

Death in the Family in Urban Senegal

Interview topic guide for adults

Different interview guides were developed for use with different participants in the project. We set out below the main topics that were included in the interview guide for adults; these topics and questions were modified for use with children, while we developed different guides for interviews with key informants, and for use with the focus groups.

NB. to be used flexibly and adapted, remaining sensitive to signs of distress

Biographical and household information

We would first like to briefly talk about who you live with.

1. Can you tell me about who you live with?
2. Can you tell me about any other children you have who don't live here with you?
3. Which ethnic group do you belong to?
4. Which religion do you belong to?

Life history and identity

We would like you to tell us about your life, what it was like for you growing up and about important things or events that have happened in your life, and about your life now.

5. Can you tell me about your life up to now?
6. So what do you see as the most important people, things or events that have shaped your life?
7. Apart from the death of your (relative) which we will talk about more in a minute, have you or other relatives experienced any other difficulties or problems during the last few years?
8. What is most important to you in your life?

The death, funeral and mourning

We would like to talk more about the death of your (relative). I'm sorry for your loss/ we present our condolences.

9. Can you tell me about your (relative) and how they came to die?
10. We are aware that people may have quite mixed or confusing feelings about the death of their relative. Can you tell me how you felt at the time of the death of your (relative)?
11. Can you tell me more about the burial of your (relative)?
12. Can you tell me more about the funeral of your (relative)?
13. Do you know if your (relative)'s burial and funeral followed the customs of your culture/ ethnic group?
14. Could you tell me more about your experiences soon after the funeral?
15. Did you follow any particular practices of mourning in the time after the death of (relative)?
16. Was this in accord with the practices that are followed by most people from your ethnic group/religion? What was different or the same?

Memories of the deceased and inheritance

We would like to talk more now about your feelings since the death of your (relative), your memories of them and the things that they have passed on to you and other relatives. We are aware that these may not all be happy memories or may be quite mixed.

17. Do you think about your (relative) often?
18. Is there anything you still do particularly for your (relative who has died)?
19. Have your feelings about the death changed over time?
20. How do you feel when you remember your (relative) now? Are they welcome or unwelcome feelings?
21. Can you tell me about what happened to your (relative)'s belongings and assets after their death and how this was decided?
22. Are you satisfied that the wishes of the deceased have been respected?
23. Did this follow the usual pattern for inheritance in your community?
24. Are there other non-material things that you feel that your (relative who has died) has passed on to you/ your children/ other relatives
25. Have you inherited or received any significant assets or gifts from other relatives in the past?

Social and material changes following the death

We would like to talk more about what has changed in your life since the death of your (relative) and in the lives of your children and other relatives.

26. How do you see the effect on your life of (your relative's) death now?
27. How is your life now compared to the period when you lived with your (relative)?
28. How did your children feel and experience the death of their (relative) around the time of the death?
29. How has the death affected the children since then?
30. What, if any, changes have taken place in your children's lives as a result of the death?
31. And what about other relatives? How do you think the death has affected them?

Support and assistance

We would like to ask you about the ways that relatives and others in the community provide support and assistance.

32. What are the things that have helped you since your (relative) died?
33. How do your children and other relatives help you?
34. Does your community generally provide financial or practical assistance or emotional support, or do they sometimes stigmatise, people who have experienced the death of a relative?
35. Have you received any financial or practical assistance or emotional support from governmental social services or NGOs working here, from teachers/ school staff, imams/ priests, community leaders, members of your faith community, women's or youth groups or any other associations that you belong to?

36. In your view, what services and support would help people who have experienced a death?

Understanding of 'family'

(if not already covered – could skip to future outlook, depending on time)

We are coming to the end of the interview and would just like to talk a bit more about your relatives, who you see as your 'family' and how you feel about 'family'

37. How do you get on with your relatives?

38. What does 'family' mean/ represent to you?

39. Who would you describe as your 'close' family? and your 'extended' family?

40. Are there particular family resemblances, traits or behaviour that you see in your children/ other relatives?

Future outlook

41. How do you see the future?

Thank you very much for taking part.

Is there anything important you think we have left out?

Do you want to ask any questions about the research?

(NB. If difficult issues were raised, provide information about potential sources of support available in the neighbourhood/ city from community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, government assistance etc. - to be identified during the recruitment phase).