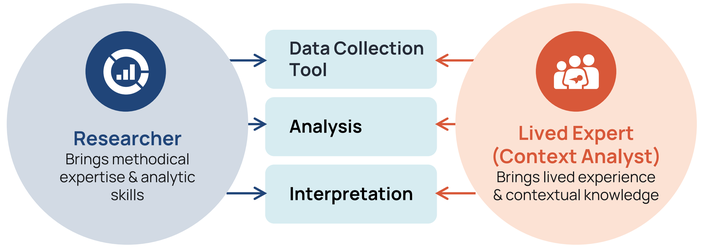
HELPLINES & HOTLINES

Introducing VERA: Validity-Embedded Rapid Analysis

Incorporating lived experience at every stage of rapid analysis, from data source to analysis and interpretation

1 What is VERA?

A new approach to analysis with **lived experience fully embedded**



2 What Does VERA Change?

Shared ownership, with **stronger, more relevant findings**

Unlike member checking after analysis or PRA at data collection, VERA embeds lived experts (or *context analysts*), throughout the research process, including tool design, data collection, and analysis, with defined interpretive authority at each stage.

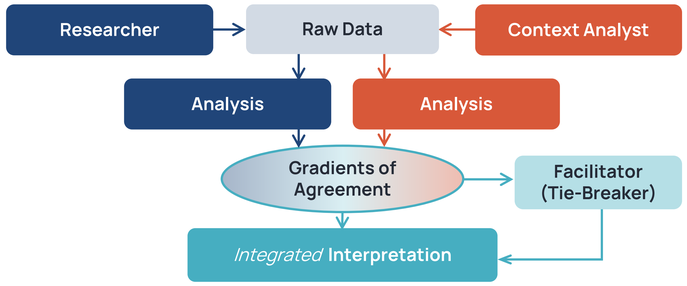
- **Member Checking** — After analysis
- **PRA** — During data collection
- **VERA** — Throughout — with authority

3 How Does It Work?

Lived experience integrated across 61 activities via the **context analyst role**

- **Key informant interviews** (n=32) — Context analysts reviewed the researcher's finished analysis.
- **Listening sessions** (n=20) — Context analysts attended live and analyzed in parallel.
- **Site visits** (n=9) — Context analysts led lived-expert panels; teams reached consensus live.

Different interpretations come together through **reconciliation**

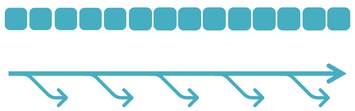


4 Results

Through reconciliation, context analyst input **altered interpretation**

14 times

5 of those produced substantive analytic shifts



5 Rigor

Built on established trustworthiness criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Credibility: Context analyst, facilitator, and researcher interpret independently, then reconcile through peer debriefing.

Transferability: Four discovery activities document what changed and why, supporting judgments about fit in other settings.

Dependability: A consistent process is traced and reproducible across all 61 activities.

Confirmability: Conclusions trace to documented interpretation and resolution.

Audit Trail: Discrepancy Logs → Interpretation Updates → Consensus Notes.

VERA also aligns with PARRQA (Kowalski et al., 2024), a consensus-based framework for rigor in rapid qualitative analysis.

6 Limitations

- Not yet independently evaluated against an external standard.
- Observer variability across the three core roles is not quantified.
- Fidelity is not formally tracked across all 61 activities.
- Team members are closely embedded in the phenomenon under study, which aids interpretation but introduces risk of suppressing politically difficult findings.

7 Next Steps

- Secure independent external evaluation.
- Quantify observer variability across roles.
- Track fidelity, feasibility, and acceptability.
- Test the protocol beyond the Quality Improvement Center on Helplines and Hotlines.

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Developed within the Quality Improvement Center on Helplines and Hotlines

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