

Logistics of Qualitative Methods

Qualitative Methods: Interviews

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Session Overview

- Identifying investigators and staff to be involved
- Timelines
- Budgets
- Human Subjects Protection



Logistics in the Field

- Each qualitative study is different
- Cannot anticipate all logistical challenges but some are common across studies
- “Expect the unexpected”

*Chapter 5 of Tolley et al. book



Key Investigators/Staff

- Project Leader
- Content expert(s) for planning/interpretation
- Participant Recruiter
- Interviewer(s)
- Note taker(s)/Assistant(s)
- Transcriber(s)
- Data analysts/coders

In reality, 1 to 2 people may serve in all roles



Key Stakeholders

- Build rapport with community and key stakeholders
- Identifying stakeholders:
 - Who may be impacted by the research/outcomes?
 - Who may have influence to affect participation?
 - Who may have specific interest in topic?
 - Who are potential funders with interest?
 - Are other researchers working in this area?



Key Stakeholders

- Consider both informal and formal leaders
- Create brief document to outline project goals, objectives, partners, funders, and activities
- Meet with stakeholders during planning process, keep them informed, and disseminate results



Timelines

- Difficult to plan for qualitative studies
- Depend heavily on scope of project (anticipated number of interviews, recruitment type)
- Influenced by number of people involved and competing roles of staff
- Depends on brief or extensive analysis
- For a medium to large scale project, aim for about a year



Items on Timeline

- Literature review
- Developing research question/purpose/protocol
- Developing guide and materials
- Pilot testing guide
- IRB approvals (if necessary)
- Train staff
- Conduct Interviews
- Transcribe interviews
- Data analysis
- Writing reports



Critical Documents Needed

- Research question/purpose
- IRB Protocol and Applications (if necessary)
- Interview guide/demographics survey
- Screening questionnaire
- Consent forms
- HIPAA forms
- Recruitment plan and flyers
- Training materials (if necessary)



Training

- Train all project staff to ensure consistency and that everyone fully understands their role and goals of the project
- Serves as team building and rapport
- Should include practice interviewing skills
- Provide training at beginning and throughout if necessary



Budgets

- Staff time (project lead, interviewer time, coordinator time)
- Supplies
 - Digital recorders (2 @\$75 each)
- Travel – mileage for planning meetings and interviews, possibly for participants as well



Other Budget Items

- Advertising costs
- Participant incentives (@\$30 each)
- Transcription costs (@\$40 each if outsourced)
- Data Analysis Software such as NVivo or MaxQDA (\$750 per license)



Human Subjects Protection

- Need to first determine whether your project is considered Human Subjects Research
- Work with your Institutional Review Board
- Is the activity a systematic investigation designed to contribute generalizable knowledge?
- Does the research involve obtaining information about living individuals?
- Is the information individually identifiable?



Protection of Research Subjects

- Research will need approval of appropriate IRBs
- Outline research team, design, procedures, data analysis, risks, and potential benefits in research protocol
- Will need draft versions of all materials



Informed Consent

- Human research must be conducted with informed consent
- Ensures participants understand purpose, how they were chosen, procedures, risks, benefits, and voluntary nature of study
- Risks may be physical, psychological, social, economic, or professional
- Usually required to get signed consent form



Confidentiality

- Include procedures to minimize the risk of loss of confidentiality
- Store data on encrypted devices, secure servers, and in locked cabinets
- Use unique identifiers rather than names and keep key locked in separate location
- Remove identifiers within transcripts
- Delete audio recordings when study ends



Final Thoughts

- Plan to be flexible
- Each qualitative study is unique
- Work closely with your IRB if necessary
- Seek guidance from experienced qualitative researchers



Questions?

