

## Clinical Research Education Series 2022

Presentation will begin at 12:00 PM (PT)

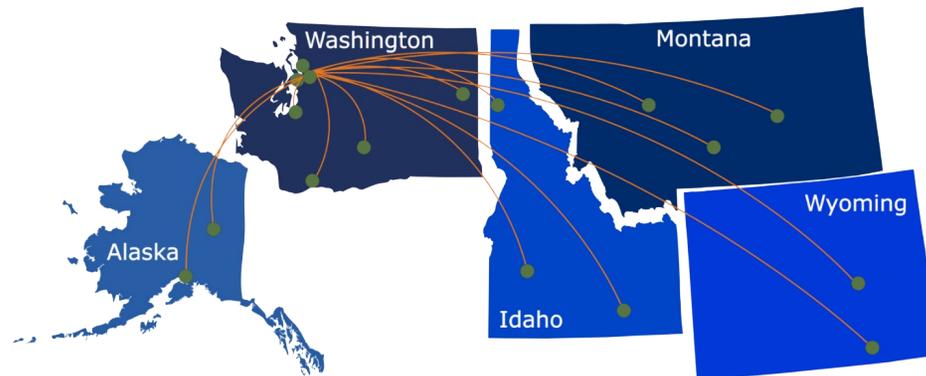
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### **Tell me more about that...Identifying Best Practices in Conducting Research Interviews**



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# Contact ITHS

## Director of Research Development



- Project Consultation
- Strategic Direction
- Resources and Networking

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## Scientific Success Committee

- Clinical Trials Consulting
- Guidance on Study Design, Approach and Implementation
- Feedback on Design and Feasibility

<https://www.iths.org/investigators/services/clinical-trials-consulting>

# Feedback

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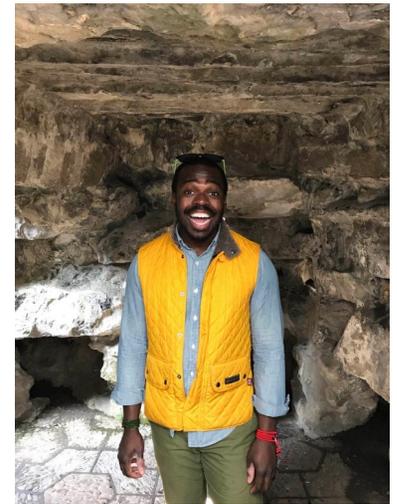
At the end of the seminar, a link to the feedback survey will be sent to the email address you used to register.

Clinical Research Education Series 2022

# Tell me more about that...Identifying Best Practices in Conducting Research Interviews

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**Presented by: A. Morgan** *(he/him), MS*  
Research Coordinator, Division of Allergy and Infectious Disease  
UW



# Learning Objectives

- 1 Define at least 2 types of research interviews.
- 2 Identify at least 5 best practices in conducting research interviews.
- 3 Identify at least 2 relevant resources for additional training on conducting research interviews.

## Highlighting Two Types of Interviews

**Semi-structured interview:** relies on a guide (not a script) and, although there is room for deviation from the guide, it is important to cover most of guide, for comparative purposes.

**Structured interview:** relies on a detailed script that is prepared and usually piloted before the interview. It can resemble a spoken questionnaire. Part of the reason for this piloting and revision process is that the script is usable by more than one researcher.

# Interviewing Tips From Two Protocols

- **Protocol 1: Male Relationship Study.** Repeat face-to-face semi-structured qualitative interviews (N=160) conducted with natal male adolescents aged 15-19 years about early same-sex sexual experiences.
- Interviews were confidential, lasted 60-90 mins, recorded and transcribed; participants paid \$40 cash + refreshments. Team of 3 interviewers.
- **Protocol 2: Project NEXUS.** One-time virtual (Zoom) structured interview with people who use drugs (IDU/Non-IDU) accessing syringe services programs (SSP) across six states.
- Interviews are anonymous, last ~40 minutes are not recorded, participants paid \$20 onsite. Team of 12 remote interviewers.

# Protocol Matters!

- Face-to-Face vs virtual interviews.
- Interview guide and length developed and piloted w/target audience.
- Anonymous vs confidential.
- Consent or permissions forms available and thoroughly reviewed w/participants.
- Realtime / onsite participant and interviewer safety plans in place.
- Mental, sexual and other health resources built-in (*e.g., during or post interview*).
- Identify resources for interviewer staff who may experience secondary trauma from interviews.
- Refreshments available, *if possible*.
- Interviewee preferences considered, *if possible*.

# General Interviewer Techniques

- **Building rapport matters.** Be mindful to thank participant, eye contact, body language, distance, dress. Depending on protocol ask questions.
- **Bring your social skills.** Exhibit warmth, empathy, consideration, and humor.
- **Be an active listener.** Let the participant know you are engaged e.g., repeat response, paraphrase – this will help with their engagement!
- **Suspend all judgements. Participants experience what you bring into the room.**
- **Plan for how to handle discomfort** during an interview.
- **Be aware of your physical responses.** Avoid expressions of being shock, surprise, disappointment or praise.
- **Silence can be useful in an interview.** Opportunity to check-in w/participant about question or probe comprehension.

# Male Relationship Study

## Sample interview questions and probes:

*Tell me the story of the first time you were attracted to a boy or another male.*

### Probes:

- Describe how you felt (probe for more than “good”)*
- How old were you when you felt this attraction?*
- Describe where you were when you felt this attraction.*
- Was there a particular person that you were attracted to?*
- What attracted you to them?*
- How old were they? What is their ethnicity? What is their sexuality?*
- How did you know him?*
- What did you do to show your attraction to him?*

**Goal was to elicit an in-depth description of early same-sex sexual experiences from participants.**

# General Interviewer Techniques

**Be knowledgeable:** in subject matter and focus of the interview.

**Add structure:** clear start, transitions throughout and clear wind down/close.

**Clear questions:** simple, easy, short w/no jargon.

**Respect:** give participants space to finish answering questions; think about responses and allow pauses.

**Display empathy!** Listen attentively to what is said and how it is being said.

**Be Open:** responds to what is important to interviewee and is flexible.

**Steering:** stay focused on what interview is aiming to glean.

**Remembering:** how does what has been said relate to what has previously been said.

**Interpreting:** clarify meanings of interviewees' statements, but without imposing your own meaning on them.

**Balance:** the interview is not about us. Rather we want to give participants ample space to describe experiences and answer questions.

**Ethically sensitive:** ensure interviewees understand what the research is about, its purposes, and level of confidentiality or anonymity offered.

# NEXUS Remote Interview



## UW Interviewers Station:

- Laptop w/Zoom App + UW Background
- Survey Flashcards
- Tablet:
  - REDCap participant tracker open monitoring status (*e.g. registered*)
  - REDCap Core/Local Survey
  - Slack open to comm. w/site

## Interview Monitor Station:

- Laptop w/Slack open for communication w/UW
- REDCap participant tracker monitoring participant status (*e.g., eligible, permission for testing, finished survey*)
- UW interviewer Zoom IDs

## Participant Survey Station:

- Charged tablet w/Hotspot enabled (or on WIFI)
- Noise cancellation headphones
- Zoom App open awaiting UW interviewer Zoom ID
- Monitor hand-off to participant for NEXUS screen

# Connecting to UW NEXUS Interviewer

**Step 1:**



**Interview monitor communicates potential participant + Confirms the UW interviewer**

**Step 2:**



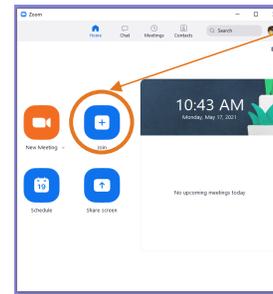
**Interview monitor engages NEXUS tablet @ interview station**

**Step 3:**



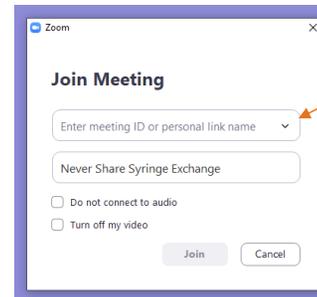
**Launch the Zoom icon pinned to task bar**

**Step 4:**



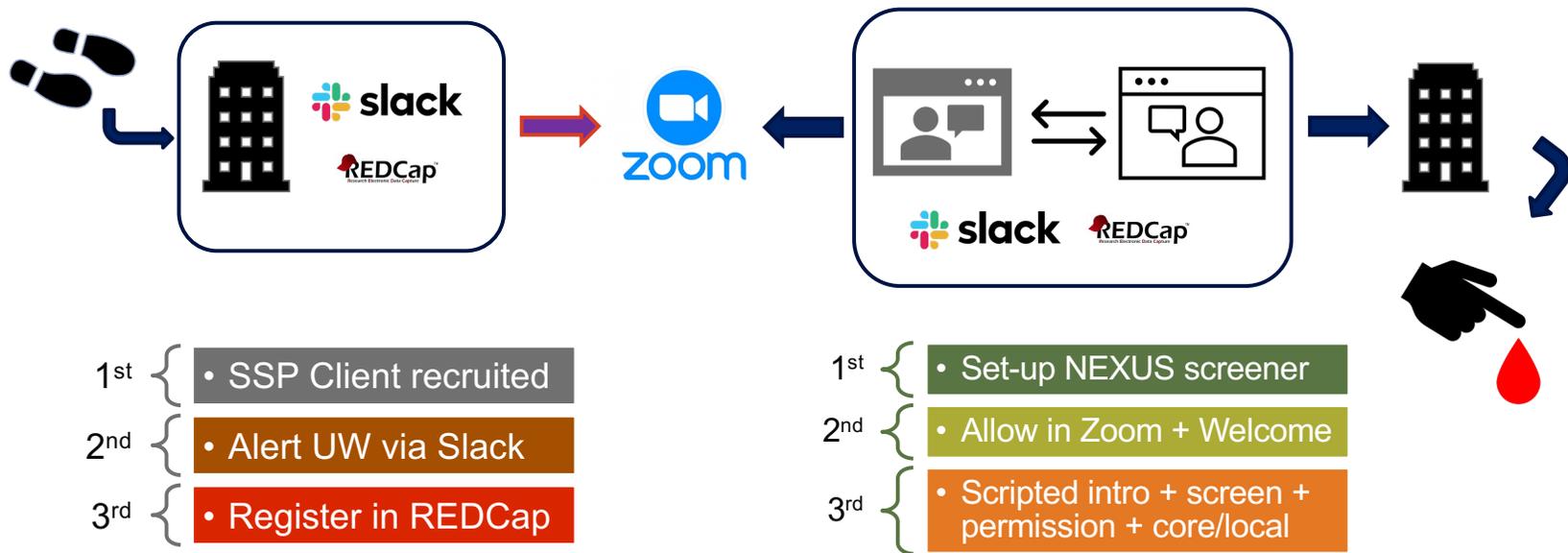
**Clicks Join Meeting Icon**

**Step 5:**



**Enters Interviewer 10-digit Zoom ID to be let into waiting room**

# NEXUS Remote Process



- 1<sup>st</sup> { • SSP Client recruited
- 2<sup>nd</sup> { • Alert UW via Slack
- 3<sup>rd</sup> { • Register in REDCap

- 1<sup>st</sup> { • Set-up NEXUS screener
- 2<sup>nd</sup> { • Allow in Zoom + Welcome
- 3<sup>rd</sup> { • Scripted intro + screen + permission + core/local

# Project NEXUS

## Sample interview questions and probes:

*Have you ever in your life injected any drugs?*

*-When was the last time you injected any drugs?*

*-What drugs did you inject the last time you injected any drug?*

*-On a day when you inject, about how often do you inject any drug?*

**Goal is to elicit a more detailed account of use patterns.**

**All enrollment sites employ staff *'interview monitors'* to assist interview participants while onsite.**

# Interviewer Skills

## **Establish Rapport Quickly**

Welcome virtual participant in a sincere manner. If needed, allow some silence after greeting the participant before moving on to give the participant a chance to respond. Thank the participant for agreeing and taking the time to learn more about the interview. Given the nature of the interview questions remind participant the interview is anonymous or confidential, being conducted in a private space and not being recorded.

## **Be an Active Listener**

While engaged in a Zoom session interviewers, should avoid distractions, and use active listening skills to determine if the participant is engaged and following along. Active listening involves paying close attention to verbal and physical response to questions and acknowledging that you have captured their responses. This information can help the interviewer decide the pace of survey questions.

## **Be comfortable asking Survey Questions**

The NEXUS survey captures sensitive information related to drug use, sexual behaviors, and experiences with law enforcement. Interviewers should read and re-read all survey questions and ensure they are comfortable asking the question, and repeating when necessary, the survey questions.

# Interviewer Skills

## **Read Questions Verbatim**

All NEXUS core and local survey questions should be read exactly as written. Interviewers may be tempted to re-word/phrase questions to aide in participant comprehension. This is highly discouraged, if an interviewer senses a participant does not understand the question, the interviewer should ask the participant if they would like the question to re-read. Interviewers should document issues related to question comprehension in the interviewers notes section of the survey.

## **Speak Clearly**

Interviewers should pay attention to the pace at which introductions, transitions, and questions are read. If participants cannot hear the question clearly this presents data quality issues. Given the NEXUS survey interviews are being conducted via Zoom platform interviewers should anticipate potential questions-response issues and find a pace that works for each participant.

## **Neutrality**

Interviewers should refrain from providing or appearing to provide approving or disapproving reactions to participant question responses. Interviewers should employ a consistent neutral transition to the next question.

# Interview Challenges

<b>Participant emergency or other immediate safety concerns.</b>	Use interviewers Slack channel to communicate emergencies or immediate concerns to the group
<b>Participant falls asleep.</b>	Access Slack to contact the interview monitor to intervene. If able, participant can continue the interview. Ensure to offer water or coffee is possible.
<b>Participant keep going off-topic.</b>	Don't ignore the participant; acknowledge. Gently redirect participant with reminder of time boundary in place, current progress and your awareness of their time.
<b>Participant in emotional distress.</b>	Pause the interview session. Check-in with participant, ask if they would like to stop or continue. Ask if they would like to have the interview monitor return to the interview room.
<b>Participant makes inappropriate comment about interviewer's appearance, voice, or asks personal questions.</b>	Pause the interview session. Alert issue to UW team who will work with site monitors. Redirect participant to purpose of the interview and current progress. If the issue persists, remind the participant that their participation is voluntary and if interview is ended due to inability to complete they will not be eligible for compensation.
<b>Participant turns off video.</b>	Pause interview; Remind participant video should remain on during interview; Send Slack IM for site assistance. If issue is due to wireless connection, UW will work w/site to rectify . If not possible, continue the interview without video, site interview monitor will increase attention.



## REMOTE INTERVIEW TECH ISSUES

### Interviewer Equipment

- ▶ Chromebook CPU usage issues, e.g., unable to run Zoom + share flash cards w/out crashing
- ▶ Chromebook OS unable to support all Zoom features (e.g. virtual background)

### Zoom

- ▶ Participant unable to enter interviewer waiting room; Site gets “waiting” error message for multiple minutes
- ▶ UW interviewer unable to share screen

### Interviewer Equipment

- ▶ Switched to Dell laptops w/higher OS
- ▶ Solved both CPU and Zoom issues

### Zoom

- ▶ Check the format of Zoom ID, no spaces
- ▶ Reset hotspot or WIFI and restart tablet, relaunch Zoom
- ▶ Sign out of Zoom and relaunch
- ▶ If screen share is enabled in Zoom, issue has been resolved by updating privacy setting on the laptop

## Some things Avoid...

- Closed ended questions – those which elicit a ‘yes/no’ responses (*dependent on protocol*).
- Judgment – *“that sounds very risky, you should stop doing that?”*
- Preaching – *“What I think you should do or what you need is...”*.
- Long winded questions – questions/probes should be succinct and clear.
- Double-barreled questions – *“how would you rate the staff and services at the clinic?”*
- Leading questions – *“don’t you think you should avoid that behavior in the future?”*

# Interviewer Tips

- Consider multiple research interview methods when attempting to answer research questions.
- Prepare yourself as an interviewer
- Construct an interview guide and test your questions.
- Consider cultural and power dimensions of the interview situation.
- Build rapport with your respondents.
- Remember you are a co-creator of the data.
- Talk less and listen more.
- Allow yourself to adjust the interview guide.
- Be prepared to handle unanticipated emotions.
- Transcribe the interviews in good time.
- Check the data among target audience.

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# Thank You

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Open for Questions

# Feedback Survey

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A link to the feedback survey has been sent to the email address you used to register.

Please get out your device, find that email, and spend a few moments completing that survey before you leave today.

Tip: If on a mobile device, shift view to landscape view (sideways) for better user experience.