Grounded Theory Coding

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What Is Grounded Theory?--Initial Definition

Grounded theory methods consist of a systematic approach to inquiry with several key strategies for conducting inquiry.
- Inductive-Abductive
- Comparative
- Interactive
- Iterative

Grounded Theory Means--

- Remaining open to all possible theoretical understandings
- Developing tentative interpretations about these data through codes and nascent categories
- Returning to the field site(s) and gathering more data to check and refine major categories.

How does Grounded Theory Coding differ from other qualitative coding?

- Codes for social and social psychological processes, not for topics
- Emphasis on actions with actions embedded in the codes
- Uses gerunds
- Makes coding processes iterative
How does Grounded Theory Coding differ from other qualitative coding?

- Aims for specificity
- Allows for imaginative interpretations—less concern with accuracy
- Compares data with data
- Prompts researcher to remain active in the process—kinesthetic
- Rejects requirements for agreement among coders

Conventional Qualitative Coding

| Marital tensions | My ex-husband had kind of a double life going on as it turns out; he would disappear for two or three days at a time which became increasingly worse. He had colitis...part of it was his colitis but part of it, [as] it turned out was a hidden cocaine addiction so I couldn't continue to—in my chronic pain condition and his behavior, just kept me so stressed out where I couldn't function emotionally and physically to a point. That's why I say my survival was at stake...it hurt me. And there was no support there for my pain issue. ...
| Ex-husband's illness |
| Ex-husband's addiction |
| Stress |

My ex-husband had kind of a double life going on as it turns out; he would disappear for two or three days at a time which became increasingly worse. He had colitis...part of it was his colitis but part of it, [as] it turned out was a hidden cocaine addiction so I couldn't continue to—in my chronic pain condition and his behavior, just kept me so stressed out where I couldn't function emotionally and physically to a point. That's why I say my survival was at stake...it hurt me. And there was no support there for my pain issue. ...

What is Grounded Theory Coding?

- Inductive-Deductive
- Comparative
- Interactive
- Iterative

Woman with Neck Injury

Living with ex-husband's double life
Disappearing husband
Escalating disappearances
Accounting for husband's disappearances
Defining hidden addiction
Alluding to limits for self—Explaining distress
Being unable to function
Disintegrating self
Questioning survival of self/or way of life

My ex-husband had kind of a double life going on as it turns out; he would disappear for two or three days at a time which became increasingly worse. He had colitis...part of it was his colitis but part of it, [as] it turned out was a hidden cocaine addiction so I couldn't continue to—in my chronic pain condition and his behavior, just kept me so stressed out where I couldn't function emotionally and physically to a point. That's why I say my survival was at stake...it hurt me. And there was no support there for my pain issue. ...
Grounded Theory Strategies for Seeing Data Anew

- *Engage in coding* from the start of data collection—line-by-line, incident-by-incident and/or situation by situation
- *Compare data, data with codes, and codes with codes* throughout inquiry; Integrates and streamlines data collection and analysis
- *Study and use your emerging analysis*

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Flexible strategies to help you code

- Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties
- Defining the actions on which they rest
- Looking for tacit assumptions
- Explicating implicit actions and meanings
- Crystallizing the significance of the points
- Comparing data with data
- Identifying gaps in the data

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Grounded Theory Strategies for Seeing Data Anew

- *Build inductive theoretical analyses*
- *Move beyond inductive logic*
- *Check your emerging theoretical ideas* through collecting focused data

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During Initial Coding, Ask:

- "What is this data a study of?" (Glaser, 1978, p. 57; Glaser and Strauss, 1967)
- What does the data suggest? Pronounce?
- From whose point of view?
- What theoretical category does this datum indicate? (Glaser, 1978)
- "When, how, and with what consequences" are participants acting? (Corbin & Strauss, 2007)
A Code for Coding

- Remain open
- Stay close to the data
- Keep your codes simple and precise
- Construct short codes
- Preserve actions
- Compare data with data
- Move quickly through the data

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Mary Allen—Violence and Voice—Initial & Focused Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control by partner</td>
<td>Controlling Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to comply</td>
<td>Strategic resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control by partner</td>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First physical assault</td>
<td>Threatening Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat by partner</td>
<td>Turning Point</td>
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Suddaby and Greenwood, Rhetorical Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text Excerpt</th>
<th>Multidisciplinary practice within one firm is not a revolutionary concept. It is simply a natural evolution from multi-disciplinary teams already a reality in today's marketplace. (Testimony of Richard Spivak)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase one coding</td>
<td>Position on MDPs [Multidisciplinary Practices] : Con; How problematized: Represents a breach with the past Persuasive appeal: Historical character Encompassing terms: Time <strong>“Honor the past”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical coding</td>
<td>Historical *ASQ 50: 35-67, 2005, p. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase two coding</td>
<td>Final Category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data example

I: So, how has life been for you?
S: Well, as you can tell, it's been very busy. Between babies and marriage and life, uhm, it's kind of hard to explain, but it's been a lot different than being on my own because people rely on me now. So part of it has been good because I can see that I'm not the only one that has good days and bad days, everybody does. They might not be physical, as much as psychological, but everybody has kind of good days and bad days, as moods and things too.
Data example (cont.)

Uhm, I guess the main thing, I had a fight with my husband before coming here, and what I'm kind of seeing from that is the main thing that I still have a little bit of guilt attached to or hard time, or is hard for me, is I don't know how much responsibility is mine, like what I should take on all the time.

Coding for what is happening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeing beyond self</th>
<th>Identifying a positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discerning the content of good and bad days</td>
<td>Recognizing other people's good and bad days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So part of it has been good because I can see that I'm not the only one that has good days and bad days, everybody does.</td>
<td>Qualifying their good and bad days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They might not be physical, as much as psychological, but everybody has kind of good days and bad days, as moods and things too.</td>
<td>Viewing good and bad days as universal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Statements: Sara Shaw—Taking a broader view beyond self

So part of it has been good because I can see that I'm not the only one that has good days and bad days, everybody does. They might not be physical, as much as psychological, but everybody has kind of good days and bad days, as moods and things too.

Where Does Constructivist GT Take Us?

- Take what is "real" as problematic—move further into interpretive social science
- Look for multiple definitions of reality
- Pay close attention to language—and action
- Examine how experience is constituted and structures are enacted
Example Initial Coding—Thornberg’s Interview with Anna

| Being bullied for different reasons; |
| Being punished for being too social; |
| Breaking-down process; |
| Being bullied for group-imposed social shyness; |
| Name-calling; |
| Experiencing social disapproval because of being too outgoing; |
| Reacting with self-silencing; |

Anna: I was bullied during elementary school by different people. Well, for different reasons. When I was very little, I was very social and stuff, but they didn’t think it was okay that I was talkative, so I had to be broken down or stuff like that. So I stopped talking, and then I became silent, and they started to bully me because of that instead, because I never dared to talk and stuff.

Anna: It was because I was a bit different, and then, you know, they started calling me names. I don’t remember exactly what.

Interviewer: Different? How?

Anna: Well, that I was more outgoing than most of the others and stuff. And they thought that you shouldn’t really be like that. But I was like that so they thought I had to be broken down or stuff like that. So I stopped talking.

Staff Interview—Hospital for Brain-Injured Patients

| Confronting loss constantly; surveying probable pasts |
| Explaining all-encompassing loss |
| Being aware of devastating losses; |
| Losing one’s prior life; |
| Having nothing left; |
| Comparing self with others; |
| Explaining emotional response; |
| Understanding the magnifying of small slights; |

They (patients) might just be constantly thinking about how much they’ve lost. I mean um, well you know... patient, well... patient has lost everything she lost her, you know she had a flat with her, well she was engaged she had a, you know, a really good job, fantastic social life. And she’s got nothing now, and, you know, quite rightly so, that she’s, you know, on days where she’s feeling low and sees people going off doing things that she can’t do. Her level of arousal is going to rise, so if you even say wait a minute to her, its important to her.

Memo Excerpt—Explaining All-encompassing Loss

Explaining all encompassing loss means making explicit unknown or forgotten meanings of the magnitude of patients’ loss. Explaining here means pointing out types of loss patients have experienced, delineating their extent, and making these losses known and understood. Explaining all-encompassing loss means taking the patient’s perspective and looking at what is lost. Loss resides in the chasm between the life once lived and current institutional existence. Participant D points out, “I think, I don’t think enough emphasis is placed on that fact that these people have lost their life. And basically through that they have perhaps experienced a huge range, huge range of losses and because of their behaviour they may have alienated people so that there is just this massive aspect of loss that they all have.”

Thank you.