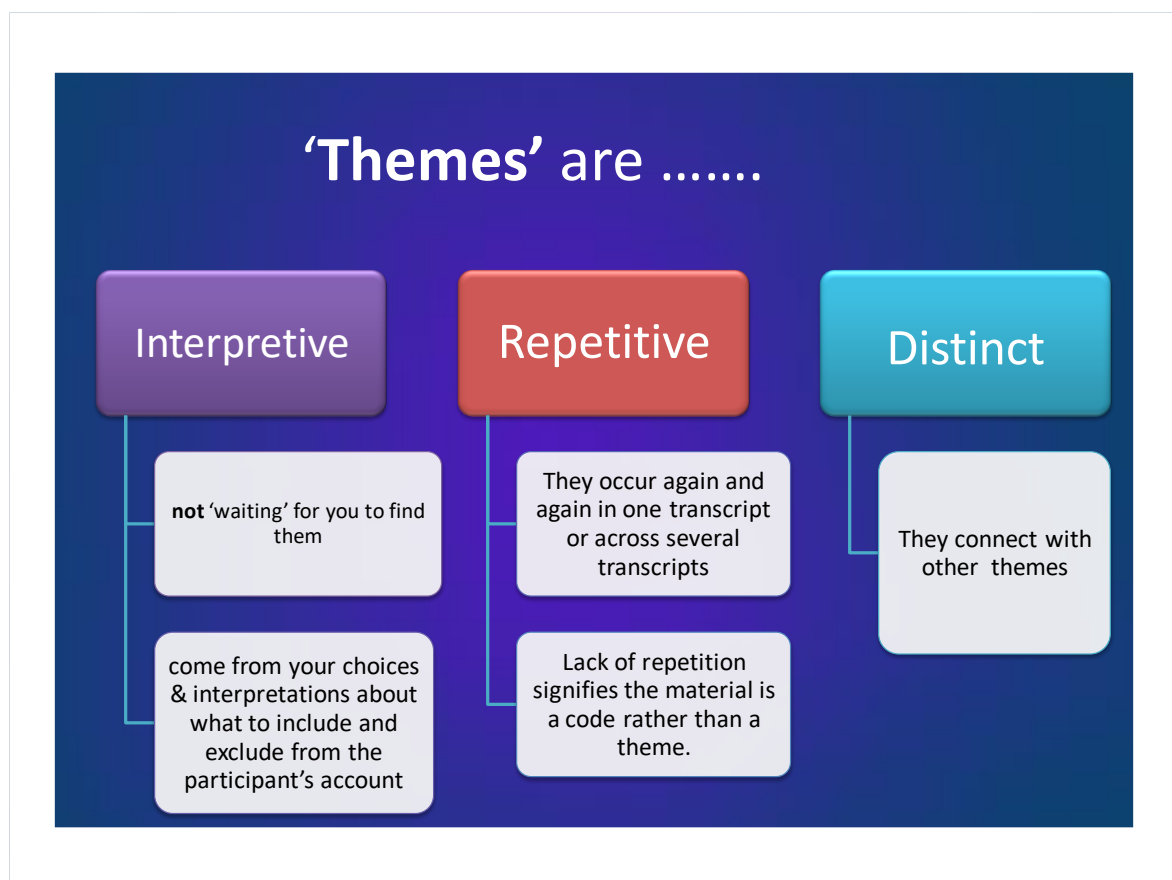


Worked example of Thematic Analysis (TA): Phase 3, searching for themes; phase 4, reviewing the themes and phase 5, defining and naming the themes.

By this point you should have worked through *phases 1 and 2* (see document on moodle) and identified several groupings of codes. Read through the entire transcript once more and repeat the earlier processes to identify anything you may have missed. You should aim to have most of the text from the interviewee coded.

If you have done this then you are ready to move onto *phases 3, 4 and 5* where you will search for, review and label your themes. A **theme** is merely a word or phrase that summarises or represents the information you have identified in your 1st and 2nd order codes. It is helpful to think of a theme as an umbrella covering the codes you have identified.



The aim of the next phase is to identify several *themes* which encompass or overarch some of the interpretive groupings you created in phase 2.

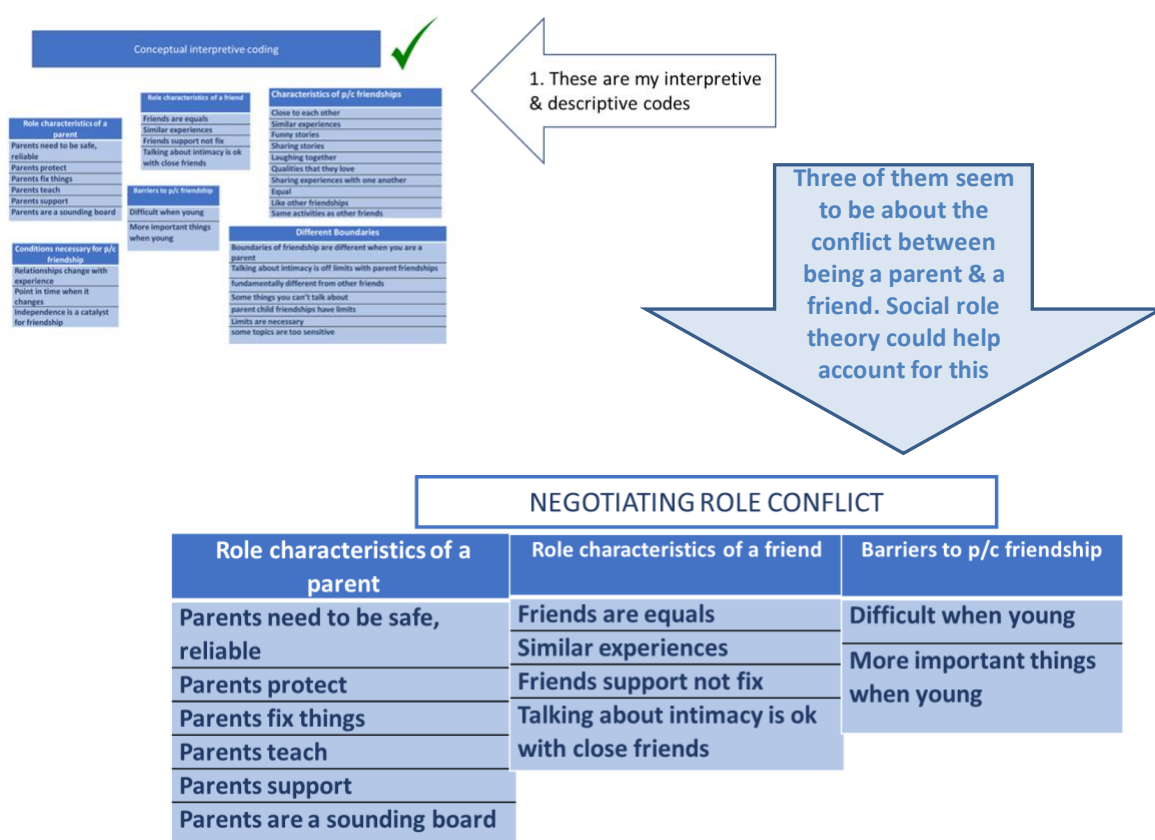
It involves collating the codes into potential themes, and gathering all the data together relevant to each potential theme.

Follow these steps:

1. **Searching for themes (phase 3):** Look at your interpretive groupings of the codes and see if any of these fit together into a theme.

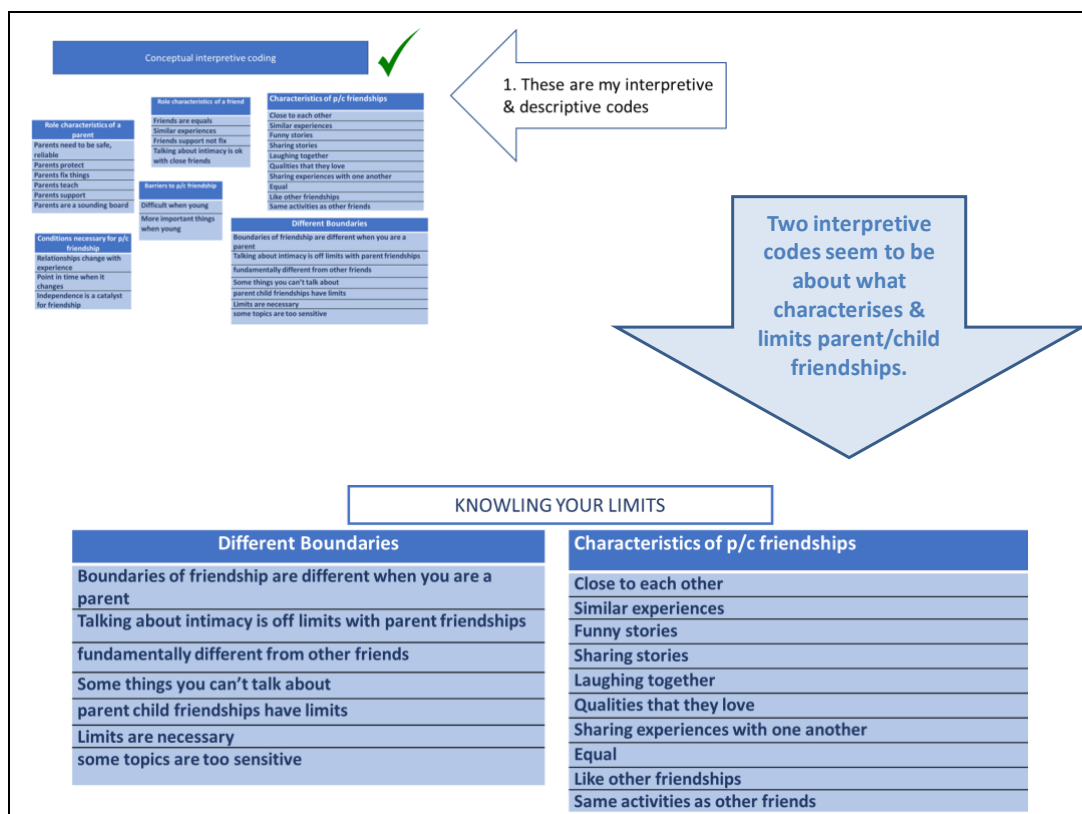
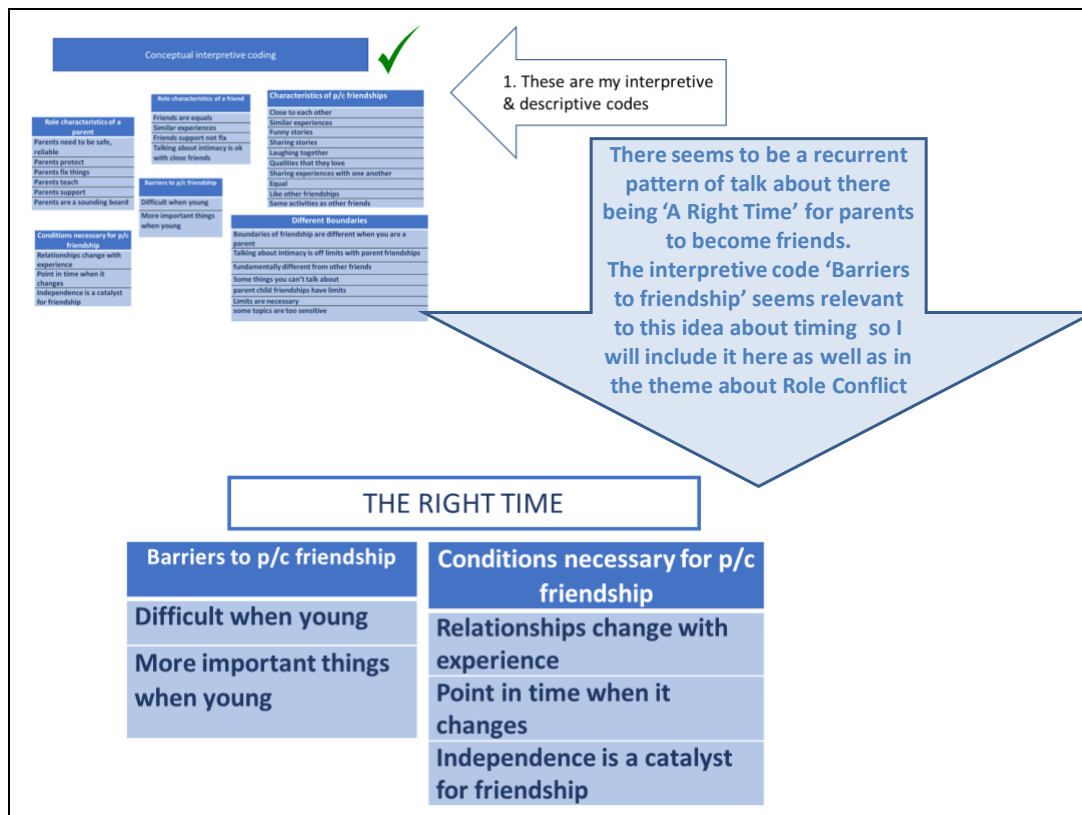
- Also draw on theory: Think about the theories or literature or findings about your topic that might relate to your groupings.
- Reviewing themes (phase 4):** Check if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. Does the theme overarch several interpretive themes? Is it distinct? Is it recurring? Does what the interviewee says in the transcript fit the theme?
- Generate a thematic 'map' of the analysis (see diagram below).
- Defining and naming themes (phase 5):** Create a title for your theme: Label your theme with a title that reflects its contents.

See the example:



- Check that your theme title reflects the recurring patterns from your analysis. Does it make sense when you look back at the story the participant(s) have told? Do you have a clear definition and name for each theme? Carry out ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme. It may take a while to label these with something you are happy with.
- Revise: If several themes could be made by grouping the interpretive codes together ask yourself – which of these is the closest to the analysis and the data?

8. Repeat steps 1-7 and continue to develop themes which encompass and overarch *all* of the interpretive groupings you made. See the examples below where all of the groupings we developed at phase 2 are organized into themes.



Students often ask: How many themes should I have?

- That depends on how big your data set is and how rich the data is, but there should be more than 1 theme.
- It's common to have between 2 and 5 overarching themes.
- If you have *fewer* themes, check to see if some of your themes are too broad and could actually be 2 themes.
- If you have *more than 5*, think about combining the groupings more and revising the title of the theme to include more of the codes.

Organising and illustrating your analysis:

Analysis involves moving beyond creating a 'LIST' of themes. It involves 'organising' the themes in a way that 'shows' how they relate to one another.

These questions can help us when we are organising our themes:

- What are our themes about?
- How do the themes relate to one another?
- How do the themes relate to the topic of the research
- How do the themes relate to the research aims or questions

It helps to illustrate our analysis visually. This is important because illustration provides the reader with:

- A visual overview of the analysis as a whole
- Demonstrates how the descriptive and interpretive codes are related
- Illustrates the relationship between the themes
- Acts as a kind of 'audit trail' of the relationship between the codes and themes

On the next pages are some examples of how you might illustrate your analysis in a visual form.

You can use tables or diagrams and illustrate the analysis in any way that suits you as long as the hierarchy of themes and codes is clearly shown.

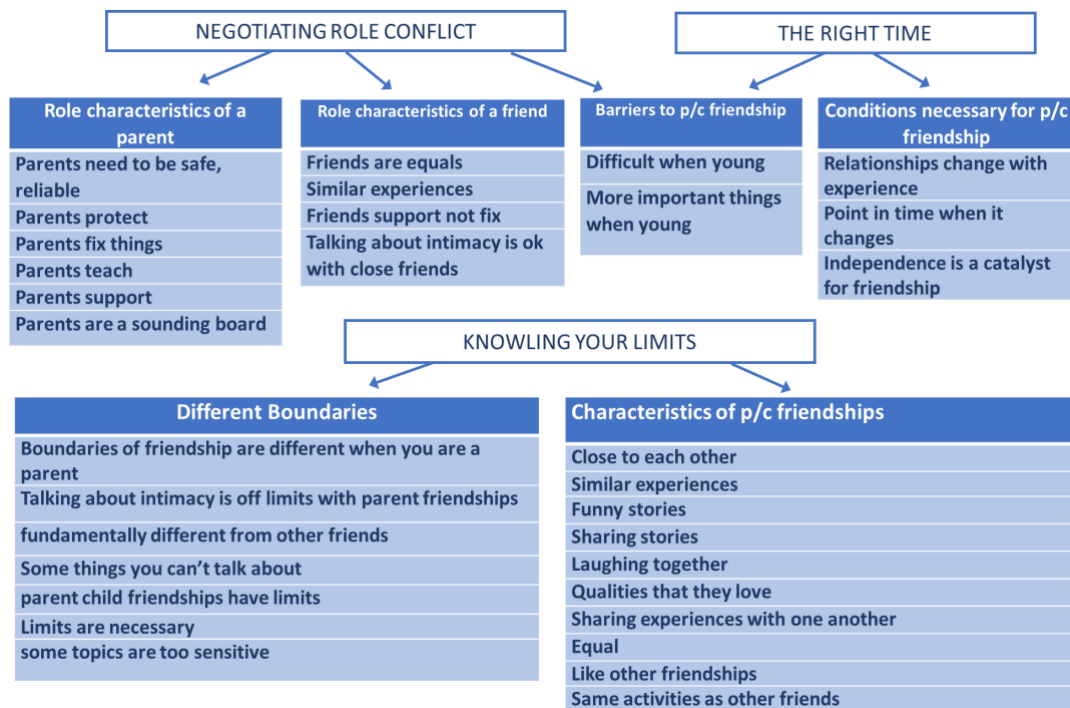
The reader needs to be able to clearly see how the codes relate to the themes.

WARNING: Please remember do NOT use any of this data or any of the codes or themes generated from this document in your own assignment. They will not be relevant.

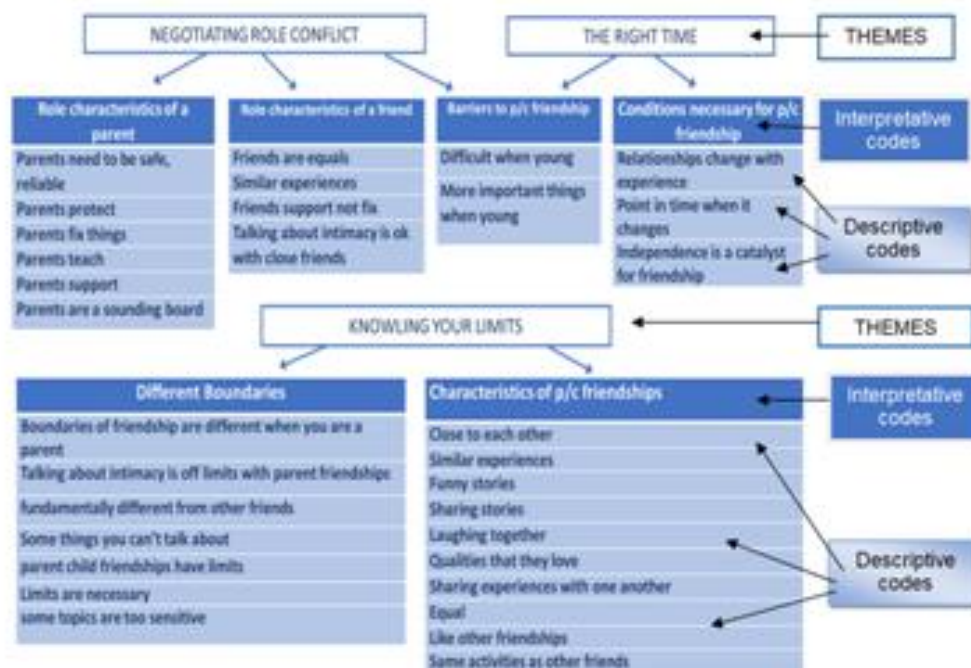
This is an example only and you must conduct your OWN analysis of the data sets provided for the assessment.

The data sets and research questions are different to those used here.

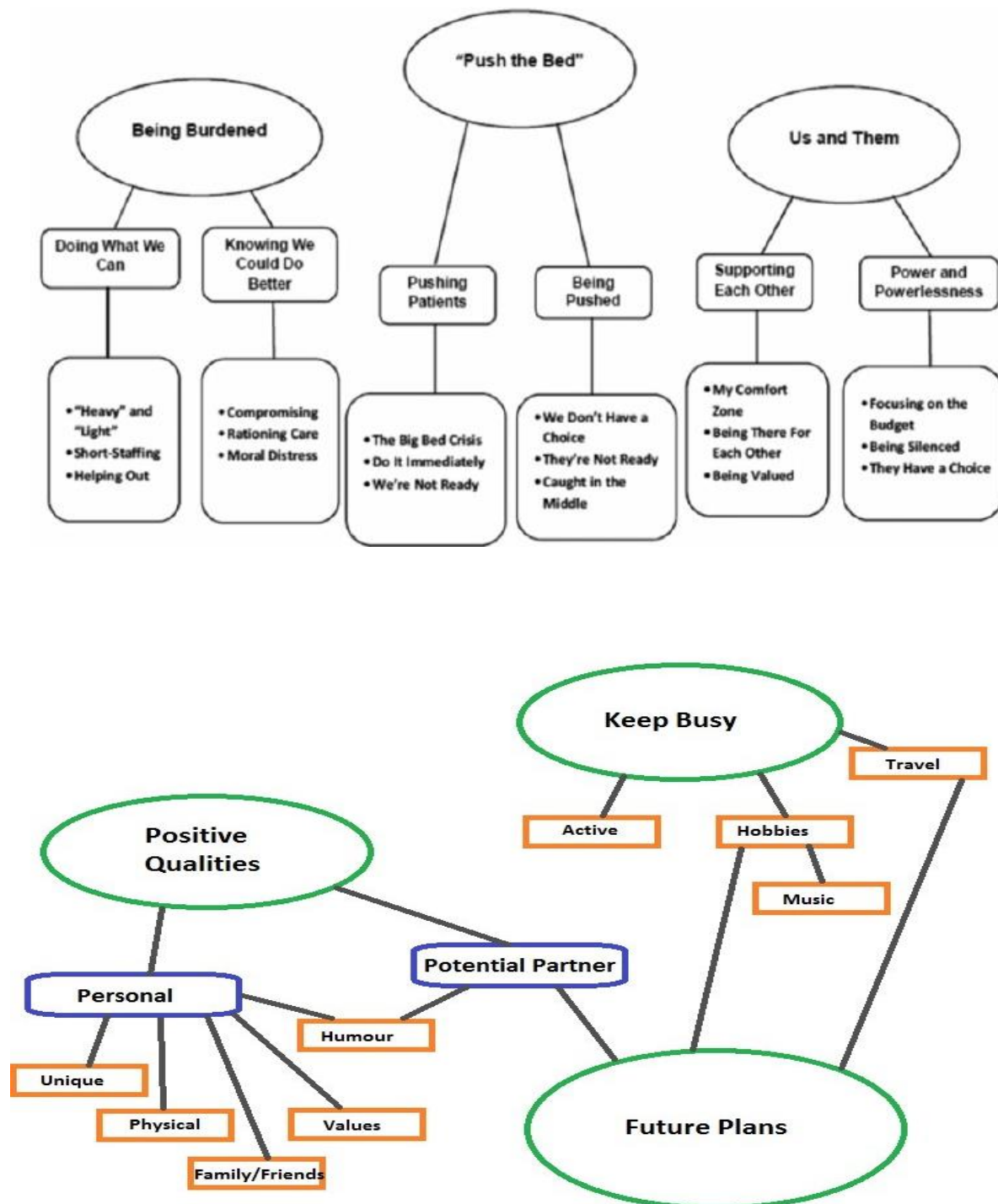
Themes arising from an interview on parent/child friendship



You can clearly see that the 1st order/ descriptive codes have lead to the 2nd order/interpretive codes and these are organised into the themes. There is no need to label these as shown on this illustration below. It should be apparent from the way it is organised.



These two examples here are not related to the data set used throughout this document, but do show the other ways in which the analysis of the data can be illustrated. The illustrations clearly show the themes and codes and how they are related to one another.



Remember that the themes provide the focus or structure for writing up the analysis and this leads to **Phase 6: Producing the report**. Guidance is given on this in unit 8.

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