



5/8/2011

Participant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewers: \_\_\_\_\_

## LEARNING FROM OLDER ADULTS IN HOWARD COUNTY MARYLAND (Interviewer Guide for In-Person, In-Residence Interviews)

### **A. Introduction/Overview**

Thank you for letting us into your home today for this interview. You have volunteered to talk with us about your thoughts on remaining in your home as you grow older. These interviews will shed an important light on how people just like you are looking at remaining in their homes.

There are several things we'd like to hear from you:

- Your connections with others who are important to you
- Your view of your health status and changes might affect you
- Your ideas on using services in the home and in the community
- Your view of your financial security and how services you want might be paid for. **We will not be asking about any details of your finances.** Our interest is the link between professional and community services and the payment sources.

Your interview will last about an hour.

- The questions are open ended There are no "right or wrong" answers.
- You don't have to answer any question you don't want to.
- We can pause whenever you want.
- Your interview will be kept confidential. We may quote your remarks but won't use your name.
- The transcript will be destroyed and the audio recording will be erased once we've written the report.

Any questions so far? **Let's take a few minutes and confirm basic information about yourself.**

We have a release form for you to sign which includes our confidentiality pledge. **(If necessary, review the form to ensure it is fully understood.)** Once you and our team members sign it, we're ready to start your interview.



**{Note: After the form is signed, turn on the recorder and test to make sure all voices are clearly heard. Note the name(s) of persons being interviewed, interviewer's names, date and time, and location. Do not include the actual home address.}**

**Note: try to keep the recorded interview under 60 minutes. If interview looks like it is running long, be sure you cover the **highlighted questions** in all sections.**

### **A. Living at Home**

**Let's begin with you telling us about yourself, your home, and your family.**

1. Where did you grow up? If not from here originally, why did you settle in Howard County?

Prompt after response if needed:

- Where were you born?
- Did your family move around?

2. **What is important to you about remaining in this home?**

Prompt after response, if needed:

- What do you like about where you are living now?
- Are you considering changing anything to make it easier to stay here?

3. How about moving to some other location as you grow older? Have you thought about it?

**This is a great start for our discussion. Now let's shift to your family, friends and neighbors and talk about some specifics of your connections with them.**

### **B. Informal Networks and Support**

4. **Tell us about your family. Do you have regular contact? What do you do together?**

Probe, if needed:

- Is there one in contact with you more than others?
- In what ways do you help each other out?
- If your family relationships were different, what would you like to see?

5. How about your friends? **Are there some friends you see or depend on more than others?**

Probe, if needed:

- What are some of the things you do together?
- In what ways do you help each other out?

6. Are you close to any of your neighbors? Is there a sense of neighborhood where you live?

Probe, if needed:



- See them often?
  - In what way do you help each other out?
  - Would you depend on him/her if you needed help – say after an accident, illness or injury?
7. Are you a member of a faith community (use church, synagogue, mosque or temple, if known)? If so, have you or other people you know, ever “helped out” other members? Have you called on that group for any type of help?
8. **We’d like to hear about any groups you are currently a part of.** What do you like about belonging to them?  
Probe if needed:
- Names of some groups
  - Are there groups you used to belong to but are no longer involved? Why?
9. Are there any groups you would like to join in the next year? What interests you about them? Are there any barriers to your joining?

**You’ve told us about your home, family, friends, and community connections. Now let’s talk more about what kinds of support these connections provide for you. If you have not experienced needing assistance from others, you can describe the experience of someone you know, if you wish.**

10. What if you needed information on something to help you in your home, or with your house, or wanted assistance from a community organization? Think about your family, friends, neighbors, and members of the group you belong to – who would you ask for information?
11. **With whom would you be comfortable talking with if you had a health concern, major problems with your house, or a major financial decision you wanted to make.** Among the type of connections you’ve described, who would you talk to if you wanted to “talk things out”? Can you give me an example from the last year or so?
12. Tell me about a time when you had a somewhat short term health issue like an illness or injury (2 weeks or so) that prevented you doing the routine things like get meals, drive a car, or get your medication. Did a friend or family help you out?  
Probe if needed:
- What did they do?
  - Would you depend on him/her if you needed help again?
  - Have you ever “helped someone out” in a similar way?



13. Some people live with long term health conditions, like diabetes or heart disease, and might need some support in the home on a long term basis. Do you have a chronic condition? How did you find support if there were daily things you needed help with over a long period of time?

Probe, if needed:

- Would it be the same people as you talked about before for a short-term issue?
- How hard/easy do you feel it would be to have the same people help for an extended period of time?
- How long do you think they could help?

**I appreciate you talking about the support you get from your family, friends, faith and social groups. Now we're moving to the kind of help you may have had from outside sources like a home health agency or through community programs and services like those offered by the Office on Aging. We're also going to be talking about the role of professionals that help us find and pay for health or community services when we need them.**

### **C. "Formal" Support Systems and Finding Community Services**

**Between ongoing health conditions like diabetes or arthritis we can also have something that requires hospitalization like a stroke or hip fracture – and family support may not be enough.**

**If we need help over a long period of time, formal services may be needed. These could include a nurse coming to your home, someone to clean or prepare meals, a person that drives you to doctor appointments, or modifies your home to make it easier to get around. We also need to know how these services are paid for.**

**That is when some people use trained professionals to locate what we need and find out how to pay. If that professional puts the services in place, that help is called case management.**

**In the following questions, if you have not experienced what we ask about, maybe a friend or relative of yours has. You can tell us about their experience if you like.**

14. Do you have any health conditions that interfere with your life style, like diabetes, heart problems, etc? How do they affect your day to day life?

15. **Have you ever had anyone outside of your family help arrange support in your home because of your health conditions?** If you have not had this experience, do you have a friend or family member who did? How did you get this help?

16. Have you been in the hospital in the past year? Did anyone help arrange services for you in your home or in a community location when you were discharged?



17. **Are you currently using any in home or community services?** (Transportation, senior centers, home delivered meals can be examples of services provided by community organizations).  
Probe, if needed:
- Are you satisfied with what you are receiving?

18. **Who would you talk to about finding support in your home or in the community if enough help is not available from your family and friends?**

19. Have you ever used someone like a social worker, or the Office on Aging, or a private case manager to find services for you? If not, how would you find out about available services?

20. Do you remember how you found out about these services or programs? What did you pay for them and do you remember what organization provided them?

21. Sometimes, we need services connected to our homes like house cleaning, lawn care, gutter cleaning, etc. How have you found these services? Were you satisfied with them?

**We're moving into the final two sections now. You're doing a great job!**

### **Health Status**

**Good Health is important to all of us. We've spent a lot of time having you describe what might happen if your health changes. We have a few more health –related items we'd like you to talk about.**

22. **How would you describe your health in comparison with others your age?**

23. How would you describe your emotional or mental health?

24. **How confident are you about managing your own health?** Can you give me some examples of what you are doing for your health?

25. How confident are you that you can manage your multiple doctors to make sure that one knows what the other is treating you for?

26. Do you have anyone help you with scheduling and getting you to doctors' visits? Does anyone help you with the paperwork related to your medical care?

27. Do you take medications on a regular basis? How many? How do you manage your medication schedule?

28. **What would you like to have from the health care system that you have not yet experienced?**



## **Financial Issues**

**While your ability to remain living at home usually relates to your health, financial considerations are important – even if you are in excellent health.**

29. Financial security is a concern to everyone. How confident are you about your financial security and your ability to pay for the services you may need as you age in place?

30. How would you find out who pays for the type of services that you might use to stay at home? Have you ever talked with anyone to determine what you could expect from your insurance, public government, and your own financial resources?

31. Do you know if there are public programs you could use to help pay for what you need? If not, how you would find out?

32. Your home is as important to your ability to age in place as is your health. How confident are you about your financial ability to pay for expenses related to your home – general maintenance, homeowners' fees, etc.?

33. Would your family help you financially if you needed it? Would you ask them?

**One last question and then we're all done!**

34. Is there anything you like to tell us about yourself and your plans to stay in your home that we haven't touched on?

**THANK YOU! The Coordinating Center and Leadership Howard County appreciate your time and willingness to share your experiences with us. Would you like to receive a copy of the final report this fall? (Yes- No) (We have contact information.)**

*{Note the time the interview ended and turn off the recorder}*