



Research Design

SEMESTER TWO

Aims

- ▶ To introduce the methodological approaches to research
- ▶ Interviews

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- ▶ Interviews have been used by researchers for a long time. They have taken different forms.
 - ▶ They can enable researchers to understand particular issues within societies and cultures.
 - ▶ Throughout the twentieth century interviews have been used within social care and health services, to explore different social issues.
 - ▶ They have been used as an alternative to the more measuring research methods used within quantitative research.

Interviews

- ▶ Interviews are not simple tools that can be automatically used within a research project.
- ▶ They need to be well thought through.
- ▶ They involve a relationship between at least two people and the information that is gained through the interview will have a significant impact on the research project.

What are interviews?



What are interviews?

- ▶ The latin prefix *inter* means between or among and suggests that there will be an exchange between two people. A turn taking conversation, in which one person asks, another answers and then the first person will know.
- ▶ Seidman(2006) suggests that interviews are a way of collecting stories about people's lives, in order to 'know'.
- ▶ The stories that we tell will always be influenced by the audience. We see that often within the counselling relationship.
- ▶ Take a moment to consider this.

Interviews

- ▶ Researchers who undertake interviews need to think about not only the questions that they are going to ask, but also how, when and where the questions will be asked.
- ▶ As much attention should be paid to the *process* of interviewing as much as the *product*.

Why are interviews used as a method for collecting data?



Interviews can:

- ▶ Generate insights into participants' lives which would otherwise remained hidden to the researcher.
- ▶ Give access to individuals' understanding of the contexts they are in, to their opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings;
- ▶ Generate complex insights into others' perceptions of social phenomena and why they make certain choices and act in the ways they do.

Researcher Subjectivity

- ▶ There is a risk, when undertaking qualitative research and interviewing, that the researcher's own values, morals, life experiences and understanding of social contexts can influence the research project.
- ▶ Researcher's need to be mindful of this and acknowledge this within the research project.

Structured, Semi-Structured and Unstructured Interviews

- ▶ Interviews can take many forms, often the type of interview style will be influenced by the research question.
- ▶ Structured interviews can often resemble a questionnaire, they can be useful if the research project depends on populations that live a distance apart. They can also be helpful if the research project involves a large sample.

Semi-Structured

- ▶ These can be used for smaller sample groups. There will be a set of questions, however these will be used flexibly and new questions will be added where appropriate.
- ▶ This type of interview is often used within qualitative interviews. It enables the researcher to really understand the lived experience of the interviewee, but still has a frame to it.

Unstructured.

- ▶ Interviews can also be unstructured and may not have the structure of some of the more formal types of interviews. They can almost be a type of talk. The researcher may well be a participant, where they join in the conversations of others.

What might be the advantages/disadvantages of these interviews?



Power in Interviews

- ▶ What might be the challenges, regarding Power within the research relationship?



Thoughts so far?

- ▶ Task for next week:
 - ▶ Consider how you might use interviews within the Counselling field. Reflect on the type of research question you might use and which kinds of interviews would be appropriate to gain the types of information that would support your 'research project'.