



# Conducting Interviews

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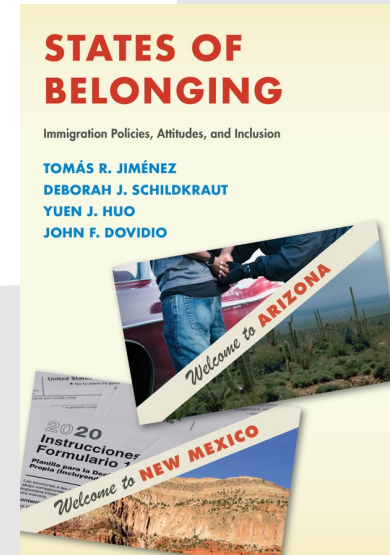
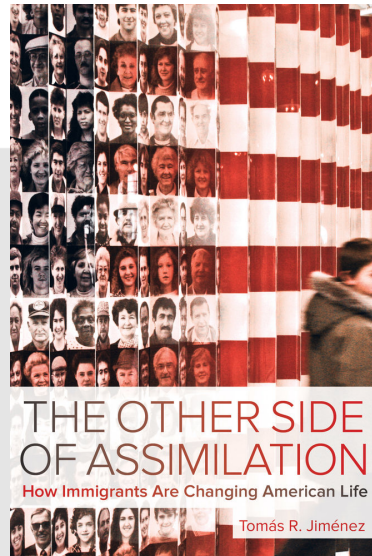


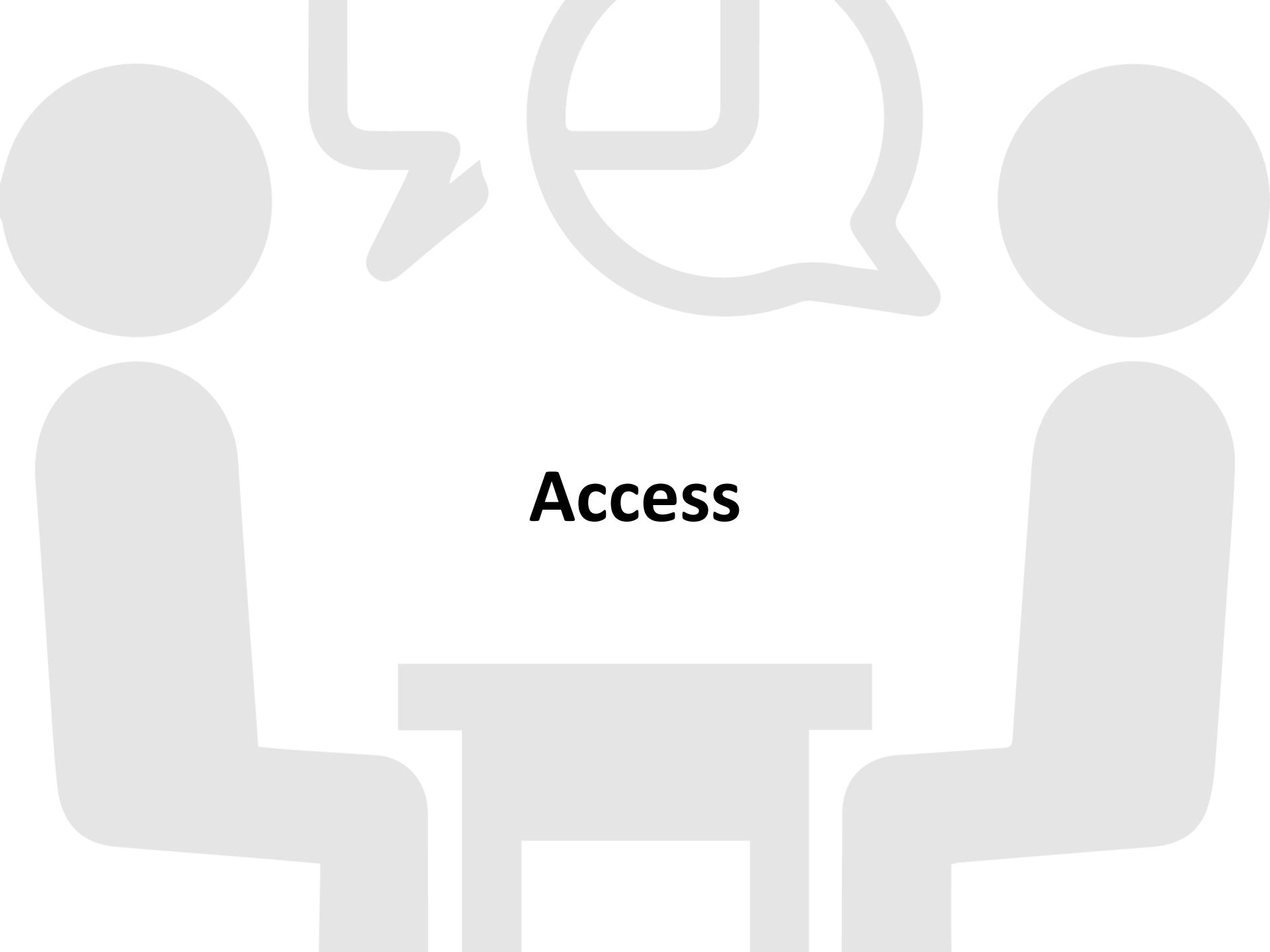
# Today's Agenda

- Introduction
- Access
- Interview Protocols
- Rapport
- The Art of the Interview
- Practice
- Using Interviews with other methods

# My life as a qualitative researcher

- Research on immigration, race, ethnicity, immigration policy
- Why I do in-depth interviews...
- Director of the qualitative initiative in Stanford's Immigration Policy Lab
- 14 years at Stanford; 17 as a professor





**Access**

# Golden Rules for getting access...

- 1. Get to the gatekeepers
  - It's not all about business... unless it has to be
  - What's in it for them?
  - What matters to them?
- 2. Have a “pitch”
  - You need a good elevator pitch
  - Be a salesperson (not the slimy kind)
  - Examples?
- 3. Tell them what they need to know; not much more
  - “Vague truth”
  - Deception OK?
    - McDermott 2006; López-Sanders 2011



# More Golden Rules for getting access...



- 4. Use your institutional affiliation... if it's appropriate
  - “Student”... or “researcher?”
  - Badges of legitimacy – website, business cards
- 5. Have your “stuff” together
  - Project competence and warmth
- 7. Intangibles might get you in
  - e.g., John Eason and his family
  - e.g., Catherine Rodela – infant son
- 8. Just show up if necessary
- 9. \$ is nice, but not a requirement (especially for students)



My name is Dr. Tomás ("TJ") Jiménez, and I'm a sociology professor at Stanford University. I'm conducting research on how individuals experience and perceive life in Cupertino.

My research involves conducting face-to-face interviews with Cupertino residents. I am currently looking to interview people who:

- currently live in Cupertino;
- have lived in Cupertino for at least 10 years;
- were born in the United States to US-born parents;
- are 15 years of age or older.

If you fit the above criteria, I'm wondering if you would be willing to allow me or one of my research assistants to interview you.

The interview is very casual and requires no preparation – all the questions are about you, and so you already know the answers. The questions are open-ended so that you have an opportunity to speak openly about your experiences and perceptions. The interviews are audio recorded and later transcribed so that I can take a closer look at your responses and how they compare to other people I interview. Only my research assistants and I will have access the audio recording and transcript from the interview. What you say in the interview will be held in strict confidence. Quotes from the interview may be used in public presentations, reports, journal articles, and books. However, your name and identifying characteristics will *never* be used.

The interview will likely last between one and two hours. As compensation for your time, you will receive a **cash honorarium of \$45** at the conclusion of the interview. I should also note that most of the people I interview say that they enjoy the experience.

I hope that you will agree to allow me to interview you. If you have any questions, would like to learn more about participating, or would like to set up an appointment for an interview, please contact me at 650-714-8335 or [tjimenez@stanford.edu](mailto:tjimenez@stanford.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

TJ

**Tomás Jiménez**

July 19, 2010 5:42 PM

To: [REDACTED]

[Hide Details](#)

Cc: [REDACTED]

Sent - Stanford 1

interview for Stanford study

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Dear [REDACTED],

I interviewed your wife, [REDACTED], for a research project that we are doing here at Stanford University. [REDACTED] mentioned that you would be willing and interested in participating, and I'm wondering if we might be able to schedule and appointment to interview you. As [REDACTED] can tell you from her own experience, the interview involves answering a series of open-ended questions about your life experience and perceptions. The kinds of questions that we ask are all question that I would be willing to answer to a stranger. The interview generally takes around two hours. I realize that this is quite a bit of time, and so we can meet at a time a place that is most convenient for you, and you will receive a cash compensation of \$45 at the conclusion of the interview.

Would you still be willing to participate? We are currently scheduling interviews for next week. Thank you so much, [REDACTED]. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

TJ

650-714-8335



## PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR **RESEARCH STUDY ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT**

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We invite you to participate in a study about refugee resettlement services. If you have recently been matched to a cosponsorship or volunteer team in the U.S., we would like to hear about your experiences.

### **IF YOU PARTICIPATE, YOU WILL:**

- Participate in **3 discussions** over the course of **one year**, in-person or remote.
- For each interview, you will receive a \$75 gift card.
- Share your experiences about your time in the U.S with a member of our research team; the information you share is **confidential**.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN UP  
TO PARTICIPATE PLEASE CONTACT:

ISA AVILA BREACH  
iavila@stanford.edu  
(650) 772-0707



# Research Opportunity!

Language and Health

Spring 2023  
Immigration Policy Lab



# Introduction

Isa Avila Breach

Mexican

English & Español

Research Associate



# Project



# Interview



Remote or in-person



1.5 hours



\$75 gift card

# THANK YOU!

Please sign up:

 Email: [email@stanford.edu](mailto:email@stanford.edu)

 Phone: (650) ###-####



A light gray background illustration depicting an interview scenario. At the top, there are two circular shapes representing heads. Between them is a speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the left head. Below these, two stylized human figures are seated at a rectangular table. The figures are simple, rounded shapes. The table is a solid gray rectangle. The overall composition is clean and minimalist, using a monochromatic gray palette on a white background.

# **The Interview Protocol**

# How to structure an interview Protocol

- Goal: **get people to talk about topics that interest you; not answer questions**
- Keep in mind: It's an interview guide, not a survey
  - Don't expect interviews to follow protocol sequentially – they usually don't
  - Don't expect to ask *all* of your questions
- 1. List *topics* you want to your respondent to talk about
- 2. Make a battery of ~~questions~~-prompts designed to **get your respondents to talk** about these topics.
- Two approaches:
  - 1. Short protocol (8-10 questions) with lots of follow-ups
  - 2. Lengthy protocol (up to 80 prompts)
    - “arsenal” of questions; you don't have to use all



# Golden Rules for the interview protocol...



- Prompts should:
  - be open-ended
    - Shouldn't be able to answer with "yes" or "no"
      - "Tell me about..."
      - "Walk me through..."
      - "**How**..."
  - be single-barreled
    - No multiple choice ("How did you think about your job before you left, and then how did you feel after?"; "Did you like your job, or did you hate it, or did you just think it was okay?")
  - be non-leading
    - Get them to talk about a topic, not come to a conclusion (i.e., "What was that like?" [instead of] "That sounds awful. Did you hate it?")

# More Golden Rules for the interview protocol...



- be jargon-free
  - Don't impose categories
  - Let categories emerge (learn their “language”)
- tap into perception, experience, process, internal state
  - “What was that like?”
  - “**How** did that feel?”
  - “**How** did you come to that view?”

# More Golden Rules for the interview protocol...



- Structure of protocol should...
- Allow them to warm up
  - Start with something easy, but relevant
- Save basic info (age, occupation, etc.) for the end
  - Don't want to give the impression that it's a survey

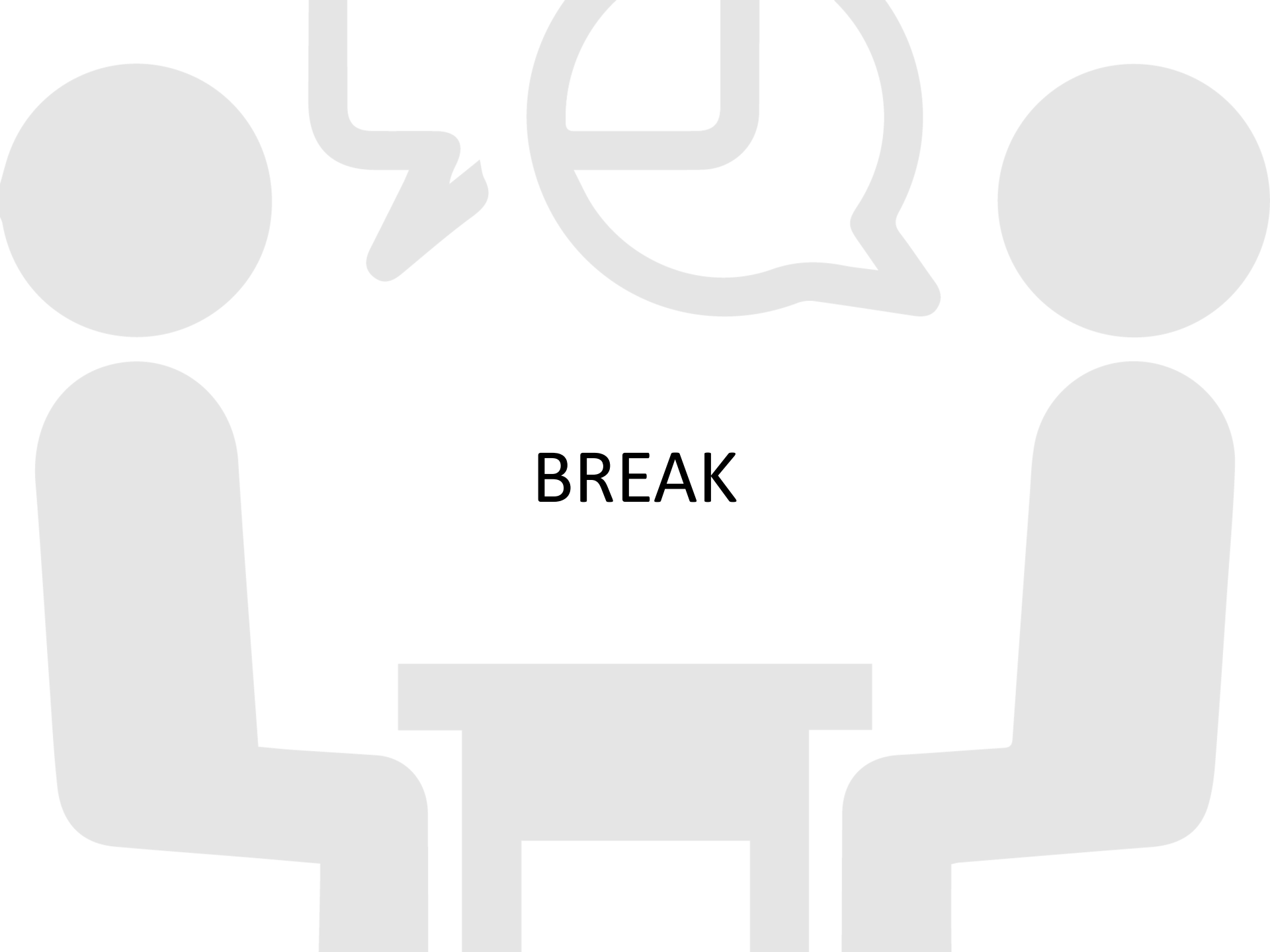
# More Golden Rules for the interview protocol...



- Useful prompt formats:

**Table 1** Prompts, what they solicit, and sample formats

<i>Prompt</i>	<i>Solicits the respondent's account of...</i>	<i>Prompt Format</i>
Guided “Grand-Tour”	the salience of events, attributes, and experiences	How would you describe __ to someone unfamiliar with it?
Comparison	their perceptions of cause and effect	How would you compare __ to __?
Counterfactual	the structure of what is normal	What would __ be like if __ didn't happen?
No-limits	behaviors, experiences, and views related to sensitive topics	Some people say / feel __ and others say / feel __. And, I have heard lots of views in between. What do you think? People have shared with me lots of different opinions / experiences / behaviors related to __. Tell me about your view / your experience/what you've done.



**BREAK**

## Grand tour:

- “How would you describe Cupertino to someone who has never been her before?”
- “So first, how would you describe your caregiving to someone who has never cared for children?”

## Counterfactual:

- “I want you to kind of jump into a hypothetical world with me, that there were no Mexican immigrants coming to Santa Maria after 1940. What would things be like for those Mexican families who were here since before 1940 today?”
- “What do you think your life would have been like had you never gotten that first prescription for 500 pills?”

## Comparing States:

- “How would you compare your emerging manager program to other emerging manager programs you’ve seen?”
- “How would you compare your life in this neighborhood to life in your previous neighborhood?”

## No-Limits Prompts:

- “So, there’s many opinions that different people have about border control. Tell me your thoughts about this topic, about border control.”
- “Some people we’ve talked to have said that if we want to create a harmonious society then we have to recognize that each ethnic group has the right to maintain its own, unique traditions. And on the other hand, other people we’ve talked to say that members of different ethnic groups should blend into a common way of life. What do you think about some of those ideas?”



# Rapport



# Rapport Needs Constant Attention

- Starts before you make contact
  - Careful about what you put on your website
  - Facebook, Twitter, TikTok page (e.g., Devon Magliozzi)
- Tend to it during and after data collection
- What has worked for you?
- What hasn't worked for you?

# Golden Rules for Rapport...



- 1. Make them comfortable
  - Be relaxed
  - (interviews) Be human – OK to laugh and joke; small talk is good
    - Not an interrogation
    - ... but not therapy
    - e.g., my preamble to each interview
- 2. Explain the procedures
  - Even if they read the consent form
  - Anonymity – legal, but also comfort issue
  - Confidentiality (?)

# Golden Rules for Rapport...



- 3. Manage your identity
  - Dress appropriately (“Stanford” sweatshirt not a good idea)
  - Race, gender, sexual orientation, political views
  - Social media/web presence Facebook, Twitter, TikTok page (e.g., Devon Magliozzi)
- 4. Leave a good impression
  - Send “thank-you” note
  - Help out, if appropriate
  - Share your work
- 5. Don’t sacrifice it all for rapport
  - Temper eagerness to please; could get you in trouble
  - Walk away if you feel in danger



A stylized, light gray background illustration depicting an interview. At the top, there are two circular shapes representing heads. Between them is a large speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the left head. Below the heads, there are two large, rounded shapes representing chairs. In the center, between the chairs, is a rectangular table. The entire scene is rendered in a minimalist, flat style.

# **The Art of the Interview**

# Setting up the Interview

- The set up
  - Consent form
  - Quiet area (helps with sound)
  - Comfortable area (you may be there for a long time)
    - safety
- Preamble is essential – develop one
  - An example... (also see Lareau reading)
- Set up the recorder in unobtrusive area
  - Wind... bad for sound
  - Watch for background noise
  - Put it on something soft (napkin, cloth, etc.) to reduce rattle noise

# What are the ingredients of a good interview?

- Some examples...

# Golden Rules for interviewing



- 1. Let them talk
  - It's a collaboration, but make them do the work
  - Don't judge... learn
- 2. Know your protocol
  - Interviews are almost never linear
  - follow your Rs thoughts and be prepared to ask follow ups
    - "How did you...?" "Tell me more about that."
- 3. Don't make it a survey
  - Uniformity of questions not the point
    - Some Rs better for some topics
  - Don't need to get through all questions

# More Golden Rules for interviewing

- 4. Take notes so you can identify and keep track of “markers” and follow up
  - Write down key markers
  - They are potential “doors” that lead to something
    - Get them to take you inside
- 5. Have on hand basic set of follow ups
  - “What’s that been like?”
  - “Tell me more about that.”
  - “How did you come to that view?”
- 6. Learn their language (quickly) and use it
  - “culture,” “rich/poor,” “male/female,” “partner/spouse/husband/wife,” “race”





# Even More Golden Rules for interviewing



- 7. Let “how” be the crutch question
  - gets at processes
- 8. Monitor your participation
  - Some friendly banter is good to establish rapport, but...
    - You don’t need to validate
    - You don’t need to share
- 9. Don’t let them just be general (more on this in a sec.)
  - Some Rs want to be general (it’s comfortable)
  - Ask for examples: “Tell me about the last time...” “How did you come to that view?” “Is there something that stands out?”

# Even More Golden Rules for interviewing

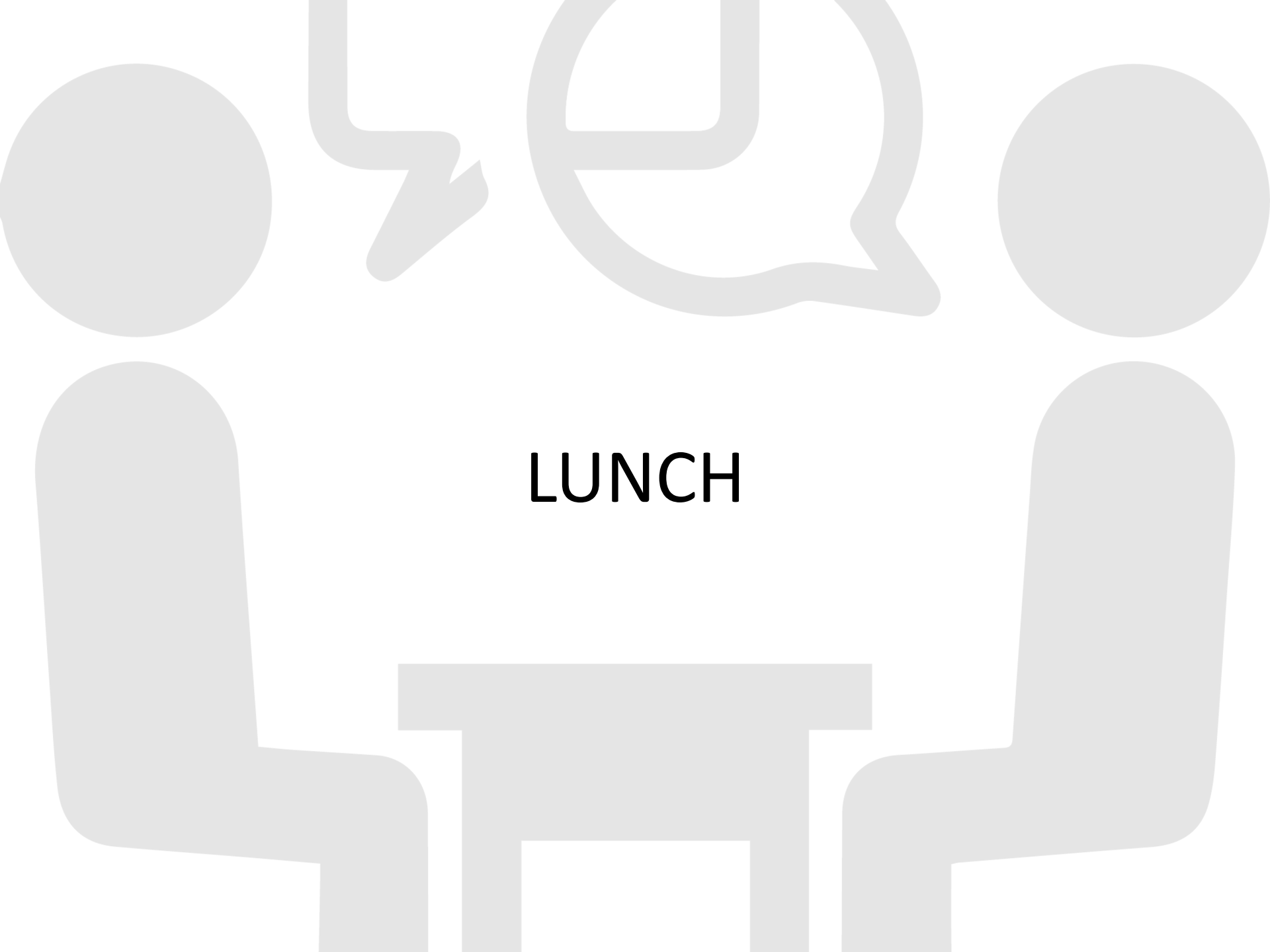


- 10. Pay attention & document (fieldnotes) data not part of the interview
  - Who is coming or going?
  - What's around you?
  - How do they interact with others?
  - What does R look like?
  - \*take fieldnotes after!
- 11. Be a “duck on a pond”
  - Project calm, pay attention
  - Think about what you want them to talk about next
  - Do some analysis on the fly



# Levels of Respondent Articulation

- The General – the world “out there”
  - E.g., “College admissions is very competitive, and everyone is working really hard to stand out.”
- The Personal – the world, in general, with the respondent in it
  - “When I applied to college, everyone told me to do lots of things outside of school, and to try to do interesting things – just the usual stuff – to stand out on applications. So I tried to do that.”
- The Process – HOW respondents arrived their understanding of the world and their place in it
  - “I wasn’t really sure about the kinds of things that I should do, and so my older sister, who got into a really good school, told me that I should try for things like fencing or international volunteer work; activities that were really different.”
- The Concrete – the world, specifically, as the respondent experienced it.
  - “One time, I was talking to my sister, and she told me about her friend who didn’t get into an elite school. Her friend told her that she wished she didn’t just do debate and the usual activities. She said she wished she had done things that the other students weren’t doing, but that still showed my strengths and that make me stand out. When my sister told me that, it really opened up my eyes.”
- GET ALL FOUR



LUNCH



**Using interviews with other methods**

# Exercise

- Using your own work, write:
  - guided grand tour prompt
  - Counterfactual prompt
  - comparison prompt
  - no-limits prompt

# Exercise

- Partner with two other people
- Pick a role:
  - Interviewer
  - respondent (or act like one)
  - observer
- Use your protocols and interview a partner, give feedback, then switch