00:00:01 Participant

There won’t be anyone ringing me from queer phone numbers will there?

00:00:04 Interviewer

No, no, nothing like that. And to be honest, I've just gotten one of those myself because again, people will be ringing me from numbers I don't recognise.

It was a scam call saying something about Amazon Prime and of course I don't have Amazon Prime. So no, nothing like that.

00:00:19 Participant

I don't do anything like this either.

00:00:22 Interviewer

OK, so I'll just set this to record. And as I said I will print it out. I'll post it you. You can look at it at your own time, but I'm not just sharing it or anything like that, so please have no concerns.

It's an ethical study and I want to tell you a little bit about it.

I want to read out the consent statements to you and then you can have a think about those.

You can ask any questions. All that will probably take maybe about two minutes and then really what I'm looking for is kind of broken down into three parts. So the first set of questions will just tell me a little about yourself, your age, gender, household. Well, I know some of this already from you, and then I'll ask you about lifelong learning, what it means to you, and I'll tell you a little bit about what it seems to mean to the Irish Government and how you know my research takes a different interpretation of that.

And we'll talk a little bit about digital skills or what you use the iPad for and the games and that kind of thing.

And then I'm interested in the intergenerational aspect of learning. So you know, you talked there about your granddaughter so you know, do your grandchildren help you out with your learning? Do you help them out with theirs in any way?

And that's really it. So, quality of life, I think is important, so I can usually tell pretty quickly whether somebody has generally a positive outlook on life and that kind of thing.

00:02:11 Participant

Right, so they’re answers (you’re looking for)?

00:02:13 Interviewer

Yes, absolutely. So I do have a couple of questions in relation to that, and I also like to just ask a little bit about community, and I know you're involved in in Eilish's Active Retirement Group there in Little Island.

00:02:26 Participant

That's right, yes.

00:02:30 Interviewer

And maybe you're involved in other activities and that kind of thing. So it seems all a little bit piecemeal but it'll all come together and tell a story. Does that make sense?

00:02:37 Participant

OK, that's fine, yes.

00:02:41 Interviewer

OK, so you can have a sip tea there now and I'll tell you about the study.

00:02:45 Interviewer

The study aims to explore the experiences of older adults and lifelong learning with specific focus on intergenerational exchanges and digital skills. Little is known about the concept of intergenerational learning in Ireland outside of formal learning environment, so that schools and universities, by taking part in this study, your insights will help contribute to our understanding of the contribution that intergenerational learning can make to the lifelong learning and digital skills development of older adults.

00:03:16 Interviewer

So does that make sense, <KATHLEEN>?

00:03:20 Participant

It does, yes.

00:03:27 Interviewer

I have seven statements here now that I'm going to read out so I'll take my time just so that you can take them in and if you want to stop me at any point then please do and just ask me, is that OK?

00:03:51 Participant

OK, fair enough.

00:03:52 Interviewer

So number one, I confirm that I understand the information about the study that has been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.

Number two, I understand that my participation is voluntary and if I'm involved in interview, I am free to withdraw my participation within two weeks of the date of the interview without giving any reason and my data will be removed. Now, it says 2 weeks, but it'll be at least October before I get to looking at any of this. And <KATHLEEN>, as I said, I will be sending off the transcript to you.

00:04:29

OK. No problem.

00:04:34 Interviewer

Number three, I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher (that's me) but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my anonymity. When I'm involved in this project, anonymized data will be offered to Lancaster University Archives and will be made available to genuine research for reuse.

00:05:05 Participant

OK.

00:05:06 Interviewer

Number four, I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent. And in reality <KATHLEEN>, I'm not including anyone’s name. If I'm referring to somebody, I'll give them different name, first name and that's it.

00:05:21 Interviewer

OK, fair enough.

00:05:22 Interviewer

Number five, I understand that interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure, so that's what you were asking about.

00:05:35 Participant

OK, fair enough.

00:05:36 Interviewer

Very secure and no issue at all.

Number six, I understand that the data will be kept according to university guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study. Again, all anonymized and no way of being able to trace it back to the research participant and finally,

Number seven, I agree to take part in this study.

So how does that sound <KATHLEEN>?

00:06:00 Participant

That sounds fine, yeah?

00:06:02 Interviewer

OK, you feel a little bit better about it now?

00:06:03 Participant

Now things are covered.

00:06:05 Interviewer

Things are covered, yeah, I mean, at the end of the day it needs to be an ethical study. It's had to go through, you know, the Ethics Committee so please don't have any concerns in that regard.

00:06:16 Participant

I actually do a thing with Trinity College in Dublin. They send it out every so often.

00:06:27 Interviewer

That’s TILDA, is it?

00:06:30 Participant

TILDA, yes that’s it.

00:06:34 Interviewer

Brilliant. They’re a great source of information.

00:06:34 Participant

I've been doing that now for... since before my husband died 11 years.

I feel that as an older person, as you get older.... and when I think about it now, they sent me one during the COVID but I never filled it in, I think. It was mostly about COVID anyway.

00:06:55 Interviewer

And they published that recently. I read their reports, a lot of people were saying the same things (about COVID), but it was very good. All their reports are very good.

00:07:03 Participant

What you’re doing now is something similar.

00:07:05 Interviewer

Yes, it is. This is for my PhD.

00:07:11 Participant

Are you hoping to teach then as well?

00:07:14 Interviewer

Here's the thing. I'm 56, so I'm retired from industry. I used to work as a project manager for Apple, the other side of the city from yourself in Hollyhill, and with Heineken, Murphy brewery before that.

00:07:26 Interviewer

I left Apple in 2017 but for the past nearly 20 years I've been teaching part-time at UL, at the University of Limerick.

00:07:32 Participant

Oh, that’s very good.

00:07:38 Interviewer

Yeah, so I'm teaching project management, but I always wanted to get a qualification in education, so I said, well, you know, I have a master's degree now. What's the next one to get it was the PhD. So this is really my retirement project, my semi-retirement project.

00:08:07 Participant

Do you make the long journey from Skibbereen to UL?

00:08:09 Interviewer

I mostly teach online but I teach on campus there in the spring. The way they do it for me is that they give me one full day every two weeks, which is great. Yeah, so I'm not up and down there every day. No, not at all.

00:08:28 Participant

Well, fair play to you at you know, your age. You're doing that, you know it's good.

00:08:35 Interviewer

Yeah, well I enjoy it and I think that’s the main thing.

00:08:39 Participant

That’s like my granddaughter who is thirty and she’s always, she qualified, she went to UCC as well and she’s the only one of us who went to UCC. We're very proud of the fact, but she qualified in different things. And then she's doing things online. She went into the hotel industry and of course that closed down.

And then she did something about health and safety and she has certificates for this, that and the other thing. She’s constantly upgrading herself, you know.

00:09:17 Interviewer

I think that's great and definitely will talk about where she gets that from because I've been teaching online as well, it’s the same course, the same programme but for online students. And I've been doing that like for about 10 years. So all of the stuff with COVID, really didn't affect me much, and in fact it was better because the class I would normally go to Limerick to teach, I was able to teach that online as well. There was no travel.

00:09:47 Participant

That was good, doing it online. Well done.

00:09:52 Interviewer

So I'll just go through the questions now. You told me some of these already, that your age range is over 75 and now I have to ask this one.

And you're going to laugh because I was talking to a lady who you probably know, last week, and I said, your gender. Are you male, female, other or prefer not to say and she burst out laughing and she said, “I was female the last time I checked it” it was so funny. We both burst out laughing. You have to be careful and politically correct.

00:10:23 Participant

I'm female.

00:10:31 Participant

I know that person. Eilish told me you were talking to one of our members.

00:10:43 Interviewer

OK, so you live in County Cork and I expect Little Island is urban with population of over 1500, right?

00:10:54 Participant

It's still urban, but just about I think.

00:10:57 Interviewer

It’s on the border. So what I do is I take the central Statistics Office definition and they say rural is like a village with under 1500 or out in the countryside and something like that but.

00:11:11 Participant

I think we're still rural because we were meant to join when they extended the city, so they included Glanmire but they didn’t include us so I would assume maybe we're rural.

00:11:22 Interviewer

OK. I can look that up actually from the census, the population, I'll look that up and I'll check because that's interesting.

00:11:30 Participant

I always understood long ago that when your address was County Cork you’re rural, and when your address was Cork you were in the city or the border of the city.

00:11:39 Interviewer

All right, so I know what you mean.

I live, well, it's rented out now at the moment, in Ballincollig and it is still referred to as a village, you know, with a population of 20,000 or more <laughs>.

00:11:50 Participant

Just like Glanmire, huge.

00:11:52 Interviewer

It is. I can check that out anyway and that's not a problem.

00:11:57 Interviewer

So in terms of your living arrangements, <KATHLEEN>, do you live alone, with one other or more than one other?

00:12:04 Participant

Well, officially I'm on my own, but my granddaughter stays here most times.

I’m a widow so my family are gone from home.

00:12:18 Interviewer

And your granddaughter. Is she the one you referred to earlier?

00:12:22 Participant

She's the one, she works in the city. Her mum lives in County Meath, you see, so it's handier for her to stay with me.

00:12:30 Interviewer

Of course. Well, that's perfect, so I'll put her in the age range 25 to 39 then.

00:12:40 Interviewer

The last of these questions, then, is about school. So when you left school, I think you said that she's the first in your family to go to college. So what age or what level did you leave school <KATHLEEN>? Do you remember?

00:12:57 Participant

I left school. Would the College of Commerce count?

00:13:01 Participant

Yes, of course it would.

00:13:04 Participant

I was, my first job, I was 18. I went to the College of Commerce. I went to secondary school, did my Junior cert now (it was Inter cert in my day) and then left secondary school after that and went to the College of Commerce to do a commercial course.

00:13:24 Interviewer

OK, that's great. That's exactly what I want to know. And you started work at 18. OK, brilliant. We're flying it here now. Alright, I'm going to take a sip of my tea now <laughs>.

00:13:42 Participant

I had a year and a half in an office of Mother’s Pride bakery.

And then I went to the mental hospital on the Lee Road, Our Lady's hospital. I was there three years, never qualified unfortunately. And that time when you got married you had to leave your job.

00:14:05 Interviewer

OK.

00:14:10 Interviewer

And what were you working at there, <KATHLEEN>?

00:14:13 Participant

Nursing, but I never qualified as a psychiatric nurse.

00:14:18 Interviewer

Yeah, you just did all the on-the-job training, obviously.

00:14:21 Participant

I did, I was married at 21, so that was the era people got married in my day, and you know that was it, when you got married you had to leave your job.

00:14:34 Interviewer

That was the law at the time until the 1970s when they lifted that marriage bar.

00:14:41 Participant

Yes exactly. So that was the source of my work years. About 3 to 4 years I was working and that was it, you know.

00:14:51 Interviewer

That makes sense in relation to the way things were at that time.

00:14:58 Participant

At that time, exactly yeah.

00:15:00 Interviewer

So I'm going to ask you now, just a little bit about, but I want to explain what lifelong learning is. You've heard me mention it already. The EU, the European Union, they describe it as “investing in people's knowledge, skills and competencies throughout their lives”.

However, when I when I look at the policies of the Irish Government and I look at their various strategies, it all seems to me that lifelong learning is trying to get people either back into work, back into the labour market, skilled at something else and so on.

So, the first question then that I'd like to ask you is to tell me a little bit about what lifelong learning means to you, <KATHLEEN>.

00:15:53 Participant

Well, my motto is “As long as you're on this life, you're always learning something.”

00:16:00 Interviewer

OK, that's a good motto.

00:16:02 Participant

What I think because somebody will come up with something, even one of my grandchildren might say something and I’d say, “oh yeah, that's right, you know, yeah, I never thought of that”, you know.

They’d think of some idea about something and I wouldn’t have thought about it so therefore I learn something from them. And hopefully they're learning something as well from you.

00:16:24 Interviewer

Exactly and that's the whole learning exchange. I think that's so important to this because what I didn't explain, and I should have, is that when we think of so, there's probably three types of lifelong learning, so if you break it down into three ways so there's the formal learning so in your case, it would have been doing that commercial course in the College of Comm. And then you have non-formal learning. That's where you take an organised course, so it might be the Active Retirement group. Getting a speaker in to chat about something, that's non-formal learning because it's organised and then you have informal learning, which is exactly what you've described there about the interactions with your grandchildren, so I think that's useful information just to keep in mind.

00:17:11 Participant

OK, fair enough yeah.

00:17:17 Interviewer

So after that then. Over the years.

00:17:25 Interviewer

Have you completed any kind of courses maybe organised by groups, adult education, night classes. Any of those kind of things over the years?

00:17:38 Participant

No, to be honest.

I joined the ICA at one time all right.

00:17:46 Interviewer

OK, tell me about that.

00:17:50 Participant

A guild was formed here in Little island, but it didn’t last unfortunately, it just gave up.

00:17:57 Participant

But I remember when I was young, my mother was in the ICA in Glanmire and I remember I went to Termonfeckin which was their headquarters when I was 16 years of age.

What I went for I don't know. You generally went for two days that time. I don’t know what I did, I can’t remember. All I have is an autograph book with autographs of singers that were there. We had a great night <laughs>.

I have that to remind me <laughs>.

00:18:37 Participant

I did a course with the Active Retirement alright on computers. Yes, it was just a weekly thing for about three or four weeks or something. Just the basic learning of how to do things on the computer.

00:18:51 Interviewer

OK, and how did you find that?

00:18:54 Participant

It was OK, basically all I wanted to do was as I told you, just to check RIP.ie to see who was dead. All the deaths don’t appear on the paper anymore, so I wanted to do that and I wanted to check Facebook.

And it just basically went through what I wanted to do. I wanted just to play my solitaire now and Onyx is the other game I play and that's it. That's as much as I do on the computer.

00:19:26 Interviewer

OK.

00:19:30 Participant

I check Facebook and different groups and different things on Facebook. You know. Glanmire mums now have a page and East Cork Discussion group or something has a page, you know, which I would be interested in. I’m just basically interested in what's going on around and that's it.

00:19:50 Interviewer

Yeah. It's great for getting information like that, I have to say.

So do you remember when that was when the Active Retirement group had that course?

00:20:02 Participant

Oh my goodness. I suppose it was maybe two years ago?

00:20:07 Participant

It was in the library in Glanmire.

00:20:11 Interviewer

I'm very impressed with the work that I'm hearing from, you know, the county councils are doing through the library and the library ambassadors and they have the Older People’s Council and they have the Age Friendly programmes. They have a lot of good stuff going on.

00:20:27 Participant

And like that, we had young people and there were so many there, and one girl would be pointed to let’s say three elderly people and she’d just take the three of us then and she’d want to know... Now we took our tablets or laptops or whatever we had with us and it’s a tablet I have. They even provided laptops if we wanted to use them but I found the laptop too big and awkward because I was used to the tablet, you see.

00:21:03 Participant

It's the same thing on both as you know but I thought the tablet was easier to manage and everything, you know.

00:21:09 Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, oh that's brilliant. Just hold on just one second because this is interesting. We've so much to talk about here now.

This is only two years ago. I thought it might have been further back. How did you get the tablet in the first place, tell me.

00:21:27 Participant

My granddaughter.

00:21:28 Interviewer

OK, so she thought it was a good idea for you.

00:21:30 Participant

She gave it to me for Christmas. Oh God, it must be... my husband is dead 11 (years) so this is how I judge things. It must be after that anyway, definitely after he passing. It was for Christmas and she just showed me the basic things, what to do, how to turn it on, turn it off and do this and do that and then she just put things up on the screen for me and that was it. If I have any problem or if I wanted to look up anything she’d do it for me, you see. She taxed my car now for instance, I mean online rather than I having to go into town to do it, you know?

00:22:26 Interviewer

It’s such a short period of time that you've been using it, how do you compare getting the information, getting the notices, the news, that you get today compared when you didn't have the tablet? What was that like for you?

00:22:45 Participant

When I didn’t have it I used to buy the paper regularly and the daily newspaper was the one that gave all the news, or the television. But you wouldn’t get local knowledge and the television, obviously. I still buy the (Evening) Echo every day. I don’t get the Cork Examiner, or the Examiner, as they call it, anymore. Because I think they’re gone crap altogether. I mean it’s the same thing, you look at Facebook tonight and it's the same thing you see tomorrow on the Echo, which is out daily now rather than evening. So it's basically the same thing, you know.

00:23:25 Interviewer

Yeah, so getting news and everything. I mean I'd be the same. And sure, sometimes things pop up earlier or beforehand.

00:23:34 Participant

And unfortunately, I don't buy the Southern Star (Sandra’s local weekly newspaper) but when I go to West Cork I get it <laughs>.

00:23:39 Interviewer

Well, I have to buy it every week to see if I've written a piece for the Tidy Towns is in it <laughs>.

00:23:48 Participant

My brother was on the front page last week. Down a hole in Union Hall.

00:23:53 Interviewer

I saw it, Oh my goodness and he's over 6 foot tall.

00:23:57 Participant

He's 84 years of age. I knew it was on because I saw it on Facebook <laughs>.

00:24:21 Participant

I get the Examiner on a Saturday and I get the Echo on a Saturday and the reason I get the Examiner is because I follow sport in general and I like the sports supplements.

But when you read the Examiner on a Saturday and look at the Echo or vice versa, whichever one I do first, it's the same thing on both nearly.

00:24:50 Interviewer

It's the Saturday supplements I like in the Examiner, you know, the property and the weekend.

00:24:57 Participant

Yeah, I'm the same, properties in the Examiner as well and maybe the television programmes of the week or something like that.

00:25:05 Participant

You look at things that happen, let’s say in Cork and it's on Facebook. I'll read it tonight and it's like, I don't know how to describe it, it's like a habit. Now the tablet is here beside me. I plug it in the morning to charge up with my phone, both of them in the kitchen. They're brought in then to the front room in the evening. The phone is with me all day but the tablet is brought in and it’s like a disease I suppose, you pick it up and look at it. I go through Facebook and when I've checked everything, I'll check RIP maybe about 10:00 or 11:00 o'clock because they say, well, if somebody dies now they’ll put it on later. Then I must have two games before I go to bed. It’s all a habit <laughs>.

00:26:03 Interviewer

Yeah, but with our kind of age groups, I think we're not silly about how we use our devices. You know they're there for a purpose.

00:26:14 Participant

And yesterday I'm giving out about the grandchildren when they come and instead of talking to me they’re sitting there playing with their gadgets as I call them.

00:26:26 Participant

My granddaughter, Kelley, she says to me “you’re giving out about them and here you are every night” <laughs>.

00:26:34 Interviewer

Yeah, but you're not in company, that's the difference.

00:26:38 Participant

Well, that's it exactly I suppose.

<*Sandra explained about her husband dying unexpectedly two years ago and he regularly complained about what he saw was her overuse of her iPad*>

00:27:26 Interviewer

I started the library. I started using their books, borrowbox and their library app. Now it's changed a few times, but you could read all the magazines for free on the iPad and you could read the books for free. So this is what I would be doing when he would be watching the television and saying to me “why are you always on that thing?" And I would say, “would you say the same thing to me if I picked up a book to read?”

00:27:54 Participant

I know. My granddaughter Kelley is just the very same, she reads books online. I did a lot of reading in my younger days, not so much now. I must say I love my sports and television, so if there's a match on of any description whether it be rugby, soccer, GAA or anything, I’ll watch it. Even the foreign matches, Inter Milan and all those, I’ll watch all them.

00:28:26 Interviewer

That's brilliant. I missed, I just saw the highlights of the tennis with that young teenager Emma winning there in Flushing Meadow.

00:28:35 Participant

No, I didn’t. It wasn’t on any channel I have. The American Open. I was surprised because I went through all the channels to see if I could find it and I didn't see it on any one I have.

00:28:47 Interviewer

No I didn't either.

00:28:49 Participant

I just saw what they showed on the news and that was it.

00:28:52 Interviewer

Yeah, I was the same because normally they have highlights of that on BBC, but they didn't. I didn't see anything.

00:28:59 Participant

Yeah, I'm surprised at that.

00:28:59 Interviewer

Maybe after Wimbledon they didn't expect her to do so well and they didn't buy the rights. It could have been something like that, you don't know.

00:29:11 Participant

She didn't participate in Wimbledon this year, sure she didn’t?

00:29:14 Interviewer

But she did. She was doing so well. And then she just crashed out. She just stopped in the middle of a match, I think she wasn’t well and she just gave up at that stage.

00:29:27 Participant

I saw a good bit of Wimbledon but I can’t remember her.

<*00:29:30 to 00:30:56 Chatted a little about Leona Maguire’s performance in the Solheim Cup and Shane Lowry’s selection as a wild card for the upcoming Ryder Cup*>.

00:30:57 Participant

Back to business <laughs>.

00:30:59 Interviewer

No, this is all important. This is all learning <KATHLEEN>, absolutely, whether we like it or not, it is.

00:31:04 Participant

Good. Good.

00:31:07 Interviewer

So tell me then a little bit about what it was like when COVID and the lockdown happened. You're able to use the tablet and you're able to look up information and you had Kelley with you. But what about other family members you couldn't see? Did you use the tablet at all to connect?

00:31:29 Participant

Kelley did Zoom calls, she set up these Zoom calls.

00:31:36 Interviewer

How did you find those?

00:31:38 Participant

The telephone kept me going. Or you know people would... my sister, as I said, I hadn't seen her in a year and a half until last Saturday week but we were on the phone. And I have a sister in Kinsale as well and we’d be on the phone. Any of them weren't prepared to travel on account of COVID obviously. They couldn't travel outside the 5 kilometres and you know, we just basically kept in contact more by phone than by Zoom really.

00:32:15 Interviewer

And I think as well, we forget, when I read some of the accounts especially to do with the social isolation at that time. So I think what we were missing, you know, especially anybody living alone. So what is kind of being said is that calls over Zoom made up for all that, but I'm saying I'm not getting evidence of that. I think it was the phone because people would interact by phone and that's what they were used to.

00:32:50 Participant

Exactly, if I was on my own all that time. I would have interacted more by phone I think.

I don't think I’d be able to do Zoom, what to press and what to do. I'm very much afraid that I’ll do something wrong and I’ll disconnect the whole thing or something with the tablet.

00:33:15 Interviewer

Yeah, and that happens and I think you know, I think the point is very valid that you don't need it when you have the phone and you use the phone, you know.

00:33:26 Participant

I use the phone and I have my mobile, I can text. I know a neighbour of mine who's younger than me and she can't text. She can use the mobile phone, but she never learned to text, you know, and she's a widow now as well. I mean she would be 70 years old or 71, but she's a widow and she ended up in hospital recently and another neighbour said “Margaret doesn't text, you could only talk to her on the phone”, you know. And I said “what? She doesn’t text?” I thought she sounds like one of these people that you think would be able to do it.

<*00:34:06 to 00:34:51 Sandra told <KATHLEEN> the story about her cousin’s husband (in his 60’s at the time) learning to text because it was the only way to get in touch with the builder building the house extension*>

00:34:52 Interviewer

So it was the only way that he could get in contact with the builder, so his wife, my cousin, showed him how to do that, she was what we call the Warm Expert in the house (like Kelley is for you). And you know the extension got built and it was all fine. As soon as the extension was built the texting stopped. And he's never done it since, no.

00:35:11 Participant

Ah for goodness’ sake. No, I don't mind the texting at all and I have no problem. You know I even texted Eilish yesterday. I was having lunch in the Elm Tree in Glounthane. I go there every Sunday, my late husband George and myself used to go regularly on a Sunday, that was our treat and I kept it up when he passed away. Kelley and myself now will go. She was away this weekend now so I was on my own and I was on my own last weekend and I still went down for my lunch.

00:35:44 Interviewer

OK.

00:35:49 Participant

But I texted Eilish yesterday when I was sitting down. I said (texted) “corned beef on the menu today, beautiful.” And I got a reply back this morning from her “Sorry <KATHLEEN>, I never checked. Had one of my sons and family for lunch yesterday anyway” <laughs>.

00:36:07 Participant

She’d been there one Sunday about 2 weeks ago and she said to me “there's no corned beef on the menu today” and I said “what? No corned beef on a Sunday” <laughs>. The text comes in very handy I can tell you <laughs>.

00:36:22 Interviewer

I know, it does absolutely. Eilish told me she just all her business by phone and you know it absolutely works. Honestly, I hope that maybe when all this is over and I've this work done, I'd love to come to Little Island and talk to you all about my research and what I found. But it's a bit down the road.

00:36:38 Participant

I think that would be very interesting, Sandra, because I know Sarah (Davis, CIT/MTU researcher I spoke with some weeks back?). She’s related to Eilish I think?

00:36:56 Interviewer

I don't know. Now Eilish came to me because she saw it in the email from the Active Retirement Ireland so I don't know what all the connections are, but it was Eilish, when I was explaining to her that I was having a hard time getting to people who typically aren't online and don’t use email, that kind of thing...

00:37:15 Participant

I think Sarah is married to Alicia's brother or something and she was doing some survey now like that and she did come to the Active Retirement group.

00:37:26 Interviewer

Ah OK.

00:37:27 Participant

She did separate interviews with each of us, you know.

00:37:35 Interviewer

Yes, that's Sarah, she's a researcher in CIT, MTU now. I was talking to her about a month or so ago, so she was giving me some connections and who to try.

So she's a bit ahead of me. Now she has her PhD and she was telling me about her experiences and stuff and it was great because I was saying it's just kind of hard right now and I think you’re interview number 18 which is great, and 20 is where I'm hoping to get to so it’s all great. The connections are all great.

00:38:17 Interviewer

This might be something that you know Kelley might be interested in, but I did a study last autumn. I sent out a survey to students in UL, and because it was so soon after lockdown and everything, I basically asked them if they helped their older family members with the digital communications like Zoom etc during the lockdown. I got 440 responses, it was huge, and over half of them said they did (provide some help). Then I was keen to hear about what they learned so they said they learned patience, they learned that they technology for granted and that kind of thing, so I'm hoping to get that published in a journal, I should be hearing about that again soon, and if I did, then that would be something I could come and talk to different groups about that might be of interest.

So, it's something I’ll talk to Eilish about obviously, it's the flip side of my current research you know, because at that time I couldn't get to the older adults. It just wasn't possible, so I said let me get the young people’s perspectives and then for my PhD research, which is the bigger piece of research, this one, I'll talk to the older adults, so that's kind of what I'm doing.

00:39:52 Participant

That’s interesting.

00:39:54 Interviewer

So, when you're back up and running, I'll contact Eilish and I'll just ask her because I think that might be something that's interesting to some people anyway.

00:40:00 Interviewer

OK, so we talked about technology and stuff.

So overall, I suppose you sound to me very much, that you're a very positive person, <KATHLEEN>, and you have a very positive outlook on life so when I do this in the survey I give people a number of statements. Now these are similar statements to what TILDA uses, it's called CASP-19. TILDA uses CASP-12.

So there are a number of statements for example “I enjoy the things I do.” “I enjoy being the company of others.” And then you respond, often, sometimes, not often, never. But I'm not doing that at interview because the flavour of a 30-40 minute conversation is generally giving me that, but I would like to, you know, given losing your husband relatively young, ask you how you feel about your outlook on life. Is it overall positive? Is it negative and has using technology in any way made your or worse quality of life better? Does that make sense?

00:41:11 Participant

It does (make sense). Well, I don't know whether it makes life better or not, I really don't know, but my idea of life is take every day as it comes. And once you're able to get up every morning it's another day and that's it, no matter, age is only a number, in my estimation. Now I know there's things I cannot do physically that I was able to do 20 years ago, but you know, and I've had two hip replacements so I'm bionic, half a bionic woman.

00:41:42 Interviewer

You are indeed.

00:41:45 Participant

I had one done there in March this year. So it's fine. Everything is going grand thank God. No, my attitude would be regardless of age, you just take every day as it comes. I would be positive. I wouldn't be negative about things at all.

And as I said, you’re always learning in this life, no matter how old, you’re always learning something.

00:42:13 Interviewer

Yes, and as you had your motto, <KATHLEEN>, my motto is “you're never too old and it's never too late.”

00:42:20 Participant

That’s true. You're quite right, yeah.

00:42:21 Interviewer

OK, is there anything else then and this is my last question, <KATHLEEN>. When you were thinking about this or since we chatted the last day, is there anything that we haven't covered that you said “oh I must remember to say that”?

00:42:39 Participant

I don't think so.

00:42:42 Participant

You've covered a lot. I expected it to be a different format actually.

00:42:49 Interviewer

Did you? Tell me what you did expect. That's interesting.

00:42:52 Participant

I don't know, I just thought you'd have a list of questions, you know. And that I’d be answering yes, no or whatever.

I quite enjoyed the general conversation.

00:43:03 Interviewer

Well honestly, I get more out of this because basically what I have is a few pages here of themes to guide me and I'm jumping forward and back because if I have a list of questions and that's really what the survey is for, it just scratches the tip of the iceberg, but the quality that I'm getting for these interviews is far more important, and that's what you see with the TILDA reports as well. They give quotes, you know, and they usually give just an alternative first name or gender and age. These stories are really powerful and meaningful so it’s all great.

00:43:43 Participant

I’ve been doing this TILDA thing now for over 11 years. I think the first year they contacted me was the year before George passed away. Or maybe two years before and I'm doing it since. Every now and again they send out this literature and you just fill in questions that tick boxes and it's always for survey and things like that so you know.

00:44:07 Interviewer

They cover such a lot, like they talk about, you know exclusion, isolation and they had one report there and it was to do with vitamin D and COVID, would you believe? I go to some of their webinars and the topics are interesting.

00:44:26 Participant

As I said, I didn’t fill it in. I still have the form and they sent me a reminder there a few weeks back about it, I think, so I have to fill it in and send it off. I just do it and I say “if it helps somebody when I'm gone on the medical side of things fair enough”, you know.

00:44:45 Interviewer

Yeah, and hopefully it'll help somebody when you're still alive and kicking.

00:44:49 Participant

Hopefully with the help of God.

00:44:50 Interviewer

Please God.

00:44:55 Participant

Hopefully I’ll live another few years anyway.

00:44:57 Interviewer

Absolutely, without a doubt.

00:44:59 Interviewer

So <KATHLEEN>, I'm going to just stop the recording now and thank you for your time and interest today.