

# Reflexive Thematic Analysis: An introductory intensive

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This course is designed to offer a theoretically-grounded, practice-oriented, reflexive introduction to the *doing* of reflexive thematic analysis (the approach developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke).

The teaching combines a range of pedagogical styles and activities, from mini-lectures through classroom discussion, small-group and individual- classroom activity, and homework. It asks for a reflexively open and interrogative learning-engagement from participants.

At the end of the two days, you should have a deeper understanding of the potential (and limitations) of (reflexive) thematic analysis, important design considerations, and a good grasp of what *doing* reflexive thematic analysis looks like in practice, and what this sort of analysis can - and cannot - deliver). Not every aspect will be covered in depth, but the course aims to build skills, knowledge, and a critical reflexive practice related to coding and theme generation, that collectively provide a foundation for doing rigorous analysis that is both theoretically and methodologically congruent.

## General preparation for the first class

Please try and do some reading *and* most important do the initial dataset familiarisation ahead of the first session.

*Data engagement (essential):*

- Initial dataset familiarisation (and reflexivity task)

*Reading* (please make sure to do at least SOME *before* the session):

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology*, 9(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196>

Finlay, L. (2021). Thematic Analysis: The 'Good', the 'Bad' and the 'Ugly'. *European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy*, 11, 103-116.  
<http://ejqrp.org/index.php/ejqrp/article/view/136>

Olmos-Vega, F. M., Stalmeijer, R. E., Varpio, L., & Kahlke, R. (2023). A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher*, 45(3), 241-251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287>

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2024). Thematic analysis. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, M. D. Giardina, & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (6 ed.). Sage.
- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, *56*, 1391–1412.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Trainor, L. R., & Bundon, A. (2021). Developing the craft: reflexive accounts of doing reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *13*(5), 705-726. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2020.1840423>
- Web resource: <https://www.thematicanalysis.net/> – I highly recommend exploring the official Thematic Analysis website, which brings together key articles and offers a rich collection of video material (e.g., talks, lectures, and more).

### **Day 1 morning – early afternoon: Classroom based**

Focus on understanding, clarifying, and getting started with reflexive TA. Aspects covered will include:

- Introducing and locating thematic analysis
- Ethics, reflexivity and positioning yourself; subjectivity
- Data for TA (including the dataset)
- Starting to *do* reflexive TA
  - Familiarisation
  - Initial coding

### **Day 1 afternoon: Self-directed activity**

*Data engagement* (prioritise this task):

- Coding development

*Reading* (please also try and read between sessions, after coding development – at least one of the first two, and one of the second two):

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Is thematic analysis used well in health psychology? A critical review of published research, with recommendations for quality practice and reporting. *Health Psychology Review*, *17*(4), 695-718.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2022.2161594>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and be(com)ing a knowing researcher. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, *24*(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2024). Supporting best practice in reflexive thematic analysis reporting in Palliative Medicine: A review of published research and introduction to the Reflexive Thematic Analysis Reporting Guidelines (RTARG). *Palliative Medicine*, *38*(6), 608-616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02692163241234800>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2025). Reporting guidelines for qualitative research: a values-based approach. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 22(2), 399-438.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2024.2382244>

## **Day 2 morning – early afternoon: Classroom based**

This day will build on what was done on Day 1, both in class and afterwards. Its focus is really getting *into* reflexive TA analysis

- Reviewing and developing coding (coding rigour and quality)
- Understanding themes conceptually
- (Initial) theme generation – processes and practice
- Theme development processes
- Reflexivity and subjectivity in theme development and interpretation
- Quality – in themes and in reflexive TA; challenges to quality