

## Appendix 1: Data Collection – Semi-structured Focus Group Interview Guide

**Time of interview:**

**Date:**

**Place:**

**Interviewer:**

**Observer:**

**Interview Participants:**

**Practice Area of Focus:**

| <b>Preamble</b>           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Welcome                   | <p>Welcome. I want to thank you for joining today. My name is _____ and I will be the facilitator for today's group discussion.</p> <p>I am representing a team who are conducting this focus group as a first step in a project aimed at establishing a research agenda for the Canadian RT profession. We also have _____ present to take notes for us.</p> <p>We invited you to take part in this group discussion today because you have all been identified as experts in a particular area of RT practice (in this case Leadership in respiratory therapy)</p> <p>We would like to talk with you today about potential research topics you feel are important for the RT profession.</p>   |
| What is a research agenda | <p>Essentially, a research agenda identifies the research priorities or topics for a group (in our case respiratory therapy) and enables research among RTs, guides funding decisions, guides how to use research resources and builds capacity for RTs to conduct research.</p> <p>To our knowledge, a research agenda has never been established in the profession of respiratory therapy.</p> <p>Please note that when we say "research" we are speaking broadly. We are referring to any systematic process that helps to improve or add knowledge that is important to RTs and/or RT profession. This means that projects such as quality improvement, program evaluation, case studies, and others, also fit the criteria.</p>   |
| Ground Rules              | <p>Before we begin, I would like to review a few 'housekeeping items" including how the focus group will be conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I'm going to ask some questions and we want everyone to take part in the discussion. We ask that only one person speak at a time.</li> <li>● Feel free to treat this as a discussion and respond to what others are saying, whether you agree or disagree. We're interested in your opinions and whatever you have to say is fine with us. There are no right or wrong answers.</li> <li>● If there is a particular question you don't want to answer, you don't have to.</li> <li>● We will treat your answers as confidential. If names or places are mentioned, they will be anonymized in the transcript.</li> </ul> |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are recording the discussion today and also taking notes because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Is everyone OK with this session being tape recorded?</li> <li>• After the focus group we may follow up, by phone or email, should we have any questions regarding clarification of response. At that time, you can choose to respond or refuse without any consequences</li> <li>• This discussion is going to take approximately 1-1.5 hours. We ask that you stay until the end if possible and please open your camera if you feel comfortable.</li> <li>• I would like to remind everyone to complete the demographic survey:</li> <li>• Does anyone have any questions before we start?</li> </ul> |
| 1. Introduction/ General  | Please briefly (5 minutes max) describe yourself and your experiences in any research project/quality improvement initiatives within the profession of respiratory therapy.   |
| 2.  | Broadly speaking, what research topics are important to enhance the practice of respiratory therapy<br><b>Prompt:</b><br>What research topics would you like to see researched by RTs and/or for the RT profession.   |
| <b>Questions related to RTs' technical skillsets</b>  |   |
| Preface   | <i>RTs have skills and abilities that uniquely contribute to care in highly and critically complicated situations. For example: Ventilation, Airway Management, Cardiopulmonary resuscitation</i>   |
| 3.  | As a [STATE AREA OF FOCUS] RT, are there any specific skills and/or abilities that RTs rely on to care for highly complicated care that you feel require more research ?<br><b>Prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe any specific nuances of these issues that should be considered if studied (e.g., specific contexts, patient populations, etc.)?</li> <li>• What makes these a priority to research from your perspective?</li> <li>• How could researching these topics improve RT practice?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Questions relating to the approach to practice shared by RTs across settings (i.e., the how RTs go about doing their work)</b> |   |
| Preamble  | <i>RTs use unique skills and work in unique ways to provide effective care. Examples include critical thinking &amp; decision-making, working across multiple patient populations (e.g., neonatal through older adults), critical care to community care, collaborative team-based care</i>   |
| 4.  | As a [STATE AREA OF FOCUS] RT, what are some of the features that make RTs work unique and require more research?<br><b>Prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some unique ways RTs work compared to other professionals?</li> <li>• How might understanding more about these approaches to practice impact care?</li> </ul>  |

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| 5.   | With respect to the ways that RT work, or how they go about doing their work, what do you feel are areas that need more research?   |
| <b>Questions relating to the strategically relevant expertise RTs have (i.e., “big picture” issues)</b>  |   |
| Preamble   | <i>RTs often contribute their expertise to address <b>system-wide problems</b>. These include things like hospital-wide policy and procedure changes, tracheostomy teams, pulmonary rehabilitation programs, patient safety programs, chronic disease management</i>  |
| 6.   | Please think of a really big issue/priority for your patients, hospital or healthcare system. How are RTs helping/contributing to its improvement?<br><b>Prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any specific contributions to big issue/priority areas that you feel are priorities for investigation?</li> <li>• How might more research to understand the big issues/priority areas impact practice?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Examining the tools that are needed to support RTs to leverage capacity (i.e., what research needs to be done to show the value of the RT)</b>            |   |
| Preamble   | <i>There exist important tools that help leverage RT skills and abilities to impact care and add value to the healthcare system or to the profession itself. Tools include supports for practice including formalized programs/protocols (e.g., asthma education guidelines, ventilator weaning protocols, clinical pathways), or perhaps respiratory therapy specific scientific journals/conferences and other knowledge translation venues like continuing education.</i>                                      |
| 7.   | As a [STATE AREA OF FOCUS] RT, are there specific tools that help leverage RTs skills and abilities which require more research<br><b>Prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there limitations in our understating of any of these tools? (whether that understanding is theoretic and/or practical)</li> <li>• How might understanding more about these tools impact practice?</li> <li>• [If participant provides example]: How did your RT experience/lens influence that project?</li> </ul> |
| 8. Closing question  | Does anyone have any additional thoughts, ideas, or comments you would like to share relating to knowledge gaps or the need for additional research in the RT profession?   |
| <i>[Thank participant for their generosity in sharing their time and perspectives in this study. Assure them of the confidentiality of their responses].</i> |   |