**Supplementary File 1 -** **Interview guide**

**Preamble:** We are now going to begin the interview section of our meeting. We will be talking about your experience as a caregiver to your spouse/ partner with dementia. There has been a lot of research on partner caregivers, but this research tells us little about caregivers at more advanced ages, like yourself. Because our understanding of caregiving at this age is so limited, it is possible that health care and social services are not tailored to their needs. In the coming years, there will be more and more people providing care to a partner with dementia at an older age, so your story is valuable to expand our understanding of older caregivers, and ultimately better directing caregiver services to meet their needs.

We’re going to talk today for about 30 minutes and then continue the next time we meet.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that all the information you share will be stored so you will not be identifiable.

**Questions:**

1. **Lived experience:** So you told me that you have been caring for your partner for the last X years. Can you tell me about this, starting from the beginning?

**Probes:**

1. How did you become a caregiver? How did you learn to be a caregiver? Was caregiving new to you?
2. What other things were happening in your life at the same time? (Other life transitions/exits, other roles, career)
3. How has your caregiving experience changed over time? How did it fit in with other changes you were experiencing?
4. What does a typical day look like? What are some of the caregiving activities that you do during the day? What are some of the non-caregiving activities that you do?
5. How does caregiving fit with other aspects of your life today?
6. Do you differentiate between being a caregiver and being a spouse/partner?
7. Who are some of the other players involved in the care? (e.g., health care professionals, family). How has their involvement (or lack thereof) shaped your caregiving experience?
8. **Meaning:** What does caregiving mean to you? What does it mean for you to be a caregiver?

**Probes:**

1. What does it mean to you to grow old in the caregivigng role/to be a caregiver at this age and stage? How does your caregiving role fit into your understanding of growing old?
2. Some people describe that caregiving has impacted their lives for better or for worse, can you tell me about how you think caregiving has impacted your life? (e.g., health, mood, relationships, social life).
3. Some elders find caregiving to be a meaningful occupation, something that provides them a purpose in life. Does that resonate with you?
4. What was your role in creating this meaning?
5. **Contexts:** As you were talking about you experiences and the meaning of caregiving in your life you mentioned……

These are examples of some factors that have shaped your caregiving experiences and the meaning that you attributed to them. I would like to hear more about that. Can you tell me about some other things that shaped your experience? (Like your age and gender, your community, or the Canadian health care system).

**Probes:**

1. Past experiences (such as previous caregiving experiences)
2. Aging specifically (as a process) or being an old person
   1. Some people feel that they are discriminated against because of their age, do you feel that?
   2. Some people find that their old age makes it more difficult to care. Do you feel that?
3. Personal factors (such as gender or culture)
4. Health and social systems available to you, in the past and present
5. Presence or absence of other people in your life, previous relationships
6. **Timing and duration of caregiving** - (when in your life it is happening and how long you have been doing this for)
7. **Managing/coping:** from your stories it is clear that these factors influenced the way you provided care in various ways such as…
8. Can you tell me some more about the things that helped you adapt/cope/manage the role?

**Probes:** As you were talking about you experiences of ageing in the caregiving roleqbeing an older caregiver you mentioned……Can you tell me more about how you manage these age-related challenges?

1. Can you tell me more about things that made the role more difficult for you? /made it harder for you to manage the role?
2. If you could make one change to the health care system to help caregivers like you, what would that be?
3. If you could give advice to others in your situation, what would that be?