



TOPIC GUIDE



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest to declare



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To develop a topic guide for interviews and focus groups



OUTLINE OF THE WORKSHOP

- An introduction to how to develop a topic guide for interviews and focus groups
- Each research team develops a topic guide for individual interviews based on the research questions and aims developed in workshop 1
 - the topic guide will be used in the practical experience of individual interviews



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- Research question(s), Aims and Objectives
 - Determine how data are collected
- Tools for data collection
 - Interviews, Focus groups → Topic guides
 - Observations, Interviews, Focus groups → Fieldnotes
 - Policies, Guidelines, Reports, Archived data → Documents
 - Questionnaires with open questions → Documents
 - Internet data



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE

- A topic guide is developed based on
 - the research questions and aims and objectives → only relevant questions
 - previous literature on the topic
 - information received from informants (patients, healthcare professionals, managers etc.)
 - the experience of the research team
 - previous pilot studies

Supports consistent data collection



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE

- Structured interviews → interview schedule
 - The order of questions is pre-defined
 - Only questions in the interview schedule are used
 - The questions in the interview schedule are always asked in the same way
- Semi-structured interviews, open interviews, focus groups → topic guide
 - The order of questions can be changed during the interview
 - New questions can be added to the topic guide if relevant
 - There can be variation from interview to interview how the questions are asked



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE

- Structured interviews → interview schedule

NOT FLEXIBLE

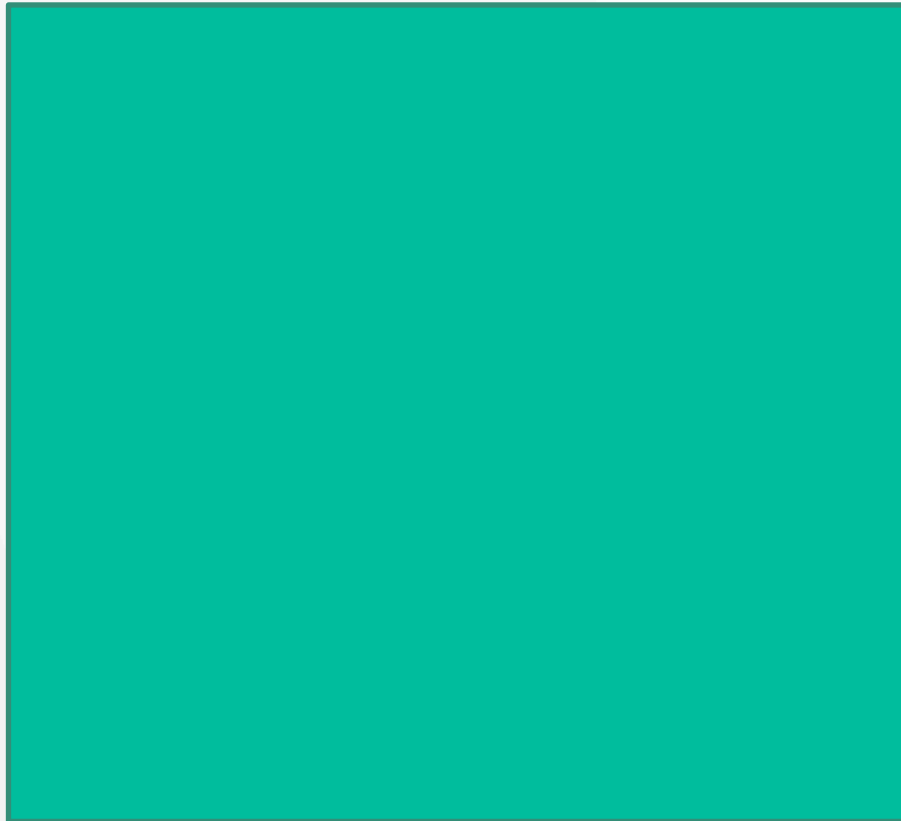
- Semi-structured interviews, open interviews, focus groups → topic guide

FLEXIBLE



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE

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- Semi-structured interviews, open interviews, focus groups → topic guide

FLEXIBLE



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: QUESTIONS

- Use open questions: WHAT, HOW, WHAT KIND/TYPE OF, WHY
- Try to avoid closed questions that can be answered with YES/NO
- In addition to the main questions, develop probing questions or explanations of new services or potentially difficult terms in advance
- Don't use too many questions to allow enough time for the interviewees to talk about issues important to them



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: STAGE 1

- Interviews
 - Creating a friendly atmosphere
 - Seeking informed consent
 - Introducing the topic / context
 - Interviewer / interviewee
 - No wrong or right answers
 - Recording the interview
 - Consent recorded
- Focus groups
 - Creating a friendly atmosphere
 - Seeking informed consent
 - Introducing the topic / context
 - *Introducing the idea of focus group*
 - *Facilitator / observer / participants*
 - No wrong or right answers
 - *Differing opinions / experiences / feelings etc.*
 - Recording the interview
 - Consent and introductions recorded



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: STAGES 2-3

- Interviews / Focus groups
 - QUESTIONS
 - Create a comfortable atmosphere with the first question(s)
 - Start with general (easy) questions → background, contextual information, definitional questions
 - Continue with more specific (difficult) questions → questioning or discussion is more in-depth, attitudes / perceptions / evaluations
 - Ensure the flow of the questions



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: STAGE 4

- Interviews / Focus groups
 - QUESTIONS
 - Questions looking to the future, suggestions
 - Winding down and finishing on a positive note
 - Summarising / Checking
 - Any additional issues?
 - Thank you! (Any incentive?)
 - Listen for any further ideas / experiences / feelings
 - Information about what happens next / support or help available (if appropriate)



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: FOCUS GROUPS

Consider the following when developing a topic guide

- Focus groups are time-limited (60-90 min)
 - time allocation for each question has to be planned
 - more time needs to be allocated for discussion → less questions
- The facilitator introduces the topics and the participants discuss the topics between themselves
 - The introductions of the topics can be longer than in interviews
 - Background materials can be used in introductions e.g. pictures, videos of patients talking about how they cope with their medicines, leaflets of new services
 - The participants can be asked to complete an exercise e.g. ranking new pharmacy services in order to start or stimulate discussion



EXAMPLES OF TOPIC GUIDES



PILOTING A TOPIC GUIDE

- Piloting the use of a topic guide may have different purposes
 - Practising interviewing / facilitating focus group interviews and improving one's technique
 - Testing the usability of the topic guide
 - Relevant questions? Too many / few questions?
 - Are the questions / explanations understandable?
 - Testing the flow of the topic guide / the introductions
 - Testing the background material / exercise



DEVELOPING A TOPIC GUIDE: EXERCISE

- Use the research questions and aims developed by the research team in workshop 1
- Develop a topic guide for an individual interview to be used in the practical experience of interviews
 - Discuss and develop relevant questions to the aims and objectives based on the research team's experience (and previous literature)
 - Select 5-7 questions for an interview that lasts about 20 min, including introductions and conclusions
 - Start with general questions and continue with more specific questions
 - Ensure the flow of the interview by putting the questions in the 'right' order

30 min



LITERATURE

- Bowling: Research Methods in Health, 2014
- Miles, Huberman & Saldana: Qualitative Data Analysis, 2014
- Ritchie, Lewis, Naughton McNicholls & Ormston: Qualitative Research Practice, 2014
- Silverman: Doing Qualitative Research, 2010
- Smith: Conducting Your Pharmacy Practice Research Project, 2010
- Smith: Research methods in Pharmacy Practice, 2002
- Walker: An Introduction to Health Services Research, 2014



Thank you!