

NSYR 2013 In-person Interview (Wave 4)  
Interview Guide

**\*\*GET SIGNED CONSENT FORM\*\***  
**\*\*START RECORDER & CHECK THAT IT'S RECORDING\*\***

## **INTRODUCTION**

- Thanks for agreeing to do this interview and taking the time to talk with me.
- It's great that you participated in our survey again, and that we can do another in-person interview
- In the next few hours, I would like to just have a conversation with you about your life, experiences, opinions, beliefs, feelings, hopes, problems—whatever is important to you.
- These interviews are to hear from your perspective, in your own words, how your life is going.
- Some of what we may talk about today is personal, but we're interviewing lots of people your age, and all of your lives together tell us a lot about what it's like to be a young adult today.
- Please feel at ease to talk freely and honestly with me. There really are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know whatever you honestly think or feel.
- I am not here to evaluate you, but only to understand your life as whatever it is. I am a social researcher. You can tell me anything and, honestly, it will not bother me or make me think the better or worse of you. I truly only want to know whatever the facts are in your case. So thanks for your honesty.
- [MUST READ] Also, everything you say is totally confidential—*unless you tell me you're going to badly hurt someone else or yourself, or that someone is badly hurting you*—otherwise, we keep whatever you say completely confidential.
- [MUST READ] You may decline to answer any questions you don't want to talk about. That is fine. Just let me know.
- Sometimes I'm going to ask you to comment on how things have been since your last interview for this study, about “the last 5 years.” Do your best to think about what you have been up to since then and how things may have changed since the summer of 2008.
- Finally, just to let you know, I may jot something down to remind myself to ask you something later, and I may have to check to make sure the recorder is still going, but I'll still be listening, so go ahead and keep talking. Okay?
- Good, let's get started.

## **GENERAL ORIENTATION**

Purpose: get R talking, get some grounding from which to base the conversation in the rest of the interview.

Key topics to cover: work/school/daily life, relationships/family, general sense of how life is going

\* It has been a while since I [someone from the project] have talked with you. Can you start by just telling me what is going on in your life these days? What is happening with you?

Any big changes, surprises, or really stressful situations in the last 5 years? Problems you're dealing with?

- What have been some of the more significant events or experiences in your life in the last 5 years?  
[If not already mentioned:] Work? Job? School? Relationships? Children?

\*Do you consider yourself to be an “adult?” Why or why not? What does it mean to be a (full,

real) adult today? When do you think you became or will be an (full, real) adult?

## **HOUSEHOLD/LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

Key topics to cover: R's living situation, how it's changed, how it's going; R's level of independence

\* OK, now can you tell me more about where you're living and who you live with, if anyone?

- What *kind of place* do you live in?
- Who pays the bills/rent/mortgage/etc.? Do you receive help from your parents or family, or are you pretty much on your own?

\* Has your living situation changed much over the past 5 years, or pretty much stayed the same? If so, how? What were the reasons for some of these changes?

- IF LIVING WITH PARENTS, How is it going living with your parents these days? How long do you think you will stay living with them? How do you feel about living with your parents? Some people we talk to live with parents for financial reasons, to save money or they couldn't afford living on their own. Is that the case for you?
- IF NOT LIVING WITH PARENTS, How long has it been since you lived with any of your parents? How did it come about that you moved away from your parents? Looking back would you do it all the same again? Why or why not?
- IF ROOMMATES, What are your roommates like? How did you come to live with them?
- IF MARRIED, Is living with your spouse what you thought it would be like? How is that going? Did you live together before you got married? What was the transition like when you first moved in together/got married?
- IF COHABITING, What were your reasons for wanting to live with your partner (or partners, if there have been more than one)? Was there a conscious decision-making process that went into it, or did it just kind of "happen?" What is/was it like living with someone? Pro and cons?
  - Would you ever consider marrying him/her, or have plans to do so? Why/why not? Do/did you know how he/she feels/felt about marriage?
  - To you, what's different, if anything, about living together versus being married to someone? Does that difference matter?

.IF DIVORCED: What was living with your former spouse like? Did you live together before you got married? How did your living situation change after you separated/divorced?

IF WIDOWED: What was living with your former spouse like? Did you live together before you got married? How did your living arrangements change when he/she passed away? Do you mind telling me a little more about the circumstances of his/her death?

\* [IF NOT ALREADY COVERED] Have you ever lived with someone you were romantically involved with, but not married to?

- IF HAS COHABITED IN THE PAST 5 YEARS: Probe with Cohabiting questions if. Did you ever consider marrying him/her or have plans to do so? Why did you stop living together?
- IF NEVER COHABITED. Would you ever consider living with someone you were romantically involved with (without being married to them)? Why/why not? What would be the pros/cons?

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENT/S**

**Key topics to cover: Closeness and strength of relationship with parents; parents' influence, particularly regarding influence**

\* The people we interview have all kinds of different family situations, so I don't want to assume anything. Can you tell me who the main parent figures are in your life at this point, if anyone?

\* How close do you feel to them? How has your relationship with your parent(s) changed over the past 5 years?

\* How similar are you to your [parents] in terms of religious beliefs and practices? Do you do religious things together? Do you talk about religious beliefs or issues?

\* On the whole, do you think that your parent(s) are happy with how you've turned out? What are they happy about? What do you think they are disappointed about?

## **FRIENDS**

**Key topics to cover: importance of friendships in R's life**

\* Let's talk about friendship. Some people say they have friends, others don't. What is your situation?

- [IF HAS FRIENDS] Who are they? How did you get to know them? Why are you friends with them? What sorts of things do you do with your friends?
- [IF NO] Has that always been the case for you or has that changed in the past 5 years? Why and how so? Do you ever try to make new friends?

\* Tell me about the religious lives of your friends. Is this something you know much about? Do your friends have the same religious beliefs and practices as you? Do you discuss religious things with your friends?

## **\*\*CHECK RECORDER**

## **GENERAL WELL-BEING**

**Key topics to cover: EA challenges, taking stock of highs and lows, character aspirations**

\* What do you think are the most important challenges facing people your age today?

• Are those challenges that you personally face?

\* Do you like where your life has been headed the last 5 years or not? Why or why not?

\* What things in the last 5 years have made you the most happy/excited?

\* What things in the last 5 years have made you the most sad/depressed?

- \* Have you had any traumatic life experiences in the past 5 years, or not really?
  - Do you mind telling me about what happened?
  - Can you describe how this experience affected your life?

\*Can you tell me about a difficult or complicated decision that you've had to make in the last five years? Why was this difficult/what was the struggle?

\*About how much stress do you personally experience on a daily basis?

\*Do you feel like you are too busy or not busy enough? Why?

\* Are there any kinds of people you really look up to, or not? Why? [IF UNCLEAR] What do these people have in common?

\* Whether we like to admit it or not, we all look down on or are critical of some people at least some of the time. At the times in your life when you've felt this way, what kinds of people did you have these thoughts about? Why? [IF UNCLEAR] What do these people have in common, do you think?

## **MORALITY**

\*Can you tell me about a specific situation you've been in recently where you were unsure of what was right and wrong? Why was that difficult? What was the struggle?

- What were some of the factors you needed to consider? How did you decide what to do? Why that?

[IF R CAN'T THINK OF A DILEMMA AT ALL, SUGGEST THIS] "Imagine you work with a good friend, and you discover that he/she is stealing from your company. How would you decide if you should stay quiet and let the behavior continue or let someone know, potentially resulting in your friend losing the job?"

- \* How do you normally decide or know what is good and bad, right and wrong in life?
  - In general, is it easy or hard for you to decide between right and wrong?
  - What about doing right instead of wrong (not just knowing about it)? How easy or hard it is for you to actually do what you know is right?

- \* What do you think it is that makes something right or wrong?
  - [If "consequences": What kinds of consequences would make something wrong?]
  - [If "feelings": What kinds of feelings do you mean? Where do these feelings come from, in your view?]
  - [If stuck] Is it rules or laws? Consequences? How it feels? God's will? Something else?
  - If they haven't brought up religion: What role do your religious beliefs play in deciding what is right and wrong?

\*Some people say that there are certain things that are definitely either right and wrong in life, and others say that there are no final rights and wrong, and believe instead that everything is relative and depends on the situation. Which do you agree with more strongly?

\*Which rights/wrongs should apply to everyone or be made into laws? Has this changed for you in the last 5 years?

\* Some people believe that it is sometimes okay to break moral rules if it works to your advantage and you can get away with it. What do you think about that?

[IF THINKS WRONG] Why exactly is that wrong?

[IF THINKS RIGHT] Why isn't that a problem?

\* Do you think people have any moral responsibility or duty to help others or not?

- [If yes] Can you give me some examples of ways we are obligated to help others? Why?
- What if someone just wasn't interested in helping others? Would that be a problem or no? Why?

\* How do you/will you teach your child/children about morality, moral responsibilities, and what's right and wrong in life, if you have any?

\* Some people tend to see the whole human race as one common family of people, and believe everyone is responsible to help take care of others. Other people tend more to believe that each individual and family is only responsible for themselves. How would you describe your thinking on this issue?

## **WELL-BEING**

Key topics to cover: expectations, hopes, gratitude, purpose, understanding of why some people do better in life than others, meaning of life.

\*How happy or unhappy are you with your life as it is right now? Why? What could change for you to be happier/even happier?

\*How would you say your life has gone in terms of what you were hoping or expecting?? [Give examples]

\* Some people we talk to feel deeply grateful for all of the good things or even "blessings" in their lives, and other people feel more like they really deserve more than they have gotten out of life, that they've somehow gotten the short end of things. How do you personally feel when it comes to this?

\*For some people, life works out well, and for others, life is a real struggle. How do you personally make sense of how and why some people do better in life than others?

\*Some people we talk with seem to have a very strong sense of purpose in life, they know exactly what's of value in life and what is important to be or do. Other people seem more disoriented or lost in life, not knowing exactly what their purpose is. How would you describe yourself when it comes to this question of purpose in life? Do you have a clear sense of purpose or not really?

[IF HAS PURPOSE:] What is your purpose in life? How have you come to that sense of purpose, and what are the things you are doing to identify your purpose now? How does that affect your life? How has this changed over the past 5 years?

[IF HAS NO PURPOSE:] Why do you think you lack purpose? Would your life be different if you had a sense of purpose? What might it take to identify a sense of purpose in life?

\*Okay, next I want to ask a really big, broad question: What do you think life is all about?

\* I'd like to know what your response is to these kind of questions. I'll ask you them altogether first, and then we can go through them one by one:

- What do you think are the most important things in life?
- What are your highest life priorities?
- What will count for you as having lived a good life?
- What would it mean that you had not lived a good life, or didn't do what was most important, or didn't accomplish what life is all about?

\* We are interested in learning the places or groups where people feel their strongest sense of belonging. Are there any people, groups, places, or communities where you feel like you most belong? Where or with who are you most "at home" or are you most secure being your true self?

[IF STUCK: prompt work, family, neighborhood, church, friends?]

- What is it that makes you feel a sense of belonging there? Why?
- [IF NOT RELIGIOUS CONTEXT] What about any religious groups? To what extent do you feel any sense of belonging in your/any [church] or other religious group? Why/Why not?

How has all this changed over the past 5 years, or not?

## **SUBSTANCE USE**

Key topics to cover: how substance use affects R's life, changes and reasons behind the change

\*Tell me about your use of alcohol, tobacco, pot, or other drugs.

- Has this changed over the last five years? If so, why, and how have these changes affected your life?

\*Do you expect that your current use of alcohol and drugs will be the same five or ten years from now as it is now? Why/why not?

## **\*\*CHECK RECORDER**

### **RELIGION**

\* How would you describe yourself to me in terms of your religion or spirituality? With which religious group do you identify most strongly?

[IF CHRISTIAN] What specific denomination or group would you consider yourself a part of?

- What is unique about being [R's denomination] (compared to other denominations)?

[IF JEWISH] Do you consider yourself to be more culturally or religiously Jewish, or both? How so? How do you define "culturally" or "religiously"?

[IF MUSLIM] Do you consider yourself to be a observant or non-observant Muslim? How do you define practicing and non-practicing? Do you consider of yourself to be a Shi'ite or Sunni or just Muslim?

[IF CATHOLIC OR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN] [modify for Orthodox] What does it mean to you to be “Catholic?” What is it that defines you as Catholic?

- Do you like being Catholic or not? Why?
- What do you think of the Catholic Church in general? What about its doctrines / teachings: would you say you are familiar with them? Are there aspects that you agree/ disagree with? Why?
- What do you think of sacraments and rituals (e.g., Baptism, Eucharist): are they important to you? Why/not?
- What do you think about Mary and the Saints: are they should they be important?
- What about priests/nuns/religious orders and the Pope: do/should they matter?
- Are there any other things that you would consider essential or central to being Catholic? Do you think anything should change in the church? What/why?

[IF NOT RELIGIOUS] Do you consider yourself to be agnostic or atheist?

[IF NO] Do you feel passionately about being non-religious? How so? Is religion something you know much about? Why/why not?

[IF AGNOSTIC] What led you to be agnostic? What does it mean for you to be agnostic? How likely or unlikely is it that a supernatural or divine reality exists? Do you think you’ll still be an agnostic when you’re, say, 40 or 50? Or might this change? Would you prefer it if you could be certain one way or the other about the existence of God or divine reality, or is it OK with you to be uncertain?

[IF ATHEIST] What led you to be an atheist? What does it mean for you to be an atheist? Is atheism something that you are passionate about?

\* [EVERYONE] Do you attend religious services? Where? How often?

- IF YES: Where and how did you locate that [church]?

\* How have your feelings about your [church] changed in the last five years? In what ways? Why?

- Have you become more or less interested in what happens at [church]? How so?
- Have you become more of less comfortable at [church]? In what ways?
- Have relationships you have had a church changed? How?

\* Do you consider yourself, “spiritual, but not religious?” IF YES: What do you think that means?

\* Can you tell me some of the things you believe religiously [or spiritually]? [GIVE THEM TIME TO EXPLAIN, DON’T RUSH INTO SPECIFIC PROMPTS]

- Do you believe in God? IF YES: What is God like to you? What images or feelings do you associate with God?
- [IF CHRISTIAN:] Do you believe in Jesus? What about him? Who or what is Jesus?
- Do you believe it is important to live a certain way?
- Do you believe in life after death? Heaven? Hell?
  - IF YES: What is afterlife/heaven/hell like? How do people get there?
- Do you believe in reincarnation?
- Do you believe in karma?
- Which beliefs are most important to you? Are you less sure about some of your beliefs than others? Which ones?

[FOR ALL, Rework for atheists, agnostics]

\* Have you had doubts about your religious faith [the way you think about...] [spirituality, beliefs about religion] in the past five years? More or less than before?

- IF YES: What kind of doubts? Where do they come from?
- Did you resolve them? IF SO, how? Do you talk to people about them? Who?

[IF RELIGIOUS]

\* How hard or easy has it been to maintain your religious faith, or being the kind of religious person you want to be, over the past five years? In what ways?

- Do you see it getting easier or more difficult in the future? How?

\* What, if anything, would it take to stop you from believing in your religious faith?

\*[IF NOT RELIGIOUS] How hard or easy has it been to be non-religious?

- Do you see it getting easier or more difficult in future?

\* What have been the most important influences on your [IF non-religious: views about] religion, faith, belief, or spirituality over the past five years? What has most formed who or what you are religiously? Events, experiences, people? How? Why?

\* Do you pray? How often? What kinds of things do you pray for or about?

- Do you have any examples of things you have prayed about lately? Did you feel like you got an answer? Do you ever? How so?

\*Do you meditate? Do you consider that to be part of your religious or spiritual practice?

\*Do you read the [Bible]? How often? Why? How, if at all, does it affect you?

\* Are there other kinds of religious or spiritual practices or activities (at home, [church], anywhere) that you participate in?

\* How much would you say religion or spirituality is a part of your everyday life? In what ways?

\* Have you changed at all in the last five years religiously or spiritually? How so? Do you think you've become more religious, less religious, or stayed about the same? How so? What was behind the change? Was it a conscious change or not?

- How do you feel about those changes?
- Do you feel as though you are missing something in your current religious community that you had before?
- Has your level of attendance at religious services or groups gone up or down? IF YES: How so? Why?
- Do you pray or read the [Bible] more or less? IF YES: What brought about that change?

\* SKIP IF NOT RELIGIOUS: Have you been to a religious retreat, mission trip, service project, or religious conference in the past five years?

- IF YES: Tell me about that experience. Did that affect your life in any way? How?



\* Are you involved in any religious groups for young adults, or other religious groups? Why? What does it mean to you? What kind of group is it? Church, school, independent?

Are you a member of this group?

- Why did you choose and stay involved in this particular group?
- How often does the group meet? For what kinds of meetings/events? What usually takes place? How big a part of your life is this group to you? In what ways?
- Do you enjoy it? What do you get out of it?

\*In the past 5 years, have you been part of any other religious groups? [Probe for those groups]

\* IF RELIGIOUS AND NOT INVOLVED IN GROUP: Are there religious groups you could be involved in? Have you ever been invited? Why haven't you chosen to get involved?

IF NOT RELIGIOUS AT ALL AND NEVER ATTENDS: In the past five years has anyone invited you to attend religious services or a religious group? Who invited you? How did you respond? Did you go? Why or why not? How was it?

IF NOT INVOLVED: Do you have reasons for not being religious or religiously involved, or has the opportunity just never really presented itself? IF STRONG REASONS: What are they?

EVERYONE:

\* In terms of your views and beliefs about religion, how different or similar do you feel from people you are with regularly (work, neighbors, friends)? Why?

\*If you have/were to have children, do/would raise them in particular faith tradition or religion? What sorts of things would you teach them about religion? Why those? Do/would you take your children to [church]?

\* Some people say that religion and science are in conflict with each other. What is your view about the relationship between religion and science? Do you think they are compatible with each other, or do they conflict? Why do you think that?

## **RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES**

**Key topics to cover: significant religious/spiritual/other-worldly experiences that have affected R**

\* Have you personally had any significant "religious experiences" in the last 5 years? (things that stand out to you, have special meaning to you, mark important moments in your religious/spiritual life)

- IF YES: What kind? What was it like? How did you feel about it?
- Did that religious experience(s) change you in any way? How?

\* Have you experienced anything that seemed supernatural in the last five years?

- A miracle? An experience of angels or demons? A healing?
- IF YES: What was it like? What happened? How did you feel about that experience? Did it change you religiously/spiritually?

## **FEELINGS ABOUT RELIGION & DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION**

Key topics to cover: sources of and obedience to religious authority; the role of religion in society

\* Some people say that only one religion is true, others think many religions may be true, and still others say that there is very little truth in any religion. What do you think? Why?

\* In the past four or five years, have you yourself ever looked into practicing or becoming a different religion?

IF YES: What other religions did you look into?

- What made you look into it?
- What was the result of your search?

\* How do you decide or know what to believe when it comes to religion? By what standards do you evaluate various religious claims?

\* Some people we talk to feel comfortable with institutional religion. Others feel distant or put-off by it. How do you feel?

- [IF UNSURE ABOUT HOW TO ANSWER] How do you feel about American religion in general, not one specific church or religious organization?

\* Do you think religious communities contribute anything good or helpful to American society? If so, what? How? Why or why not?

- Do most religious communities and traditions play these roles? Or do only some religious groups play these roles?

\* Would anything be lost or gained if the U.S. became much more religious?

\* Would anything be lost or gained if the U.S. became much less religious?

\* Should religion have a role in public debates? How? Why? In what ways should religion have or not have an influence? Why?

\* Do you feel that religious faiths, organizations, traditions are relevant for people your age? Do they meet the needs of young adults? Why or why not?

## **SCHOOL**

Key topics to cover: educational trajectory & goals; R's understanding of the purpose/utility of education, and how well education has helped R meet his/her career and other goals.

\* Now, let's talk some about school and education. What's the highest level of education you have completed? Are you in school now?

### **IF IN SCHOOL**

\* When you complete your program, will you have accomplished what you wanted to accomplish with your education? Or do you think you will continue your education? For what kind of degree? When? Why?

### **IF NOT IN SCHOOL**

\* Were you ever in school over the past 5 years? Did you earn a degree? How did you choose your program and school?

\* Do you see yourself going back for more education some day? For what kind of degree? What sorts of things do you hope to accomplish with that kind of degree?

[IF NOT] Are there things that have kept you from pursuing as much education as you would have liked?

\* EVERYONE: Looking back, are you satisfied with your degree and educational experiences?

Was it important and worth it for you to earn/work toward [degree]. Why?

## **\*\*CHECK RECORDER**

### **WORK**

**Key topics to cover: career goals (job v. career?), effects of recession, connection between religion/morality/purpose in life and work/career**

\* Next I want to talk to you about work, your career goals, and plans. Have you held any jobs over the past 5 years? What did you do? Has that changed? [IF SO] What sorts of things led to switching your job? Have your career goals changed over time? How so? Why?

. How if at all do you think the economic recession since 2008 has impacted your ability to find work or kind of job you wanted? Did you ever struggle with underemployment, that is to say finding some work, but not enough to financially stable? How did that affect you personally?

### **IF CURRENTLY WORKS:**

\* What do you do?

\* What is the job like? Do you enjoy it? Do you get satisfaction out of your work? Do you feel a sense of belonging at your work?

\*Do you think you're earning enough? Do you feel like you're living paycheck to paycheck, do you feel more comfortable financially? How does that impact you?

\* Is this a permanent job and what you see yourself doing as a career? Or are you still figuring out what kind of career, if any, you want to have?

### **IF NOT WORKING**

\* Would you like to work for pay? What kind of career are you hoping to have? What kind of career goals do you have?

- . IF UNSURE:What kinds of things do you think about that you would enjoy doing? Why?
- . Have you taken any of those steps yet? How far are you in the process?
- . How much do you think about what your career plans/goals are?

\*IF RELIGIOUS—Does your religious faith influence what want out of your work life?

[EVERYONE] Do you have any idea about how long you will stay with your current job?

\* What sort of job do you think you'll have 10 years from now?

\* What, in your opinion, do you think matters most in a career or job? [IF STUCK:Making money, influencing the world, having a flexible schedule or enough leisure time, finding personal satisfaction, helping others, or prestige?] What matters the least for you? Why?

- . In your own work-life, are you trying to strike a balance with some or all of these values? Or not necessarily?

\*What is your dream job? [The job you would most want to have if you could attain the education and experience necessary]

## **ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES**

**Key topics to cover: how R spends discretionary time, particularly with regard to organizations/groups**

\*What sorts of groups, clubs, sports teams, or other organized activities have you been involved during the past 5 years, and how did you choose to become involved with these?

## **VOLUNTEERING**

**Key topics to cover: thoughts about and motivation for generosity**

\*Have you done any volunteer work in the past 5 years?

IF YES: what motivates you to volunteer?

IF NO: why not?

\*Do you donate money to charitable or religious organizations?

IF YES: why, and how did you choose where to donate?

IF NO: why not?

\*Do you talk to your kids/will you talk to your kids, if you have any about helping others? If so, what do you want them to learn about generosity?

## **POLITICS**

**Key topics to cover: political views, civic engagement, thoughts about the state of US society**

\* Do you think we are living in a good society, or does it have major problems? Why? Do you feel confident about where the U.S. is going or do you have worries or criticisms? Why?

\* Are there any social or political issues that you especially care about? Which? Why those in particular? What do you think or feel about them? Why do you think or feel that?

\* How do you feel about politics in general? Are you a very “political” person? Do politics or world or national events interest you? Why or why not?

- Have you been involved in any political activism or protests or demonstrations in the last 5 years? What were they about? Why did you get involved? How did the experience affect you?

\* What would you say your own general political position or view is, if any? Conservative? Liberal? Something else? What does that mean to you? Why are you that?

## **\*\*CHECK RECORDER**

## **CONSUMERISM**

**Key topics to cover: how decisions are made about consumer choices, and how those choices influence life**

\*Do you think you will have a higher or lower standard of living than your parent(s) or the people who raised you? How so? How do you think your lifestyle will be similar or different?

\* Thinking specifically about the types of things you want to buy and own, what is your idea of a “good life” when it comes to the ideal kind of lifestyle you want to have?

\*What are your goals when it comes to buying, owning, and consuming in your life—or maybe living modestly or simply? \*Some people talk about the “American Dream.” What does the American Dream mean to you? Do you personally want to achieve those markers of success? Why? How likely is it do you think that will achieve that? [IF UNLIKELY] How do you feel about that?

\*Are your shopping habits influenced by any moral considerations or obligations? Like caring for the environment or “living simply so that others can simply live”? How so?

\*How have your ideas about shopping and buying things changed over the past 5 years? Have your shopping or buying habits changed over the past 5 years?

\* Do you think there can be negative outcomes from having too many possessions?

\* Are there things that money can buy, that you personally feel you have to have to be happy?

[IF RELIGIOUS] Do you think your religion has anything to say about the possible moral and ethical issues of money, wealth, possessions, consuming, or luxury?

[IF YES] What does it say or teach? Do you try to live by these teachings? Can you give a specific, recent example of how your religious beliefs influenced you in these ways?

## **ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS – MARRIED/ENGAGED**

**Key topics to cover: nature and success of current and previous relationships, how decisions are made regarding relationships, how relationships have changed since adolescence/early EAhood**

\*Let's talk about your romantic life over the past 5 years. Who have you been involved with, and what sorts of relationships have you had?

- Have you had any traumatic break-ups? What happened? Did things get resolved? [IF SO] How?
- How is your current relationship going?

\*Looking back over the past 5 years, would you describe yourself as heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, or something else?

\*What have you learned about relationships over the last 5 years?

\* What do you think it is like for people your age to date and start a relationship?

- Is there a certain age or point in life when people should take dating more seriously and date to find a spouse, or not necessarily?

\*Are there certain things a person should have accomplished before they are ready to marry? What kind of things? Why are they necessary?

\* Before you were with your current partner, did you do anything actively to try to search out potential people to date or become romantically involved with? [i.e., girlfriends/boyfriends]? Were you always kind of looking for those kinds of potential people or romantic encounters, or not?

- IF YES: How? Hang out any particular places? What were good places? Did you ever try online dating?

\*When did you get married? How did you meet your spouse? How did you decide to get married?

\*What have been some highs and lows of married life so far? Has being married been what you thought it would be like?

\* Before you met your spouse, what qualities were you looking for in a marriage partner? Did you find those qualities in your spouse? How so? Some people talk about finding "the one" or soul-mates, do you believe that there is one specific person for everyone, or not?

\* How similar or not are you to your spouse religiously? Has it always been that way, ever since you met? Do you have the same religious background, beliefs, and practices?

IF NO DIFFERENCES: How important is it to you that you be similar to your spouse when it

comes to religion? Why is that?

IF HAD/HAVE DIFFERENCES: How did/do you deal with the differences you have? Is it a source of tension or does it come up much? Do you have examples? How do you feel about the differences? How does your spouse feel?

\* Do you do religious activities or practices together?

IF YES: What sorts of religious activities or practices do you do together?

IF NO: Is it something you wish you did together, or does it not come up? Do you ever discuss it and what are those conversations like?

\* Were you married in a [church/synagogue/mosque/temple]? Did that have some kind of special meaning to you or was it just the place to do it?

\* Did you have any kind of premarital counseling? IF YES, How was that? What did you get out of it, if anything? Was it religious or by a member of the clergy, or not?

\*Do you think people with different religious views can have a strong, serious romantic relationship? Why/why not? Have you had romantic relationships where religious beliefs were a factor?

## **ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS – NOT MARRIED/ENGAGED**

**Key topics to cover: nature and success of current and previous relationships, how decisions are made regarding relationships, how relationships have changed since adolescence/early EAhood**

\*Let's talk about your romantic life over the past 5 years. Who have you been involved with, and what sorts of relationships have you had?

- Have you had any traumatic break-ups? What happened? Did things get resolved? [IF SO] How?
- [IF IN A RELATIONSHIP NOW] How is your current relationship going?

\*Looking back over the past 5 years, would you describe yourself as heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, or something else?

\*What have you learned about relationships over the last 5 years?

\*How has/ve your relationship/s gone over the past five years? A positive or negative part of life, or both? How so?

- What have you learned from your relationships and dating experiences in the past five years? Anything you would do differently?

\* Have the people you've been in relationships with been similar to you religiously? In what ways? Is/was that a particularly good or bad thing for the relationship?

\*Do you think people with different religious views can have a strong, serious romantic relationship? Why/why not? Have you had romantic relationships where religious beliefs were a factor?

\* Do you yourself pay attention to potential partners' religious beliefs/participation? Does your family? Why or why not? What kinds of religious differences, if any, with a partner would be OK for you?

\* What do you think it is like for people your age to date and start a relationship?

- Is there a certain age or point in life when people should take dating more seriously and date to find a spouse, or not necessarily?

\* Do you want to get married someday? How likely do you think it is that you'll get married?

- What makes you [want/not want] to get married?
- At what age do you think it would be good to get married? Why that age in particular?

\*Are there certain things a person should have accomplished before they are ready to marry? What kind of things? Why are they necessary?

\* [IF INTERESTED IN GETTING MARRIED] What qualities are you looking for in a marriage partner? How difficult do you think it will be to find those qualities in a person? Some people talk about finding "the one" or soul-mates, do you believe that there is one specific person for everyone, or not?

\* [IF IN A RELATIONSHIP AND INTERESTED IN GETTING MARRIED] Do you want to marry your boyfriend/girlfriend? How likely do you think it is that you will marry him/her? Why/why not? [IF YES] Do you have a sense yet of when that might happen? [IF NOT] Is this a serious relationship or a more casual relationship?

\* [MODIFY IF IN A RELATIONSHIP]: Do you do anything actively to try to search out

potential people to date or become romantically involved with? [i.e., girlfriends/boyfriends]? Are you always kind of looking for those kinds of potential people or romantic encounters, or not?

- IF YES: How? Hang out any particular places? What are good places? Have you ever tried online dating?
- IF YES: Are you looking for casual relationships and dating experiences or something more serious?
- IF NOT: Are there any particular reasons why you're not interested in dating or finding a serious relationship right now (finishing school, establishing a career, caring for a child)? Would a romantic relationship be a bad thing right now?

## **SEX**

**Key topics to cover: experiences with and thoughts about intimate involvement, how these have changed since adolescence/early EAhood**

\*Can you talk about your sexual relationships over the past 5 years? How have you made decisions about your sexual behavior? How satisfied are you with your sexual relationship/s at this point?

- Are there any things you wish you would have known earlier as a teenager or in your early 20s about sex?
- Are there any things you would have done differently if you had known more, earlier?
  - What? Why?

\*Do you have any particular regrets about your sexual history? Do you mind telling me what and why?

\*Have you ever “hooked up” with others?

IF YES: Who was this with? What happened? What were your reasons? How do you feel about that now?

IF NO: Are there any particular reasons why you have not “hooked up?”

\*Do your religious beliefs affect your attitudes toward sex or behaviors? How so?

- Does your religion teach anything about sex? What exactly does it teach?
  - Do you agree with your religion's teachings about sex?

\*Would getting (someone) pregnant right now be a good or a bad thing?

\*Have you ever been pregnant/gotten someone pregnant?

[IF YES] Can you tell me about the circumstances – when did it happen, were you planning it, how did you feel/react?

\*What do you think you will teach your children about sex (ADD “if you have any” AS APPROPRIATE)? What sorts of expectations do you have for your children's sexual behavior as teenagers and adults?



## **INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

[EVERYONE] Imagine one of your friends told you their romantic partner was hurting them. What would you say or do?

- [IF R asks what kind of hurting? Would the kind of hurting make a difference? Then suggest: possibly emotional, verbal, physical hurt/violence/coercion]
- How bad would a situation like this have to get for you to intervene or tell your friend to end the relationship?
- How common do you think these behaviors are in relationships among people your age? Do you think people your age tend to tolerate hurtful or violent things in relationships more than they should, or not? Why or why not?

\*CHECK RECORDER

## **CHILDBEARING AND PARENTING**

**Key topics to cover: experiences with and thoughts about parenthood**

[IF R HAS A CHILD/CHILDREN]

\*Let's talk about what it's like to be a parent. How close do you feel to your child/children?

\*How has being a parent changed your life?

\*Besides you, who else has an important role in your child's/children's life?

\*What have been the highs and lows of being a parent so far?

\*Do you plan to have any more children?

[IF R HAS NO CHILDREN]

\*Do you think you will become a parent someday?

[IF SO] How many children would you like to have, and when would you like to have them? How do you think your life will be different than what it's like now when you have kids?

[IF NOT] Why not?

[EVERYONE]

\*Do you think there are certain things someone should accomplish before having kids? What are they, and why are they important? Is it important to be married before having children? Why/why not?

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS & PLANS**

Throughout this interview we've covered a lot of ground. Now I want to take a step back and think about your life as a whole.

\* If you could change one thing about the world today, what would it be? Why?

\*What would it take for you to be truly happy with your life when you are 40? 70?

\* What, ultimately, do you want to get out of life? What is it that you really want to accomplish or experience in your life before it's all over? Why that/those things?

\*When you look back on your life, when it's all said or done, what would it look like to have failed in life, for your life to be a failure? Do you ever worry that this might happen?

\* Taking your whole life into consideration, what are the things you most value? Does the way you're living your life let you achieve or live your values?

\*If you could do things differently, what would you change?

\*How likely is it that you will live the life you want to live?

\* Some people we talk to say that they have few or no regrets about the bad things that have happened in their lives because even the bad parts of life lead them to where they are supposed to be. Other people have lots of regrets and think that life could have gone another way. What are your thoughts about this topic in your own personal life?

- Would you say that you have any regrets? If no: are there things that you wish you would have done differently?
- Probe on troubling examples given in interview if necessary—“If they’re not regrets, then how do you think about those times or experiences?) Is there anything wrong with having regrets? Would it be a problem to think of some of your experiences as regrettable?

\* What do you think you will be like generally when you are 40 years old? What kind of family, job, lifestyle do you think you’ll have?

\* What do you think you will be like religiously when you are 40 years old?

\* Thinking back on your life, who would you say were the most influential people in shaping who you’ve become today (as a person)? Why and how did they influenced you so much?

## **CONCLUSION**

\*That’s it for my questions. Is there anything we have not yet talked about that you think is important for understanding your life or young people in general? Is there anything else you would like to say?

\*Thank you so much for talking with me today. I really enjoyed hearing about your experiences and opinions. Please be assured that everything we talked about today will remain totally confidential. Do you have any other questions?

**\*\*PAY \$\$ AND GET SIGNATURE ON RECEIPT, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CONSENT FORM!**

[church] = church, synagogue, temple, mosque, etc. as appropriate

[parent] = mother, father, step-mother, etc. as appropriate

[minister/pastor] = minister, pastor, priest, father, rabbi, imam, etc. as appropriate

[bible] = Bible, Torah, Koran, sacred scriptures, etc. as appropriate

[girlfriend/boyfriend] = READ BOTH OR ONE BASED ON THE INFO R HAS SHARED