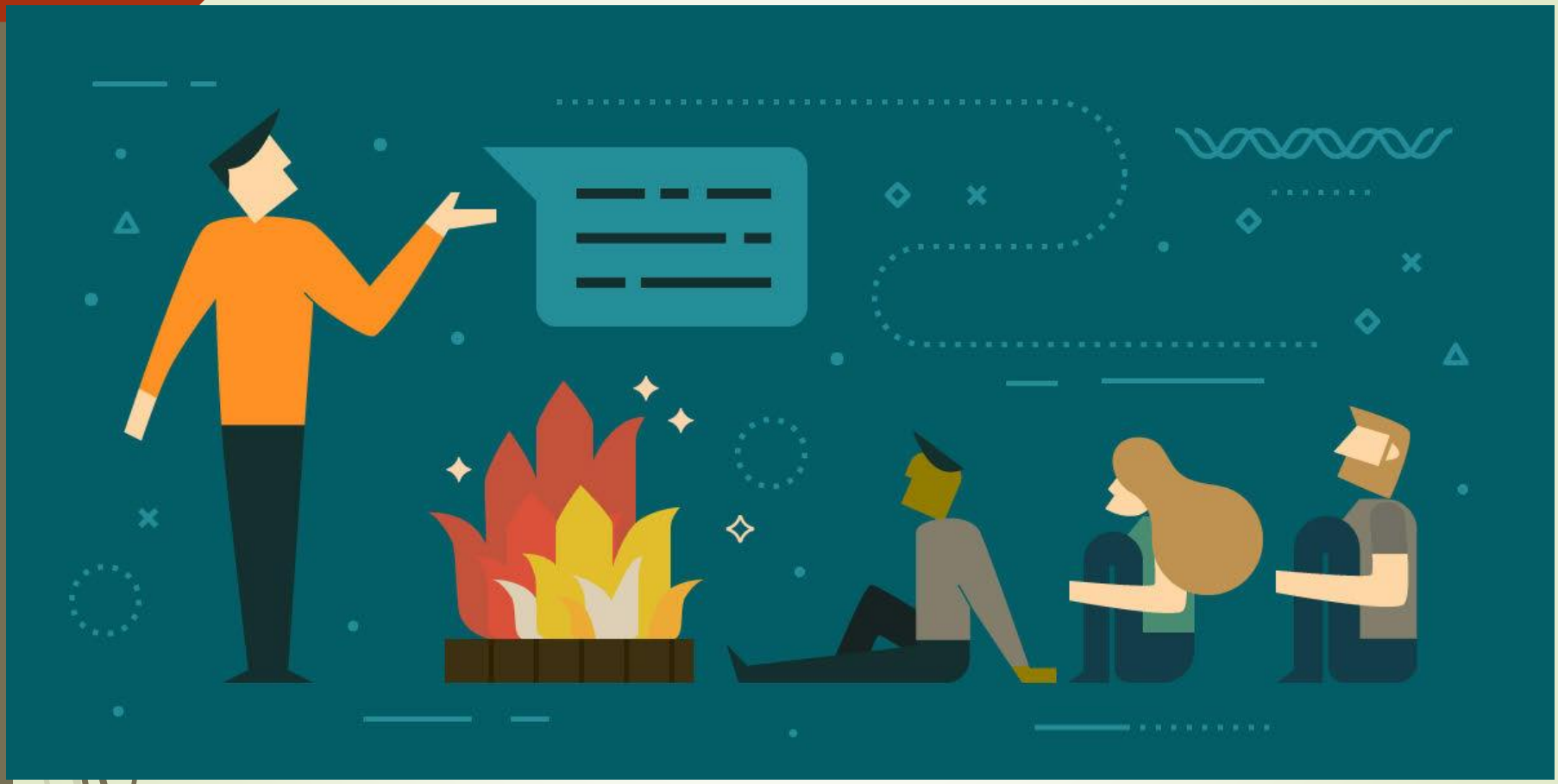
Interviewing and transcribing

Qualitative interviewing

- Start with general questions - Establish rapport
- Different to everyday conversation
- Task is to gather information about the participant's experience, not your own.
- Consider body language (e.g. arms crossed) and active listening skills (e.g. nodding your head, making eye contact) to help participants feel comfortable.
- Consciously and intentionally present while listening to participants i.e. focussed on what is being said and not distracted
- Listen carefully, follow responses, probe for more information.
- Effective interviewing - practice.

During the interview

- Important to encourage participants to stay on topic.
- Check for meaning, clarity important for both reliability and validity.
- Closing questions – check for any topics that may have been missed/questions for future participants.
- Record interviews and take field notes.



Allow participants to “tell their story”, a natural inclination of all humans…

Transcribing



Familiarisation with data - first step of transcription



Very time-consuming (one hour of interview/focus group = minimum three hours)



Important to remember this during planning and data collection – stick to time limits



Pay attention to what is actually said rather than what is expected



Recordings may be difficult to understand - recording quality, accents, context specific language, style speech.



Referring back to questions - helps interpret recordings

Academic written language & spoken word

- How should we present spoken English in interview or focus group transcriptions?
- Verbatim?
- Standardised?
- What do you think? What about punctuation?
- Standard written grammar and spelling:
- improves readability
- removes linguistic variety/accent/dialect



Literal spelling - difficult to read, may seem inarticulate.



False starts, repetitions, interruptions, overlaps, laughs – should they be included?



How it is transcribed - reflects researcher interpretations.



Need to decide level of detail required and how to represent data in written form.



Generally presented with a new line for the next speaker



Deciding what quotations and themes to highlight - reflects researcher interpretation also