

Much of the value interviews provide as an effective evaluation method is in their flexibility. It is important that the interview has some basic structure and framework to make the process useful, credible and reliable.

- 1) **Purpose** – The purpose of the evaluation determines which method of collecting information is most appropriate. Therefore, being clear with the purpose will help determine if interviewing is the “best” method to use. Answering questions such as, “why are we collecting the data,” and “what do we need to learn from the data” before determining “how” (which method) will help determine the appropriateness of a particular method.
- 2) **Design** – Your overall design of the interviewing process should include the stages of analyzing and reporting the data *before* the interviewing begins. Having answers to questions such as, “who will record and organize the notes,” “once we have the data analyzed, who will need to receive it and how do they prefer to obtain information,” and “how will I or the group I am affiliated with use the data?” will be very helpful before you proceed with the actual interview(s).
- 3) **Preparation** – Having awareness and an understanding of the basic principles of good interviewing will help everyone involved feel prepared. Ensure that the interviewer understands the questions to ask and how they are to be asked, has enough knowledge of the subject matter, feels confident in his/her ability to conduct the interview, and record responses appropriately.
- 4) **Recording** – The first step in analysis. This is where all of the information shared in the interview is recorded either on the interview sheet, as notes, or by using a tape recorder, or in some cases, a video recorder. Identifying how to record the data depends on a number of factors such as the type of interview, number and complexity of questions being addressed as well as obtaining permission from the interviewee (to tape the conversation for example).
- 5) **Analysis** – Interviews can produce a lot of material (narrative data), which must be condensed, categorized, interpreted and ultimately made useful. It is for this reason that the type of interview process selected as well the number of people who will be interviewed be considered carefully. The most appropriate method of analysis will depend on the original purpose, the nature of the material and the resources available (time, people, money).
- 6) **Verify** – One way to verify your data is to take the results back to some (maybe all if your sample size is small) and ask them if the results accurately represent what they said or meant. This step provides an opportunity for you to confirm your data and seek additional explanation, if appropriate.
- 7) **Report** – To effectively communicate your findings consider the following: a) document your interviewing process and provide evidence that you and your group followed steps that coincide with the basic principles of good interviewing, b) outline the standard of ethics you followed (e.g. confidentiality), c) ensure the report is readable and useable to your audience(s).

Sources: *Inter Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*,
Kvale, S., 1996
Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (2nd ed.),
Patton, M. Q., 1990