Quantitative research methods

⇒ **Before/after studies**
Repeating the same measures pre- and post-intervention to detect change.

⇒ **Secondary data analysis of monitoring data**
Analysis of existing resources to extend knowledge about service utilization and outcomes.

⇒ **Questionnaires**
Used to explore service users' attitudes, needs, expectations, preferences and knowledge.

⇒ **Observation research**
Use of systematic checklists to describe and quantify naturalistic events e.g. such as service delivery.

Qualitative research methods

⇒ **Interviews**
Client-centered means of exploring people's views and experiences.

⇒ **Focus groups**
Used to explore attitudes and opinions where interaction between people may raise additional insight. Usually involve 6-8 people with similar experiences/ characteristics.

Choosing research methods: a best practice checklist

Create a research proposal detailing your aims, objectives timeframe and resources, to ensure you have considered all necessary elements of the evaluation.

Ensure your chosen research methods match your aims and objectives.

Plan to collect the type of data appropriate to your chosen quantitative/qualitative research methods.

Consider your stakeholders; can you involve them in the research design process?

Do you have enough resources to conduct the research in the way that you would like?

Is the research justified? Have others completed similar research previously?

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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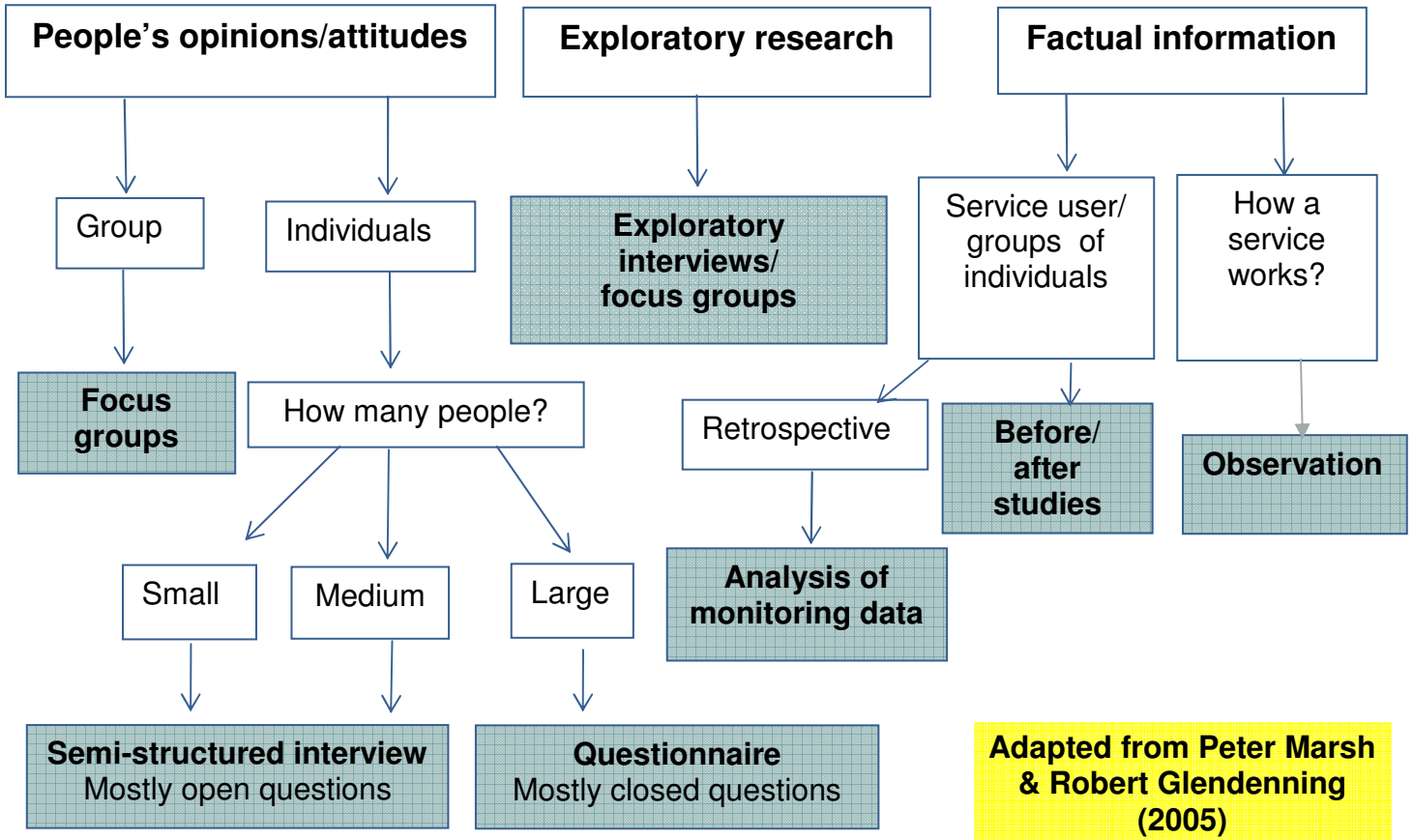
Choosing research methods

A best practice short-guide to choosing appropriate research methods

March 2014

Bath & North East Somerset
- The place to live, work and visit

Which method should I use?



Adapted from Peter Marsh & Robert Glendenning (2005)

This short best practice guide is bought to you by the University of Bath in collaboration with Bath & North East Somerset Council.
For more information contact the Active Lifestyles and Healthy Improvement Team on 01225 396429

Which approach?

Research can be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

Quantitative research

⇒ Used to test specific hypotheses, using pre-defined outcome variables.
⇒ Data are numerical and analysis typically involves conducting statistical tests
⇒ Usually involves a large sample size (number of people).
⇒ If data are representative of the full population, results allow inferences to be generalised.

Typical examples are questionnaires, randomized controlled trials, observation research

Qualitative research

⇒ Used to answer exploratory questions, and understand the meaning that people attach to their experiences.
⇒ Data are often very rich and descriptive.
⇒ Usually involves a small sample size (number of people).
⇒ No generalisations can be made from data, but can help to generate ideas and hypotheses to explain what is observed more widely.

Typical examples are interviews & focus groups