

# Interview Methods

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PSY 357: Community Psychology

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# Announcements

- Assignment 2 Re-do Due SATURDAY
- Assignment 3 due Friday (24hr grace)
- Assignment 4, 5, and final Available (5 optional)
- Spring break starts Tomorrow!

You really want to get to know someone.  
Particularly you want to know detailed information  
about their life and experiences.

What kinds of questions might you ask this person?  
What do your questions look like at the start of the  
conversation? What do you save for later?

# What's a research interview?

- Put simply and broadly a research interview is defined as a researcher (interviewer) asking open ended questions in order to gather information from a participant (interviewee).
- Designed to gather in depth narrative information that would not be possible to get otherwise
- Can be with more than 1 researcher or up to 2 participants
- Can be done face-to-face, over the phone, through video chat, or on the internet.
- Different from a journalistic interview or a job interview

# Interview terms to know

- Interview Protocol: List of questions that you want to ask each participant
- Code Questions: If you are going into the interview with particular codes that you plan to use later in analysis you will have some questions specifically geared toward answering these questions.
- Probing Questions: These are questions designed to elicit more detailed information from one of your standard questions. These may add a direction or a nuance that your project wants to focus on
- Interview Transcript: This is the written version of the interview. Researchers often have do this themselves by listening to the audio recording and writing down everything that was said. Transcripts make coding possible.

# Practice Questions

Let's say you wanted to know more about students' sense of community here at CCNY experience.

What kinds of open ended, non-leading questions could you ask to elicit rich narrative responses about this topic?

What kinds of probing questions could be added after these questions to elicit more information?

# Types of Interview

Structured

Semi-Structured

Unstructured

# Good reasons to use interviews

When you want to gather detailed qualitative data

When you want to understand personal experiences or narratives

When you want to understand how a person or multiple people interact with larger societal forces

When you want to understand how folks make sense of the world around them

When you are unsure about an issue in particular and want to learn more

When the issue you want to address is very nuanced



# An interviewer must...

1

Be aware of who they are and how this might influence the responses they get

2

Carefully address inconsistencies and utilize probing questions

3

Understand that narratives may evolve or be different outside of interview

4

Use active listening in order to better understand the participant

# Benefits of Interviews

- The interview process can be cathartic/therapeutic for interviewers and interviewees.
- Interviews allow for a deeper more complex understanding of lives, narratives, context, and experiences
- Interviews center the voices of the community rather than the researcher
- Interviews reduce the chances that researchers will produce research that doesn't speak to a communities lived experiences

# Difficulties of Interviews

- SO MUCH DATA
- Interviews can be intense and sometimes even triggering
- It can be hard to organize and pull out important themes
- The researcher is always looking through their own lenses this means with such sensitive and complex data they need to be extra careful
- Analyzing process is LONG
- Interviews often require greater incentives meaning the research costs more

# Interview Practice

- RQ: How does socialization play a role in CCNY students understandings of their gender and race?
- Welcome and thank partner for interviewing with you
- Take turns asking and answering the following questions:
  - Tell me about the first time you recognized your gender
  - Tell me about the first time you recognized your race
- Utilize probing questions to get more answers about the context of these situations and how folks were socialized
- Switch and repeat if we have time...

# Follow up questions

- What was the process like?
- Were you able to answer the research question?
- Did you ask any probing questions?
- Were there any themes that came up in participant responses?
- What would you say about this interview data?