

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CORE BATTERY III Life Course Interview (LCI)

**Instructions for the Interviewer:**

The Life Course Interview is a semi-structured clinical interview used to elicit and record the subjective life story of the individual as a sequence of life course events or experiences. The participant should first complete the Life Chart, as this will be used as a guide for the individual in answering some of the interview questions.

The questions in the interview follow a sequence that includes seven themes (i.e. Where have I been, Past turning points, Where am I now, etc.). Following each theme is a series of probes designed to elicit specific information regarding the individual's life experiences.

The interview introduction and questions (including the question numbers) should be read in their entirety. It is important that the format and structure of the interview be followed exactly and that the interviewee responds *verbally* to all of the interview questions.

**Interviewing Guidelines.** If the participant does not describe life events in detail or if the response given needs clarification, then remember to use **neutral** probes (two maximum) to elicit elaboration of meaning and significance.

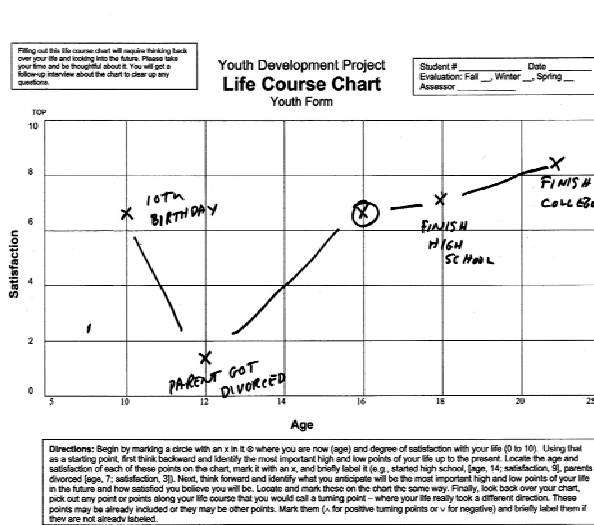
Sample Meaning Probes:	Sample Significance Probes:
"What did/does that (____) mean to you? "Can you say more about what you mean by ____? "Does that (____) mean anything else?" "Is there anything else?"	"Why is this significant or important to you? "How significant or important is this to you?" "Can you say more about <u>why</u> this is important to you?" "Can you say more about <u>how</u> important it is to you?" "Is there anything else significant or important about it?"

**Taping Guidelines.**

- Make sure you have a new tape in the tape recorder, that it is turned on, and the tape labelled.
- ALWAYS take a minute before you start the interview to test record a small section and play it back to make sure the recorder is functioning.

This copy of the Core Battery III belongs to (Evaluator's Name): \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Life Chart**



**Interview Introduction:**

*Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This should take about a half an hour or maybe longer. I would like your permission to tape record this interview. The tapes will be kept under lock and key and will not be shared with anyone. I also would like your permission to use anonymous quotes from some of the things that you tell me. Would this be all right?*

*For the record, my name is \_\_\_\_\_(interview's full name) and I have permission to record this conversation. I am interviewing \_\_\_\_\_(student's initial's only) on \_\_\_\_\_(date) in/at \_\_\_\_\_(location).*

*The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of what your life experiences have been like. I will be asking you about different events in your past, present and future life, what these events mean to you and how significant they are to you. We are mainly interested in finding out about who you are, where you're coming from, and what you want to do with your life.*

*It is possible that you have been interviewed before regarding the same subject matter. It does not matter whether your answers are the same or different. We continue our interest in your life and how it may or may not change over time. Therefore we appreciate your continued cooperation in sharing information about your life with us.*

*Do you have any questions before we get started?*

I would now like you to get comfortable and think about your life. Throughout this interview, I will be asking you a series of questions that pertain directly to the Life Chart you filled out before this interview. If at any time throughout this interview you have any questions or would like me to stop the tape for any reason, please say so.

**I will now begin with the interview questions.**

**Interview Questions:****1. Where have I been?**

***Let's start with where you have been. I would like you to look over your life chart and think about the most important high and low events in your life up to the present time.***

*1.1. Now locate the most important high event. Tell me both the age and level of satisfaction you marked for that event on your life chart.*

*1.2. Please describe as much as you can in detail about this most important high life event. (Probe for meaning and significance as necessary)*

*1.3. Now locate the most important low event and tell me the age and level of satisfaction you marked on your life chart for that event.*

*1.4. Tell me as much as you can in detail about this most important low life event.*

*1.5. Tell me as much as you can about the other points you marked.*

## 2. Past Turning Points

**A turning point is time in which your life really took a different direction or when you underwent a dramatic change in how you saw yourself or the world.**

*As think about your life and look over the life chart I would like you to pick out points along your past life course that you would call turning points. They could be the events on your life chart but they do not have to be.*

2.1. Please describe what you consider the **most important first turning point** in your life up to now?

2.2. Explain why you consider it a turning point.

Interviewer: If not included in the response, probe for the following

- What age did it occur?
- What impact did it have on your life?
- Was it positive or negative?
- What caused or influenced the change?

2.3. How much control and responsibility did you have over this change?<sup>1</sup>

2.4. Describe in detail any other turning points in your past.

Interviewer: If not included in the response, probe for the same as (1,2) above

## 3. Where am I now? Who am I?

**Next, let's talk about where you are right now – the circle with an x in it ☉.**

*I would like you to think for a moment -- what comes to mind when you ask yourself the question Who am I? (Pause)*

3.1. Now, I would like you to tell me your thoughts about the answer to that question. (Probe as necessary)

3.2. Explain what you mean by that **OR** tell me more about that.

## 4. Present Turning Points

**Now I would like you to think about turning points in your life right now.**

4.1. Do you think your life is undergoing a turning point now?

4.2. If so, what is it and why do you consider it a turning point?

Interviewer: If not included in the response, probe for the following

- What impact is it having on your life?
- Is it positive or negative?
- What is causing or influencing the change?

4.3. How much control and responsibility do you have over this change?

## 5. Current Life satisfaction

**Now I would like you to think about how satisfied you are with your life right now.**

5.1. Using the satisfaction level from the chart, tell me how satisfied you are with your life now.

5.2. When you say that your level of satisfaction is \_\_\_\_\_ what does that number mean to you?

5.3. What do you like about your life and want to keep the way it is (or want more of)?

5.4. What do you not like about your life (or what you would like to change)?

➤ <sup>1</sup> What we mean by **control** is when you feel like you can do things that will change or influence something.

➤ What we mean by **responsibility** is when you feel like you are accountable (deserve credit **or** blame) for your decisions and actions **and** for the consequences or outcome of those decisions and actions.

## **6. Challenges and Resources**

**Now I would like for you to think about what sources in your life either help (resources) or hinder (challenge) your effort in doing what you want to do with your life.**

- 6.1. Describe what you consider the most important resource, including people, institutions or other things that you consider will be helpful in doing what you want with your life right now ?
- 6.2. Describe what you consider the most serious challenge, obstacle, problem, issue, or barrier you face in doing what you want to do with your life right now.<sup>1</sup>

## **7. Where am I going? What do I want to do with my life?**

*Finally, let's talk about where you want your life to go.*

- 7.1. I would like for you to think forward for a moment and describe what you anticipate will be the **high** points of your life in the future. Explain
- 7.2. How satisfied do you believe you will be at each of these high point?
- 7.3. How much control and responsibility do you think you will have over the future high points you described?
- 7.4. What do you think will be the important low points? Explain.
- 7.5. How much control and responsibility do you think you will have over the future low points?
- 7.6. Describe what you consider the most serious obstacle, problem, issue, or barrier you face in doing what you want to do with your life in the future.
- 7.7. Describe the support you have in your life right now that will be helpful in assisting you in doing what you want in the future.
- 7.8. What do you think you will be doing 5 years in the future?
- 7.9. How satisfied do you think you will be (using the life satisfaction scale)?
- 7.10. What do you think you will be doing 10 years in the future?
- 7.11. How satisfied do you feel your life will you be?
- 7.12. What will be the important life events in your life at 15 years in the future (or later)?
- 7.13. How satisfied do you feel you will be?

That concludes the Life Course Interview. Do you have any questions about the interview or information about yourself that you would like to clarify before I turn off the tape?

**I would like to take this time to thank you for your thoughtful responses to these questions.**

---

➤ <sup>1</sup> A challenge is an obstacle, problem, issue, barrier, limitation, etc. that might keep you from achieving your life goals. It would be helpful if you would describe a challenge that you currently face and that you would like to do something about.