the interview
Standardized Interview
- face-to-face questionnaire, unambiguous information, identical meanings, comparisons

In-depth Interview
- low structure, completely open ended, natural progression, prioritization, field research

Semi-Structured Interview
- freedom, flexibility, natural flow of conversation

Focus Groups
- large amount of information in short time, gather information from transient populations, places participants on more even footing with each other and the investigator
Probes, Prompts, Checks

➔ Could you expand on that point?
➔ You mentioned that....how did you feel about it?
➔ A nod, 'mm' or even a pause
➔ Do you have further examples of this?
➔ Could you say something more about that?

➢ Remain silent
➢ Repeat the question
➢ Repeat last few words spoken by the participant
➢ Offer some examples

✓ So if I understand you correctly...
✓ what this is means, then, is that ....
✓ Is it correct that you feel that ...?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO...</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T ...</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ practice, practice, practice, practice</td>
<td>✗ Don't stick to your questions rigidly. If an interesting subject comes up that relates to your research, feel free to ask additional questions about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ come to the interview prepared</td>
<td>✗ Don't pester or push the person you are interviewing. If they do not want to talk about an issue, you should respect that desire.</td>
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<td>✓ bring redundant recording equipment</td>
<td>✗ Don't be satisfied with monosyllabic answers</td>
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<td>✓ be respectful, cordial, and appreciative</td>
<td>✗ Don't make it <em>all</em> about you</td>
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<td>✓ start with some small talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ ask good questions</td>
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<td>✓ pay attention to what is being said</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ give them a chance to ask you questions</td>
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<td>✓ get close to the data</td>
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<td>✓ make time for reflection</td>
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<td>✓ take care of yourself</td>
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12 Handy In-depth Interviewing Tips

1. **Probe, Probe, Probe in a Nonalien Way**: the MOST IMPORTANT question for your interviews is probably not on your question sheet. Rather, the most important question is the probe, which is a question you ask in order to learn more about what an interviewee just told you. Probing more in depth makes the interviewee think more about his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and thus allows you to learn just what is behind things. … Some specific interview probes you might use include: “Can you describe what the place looked like?”; “How did that make you feel at the time?”; “Can you give me an example of that?”; “What did you mean when you said ___?”

2. **Avoid $100 Words**: Don’t ask questions like “What is your gender ideology?” or “Tell me about your role overload.”. Rather, phrase questions in a way that a generally educated respondent would understand. Example: “What do you think the proper role for a woman [man] is?” or “Who do you think should be responsible for housework?”.

3. **Turn a Clark Kent Question into a Superman Question**: Many closed-ended questions can be turned into open-ended question by beginning the question with a “why” or a “how”, or by following up the answered to a closed-ended questions with “Why?”, “Why not?”, “Why do you feel that way?”. For example, a question like “What chores do you do on a regular basis?” is rather closed-ended. However, adding the follow-up “Why do you do these chores in particular?” “How did you and your spouse decided who does what chore?” opens up the question for further elaboration.

4. **Probe, Probe, Probe**: Did I mention this? Good. Don’t forget it.

5. **Do a Homer Simpson**: Sometimes you will ask questions that seem very commonsensical to your interviewees. One tactic for handling this problem is just to “play dumb”. Tell them that you really don’t know what they are talking about. This will make your interviewees further explain things, which will provide you with much better data.

6. **Battle the “You Know What I Mean?” Demon**: you may find that your interviewees will end a statement by the phrase, “you know what I mean?”. Kill this demon every time you see it. Don’t allow it to kill you by nodding your head and saying “yep”. Rather, say no, you don’t know what they mean, or ask them to just clarify what they mean for your sake. This demon raises its ugly head especially with questions about thoughts and feelings.
12 Handy In-depth Interviewing Tips

7. **Order Attention Pay to:** the questions that you ask should flow logically from one to another, or you should have transitions between sets of questions to let the interviewee know that you are now going in a different direction. Questions that seem orderly put the interviewee at ease and make the interview seem more conversation-like, and this practice will cause the interviewee to open up to you more. It will also make you seem as if you’ve got your act together, giving you legitimacy as an interviewer.

8. **Be a Good Ant and Don’t Lead, Follow:** Try to avoid leading questions that may make interviewees feel obligated to answer in a particular way; for instance, “How did the division of housework make you upset?” (it assumes that the person was upset about the issue). However, the question, “How did the division of the housework make you feel?” gets at the same thing, but it does not lead the interviewee into a specific emotional direction.

9. **Probe, Probe, Probe:** Just in case it hasn’t burrowed its way into your mind forever by now. I’m serious. Do it. You’ll be sorry if you don’t.

10. **Enjoy the Silence:** Oftentimes there will be ‘dead air’ during the interview. Avoid the temptation to fill it. Give your interviewees time to think about the answers that they want to give. Don’t worry. Interviewees are usually quick to tell you if they don’t understand a question or if they don’t have anything else to say about a topic.

11. **Don’t Be A Judge Judy:** You may not agree with some or a lot of what your interviewees say. However, it is really not your job as an interviewer and researcher to morally judge your interviewees. Rather, your goal is to document, understand, and try to explain why they think and feel in certain ways. Try not to take a judgmental tone or stance toward what the interviewee says. Also remember that you can express judgment in nonverbal ways, such as how you look at a person when they give an answer or the tone you use when asking follow-up questions.

12. **Shut up:** Do not put words into people’s mouths. Rather, let them say things in their own words, especially with questions that deal with thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Remember, if you say it, it’s not data. It is only data when the interviewee says it.

Checklist before Data Gathering for Interviews

- Are the questions clear in my mind? Have I practiced enough to be fluid in my delivery?
- Is the interview guide ready? Are my probes ready in case I need them?
- What is my plan for contacting participants? (phone, mail, person,..)
- How long will each interview take? Contingency plan if time is insufficient? Exit strategy clear?
- Is the interviewing setting safe for me and my participants?
- What kind of interview setting is most appropriate?
- What kind of anonymity or confidentiality can I guarantee?
- What amount of time do I need for each interview and for reflections afterwards?
- Do I want participants to prepare in some way, to think about topic beforehand or bring some documentation?
- What if they decline to participate?

Ethical Considerations

Risks

Anonymity / Confidentiality

Informed Consent
Ethical Considerations: Risks

Physical Risk (e.g. bodily contact, administration of any substance, physical discomfort, tiredness)

Psychological or Emotional Risk (e.g. feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, worried, anxious, upset)

Social Risk (e.g. loss of status, privacy, reputation)

Legal Risk (e.g. arrest, being sued)

Economic Risk (e.g. loss of income, incurred expenses)