

Reflections on Interview

On the whole, I think the interview went well. A seemed pretty engaged with it for maybe 25 minutes or so but I drew things to a close soon after when I noticed A becoming a bit distracted. At this point, it seemed to me like we'd gone as far as we could with it. A's response to my final question about how we can get it right when doing research with young people seemed to confirm this when she said that her top tip was not to go on for too long! Interestingly, once we'd stopped filming I asked A if we'd gone on for a bit long and she said 'no'. Perhaps the context of the interview provided a safe enough space in which to give me this feedback.

On a couple of occasions, I lost my train of thought. This is something that routinely happens to most researchers during interviews and rather than feel bad about it or try to cover it up, I feel it's best just to acknowledge that it's happened in a light-hearted way and see it as part of the ebb and flow of the interview.

In the interview, I used a stimulus tool to encourage A to talk about the important people in her life. This has pros and cons. On the plus side, I think this worked well in the sense that A engaged with it by writing down the names of the important people in her life and this stimulated a very interesting discussion about why these people are important and what qualities A values in people. We were also able to explore her concept of 'friendship', although my question about what 'family' is all about didn't work. On the negative side, I noticed two limitations. Firstly, the idea of placing people on the diagram using a sort of hierarchy of importance didn't really work. A made a stab at this by placing people's names in different circles but in the subsequent discussion she made it clear that she considered certain people to be of equal importance. This may not always happen, of course, and I've used this tool to good effect in other contexts where participants (slightly older children) have engaged with this in a very insightful way. The second limitation relates to the particular version of the concentric circles diagram I used which provided space for participants to mention three categories of people: family, friends and other people. Had I used a less prescriptive diagram that simply asked for 'important people' then it may have been possible to gain more insights into, for example, how participants rate family versus how they rate friends in terms of importance.

Gill Highet
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