

Conducting Interviews in Qualitative Social Science Research

Types of Interviews -

- individual face-to-face (*choose non-shy participants willing to share*)
- telephone (*not ideal but used when direct access is not possible*)
- focus group (*only used if time is limited, if interaction aids response, if solo participants are hesitant*)

Benefits of Interviews -

- Researcher controls the line of questioning
- Historical context can be provided by interviewee

Drawbacks to be aware of -

- Researchers presence may introduce **biased** responses
- Responses are indirect (and can get out of context or off topic)

Tips for Formulating Questions to be Asked -

- Determine what kind of information is needed before writing questions
- keep questions open-ended, unstructured
 - tell a story about...
 - give a specific example of ...
 - walk me through the process you experienced...
- ask **clear** questions
- ask **single** questions
- Use few in number (5-7)
- Memorize questions and their order (follow suggested stages):
 - 1- establish interviewee background in area of research
 - 2- details of present experiences/thoughts relevant to the topic
 - 3- discuss meaning of the current experience has for them

To Get The Information You Need -

1. Allow for expansion and details, but stay on track with questions.
2. Assure you are confident with the terminology and the background information related to your topic.
3. Use probes
 - link, challenge, acknowledge, encourage, contradict, directly question
4. Be a good listener
 - offer little advice and few questions
 - ask for details, clarification examples
 - allow for silence as participant thinks