

Interviews

Interviews are structured or semi-structured conversations designed to capture personal stories, barriers, and breakthrough moments in depth. Unlike surveys, they provide rich, qualitative detail and allow for probing follow-up questions. Interviews can surface experiences that may not appear in structured tools and are especially powerful for understanding the “why” behind participant behaviors or outcomes.

Purpose

- Capture first-person narratives that bring data to life.
- Explore barriers, motivations, and decision-making in greater depth.
- Generate insights into program outcomes that quantitative measures miss.
- Provide context for interpreting survey or log data.
- Highlight compelling individual stories for reporting and storytelling.

When to Use- Options

- **Mid-Program Check-In** → Understand participant experiences, challenges, and engagement.
- **Close-Out Interviews** → Document final reflections, lessons learned, and program value.
- **Follow-Up (3–6 months later)** → Explore sustained impact, long-term application of skills, or behavior changes.

What to Capture in Interviews

Category	Examples
Demographics/Context	Participant role, background, program track.
Experience/Highlights	“What has been most valuable so far?”
Barriers/Challenges	“What obstacles have you faced?”
Growth/Breakthroughs	“What’s the biggest change you’ve noticed in yourself?”
Suggestions for Program	“What would you change if you could redesign this program?”
Reflections/Quotes	Powerful participant statements that can be used in reports.

Recommended Tools

Category	Examples
Zooms/MS Teams	Great for virtual interviews or focus groups. Easy scheduling

	and screen-sharing, with built-in recording features. Requires storage management for recordings.
Otter.ai / Descript	AI-powered transcription tools that save time on note-taking. Otter integrates with Zoom, while Descript also allows editing transcripts and audio. Paid tiers may be needed for longer recordings.
Dedoose / NVivo	Qualitative coding software for analyzing themes and patterns across interviews. Best for larger programs with capacity for deeper analysis. Higher learning curve than basic tools.
Google Docs / Sheets	Simple, free, and accessible. Great for storing notes, sharing with a team, and lightly coding feedback without specialized software. Works well for smaller programs.
Dictaphone/Voice Memos	Lightweight recording option for in-person interviews. Easy to use on smartphones, but requires manual transfer and transcription afterward.

Best Practices for Interviews

- Use semi-structured guides. A mix of core questions with flexibility for follow-up.
- Build trust. Start with easy “warm-up” questions before moving to sensitive topics.
- Use probes. Encourage detail: “Can you give me an example?” or “Tell me more.”
- Keep it manageable. 20–45 minutes per interview is ideal.
- Obtain consent. Clarify how responses and recordings will be used.
- Triangulate data. Use interview insights to explain or deepen findings from surveys or activity logs.
- Respect participant time. Offer small thank-yous or recognition for sharing experiences.