**Children’s Understanding of Death and Dying**

**Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Older Children and Adolescents (English version)**

These are guides and prompts to assist interviewers in addressing important thematic components of the study. Not all sub-questions must be answered or addressed if not appropriate for the individual child.

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| Date: |  |  |

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1. How old are you?
2. Do you go to school?
   1. If yes,
      1. What grade are you in?
      2. What do you enjoy about school?
   2. If no,
      1. What is keeping you out of school?
      2. What do you do during the day?
3. Tell me about where you live?
   1. Tell me about who you live with?
   2. Do you have any pets?
4. Can you tell me about your/your sibling’s illness?
5. Tell me about what it is like to have your illness/to have a sibling with an illness?
   1. Do you think about your/sibling’s illness often?
      1. If yes,
         1. How does that make you feel?
         2. How does it feel to be home? How does it feel to be in the hospital?
         3. Do you worry about you/your sibling dying?
            1. If yes,

Why do you worry?

What do you worry about?

* + - 1. How does your/your sibling’s illness affect your life?
         1. Friends, experiences, happiness, activities?

1. Have you ever known anyone or been around someone who has died?
   1. If yes,
      1. Can you tell me about him/her? (if multiple individuals, will ask about each)
      2. Was he/she in the hospital?
      3. If he/she was sick, how often were you around him/her when he/she was sick?
      4. Did you help with care? If so, how?
      5. How did you feel when he/she died?
      6. Did you go to a remembrance service?
   2. If no,
      1. Have you ever had a pet die?
2. What is death? What does it mean to die?
   1. How do people/animals die?
   2. Why do people/animals die?
   3. Do all people/animals die?
      1. Will you die?
         1. If yes, why?
         2. If no, why not?
   4. Can someone who dies feel pain? (why or why not?)
3. What happens to a person after he/she dies?
   1. What happens to the body?
      1. Do you believe that people/animals have souls?
         1. If yes, what happens to the soul?
4. What makes you feel better when you are upset about
   1. Your/your sibling’s illness?
   2. The death of your pet/friend/family member?
5. What can people do to help you when you are sad/upset/scared about your/your sibling’s illness or about death and dying?
   1. At school?
   2. At the hospital?
   3. Your friends?
   4. Your family?
   5. Your community?
6. When you are happy and healthy, what do you enjoy doing for fun?
7. Tell me about the best day of your life so far

**Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Younger Children**

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1. How old are you?
2. Do you go to school?
   1. If yes,
      1. What grade are you in?
      2. What do you enjoy about school?
   2. If no,
      1. Do you stay home during the day or go somewhere else?
      2. What do you like to do during the day?
3. Tell me about where you live
   1. Tell me about who you live with
   2. Do you have any pets?
4. Can you tell me about your/your sibling’s illness
   1. Medication, treatment, hospital time
   2. How do you feel about you/your sibling’s illness?
      1. Does it make you sad or mad?
      2. Does it stop you from doing things you want to do?
5. Do you think about your/your sibling’s illness often?
   1. If yes,
      1. What do you think about
      2. Do you worry about you/your sibling dying?
         1. If yes,
            1. What do you worry about?
6. Have you ever known or been around someone who has died?
   1. If yes,
      1. Can you tell me about him/her? (if multiple individuals, will ask about each)
      2. How did he/she die?
         1. If death was from an illness, did you ever visit him/her in the hospital or at home when he/she was not feeling well?
      3. Did you help take care of him/her? What did you do?
      4. How did that make you feel when he/she died?
      5. Did you go to any kind of event where people talked about that person? Can you tell me about it?
   2. If no,
      1. If yes,
         1. Have you ever had a pet die?
         2. Can you tell me about your pet and what you and your family did when your pet died
7. What is death? What does it mean to die?
   1. How do people/animals die?
   2. Why do people/animals die?
   3. Do all people/animals die?
      1. Will you die?
         1. If yes, why?
         2. If no, why not?
   4. Can someone who dies feel pain? (why or why not?)
8. What happens to a person after he/she dies?
9. What makes you feel better when you are upset about
   1. Your/ your sibling’s illness?
   2. The death of your pet/friend/family member?
10. What can people do to help you when you are sad/upset/scared about your/your sibling’s illness or about death and dying?
    1. At school?
    2. At the hospital?
    3. Your friends?
    4. Your family?
    5. Your community?
11. When you are happy and healthy, what do you enjoy doing for fun?
12. Tell me about the best day of your life so far

Reference: Some interview questions adapted from The Smilansky Death Concept Questionnaire. Smilansky, Sara. On Death: Helping Children Understand and Cope. Peter Lang Publishing Inc., New York, 1987.