

INTERVIEW GUIDE

BACKGROUND MENDED HEARTS/VISITING QUESTIONS

Let me start with just a few background questions:

How long have you been a member of Mended Hearts? _____

And how long have you been volunteering as a Mended Hearts **visitor**? _____

Are you a patient or a caregiver?

Do you usually visit in a hospital?

Do you do other types of visiting, such as visiting by internet, in the cath lab, or by telephone?

Taking into account all the types of visiting that you do, about how many hours per week do you spend visiting, on average? _____

About how many hours did you visit last week? _____

Besides being a visitor, do you hold any leadership positions in Mended Hearts as well?

OWN SUPPORT EXPERIENCES BEFORE BECOMING A VISITOR

FOR CAREGIVERS ONLY:

Who in your family had the heart event?

When did that happen?

FOR ALL VISITORS:

Now, please think back to when [you were/your family member was] first in the hospital. We're interested in the kinds of things people said or did that were helpful to you.

Was there anyone who was particularly helpful or supportive at the time? Who? What kinds of things did he/she say or do?

Was there anyone who was *not* helpful or supportive? Who? What was not helpful or supportive?

(If necessary): Were you visited by Mended Hearts [when you were/when your family member was] in the hospital?

Was talking with him/her helpful? Anything *not* helpful to you in that visit?

Among the family members or friends who came to the hospital, had anyone had a heart event similar to [yours/your family member's]?

Was anything [he/she] said or did especially helpful to you? Anything *not* helpful?

Was there anyone else you remember who was particularly helpful or supportive – or someone who was *not*?

Did any of these experiences affect your decision to become a volunteer visitor?

If “no”: What made you decide to become a visitor?

SUPPORT FROM VISITORS COMPARED TO SUPPORT FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND STAFF

As a Mended Hearts visitor you’ve probably had chances to observe differences between the kinds of support *you* give while visiting, and the kinds of support patients’ family members or friends give.

Your support: Are there kinds of support you give during visits that seem to be especially helpful to a [heart patient/caregiver]? What seems most helpful?

Are there kinds of support you offer that sometimes falls flat or gets ignored? Example?

Hospital support: What about support from doctors and nurses? Do they say or do things that seem to be especially helpful to patients? Example?

Have you seen doctors or nurses being unhelpful or unsupportive? Example?

Family & friend support: Now what about the kinds of support given by family members or friends? From your own experience, what kinds of things do family or friends do that seem to be especially helpful to a [heart patient/caregiver]? Example?

Have you seen examples of family members or friends being unhelpful or unsupportive?

[Note: It’s okay if they return to their own personal experiences here, rather reporting on what they see family or friends do for patients in the hospital.]

From what you’ve experienced, is there anything special or different about the support that Mended Hearts visitors give, compared to the support other people give?

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL SIMILARITY/DISSIMILARITY

FOR PATIENT VISITORS ONLY:

I’m going to change topics a bit and ask about how well visits go with people who are similar or different from you.

Do you often visit with patients who have had the *same heart event or procedure* as you?

Do you think the success of a visit depends on a match between your heart experiences and theirs? (Check: So in your experience, the success of a visit doesn't really depend on a match between your heart event or procedure and theirs?)

FOR ALL VISITORS:

Age: Thinking more generally about your visiting experiences, do you think it helps in a visit if you and the [patient/caregiver] are similar in age?

Probe if "yes": In what ways?

Sex: What if you and the [patient/caregiver] are the same sex or opposite sexes? Do visits go differently if you are talking with a man versus a woman?

Probe if "yes": How do visits differ?

Race: Do you think that visits go differently if you and the [patient/caregiver] are the same race, compared to being different races?

Probe if "yes": Tell me a bit about that.

Education: Does having the same or a different level of education seem to matter?

Probe if "yes": In what way?

Other: Are there other [patient/caregiver] characteristics that can affect how a visit goes?

REASONS FOR BEING A MH VISITOR

Shifting topics now, we're interested in your reasons for visiting.

Thinking back to when you first started visiting, what were your reasons for doing this?

Probe: Anything else?

If "wanted to give back": Could you say a little more about giving back – giving back how, or giving back to who?

Have your reasons for visiting changed over time, from when you first started, to now?

Probe if "yes": In what ways?

What things make visiting most worthwhile for you?

Probe: Anything else?

Are there aspects of visiting that you don't enjoy or that make it a problem for you?

Probe: Any other problems or drawbacks?

If you were describing yourself to someone you met for the first time at a party or while on vacation, how likely is it that you would mention volunteering as a Mended Hearts visitor to this person?

(If needed:) For example, would you be very likely to mention it, not at all likely to mention it, or somewhere in between?

(If in between:) What might lead you to mention it?

Some people say that being a parent is “who they are” or that their work “gives them an identity.” Do you see being a visitor this way? Is it part of who you are – an identity for you?

Probe: Can you say more about that?

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important, and 10 is extremely important, how important to you is being a Mended Hearts visitor?

Think about the other roles you may have in your life, for example, being a spouse, a parent, a grandparent, a worker, a friend, as well as your religious, political, and leisure time activities. Where does being a Mended Hearts visitor stand?

Which of your roles are more important than being a visitor?

Which roles are less important than visiting?

Some people say that volunteer visiting gives them a sense of meaning and purpose in life. What do you think about that?

If agree: Can you say a little bit about the meaning you get from visiting?

If disagree with statement: What makes you disagree?

Do you think of yourself as part of a larger group of [heart patients/caregivers], perhaps through your membership in Mended Hearts? (In other words, do you identify with other heart patients/caregivers, in general?)

(If yes:) Does this play any part in your reasons for visiting? Can you explain?

(If no:) Can you say why you don't see yourself as part of this broader group?

FINISHING UP

We're coming to my last couple of questions now.

Beyond the visiting experience, what other sorts of things do you gain from belonging to Mended Hearts, in general – if anything?

If you were giving advice to someone who was thinking about whether or not to become a Mended Hearts Visitor, what would you say?