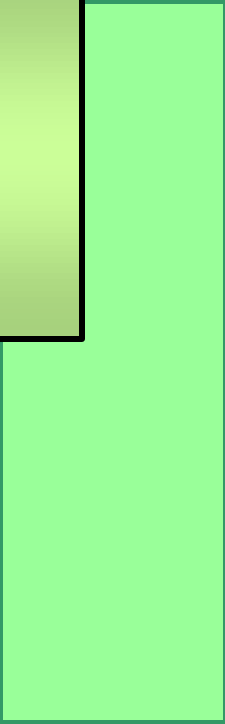




DOING IT WITH FOCUS!

Analysis of Qualitative Focus Group Data

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Plan for this session?

- Have a brief introduction to focus group research
- Look at some sample data
- Learn about qualitative data analysis strategies
- Try coding part of a transcript
- See examples of an analysis process

What is qualitative research?

- Data are words, not numbers
- Emphasis is on understanding phenomena from perspective of participants
- Goal is explanation, discovery, and understanding meanings
- Umbrella term encompassing a number of research approaches (e.g., grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology)

What is focus group research?

- Data are collected through semi-structured group interviews
- Usually 4-8 participants/group
- Common in marketing and evaluation research
- Allow for inclusion of the views of more participants, but less depth than individual interviews

The 'Do it With Focus' study

Purpose: To examine Canadian dietitians' beliefs and practices regarding weight management

Design:

- Quantitative (mail out survey)
- Qualitative (focus groups)
 - 15 focus groups
 - pre-tested interview guide (see handout)


The 'Do it With Focus' study: Sample data

- Excerpts from 3 focus groups
- Previous questions addressed how participants would counsel a 45 year old woman (BMI=33) who came to see the dietitian about concerns about her weight
- Sample data are responses to the question:

If you had attended a focus group like this when you first started practicing as a dietitian, would you have answered the questions about how you would counsel the 45 year old woman the same way?



The 'Do it With Focus' study: Sample data

- What is going on here?
 - What is interesting?
 - What does this tell us about Canadian dietitians' beliefs and practices regarding weight management
 - How would you go about analyzing these data?
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Qualitative data analysis

- Rigorous, systematic analytic processes that transform many pages of raw data into new knowledge
- Conducted while data collection still underway (ideally!)
- Generates concepts, themes, theory, thick description

Qualitative data analysis

- There is no one 'right' way of analyzing qualitative data!
- How the data are analyzed will depend on
 - the researcher
 - the data
 - the purpose of the study

The qualitative analysis process

Iterative cycles of:

- Coding
- Memoing
- Displaying data
- Writing, writing, and more writing

Qualitative Analysis Strategies

I. CODING

When 'coding' the data, a researcher is doing one or more of:

- assigning tags or labels to units of data
- indexing data so it can be reorganized in new ways
- condensing data into analyzable units
- generating concepts

Coding styles

a) Line-by-line coding

- Open coding—i.e., no preset code list
- Each line is labeled with a word or phrase
 - may use participants' words ('in vivo' codes)
 - often uses action words (-ing endings)
- Followed by 'axial coding' to identify relationships among line-by-line codes
 - conditions, context, action, consequences
- Typical of grounded theory studies

Coding styles

b) Code-and-retrieve

- Codes are applied to transcript segments or 'chunks' that deal with one idea or topic
- Chunks are of varying lengths (1 line - several pages)
- May use preset code list, or code list may be developed and modified during analysis
- Most effective with limited number of codes (~10-20)

Coding styles

b) Code-and-retrieve

- All transcript segments tagged with same code are brought together in one 'file'
 - Cut-and-paste with scissors & paper/folders
 - Cut-and-paste with a word-processing file
 - Use software designed for qualitative analysis
- May want to code new 'file' (2nd level codes)
- Start memoing, displaying data and writing to communicate 'what is going on here'

Qualitative Analysis Strategies

II. MEMOING

- Written record of your ideas about analysis
 - process
 - reflection
 - analysis/integration
- Analytic memos
 - describe/interpret 'what is going on' in data
 - include quotes, summaries, patterns, questions
 - interim step between coding and write-up


Writing a memo on the sample data: Questions to consider

- What counselling changes are being described?
- In what contexts does each type of change appear to happen/not happen?
 - who is speaking? (area & length of practice, health services environment)
 - what contextual factors does the speaker describe?
- How common does this change appear to be?
- What are the consequences of this change?
 - How does it relate to other issues in the data?
- Are there examples of 'negative cases' or instances that do not fit the pattern identified elsewhere?



Qualitative Analysis Strategies

III. DATA DISPLAY

- Matrices
 - Networks
- 

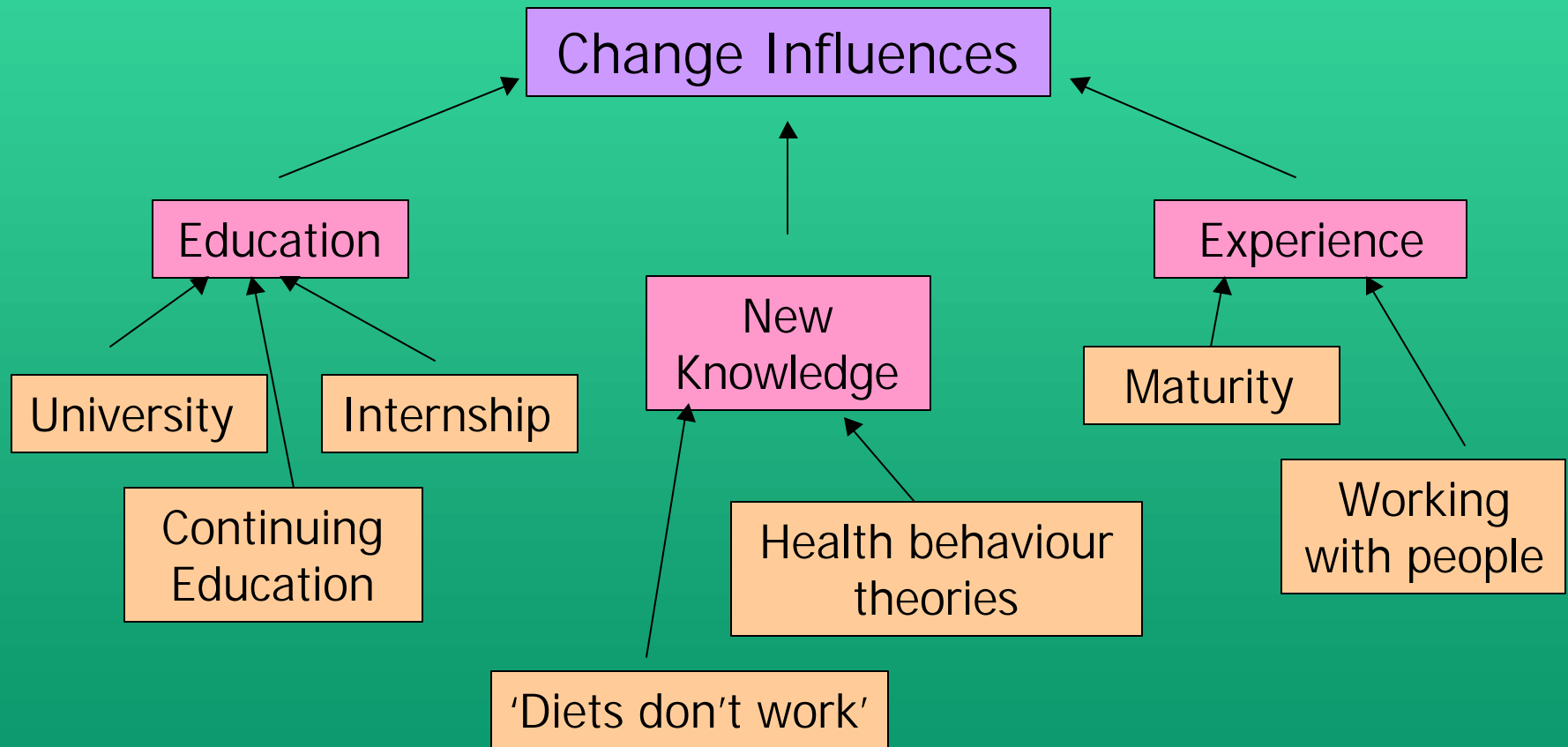
Data Display

a) a matrix

	Before	Now
MDs	'dictated by the doctors' 'we would have to call them up if we wanted to change from 1200 to 1500 calories'	'they leave it up to whatever we want to do'
Counselling advice	- 'give them everything we knew as fast as we could' - provide diet plan for client to follow	- consider client's 'relationship with food' - help client develop 'healthy relationship with food'
Etc.		

Data Display

b) a network



Qualitative Analysis Strategies

IV. WRITING IT UP

- Edit and combine memos and displays
- Consider audience
- Define and refine the purpose of each report or paper

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