

# GRADUATE STUDENT WRITING WORKSHOP

## We Want You! Effective Recruitment Strategies and Posters

November 15 2012  
Prepared by Jean E. Wallace

### **DILLMAN'S TOTAL DESIGN METHOD** (in a nutshell)

Dillman has examined the various ways in which researchers attempt to increase responses rates. He proposes the Total Design Method (TDM) which stresses the necessity of paying attention to all aspects of the study as opposed to one or two gimmicks. He argues that every aspect of the survey process must be examined in terms of how it can maximize the survey response rate. In general, Dillman suggests that response rates can be increased by:

1. Minimizing perceived costs of participating
2. Maximizing perceived rewards for participating
3. Convincing the potential participant that the expected rewards will be delivered

### **Relevant Articles:**

Couper, M. P. (2000). Web Surveys: A Review of Issues and Approaches. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64:464-494.

Dillman, D.A. (1983). "Mail and Other Self-Administered Questionnaires" (pp. 359-377) in P.H. Rossi, J.D. Wright, and A.B. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of Survey Research*.

Diaz de Rada, V. (2005). Influence of Questionnaire Design on Response to Mail Surveys. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8:61, 72-74.

Gosling, S.D., Vazire, S., Srivastava, S., & John, O.P. (2004). Should we Trust Web-Based Studies? A Comparative Analysis of Six Preconceptions about Internet Questionnaires. *American Psychologist*, 59:93-104.

### **FOUR PHASES OF RECRUITMENT**

The success of research projects depends a lot on the ability of the researcher to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of research participants, yet researchers sometimes overestimate their ability to address the methodological issue of participant recruitment. Berger et al (2009) describe the research recruitment process and provides an analysis of issues and strategies. They lay out four stages of the recruitment process as follows:

1. Generating initial contacts
2. Consenting
3. Screening
4. Enrolment and retention

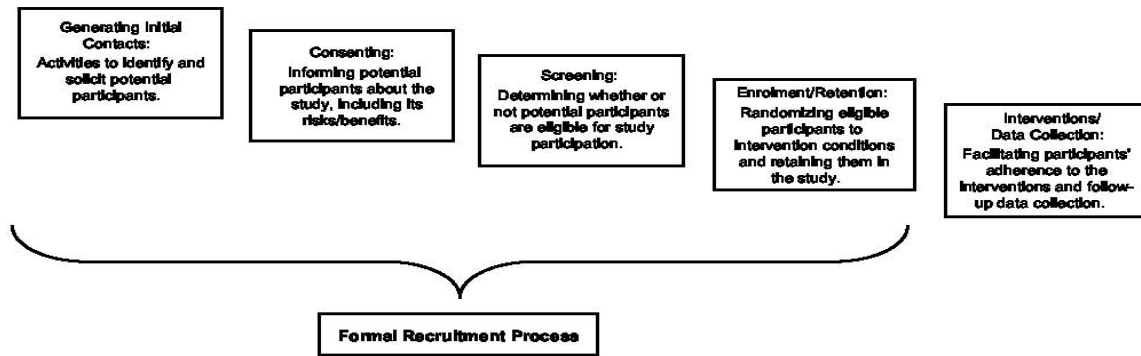


Figure 1. Stepped recruitment process in intervention research.

### Relevant Article:

Berger, L.K., Begun, A.L., & Otto-Salaj, L.L. (2009). Participant Recruitment in Intervention Research: Scientific Integrity and Cost-Effective Strategies. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12:79-92.

### INFORMED CONSENT

Potential participants are provided with all relevant information that is needed to inform their decision to participate

Their decision should be voluntary

They should be competent to make such a decision

### HARD TO REACH GROUPS OR “HIDDEN” GROUPS

Hard to reach groups may involve individuals who are engaged in illegal or deviant practices, if their activities are of concern or disapproval by others. The Bengry-Howell and Griffin (2012) article describes three projects where they studies “Car Modifiers”, young people and alcohol use and participation in music festivals and free parties. In connecting with these hard to reach groups, they suggest it is important to recognize:

1. The importance of establishing a credible view of oneself and one’s research
2. The need to establish mutual trust and understanding with potential participants and gate keepers
3. The ethical issues about how much to negotiate or “encourage” participation

Certain groups may be “hidden” due to low numbers of potential participants or the sensitive nature of the topic under study. Browne (2005) talks about how the study of sexualities is a sensitive subject because there may be risks to participants if they transgress dominant heterosexual codes. She discusses the snowball sampling approach as one method that has been used to study hard to reach, sensitive populations.

1. Snowball sampling as a method to recruit hidden groups

2. Relying on interpersonal relations and connections both includes and excludes people
3. It's important to recognize who it excludes and who is really hidden

### **Relevant Articles:**

Bengry-Howell, A., & Griffin, C. (2012). Negotiating Access in Ethnographic Research with “Hard to Reach” Young People: Establishing Common Ground or a Process of Methodological Grooming? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15:403-416.

Browne, K. (2005). Snowball Sampling: Using Social Networks to Research Non-Heterosexual Women. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8:47-60.

### **OTHER RELEVANT ARTICLES**

I have found the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* very helpful in locating information on specific qualitative and quantitative methodological issues. You might do a more refined search on your particular methodological strategies, issues or concerns or sample under study.

Davies, K. (2010). Knocking on Doors: Recruitment and Enrichment in a Qualitative Interview-Based Study. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14:289-300.

“This paper describes the process of recruiting participants for a qualitative interview-based study by leafleting and door knocking. It is argue that door knocking can enrich and thicken research that usually takes place “behind closed doors,” enabling researchers to engage their ethnographic imagines by observing neighbourhood interactions, familiarizing themselves with the places their participants inhabit and through the embodied, sensory experience of walking itself. By treating the recruitment process as data, it is suggested that the door knocking researcher can ensure his/her individual participants are understood as connected to the wider social, physical and sensory environment they inhabit. Door knocking is also seen as enabling researchers to find interest in an element of the research process often viewed as a somewhat irksome means to an end.”

Goodrum, S., & Keys, J.L. (2007). Reflections on Two Studies of Emotionally Sensitive Topics: Bereavement from Murder and Abortion. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10:249-258.

“This article provides a candid account of the challenges two researchers faced while collecting qualitative in-depth interview data on two different studies of emotionally sensitive topics. These studies involved asking participants to describe their feelings about a difficult experience—the loss of a loved one to murder and the termination of a pregnancy. We build on the literature on feminist methodology by offering a backstage look at qualitative research on an emotional topic and with an emotionally vulnerable population. Using illustrations from our respective studies, we share some of the insights we gained on recruitment problems, interview question development and participant compensation (e.g., financial, interpersonal and follow-up contacts). We also discuss the need for monitoring and attending to the participants’ emotions as well as our own throughout the data collection process.”

Harwood et al. (2012). Sampling Hidden Populations: Lessons Learned from a Telephone-Based Study of Persons Recently Diagnosed with HIV (PRDH). *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15:31-40.

“This paper describes a flexible, multi-stage, nonprobability sampling process used in a study of persons recently diagnosed as HIV-positive (PRDH). From July 2007 to June 2008, we used venue and chain-referral sampling strategies to recruit PRDH in the US. We sought equal distributions (n = 20) of eligible PRDH from four self-identified subgroups: gay or bisexual men (GBM), heterosexual men (HM), heterosexual women (HW), and male-to-female transgender women (TGW). We categorized 30 sampling venues as websites, health clinics, or other networks. For 359 volunteer respondents, website venues proved more productive compared to health clinics and other sources. Website venues were most efficient for sampling recently diagnosed GBM and HW. Passive sampling methods were less effective in recruiting HM and TGW. Sampling approaches should be flexible and tailored to reach sub-categories within hidden populations. The sampling process itself produced valuable knowledge about social networks of hidden HIV populations.”

Hazel, N., & Clark, A. (2012). Negotiating Doorstep Access: Door-to-door Survey Researchers’ Strategies to Obtain Participation. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, online first.

“This article explores the interactions between researchers and potential respondents when recruiting for a door-to-door survey. Researchers’ reflective accounts suggest a range of tactics used to influence potential participation in research that draws upon contrasting identities and roles for researchers and participants. In examining these roles, the paper demonstrates the ways in which, while fleeting, the interactions between researcher and respondents involve impression management strategies and are entangled in negotiations of power and status. In reflecting on some of the practices behind door-step recruiting in survey research, we show how gaining consent to participate is about negotiating researcher and respondent roles. In doing so, we hope to encourage debate about the importance of identity, the ethics of consent and issues of reflexivity in survey-based research.”

Lewis, R. (2009). Recruiting Parents and Children into a Research Project: A Qualitative Exploration of Families’ Decision-Making Processes. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12:405-419.

“While approaches to the analysis of multiple perspectives have been explored, the earlier stage of arranging fieldwork with multiple family members has received relatively little reflection within the literature. Drawing on data from a qualitative study exploring family communication about sex and sexuality, this paper examines parents’ and children’s accounts of how their families became involved in the research. A key finding notes how dynamics of parent–child communication about sex were played out through families’ interactions concerning research participation. Particular focus is paid to the ways in which information about the study was mediated between parents and children and also individuals’ differential agendas for participation. Evidence of the persuasive practices of some parents to engage their families in research underlines the importance of accessing all potential participants directly. The paper

concludes by highlighting the importance of sensitisation to interactions between family members themselves when engaging families in research.”

Tyldum, G. (2012). Ethics or Access? Balancing Informed Consent Against the Application of Institutional, Economic or Emotional Pressures in Recruiting Respondents for Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15:199-210.

“In this article, I will show how groups with low human and social capital are less likely to volunteer to participate in research, if participation entails no direct personal benefits for respondents. Consequently, if our research was to be based solely on volunteers, our knowledge of social practices would be biased. This bias would often be in favour of groups with high human and social capital, who are also more likely to have their voices heard in other arenas; while more marginalised groups remain unheard. In order to get access to all respondent groups, various forms and degrees of institutional, economic and emotional pressure are widely used to recruit respondents for interviews. Although such practices are common, it is still taboo in many research communities to acknowledge that pressure is applied. I argue that it can be defended to apply pressure in some instances, even if this reduces the respondents’ opportunity to freely consent. However, if pressure is applied, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that respondents are not put at any risk of harm. To facilitate research that is ethically sound, research communities could benefit from widening their focus, from one strongly focused on informed consent to a wider awareness of factors that can entail risk of harm for participants.”

## **List of Student Recruitment Attachments**

Gondek CFREB Recruitment Notice

Gondek Rocky View County Poster

Hickey Recruitment Letter for Students

Hickey Recruitment Letter for Professionals

Hickey Overeating Poster 1

Hickey Overeating Poster 2

## **CFREB Application of Prabhjote (Jyoti) Gondek**

Supplemental Information for Section 3.1:

### **RECRUITMENT NOTICE:**

#### **UNDERSTANDING CHANGE IN ROCKY VIEW COUNTY: Seeking participants for a study about the County**

I am conducting research into the pressures that accompany life in an urban-rural hybrid zone like Rocky View County. If you live in the County, are over the age of 18 years, and are interested in participating, here are the highlights:

- You will be asked to take part in a 45 minute interview
- All information will be kept confidential and anonymous
- You will be helping the researcher develop an understanding of the pressures faced by the County from the perspective of its residents

You don't need to have any prior training or knowledge to participate in this study.

If you are interested, please contact the researcher directly:

Jyoti Gondek, PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology  
University of Calgary  
403-630-1537  
pkgondek@ucalgary.ca

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!**

---

### **RECRUITMENT MESSAGE (VERBAL OR ELECTRONIC):**

Hello! My name is Jyoti Gondek and I'm a PhD student with the University of Calgary's Sociology Department. I'm conducting research into the pressures that accompany life in an urban-rural hybrid zone, using Rocky View County as my case study. Part of the research involves interviews with people who represent important groups in the County, like longtime residents, new residents, County representatives and development representatives. If you are willing to assist me with this research project, I would like to conduct a 45-minute interview with you to learn more about your expectations from life in the County and what you feel some of the pressing issues are in Rocky View County.

Would you be interested? YES = Thank you so much! Let's set a time and place to meet so I can first provide you with the information for your consent to participate, and then conduct the interview.

NO = Thank you for your time. If you happen to change your mind, please do not hesitate to contact me (provide contact information).



## **RECRUITMENT NOTICE:**

### **UNDERSTANDING CHANGE IN ROCKY VIEW COUNTY: Seeking participants for a study about the County**

I am conducting research into the pressures that accompany life in an urban-rural hybrid zone like Rocky View County. If you live in the County, are over the age of 18 years, and are interested in participating, here are the highlights:

- You will be asked to take part in a 45 minute interview
- All information will be kept confidential and anonymous
- You will be helping the researcher develop an understanding of the pressures faced by the County from the perspective of its residents

You don't need to have any prior training or knowledge to participate in this study. We can arrange a time and place to meet that is convenient for you.

If you are interested, please contact the researcher directly:

Jyoti Gondek, PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology  
University of Calgary  
403-630-1537  
pkgondek@ucalgary.ca

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!**





## **Recruitment statement for students**

I am writing to kindly request your participation in my dissertation research about eating disorders and obesity. You have been identified because of your program of study and expertise relates to one or more of the following areas: mental health and illness, eating disorders, weight management, obesity, dietetics or nutrition. Through an interview with you I hope to gain more understanding of how professionals learn of new or newly identified illnesses and changes in professional understandings of mental illness, eating disorders and obesity.

I am interested in talking with you about several topics, such as: (a) What content in your training has focused on or included mental illness, eating disorders and/or obesity? (i.e. an assignment, a reading, an option for an assignment, a practicum etc.) (b) What sources of knowledge are you directed to for developing deeper understandings of mental illness, eating disorder and/or obesity? (c) What experience you have had in the areas of mental illness, eating disorders, and/or obesity? (d) Once your schooling is finished, for what ailments do you expect patients/clients to seek your care?

The purpose of this interview is not to assess your knowledge, abilities or skill. Rather, it is to gather information concerning the educational experiences of and educational content presented to student professionals.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and confidential. Additionally, I will make all efforts possible to interview you in a convenient and comfortable way (i.e. interviews can be conducted face-to-face, or through telephone, skype or email).

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Kate Hickey, by phone at (403) 589-1194, or by e-mail at [kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca).

## **Recruitment statement for professionals**

I am writing to kindly request your participation in my dissertation research about eating disorders and obesity. You have been identified because you work and have expertise in one or more of the following areas: mental health and illness, eating disorders, weight management, obesity, dietetics or nutrition. Through an interview with you I hope to gain more understanding of how changes in professional understandings of mental illness, eating disorders and obesity are organized and changing.

I am interested in talking with you about several topics, such as: (a) How do patients arrive at your office (i.e. referral, etc.)? How do patients present their problems to you? (b) How does the intake and assessment of new patients proceed? (c) How are patients routed and directed in the system (who they are referred to see, by whom, and for what purposes)? (d) What sources of knowledge do you employ or rely on for the practice of your profession (i.e. peers, journal articles, books, conferences etc.)? (e) How is your ability to perform your profession impacted, (for better and/or worse), by the development of newly recognized mental illnesses (i.e. binge eating disorder)?

The purpose of this interview is not to assess individual practitioner knowledge, abilities or skill. Rather, it is to assess the impact of new or newly recognized illnesses on practitioner experiences and the organization of health care services.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and all efforts will be made to assure your anonymity. Additionally, I will make all efforts possible to accept your participation in a form that is most convenient and comfortable for you (i.e. interviews can be conducted face-to-face, or through telephone, skype or email).

To participate in this study or to address any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Kate Hickey, by phone at (403) 589-1194, or by e-mail at [kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca).

# Overeating Research

**Have you ever thought that you may suffer from Binge Eating? Or Compulsive Overeating?**

**Have you or has anyone else been concerned that your overeating is out of your control?**

**Have you sought help or been treated for overeating, binge eating, or compulsive overeating?**

I am seeking volunteers to participate in research about people's experiences regarding overeating and binge eating.

**If you answered yes to any of the questions above (and you do not currently suffer from anorexia or bulimia)** then I would like to interview you for this research.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and confidential. I will make all efforts possible to arrange your participation in a way that is most convenient and comfortable for you (i.e., interviews can be conducted face-to-face, or through telephone, skype or email).

To participate in this study or to request more information please contact Kate Hickey, by telephone at (403) 589-1194, or by e-mail at [kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca).

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

# Binge Eating Research

**Do you binge eat?** Eat in a discrete period of time (e.g., within any 2-hour period), an amount of food that is definitely larger than most people would eat in a similar period of time under similar circumstances AND feeling a sense of lack of control over eating during the episode).

**Do at least three of the following apply to your binges?**

- Eating much more rapidly than normal
- Eating until feeling uncomfortably full
- Eating large amounts when not feeling physically hungry
- Eating alone due to embarrassment of how much you eat
- Feelings of disgust, depression, or guilt after overeating

**Do you feel distressed regarding binge eating?**

**Has this occurred, on average, at least once a week for 3 months?**

If you answered **yes** to the questions above **and you do not engage in compensatory behavior (e.g., abuse laxatives, over-exercise, or purge)** then I would like to interview you for research regarding overeating and binge eating disorder.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and confidential. I will make all efforts possible to arrange your participation in a way that is most convenient and comfortable for you (i.e., interviews can be conducted face-to-face, or through telephone, skype or email).

To participate in this study or to request more information please contact Kate Hickey, by telephone at (403) 589-1194, or by e-mail at [kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca).

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research

[kjhickey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kjhickey@ucalgary.ca) or 403-589-1194  
overeating research