

RESEARCH METHODS

Lecture 10: Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis

Lecturer: Dr Judith Marshall

(Slides: Stacey Coleman/Judith Marshall)





LECTURE OUTLINE

- Continue exploring qualitative research methods
- Analysis of qualitative data
 - Focusing on interview and focus group data



SKILLS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Use neutral, open-ended questions that aim to elicit in-depth responses from participants
- Do not use loaded questions
- Do not use closed questions
- Questions form a prompt to the interviewer but are not necessarily adhered to in order
- The interview should enable participants to express their beliefs, opinions and feelings freely

DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Think about what information you want to get from your participants
2. Develop an **interview schedule** to guide your questions to ensure you cover all important areas

What to include:

- Introduction (who you are)
- Permission to record the interview / insurance of anonymity
- Prompts and hints for follow-up questions
- Wrap-up at the end (thanks and summary of the research aim)

CATEGORIES OF QUESTIONS

- **Opening:** get acquainted with the participant, feel connected and build rapport
- **Introductory:** begins the discussion of the topic
- **Transition:** moves smoothly and seamlessly into key questions
- **Key:** obtains insight on areas of central concern in the study
- **Ending:** helps researchers determine where to place emphasis and brings closed to the discussion

(Krueger, 1998)



BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING QUESTIONS

- Ask questions in a conversational manner
- Keep questions clear, brief, reasonable, uni-dimensional and avoid jargon
- Obtain feedback from others
- Allow enough time to make revisions



YOUR TASK...

- Spend ten minutes thinking of four questions each on the topic of 'being a student'
- Interview each other about what it is like to be a student...
- Critically evaluate how well you have asked these questions

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS



COMMON FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- There are several common features regardless of which approach is used:
 - Analysis begins with written transcripts, and creating and organising files of information
 - Process of general reading and 'memoing' of information occurs to develop in-depth understanding of the data
 - Develop categories/codes to sort text
 - Describe, classify and interpret
 - Aim to finish with a story evolving around 5 or 6 key categories

TRANSCRIPTS

IMPORTANT!!

- Transcripts are the basis of your analysis!
 - Transcription of data should take place ASAP after the interview
- How?
 - Create wide margin either side
 - Double-space
 - To allow space for notes/initial coding etc
 - Read through and familiarise self with transcripts a few times

Key: Interviewer in bold ; Interviewee (Jennifer) in plain font

1	Do you have any questions before we begin?
2	
3	Nope not at the moment.
4	
5	Great. I'd also like to just reiterate that anything that you mention today that
6	could be traced back to identify you will be replaced with some
7	unidentifiable context - so if you do say the names of any members of your
8	family or friends I will just replace those with different names when writing
9	up this interview. Is that ok?
10	
11	Yep that's fine.
12	
13	So first of all, can you please describe to me what eating healthily means to
14	you?
15	
16	Umm – the first thing that comes to my mind when I think of health eating is veg
17	[laughs]. And fruit. I mean... that's not all is it – it's about eating a balanced diet
18	and getting the correct amount of nutrients and stuff, isn't it? And minerals that
19	your body needs to function properly... I think that's what eating healthy mainly

CRITICAL INGREDIENTS OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Analysis must be:
 - Systematic
 - Verifiable
- Analysis requires time (1 hour audio / 4-5 hours to transcribe)
- Analysis is jeopardised by delay
- Analysis should entertain alternative explanations
- Analysis is a process of comparison



MUST GIVE CONSIDERATION TO...

- The words
- The context
- The internal consistency
- The frequency of comments
- The extensiveness of comments
- The intensity of speech/ comments
- The specificity of responses
- Consider what was **not** said
- Find the big ideas

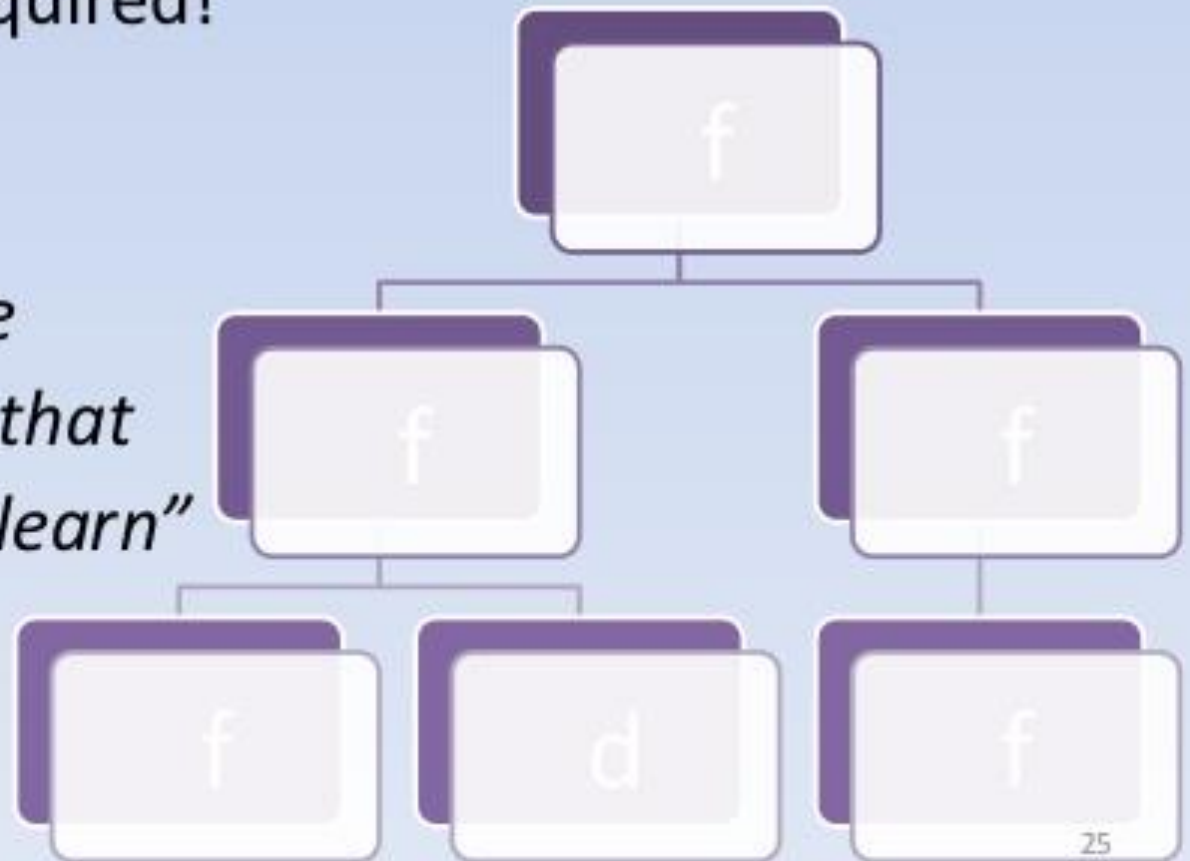
What to do with the data?

- Transcription (1 hr audio = 10 hrs work)
- Be systematic and organised
- Interpretation required!

Thematic Analysis

“the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn”

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78)



THEMATIC ANALYSIS



STAGES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

1. Create transcripts of interviews/focus groups etc.

- Wide margin either side and double-spaced to allow space for notes and initial coding

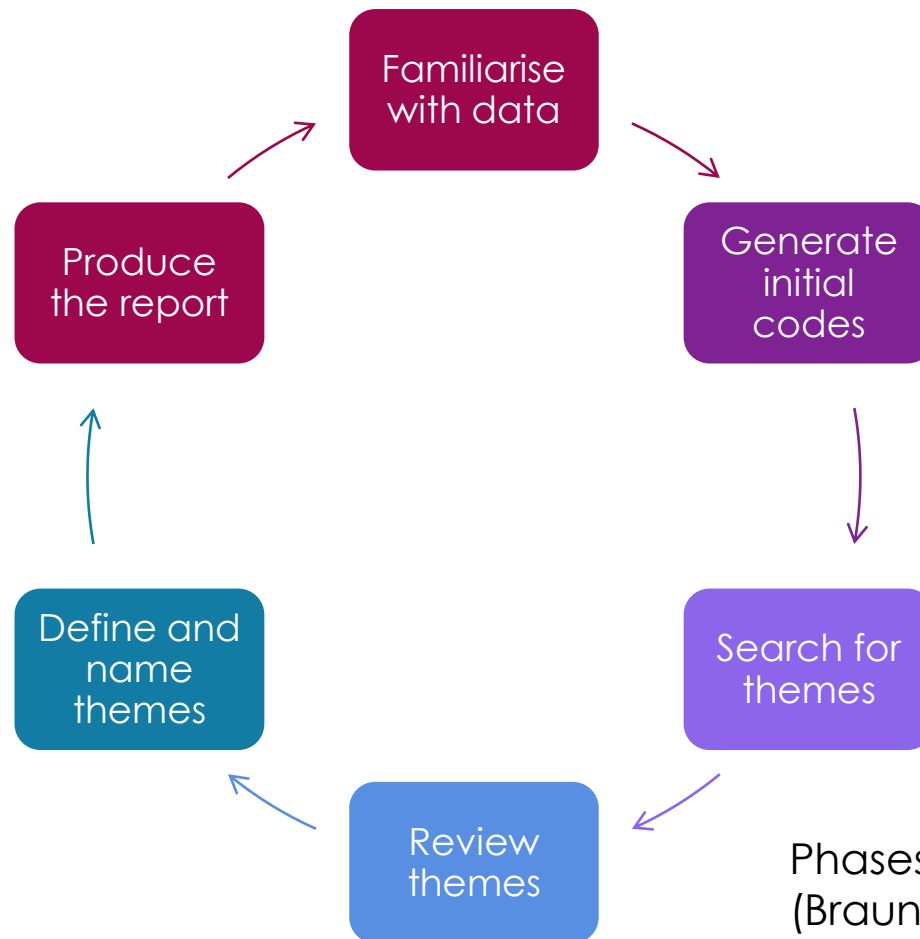
2. Read through and familiarise self with transcripts

3. Make initial notes – this is the beginning of **interpreting potential themes** in margins

STAGES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

4. Create initial coding scheme
5. 'Cutting and pasting' of transcript to re-order under specific themes
6. Themes may be counted to discern if common/rare
 - This does not reflect their importance
7. Plausible story is developed which relates to the literature review/theory being considered

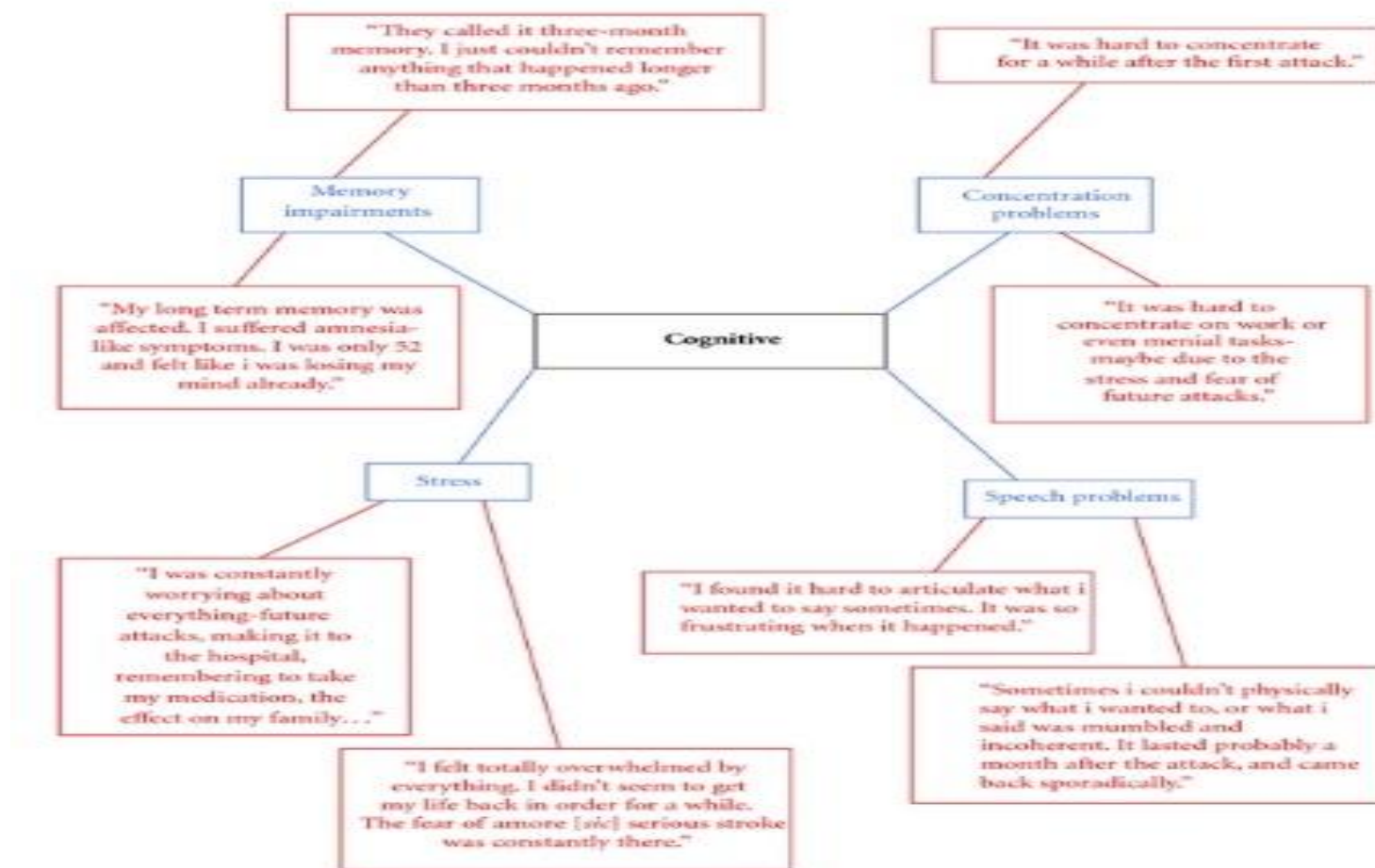
METHODOLOGY: THEMATIC ANALYSIS



Phases of thematic analysis
(Braun & Clarke, 2006)

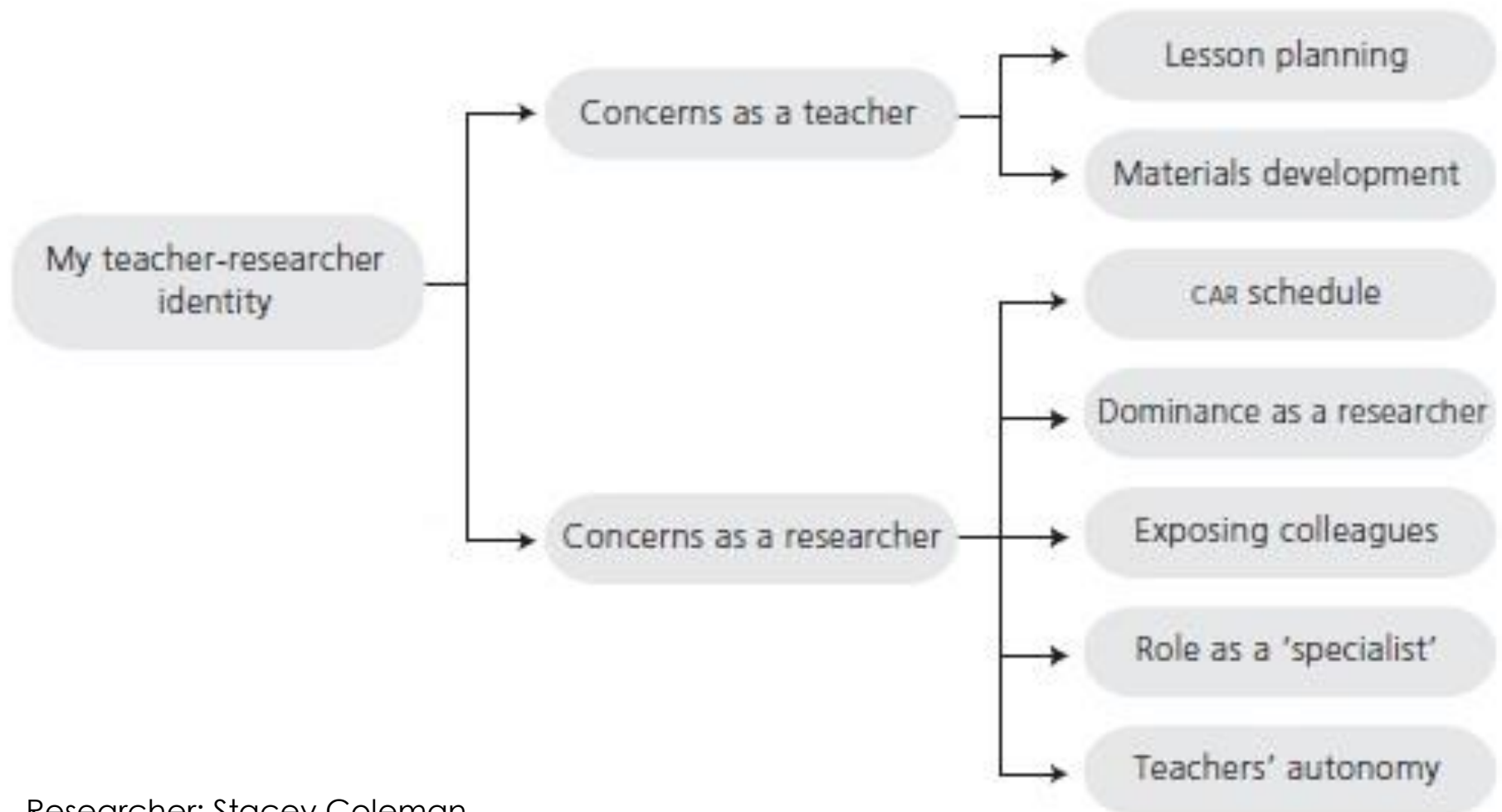
Simplified thematic analysis of cognitive problems post-TIA (global theme in black, organising sub-themes in blue, supporting quotes in red outer boxes)

[note there may be more than one global theme]



Black = global theme
Blue = organising theme
Red = basic theme

Figure 1. Thematic Network Derived from my Research Journal



REPORTING THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- The final thematic map/coding structure is translated into a narrative account illustrated with quotes from participants
- The quotes are your 'data' that support the statements you make
- The rest of the report should look no different from any report in psychology in terms of main sections/sub-headings

E.G. 1 (One interview)

Theme 1: The impact of past experiences

As the interviews progressed it became clear that John's past experiences affected how he coped with the risk assessment process. Two main sub-themes were identified: having a personal experience of cancer, and prior medical experiences.

Personal Experience of Cancer

John stated that: *"Having already had cancer, and survived it, I suppose in a way I was a bit blasé about [how I felt when waiting for my risk results]"*. He went on to further comment:

"I know when I was initially diagnosed XX years ago it was a bit of a shock.....but I've always thought, as long as I know what the problem is, and I know what's going to be done about it, I can cope with it".

It seems that John was drawing on his previous experience of cancer when it came to coping with the risk assessment process.

THE USE OF QUOTES

- Quotes should be in italics and contained within “*quotation marks*”
- If the quotation is more than 40 words long, it should be set as an extract and the whole quotation indented.
 - One indent to the left for the whole quotation (same position as indent for a new paragraph)
 - No quotation marks

EXAMPLE OF REPORTING

- A thematic analysis was conducted whereby the researcher became thoroughly familiar with the comments and identified commonly occurring themes throughout the interview. Axial coding was used to link themes together across and within categories, and superordinate key themes were identified as the analysis progressed. Comments were also analysed in terms of key study variables such as gender, risk status and level of distress.



WRITING UP A QUALITATIVE REPORT

- No single correct way to present qualitative interpretations
- Researcher must choose which story to tell and how best to tell it – subjective interpretation
- What is the storyline?
 - What is your research question?
- The important ideas will not be 'in' the data themselves
 - The content is there to think about and **interpret**

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT POINTERS...

- Interviews – How does the conversation between participant and researcher construct an account?
 - Points / arguments?
 - Dominant themes and / or similarities and differences
- Also
 - Interviews – specific ways in which the participants answer questions or tell their story
 - Similarities and differences in themes across participants/groups



ANALYSIS

- You need to consider:
 - Is there a consensus regarding a theme/subtheme?
 - Are some themes/subthemes present in some talk but absent from others?
 - Are some present in more than one person's talk but spoken about differently?
 - Could be in different interviews or within a focus group

ANALYSIS

- Use the data selectively to exemplify, illustrate or illuminate what you are trying to tell us about the topic of your study
 - Does not mean cherry picking the most extreme or dramatic examples
 - Sometimes what appears to be mundane can tell us much about how people feel/think
- You decide how best to present themes
- Example from Sarah Hocking-Rees, previous graduate (2014)
Sibling experiences...

Always begin by indicating what the themes are...

'The primary aim of this research was to.....'

Analysis overview:

Example (from IPA but your initial themes can be presented this way)

'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) upon the eight semi-structured interviews results in the emergence of six master themes. The themes are as follows:

Superordinate theme title Brief description of content of superordinate-theme

"That's life"	The effects of life transitions upon the sibling relationship.
"How do I understand who I am?"	Exploring identity and the concept of self.
"They did their best"	Parenting styles and the Impact upon the adult sibling relationship.
"they were always there"	Perceived support in the sibling relationship
"It is normal to fight"	The influence of the experience of conflict within the sibling relationship.
The society of family.	



TRANSPARENCY

“It is important at this point to recognise that the themes developed are only one possible account of the experience of siblinghood and do not incorporate all aspects of the participant’s full experience.”

(Hocking-Rees, 2014)

ANALYSIS

Theme 1 (explain what this theme is about – why is this a theme?)

e.g.,

“That’s life” : the effects of life transitions upon the sibling relationship

The first superordinate theme captures the sense that the sibling relationship experiences many transitions from childhood to the end of life, the sibling relationship has longevity and holds significance in relation to understanding how each transition impacts upon the sibling bond. Participants each spoke differently about types of life transitions such as divorce of parents, divorce as a parent, parental death, sibling death, remarriages, geographical distances and the strength of the childhood connection in relation to the adult bond.

ANALYSIS

- Sub-themes...

e.g., **Loss of the relationship**

The subject of ‘loss’ emerged as a distinct subtheme, as out of the total eight participants six commented in the area relating to loss of a relationship. For example in the case of participant three the notion of loss is discussed in relation to offering sibling support as highlighted in the following transcript extract: [\(Detailed explanation of how this became a subtheme\)](#)

“Um, yeah, I think in particular, with my eldest sister, but brother passed away five years ago”

(Participant 3, female, 30s)

[\(Quote to support\)](#)

This loss has obviously made an impact upon the sibling relationships which have survived it, strengthening the connection further. Another area of loss was the loss of a parent as demonstrated in the succeeding transcript extract:

[\(Interpretation and link to next point/quote\)](#)

- Deal with each theme/subtheme in the order in which you have stated they will be presented
- **Summarise at the end of each subtheme/ theme** - tie up each before moving on to the next
 - The responses regarding.....strongly suggest that/could be interpreted as.....
- **Summarise at the end of the Results (Findings) chapter**
 - e.g. What threads have been the most strong/dominant throughout the focus group sessions/interviews?

“The accounts of the participants show how the presence of siblings provided the resources with which to form and maintain a sense of identity. The design of the study involved asking men and women to discuss their memories of different aspects of sibling relationships. The analysis demonstrated that the participants.....”

Introduction of main aims of the study

- a) Introduction of **Themes** (Theme 1, 2...)
 - b) Introduction of **subthemes** (subtheme 1, 2....)
- Within each theme with brief detail. May use lists, tables or diagram format if you wish

Theme 1

General description
and justification

Theme 2

General description
and justification

Theme 3

General description
and justification

Subtheme 1, 2

Subtheme 1, etc.
introduction,
interpretation and
example quotes.
Brief summary

Subtheme 1, 2

Subtheme 1, etc.
introduction,
interpretation and
example quotes.
Brief summary

Subtheme 1, 2

Subtheme 1, etc.
introduction,
interpretation and
example quotes.
Brief summary

Summary of themes



TIPS

- **Do not** leave 'writing up' to the end of the process
- Begin with notes, memos and mind maps
 - 'cutting and pasting' of quotes to fit to themes
- What is your research question?
 - And keep this in mind throughout
- Theory/empirical research – what does the literature suggest you should look for?
- Make notes as you gather and transcribe your data – as you interpret themes within the interviews

TIPS

- Read journal articles that report a qualitative thematic analysis
- Don't forget to include an 'introduction' to your results section – what were the main aims of the study and how many themes/sub-themes were identified
- **The narrative is your data** - you **must** include quotes to support your interpretations
 - Also, page and line numbers
- Table of themes must be somewhere in the report
 - Either in the results section or in the appendices

READINGS

- Howitt, D. (2010). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. Harlow: Pearson. (Chapter 7: Thematic Analysis)
- Smith, J. (2008). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage. (Chapter 10: Thematic Analysis)
- Phelps. C., Horrigan, D., Protheroe, L. K., Hopkin, J., Jones, W., & Murray. A. (2008). "I wouldn't classify myself as a patient": The importance of a "well-being" environment for individuals receiving counselling about familial cancer risk. *Journal of Genetic Counselling*, 17, 394-405.
 - Available on Moodle



TO DO...

Thematic analysis on a provided interview transcript

Submission of coded transcript with emergent themes noted and a table of themes, sub-themes and supporting quotes for formative assessment (by Monday 27th April).