

- From raw data to credible interpretation: Coding, categorization, themes & reporting
- Margaret Barton-Burke, PhD, RN, FAAN

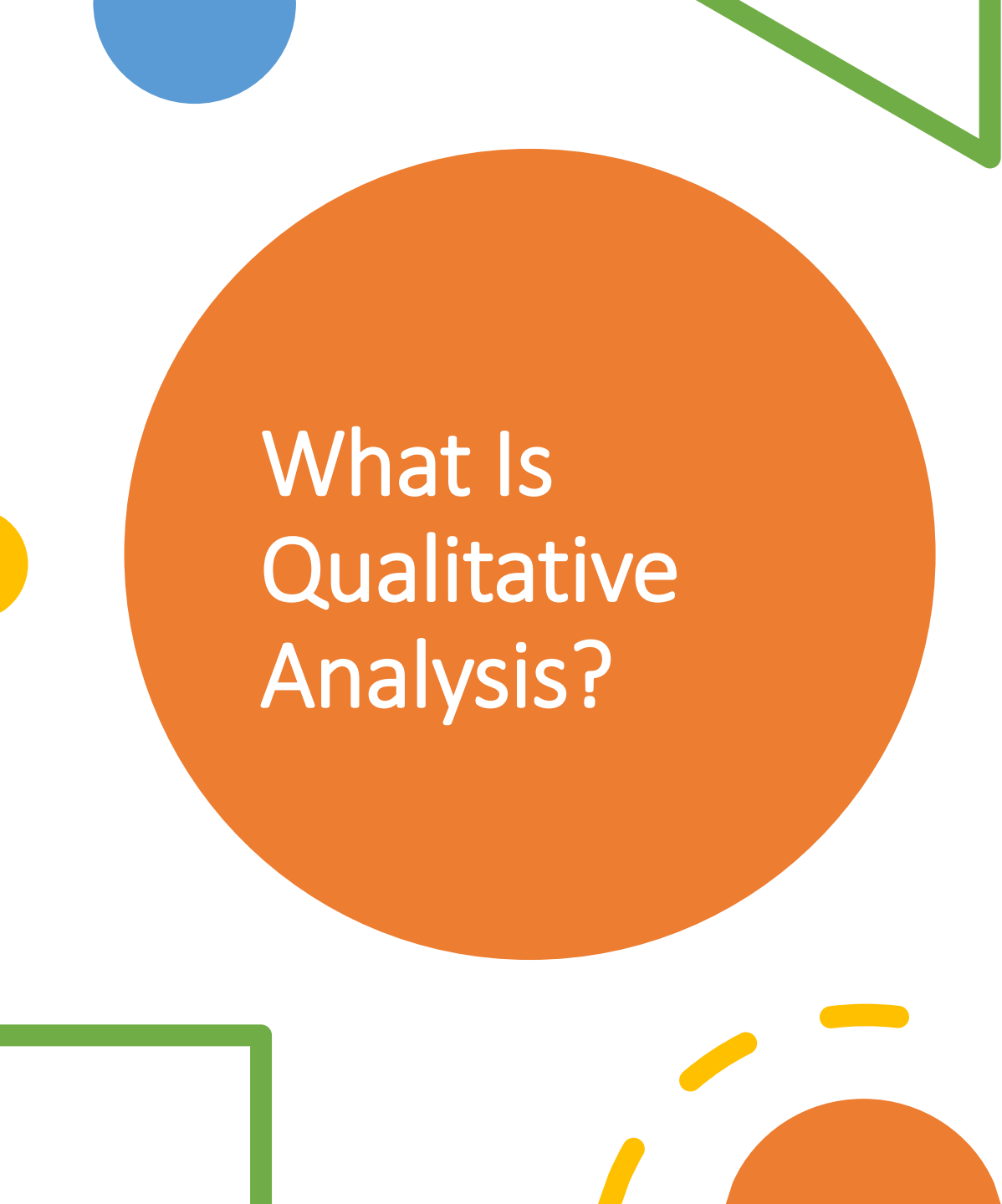
Qualitative Research Analysis

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Learning Objectives

- Explain purpose of qualitative analysis
- Distinguish common approaches
- Apply coding & theme development
- Assess credibility
- Present findings effectively





What Is Qualitative Analysis?

- Systematic interpretation of meaning, experience & context
- Focus on meaning, process, context, variation & patterns
- Interpretive, systematic, reflexive & evidence-based
- **MUST BE RIGOROUS**



Common Data Sources

- Interviews
 - Focus groups
 - Observations
 - Documents
 - Visual/digital data
 - Open-ended responses
- 



Major Analytical Approaches

- Thematic Analysis
- Content Analysis
- Grounded Theory
- Narrative Analysis
- Discourse Analysis
- Phenomenological Analysis
- Framework Analysis



The Analysis Cycle

- Prepare data
- Familiarize yourself with the data
- Code data
- Develop categories
- Construct themes
- Interpret findings
- Write &/or presentation

Prepare & Manage Data

- Transcribe & organize data
- Audit the transcription
- Anonymize identifiers
- Secure storage & metadata
- Maintain audit trail & record



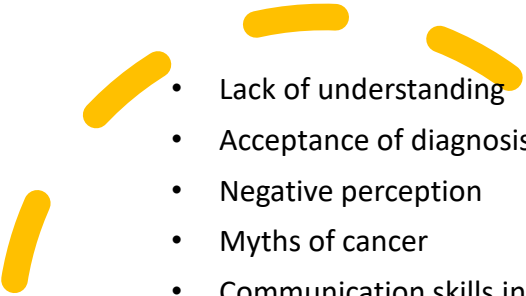
Become Familiar With Data

- Read repeatedly
- Note patterns & surprises
- Write summaries & memos
- Maintain reflexive journal

Generate Codes

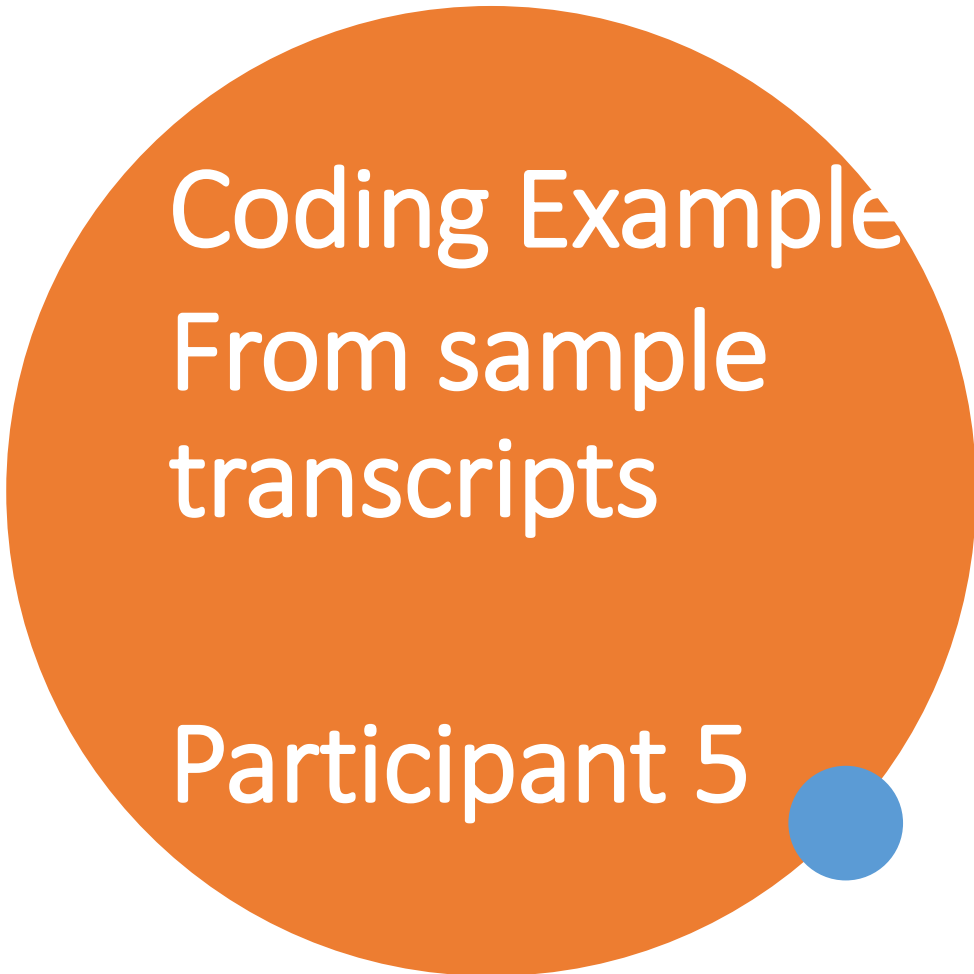
- Descriptive, process, in vivo, emotion & interpretive codes
- Use inductive & deductive coding



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- Lack of understanding
 - Acceptance of diagnosis
 - Negative perception
 - Myths of cancer
 - Communication skills in cancer management
 - Physician patient relationship
 - Poor knowledge of lung cancer treatment protocol
 - Training of doctor
 - Accepted medical advice
 - Isolation
 - Frustration
 - Fate/Spirituality/Religion
 - Cancer fatalism
 - Resignation to fate
 - Dissatisfaction
 - Stigma
 - Time
 - Burdens of cancer treatment
 - Denial
 - Rating of doctors' communication

AND

- Circumventing the suspected culprit



Coding Example
From sample
transcripts

Participant 5

Build a Codebook

- Code name & definition
- Include/exclude criteria
- Examples & related codes

From Codes to Themes

Data extracts → Codes → Categories →
Themes → Interpretation



Develop Strong Themes

- Coherent
 - Distinctive
 - Evidence-based
 - Interpretive
 - Relevant
 - Nuanced
-
- Can be metaphorical



Compare Cases & Seek Variation

- Across participants & groups
- Across data sources
- Negative-case analysis



Reflexivity

- Examine researcher influence
- Challenge assumptions
- Document analytic decisions



Strengthening Trustworthiness

- Credibility
- Dependability
- Confirmability
- Transferability

Keep a journal or log





Software Tools

- NVivo
- ATLAS.ti
- MAXQDA
- Dedoose
- Spreadsheets

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- Protect confidentiality
 - Respect informed consent
 - Avoid harmful interpretations
 - Review AI/cloud requirements – to keep the data safe



Ethical Considerations

Common Pitfalls

- Topics treated as themes
- Quotes without analysis
- Frequency mistaken for significance





Writing Findings

- Claim
- Evidence
- Interpretation
- Context



Analytical
Reporting
Example – from
transcript for
participant 5

- Theme: Communication
 - Meaning of cancer in his/her life
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Practical Analysis Plan

- Preparation
 - Familiarization
 - Coding
 - Theme development
 - Quality review
 - Reporting
- 



Key Takeaways

- Analysis is systematic & iterative
 - Research question guides decisions
 - Transparency strengthens trustworthiness
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Discussion Exercise

- Identify codes
- Create a category
- Develop a theme
- Consider alternative explanations

