



RIVA Highlights

- 🎃 Jo Ann celebrated her RIVA-versary earlier this month! Thank you for all you do for us at RIVA.
- 🎃 At the very end of September, RIVA had our quarterly Mental Health Day for staff to take a day to themselves.
- 🎃 Amber's youngest got his driver's license. She's looking forward to her "free time." As well, her oldest is doing an internship and as he puts it, "he gets to play with the rats!"
- 🎃 Brittany attended the virtual Quirk's conference on "Data Quality" at the end of September.

QRCA Mentorship Program

Amber is participating in QRCA's 2025-2026 Mentorship Program. The program matches a mentor and mentee for one year. If you would like more information on this, please visit <https://www.qrca.org/site/join-qrca> where you can join QRCA and then explore the mentee program.

RIVA's AI Survey

We've been asked about the results from our AI survey and had originally planned to include the findings in this newsletter. However, we've had such good insights that we plan to send them in a separate update later this month.

Upcoming Classes

RIVA 201: Fundamentals of Moderating
In-Person
December 1-4 – *a few seats open*

Virtual
December 8-11 – *a few seats open*

RIVA 241V: Qualitative Analysis & Reporting
October 27-30 – *Waitlist only*

RIVA 275: Beyond Probes – Using Interventions & Projective Techniques to Get Below Top-of-Mind Answers
November 17-18 – *one seat open*

RIVA 618V: Moderating Video Chats*
November 12-13 – *a few seats open*

RIVA 614V: Moderating Text Chats*
December 15-16 – *a few seats open*

*Bundle & save 10% when you register for two or more of the online (RIVA 610, RIVA 614, and/or RIVA 618) moderating classes!

Learn more about our classes and check our calendar for courses coming in 2026 by visiting our [website](#).

Taking Requests – 2026 Blog & Newsletter Topics

We're still planning our blog and newsletter topics for 2026 and want to hear from you!

What are you dying to know about QLMR?

If you have any topic recommendations, please email brittany@rivainc.com with your requests.

Taking Requests:



Lloyd J. Harris Scholarship Fund

If you're new to qualitative research and haven't had formal moderator training, the Lloyd J. Harris Scholarship might be a good fit for you. Check out the qualifications and apply [here](#).

Recent Blogs

In case you've missed them, check out our most recent blog posts:

[“Ethnography Research Tips”](#)

[“Respondents are More Capable Than We Think”](#)

We publish blogs every other Friday – our next post goes live this Friday!

We want to wish all who will be celebrating at the end of the month a Happy & Safe Halloween!

También, Feliz Día de Los Muertos.



When vs. When Not to Call on Respondents

Written by Brittany Mohammed

What we know about Respondents is that they really like being called by their name. It helps things feel personal and more conversational and less like a robotic survey. But, not all Respondents feel comfortable being called on to answer questions. It can make them feel put on the spot and uncomfortable.

Should you call on Respondents by name to answer your questions?

The answer isn't simple. Truly, it depends. Calling on someone during the Rapport & Reconnaissance period isn't advised. You're still creating connections, encouraging involvement, and building trust. In this stage, you should be focused on demonstrating that it is a safe place to participate and share POBAs (perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes). This makes Respondents more likely to contribute to the discussion.

When to avoid calling on someone?

- 🍊 Shy Respondents randomly – those who aren't very talkative from the start. When you call on someone directly, you put them on the spot. Shier Respondents will find this uncomfortable.
- 🍊 Actively avoiding eye contact – if someone is actively avoiding eye contact with you, it's a good indication they aren't ready or willing to answer that question.
- 🍊 As the first person to read what they wrote after private writing/a private exercise – ask for volunteers to share their thoughts, versus calling on someone.

When is it a good time to call on someone?

- 🍊 They've given you an indication they want to talk – this could be eye contact, a raised finger, opening their mouth as to speak, raising a hand, etc.
- 🍊 As part of a group – ask to hear from three people and include your shy Respondent in the set, typically as the second or third and **make sure you follow through.**
- 🍊 After two to three other people have shared – it's okay to ask if the quieter Respondent (by name) is willing to share what they wrote down.

What can you do instead of calling on someone directly?

1. Ask to hear from the side of the room that the quiet Respondent is sitting on. This could look like “I want to hear from the back of the room, what are your thoughts on XYZ or ... or _____?”
2. Ask to hear from people you haven't heard from yet.
3. Complete a private writing activity – even if they don't share, you'll have their thoughts written on paper.
4. Do a small group exercise – have the group divide into pairs to discuss a question, then have Respondents report on what the other person said.

Sometimes, people need an invitation to join the group, and sometimes, they don't have anything to add. A good rule of thumb is to attempt three times to get that person involved. If they don't bite, then let them be. As long as they aren't disruptive, allow them to remain in the session. If they have something to add, they will. It's also a good idea to take a look at yourself: have you done enough to make them feel comfortable contributing?

Brittany Mohammed
Qualitative Training & Research Specialist

RIVA Market Research & Training Institute
1803 Research Blvd., Ste 401
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: (301) 770-6456 x 108

www.rivainc.com
<https://rivainc.com/blog/>
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Find out more about Naomi's book at: <https://rivainc.com/our-book/>