

## In-Depth Interview Guide

### Psychoactive Substance Use in Underserved Ghanaian Communities: Lived Experiences, Drivers, and Recovery Pathways

**Research Team Lead:** Simon Nyarko

**Target Group:** Individuals (15 to 35) with lived experience of psychoactive substance use in Yeji

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#### Instructions for Interviewers

- Build trust. Start with a friendly introduction and explain that the interview is confidential and voluntary.
- Use the participant's preferred language (Twi, Gonja, Hausa, Nchumuru, or English).
- Use probes to follow up on answers. Avoid judgmental language.
- Remind participants that they can pause or stop at any time.

#### Introductory Script

*"Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I am part of a research team trying to understand the experiences of people in Yeji who use or have used drugs. We want to learn more about what led to drug use, how it affects people's lives, and what support would help people stop or reduce use. Your voice matters and will help improve services. You can skip any question you don't want to answer. Everything you say will be kept confidential".*

#### SECTION 1: Background and Life Context

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1. Can you tell me a little about yourself (name, occupation, age) and your life growing up in Yeji (or wherever you grew up)?

*[Probes: What was life like at home? Did you attend school? Work?]*

2. What was your life like before you started using drugs?

*[Probes: Hopes or plans you had? How did you spend your time?]*

#### SECTION 2: Pathways Into Drug Use

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3. Can you tell me about how you first started using drugs?

*[Probes: What drug? How old were you? Who introduced you?]*

4. What were the main reasons you started using drugs?

*[Probes: Was it stress, peer pressure, curiosity, boredom, trauma?]*

5. Looking back, what do you think made you more vulnerable to using drugs?

*[Probes: Home environment? Financial issues? Influence from friends?]*

### SECTION 3: Experience of Drug Use

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6. What has your experience been like since you started using drugs?  
*[Probes: Positive feelings? Negative consequences?]*
7. How has drug use affected your relationships with family, friends, or community?
8. Have you ever wanted to stop or reduce your use? Why or why not?

### SECTION 4: Attempts to Quit and Recovery Efforts

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9. Have you ever tried to stop using drugs? What happened?  
*[Probes: What helped? What made it difficult?]*
10. Did you ever try to get help (formal or informal)? What kind of help?  
*[Probes: Clinic, prayer camp, traditional healer, family, peer groups?]*
11. Were there any barriers that made it hard to get the help you needed?  
*[Probes: Fear, cost, stigma, distance, lack of support?]*

### SECTION 5: Recovery and Support Needs

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12. What do you think would really help someone like you quit drugs and stay off them?  
*[Probes: Health services, jobs, community support, counselling, safe housing, spirituality?]*
13. If you could design a recovery programme in Yeji, what would it include?  
*[Probes: What would make it accessible, safe, and helpful for people like you?]*
14. What would encourage you or others to actually use a support service if it were available?  
*[Probes: Respectful treatment? No judgment? Free services?]*

### SECTION 6: Reflections and Advice

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15. What would you like health workers, leaders, or policymakers to understand about people who use drugs?
16. What message would you give to a young person in Yeji who is just starting to use drugs?

### Closing

*"Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and thoughts. Is there anything else you'd like to say that we haven't asked about? Your story will help us better understand what people are going through and what needs to change."S*