

# Volunteer Training Guide

# What is the Street Needs Assessment?

- 1. Indoor count & survey:** Point in time count and survey of people in emergency/transitional shelters, 24-hour women's drop-ins, Violence Against Women shelters, 24-hour respite sites, health and treatment facilities, and correctional facilities on April 26, 2018
- 2. Outdoor count & survey:** Point in time count and survey of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness (any outdoor or public locations that are not meant for human habitation such as streets, alleys, parks, bus shelters, parked cars, etc.) on April 26, 2018

# Why Are We Conducting the Street Needs Assessment?

- Update profile and census of homelessness in Toronto
- Give people experiencing homelessness a voice in what services they need in order to find and keep housing
- Previous SNA results have helped to improve program and service delivery, such as the creation of an LGBTQ2S youth shelter and increases in funding to organizations serving Indigenous people

# Volunteer Roles

As a Volunteer, you will either be:

- Surveying indoors at shelters or other sites
- OR**
- Surveying outdoors in defined Study Areas

**All Volunteers** are working in small teams led by experienced **Team Leads** who provide on-the-spot instructions and assistance to Volunteers

# What is My Role as a Volunteer?

- Directly administer the Street Needs Assessment survey to participants
- Take direction from the Team Lead
- Follow the instructions listed on the survey about **how** to conduct the survey so that the results are statistically valid
- Record observed homelessness data on tally sheets if part of outdoor team

# Survey Administration – 3 Main Steps

1. Read out loud the Opening Script, screening question, and Informed Consent process
2. Administer the survey questions and record the participant's responses
3. Read out loud the Closing Script, thank the participant, provide the honorarium (\$10 food voucher), and if outdoors, offer Service Connection

# Step 1. Opening Script and Screening Questions

1. Opening Script – Introduces you, your role, and the purpose of the survey
2. Screening Question – Screens out people who report having already done the survey or who are ineligible to complete the full survey
3. Informed Consent – Read over the Informed Consent statements so that people can make an informed choice to partake in the survey

**Do not skip over these sections!**

# Informed Consent

Before beginning the survey, you will read the Informed Consent script which ensures the survey participant knows the following:

- The individual's participation is voluntary
- Decision to participate will not affect receipt of support services
- Anonymous – do not record individual's name anywhere
- Confidential – do not discuss person's responses with others
- Participants can skip any question, take a break, or stop survey at any time
- Results are reported at an aggregate (not individual) level
- Participants will receive a \$10 gift card if they engage in the survey (even if they stop at any point)



# Step 2. Administer the Survey

- Up to 24 questions – not all questions applicable to everyone
- Approximately 10 minutes to complete
- Steps to follow:
  - Write down the Study Area Number (Outdoor Survey) OR Location Name (Indoor Survey)
  - Record the respondent's response if they report staying at a location not listed in the initial list (i.e. Other)
  - Read out loud the survey questions. It is important to read to yourself the *italicized* instructions and follow them (i.e. ask a follow-up question, skip to another question, circle a unit of time, etc.)
  - Record the participant's responses

# Step 3. Closing Script, Honorarium, Service Connection

- Read the Closing Script
- Provide the honorarium (food voucher)
  - Everyone who starts the survey receives a gift card - even people who stop part way through. The only people who don't get a gift card are those who never engage, those who are ineligible, and those who do not consent to participate in the survey.
- Only if you are doing the Outdoor survey, provide the yellow Service Connection resource card

# What Happens on April 26?

## Indoors

- By 4:30 pm, report to your pre-assigned Field Office: here you will sign in, be assigned to a Study Team, meet your Team Lead, and learn what shelter location you will be surveying
- You will review instructions with your Study Team and get refresher training
- By about 5:30 pm, you and your Study Team will go to your assigned indoor area with your Team Lead
- Conduct the Indoor Screening Tool and administer the survey with participants
- Return to the Field Office by 11 p.m. with your Study Team to sign out

# What Happens on April 26?

## Outdoors

- By 5:30 pm, report to your pre-assigned Field Office: here you will sign in, be assigned to a Study Team, meet your Team Lead, and review the outdoor area map
- You will review instructions with your Study Team and get refresher training
- By about 6:30 pm, your Study Team will go to your Study Area with your Team Lead
- Once you arrive at your Study Area you will walk along the streets indicated on the map
- Your Study Team must stop every person encountered and administer the Outdoor Screening Tool
- Complete the survey with those who are eligible and consent to participate
- Volunteers administer the survey
- Return to the Field Office by midnight with your Study Team to sign out

# Ways to Prepare Before April 26

- Become familiar with the contents of this training guide
- Please review the documents that were sent to you along with this training guide and in upcoming emails
- Familiarize yourself with the **Outdoor Screening Process** and the **Outdoor Survey questions** that were sent to you with this training guide
  - All versions of the survey are almost identical. Even if you are surveying indoors, please familiarize yourself with the Outdoor Survey as almost all the indoor survey questions are the same
- Practice your Opening Script listed on the survey

# Interviewing Safety + Tips

# What Should I Wear and Bring?

- Dress comfortably and for the weather
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Bring a signed copy of the **SNA Volunteer Agreement, Release and Waiver** (available on the Street Needs Assessment website, follow 'Volunteer registration' link)
- Consider bringing a bottle of water and a snack
- Bring a mobile phone (charged), if you have one
- Make sure you have a way home from the Field Office
- Parking at Field Offices may be limited: please check ahead as you are responsible for any parking costs

# Interviewer Safety

- The 2018 Street Needs Assessment is organized and led by experienced SSHA staff and follows City of Toronto health and safety policies
- Safety is our priority
- The SNA Safety Plan is in place to ensure everyone's safety
  - Your Team Lead has been trained on this plan



# Interviewer Safety

- Team Leads have experience with vulnerable people and are well trained on the SNA Safety Plan
- You will always be working within sight of your Team Lead and your team
- Volunteers are to bring forward their concerns to a Team Lead
- If, for whatever reason, the Team Lead is unable, Volunteers are to communicate with the Field Office
  - You will be given the phone number of the Field Office, who is available to help
- Emergency responders have been alerted about the SNA

# Interviewer Safety

- Minor incidents such as slips, trips, and falls have occurred in previous SNAs
- To avoid slips, trips, and falls
  - Wear properly fitting, comfortable shoes
  - Pay attention to where you are stepping
  - Walk at a pace that is suitable for the surface being walked on
  - Where possible, avoid slippery surfaces
  - Use handrails, where available

# Interviewer Safety

- Outdoor Study Teams will be given a map of their study area
- “Special survey areas” that teams should **not** cover will be clearly marked on your map in yellow crosshatch. In addition to these areas, Study Teams will **NOT** go into:
  - Alleyways
  - Subway and other TTC Stations, schools, government buildings
  - Private property (including inside commercial establishments)
  - Any area within your study area where the Team Lead feels the safety of the team may be at risk (e.g., poorly lit areas)
  - Areas outside assigned study areas

# Interviewer Safety

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Keep within view of other Volunteers and your Team Lead
- Follow the instructions of your Team Lead at all times
- Do not follow someone into a secluded area
- Do not touch survey respondents or their pets
- Don't wake people who are sleeping
- **If you feel unsafe, remove yourself and your Study Team members from the situation**, even if it means ending the survey early
- In all emergency situations, call 911 immediately. Then call the Field Office

# Interviewer Self Care

- Interviewers may hear emotional, painful, and traumatic stories and will have to listen with compassion – if you need to, take a break
- Take time to debrief and respond to emotions through talking with others after the event but please maintain participant confidentiality
- If you feel emotional distress during your role as a Volunteer, take a break and talk to your Team Lead

# Participant Safety

- It is important to treat participants with respect and dignity
- Many people experiencing homelessness have had traumatic experiences
- Some questions may be upsetting and may cause participants discomfort or distress or may evoke fear, anger, and other painful emotions
- If the participant is experiencing discomfort, remind them that they can skip any question, take a break, or stop the survey at any time
  - Remember, if the survey is stopped, participants should be thanked and given the gift card
- If the participant becomes distressed, seek help from the Team Lead who will get support for the individual

# Approaching Someone in an Unsheltered Environment

- **Make yourself visible**

Make sure that your interviewer identification is visible. Do not startle people or their pets

- **Make eye contact first**

As you are approaching the individual, introduce yourself and make eye contact. Be friendly and polite

# Approaching Someone in an Unsheltered Environment

- Mention the purpose early

Mentioning the purpose of the survey early will help to generate interest

- Respect personal space

Begin the script when you reach a comfortable distance. Do not invade the person's personal space

- Be conscious of body language



# Good Interviewing Techniques

## *How to Prepare Prior to April 26*

- The first and most important step is informed consent. So, practice the introduction so it sounds natural
- It is also important to familiarize yourself with the survey and the choices of responses for certain questions. This will make it easier to choose them based on the participant's answer

# Good Interviewing Techniques

## *Speech and Behaviour*

- Don't talk too quickly
- Use a clear and professional tone
- Be friendly with participants, but don't come across as overly casual
- Avoid over-empathizing and biasing comments
- Effective non-verbal communication skills are essential: be mindful of your body movements, facial expressions, and eye movement
- Be aware of your eye contact. Some people prefer long eye-contact, others prefer little to no eye contact. Take your cues from the participant

# Good Interviewing Techniques

## *Surveying*

- Read all questions and responses exactly as written
- Remember to write your responses clearly
- Avoid taking too much time finding the appropriate boxes. Try to find and check the appropriate box quickly. If you can't, record the response under 'Other'
- Listen and reflect participants' answers back to them by paraphrasing their answers and checking which survey response sounds the most accurate

# Good Interviewing Techniques

## *Keeping on Track and Safety*

- In cases where respondents might be steering the conversation away from answering the survey:
  - apologize for interrupting the respondent
  - restate the original/next question
- If a respondent starts to act in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable and/or threatened, immediately end the survey

# Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions, please contact the SNA team at the following:

Email: [SNA@toronto.ca](mailto:SNA@toronto.ca)

Phone: 416-338-2211