

Appendix A

Guide for Conversations with Indigenous Women

Date: _____

Participant Number: _____

Location of participant at time of interview: _____

Thinking of the last incidence of abuse, what was your location at this time: _____

Type of interview (telephone or in-person): _____

I. Background/Demographics:

1. Can you please tell me your age? _____ (in years)
2. Are you currently employed?
 - a. No _____
 - b. Yes – full time _____
 - c. Yes – part time _____
 - d. Yes – casual _____
3. What is the highest grade/level of education you have completed? _____
4. What is your total monthly household income (approximate)? _____
5. With which Indigenous nation do you most identify with? --- _____
6. A. What is the relationship status with your abusive partner/ex-partner?

a. Married	_____	Separated/Divorced	_____
b. Common-law	_____	Single	_____
c. Dating	_____	Widowed	_____
d. Other (specify)	_____		

B. Is this a same-sex relationship? Yes _____ No _____
7. Do you have children?
_____ Yes _____ No (if "No" skip to question 10).
8. If yes, how many? _____
9. What are their ages?

10. Do your children live with you? Yes _____ No _____

a. If yes, how many of your children live with you? _____

b. If some of your children live elsewhere, where do they live?

[Check all that apply]

Father/Mother _____

Grandparents _____ or other relative _____

Child welfare: temporary placement _____ or permanent placement _____

Children live on their own (adult children): _____

Other (describe): _____

11. How many times did you access women's shelter within the last 5 years?

12. When you accessed shelter within the last 5 years, which women's shelter did you access? (can choose multiple):

a. Indigenous/on-reserve _____

b. Non-Indigenous/rural _____

c. Indigenous/urban _____

d. Non-Indigenous/urban _____

i. How long did you stay at the Indigenous women's shelter? _____

ii. How long did you stay at the non-Indigenous women's shelter? _____

13. At the time you sought help from women's shelter, where did you reside?

a. On-reserve _____

b. Off-reserve _____

c. Rural area _____

d. Urban area _____

e. Other _____

14. Which community do you consider as your home community? _____

a. Are there any other communities that you are associated with through your intimate relationship? _____

In this conversation, I would like to hear your story. I will start asking you to tell me about your help-seeking journey and how you accessed the women's shelter. Then, I will ask about your experience of staying at the women's shelter. Finally, I will ask questions about how to improve the existing services.

II. Help Seeking Journey/Accessing shelter

I understand that you have accessed a women's shelter when seeking help for your experience of abuse. So, I would like to ask questions regarding your experience of seeking help in general but also specifically at women's shelters.

1. Before seeking help from shelter, did you seek help informally elsewhere or think of reaching for help informally? Can you describe this experience? (*family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, Elders, knowledge keeper/holders, faith leader*).

a. Why did you reach out to them?

b. Was it difficult to find help?

2. Before reaching out to the shelter, did you reach out to other formal services, such as *Police/RCMP, Band Office, Victim Services, lawyer, medical personnel, counsellor, crisis line, Child and Family Services (CFS), and others?*
 - a. *If yes, how was this experience?*
3. What was the story of you reaching out for help to a shelter?
 - a. How did you reach out? Were you referred? If so, by whom?
 - b. What kind of support did you hope to receive at the shelter?
 - c. Was it difficult to access their supports? Why?
 - d. Did you come with your children?

Probes: isolation, lack of information, lack of space at shelters, the experience of abuse itself, lack of access to technology (cell connection/phone/other), a lack of transportation, shame/confidentiality concerns, racism/lack of cultural safety, lack of services in your area, fear of child removal by CFS, care of pets, a lack of housing/funds, fear of leaving the community, housing insecurity, health-related issues, concerns related to children, etc.

4. Did you experience any other difficulties when accessing shelter, for example, in relation to receiving social assistance?
5. How did you come to the shelter? (car, busses, trains, planes, taxis, other means).
6. What were your concerns, if any, while using these modes of transport? (expenses, safety, distance, lack of road, etc.).
7. How long did it take you to reach the shelter from where you lived/your home community? How expensive this trip was for you/and your children, including gas for vehicles, bus tickets, plane tickets, etc.?
 - a. Does the community/communities you resided in at the time of help-seeking provide regular bus/transportation out if you wanted to seek help elsewhere?
8. Were there any other additional expenses for you when you were seeking help, such as additional food costs, parking costs, childcare costs, and other such costs?
9. Was the shelter you accessed help from the nearest to you at the time? If not, why did you decide to seek help from the one that was farther away/closer from/to where you lived?
10. How did leaving/staying in your community to access a shelter affect your experience of help-seeking?
11. *For mothers:* How did concerns about your children affect your experience of help-seeking? Accessing shelter?
12. Were there any other considerations when you were seeking help for the abuse?

III. Staying at shelter

1. Can you tell me about your experience of staying at the shelter? What kind of help did you receive?
2. Did you experience any difficulties throughout your stay? Did you have any concerns?
What worked for you at the shelter? What did not work for you at the shelter?
3. Do you think your experience was overall positive or negative? Why?
4. *If the woman stayed both at Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelters:*
How was your experience at Indigenous-led shelter different from your experience at non-Indigenous-led shelter?
Prompts:
Did you trust the services?
Did you feel the shelter was accessible?
Did you feel the shelter was an advocate for you? (housing, legal assistance, child welfare, court (testifying at the court), Victim Services, etc.)

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- Did you feel that there was prejudice against you in some way?
- Did you feel that the approach was not meeting your needs?
- Did you have issues with racism and lack of cultural safety? Cultural services?
- Did you have access to an Elder/Knowledge Keeper?
- Did you have access to traditional foods (fish, wild meat)?
- Did you have access to traditional medicines?
- Did you have access to ceremony?
- Did you have access to translation/interpretation (if needed)?
- Did you children have access to these (above) supports?
- Did the shelter have appropriate services for your children? Did you experience any difficulties with caring for your children while at the shelter?
- Did you experience difficulties with freedom of movement or access to food?
- Was there anyone you knew personally working at the shelter?
- Did you have any confidentiality concerns while staying at the shelter?
- How was the counselling service (group or individual) you received? Did it meet your needs?
- If substance use is an issue for you, do you feel your recovery has been supported?
- If mental health is an issue for you, do you feel you received an adequate support?
- Were services relevant to you? Did they make you feel comfortable?
5. Looking back at your experience of staying at the shelter, what other challenges come to mind that you would like to share?

IV. Recommendations

1. How do you think the experience of staying at non-Indigenous-led shelters could be improved for other Indigenous women like yourself?
2. How do you think the experience of staying at Indigenous-led shelters could be improved for other Indigenous women like yourself?
3. What were your hopes at the time when you stayed at the shelter and how this could have been better supported by service providers who work at shelters?
4. Are there any other recommendations you must improve the existing services for Indigenous women?]

Anything else you would like to share before we finish our conversation?

Thank you for taking the time for this interview and for sharing your thoughts and experiences. This can be a difficult topic to talk about, and your responses are very valuable in helping us to understand the experiences of Indigenous women.