Guide to Transcribing
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Note: Some of these guidelines are followed due to APA formatting (making sure these formatting rules are applied in the transcription will save time later on).

General formatting
- On each page of the transcript, insert a page number on the "upper, outside" corner of each page, in 12-size Times New Roman font (in the "header").

- At the bottom of the page (in the "footer"), put information about the interview in 9-size Times New Roman font, such as "Retirement and Caregiving- Interview 1"

- Title your transcript (e.g., "Retirement and Caregiving: Interview 1")

- Use "P" for participant, and "I" for interviewer, type single spaced with a blank line between each comment.

    I: Let's begin. Can you first tell me about what happened yesterday?

    P: Sure, well the first thing I did was make an appointment with the doctor.

    I: Ok.

    P: I had to wait on the phone for 30 minutes to talk to someone, it drove me crazy. First I had to dial one number and choose from several options, oh my gosh, then I had to do that *three* more times, and then wait and wait and wait. [sigh]

Pauses
- When using … (an ellipses), put a space after it but not before it. For example:
    He never did finish that up… I think he got tired.
        rather than
    He never did finish that up…I think he got tired.

- However, I would recommend that you only use ellipses at end of sentences to indicate a "tailing off" of speaking or at the beginning of a person's statement if they are continuing from a previous thought and it might not make sense if you didn't indicate otherwise.

- Because an ellipse is used in APA format to indicate that some material has been left out, do not use an ellipse to indicate a pause. If there is a "lengthy" pause, write it as [pause]. Most brief pauses will not require the indication of a pause. Instead of typing "[pause]", using .., or …, use a comma, which is used to indicate slight pauses in speech.

Nonverbal communication
- Identify all nonverbal communication, such as pauses, laughter, crying, sighing, and so on.

- Identify nonverbal communication with brackets [ ] rather than parentheses ( ). For example:
    My father is so funny. [laughing]

- Don't interpret the nonverbal communication. For example, don't transcribe:
    My father is funny. [nervous laughing]

- Be consistent with how the same behavior is identified. For example, don't write [laughing] one time and then [laugh] the next time.

Inaudible material
- If any words are inaudible, type (inaudible) in parentheses rather than (can't make out) and put the time of the tape, if possible, in the parentheses- e.g., (inaudible- 34.15). If there are multiple files, make sure you identify the file the section comes from (e.g., some digital taping works in 5-minute segments, thus a transcript 15 minutes long will consist of 3 separate files, each 5 minutes long)

Quotations
- If someone indicates that they said something to another person, indicate this with double quotations and use proper punctuation. For example:
  > Then I said to him, "You shouldn't do that".
  >> rather than
  > Then I said to him you shouldn't do that.

- Similarly, do this for when people are indicating they were thinking something, such as:
  > I was thinking, "Do I want to do this or not?"

Words that are emphasized
- Italicize words that the respondent emphasizes in their talk (this will happen occasionally, but usually not too often). For example:
  > I really, really, *really* loved my wedding.

Confidentiality
- Always recheck that identifying information such as *all* names are removed (name of the participant, any people they refer to, towns where they live, hospitals that they visit, countries they go on holiday to, etc.) To replace the specific word that you have removed, use a pseudonym or include a blank line or a general term in parentheses (not necessary to include both a blank line and the general term though). For example:
  > I went to see _____ to see how she was doing. OR
  > I went to see Jane to see how she was doing.
  >> rather than
  > I went to see Sally to see how she was doing. (Sally being the person's real name)

  > I went to (the local hospital) to see how she was doing.
  >> rather than
  > I went to _____ (the local hospital) to see how she was doing.
  > I went to the IWK to see how she was doing. (IWK being the real name of the hospital)

- NOTE: Any time you change something from the original tape, such as replacing a name with a broader frame of reference, put that information in parentheses to indicate the change. One exception: Pseudonyms do not need to be identified with parentheses. For example:
  > He talked to Jennifer. OR
  > He talked to (his sister).
  >> rather than
  > He talked to Carol. (Carol being the person's real name) OR
  > He talked to his sister. (this suggested that the interviewee used the words "his sister", which is not correct)

- Create pseudonyms that have a different first letter than the real names. For example, if the person's real name is Elizabeth, her pseudonym should start with any letter other than "E".

Proof reading
- Transcripts always need to be reviewed! You will probably need to check through a transcript more than once.

- Identify words or phrases that previously were thought to be inaudible. Also check for errors in transcription (e.g., "can" instead of "can't", "didn't" rather than "did not", "cause" instead of "because" or vice versa [strive for accuracy in transcribing], or a real name still in the transcript and thus needing to be removed) if you are reviewing a transcript that has already been done. Listen very carefully to the tape and read the transcript carefully at the same time to locate these.

Miscellaneous

- When a person trails off on a word (doesn't finish it), or changes their thoughts part way through a sentence, type a long dash afterwards (this is called an "em dash"- note: it is not the same as a hyphen). For example:

  > To comp—to compensate for him not being there.
  >> rather than
  > To comp, to compensate for him not being there.

  > I went to—there was nobody there!
  >> rather than
  > I went to, there was nobody there!

- If a person talks in a way that is not grammatically correct, type "[sic]" immediately after the error to indicate it's actually what they said rather than an error in transcription. For example:

  > She's wrote [sic] to the government.

- Use one space after periods, not two. To check for this, go to "edit", and "replace". Press the space bar twice for "find what" and then press the space bar once for "replace with". Then click on "replace all". Do this several times to make sure you have caught all of them.

- For numbers that are nine or less write out the number (e.g., type "seven" instead of "7").

- Use a comma before the last list item for lists that include three or more items. For example:

  > The colors were red, white, and blue.
  >> rather than
  > The colors were red, white and blue.