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Section 1

During this first section, I’m going to ask you some basic questions about your age, education, and employment. I’ll also ask you what brought you to the shelter. This will help me understand your situation; not everyone in a shelter has the same situation. I
want to get a picture of your situation because I want to compare your situation to the situations of other people in emergency shelters. We will talk about your experiences getting information in a minute.

Do you feel comfortable telling me your age?

What’s the highest grade you completed?

Have you always lived in Eastern King County? Where else have you lived? When did you come to Eastern King County? Why?

What are some of the jobs you’ve had? What are you looking for now in terms of a job?

Did you come to the Eastside to look for services?

Do you have any children?

Is there anything else about your situation that you’d like to tell me?

Section 2

During this section, I’d like to talk in detail about your current situation, and about how you came to be at this shelter. I’ll also ask you about information you have, and information you feel is missing in your life right now. This will help me learn what sources of information are available to you. I want to learn about this because it will help us figure out ways to keep people from being homeless, and to help them quickly if they become homeless.

What happened that led to your needing to come to the shelter?

What do you think could have prevented you from becoming homeless?

What information are you missing right now?

What information would help you to improve your situation now?

How did you find out about this shelter? How long have you been in this shelter? Have you been homeless before?

Since becoming homeless, what services have you heard about that you think you will use?

How do you like to get information?

Is there anything else you’d like to tell me?
Section 3

We’re almost done! In this section I want to ask you about specific services you’ve received since you became homeless and how helpful they were. I would also like to know what services you would like to use. This is important because it helps us understand which services are useful and why, and what your needs are right now.

Have you received social services outside of this shelter since becoming homeless? What services and why?

Did you find these services helpful?

How did you get information about these other services?

Are there services on the Eastside that you feel are missing? What kinds of services would you like to see on the Eastside?

Have you had to deal with any health issues since you became homeless? How did you get health care?

Conclusion

Do you have any questions for me?

You’ve been very generous in sharing your thoughts with me and I want to pay you for your time. I know there are a lot of other things you could have been taking care of.