

Appendix 1 - The interview guide

Researching the lived experience of older people who feel life is completed and no longer worth living

Introduction of the interview

- *Acknowledgments for time and participation*
- *Information about the research project and the procedure*
- *Information about the character of the in-depth interview (open structure and the focus on the thorough exploration of the lived experience)*
- *Possibility for questions about the project and the interview*

The interview

Introductory question

- Can you tell me in what way our call to participate in this study did appeal to you?

Sequence 1: About completed life

- Can you describe what it means to experience that life is completed¹?
- Can you focus on a particular example of this experience? Can you describe a specific event or particular experience when you (first) experienced that life is completed?
- Can you describe as fully as possible how this experience influences your daily life?"

Sequence 2: About the wish to die

- Can you describe what it means to have a strong desire to die?
- Can you describe as fully as possible how the wish to die influences your daily life?
- Can you describe a moment when the desire for death was very strong?
- Can you describe a moment when it was less pronounced, more at the background?
- What kind of things influence your wish to die?

Sequence 3: About a self-directed death (if suitable)

- Tell me about your preference of a self-directed death. Can you explain why it is important to you?
- Tell me about the process of how your decisions / ideas developed.
- What is it like to live in this in-between period: living on while ideating on a self-directed death?

¹ NOTE: if a participant used another word, such as 'life is over, ready to give up on life, tired of life, the interviewer used this way of saying in her questions to stay as close as possible to the participant's experience.

Elaborating questions

In order to encourage participants to articulate their experiences in detail, during the interview, the interviewer keeps on posing questions such as:

- Can you describe the experience as much as possible as you live(d) through it?
- Please, try to describe the experience from an insider-perspective, as it were almost like a state of mind. Tell me about the feelings, the mood, the emotions.
- Can you elaborate a bit more on that as concretely as possible?
- What do you mean by...?
- What is it like...?
- In what way?

After the interview

- *Closing words and summarization*
- *Voluntary administration of the HADS*
- *Ask for the completed personal information form*
- *Acknowledgments*
- *Appointments about member check and privacy*
- *Appointments about reciprocal possibility to contact for any additional info*
- *Appointments about possibility aftercare*