

Managing Challenging Interviews

Example introduction for qualitative topic guide

Below is an example topic guide introduction for a hypothetical study dealing with sensitive issues and / or challenging populations. Please note that not all points will be relevant to all studies.

Introduction

- **Introduce self and organisation** (*and research consortium, if applicable*)
 - Independence of organisation from commissioning body (*and scheme / system / pilot being evaluated, if applicable*)
- Explain the **aims and objectives** of the evaluation
- Review **topics to be covered**
 - Remit of discussion (*e.g. will not impact on healthcare treatment / case within the criminal justice system etc.*)
- Briefly explain **process of sampling and recruitment**
- Stress that **participation is voluntary**; free to stop the interview at any time and not answer particular questions if they do not want to
- Explain **confidentiality and anonymity**
 - That their name / other identifiers (e.g. address) will not be linked to their data
 - How findings will be reported, who to
 - Potential confidentiality caveats / disclosure issues
- Explain that the interview will be **recorded** (with permission) and **how the data will be stored**
- Explain **length and nature of discussion**
 - Can take a break at any time
 - No right or wrong answers; want to gather their views and experiences
- Go through **consent form** in detail and obtain signature
- Check whether **any questions**