

Phase 2 qualitative interview topic guides

Three-month qualitative interview topic guide

Not all topics will be asked at each interview. The questions will be selected and refined according to the analysis of the study findings.

1. How has it been (trying to lose weight/keep weight off/not regain weight in this study)?
2. How you think the study has impacted your
 - a. Thoughts and feelings towards weight loss?
 - b. Behaviours surrounding weight loss? Strategies? What have you tried? What seems to be working for you? What doesn't seem to be working for you? Is anyone helping/not helping you? Social Networks? Have you talked to anyone about being in this study, if so what were their reactions? What about family/friends/work colleagues – have they commented? Have they helped or hindered in any way?
3. Did you change anything after I saw you 3 months ago? Did the text messages help?
4. What was it like getting the text messages? What parts of the study have you found helpful or unhelpful in your efforts to lose weight? The web pages? The information links on the website? The pedometer? The incentives? The weight loss targets?
5. Is there anything about the study that could be improved (e.g. initial approach, first appointment, information, randomisation, the texts, the website, the incentives, the communication with the research team) if we do it again?
6. Do you have any suggestions for us as researchers/ what would make a difference?
7. Has there been anything that has surprised you about being part of this study. Has there been anything that has upset you or that you have found difficult?
8. Have you met any other men who are involved in this study? Did you discuss the study? Can you tell me a bit about your conversations?
9. Have you seen any information about this study other than what we have given you?
10. When we design research studies about weight loss in men, we are keen to ask questions and measure the things that really matter to the men taking part [Discuss particular items in the questionnaire and seek their views]

11. It is now possible to link anonymous computer records about your health with anonymous results of Government funded research like the results of this study. Participants in the research are being asked to consent to this. For example, for men in this study who have lost weight, we could find out in future whether they have less diabetes or cancer than men in the study who did not lose weight. This can help researchers and NHS make decisions about whether new initiatives like those in this study can improve health and are good value for money. What are your views about this?
12. How do you feel about the way you were recruited? What other ways could we recruit men to take part? What is likely to encourage men like you to take part. What is likely to put men off? Do you think you would have signed up if you saw a Game of Stones Stall in a supermarket/ receive a letter from your GP/other routes....(besides the one they responded to) ?
13. I am meeting you today in X - what other venues would you like to attend? We want men to stay in the study and come and be weighed over 12 months - how do you suggest we keep men in the study.

12-month SMS+I group qualitative interview topic guide

‘I would like to have a chat with you about your experience on the Game of Stones Study.’

General [including appointments, retention, supportive accountability]

- How have you found taking part in the study? Do you have any suggestions about how the study could be improved?
- If a friend was thinking of joining Game of Stones - what would you say to them?
- Some men have not attended all their appointments. What motivated you to attend today? Why do you think some men may have not attended? Do you have any suggestions of how best we could get men to attend? (prompt if not raised £20 voucher at 6m)
- How did you find the number of study appointments? What if there was only one appointment at 12 months for weighing and one target weight (10%) - what are your thoughts? Does it matter who you meet for the appointments? What if it was a different researcher each time you attended? If this was in the ‘real world’ and not a research study who would you like to meet with (e.g. nurse at GP practice or chemist)?
- Has there been any unexpected benefits or downsides about taking part in this study?

Incentives

- Could you tell me what your understanding of how the incentive aspect of the study works? Can you explain it me? What did/do you think about the incentive aspect?
- Have these thoughts changed over the 12m (e.g. start, if target met/not met)? Were the targets realistic? How did you feel when you met/didn’t meet targets?
- **[Explain loss aversion]** What do you think the best ways would be to make men feel like they would be losing out on their money if they do not achieve their targets (rather than gaining if they do meet targets)?
- Did you tell anyone about the money aspect of the study? What was their reaction?
- Did/do you have specific plans in mind for the money?
- Did you monitor your weight during the study? Did you notice if you were likely to meet your weight loss targets prior to appointments? Did you change your eating patterns at all in the last few weeks or days before the target date?
- What if there were no texts messages or no money linked to targets?

- If there was something you could change about the money aspect of the study, what would you change and why?

12-month SMS only group qualitative interview topic guide

‘I would like to have a chat with you about your experience on the Game of Stones Study.’

General [including appointments, retention, supportive accountability]

- How have you found taking part in the study? Do you have any suggestions about how the study could be improved?
- If a friend was thinking of joining Game of Stones - what would you say to them?
- Some men have not attended all their appointments. What motivated you to attend today? Why do you think some men may have not attended? Do you have any suggestions of how best we could get men to attend? (prompt if not raised £20 voucher at 6m)
- How did you find the number of study appointments? What if there was only one appointment at 12 months for weighing and one target weight (10%) - what are your thoughts? Does it matter who you meet for the appointments? What if it was a different researcher each time you attended? If this was in the ‘real world’ and not a research study who would you like to meet with (e.g. nurse at GP practice or chemist)?
- Has there been any unexpected benefits or downsides about taking part in this study?

Text Messages

- How have you found receiving regular text messages over the last 12 months? Have you been keeping up with them?
- Could the text messages be improved? Do you have any suggestions?
I would like to now show you a different style of texts (alternative texts) to the ones that you have received (narrative texts). We will be trying these out with some other men. Take a minute to read these. As you are reading them please talk through any thoughts that are going through your head. E.g. if you immediately think they are irritating, interesting or useful, please say this.
- What are your thoughts on these texts?
- In what ways do they differ from the texts you have been receiving over the past 12 months?
- If you were to make recommendations for our future research looking at using text messages to help men to lose weight, what would you suggest? And why?
- What would your opinion be on offering a choice of different styles of text?

12-months control group qualitative interview topic guide

- It's been a while since your initial appointment, did you remember that you were taking part in the Game of Stones study?
- Since we met 12 months ago, have you been trying to lose weight? If so, what have you tried? Have you been weighing yourself at home? Do you still want to lose weight?
- Have you used the step counter or accessed the links on the study website?

Acceptability

- How have you found taking part in the study?
- How do you feel about being followed up 12 months after your initial appointment?
- How did you feel about being placed in a group that did not receive regular text messages for the first 12 months of this study (control group)? For an experiment, researchers think it is important for some men to be in a group where little happens so that they have a comparison - what do you think about this?
- Has there been anything that has surprised you or that you have found difficult about taking part in this study?
- Not all men attend appointments. What motivated you to attend today? Why do you think some men have not attended? (prompt – if not mentioned - £20 voucher)
- Is there anything that we could do differently to ensure that men come back?
- Up to this point, is there anything that we could do to improve your experience on this study? (e.g. initial approach, first appointment, information, the communication with the research team)
- If a friend was thinking of joining the Game of Stones study - what would you say to them?

15-month alternative SMS group qualitative interview topic guide

- How have you found taking part in the study?
- How have you found trying to lose weight over the past 3 months?
- Do you have any suggestions about how the study could be improved?

Text Messages

- How have you found receiving text messages over the last 3 months? Have you been reading them?
- Did you respond to the text messages?
- Have you shown them to anyone? What did they say?
- Have you found any particular text messages helpful?
- Have you found any particular text messages unhelpful?
- How have the text messages worked/ not worked for you?
- How could the text messages be improved? Do you have any suggestions?
- How would you feel about receiving these text messages for 12 months instead of 3 months?
I would like to now show you a sample of a different style of texts (narrative) to the ones that you have received (alternative texts) [*Explain narrative test message**]. Take a minute to read these. As you are reading them please talk through any thoughts that are going through your head. E.g. if you immediately think they are irritating, interesting or useful, please say this.
- What are your thoughts on this style (narrative) of texts?
- In what ways do they differ from the texts you have been receiving over the past 3 months?
- If you were to make recommendations for our future research looking at using text messages to help men to lose weight, what would you suggest? And why?
- What would your opinion be on offering a choice of different styles of text at the start of the study?
- What would your opinion be on having the option to switch to a different style of text during the study?
- If at your first appointment with us you had the chance to write your own text messages [that you would receive in addition to the ones you have been receiving], what would you say to

yourself? How often would you like to get a text written by yourself? Would there be any specific days or times that it would be useful to get one of these texts?

- What would you think if some of the text responses from men went onto the website so that you could see how some of the other participants on the study are doing?

*texts from a fictional character who will tell you about how he and his friends are doing with their own attempts to lose weight and keeping it off [from information leaflet]