

Appendix IV – Semi-Structured Interview Guide

This is a translated version of the (Dutch) interview guide that was used during the semi-structured interviews.

Background information

No. of interview:

Gender (self-identified):

Sexual orientation (self-identified):

Age:

Residence:

Living situation:

Nationality:

Education:

Department:

Occupation:

Opening questions

To start this interview, in the first set of questions I would like to ask you about your current job at [organization].

1. When did you start working at [organization]?
2. Why did you choose to work at [organization]?
Probe: what were your motivations, specific characteristics you appreciated.
3. Could you tell me a bit more about the content of your job?
Probe: what are your responsibilities.
4. How do you experience working at [organization]?
Probe: what are positive aspects, what are negative aspects.
5. In general, how are your relationships with your co-workers/supervisor(s)?
Probe: what are positive aspects, what are negative aspects.

Key questions

That was the first set of questions. Let us move on to the second set, which focuses on your sexual identity and your social relationships at work. To that end,

6. Could you tell me about how you, in general, deal with your sexual identity in your daily life?
Probe: how open are you, for which reason(s), how do others

(co-workers/supervisors) respond, how did this develop over the years, how was this process for you.

7. Could you also tell me about how you, in general, deal with your sexual identity at work?

Probe: how open are you, for which reason(s), how do others (co-workers/supervisors) respond, how did this develop over the years, how was this process for you.

Now that we discussed how you deal with your sexual identity in general, both in your daily life as well as at work, I want to focus more on how you deal with your sexual identity in specific social relationships at work. For that, I brought a sheet of paper, which you can use to illustrate your story. The center circle represents you. In the surrounding circles, I would like to ask you to place your colleagues, based on how good you consider your relationship with them. square represents you; please write your name on it. I also brought some circles, which represent the other people at work, such as colleagues or managers.

8. Could you tell me: who comes to mind when I say ‘colleague’? Why? Can you tell me a bit more about this person, and about your relationship with them?

Probe: to whom are you open, in which way(s), for which reason(s) (why);

Probe: to whom are you less or not open, in which way(s), for which reason(s) (why);

Ask for specific characteristics of the ‘other’ that indicate why the participant uses a certain strategy in a specific social relationship! Think of gender, age, sexual orientation, position within organization, length of relationship, content of relationship.

Make use of the materials (e.g., pencils, pens) to construct the network!

Thank you. Now we visually presented your social relationships at work, and how you manage your sexual identity within these. I would now like to ask you a bit more precisely about these social relationships, namely about how the process of “coming out” to that person took place. Herein, I am mostly interested in how you told the other and how the other responded.

9. Could you tell me about your “coming out” to [person]? It is okay if you cannot remember all details exactly.

Probe: how did it go, which considerations did you make, how long have you known each other, which obstacles did you see, where were you, how did [person] respond, how did it affect your relationship.

Ask for specific characteristics of the ‘disclosure event’ that make clear how exactly this process took place!

Thank you again. In this block, so far we really focused on your perspective, as you told me about your experiences and the choices you made. As a final element of this block, I would like to change our perspective slightly, and ask you how you see the relationships between the colleagues you mentioned. There are no right or wrong answers; I am merely interested in how you perceive the relationships between them.

10. Could you talk me through this process?

Probe: how would you describe their relationship, e.g. in terms of length, quality, content.

Now we have talked very specifically and in-depth about how you deal with your sexual identity at work, and how that relates to your social relationships. This is the end of the second set of questions. For the third and final set, I would like to zoom out a bit, and ask you some more general questions. These relate to your general experiences at work and to the role of the organization.

11. Could you tell me about some of your experiences working as a [lesbian/gay/bisexual] employee at [organization]?

Probe: what are positive experiences, what are negative experiences, how do people respond, what does the organization do, does the organization give you the idea that you are part of it/that you can be yourself,

Ask for concrete examples that illustrate experience(s) of in- or exclusion!

12. How do you think [organization] is doing in terms of diversity and inclusion?

Probe: are they present, visible, known, effective, enforced, by whom, how do employees and managers react, are there different reactions from different (groups of) employees.

13. And in terms of sexual (and gender) diversity?

Probe: are they present, visible, known, effective, enforced, by whom, how do employees and managers react, are there different reactions from different (groups of) employees.

Closing question

This ends the third set of questions. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and insights with me. To end the interview, I would like to ask you one final question.

14. What are your plans for the future?

Probe: nearby, far-away, life goals

End of interview