

# Appendix E: Project Partner Interview Summary

## Introduction

In this initial interview, our goal was to learn more about our project partner and gain a better understanding of the situation at hand. Going into the interview, we had already conducted our secondary research, which gave us a basic understanding of the issue, but more importantly it gave us questions to ask during the interview. We wanted to learn more about the specifics of the problem and learn more about our clients. We also wanted to hear more from our partner about her experience with the residents and her wants and needs for this project.

## Methodology

This interview was conducted over a Zoom meeting with Trina Semelroth on April 3, 2024 at 3:30 pm, one week after receiving our initial design proposal. Three other teams joined us in the interview, each of which prepared several questions based on secondary research that was conducted prior to the start of the interview. Before starting, our team organized the questions we wanted to ask into categories based on users, problems with the current system, possible solutions, and stories / anecdotes that the project partner could share that would help us gain a better understanding of the problem.

Teams from the other DTC section introduced the group and then asked Trina to describe the current situation that the clients were facing at Misericordia. We then took turns asking questions based on team group and section, which allowed us to build off of one another if someone's question prompted other ideas. Our group also split into roles of primary interviewers who asked questions and note takers to ensure that all of the information was recorded and organized.

## Results

We learned a lot from this interview that will help us continue to conduct more research about the specifics of the problem, and how to accommodate the users now that we better understand them and their specific needs.

### *Users*

There are around 600 residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities at Misericordia, however, each has a very unique level of physical ability. About 8-10 clients will share one bathroom, and not all of them will need the ramp, so it needs to be easily transportable (under 30 pounds). Also, because the bathroom is a shared space, the ramp needs to be relatively short so that other residents can get past and use other parts of the bathroom if they need to.

### *Previous Solutions*

The alternative methods did not work in the current space because the ramps were too long and would make the bathroom really cramped. Further, the ramps would be very heavy to move, which would inconvenience the caretakers having to shift it in between every shower. The current materials are metal, which ideally would be changed to something safer and slip resistant.

Further, the current solutions do not have any method of getting the shower chairs and other assistive devices into the shower, so caretakers usually have to lift these clients in their chairs into the shower, which is very dangerous for not only the client, but the caretaker.

### *Ideal Solution*

The showers are used daily and ramps are needed daily. The staff help the clients in and out of the showers. These showers are 43-57 inches wide and the average wheelchair is 30 inches wide or less. So it would be ideal to have a ramp around 40-43 inches wide. There must also be nothing to step over. It must be simple to transfer, easy to remove from threshold, and lightweight (<30 lbs). The non-slip aspect of the product is necessary as well. Most existing products are not universal, however, that is a very important aspect of our design as well. One last consideration is that making something on the inside of the shower often takes up most of the space very quickly.

### **Discussion**

The interview provided invaluable insights into the residents and their daily experiences, which is pivotal for our project's success. Understanding their needs on a deeper level allows us to tailor our product to address their challenges truly. Moreover, hearing our project partner's perspectives was immensely beneficial. Being closely involved in the situation, she offered crucial insights into the personal dimensions of the project, enriching our understanding and guiding our design process.