

DESCRIPTION ON CARDS OF THE SEVEN MOST IMPORTANT LIFE EVENTS

Before the life story narration, participants should write down the seven most important events of their lives on memory cards.

Instructions:

“I would first like to ask you to think about the seven most important events of your life. These events could have taken place very recently or a long time ago. Write down the most important memories of your life on these seven cards. Please only mention memories related to a very specific experience. (If a period of your life is mentioned, ask the person for a very specific experience within that longer period: if you think of an experience spanning a longer duration, you can write it on this card, but you must also recall a very specific event within that period and add it. Now take a specific card for each experience and write it down on this card.)”

Once the participant has completed this step, they are invited to arrange the memory cards on the table in chronological order.

Instruction:

“Now, arrange the memory cards of the events in their chronological order (the order in which they happened) and place them in front of you on the table so that you can see them clearly.”

RECORDING! LIFE STORY NARRATION

Instruction:

“I now ask you to tell me about what you have experienced in your life. Please include in your story the seven life events you mentioned on the cards. Think about everything that has happened in your life since you were born. I would like you to tell your life story in a comprehensive manner. I am interested in understanding how you have developed and what the most important milestones in your life have been. Mention the most significant events and changes. Tell me your story in a way that allows me to understand who you are. I would like to understand how you became the person you are today.

You have about 15 minutes to tell your story. I will not interrupt you. After 10 minutes, I will tell you that you have about 5 minutes left. In this exercise, there is no right or wrong answer. Just to check that you understood the exercise, I would like you to repeat what you need to do/what your task is. [If necessary, explain again] “You can now start. I will listen without interrupting you.””

Standardized Support or Assistance :

- Attentive and supportive listening with neutral “Ahah” and “Mhmhms”
 - Interruption, providing information on remaining time (after 10 minutes): “Excuse me for interrupting, we have about 5 minutes left. You may continue...”
 - In case the participant stops telling their life story after 10 minutes, the narration can be stopped without further questions.
 - In case the participant tells the story very quickly and superficially, to the point where it seems they will finish their story in a few minutes, you may encourage them by saying they can take their time to tell their story: “Feel free to take your time with your story and go into detail.”
 - Interruption to encourage storytelling when the person says almost nothing: “You still have about... minutes left; perhaps you could tell us more precisely what happened when... (refer to the last event that was just told)”
 - Interruption when no end is in sight: “Please excuse me for interrupting, you have now told me a lot about your life, and our time is almost up.”
-

DATING THE SEVEN MOST IMPORTANT LIFE EVENTS

After the life story narration, the seven most important life events mentioned must be chronologically ordered by the participant (how long ago this event happened, how old the participant was).

Instruction:

“I would now like to ask you to chronologically order the events you wrote on the cards: that is, how old were you in years and months (e.g., 6 ½ or 33 years and 8 months). Now write your age at the time of the events on each of the cards.”

FILLING OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRES

“Next, I would like to ask you to fill out a few questionnaires.” [Hand the participant the first questionnaire] “If anything is unclear, please feel free to ask.”