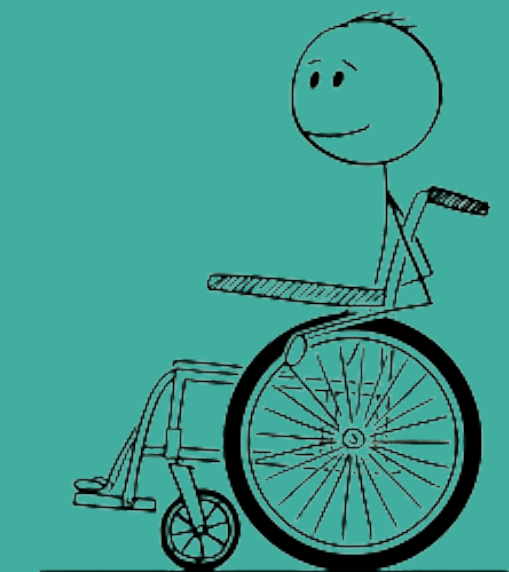
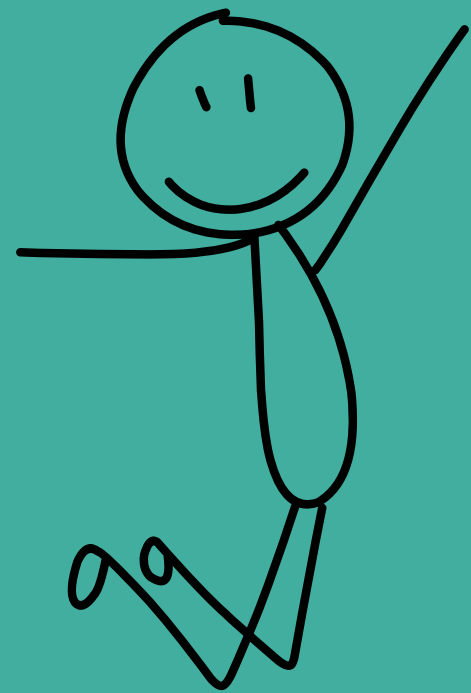
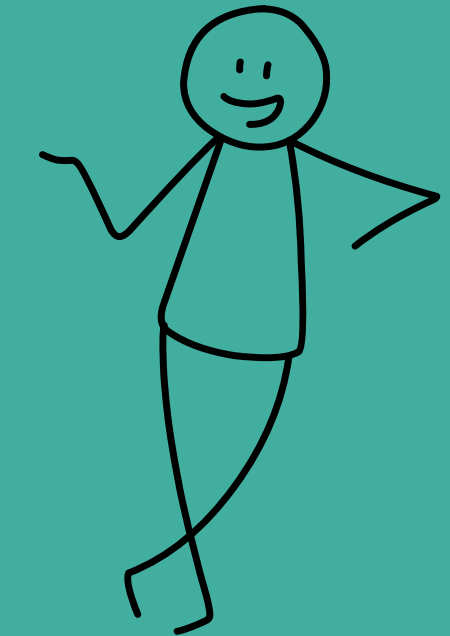
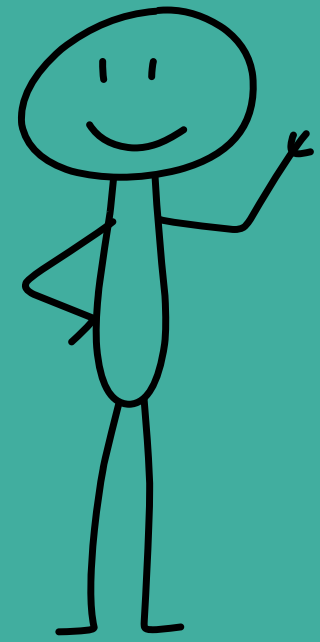


# HOW TO SET UP A PEER RESEARCH GROUP



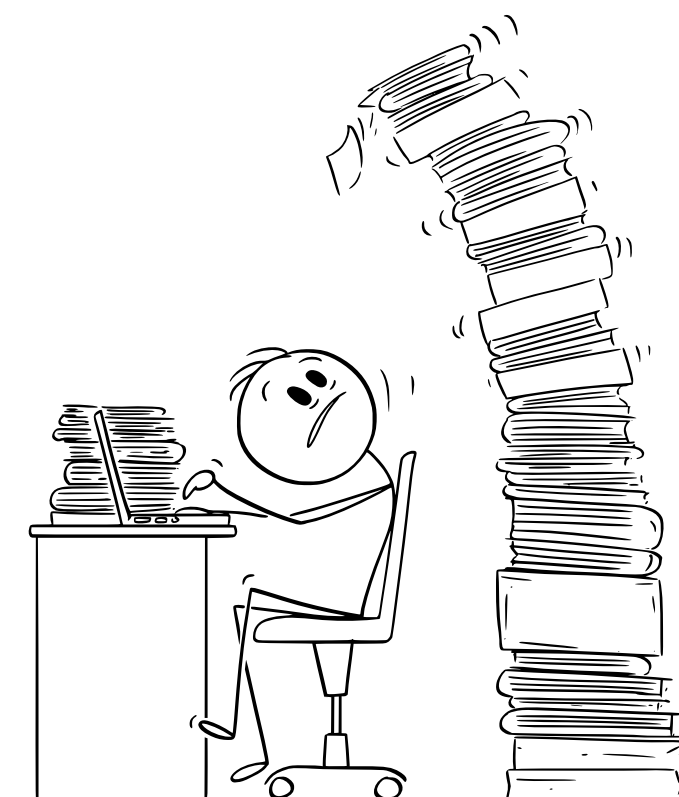
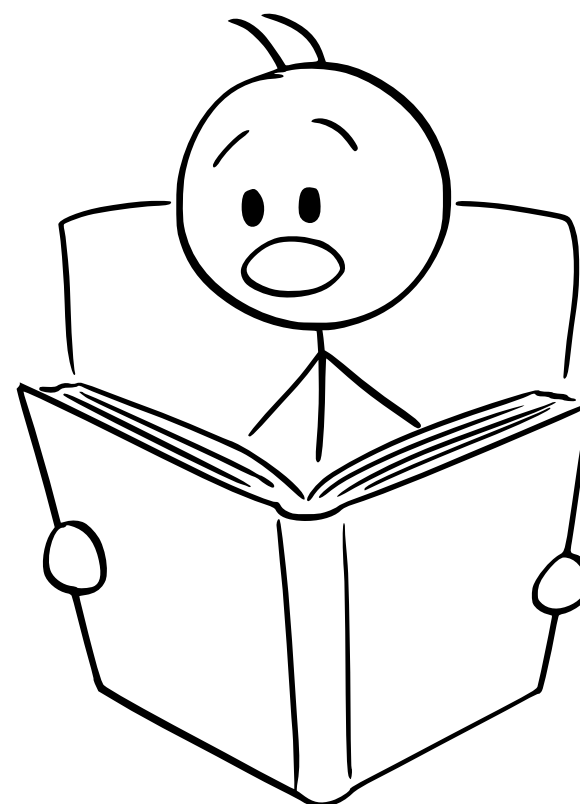
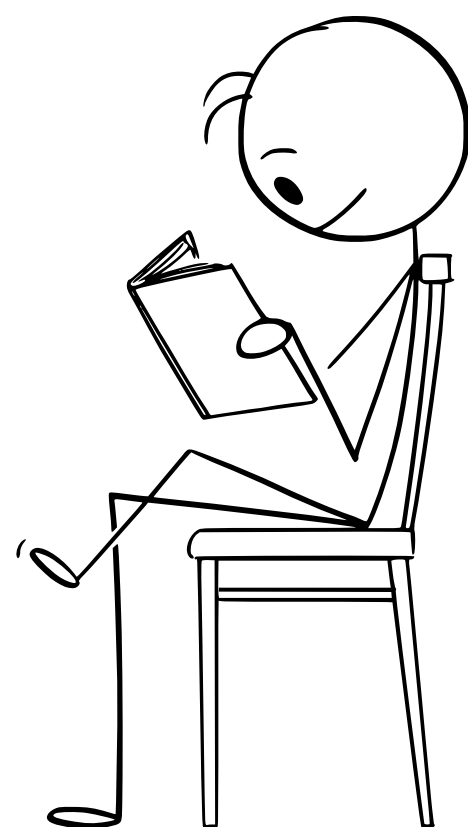
## Part Two: Session Planning Guides

Welcome to the peer research workbook. In this section, we share the lesson plans and resources that we designed and tested. The sessions combine formal training with peer-led discussions, allowing peers to build research skills while providing space for reflection and exchange of ideas.

This workbook is designed to be flexible. Where difficult topics are introduced, we have used metaphors instead of diving straight into content that might be triggering, allowing discussions that would otherwise have been difficult. This may or may not work for you, so we encourage you to adapt the language, content, and structure to suit your group's specific needs.

This includes how much time all of you, peers and facilitators, can commit to the process. We've facilitated them as 12 individual workshops over a six month period, as well as a more condensed six-week programme. We also found that some topics needed more than one session, and other topics needed to be revisited at a later date.

**In this experience, the facilitators conducted some sessions focused on teaching and learning, while others were discussion and reflection-based. We appreciated having both types.**



## Project Timetable

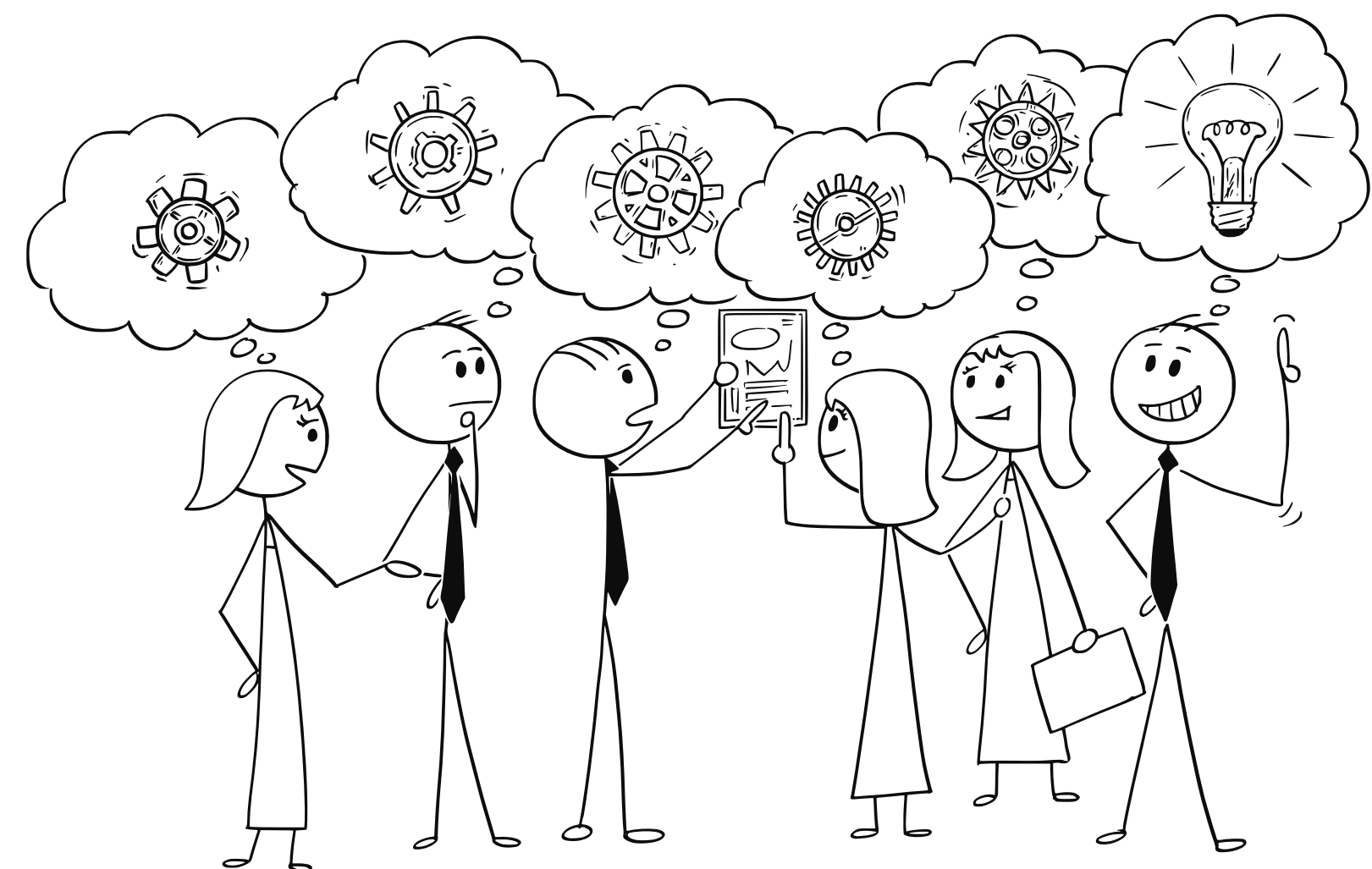
While we recommend the first session remain as suggested, feel free to order subsequent sessions based on your judgement and the group's needs, pace, and interests. Co-production remains essential throughout.

### 1. Group agreement and Introduction session

Group members meet and have an opportunity to ask questions and consider how to work together.

**Our first session gave us the opportunity to meet each other and the members of group 1. we started our group agreement so we could all work together in a safe space, we are still adding to this as we learn more about the process.**

**It was a really important space for laying down ground rules, working out our accessibility needs, and logistics of the group.**



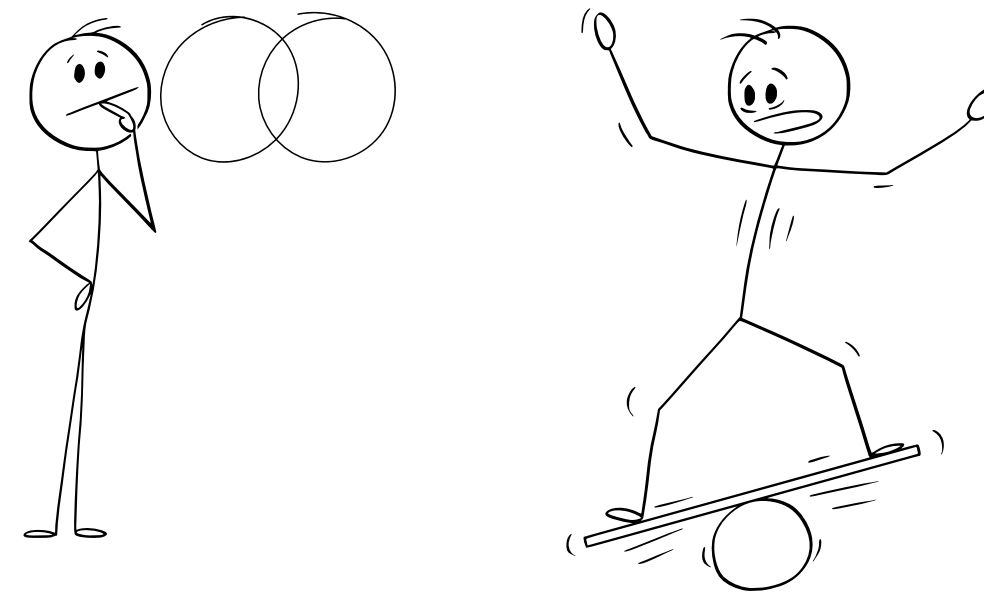
## 2. Introduction to Research

Why do research? What can it do, and what can't it do? Introduction to different kinds of research, including peer research. We discuss the impact of research on individuals.

**The complexity of research began to become apparent (I learnt so much I hadn't considered that was involved in research, so many layers to it and so much thinking behind doing research more than just thinking of a question and asking it.)**

## 3. Research Methods

An introduction to different research methods that could be used in peer research, and reflections on how these could be used when doing our own research.



## 4. Ethics

An introduction to the idea of ethics as a concept, as well as the application in practice, within research and peer research specifically. Personal ethics and boundaries, and institutional ethics.

**Really eye opening to learn about safety of researchers as well as the participants as something to think about**

## 5. Insider/Outsider and Ethics in Peer Research

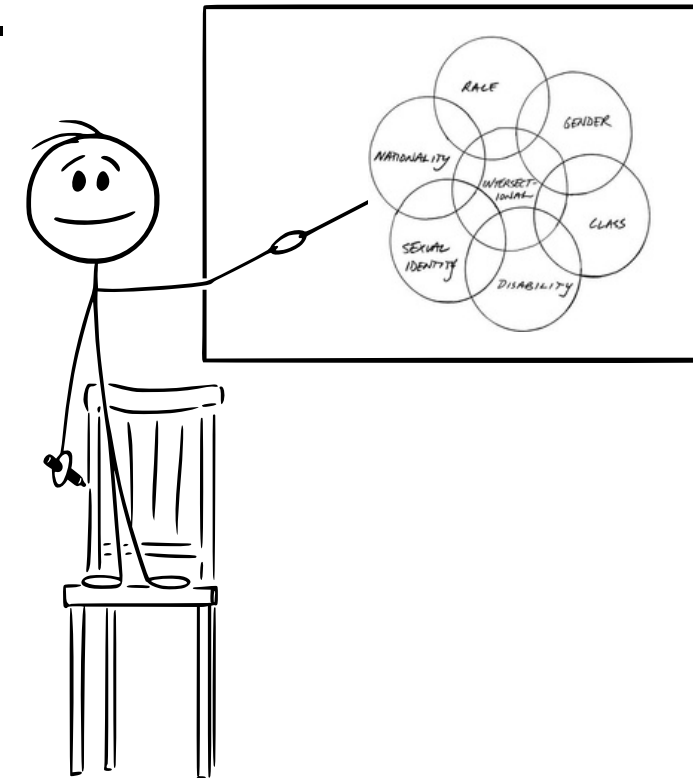
Our groups were introduced to the idea of insider/outsider positions in research, and how this relates to our work as a peer researcher.

**It helped us decide, we need to be aware of both perspectives. We need to be both, at certain points, and remain unbiased.**



## 6. Intersectionality as a Frame of Reference

Our groups were introduced to the concept of intersectionality, and ideas of power and asked to consider why this might be important in research.

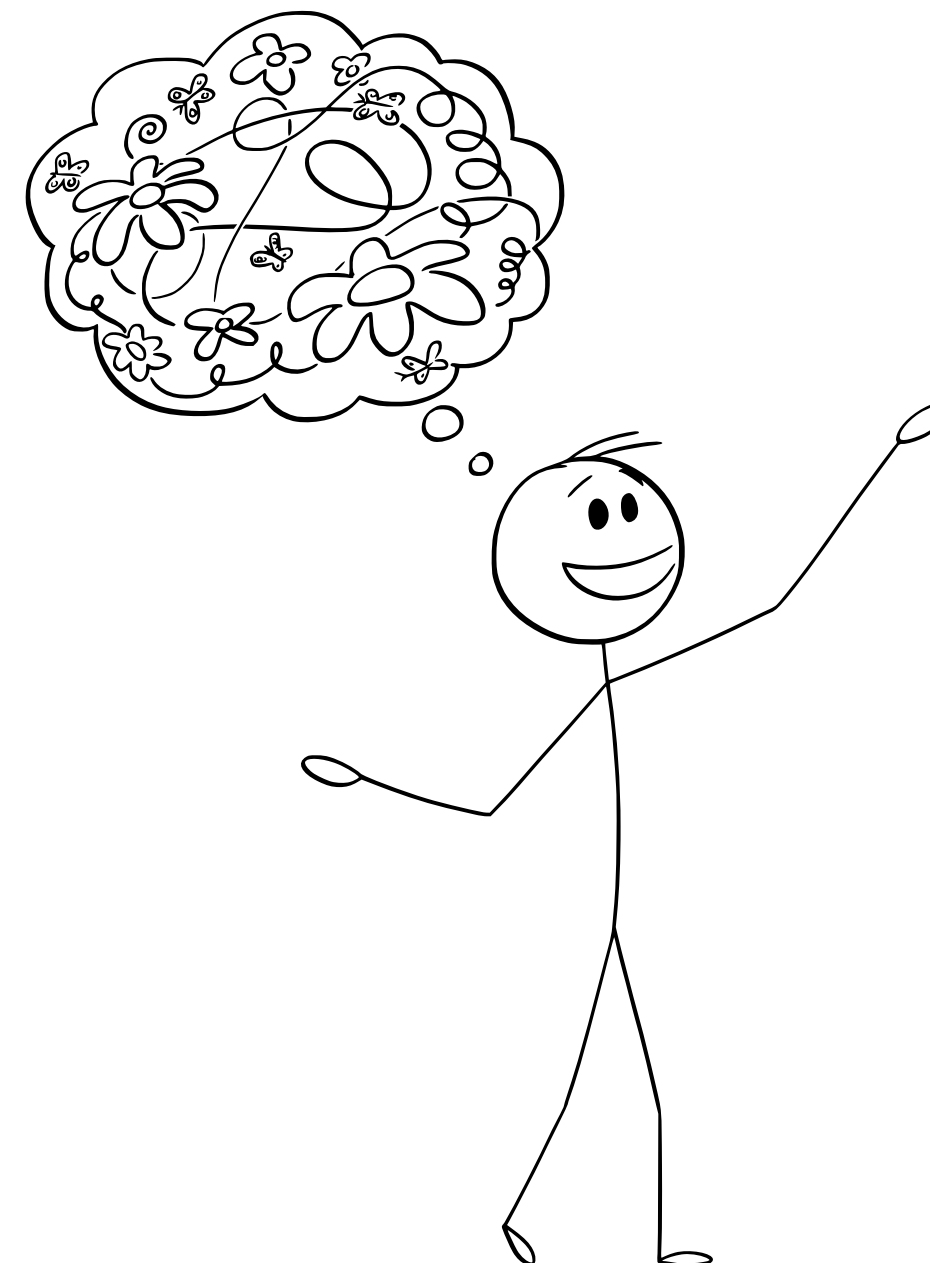


**This is where our range of backgrounds really came into its own, we were all contributing and beginning to bring in personal perspectives in a relevant way. (And this was done and received really respectfully by everyone in the room)**

## 7. Personal Skills in Research

Our groups discussed and recognised the skills that are already in the room.

**When thinking about one's own skills, it might be better as a self-led activity, so you don't have to speak about it openly. Do it in your comfort zone, without feeling pressured.**



## 8. Research Methodologies

Our groups talked about constructing research methodologies – pulling together the idea of a research question, ethics and scale. Our groups went out and tested out a mini research method/methodology using a pretend question

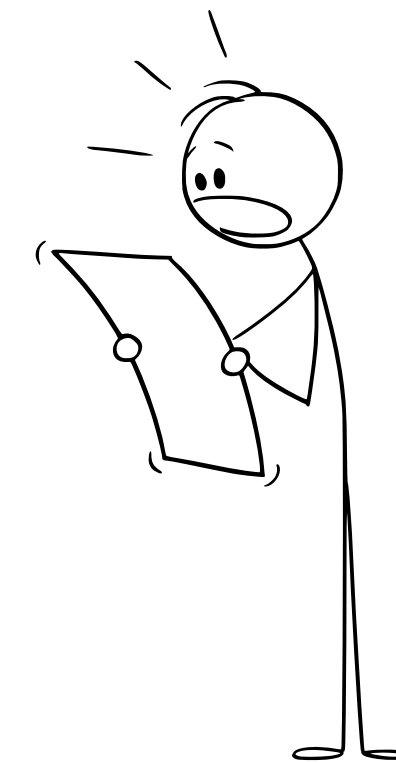
**This was the week I felt like a researcher for the first time!!**

## 9. Data Analysis in Social Research

Our groups talked through the process of thematic analysis. Everyone practised at analysing pieces of text and feeding back themes.

**There are different ways to cluster themes...action into consequences, how it affects people, animals and binary groupings**

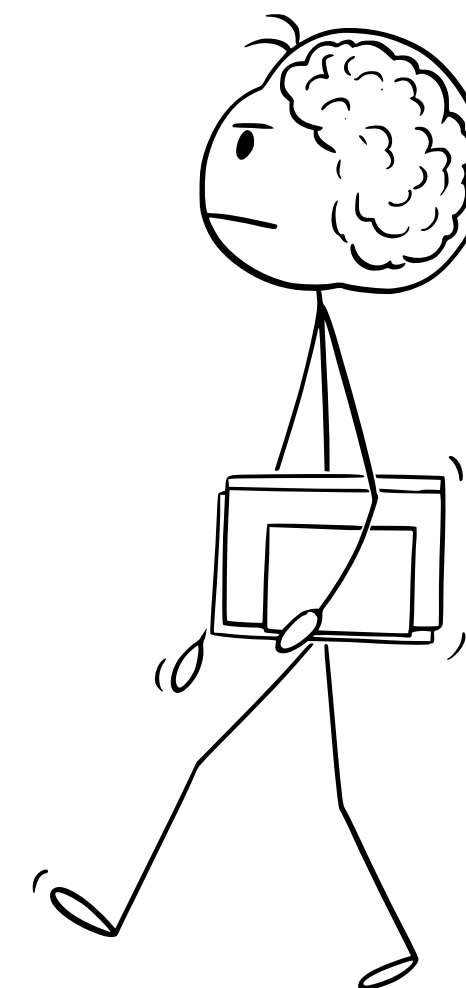
**It was interesting how people interpreted and analysed the text differently—some did it alone, others together.**



## 10. Designing your Research Question

Our groups talked through the process of designing a research question; and worked together to agree what question we would like to research.

**I liked how, as a group, we were open to different possibilities—we discussed them and felt we should change them about 3-4 times. It was good to welcome and incorporate each other's ideas. I found it collaborative.**



**We used everything we learned in previous sessions to design a question that we felt we could research with the skills we have and the resources available**

## Session Plans and Materials

### 1. Group Agreement and Introduction Session

This session aims to introduce the group for the first time and provide an overview of the project's timeline, background, and scope. A key objective is for the group to work together to create a group agreement, while also allowing peers to ask questions and engage in discussion.

**Asking about expectations gives a chance to promote the project and find out what people want.**

It is important to be open and honest by clearly informing peer researchers about the project's intentions, scope, and roles. Make sure everyone understands how their involvement will be used and its relevance to the overall project. Be transparent about any limitations, the project's funding, its duration, and the expected end date. This transparency fosters trust and supports informed consent. It is important to make everything as transparent as possible so people are clear on what to expect.

Some of our groups had socials to connect with immediately after the first session during peers' own time. People expressed they enjoyed having this more relaxed approach to get to know each other, but also it may have been better to have the social at the beginning of the session to ease into the space without any high expectations.

**It showed group dynamics around anxiety and nervousness-some people exhibit their nervousness in becoming more talkative more expressive more hyperactive, some people become more quiet more shy and more observational. A great way for everyone in the group to see and acknowledge this.**

## Respect

respect people's choice not to speak

Making space for everyone to have their say

Be aware of the room

Don't talk over each other

be self aware

Go back to a person if they are cut off/someone else speaks

Raise hand

respect anonymity

## Safe Space

No expectation to share stories

confidential space

opt in /opt out

Trauma aware - be mindful of triggers

You can leave the room at anytime

Facilitators will check to see if you need support

## Transparency

Know what's coming up

Feedback to facilitators is welcomed!

emails & texts

Policies and underpinning docs will be shared

talk about upcoming content

## Accessibility

openness around accessibility needs

use Venues that are physically accessible

possible intoxication to be addressed by facilitators 121 with individuals, in a case by case way, to support medication /recovery/health needs

Don't bring recreational drugs or alcohol to the sessions

## Support

2 facilitators in sessions: Alex & Signe

121s

2 facilitators in sessions

facilitators are group worker, and trained in psychological informed working (including trauma and ND training)



## 2. Introduction to Research

### Why do we do research?

- Gaining knowledge and insight
- In order to change procedures, rules, conditions...
- Influence decision making
- Give voice and visibility to those less heard
- To build evidence for a campaign
- To test ideas
- Other?

### Scale

- Big or small sample group
- One off – point in time
- Longitudinal, establish baseline to measure against
- Comparative, measure between areas for example or different population groups

### Why Peer Research

- Access to 'less heard' voices
- Participants may trust the peer researcher more than other researchers
- Adding value through 'lived experience'
- Benefits to peer researchers
- Good peer research involves peer researchers in design and delivery
- Peer research aims to reveal authentic insights into people's lives and experiences, which non-peer 'academic' researchers can struggle to gain.
- It is about research being done **with** and **for** people, rather than **to** and **about** them
- Other?

### Quantitative, Qualitative and Desk Research

Quantitative data is **numbers-based**, countable, or measurable. Quantitative data tells us how many, how much, or how often in calculations.

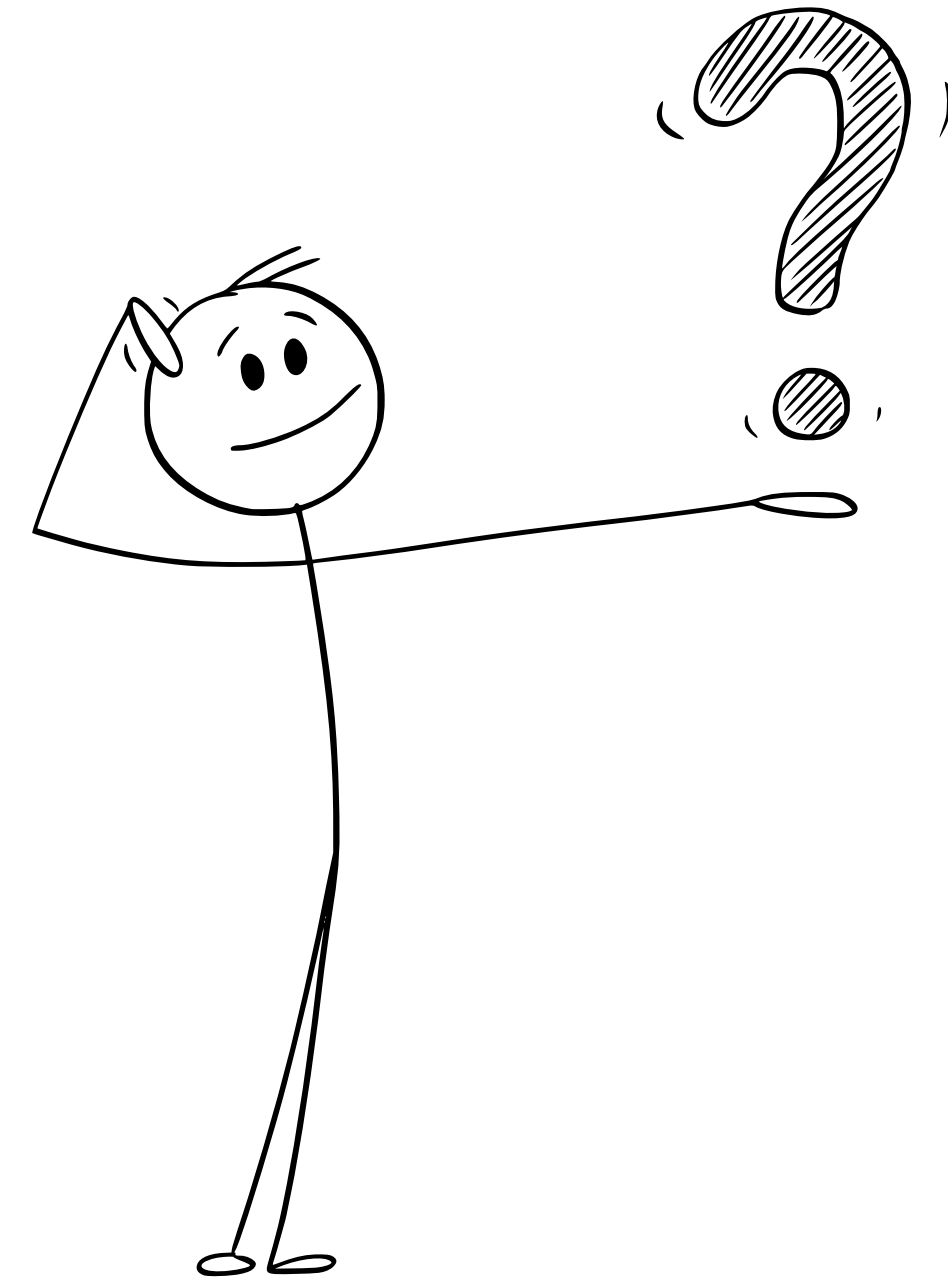
Qualitative data is interpretation-based, **descriptive**, and relating to language. Qualitative data can help us to understand why, how, or what happened behind certain behaviours.

Desk research can be either. It involves **reading** what is already written and published on your chosen subject. Sources include libraries, the media and general internet searches. Google Scholar is a good search tool for academic publications. Some researchers will put together a literature review that summarises their findings



# Thinking About Your Research Topic

- **Consider Your Interests and ideas**
- **Draft a Research Question:** Based on your interests, think about what research question you'd like to ask and explore. It doesn't need to be perfect—just a starting point.
- **Reflect and Revise:** As we go through the sessions, you may gain new insights that lead you to change your question. Keep this question in mind, and be open to changing it or developing it as you learn more.
- **Return to This Later:** We'll come back to these questions in our final sessions to reflect on your research interests and ideas, and develop them further.



**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

### 3. Research Methods

## Quantitative Research

- Methods
  - Surveys
  - Opinion polls
  - Counts
  - Freedom of Information (FOI)

## Creative Research Methods

- Can be a good way to engage research participants more meaningfully
- Can be fun and a way to build trust, rapport and put people at ease
- Often don't require literacy
- Take time and effort to do well
- Don't work for everyone!
- The creative output is not necessarily the end goal – the process and conversation around it will reveal much more depth about the topic/ person
- Don't forget to record the discussion!  
Recording or notes

## Qualitative Research

- Methods
  - Interviews (structured, semi-structured, open)
  - Focus groups
  - Case studies
  - Fieldwork/ ethnographic
  - Oral histories
- Mixed methods
- Participatory Research and Creative Research Methods

## Rivers of Life

- A storytelling technique plotting key moments and people along a person's life journey
- Structured, participant-led and visual
- Can look at past, present and future



## Mapping

- Useful for people who you struggle to get to talk
- Can identify services used, places interacted with locally
- Can be an existing map or one created in collaboration

## Photovoices

- Allows participants to represent themselves and their own story
- Doesn't require literacy skills
- Can be for both documentary and creative expression
- Low cost
- Phones make this easier

## Lego Serious Play

- Facilitation technique developed by Lego
- Can use other building materials
- Useful when asking someone to describe a state e.g. a future vision of what their life will be

## Arts-based methods

- Images can create powerful stimulus for provoking a response
- Helpful for discovering emotions
- Useful prompt for deeper discussion
- Can include drawing, collage, photography etc...



## Walking tours

- Good for place-based research
- Tour a neighbourhood/place
- Take photos or record video/audio

## Diary Keeping

- Can be visual, audio, written
- A good prompt for discussion around habits
- More accurate than recall
- Time consuming for diary-keeper

## Pick a question – pick a method

*You are encouraged to adjust the example questions in this workbook to better suit the needs of your group.*

1. How many orange people live in TA in England?
2. What is life like for green people under 18 staying in TA?
3. Have conditions in TA improved for striped people in TA since the government made a pledge to improve services for striped people experiencing homelessness three years ago?
4. Are purple people more likely to become homeless than orange people? Why?
5. How can services be improved for multi-coloured people in TA?
6. Do people of all colours feel listened to in TA?
7. What does the local service provision look like for residents of Swan House?



**Self Led task - Guiding Questions for Reflection**

**What do you want to research? What draws you to this idea?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**What aspects of research would you like to learn about?**

**What are your personal hopes, fears and needs in this research project?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

## 4.Ethics

We found that it was useful to spend more than one session on this topic. Begin by thinking about what comes to mind when you hear the word "ethics" in the context of research, before going through the key concepts and questions in this section.

**I think it helped us prepare  
for the research ahead**

### Ethical considerations

- Transparency: It is essential that research participants are informed of the intention, and how they fit into it, so that they are in a position to give informed consent.
- How much should a peer researcher share about their own story?
- Respect: The researcher must recognise the capacity and rights of all individuals to make their own choices, be treated with dignity and in a trauma informed way.
- Is this easier for peer researchers? Why?
- Responsibility: No matter your intentions, you're responsible for your impact.
- What happens if what you think is important deviates from what your research participants find important?

**We learnt how to work through the process of peer research while keeping everybody involved safe and making sure that everybody understands their role and respects their boundaries and can withdraw consent at any time.**

### Ethical considerations

- Safety: The safety of research participants, as well as researchers and other staff, is of primary importance and takes precedence, and may require overriding other aspects of this policy. For example, if there is concern of threat to life or imminent serious harm, the appropriate support or emergency service should be contacted, even if this compromises confidentiality.
- What can be done to make sure you stay safe as a peer researcher? Are there any differences between insiders and outsiders in this?
- Beneficence: While negative consequences may occur, the researcher must make sure that the benefits are greater than the risks. The primary goal must be to improve the lives of participants, directly or indirectly, and protect their physical, mental and social well-being.
- How do you weigh up risks and benefits?

## **Group activity - Ethics**

Think about the ethical principles discussed in different scenarios. Encourage group discussions to explore the ethical dilemmas and possible solutions.

### **Case Study 1: Community Views on Squirrels**

Scenario: The Local Authority has commissioned research into community views on squirrels, with findings to inform a new policy. Despite several months of research, responses are limited and do not address the key issues. The Local Authority is eager to receive your findings. What ethical considerations should guide your next steps? Consider the importance of transparency and responsibility in reporting findings, even when data is limited.

### **Case Study 2: Social Media and Teenagers**

Scenario: You are conducting a creative workshop with a group of teenagers to explore the role social media plays in their lives. What ethical considerations should you keep in mind throughout the research process? Think about the need for informed consent, risk assessment related to the emotional impact on participants, and ensuring support is available if sensitive topics arise.

### **Case Study 3: Interview with a Vulnerable Adult**

Scenario: You are interviewing a vulnerable adult who has agreed to participate after building trust over time. During the interview, they disclose something unsettling. How should you respond ethically? Reflect on the importance of debriefing and ensuring support is available, as well as respecting the boundaries of both the participant and the researcher.



## 5. Insider/Outsider and Ethics in Peer Research

### Insider/outsider

- Insider/outsider debates in research are about positionality – what position the researcher has in relation to the research topic and the participants that may take part in a study
- Insider researchers are part of the community that is being studied
- Outsiders are not. They are typically academics, journalists, working for think tanks or charities

### Consider these two statements

- As an insider you may be more trusted and have better access to research participants.
- As an outsider you may be more trusted and have better access to research participants.
- Which is true? Why?

### There are pros and cons - they matter

- Whether the researcher is an insider or outsider matters in research and can influence the research process and the data gathered.
- This is not wrong but should be considered when designing the research project.
- There are pros and cons to both approaches.

### Pros and cons of peer research

- In peer research we're trying to make the most of the benefits that an insider perspective can bring.
- What are those benefits?
- What are the potential drawbacks to consider?

## Some outsider advantages

- Free of commitment to the group
- Advantage in observation and analysis of events and structures (objective observer)
- Can see properties lost to the insider because of familiarisation, and discover something of value to theory and/or to research participants
- May be trusted with sensitive information that would not be shared with an insider

## Some insider disadvantages

- Not seen as researchers but advocates by some
- May be biased towards interpretations or findings
- Experiencing role conflicts
- May find research activities bring about difficult memories or become triggering

## Some insider advantages

- Not seen as 'strangers' but members of the group
- Incorporate traditionally ignored perspectives into theory
- Know the culture, language (jargon), familiarity with local conditions
- Less inclined to construct stereotypes
- Easier to gain acceptance, trust and cooperation

## Some outsider disadvantages

- May experience 'culture shock', which can delay or interfere with research
- May overlook or misinterpret important cultural cues or details
- Can take time to establish trust; it may never happen
- May receive 'expected results' rather than true attitudes or knowledge
- More time required understanding the culture and language (jargon)



# Being both insider and outsider

- Insiders are part of the community that is being studied
- This can be a broad category (for example TA) that intersects with other identities
- What does it mean to be both an insider and an outsider as a researcher?

## Group activity - insider/outsider

Is peer research insider or outsider, or a bit of both?

Activity: full group. Using a 2 circle Ven diagram, discuss the pros and cons of both insider and outsider research, and also consider the pros and cons of research that is both.

## Self-Led Task: Understanding the Insider-Outsider Role in Research

The following resources help explain what it means to be either an insider or outsider when doing research.

### Option 1:

Short Article and Audio

Read and/or listen to a short article explaining the difference between being an insider or outsider. It also looks at some pros and cons of both roles.

Article: Guest Blog – The insider debate in qualitative research – should there be one? (DEMENTIA RESEARCHER, [nihr.ac.uk](http://nihr.ac.uk))

### Option 2:

Reflective Academic Paper

Read a more detailed paper where the writers talk about their own experiences as insiders and outsiders in research. This option is more in-depth and academic.

Paper: The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research - Sonya Corbin Dwyer & Jennifer L. Buckle, 2009 ([sagepub.com](http://sagepub.com))

## 6.Intersectionality as a Frame of Reference

### Self Led Task: Understanding Intersectionality

This optional self-led task will help you to understand the concept of intersectionality by exploring how different aspects of identity (such as race, gender, class, and sexuality) intersect and impact people's experiences of privilege and oppression.

Watch the Video:

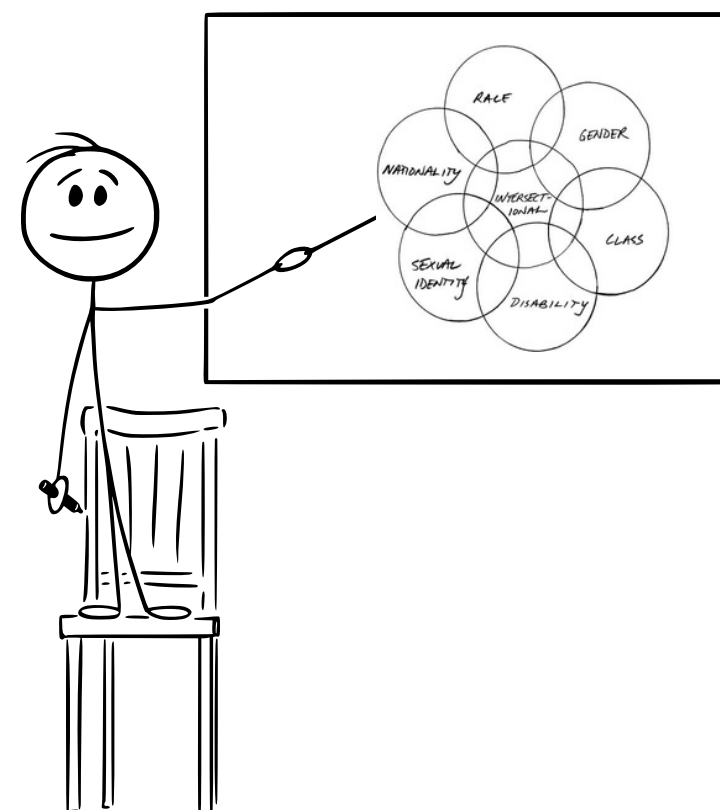
If you have access to the internet, you can watch the following YouTube video to get a short introduction to intersectionality:

What is Intersectionality? - YouTube Video (Duration: 1min:54 sec)- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc>

Read the Article (Alternative to Video):

If you do not have internet access or prefer reading, you can read the following Time magazine article which provides an overview of Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality:

"What is Intersectionality?" - Time Magazine



**Asking what we understand intersectionality to be and what it means to us would have been beneficial. Many of us have experiences with intersectionality**



# Intersectionality

## WHAT IT IS WHY IT MATTERS

### Just a new word for diversity?

**Diversity** is an acknowledgement that each of us have different backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. It is a combination of individual differences that shape our collective view of the world, our perspective and our approach.

If **Diversity** is the range of circles...

**Intersectionality** is about the overlap, rather than the circles themselves.

A **map** to understand ways in which different parts of the self interrelate.

It can also be used as a **tool** to illustrate the variety of human experiences, and how **privilege**, **oppression** and **power** can affect us differently

## What is Intersectionality?

**Intersectionality** is a way of understanding how parts of a person's identity cross over, combine or "intersect" to create different, specific and unique experiences of life.

First used by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.



### Protected Characteristics

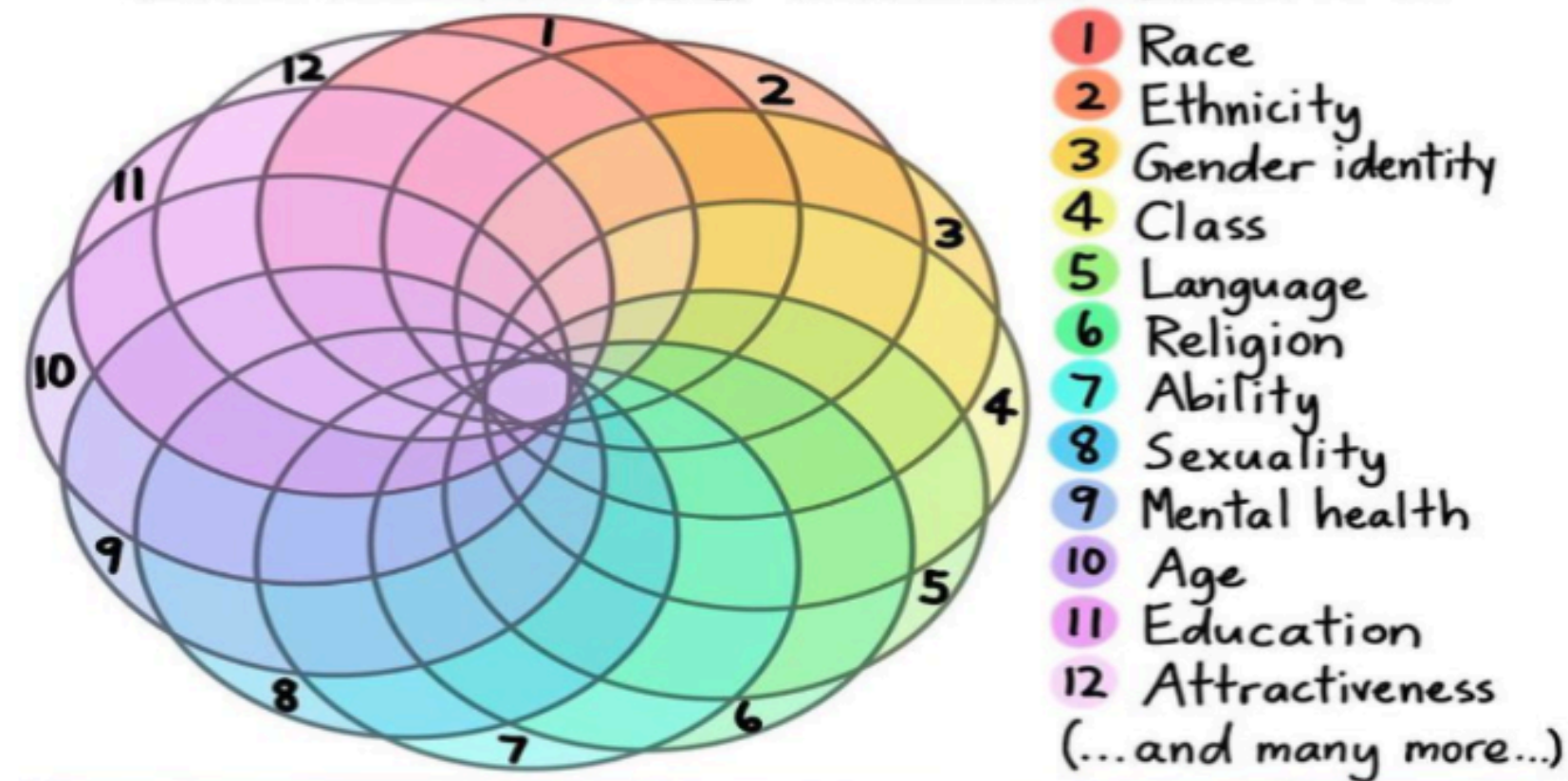
The Equality Act became UK law in 2010 and this protects people from discrimination. Under the Equality Act, there are currently nine "Protected Characteristics"

- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

Many workplaces, schools, charities have an "EDI policy"



# INTERSECTIONALITY



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

— Kimberlé Crenshaw —

Why might it be important to consider intersectionality when designing and carrying out research?

## Power, privilege and oppression

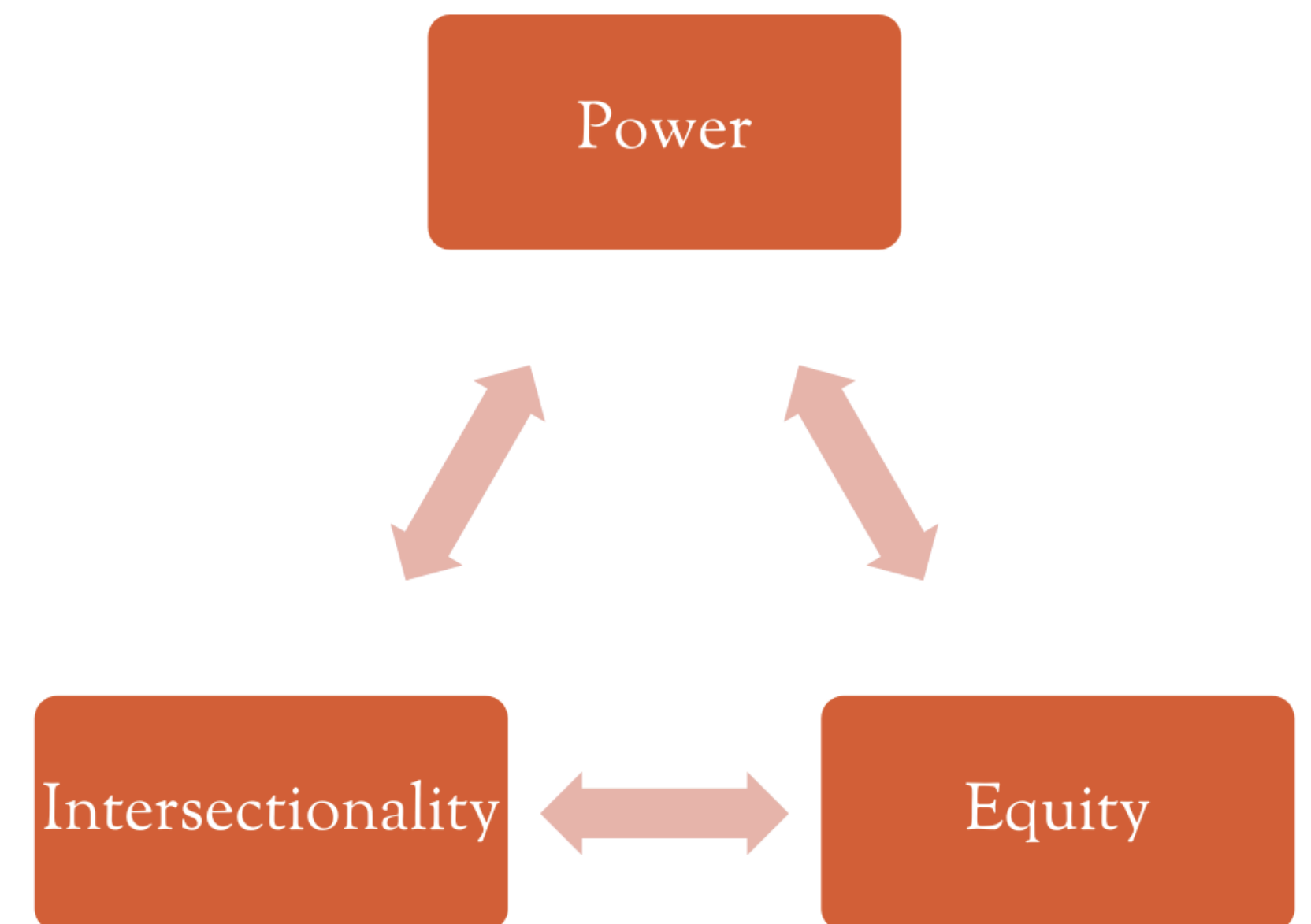
**Power** is understood in different ways by different people. One definition is it is our ability to create or resist change.

Whether we are empowered or disempowered may be affected by the context we are in, and whether we experience privilege or oppression in that context.

**“Privilege”** is a set of unearned **benefits** experienced by people who fit into a specific social group.

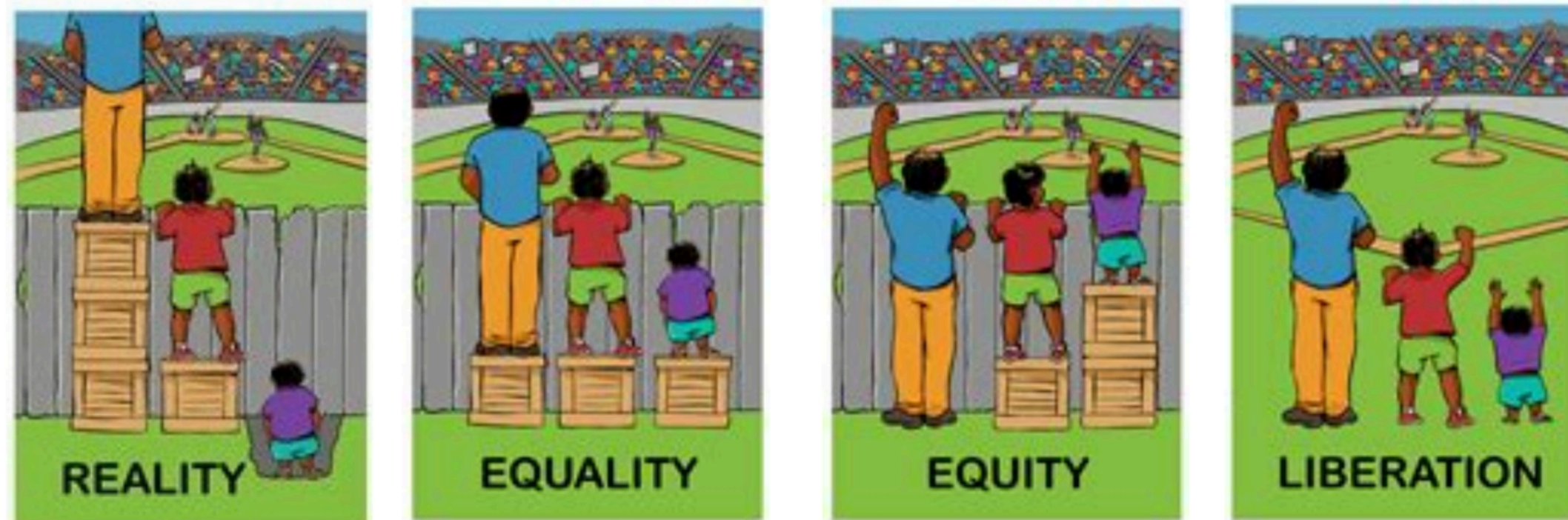
**Oppression** is a set of unearned **disadvantage** experienced by people who fit into a specific social group.

Most people will experience a mix of privilege and oppression in their lives, however some people will be more likely to experience more of one than the other due to societies systems, which are designed with a one size fits all approach. This is sometimes referred to as **systemic injustice**.





# Equity



intersectionality and diversity:

How would you create a research project that creates equity and addresses power, privilege and

1. Are purple people more likely to become homeless than orange people? Why?
2. How can services be improved for people in TA?
3. Do people feel listened to in TA?
4. What does the local service provision look like for residents of Rainbow House?

## Group Activity - Intentionality

As a group activity, you could create your own definition of intersectionality based on the discussed characteristics including those relevant to your project.

For example, one of our groups defined Intersectionality as the overlap of different identity characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, disability, etc. For this research, we also include the experience of homelessness as an identity characteristic.

## Self-led Task - Intersectionality

**What does intersectionality mean to you? Is it relatable to your experience?**

**In what ways do you think research might empower and build equity?**

**In what ways do you think research might disempower?**



## 7. Personal Skills in Research

### Paired Storytelling Activity

Engage in storytelling and reflective listening to uncover and recognise personal skills and assets within your peer research group.

- Pair up (or form trios if necessary).
- Assign roles within each pair: one person will be the storyteller and the other the listener.
- The storyteller shares a personal story highlighting their skills, achievements, or meaningful experiences.
- The listener practices active listening, noting skills, strengths, and positive qualities demonstrated in the story.
- Switch roles, giving the previous listener a chance to tell their story while the previous storyteller listens.
- The listener provides feedback to the storyteller, articulating the skills, strengths, and personal qualities they perceived.
- Discuss how receiving feedback can boost confidence and self-awareness.

### Group Discussion

- As a group, discuss what skills or strengths you discovered with your partner and how it felt to receive feedback on your own story.
- Capture key themes and strengths of your peer research as identified through the activity and discuss how these can be applied to peer research.
- Reflect on how the story telling activity can develop listening and interpretation skills which are key research skills

### Exploring Research Methods

- Introduce a hat with slips containing various research methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups).
- Ask a volunteer to pull a method out of the hat, and as a group discuss which research methods align with people's identified strengths and roles.

## 8. Research Methodologies

# Choosing research methods and constructing methodologies

## Choosing your research method(s)

- Remember your question - choose the method(s) that best answers it
- Remember your personal skills (and the skills of others you may be able to draw on)
- Consider the scope of the project
- Consider your limitations
- Consider theoretical approach
- Remember ethics
- The validity of your study is anchored in these

## Methods in social research

- Desk research
- Observation
- Semi- structured interview
- Survey
- Count
- Focus Group
- Case Study
- Opinion poll
- Fieldwork
- Rivers of life
- Mapping
- Freedom of Information request (FOI)

## Constructing a methodology

- In going through these consideration, you are constructing a methodology, explaining what you are going to do, and why you have made these choices
- A research methodology is both the collection of methods you apply to your research, as well as the “principles, theories, and values” that support your research approach
- What does this mean...?

## Summarising methods v methodology

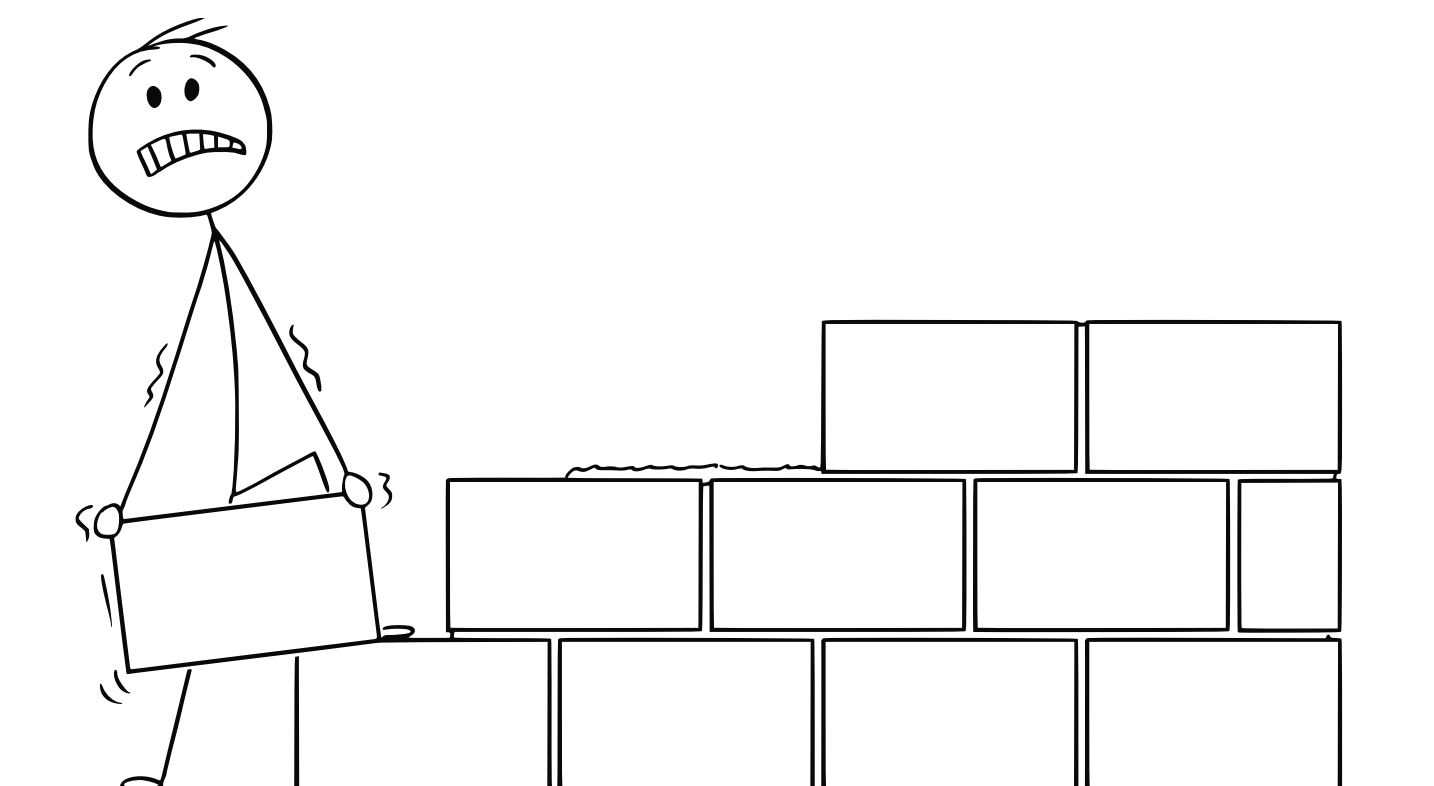
- Methods cover the technical procedures or steps taken to do the research (your tools)
- Methodology provides the underlying reasons why certain methods are used in the process (your approach and why this is chosen)

## Types of methodological approaches

- Quantitative: Things you can count. You need a certain sample size for this to be meaningful. Focuses on quantifying data and generalising results
- Qualitative: Narrative. Aims to provide a detailed description and interpretation of feelings and opinions. A smaller sample size will do
- Mixed: Combines quantitative and qualitative approaches and can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Also sometimes called triangulation

## What would you do...

- Your local authority wants to find out how primary school children feel about free school meals in an attempt to improve their image. There is a decent budget. You are keen to do it but it is a competitive bidding process.
- 'Friends of Queens Park' is worried the users of the park are trashing the environment and are keen to find out what they can do to change park visitors' behaviour. They have asked you for help. They only have a small budget but no deadline
- The government wants you to help them find out how many secondary school children cycle to school, and why some don't. They are interested in whether specific groups of children are more likely to cycle and why. You have a decent budget and time
- A charity has hired you to investigate whether vaping can help long time smokers give up cigarettes for more than a year. They can provide support in terms of manpower as well as funding. Deadline has not been discussed.





## Self Led - Research questions for testing out research methodology self-led task

The purpose of this task is to offer the time and space to experiment with research methodologies and methods in a safe environment, before moving on to your chosen topic. Each peer chooses a question, and decides on one or more research methods to answer the questions, which are then explored in practice. The questions are intentionally simple to focus on the process of research.

This activity aims to help you develop a sense of what's involved in preparing and conducting research. By working on these manageable topics, you can build confidence and gain practical experience that will be valuable for more complex research projects in the future.

We used the questions below, which lend themselves to a range of different research methods. Do feel free to modify or change these to better suit the needs and interests of the group.

1. What is the dessert most commonly given with school dinners in English primary schools?
2. How many people do you know who prefer apples over pears? Why?
3. How often are seagulls successful in stealing food from people on a beach in any given hour? Do they go for particular food items?
4. Which are the preferred places to get ice cream for people you know, and how do they get there? Why?
5. How many cafes are there in a given location?
6. How do people you know feel about cooking?
7. How often do people you know eat something sugary during the day? When?
8. What does the perfect cafe look like to people you know?



## 9. Data Analysis in Social Research

### What is it

- Data analysis in sociological research refers to the collection and analysis of data, whereby findings from the data are interpreted and summarised
- It involves the interpretation of data gathered through the use of analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns, relationships, or trends

### Steps in Thematic Analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2013)

Thematic analysis is an iterative process involving these steps

- familiarization of data
- generation of codes
- combining codes into themes
- reviewing themes
- determine significance of themes
- reporting of findings

### Thematic Analysis

- Is a multistage analytic method that involves coding qualitative datasets and using those codes to label and group similar types of data. This makes generating themes and analysing the data more manageable

### Coding your data

- A code is a label that describes your content in a way that makes it easy to compare and contrast
- For example in this sentence: “The seagull stole my sandwich” you can have a code for ‘seagull’ and a code for ‘sandwich’. Or the whole sentence could be coded ‘experiences on the beach’
- If you do this manually, you assign a colour to each code, and then go through all your data, highlighting in your chosen colour every time the code appears



## Coding your data, continued...

- You can use deductive codes (pre-established), or inductive codes (emerging from the data)
- As thematic analysis is an iterative process, you can go back and forth between both. This is called hybrid coding
- Coding ensures that you go through your data in a systematic way that other researchers can reproduce rather than making up themes from a hunch or feeling

## Reviewing Themes and Determining Significance

- You now have themes that have emerged from your data. On your flip chart, you can start to organise them and identify how they relate to each other
- You can then check how often different themes appear in your data (you may find a particular code colour dominates!)
- You can cross reference this against your demographic data. Do certain themes only appear with certain demographics? Or certain codes (even more specific)?

## Clustering into Themes

- Generating themes means sorting, or clustering, the codes into higher-level topics. Different codes that have something in common get clustered together. You can do this physically on a flip chart with post-it notes so you can move everything around as you discuss
- In the case of the thieving seagulls, this could be 'lunch' or 'bad experiences on the beach'
- This is how you begin to develop themes

## Reporting your findings

- Briefly explain what you set out to do and how you did it before revealing what you found
- Always good to add direct quotes and images (for example a river of life drawing) to illustrate your findings, if you have consent to do so anonymously
- If your dataset is big enough, you may want to calculate percentages (50% said so and so...)
- Consider your audience
- Finish with a clear message for people to take home. This could be recommendations
- Remember to thank participants for their time
- Referencing other work can be a good way of building on the work of others while adding clarity to yours



## **Practical Activity: Thematic Analysis of Social Attitudes towards Seagulls**

Conduct a thematic analysis on the case study data provided, which explores social attitudes towards seagulls. The aim is to identify common themes, contrasting views, and underlying perceptions of seagulls in urban coastal environments.

### **Steps for Thematic Analysis:**

1. Familiarisation with data: Read and re-read the case studies provided to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' views.
2. Initial coding: Identify key words or phrases that represent the main points made by the participants.
3. Identifying themes: Group the codes into broader themes related to the participants' views on seagulls.
4. Reviewing themes: Ensure that the themes accurately reflect the views expressed in the data, adjusting or combining them where necessary.
5. Defining and naming themes: Clearly define what each theme represents and provide a name that succinctly captures the essence of the grouped codes.
6. Group Activity: Collaborate with your team to discuss and refine the identified themes. Share your interpretations and come to a consensus on the final themes and their definitions.

Note: These are not real case studies! The data provided has been created for the purpose of this activity.

## **Participant details**

Age: 55

Gender: Female

Location: Brighton

“Seagulls, for me, evoke a mixed range of emotions and attitudes. On one hand, they are a part of the coastal landscape and contribute to the overall ambience of places like Brighton Beach. Their presence adds to the charm and authenticity of the coastal experience, and I appreciate the sight and sounds of these birds soaring gracefully overhead. At least at a distance.

Up closer, I am not so keen on their behaviour and interactions with humans. While I understand that seagulls are opportunistic feeders and have adapted to urban environments, their scavenging can be problematic, especially in areas with lots of people.

Seagulls can be really bold and assertive, particularly when it comes to food scavenging. Their swooping and squawking can be annoying at night, and they can be intimidating for young children or individuals with food in public. I've witnessed seagulls snatch food directly from people's hands or picnic baskets, which is not nice if you're trying to have an ice cream on the beach.

Additionally, seagull droppings can create hygiene concerns and they spread rubbish around from scavenging through bins. This aspect of their behaviour can contribute to negative perceptions and attitudes towards seagulls, especially among those who view them primarily as nuisance animals.

Despite these challenges, I recognise that seagulls are part of the natural ecosystem and have adapted to coexist with humans in coastal areas. I believe it's important to strike a balance between appreciating their presence as part of the coastal environment while also implementing measures to mitigate negative interactions and address concerns related to hygiene and safety.

## Participant details

Age: 40

Gender: Male

Location: Brighton

"I really don't like seagulls. I don't understand why they are a protected species, they are a nuisance! Have you ever seen one up close? They are really big and they are just not afraid of you. It's like they know they're protected. They're also just really aggressive. I've seen one attack a cat, and the seagull won the fight!

I have two young children, and buying them an ice cream on the beach is perilous. Both my children have been attacked more than once. They come from behind so you don't see them, and WHAM, just like that your child is left empty handed. Once, my son was left bleeding because it bit his finger. I didn't know what to do! They're filthy scavengers, surely this was unsafe? It's not exactly a relaxing way to spend time on the beach.

It's the same in the parks or anywhere else. Particularly where there are lots of children, they are easy targets. You basically can't feed your children in public in Brighton. My oldest is in primary school, and the seagulls gather at pick-up time. They're clever bastards, they know when there's a good chance of a meal.

Why are they not considered a public nuisance? I think they are pests. There are so many, I don't believe they are endangered. Look at all the cars parked around Brighton - they're full of bird poo. They go through the rubbish bins, spreading all the filth all over the streets. And the council does nothing!

I think they should be culled, get them down to a more manageable population size. At the moment it feels like they're winning, we're not in control."



# 10. Designing Your Research Question

Figure 1 - Writing strong research questions

## Characteristics of a strong research question



Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections

<sup>11</sup> Scribbr (2023) Writing strong research questions. Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

**The WHY**

**Why do you  
want to carry  
out this  
research  
project?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas,  
and reflections**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas,  
and reflections**

**How will this research  
project benefit the  
participant?**

**What is your  
motivation  
for it?**

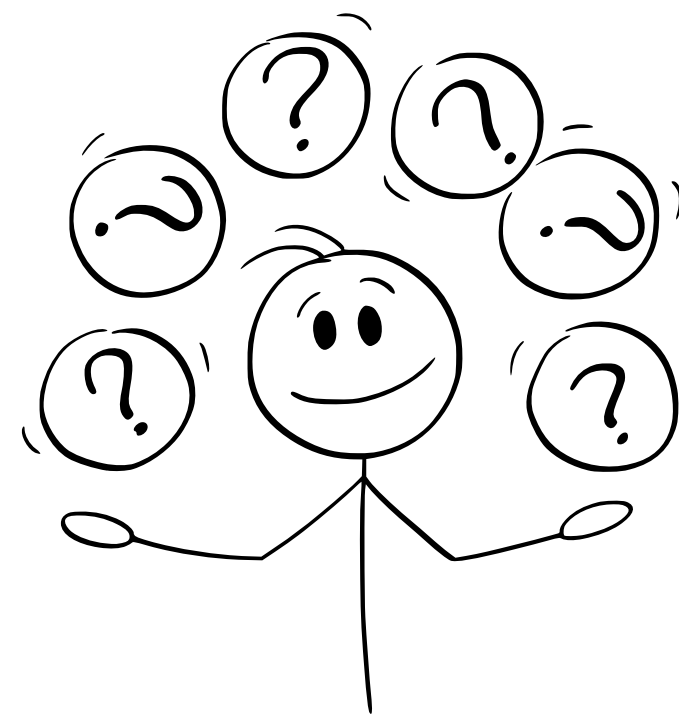
**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas,  
and reflections**



## The WHAT

**What are the research question(s)?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**



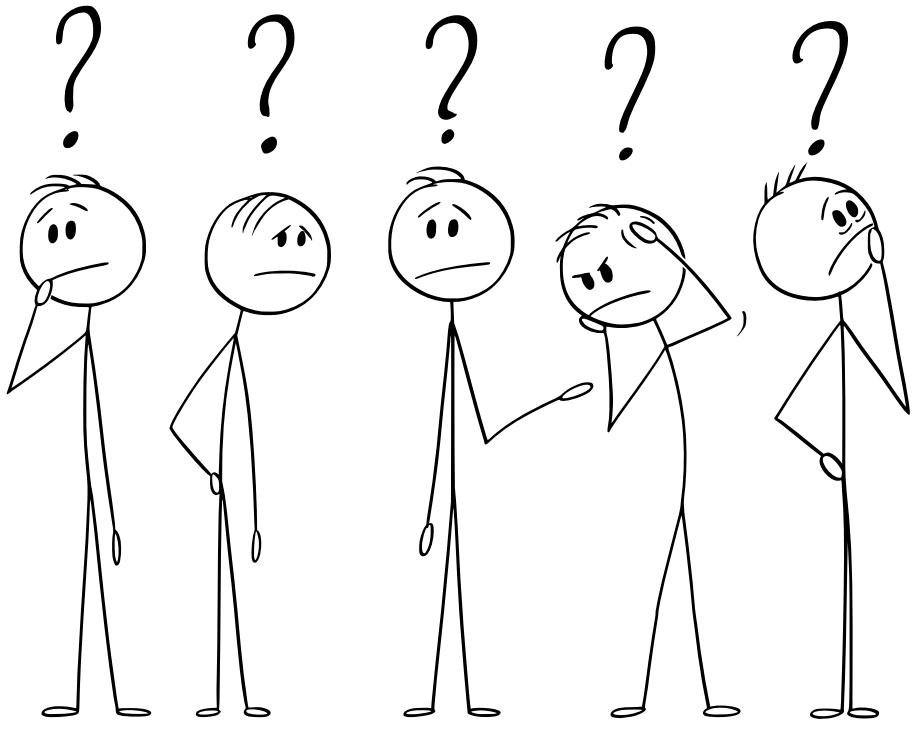
**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**What method would work best to address the question?  
Will the research involve deception of any sort?**

# The WHO

**Who are the best people to invite to take part in this research?  
How many participants are you thinking of recruiting?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**



**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**Is there anyone who cannot take part? (Inclusion & exclusion criteria)**



**The HOW and the WHERE**

**Where will you find them?  
How will you advertise the project?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**How will you obtain the consent of participants?**

Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to protect their interests?

**How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**The RISK and its MANAGEMENT**

Will there be any possible psychological or physical discomfort/distress that **participants** and **researchers** may experience during or after the research?  
What safety plans and support will you put in place to minimise these risks?



	Risks	Safety plans/Support?
Participants		
Researchers		



## The CONFIDENTIALITY

**How will participant confidentiality be maintained?  
How will data be anonymised to ensure participants' confidentiality?**

**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**



**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

**How will personal data and study results be stored securely during and after the study?  
Who will have access to participants' data?**

**The MONEY**



**Feel free to use this space to jot down your perspectives, ideas, and reflections**

How much will you pay participants for their time? How will they get the payment (e.g., voucher)?	How much will the researchers be paid for their time?	What are other costs needed for this research to be completed?



## Access more Peer Research Insights and Support

Thank you for accessing this section of the peer research manual. We hope it's been helpful. For further peer research resources and information please go to <https://www.justlife.org.uk/our-work/lived-experience/peer-research>

