

Interviewing

Karin Olson, RN, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Nursing

Overview

- Interviewing in the context of qualitative research
- Deciding whom to interview
- Deciding how to interview
- The interview process
- Logistical issues
- Turning an interview into data
- Managing interview data
- Ethical issues

Interviewing in the context of qualitative research

- Think of a recent conversation with a friend
 - Who initiated it?
 - What was its purpose?
- Think of an interview you recently read about in a magazine or saw on TV
 - Who initiated it?
 - What was its purpose?

- Interviews conducted in the context of qualitative research are a particular type of conversation
 - Unlike conversations between friends
 - Similar to the interviews in magazines or on TV because they are controlled by the interviewer
 - Different from interviews in magazine or on TV because their purpose is to elicit a story

Deciding whom to interview

- Ideal informant, as shown in videos, is:
 - Experienced
 - Articulate – able to describe
 - Focused
 - Non-analytic
 - Available

- Why do we want detailed description rather than analysis/reflection?

- Why do we want detailed description rather than analysis/reflection?
 - We will be construction the answer to the research question based on our analysis of all of the descriptive material. Our understanding of our research question is detailed and based on all the things (literature, world view professional experiences, etc) that resulted in the focus of our study. Participants are only able to reflect on their own experience. We are interested in patterns across all participants.

- What are some reasons why individuals may have difficulty **describing** their experience?

- Reasons why a participant may have difficulty describing their experience
 - Experience is from the past
 - Preference for an analytic or reflective rather than descriptive approach
 - Topic is highly nuanced
 - Topic is sensitive
 - Language limitations
 - Participant feels vulnerable for some reason
 - Sensory impairments (visual, auditory)
 - Illness
 - Disease processes
 - Medications
 - Developmental issues
 - Children
 - Older adults

- Using shadowed data
 - Used when a participant finds it difficult to fully describe their experience.
 - Someone who knows the participant describes their observations of the participant, rather than their own experience.

(Morse, 2001)

Deciding how to interview

- Formal interviews with groups
 - Focus groups
 - Family interviews
- Formal interviews with individuals
 - Structured interviews
 - Surveys
 - Interviews early in a qualitative study
 - Unstructured
 - Guided
 - Interviews late in a qualitative study
 - Semi-structured
- Informal interviews

Deciding how to interview

- Formal interviews with groups
 - Focus groups
 - Family interviews
- Formal interviews with individuals
 - Structured interviews
 - Surveys
 - Interviews early in a qualitative study
 - Unstructured
 - Guided
 - Interviews late in a qualitative study
 - Semi-structured
- Informal interviews

The Interview Process

- Setting the stage
- Taking notes
- Recording
- Pacing
- Managing sensitive topics
- Silence
- Concluding the interview
- Field notes and reflexive journal
- Debriefing (participant, research team)

Logistical issues

- Modes of interviewing
 - Common modes: **face to face**, phone, internet
 - Choose the mode that is most likely to give data that are of high quality and that will help you answer the research question
 - Need nonverbal? Add to field notes
 - Need physical context? Add to field notes
 - Sensitive topic?
 - Accessibility?
 - Safety issues?

Turning an interview into data

- Preparation of transcript
- Correcting the transcript
- Coding the transcript

Managing interview data

- Types of data related to interview
 - Transcript
 - Field notes
 - Team meetings
 - Reflexive journal
- Software
- Hard copy

Ethical issues

- Vulnerability
 - Protection from exploitation
- Recruitment
- Consent
- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries between research role and professional role

References

- Bosio, C., Graffigna, G., & Lozza, E. (2008). Online focus groups: Toward a theory of technique. In T. Hansson (Ed.), *Handbook of digital information technologies: Innovations and ethical issues* (pp. 192–212). Hershey, PA: Idea Group.
- Duncan, R., Drew, S., Hodgson, J., & Sawyer, S. (2009). Is my mum going to hear this?: Methodological and ethical challenges in qualitative health research with young people. *Social Science & Medicine*, 69, 1691–1699.
- Hammersley, M. (2010). Reproducing or constructing?: Some questions about transcription in social research. *Qualitative Research*, 10, 553–569.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Morse, J. M. (2001). Using shadowed data. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(3), 291-292.
- Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs & B. B. Schiefflin (Eds.), *Developmental pragmatics* (pp. 43–72). New York: Academic Press.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Squires, A. (2008). Language barriers and qualitative nursing research: Methodological Considerations. *International Nursing Review*, 55, 265–273.
- Sturges, J., & Hanrahan, K. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative interviewing: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 107–118.