

GUIDANCE FOR IDENTIFYING AND MINIMISING PARTICIPANT DISTRESS DURING INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Prior to the interview:

Prior to conducting interviews, pilot interviews will be conducted in liaison with the supervisor. These interviews will provide the researcher with an opportunity to identify any questions that might lead to distress and where appropriate, take steps to rephrase or change these questions.

Before conducting the first formal interview, the student will meet with their supervisor to discuss the procedures that are in place in case a participant becomes distressed during an interview. The supervisor will also ensure the student feels prepared for the interview. The supervisor must be satisfied that the researcher is competent in conducting interviews before giving approval for the commencement of data collection.

Students will inform their supervisor where and when they are completing all interviews and in turn the supervisor will ensure the student has a means of contacting them when they are conducting interviews.

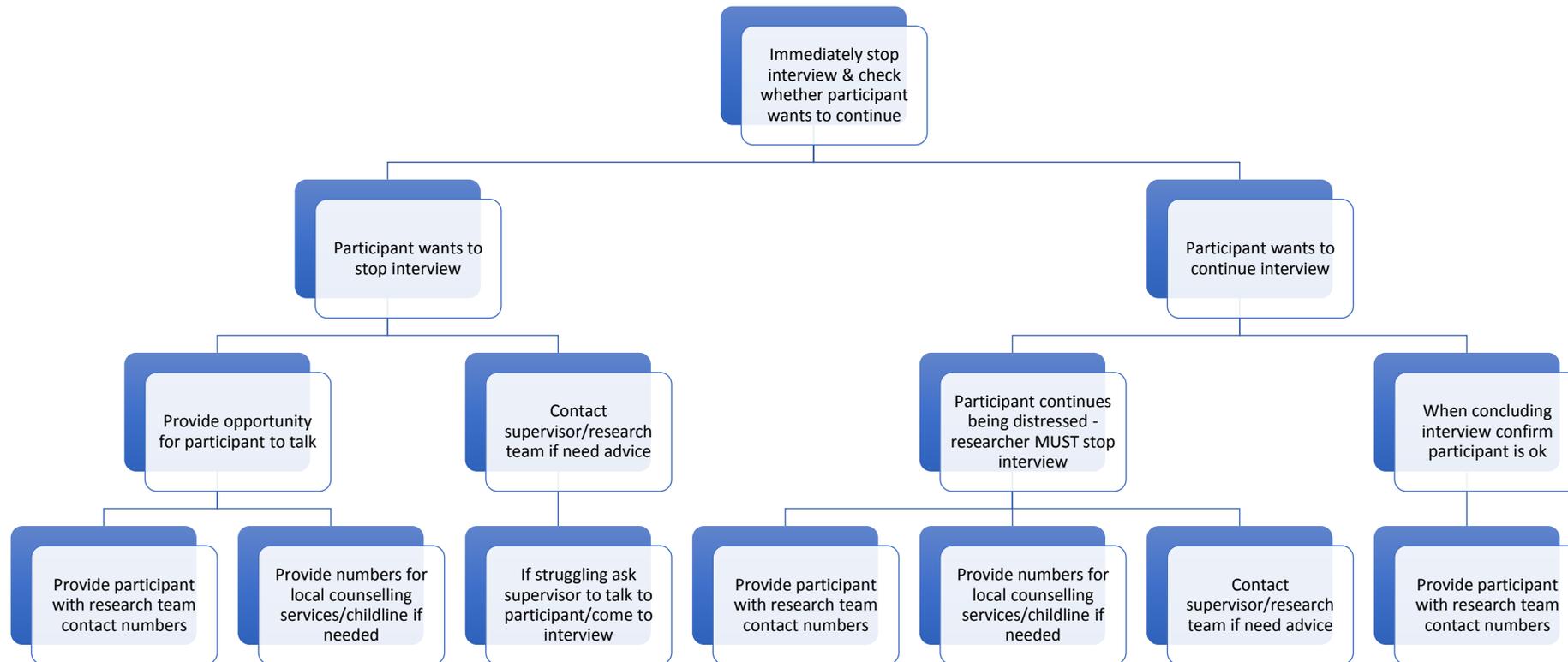
During the interview:

At the beginning of the interview the student will remind the participant that they can stop the interview at any time, that they can choose not to answer questions, and that there are no right or wrong answers to questions (so there is no fear of 'saying the wrong thing').

Once the interview begins, the researcher will be required to be aware of any potential indications of distress (e.g., withdrawing, visible upset, declining to answer numerous questions, shifting in seat, looking away from the interviewer, asking for the interview to end) and should err on the side of caution in all instances. If there is even the slightest indication that participants might be distressed students must immediately follow the procedure below:

- 1) The recording will be immediately stopped and the participant will be asked if they are ok. At this point the participant will be asked if they want to take a break/end the interview/continue talking – the participant's decision will be final. If the participant decides to take a break and continue with the interview, confirmation will be sought that the participant is actually comfortable continuing and they will be reminded there is no penalty for withdrawing.
- 2) If the participant wishes to continue but remains distressed, the interviewer will make the decision to draw the interview to an end. At this point, the interviewer will commit to providing the participant with an opportunity to talk and ensure the participant is not visibly distressed when leaving the interview.
- 3) If the participant remains distressed and the researcher does not feel capable of managing the situation they will contact their respective supervisor who will be available at all times during interviews by phone contact. Depending on the situation, the supervisor will either provide guidance to the student, speak directly to the participant over the phone, or make attempts to go and meet with the researcher and the participant.
- 4) If the participant has become distressed at any point in the interview, the student will ensure the participant has the contact details of the rest of the research team and remind them that they are free to contact any member of the research team if there is anything further they would like to discuss.
- 5) The interviewer will also offer to provide the participants with a list of local contacts (e.g., counselling services, sport psychology services) if they would like them.
- 6) Following the interview, the student will debrief the interview with their supervisor and (if necessary) other senior members of the research team. A written record of the incident and the procedures followed will be made.

Management of Distressed Participants During Interviews



If participant has become distressed at any point you must debrief with supervisor and write up the steps that were taken throughout to manage the situation.