

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Empathic Interviews



Empathic interviews are a qualitative research technique used to gain deep insights into users' experiences, needs and emotions.

In empathy interviews, researchers engage in open-ended conversations with participants, focusing on listening, observing and empathizing with their perspectives. These interviews are held to uncover unmet needs, pain points and desires that users may not be able to articulate directly. By building a rapport and creating a safe space for participants to share their stories, empathic interviews provide valuable qualitative data that can be used to create products, services and experiences that more effectively meet users' needs and aspirations.

If you choose to hold real empathic interviews, no structured interview guideline is needed. You only need to ask one question: "Tell me a story about (the last time) ..."




Empathic interviews are always held to get stories, since these stories will reveal emotions, needs and pain points much better than a structured interview guideline can. By digging deeper and asking the question "Why?", emotions and hidden needs become visible.

Duration
10–30 min each

Participants
one interviewee at a time

Facilitation
no special material needed

Empathic Interviews | Process

Preparation 	Interviews 10–30 min 	Documentation 40 min 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decide how many interviewees you are aiming for and which kind of “stakeholders” make sense as interviewees for your topic.• Empathic interviews can be used in a change process to get a better understanding of the employee’s emotional state regarding certain topics or in innovation processes where you would like to improve something for certain stakeholders (employees or customers).• Schedule the interviews.• Prepare for the interview and think about your storyline.• The following 3 rules apply in empathy interviews:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask for stories.2. Avoid asking what usually happens, and ask for specific examples instead.3. Ask WHY.	<p>Empathic interviews are normally much shorter than classical interviews, since the interviewee is only asked to tell one or more stories.</p> <p>Structure your storyline along those elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the topic and yourself.• Build a rapport (why do I ask you?).• Evoke stories.• Explore emotions (by asking why?).• Thank you and wrap up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After the interview, the results should be documented.• Evaluate the results from all interviews and hold a debriefing session to discuss the key findings/patterns.• Since empathic interviews often involve emotions, we suggest holding the debriefing session directly afterwards to record all the thoughts and emotions that were shared.