Qualitative Research Methods

• Able to address research questions “How?” and “Why?”
• Includes Focus Groups, In-Depth Interviews, Participant Observation (Ethnography)
Qualitative vs. Quantitative

• Qualitative:
  ◦ Small sample sizes
  ◦ Detailed exploration of topic

• Quantitative:
  ◦ i.e. survey research
  ◦ Larger sample sizes
  ◦ Used to generalize
Focus Groups

• Focus groups: a research approach where a group is selected to discuss together the topic of study.
• Moderated by member of research team
• Interaction between group members a feature of methodology
• Share views and experiences, ask opinions
Focus Group Nuts and Bolts

- Number of questions and participants depends on how structured the conversation
- Example of Focus Group research: Gay-Straight Alliance High School Groups
In-Depth Interviews

• Interviews can be survey-based or open-ended (or both)
• Open ended questions: primary focus
• Interviewer asks participants to share their views or experiences
• Duration of interviews can be hours, days, weeks
• Example of in-depth interviews: current work on LGBT older adults.
Participant observation/ethnography

- Researcher embeds in phenomenon being studied, first-hand observations
- Most common in anthropology and sociology research
- Typically, long term methodology; researcher may/not disclose researcher status
- Example: Young people and hip hop
Questions?