

INTERVIEWS

How to Conduct an Interview

1. Design the questions that will elicit the information you seek. Pretest the questions with a few participants so that you can determine if questions are being misinterpreted or misunderstood.
2. Send invitations to prospective participants to outline the purpose of the interview and what will happen to the information they provide.
3. Get informed consent from all participants (see How to Obtain Informed Consent document in the toolkit, data folder).
4. Set a date and place to conduct the interview. Inform the participant at the beginning of each interview that they can end the interview at any time or decline to answer any of the questions.
5. Take extensive notes and audio record the interview for transcription later.
6. Listen carefully to ensure that the interviewee has actually answered the question and observe non-verbal cues that suggest follow up questions or more specific probes. Ask for clarification as needed.

Cautions in Conducting an Interview

1. It is important to view the interview as a dialogue rather than a one-way extraction of information with the interviewer in a position of authority (PEPM p.211).

2. Ensure that the participant knows the degree of anonymity and confidentiality you can and will honour.

3. Use wording in phrasing your questions to the participant that does not lead participants to respond in a way that will bias the information that you are collecting.

4. Pay attention to the context of the interview. How comfortable were you and the participant in the context? Were there interruptions?

For further information, consider the following:

Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, Chapter 5 Applying Qualitative Evaluation Methods Ethnographic Action Research Training Handbook, <http://ear.findingavoice.org/toolbox/4-0.html>
Interviews in Education Research, <http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/interviews/inthome.htm>
Key Informant Interviews, <http://ppa.aces.uiuc.edu/KeyInform.htm>
Convergent Interviewing, <http://www.aral.com.au/areol/areol-session08.html>

