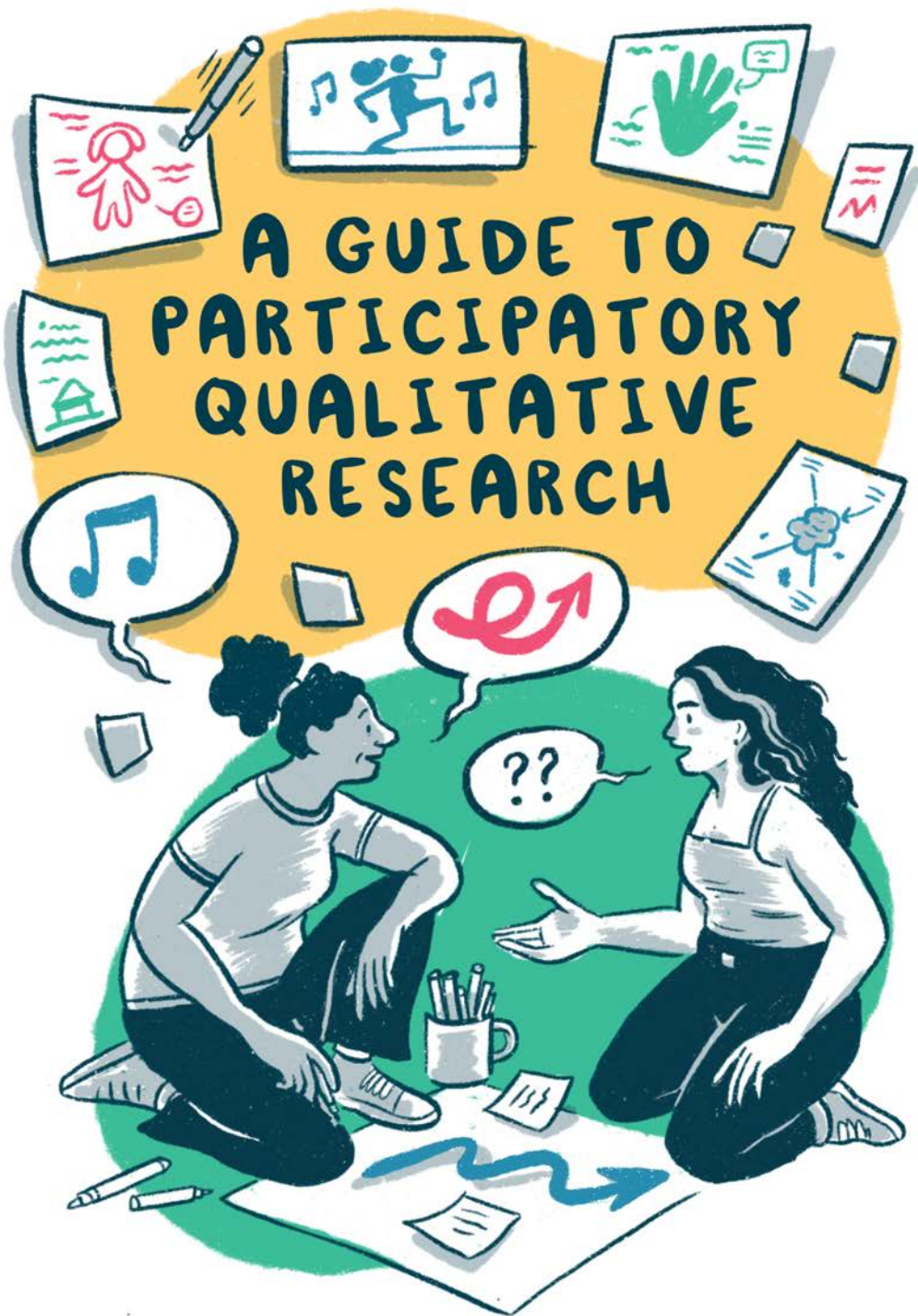
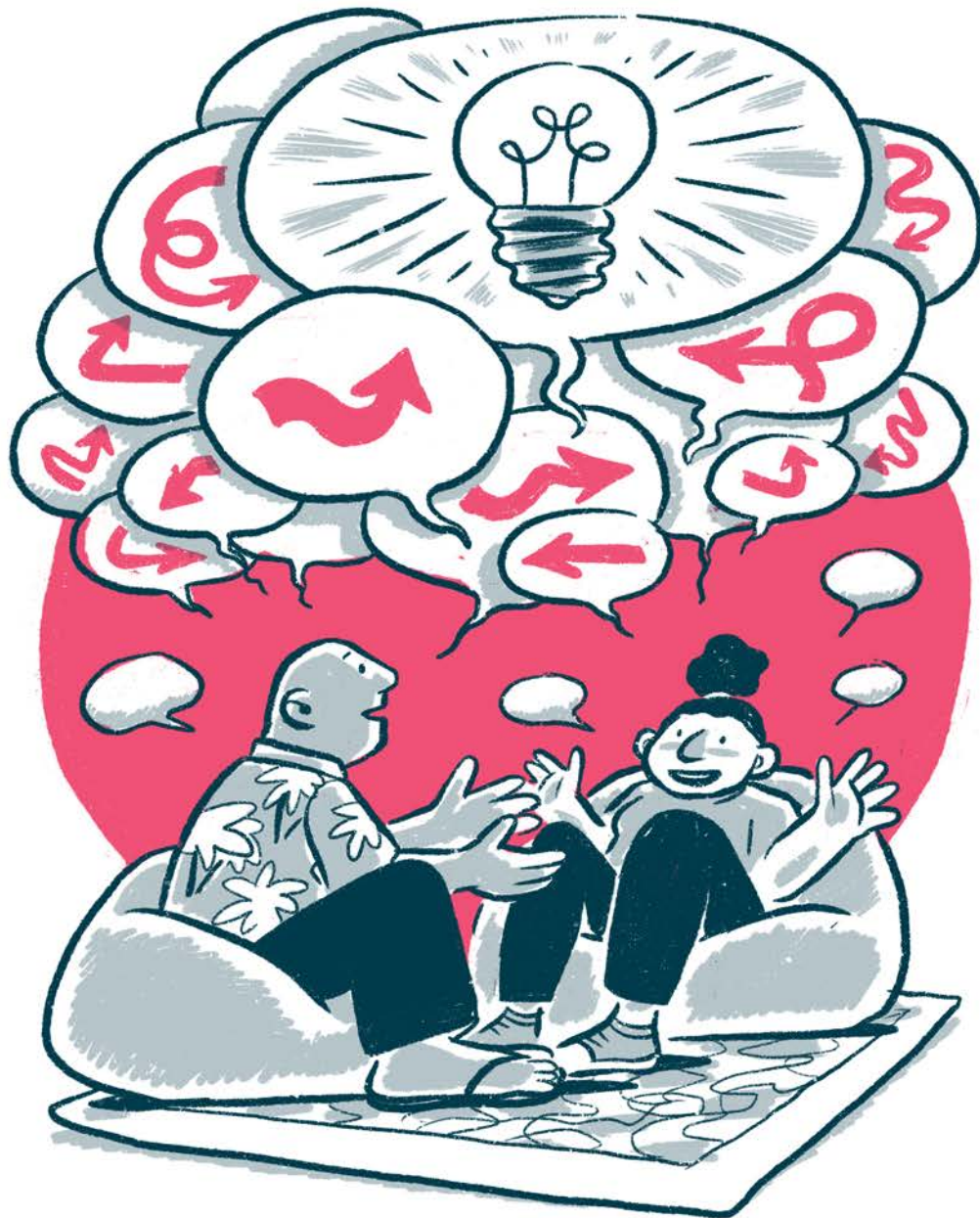


A GUIDE TO PARTICIPATORY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH





Participatory Qualitative Research is an approach to doing research interviews that aims to make the process more fun and engaging for both participants and researchers.



Where traditional approaches to research interviews tend to be quite rigid and formal, Participatory Qualitative Research aims to create a more relaxed and informal research environment in which participants feel at ease to be themselves.



By involving participants in the design of research activities, and by creating research spaces that allow for storytelling, emotion and digression, Participatory Qualitative Research attempts to break down the hierarchy that exists between participant and researcher.



There isn't one specific way of doing Participatory Qualitative Research—in fact, that's the point. The kind of activity you choose and how you choose to do it should be designed around your participants. Singing, collage, drawing, mapping and dance are all examples of potential activities.



Begin by thinking about your research questions. Identify what you are interested in understanding, then think about how you can make your research more exploratory before you think about specific activities. Be prepared for research questions to shift as research evolves



Next, plan an activity to do with participants. This may involve trial and error, as you want to find something that works for the research topic and the participants. Discuss this with participants before you begin. You want to create something that participants can get immersed in without feeling self conscious.



Go out into the field.
Find a place where
participants feel
comfortable, a neutral
space where you as a
researcher have less
power.

A university seminar
room may be less
appropriate than a
village hall, community
centre or karaoke bar.



When running your activity, begin with an icebreaker to help participants warm up and get into the task. Keep the activity simple, easy and fun.

Encourage conversation, introduce themes and prompts as the activity unfolds.

The aim is for participants to become so immersed in the activity they forget they are being interviewed.



Record the conversation and the activity as you go. The exact nature of this will vary depending on the activity and the participants. It may be useful to get an assistant to help with this process, or involve participants in recording, for instance by getting them to take photos.



It's worth noting that Participatory Qualitative interviewing is not for the faint hearted. It takes guts and takes time. It can be incredibly tiring to simultaneously organise activities, listen, interact, record and support participants.

Think about what you will do with your data.

This method will produce interesting and varied data which could enable you to tell a story with more than just words.



Thematic analysis can be used to connect outputs to research aims.

Analysis can be seen as a process of cutting and sticking, collating and building a bigger picture through data.

Creating an exhibition is one way of celebrating and sharing outputs from the research with both participants and the wider public.

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