



# RESEARCH METHODS I

Thematic Analysis and IPA

# RECAP ON THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- Thematic Analysis (TA) is a flexible method of analysis
  - Can be used to analyse a variety of different types of data (interviews, focus groups, text).
- TA uses an iterative process of coding to identify overarching themes in data

# INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

- Similar in that IPA is a form of TA, but IPA is about **subjective individual lived experiences** of how people personally see things
  - TA can cover different topics, and isn't entirely limited to personal experiences
- IPA is a more specialised form of qualitative analysis
  - Study the **lived experiences** of people
  - Data collection is (usually) through interviews
  - Phenomenological = individual viewpoint and experience

# INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

- When we talk about experience in IPA research, we are talking about “something that matters to the participant”, and something of which they have some understanding
- We then seek to understand their **perspective** on it
- IPA considers each person’s case individually before engaging in collective analysis
  - Whereas in TA, we often treat all cases as ‘one dataset’ from the outset

# SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TA AND IPA

- Both involve a process of **coding data** to organise and structure the analysis
- Both TA and IPA emphasise the importance of **reflexivity** and ensure awareness of own assumptions/bias that may impact interpretations of data
- Both emphasise **interpretation of meaning** within data. Aim is to understand the participants experiences and perspectives
- Both involve iterative processes (back and forth between data and possible themes).
  - Strength of this is that the researcher can refine results and ensure they are grounded in data!

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TA AND IPA

*TA*

Focus on patterns and themes in data  
Data can be interviews, focus groups,  
other documents

Can be used with small or large  
samples

Process involves identifying themes in  
data

Themes are reported clearly and  
concisely

*IPA*

Focus on lived experiences of people  
Data is usually from interviews

Typically used with small samples

Process involves bracketing and  
understanding participants  
experience/perspective

Themes are reported in a way that  
captures the live experience of  
the participants