

INTEREST TRANSCRIPT Issues RESPONSIBLE NARRATIVE context  
DMR CASE STUDY Transferability TRUSTWORTHY ISSUES THEME DEPENDABILITY Observation opinion Theme  
DMR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW INTEREST FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS context  
DMR Reflexibility NOTE TAKING Credibility OUTLINE TRIANGULATION TRANSFERABILITY context ISSUES  
Theme NOTE TAKING Grounded Theory TRIANGULATION OPINION Outline Issues context  
Key Informant Interview Research CREDIBILITY Observation ETHICAL Content Analysis THEME  
Note taking Confirmability PURPOSIVE SAMPLING Case study Dependability  
In depth Interview DMR Issues ding opinion Confirmability DISCOURSE ANALYSIS interpret Ethical

# Qualitative Methods in Health Research

NARRATIVE TRUSTWORTHY TRANSFERABILITY Integrity REFLEXIBILITY Outline DMR  
DMR Issues DEPENDABILITY DMR ON INTEREST CODING OPINION ISSUES  
DMR NARRATIVE INTEGRITY DMR ch DMR opinion DMR GROUNDED THEORY  
Focus Group Discussion Trustworthy Observation understanding DMR  
Outline PURPOSIVE SAMPLING Issues interpret Coding TRANSCRIPT Narrative UNDERSTANDING DMR  
DMR OPINION DMR Issues Framework Analysis THEME DMR INTERPRET DMR understanding DMR  
DMR Phenomenology DMR Issues CONFIRMABILITY CASE STUDY DMR  
INTRODUCTION OBSERVATION Note taking DMR COMMUNITY CONTENT ANALYSIS DMR  
DMR DMR Integrity DMR TRANSCRIPT DMR CONTEXT DMR Issues INTRODUCTION CONFIDENTIALITY  
Issues Note taking DMR Community Coding INTRODUCTION CONFIDENTIALITY Theme DMR Content Analysis

# **Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research**



# Background

- *Ethical reflexivity* is a core feature of qualitative research practice as ethical questions may arise in every phase of the research process.
- Ethical considerations are **more complex than QUAN:**
  1. More **personal methods**
  2. More intrusive into the everyday world of the participant & greater role for the researcher-participant relationship



# Special Consideration

- (a) **Vulnerable populations** such as children or the elderly;
- (b) **A marginalized segment** of the population such as people with disabilities, or the economically disadvantaged;
- (c) **Covert observation** that will be conducted in association with an ethnographic study;
- (d) **A narrative study** in which the researcher may withhold the full true intent of the research in order not to stifle or bias participants' telling of their stories.

# Overarching Ethical Principles

All researchers are responsible for ensuring that participants:

- Are **well-informed** about the purpose of the informed about the purpose of the research they are being asked to participate;
- **Understand the risks** they may face as a result of being part of the research
- Understand the **benefits** that might accrue to them as a result of participating
- Feel free to make an **independent decision** without fear of negative consequences

# Ethical Challenges

- Research goals
- Gaining access (sampling)
- Data collection and interpretation, and use of results
- Relationships between the researchers and the researched



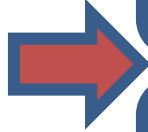
# GAINING ACCESS/SAMPLING

- Identifying **potential participants for research** particularly when research topic is sensitive may be ethically challenging.
- Will **recruitment**/identification cause harm? e.g. snowball sampling
- Need to pick up overt and covert cues of interest: nonverbal cues, indirect questions.
- Getting consensus from whom?: Autonomy vs. power relationship
- Obtaining consensus from the village leader; and/or the household-head is often the cultural consideration in certain social settings but, then, can the potential respondents (e.g. daughters-in-law) really exercise their right to decline participation?



# Points to Ponder

**Honest  
assurance of  
research  
participants**



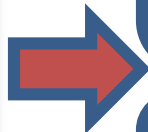
**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**RIGHT TO  
PRIVACY**

**SAFETY FROM  
HARM**

**RIGHT TO  
TERMINATE**

**Well  
described  
procedures**



**GAINING  
INFORMED  
CONSENT**

**GAINING  
IRB  
APPROVAL**

**ANONYMIZING IDENTIFIERS**



# Sensitive Issues

When highly sensitive issues are concerned, **children and other vulnerable individuals should have access to an advocate** who is present during initial phases of the study, and ideally, during data gathering sessions.

- Identity of participants should only be shared with research team. (However, if third party is involved- participants should be informed)
- In order to maintain confidentiality, some minor details about the data can be changed.
- Videotapes/audio files should be destroyed after completion of transcripts.

# Concerns on Privacy & Confidentiality

**SENSITIVE TOPICS**

**PHOTOGRAPHS  
&  
VIDEOS**



**PHENOMENOLOGIC  
DESIGNS  
[LIVED EXPERIENCES]**

**SMALL SAMPLE SIZE**

**IDIs are preferable to FGDs, particularly for sensitive topics.**

**Verbal consent for projects where the loss of confidentiality is a primary risk**

# Focus Group Method

- The focus group method brings together (typically) a number of strangers who are often asked to offer their candid thoughts on personal and sensitive topics.
- For this reason (and other reasons, e.g., the moderator may be sharing confidential information with the participants), it is important to gain a **signed consent form from all participants**; *however*, the reality is that there is no way the researcher can totally guarantee confidentiality.

# Informed Consent

- How should consent be sought for research with Indigenous communities?
- How should informed consent be evaluated and by whom?
- Does a power differential remain between the researcher and the researched?
- How important is the trusting relationship with community and the research team?

# Consultation and Community Consent: Example

- Community presentations were conducted in partnership with local Aboriginal leaders at various meetings around the Fitzroy Valley to obtain community approval and consent for The Picture Talk Project.
- Meetings included 8-40 people: local community representatives as well as local and visiting service representatives from government and non-government organizations.
- Other presentations were given directly to key organizations as approved by their CEO or to families who wanted to know more about the project.

# DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT

- Disclosure and consent need to be viewed as dynamic rather than static.
- Extent of control over circumstances under which information is shared (privacy): unwitting disclosure, option to rescind information, opportunity to share information “off the record”
- Information shared might endanger privacy of another individual.
- Information may require researchers to violate confidentiality for clinical, legal or safety reason.

# REPRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

- Extent of control over use of private information (confidentiality)
- Reporting findings should not endanger individuals or the “communities” they belong to.
- Information shared might endanger privacy of another individual.
- Need to adequately disguise data, use pseudonyms\* (life history, in-depth interview based studies)
- Providing opportunity for participants to review material that will be disseminated.



# References

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5. Fitzpatrick E, Macdonald G, Martiniuk A et.al. The picture talk project: Aboriginal community input on consent for research. BMC Medical Ethics 2019. 20:12.



THANK YOU

