

# Centre for Qualitative Research

## MAIN TRAINING PACKAGE

### SESSION FOUR

Conducting, improving, and refining interviews and focus groups

Dr Sheree Bekker

#### Session Summary

In this session we focused on interviews and focus groups as methods for qualitative data collection.

From the SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods we understand that “Interviewing is a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee or a group of interviewees.” Because of this, we focused on reflecting on researcher positionality and the power dynamics at play during this form of data collection – for example recognising that the research interview most often serves the researcher’s ends (this may be different for co-produced research).

We covered the similarities and differences between interviews and focus groups: number of participants, amount of data generated, and that focus groups in particular place the focus on participants’ discussion (with the interviewer playing more of a facilitator role). We spoke about what this means, and when and how to decide which data collection method is most appropriate (including when to consider different types, such as walking interviews or timeline interviews).

This session then provided opportunity to practice the conduct of interviews and focus groups (either as interviewers/facilitators, participants, or observers). This facilitated reflections on what participating in this process felt like from those different perspectives, building rapport, purpose, probes, etc.

Finally, logistics were discussed as part of this reflection, including: safety, cost (time and money), consent, recording, presence, and comfort breaks!

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Tuesday 20 April 2021

#### Summary

- Interviewing and focus group facilitation can be a vulnerable process, and it is a skill that is learned
- The learning process for high quality data collection requires practice, reflection, and refining
- Logistics to consider include safety, cost (time and money), consent, recording, presence, and comfort breaks!

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#### Reading List

Breen, Rosanna L. "A practical guide to focus-group research." *Journal of geography in higher education* 30.3 (2006): 463-475.

Cormac McGrath, Per J. Palmgren & Matilda Liljedahl (2019). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, 41:9, 1002-1006.

Roulston, Kathryn, Kathleen DeMarrais, and Jamie B. Lewis. "Learning to interview in the social sciences." *Qualitative Inquiry* 9.4 (2003): 643-668.

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#### Animation

<https://biteable.com/watch/2937894/3fed2bf45728aa98a5e3a6b7a4665f18>

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