

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of numerous circles of varying sizes in three colors: dark blue, orange, and white. These circles are scattered across the left half of the slide, with a higher concentration of smaller circles in the center-left area.

# Thinking Qualitatively

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An introduction to qualitative research  
in primary care

**NAPCRG**

# Introductions

- Dr Martina Kelly, University of Calgary
- Dr Patty Thille, University of Manitoba
- And you?

# Why qualitative research matters in primary care

- Because human beings are complex, different, messy and change
- Even within the same culture, people experience the world differently
- There is no location outside of culture; we are all shaped by our beliefs and actions, which have roots in our cultures
- Qualitative research delves into human experience and perspective and contexts, capturing information often lost in numerical translation

# Learning objectives

Today:

- Describe foundational understandings that underpin qualitative research
  - Reflexivity
  - Context is crucial
  - Paying attention to the specific
  - Iterative and flexible

The series:

- Engage with qualitative methods with confidence

# Start with story

We emphasize that research methods and study designs must be responsive to the research question and the story of experience that motivated it  
(Crabtree & Miller, 2023, pg 1)

# Foundational concept: Reflexivity (subjectivity)

“To be reflexive means that we are fully conscious of the lenses through which we view the world”

“The essence of reflexivity is to understand how our worldview is both shaped and constrained by our own subjectivity.”

(Kaufman, 2013, p 71)

# Why reflexivity matters: by understanding ourselves better, we can:

Better perceive and address power differentials within a study

Prevent reliance on common tropes or stereotypes

Engage deeply with your dataset

[and more]

Pause & reflect

Questions?



# Foundation 2: Context is Crucial

Qualitative research is about immersing oneself in a scene and trying to make sense of it....  
Meaning cannot be separated from thick contextual description  
(Tracy, 2013)

What is going on here?

Qualitative questions tend to be 'hows and whys' instead of how many or how much

Why we do, what we do

# Key concept 3: Paying attention to the specific

Understanding is the specific is the goal (not generalizability)

Context is never neutral or generalizable

- People
- Politics
- Power
- History

# Key concept 4: Qualitative research is Iterative

No pre-packaged research design

Iterative discovery and interpretation

- Responsive
- Organize
- Connect
- Corroborating

Emergence (doesn't mean 'appears from nowhere')

- Construction
- Interpretation
- Creative/imaginative variation
- Bricolage

Recap:

Foundational understandings that underpin varied  
qualitative traditions of research

# Recap and practice points

You are part of a research team, think about:

Reflexivity    What's your own story?

What do you bring to the research?

What values, culture, experiences shape the way you see the world?

Context    What contexts shape your story?

Specific    Is your story the same as other peoples' stories?

Where do they overlap, where do they differ?

Iterative    Rewrite your story with different characters, in a different time and place?

Revisit your story at the end of this lecture series!

# Questions?

## What's your Muddiest Point from today's presentation?

# Contact us

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