

Financial Exclusion and Gender Inequity Among Low-Income Women in Canada

Carly Kublick

IDS-3193-003

Dr. Jerry Buckland

April 30, 2021

Financial Exclusion and Gender Inequity Among Low-Income Women in Canada

Introduction

Efforts in recent decades to advance gender equality have succeeded in increasing women's economic participation. There are still many barriers, however, experienced by low-income women that prevent them from achieving their own definitions of financial well-being. Barriers such as low-skilled precarious labour and the pressures of caregiving make accruing savings difficult, placing low-income women in a vulnerable position for later in life. By using choice discourses prevalent in neoliberal schools of thought to place blame on individuals for their financial vulnerability, low-income women are further marginalized. This discourse is prevalent in financial literacy education in Canada and therefore undermines the challenges that marginalized groups face in achieving financial well-being. Because of this narrow focus, there is a gap in the literature that this paper fills.

To highlight key issues for low-income women this paper uses evidence provided by the Canadian Financial Diaries research project (CFD). The CFD analyzed the finances of 29 low-income individuals over a one-year period, including weekly interviews with the participants and two longer interviews concerned with financial well-being (see Transcript 1). This paper will use the data from four of those participants to better understand the challenges faced by low-income women in achieving financial well-being. Emerging themes include: a high level of awareness of spending; anxiety about lack of savings; a strong desire to contribute to their communities and families; and precarious employment.

Finally, to address the inequities present in an economic system that marginalizes low-income women this paper puts forward recommendations to strengthen social infrastructure through the continued funding of financial helplines.

Methods

I conducted a qualitative analysis drawing on interviews of four participants. The transcripts of the interviews were provided to me by the CFD, who conducted the interviews. The CFD (phase 1) is a year-long project where 29 low and modest-income individuals met regularly with researchers to discuss finances. Quantitative financial data was updated weekly, and longer interviews were conducted during

the project to record qualitative data (Dueck-Read, 2019). I chose 4 participants to enable a gender analysis. In particular, I chose my sample based on several variables: household income per-capita (low); gender (female); age (middle-aged); commitment to the CFPD (attended the full year); and ethnicity (two non-indigenous and two indigenous for equal representation). I drew mostly from a set of interviews done halfway through the project entitled Financial Literacy and Well-being, because I was interested in investigating gendered barriers to achieving financial well-being. The names given in my report are aliases to protect the participants' identities. Through reading the interview logs I identified key themes, then organized quotations by theme. I further organized the themes into three categories: financial well-being, barriers, and strategies. I have tried my very best to bring life to the participants' stories in the most accurate way but recognize that I bring my own biases and experiences into my writing.

Literature Review

My initial research involved gathering secondary sources from peer-reviewed journals through the University of Winnipeg's online library and databases. My search focused on women, particularly of low-income status, and financial exclusion.

Gender inequity is addressed in numerous pieces of economic literature, often with a focus on low financial literacy in women comparatively to men (Bruine De Bruin et al., 2010; Fonseca et al., 2012; Lusardi & Mitchell, 2008). In an increasingly financialized world where a growing responsibility is placed on individuals to navigate complex financial products, the need for financial literacy is a pressing issue. Women tend to live longer, have lower paying jobs, spend fewer years working, and make up 90% of single parents, leaving them more financially vulnerable (Prosper Canada, 2015). Because of this, women are identified as a group that need special attention in financial literacy education.

While this is indeed the case, financial literacy education efforts in Canada fail to address the gender inequities present in our economic system (Pinto & Coulson, 2011). In an analysis of three actively-promoted financial literacy curriculum resources ("The Money Belt" from the Financial and Consumer Agency of Canada's (FCAC), "Choices & Decisions: Taking Charge of Your Life" from Visa Canada, and the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education's (CFEE) "Money and Youth"), Pinto and

Coulson (2011) found gender was only mentioned in one – CFEE’s brief mention of women’s increased participation in the workforce.

Moreover, the content analyzed actively makes use of the “choice” discourse prevalent in neoliberal schools of thought. This discourse pathologizes individuals who are placed in negative financial situations because of greater structures of inequality, not necessarily their own choices (Pinto & Coulson, 2011). For example, women “choose” to have children, and therefore receive lower wages. Women “choose” to devote more time to unpaid caregiving which limits the amount of time they can spend working, and so on. By ignoring the barriers that prevent certain groups from making favourable financial choices and by omitting the realities of gender inequality from curriculum, the myth that women have equal opportunity to economic participation and wealth accumulation is perpetuated in financial literacy education (Pinto & Coulson, 2011).

The gender neutrality and “choice” discourse in financial literacy education points to greater neoliberal ideas present in the very notion of financial literacy promotion. Placing greater responsibility on individuals to efficiently navigate financial systems that marginalize certain groups to benefit others in order to be financially well is not a good substitute for social security (Brodie, 2010). If not everyone has equal access to participation in market forces, loosening state control over those forces only exacerbates inequalities present. Neoliberalism as an ideology has influenced many changes in policy, generally reducing social services in good faith that the market will find suitable alternatives (Brodie, 2010).

In Canada, policy reforms reflect the proliferation of neoliberalization in recent decades (Brodie, 2010). This has resulted in cutbacks of social programs that disproportionately affect low-income women (Brodie, 2010). For instance, social spending on things like healthcare, childcare, education, and other programs reduce the resources that individuals must spend on often care-related activities. When these programs are reduced women take on the burden of caregiving, especially low-income women, to fill the care deficit in state provision (Lee et al., 2015; Palmer, 1995).

Women face several barriers to equal economic participation, most of which are related to a gendered division of social and reproductive labour and care. Women often take on the role of caregiver

to children or elderly parents which impacts the number of hours a woman is able to work, incurs out-of-pocket expenses, and therefore reduces a woman's ability to accrue savings (Lee et al., 2015). Low-income women are disproportionately affected, on average spending more time caregiving (41 hours/week) and a higher percentage (20%) of their income compared to women living above the poverty line (36 hours/week and 9%, respectively) (Lee et al., 2015). These caregiving pressures economically restrict women so they are more likely to experience poverty later in life (Lee et al., 2015). With less government spending on services that decrease strain on caregivers such as childcare or healthcare, the care deficit deepens as does poverty for low-income women (Brodie, 2010; Lee et al., 2015; Palmer, 1995).

In addition to the responsibilities of social reproduction, low-income women have been increasing their participation in the formal labour force. Yet their jobs remain part-time and low-skilled (Coley & Lomabrdi, 2014; Palmer, 1995). Precarious work positions such as these offer little stability in volatile times such as recessions or pandemics, which place low-income women in a place of financial stress. Low-income women prove to be a resilient group, however, using economic coping strategies such as “drawing on social support resources, increasing earnings by working more hours, drawing on government supports and services, and using various financial management strategies, such as pooling resources” (pg. 335, Buckland et al., 2014). This shows how low-income women can do much with little, but with more supports they could thrive.

There is strong evidence that women tend to spend more money on collective goods and care for dependents – in this way they are important contributors to the household (Buckland et al. 2014). By equipping low-income women with a stronger social safety net and using public policy to cater to their gender-specific needs, their financial well-being can have a wider effect on household well-being and care (Palmer, 1995).

Results

Several key themes emerged in the analysis of interviews with CFD participants. First, I will describe what financial well-being means to the participants with examples from the interviews. Then I

will identify some barriers that prevent the participants from achieving financial well-being, and lastly some strategies they use in attempt to overcome them.

Financial well-being

Financial well-being means something unique to each individual, but some aspects were consistent across participants. One overarching theme was the ability to afford life's necessities as foundational to financial well-being:

I don't want a lot of money in my account, I just want to be able to buy groceries on a regular basis, to be able to not worry where my next meal is coming from, how to get from point A to point B – Linda

Having first and foremost that I have enough to have my needs met. Not my wants. – Kateryna

However, two (Mary, Linda) participants expressed that their mental health is affected by their precarious finances because of the inability to consistently afford the things they need. Linda for example often feels hungry and must choose between eating enough and paying her internet bill in full. Each of the participants also identified having a phone and internet as necessities, though they could not all afford both (Mary). One participant said the phone was very important to her because of safety as she had been raped once before in her neighbourhood (Linda). Through these examples we see that the participants' emotional and physical well-being is directly related to their ability to afford these necessities, and thus their financial well-being.

Another aspect of financial well-being consistent across all four participants was being able to provide for family members. For example, Mary would like to be able to visit her elderly father in Montreal and provide care as he experiences health problems:

If you want to take a vacation you've got a big enough budget that allow you to visit, to even visit your father or your family. This is a luxury that I don't have right now. My father's going to be 86 next month, so that sort of throws me back and it is painful because anything can happen to him and I don't have the finances to go there.

Nita expressed that her financial well-being is very related to her family's well-being:

I think financially healthy means that every time I get money for the kids it's a good thing because we have the transportation, we got the shelter and we get the food and we pay the bills.

Kateryna changed her spending habits so that she could provide as much as possible for her daughter:

That's where I started to really focus on what it was that I needed to do for me and for her. So my family, my family environment was most important to me.

Finally, Linda referenced through her weekly check-ins several instances where she felt strongly about contributing to her grandson, though often was unable to.

Participants also wanted to be able to donate money or give back to their communities in some way. Having disposable income or time to give to non-profits seemed to be a sign of financial well-being for these women:

I want to get back in the community and maybe even do volunteer somewhere, even if it's just an hour a week or for starters. – Nita

...also the freedom to donate finances to certain organizations or things like that where you have a passion. – Mary

Other aspects of financial wellness included being debt-free and having the ability to accrue savings. Nita expressed her desire to set aside savings for an emergency fund:

I need to save and I have to set up an appointment with RBC where I can put money into the savings. Maybe I don't know, a hundred 150 every two weeks or something and not touch it. So you said it's kind of like an emergency fund for all of us.

However, all participants struggled to accrue savings – not necessarily because of poor financial choices, but because of other barriers which I will describe below.

Barriers

A major barrier to achieving financial well-being for the participants was precarious, part-time work. The participants expressed a desire to have reliable work:

...when I do find that, even a part-time job that I'm on a payroll, not casual only but part-time, I see myself climbing those stairs to health and wellness. – Mary

...that way, I'm going to get an automatic payroll into my account and I always wanted that.
– Kateryna

However, barriers such as having to provide childcare or discriminatory workplaces prevented the participants from finding stable work. Kateryna spoke of her experience of harassment in several of her workplaces:

They wouldn't hire me full-time or they did hire me and that didn't work for me, either, because there was harassment. That was even not explored as much as it is now in a job environment. Nita and Kateryna experience inflexibility for work due to childcare. Both have commitments to look after their grandchildren so that their daughters can work, but find this restricts their own work hours:

And I might have to take care of Baby while she's working. So that's another thing I was thinking of too. Would I have time to work and babysit? – Nita

Barriers like these force low-income women to pursue unstable work. Examples of this in the interviews included being paid under-the-table by exploitative employers, underpaid work, and a general struggle to find full-time positions. Kateryna gave a short employment history in her interview. She describes her work at a local business for a man who pays her irregularly. The type of business is removed to protect her identity:

The [...] job is okay, but it paid me cash under the table.

When I know that I need, I will go there and therefore, he already knows that I don't take the money that I should, but I always have that... that's probably why it's like a little bit of a savings for me.

Kateryna appears to feel as though she cannot let go of this informal work because it has been consistently there for her, even though she describes the wage payment as “bartering”. She uses this business as a sort of safety net. Similarly, she describes another “shady” employer she worked for at a local market:

But I also knew enough to keep my hours and the monies that he provided intact. And I knew he must have been a little bit shady because at one time, he asked me for my credit card number and I never filled out an application.

Nita also described a predatory work environment in her interview, citing racial discrimination as the cause:

I worked for a while out there at a restaurant and I learned that they were paying me below the minimum wage. I found out and I told that lady, the boss I said, I'm going to go to the Employment Standards and making a complaint and right away she up'ed to the minimum she was paying me below everybody else was, she was paying the minimum except for me. And she was doing that for a while. She never did give me the back pay, but I didn't ask for the back pay. I just asked for the minimum... because the majority was, I don't know, white and I was brown.

These examples of informal and precarious labour make accruing savings difficult for low-income women, which reduces their ability to deal with emergency expenditures or reduced incomes with old age:

Like everybody else that has children know all about budgeting and looking out for the future, but then all of a sudden something comes in the way and it just kind of hinders the situation. – Nita

I should put away for when I'm old cause I'm worried already. Yea, I'm old now. – Linda

There are various government services that can help address these financial pressures that the participants feel. However, all participants demonstrated mistrust in government systems to adequately care for them.

Kateryna worries that she will be neglected by the government as a senior:

Hopefully that the government does not take away the CPP because they're not taking care of the finances and dealing with certain issues and helping the seniors.

Mary is concerned that if she were to go on Employment and Income Assistance, it would not meet her needs. She also recognizes that there may be services to help but she struggles to access them:

And also, the amount that they [the Government] give me will not meet my needs at all. And the other things that they have where they will defray the cost or take care of the cost of this and that, I didn't know about those services.

Linda expresses that it is difficult for her to access medicine with limited funding from the government:

No, it was just assistance and well I have high blood pressure, diabetes and everything [...] they have a thing for diabetes, you have to eat this special stuff which you can't afford it. They [the Government] give you \$16 but it doesn't really include if you add everything up, they don't give you for bus fare. They used to give you for bus fare but they don't no more.

In the context of a foster mother, Nita struggles with the amount that she receives from the government to provide healthy food for her kids:

Interviewer: "And the money you received from foster parenting won't change?"

Nita: "No."

Interviewer: "Does it change with consumer price index or anything?"

Nita: "No. Nope. So if expenses, like I heard vegetables and fruit are going up in costs. So to continue to buy them, might be more challenging in the future"

These demonstrate failures in the government's ability to support these individuals. This lack of social support combined with barriers to equal economic participation limit the participants' ability to save and attain financial well-being.

Strategies

Though these women face many challenges to meeting their financial needs, they remain versatile and resilient. Their financial strategies include budgeting, financial tracking, resistance to borrowing, limiting spending, using NGO's, and using government-funded programs.

All participants acknowledged the use of budgeting, which includes mental budgeting and writing amounts down in a calendar or notebook: "of course I write everything on calendar, big squares and all that. So I check everything with that" (Mary); "I have the bank book where I would update" (Kateryna).

As part of the Financial Diaries Project participants were familiar with tracking finances, but for some tracking involved tele-banking which is becoming obsolete, "the accessibility of doing the bank, telebanking, I could run to the phone and check my banking" (Mary). The decline of telebanking was an expressed area of concern because online banking felt less accessible to them.

When asked about the use of credit cards, all participants were wary of credit card usage ranging from "no. I don't borrow" (Mary) and "I'll never do that again" (Linda) to "if I didn't have the money to pay off my credit card, then I'm not gonna spend it" (Kateryna). Nita said, "right now I only have one credit card and that's all I'm going to have," citing bad experiences with a certain credit card company.

Another common strategy among participants was to limit spending. Linda, for example, quit smoking because it became too expensive for her. Kateryna mentioned thrifting for clothing instead of buying new. Mary spoke of only spending money on necessities, "If I don't need it, walk away". To supplement this, participants also referred to picking up extra shifts as a financial strategy, "accepting any other shifts from the City, that's gonna play a big role" (Kateryna).

Participants also discussed the use of food banks, churches, and other organizations as a strategy to meet their needs:

Having support of people and organizations. Like the clinic, they've been very beneficial. They've been helpful. The social worker. Some people have a psychologist that would amp them up and

encourage them. I have my Christian backing with the church prayer. A lot of people know my situation and that's what they do. – Mary

Connections within the participants' communities play a large role in their support systems.

Finally, in addition to community supports and NGO's the participants drew from government programs such as Rent Assist and employment training programs. There was mention of some difficulty accessing these programs and, as referenced above, doubts about the programs meeting their needs.

Discussion

The participants' experiences shed light on challenges their demographic faces when participating in the financial world. Their goals for financial well-being were modest – first and foremost to be able to provide themselves and their families with basic necessities. Long-term dreams of having disposable income would only be possible with more stable work and an increase in government care.

The most significant finding from the data is that the participants faced many barriers to equal participation in the economy including discrimination, abusive work environments and unpaid reproductive labour, and this inhibited their ability to accrue savings. Kateryna for example had refused to let go of her informal work even though it paid her infrequently, because she felt like it was the only job flexible enough for her childcare schedule. In her interviews it seemed she felt indebted to the owner for giving her some semblance of stability, working seven days a week at times. Later in the study she attained a position in a city library stacking books part-time but she continued to cling to this job where she “bartered” for earnings – why is that? I believe that living without a financial safety net for so long made Kateryna unwilling to give up one of the only stable jobs she'd had. Perhaps she was nervous that the library would turn out to be too inflexible with the care she was providing for her grandson, or the hours not enough to live on.

Low-income women make up a large part of the informal sector (Palmer, 1995). Even in Canada where the formal economy dominates, we can see from the participants that jobs that pay under-the-table, underpaid labour or unpaid reproductive labour still exist among low-income women and act as a barrier

to financial well-being. The participants had many strategies to ensure their finances would be enough for the month and through this showed a basic level of financial literacy to suit their incomes. For Linda or Mary that supplement their meals with food banks or Nita who worries that her income from fostering will not be enough to provide healthy food, gambling with the stock market or calculating mortgage interest rates are inconsequential compared to the strategies they must use to pay for day-to-day needs. Skills such as financial tracking, budgeting, avoiding credit card debt, limiting spending, and finding helpful resources are more pertinent. Thus, a high level of financial literacy is unnecessary.

However, job equity and access to government programs are incredibly necessary. The participants all showed doubt in the government's ability to care for their needs in some way, illustrating the "care deficit" that Brodie (2010) exposes in their research. The participants supplemented their needs with help from non-profits and community members, who serve to fill gaps left by the government. Yet many other services that could be beneficial to the participants exist, they just need to be more accessible.

The problems identified in my study warrant a government-funded response. Organizations such as United Way and SEED Winnipeg recognized this and have provided helplines (211 and 431-813-HELP, respectively) and websites (like 211.ca) that connect individuals with support ranging from employment counselling or financial services to food banks and shelters. This service is an extremely valuable addition to Canada's social infrastructure that could also provide data insights to aid in the creation of social policy interventions. The 211 service has received increased funding from the federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which will expire on April 1, 2021. United Way has recommended that the government continue its funding of the project with \$27 million over the next three years to increase the breadth and quality of the service (United Way Centraide, 2021). After assessing the functionality and importance of this service, I believe that it will address some of the challenges faced by low-income women in my study.

In addition to increasing the funding for helplines like 211, I recommend that the data collected from them should be made available to other organizations and all three levels of government to increase

the efficiency of service delivery to low-income individuals. The supports that individuals depend on the most should not suffer from a lack of funding or resources. For low-income women, we might see the care deficit reduced in areas of healthcare or childcare, allowing women greater access to employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The assertion that poor women are poor because of negative financial choices was not supported by the data collected in the Financial Diaries interviews. The “choice” discourse present in neoliberal schools of thought that promote financial literacy left gaps that I have attempted to fill in my research. The need for financial literacy is still pressing in an increasingly financialized global economy, but for low-income women I found that other needs such as social service provision take precedence.

The ability to connect financially vulnerable populations with the right resources can be instrumental to their success. As the internet can be inaccessible to people with low incomes, especially older populations, a phone line can provide the important connections needed. While some financial strategies such as budgeting, tracking, spending reduction, and borrowing avoidance fall on an individual, the programs and organizations individuals access are a public service and thus need the proper public funding. I strongly believe the 211 service in Canada can aid in the allocation of resources to the right programs.

The women whose interviews gave insight to the financial challenges of their demographic deserve to meet their financial well-being goals. However, the ability to meet their basic needs, the needs of their families, and to be able to accrue savings is challenged by gender inequities present in our economic system. The public sector has a responsibility to aid individuals such as the participants in overcoming these barriers to financial well-being. After bearing witness to the resiliency and resourcefulness of the participants in my research, I believe that with the right supports these women can thrive.

References

- Brodie, J. (2010). Globalization, Canadian family policy, and the omissions of neoliberalism. *North Carolina Law Review*, 88(5), 1559-1592.
- Bruine De Bruin, W., Vanderklaauw, W., Downs, J. S., Fischhoff, B., Topa, G., & Armantier, O. (2010). Expectations of Inflation: The Role of Demographic Variables, Expectation Formation, and Financial Literacy. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 44(2), 381-401.
- Buckland, J. (2014). Financial Exclusion and its Implications for Adult Learning about Finances. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, 141, 15-24.
- Buckland, J., Fikkert, A. & Gonske, J. (2013). Struggling to Make Ends Meet: Using Financial Diaries to Examine Financial Literacy among Low-income Canadians. *Journal of Poverty*, 17, 331-355.
- Coley, R. L. & Lombardi, C. M. (2014). Low-Income Women's Employment Experiences and Their Financial, Personal, and Family Well-Being. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 28(1), 88-97.
- Dueck-Read, J. (2021). The Differential Impact of the Pandemic and Recession on Family Finances: Report on COVID-19 Follow Survey with Phase One Participants. *Canadian Financial Diaries Research Project*. <https://financialdiariesca.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/cfd-covid-19-survey-final.pdf>
- Dueck-Read, J. (2019). Canadian Financial Diaries methods report on Phase I. *Canadian Financial Diaries Research Project*. https://financialdiariesca.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/diaries-methods-report_public.pdf
- Fonseca, R., Mullen, K. J., Zamarro G., & Zissimopoulos, J. (2012). What Explains the Gender Gap in Financial Literacy? The Role of Household Decision Making. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 46(1), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2011.01221.x>
- Lee, Y., Tang, F., Kim, K. H., & Albert, S. M. (2015). The Vicious Cycle of Parental Caregiving and Financial Well-being: A Longitudinal Study of Women. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 70(3), 425-431. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbu001>
- Lusardi, A., & Mitchell, O. S. (2008). Planning and Financial Literacy: How Do Women Fare? *The American Economic Review*, 98(2), 413-417.

Palmer, I. (1995). Public Finance from a Gender Perspective. *World Development*, 23(11), 1981-1986.

Pinto, L. E., & Coulson, E. (2011). Social Justice and the Gender Politics of Financial Literacy Education.

Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 9(2), 54–85.

Prosper Canada Centre for Financial Literacy. (2015). Financial Literacy and People Living on Low Incomes.

Retrieved from: [https://prosperscanada.org/getattachment/ace18204-262c-4680-bb1e-](https://prosperscanada.org/getattachment/ace18204-262c-4680-bb1e-8135b78e3dba/Financial-Literacy-and-People-Living-on-Low-Income.aspx#:~:text=People%20living%20on%20low%20incomes%20have%20significant%20financial%20knowledge%20and,out%20of%20a%20low%20income.&text=Financial%20education%20content%20and%20delivery,adapted%20to%20specific%20participant%20needs.)

[8135b78e3dba/Financial-Literacy-and-People-Living-on-Low-](https://prosperscanada.org/getattachment/ace18204-262c-4680-bb1e-8135b78e3dba/Financial-Literacy-and-People-Living-on-Low-Income.aspx#:~:text=People%20living%20on%20low%20incomes%20have%20significant%20financial%20knowledge%20and,out%20of%20a%20low%20income.&text=Financial%20education%20content%20and%20delivery,adapted%20to%20specific%20participant%20needs.)

[Income.aspx#:~:text=People%20living%20on%20low%20incomes%20have%20significant%20financial%20knowledge%20and,out%20of%20a%20low%20income.&text=Financial%20education%20content%20and%20delivery,adapted%20to%20specific%20participant%20needs.](https://prosperscanada.org/getattachment/ace18204-262c-4680-bb1e-8135b78e3dba/Financial-Literacy-and-People-Living-on-Low-Income.aspx#:~:text=People%20living%20on%20low%20incomes%20have%20significant%20financial%20knowledge%20and,out%20of%20a%20low%20income.&text=Financial%20education%20content%20and%20delivery,adapted%20to%20specific%20participant%20needs.)

United Way Centraide. (2021). Enhancing and Growing the Pan Canadian 211 system: Ensuring access to

services through social infrastructure. [https://www.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UWCC-](https://www.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UWCC-211-Budget-2021-Submission.pdf)

[211-Budget-2021-Submission.pdf](https://www.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UWCC-211-Budget-2021-Submission.pdf)

Appendix

Transcript 1: Financial Wellbeing Interview Questions

Questions to guide a conversation about financial wellbeing & literacy

15 October 2018

Approach

The purpose of these questions are to understand more about the participant's financial wellbeing, literacy, and their understanding of these concepts. These questions are intended as a guide and as a means of hearing our participant's voice. Audio recording and taking notes is an advisable approach. In order to audio record be sure to get participant's consent by going through the appropriate consent form. The interview will last 45-60 minutes. If the participant does not understand a term, please invite them to define it as they wish. If necessary, the interviewer can define it and please note that in the write-up.

Preliminary questions

These questions are intended to 'set the stage' of the interview and to begin the conversation and to get the participant to begin thinking and sharing about their finances. The responses can be used to tailor subsequent questions.

1. How knowledgeable do you feel about your finances?

a. In order to encourage the participant to share more you might ask the following: Do you feel 'in control' of your finances? Do you feel confident about your finances? When financial emergencies occur, can you respond?

2. Where did you learn how to manage your finances? Were there particular lessons you learned as a kid or as an adult?

a. In order to encourage the participant to share more you might ask the following:

i. When?

ii. From whom?

3. In order to encourage the participant to share more you might ask the following (Note that these are components of a common fin lit definition) For instance, where did you learn about the following,

a. Tracking finances (define)

b. Budgeting (define)

c. Saving/Using credit (define)

d. Planning your finances, anticipating changes, & protecting yourself (define).

Financial wellbeing & literacy

4. What does financial wellbeing mean to you?

a. Encourage the participant to share their thoughts

b. If needed, in order to encourage the participant to share more, you might ask the following: What are the components of financial wellbeing, in your mind?

i. If necessary, possible prompts: Is fin wellbeing related to meeting life goals? To making ends meet? To saving money for certain goals?

5. How could your financial wellbeing improve?

a. Encourage the participant to share their views including what 'financial wellbeing' means to them

b. Then ask the following,

i. How might tracking your finances (like you do in the diaries project) help?

ii. How might budgeting (setting up a weekly/monthly financial table listing income on one side, and that would be equal to, spending on the other side) help?

iii. How might regularly saving money help?

- iv. How might careful use of credit help?
- v. How might planning your longer term finances (e.g., planning for big purchase, new job, retirement) help?
- 6. To what extent do you think the following factors affect your financial wellbeing?
 - a. What role does active saving play in your financial wellbeing?
 - b. What role does not borrowing for daily living expenses play in your financial wellbeing?
 - c. What role does restraining your spending play in your financial wellbeing?
 - d. What role does confidence in your ability to manage your finances play a role in your financial wellbeing?
- 7. Are there any other thoughts you have about your financial wellbeing or how to achieve it?