Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2019): A Step-by-Step Guide

Thematic Analysis is a widely-used method for analyzing qualitative data. Developed and refined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, their 2019 work elaborates on this method to provide a clear, flexible approach to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data.

What is Thematic Analysis?

It is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes in data. It goes beyond simply summarizing data, helping researchers interpret various aspects of a research topic.

Why use Braun and Clarke's approach?

- It is flexible and can be applied across many theoretical frameworks.
- Well-structured steps make it accessible for beginners.
- Encourages a reflective and thorough analysis.

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019)

1. **Familiarisation with the data:** Read and re-read the data to immerse yourself, noting initial ideas.
2. **Generating initial codes:** Systematically code interesting features across the dataset.
3. **Searching for themes:** Group different codes into potential themes, collecting all relevant data.
4. **Reviewing themes:** Check if themes work in relation to coded extracts and entire dataset; refine them.
5. **Defining and naming themes:** Further refine themes, define the essence of each, and decide on clear names.
6. **Producing the report:** Final analysis, selecting vivid examples, and relating back to research questions and literature.

Key Points to Remember

- Thematic Analysis is not tied to any particular theoretical framework, allowing flexibility.
- The process is recursive, not strictly linear — you may move back and forth between steps.
- It prioritizes transparency and rigor in qualitative data coding and theme development.

In summary, Braun and Clarke's 2019 Thematic Analysis is an accessible and flexible method to systematically analyze qualitative data by carefully identifying and interpreting thematic patterns.