

Qualitative Data Management and Analysis

“Qualitative analysis is 50% organization and 50% conceptual.” *Anon.*

I. Types of Data Collection Procedures (see also notes from 242 re: preparing to conduct observations or interviews)

| Data collection method | Data collection procedure |
|---|---|
| Individual interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written field notes• Interview protocol form• Digital recording• Quantitative data (if relevant) |
| Group interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written field notes• Digital recording |
| Data extraction (e.g. from medical records) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data extraction instrument |

II. Collecting data: thick description (applies to interviews and field observation)

- A. A way to describe your setting
- B. Narrative details about context, physical description of site and participants
- C. Expression of emotions & behaviors of participants
- D. Spoken content by participants
- E. Social relationships of participants, and
- F. Your own thoughts, opinions and reactions (“memos” to yourself)

III. Organizing Your Data

- A. Paper
 1. Sorted in folders by either of the following:
 - a) Date of interview or data extraction procedure
 - b) De-identified ID of respondent
 - c) Study site
 - d) Other organizing characteristic important to your study
 2. In the paper folders can go:
 - a) Field notes
 - b) Interview protocol notes (if used)

- c) Paper transcriptions
- d) Any other material relevant to the interview or data collection procedure

B. Computer folders

1. Sorting and headings should match the paper folders as much as possible
2. In the computer folder can go:
 - a) Digital audio files
 - b) Transcripts of interviews
 - c) Field notes if typed into computer

C. As you proceed with analysis you can add more folders with different headings (e.g. by theme)

IV. Analyzing Data

A. Field notes vs. transcriptions

B. Develop a table (database) of your themes with data examples:

(Extract from full table) “Perceptions of Effectiveness of CBT Group Therapy”

| Theme | Quotes or descriptions | Source | Cross reference |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| Hopelessness | “I just don’t feel like it’s worth it” | Interview KL 2/5/09, p. 4 line 13 | |
| Hopelessness | How intervention reduces hopelessness feelings | Interview KL 3/15/09, p. 7 line 25 | Effectiveness |
| Hopelessness | “I felt, ‘Why bother to come in at all?’” | Interview CJ 3/12/09, p. 1 line 5 | |
| Effectiveness (of intervention) | “It made me, you know, think about my relationships with people | Interview JR, 3/14/09 p. 2 line 19 | Relationships |
| Effectiveness | “I didn’t think it would work, I mean, I was so miserable...” | Interview CJ, 3/18/09, p. 3 line 4 | Hopelessness |
| Self esteem | Self esteem outcome score | Pretest, posttest change in outcome, JR | Effectiveness |
| Self esteem | Self esteem outcome score | Pretest, posttest change in outcome, CJ | Effectiveness |
| Self esteem | Self esteem outcome score | Pretest, posttest change in | Effectiveness |

| Theme | Quotes or descriptions | Source | Cross reference |
|---------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | outcome, KL | |
| Relationships | “It made me, you know, think about my relationships with people” | Interview JR, 3/14/09 p. 2 line 19 | Effectiveness |
| Relationships | How mood affects the marriage | Interview CJ, 2/12/09 line 8 | |
| Relationships | “I noticed as my mood got better, we talked more...” | Interview CJ, 3/12/09 line 22 | Effectiveness |

1. Use Excel—so you can easily sort columns as needed
2. This table becomes your database—from here you begin to write your analysis
3. As your analysis proceeds, expect to find a more sophisticated set of themes and subthemes, e.g. “hopelessness” becomes a subtheme under a larger category “Mood problems”; and “Marital” becomes a subheading under “Relationships”.

C. Thematic and Content Analysis—could involve any or all of the following:

1. Frequency counts of words or phrases confirming themes (“manifest content”).
2. Interpretive statements (“latent content”) about the themes (e.g. “Respondents viewed ‘effectiveness’ as multi-dimensional. Some aspects of how they described effectiveness could probably not be measured...”)
3. Explore relationships among the themes—almost like finding associations among variables, e.g. “Some respondents who characterized themselves at the more severe end of hopelessness seemed to have taken better advantage of the intervention.”

D. Reporting Results of Qualitative Analysis

1. What pre-existing themes were confirmed by the data?
2. What were the unexpected themes that came out of the data?
3. What are the relationships among the themes that are implied by the data?
4. What interpretations do you have from this?
5. For mixed methods: what is the relationship of these interpretations to the quantitative data results?

V. Things to Remember about Qualitative Research

- A. You will always feel like you missed something, didn’t ask *the* important

question, and/or didn't collect enough information,

B. ...even though you will always feel overwhelmed by the amount of information you have to deal with

C. Always remember you are at the mercy of your respondents. They, in fact, are in charge of what your results will be! But—the final interpretation is yours.

Helpful references, available in the library:

For field work procedures, analysis and writing:

John Lofland, et al. (2006): *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 5: Logging Data; Chapter 9: Developing Analysis; Chapter 10: Writing Analysis.

For content analysis methods:

Bruce L. Berg (2001): *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 11: An Introduction to Content Analysis.

For mixed methods design:

John W. Creswell & Vicki L. Plano Clark (2007): *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.