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# Togetherhness in Separation: Practical Considerations for Doing Remote Qualitative Interviews Ethically

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This presentation is developed from our paper

The paper developed from conversations during C-19

We noticed online interviews were different

# Online interviews

## Advantages

- Efficient recruitment
- Convenience / comfort
- No travel
- Electronic transcription

## Disadvantages

- Less rapport
- Interviews 'felt' quicker
- Abrupt end to the interview



## **Concern: unintentional accountable carelessness**

- Inadvertently overlooking the implications of transferring the principles of good research practice directly into technology-assisted modes of interaction
- Need to centralise the principles of respect, beneficence & non-maleficence, justice, & confidentiality

# Implications

Arranging the online interview

Pre-interview

During the interview

Closing the interview



# Re-positioning the Researcher and Participant Interaction

- Focus on the position of the 'other' = effective interviewing
- To counter the apparent ease of access, researchers need to recognise themselves as outsiders to the participants' social world
- Closeness can be experienced remotely through a conversational transaction to share one's thoughts and feelings with an empathic listener



# Remember...

- The enclosed screen view restricts peripheral information or visual prompts, limiting & influencing the researcher's assumptions & questions
- The participant can present themselves closer to the way in which they desire to be perceived
- The researcher may have to 'work harder' for the data – increasing attentiveness, noticing and checking = more rigorous shared understanding
- The tension between usefully probing & maintaining participant's comfort must be sensitively & skillfully managed



# The importance of endings in online interviews

- Make time for interview endings in your diary. Do not book remote interviews back-to-back, as the conversation could be extended & should be allowed to end naturally
- Check well-being of the participant throughout, but particularly signal how many more questions are likely to be asked
- Give cues about the process of ending the interview
- Bring the participant back to the present moment and purpose of the conversation





# Conclusion

- The evolution of digital technologies, alongside the blurring of private & public boundaries demand that researchers constantly re-examine their research methods, standards, & behaviours.
- Remote data gathering does not need new ethical approaches, rather, we argue for 'an increased awareness of & commitment' to the already established ethical principles that apply across social research
- Research in the qualitative paradigm is in a prime position to explore how technology can influence & drive a new era of creative, inclusive & ethical methods for remote data collection.



Let's continue the conversation...

