**Caregiver Interview Guide**

Study: Caregiver perspectives of the unintended consequences of the COVID-19 institutional visitation restrictions

**Interviewer preamble**

Hello, my name is [researcher name] and I am a researcher studying the impact of institutional visitation restrictions on families and friends of older residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, my team is interested in learning more about caregivers’ experiences with these visitation restrictions in institutional care settings (like long-term care and retirement homes) during the pandemic. It is my understanding that you provide support to a [family member/friend] who lives in one of these settings. Is this correct?

[If YES] Great, thank you.

[If NO ask clarifying questions to determine eligibility] Do you know anyone who lives [or has lived] in a long-term care or similar facility? Have you visited them during the pandemic, or did you visit them before the pandemic began?

With this interview, I’d like to hear about your experiences of COVID-19 visitation restrictions, and hear your thoughts on how this has impacted your life, and the life of your [family member/friend] who lives in one of these settings.

There are no right or wrong answers, as we are just interested in hearing your thoughts. As noted in the consent form, your name and other identifying information will be kept confidential. We will remove or replace any identifying information like names or locations with fake names, called pseudonyms before we analyze the data.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. No one will know that you have participated in the study. Your decision to participate, withdraw, or skip questions will have no consequences to you. We will probably spend between 30 minutes to 1 hour together, but this can be longer or shorter depending on your preference. You may take breaks or stop the interview at any time. If you decide to stop the interview and withdraw from the study during the interview, we will not use any of the information you have provided us with in our study.

In the consent form, it is noted that I will record the session, which will later be transcribed. This will help me to pay greater attention to our conversation, rather than taking detailed notes. Is this still ok with you?

Do you have any questions about the study or informed consent form?

I will ask a few demographic questions before I begin recording our interview. Is this okay with you?

[Start Recording]

**Background**

1. First, I’d like to get to know you better. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

*Prompts:*

* *Where do you live?*
* *What types of activities do you enjoy doing?*

1. At the start of this interview, you indicated that you provide support to a [family member/friend] who lives in a [long-term care home/retirement home/other care facility]. Can you tell me more about them?

*Prompts:*

* *How old are they?*
* *What is your relationship with them?*
* *What types of support do they need?*
* *What type of care setting do they live in? How long have they lived there?*
* *How long have you provided support to them for?*
* *Recreational or leisure activities they enjoy?*

1. Before the COVID-19 pandemic began in Ontario, what types of care or support did you normally provide to your [family member/friend]?

*Prompts:*

* *Did you help with daily activities?*
* *Did you provide emotional support or social contact?*
* *Was there any other type of support you provided that we haven’t already captured?*
* *Did you visit them regularly? On average, how often did you visit?*

1. Can you tell me a bit about the visitation restrictions that were imposed in your [family member/friends] care setting?

*Prompts:*

* *When were the visiting restrictions introduced? How did you first learn about them?*
* *How long did they last?*
* *Did they change over time?*

1. What is your impression of the purpose of these visitor restrictions?

*Prompts:*

* *To limit the spread of COVID-19? To protect residents?*
* *Did the restrictions seem appropriate to you?*

1. How were you impacted by these restrictions?

*Prompts:*

* *Did the restrictions cause you any stress or worry?*
* *Did they limit your ability to visit with your [family member/friend]?*
* *Do you feel they protect you and your [family member/friend] from COVID-19?*

1. How do you feel communication was handled during the period of time when you were unable to visit [family member/friends name]?

*Prompts:*

* *Were you able to speak with your family member/friend regularly?*
* *Was it easy to reach staff?*
* *Did you receive updates on care changes in the facility?*

1. What types of information or communication would have been helpful to you during this time?

*Prompts:*

*Frequency of communication (daily, weekly monthly etc)*

*Mode of communication (Newsletters, calls, etc.)*

*Point of communication (one person at the facility, your loved one, a friend)*

1. Were there any resources available to you or [family member’s/friend’s name] to help you manage through this time?

*Prompts:*

* *Did any staff at the facility help you?*
* *Did you read any information online or access any educational videos?*
* *Were you given any type of financial support?*

1. What resources or supports would you like to see available in the event visitor restrictions are implemented in future?

*Prompts:*

* *Do you think families would benefit from more communication, technological support, education, etc.?*
* *How do you think you would go about getting access to these resources?*
* *Is there anyone available to help you to access the resources?*

1. What has the emotional impact been for you?
2. Is there anything we haven’t talked about today that you’d like to say, or that you think I should know? Or others should know?

Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. If you have any other follow-up questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me by email, or you can contact [Principal Investigator] at [phone number]. Once our findings from this study are available, we will reach out and share those with you.