

Bridge: A MindSport For All

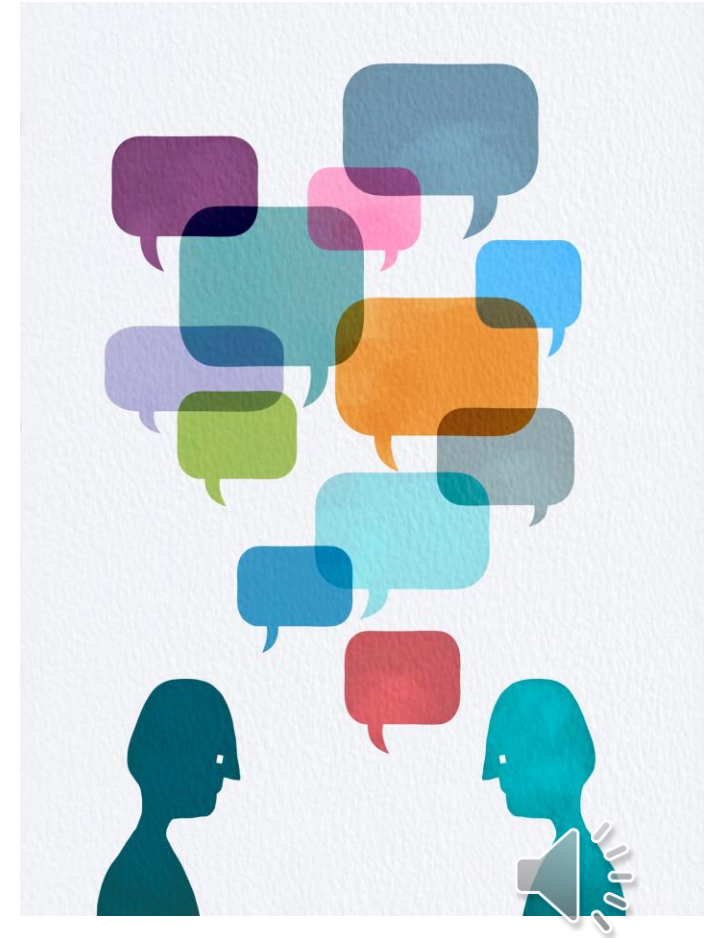
Interviewing skills

Community research training #2



What is a research interview?

- A research interview is a conversation that has a **structure** and a **purpose**.
- **Structure:** Two people converse about a theme of mutual interest (though one guides the conversation).
- **Purpose:** The goal of the research interview is to understand the world from the interviewee's point of view and to unfold the meaning of their experiences
- Interviews are used as a resource for understanding how individuals make sense of their social world and act within it



Why do interviews?

- Interviews enable **new ideas or topics** to be explored.
- In some cases, the interview is **the most appropriate method**: especially if the topic cannot be read about and people's accounts are the only data that exist on that topic
- Best used when you want to find out about people's **knowledge, understandings, perceptions, experiences and interpretations.**
- They can be highly **enjoyable** for both the interviewer and the interviewee.



Why do interviews?

*“Knowledge is understood
as buried metal and the
interviewer is a miner who
unearths the valuable metal...
The knowledge is waiting in the
subject’s mind to be discovered.”*

Steinar Kvale, 1996



Types of interviews



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Structured

- standardised
- no flexibility
- same order of questions
- same wording of questions

Semi-structured

- flexible interview schedule
- flexible questioning: to clarify, expand, probe, follow-up issues raised
- similar broad structure: some comparability

Unstructured

- non-standardised
- life history, biographical or oral history interview
- open and flexible, not constrained
- general topic or themes to explore



Before the interview

- **With whom will you conduct your interviews?** Identify and invite people to take part
- **Where will you conduct your interviews?** Accessibility, safety, privacy/noise, size
- **How will you record your interviews?** Recording equipment (plus backups), notes, reflexive journal



Before the interview

4 Preparatory steps:

- Introduce yourself and **explain the purpose of the interview.**
- **Request/confirm consent** to participate and to record.
- Ask interviewee(s) if they have any **questions.**
- **Record** the interview (audio recording and some notes).



Consent is important

Informed consent entails that participants should receive **detailed information** on the research they are participating in, so that they can make a **voluntary, informed and rational decision** regarding whether or not to participate in such research

2 Stages of consent:

- **Stage 1 (giving information):** the person reflects on the information given; they are under no pressure to respond to the researcher immediately.
- **Stage 2 (obtaining consent):** the researcher reiterates the terms of the research, often as separate bullet points or clauses; the person agrees to each term (giving explicit consent) before agreeing to take part in the project



During the interview: asking good questions

- **Open questions** are ideal (don't use a yes/no closed format)
- **What, where, when, how and why?**
- Remember you are not looking for an 'answer' but are using the exercise to **promote discussion**
- Neutrality – don't say **what you think** unless explicitly asked so as not to influence the response




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During the interview: asking good questions



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Elaboration	Clarification	Detail-oriented	Questions to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you elaborate on that?• How do you mean?• In what way?• Could you say some more about that?• That's helpful. I'd appreciate if you could give me more detail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You said the program is a "success". What do you mean by "success"?• What you're saying now is very important, and I want to make sure that I understand, please explain some more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When did that happen?• Who else was involved?• Where were you during that time?• How were you involved?• How did that come about?• Where did it happen?• How did you feel about that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• long and complicated questions – Can you tell me about X, Y, and Z;• leading questions (I am sure that this is what you're going to say but let me ask you anyway) 

During the interview: being an active listener

Active listening involves:

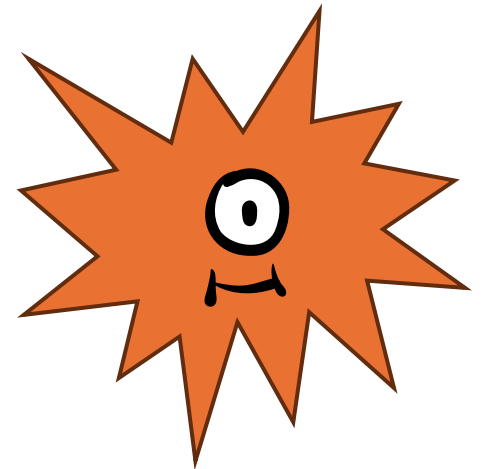
- The ability to deal with **silences**, ask one question at a time and wait for the respondent to think before answering
- Being **non-judgemental, patient** and **genuinely interested** in what others have to say
- The ability to **reflect back** or paraphrase what was heard to clarify or show understanding
- Ability to **spot non-verbal signs** and change tactics



During the interview: being an active listener

Some behaviours can stand in the way of being a good listener...

- Talking too much yourself
- Not paying close attention to an answer because you are busy thinking about the next question you want to ask
- Turning the interview into an interrogation
- Becoming distracted, bored, or interrupting the speaker



During the interview: using the interview guide

- The interview guide is there to **help** you
- The guide approach is intended to ensure that the **same general areas of information** are collected from each interviewee
- Semi-structured interview – **balance** between following the interview guide and asking additional questions

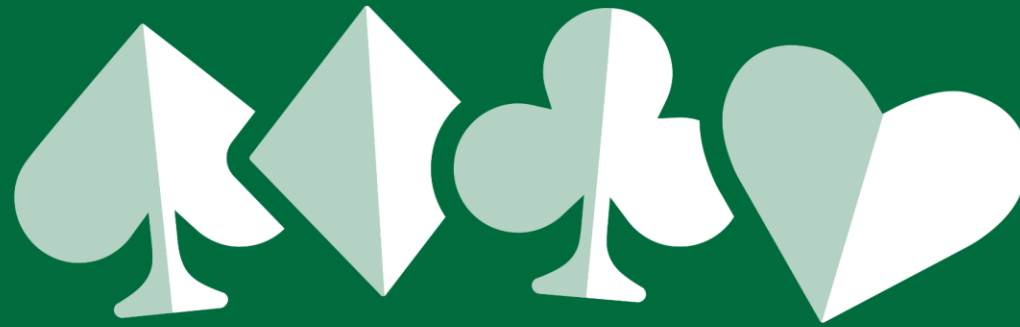


After the interview

Reflecting on what went well

- What surprised you
- What areas of questioning worked/didn't work
- What didn't you find out?
- What would you do differently next time?





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