

# Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

(PSYb2960)

Anna Ward

FSS MUNI, Department of psychology, 2023

# Inter... Pheno... WHAT?

- What is IPA
- What it is good for
- Research questions

# What is IPA? Basic fact check:

= ***Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis***

- A qualitative research method
- Works with **lived experience** of participants (respondents)
- Aims to get a picture of the *phenomenon* that is the interest of our research
  
- Developed by J. A. Smith in the 90s of 20th century in the UK
- At first used mainly in health psychology

# Qualitative X quantitative research

## Quantitative

- Big research samples for data collection
- Statistical methods usually used for processing data
- Results can be at least partly generalized
- Focuses only on specific variables



# Qualitative X quantitative research

## Qualitative

- Small research samples
- Involves in-depth digging in data, which is usually not worked on mathematically
- Cannot be generalized to a representative group /population

**BUT**

- Gives us wide range of information




# How is IPA done (in a nutshell):

- Create a research question
- Collect data (usually through a small amount of semi-structured interviews)
- Transcribe the interviews
- Analyze the data (most often using IPA recommended system and mechanisms) > get themes
- Organize themes and their relationships
- Write-up the narrative



# How does it work?

- Focuses on **understanding lived experience** of participants:
    - ← How do people **make sense** of major events and experiences?
  - We have a broadly defined research question
    - ← Content is not introduced by the researcher but by the participant
- 
- Narrows the gap between the object of a study and its perception by the participant
  - Gives the researcher a picture of the researched phenomenon from the participant's perspective

# What is IPA good for?

- Exploring new areas: useful when you have little initial information about the topic
- Adding in-depth information to already explored topics
- New perspectives on quantitative data
- HOW questions (as opposed to WHAT questions)
- Some research topics are difficult to quantify



# IPA research examples

**'I can't do it by myself': An IPA of clients seeking psychotherapy for their MMORPG addiction.**

*Kuss, Daria Joanna. Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

**Same-Sex Relationships of Men With Autism Spectrum Disorder in Middle Adulthood: An Interpretative Phenomenological Study**

Michael S. Hogan and Joseph A. Micucci

**Medical Neoliberalism in Rape Crisis Center Counseling: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Clinicians' Understandings of Survivor Distress**

Shannon M. Peters\*

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

**'Shutting the World Out': An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Exploring the Paternal Experience of Parenting a Young Adult with a Developmental Disability**

Lisa A. Thackeray and Virginia Eatough

*Department of Psychological Sciences, Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK*

**Students' Experiences of Philosophy Classes in Higher Education: A Case Study**

Tomas Saulius<sup>a</sup>, Romualdas K. Malinauskas<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Lithuanian Sports University, Lithuania

**Beyond Grief and Survival: Posttraumatic Growth Through Immediate Family Suicide Loss in South Korea**

Eunjin Lee<sup>1</sup>, Sung won Kim<sup>2</sup>, and Robert D. Enright<sup>3</sup>

**Motivations for multiple tattoo acquisition: an interpretative phenomenological analysis**

Stephanie Anne Kalanj-Mizzi, Tristan Leslie Snell and Janette Graetz Simmonds

Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, Australia

**Listening to your heart or head? – An interpretative phenomenological analysis of how people experienced making good career decisions**

Gabriela Viorela Pop & Christian van Nieuwerburgh

# Research questions

- Aimed to understand individual experience and its meaning
- Open questions
- Explorative
- Focused on the process (as opposed to the result only)

# Psychological research questions – examples

- How do people come to terms with the death of a partner? (Golsworthy and Coyle, 1999)
- How does a woman's sense of identity change during the transition to motherhood? (Smith, 1999)
- How do people in the early stage of Alzheimer's disease perceive and manage the impact on their sense of self? (Clare, 2003)
- What influences the decision to stop therapy? (Wilson and Sperlinger, 2004)
- How does being HIV [positive] impact on personal relationships? (Jarman et al., 2005)

# DOs and DON'Ts

- Do not imply what you expect to be the outcome of the researched phenomenon (because it might not have happened)
- Do not define a theory beforehand
- Be interested in general experience, not just specific aspects of it (but you may specify /narrow down the experience)
- The range shouldn't be too ambitious (not too broad)
- Specify what kind of participants you are looking for