

Interview Discussion Guide

For participants who have received External Beam Radiotherapy

1. Introduction (5 mins)

- Introduction to the semi-structured interview, review of participant information sheet and consent form, clarify purpose of interview.

2. Getting to know the participant (10 mins)

This activity is experience based so first of all we are going to ask a little about your home life, who lives with you, your routine an average week to allow us to understand the richness of your life and your experiences, so we can accurately summarise key themes and grouping and reflecting your thoughts accurately.

To get us started, please can you tell me a little more about yourself and your home life? Perhaps, start with where you live, your family and who is at home, your friends.

Now let's talk a bit about what life was like for you before diagnosis/treatment. What were your hobbies, what did you like to do? Talk me through an average week in your life before diagnosis/treatment.

3. Breast cancer background (10mins)

I'd like to understand a bit more about your breast cancer diagnosis if that's OK.

Can you walk me through how you received your diagnosis? And remember, if at any time you feel uncomfortable and wish to stop the interview, you are free to do so.

What treatment did you receive? And did you think at that point that you had a good understanding what was going to happen?

4. Surgery experience (15 mins)

Receiving surgery

Now I'd like you to think back to the day you had your surgery to remove the lump. Can you talk me through that day?

Did you experience any difficulties that you consider were related to the surgery?

After surgery

I'd like to understand more about what you experienced immediately after the surgery and also in the days and weeks that followed.

How did you feel after the surgery, as you came out of anaesthesia?

Have you experienced adverse physical or mental symptoms that you would attribute to the surgery?

Did you experience any other difficulties or consequences immediately following the procedure, during your time in hospital?

Did you have any difficulties or side effects in the days and weeks that followed your discharge from hospital?

4. Radiotherapy experience (25 mins)

Before radiotherapy

If it's okay, for the rest of the conversation today we'll be discussing your experiences of receiving radiotherapy.

When did you first hear that radiotherapy may be part of your cancer treatment? How did you find out? And what information was shared with you at the time?

How did you feel about radiotherapy? What were your initial thoughts?

How did you prepare for radiotherapy?

In hindsight is there anything you would have done differently in preparation for receiving radiotherapy?

Receiving radiotherapy

Now I'd like you to think back to your radiotherapy sessions. Can you remember how many treatments you had/ how many weeks you were going in for the treatments?

Did you experience any difficulties?

How do you feel those difficulties could have been avoided or overcome?

Did the process of going for subsequent and repeated appointments affect you and your life?

After radiotherapy

Finally, I'd like to understand more about what you experienced after your course of radiotherapy treatment was completed.

How long do you think it took you to get back to your normal activity levels? Or have you not got back to previous levels – if not, where are you now compared to before?

Final reflections looking back on the experience

Looking back now on the experience of receiving this radiotherapy, what would you say worked particularly well?

What were the main challenges you faced that may have caused frustration, difficulties, or discomfort?

How do you think the service can be improved for future patients receiving this radiotherapy?

5. Thank you and close (5 mins)