Interview Checklist

- Define as specifically as possible the purpose of the interviews. Write it down. Clarify why interviews are appropriate for that particular purpose and what additional information can be obtained vs. other assessment methods.
- Clearly define the specific outcomes/behaviors you are attempting to measure.
- Find out if you need to obtain permission from the Institutional Review Board to conduct interviews.
- Decide if you want to do a structured or semi-structured interview:
    - In structured interviews, the questions are close-ended, with a limited number of possible responses, and the interviewer asks them in a precise manner and order.
    - Semi-structured interviews retain the structure but allow for more open-ended questions and allow interviewers to ask variation of follow-up questions.
- Since the sample size for structured interviews will likely be much smaller than other assessment methods, it is crucial to obtain a representative sample. To do this, you need some demographic information on the overall population. Sample proportionally based on this population.
- For semi-structured interviews, create one broad primary question for each specific outcome you are attempting to measure. Then create sub-questions based on how the respondent answers the primary question. You can use a mix of open and closed questions, depending on the types of outcomes under investigation.
- The final set of questions constitutes the “interview guide.” It contains the questions in order, but leaves the interviewer flexibility as the topical trajectory of the conversation varies.
- Draft a series of questions (a question bank). Seek feedback from others. Revise.
- Conduct a pre-test (if possible) on a smaller sample of the population. Note any problems in the questions, such as wording, meaning ambiguity, clarity, etc. Conduct a debriefing at the end of the interview to gather the respondent’s opinion of the questions.
- Draft an invitation to participate letter.
- For evaluation, develop a way to code responses. If possible, best practice dictates that you have two independent coders to ensure inter-coder reliability.
- For coder training, it helps to have anchor responses, where you (as the primary researcher) establish the baseline score for certain responses. Coders’ evaluations should eventually converge onto these anchor measures.
- Tabulate the responses based on coding scheme. For quantitative analysis, input results into Excel, Mini Tab, or SPSS. For qualitative analysis, pick representative responses for various questions to provide a context for the types of responses you received.
- Present the results to decision-makers; if possible, give respondents the option of seeing the results.