**Mission 3 - Needfinding**

**Mindset**

“To create meaningful innovations, you need to know your users and care about their lives.”

**General instructions**

You have now dipped into the context, competitors, and similar products on the market. Naturally, you will continue to learn as you progress with the project. However, at this point, you have built a solid foundation. Your current challenge comprehension is good enough to start forming some hypotheses. You are now ready to go out, meet users and map processes!

This week is dedicated to starting the needfinding phase. Needfinding is the task to do to understand people in the context of your challenge. It involves understanding how they do things and why, their physical and emotional needs, how they think and what is meaningful to them.

The most important aspect of needfinding is that you search without knowing exactly what you are looking for. You seek insights driven by the empathy you feel for users and, more generally, the project’s stakeholders.

TIP: Document everything and identify the most important aspects for your research during the process and not just at the end. The risk is forgetting important details.

* **Gain empathy for users:** Discover emotions that drive behaviours.
* **Look for insights:** Discover surprises or differences between what people say they do and what they actually do. Try to understand observations that surprise you. Start by exploring why people do what they do.

To gain a better comprehension of the challenge, collect all the evidence and communalities identified during the interviews and create your “personas”.

**Tools:**

**Activity 1: Identify correct questions for your research.**

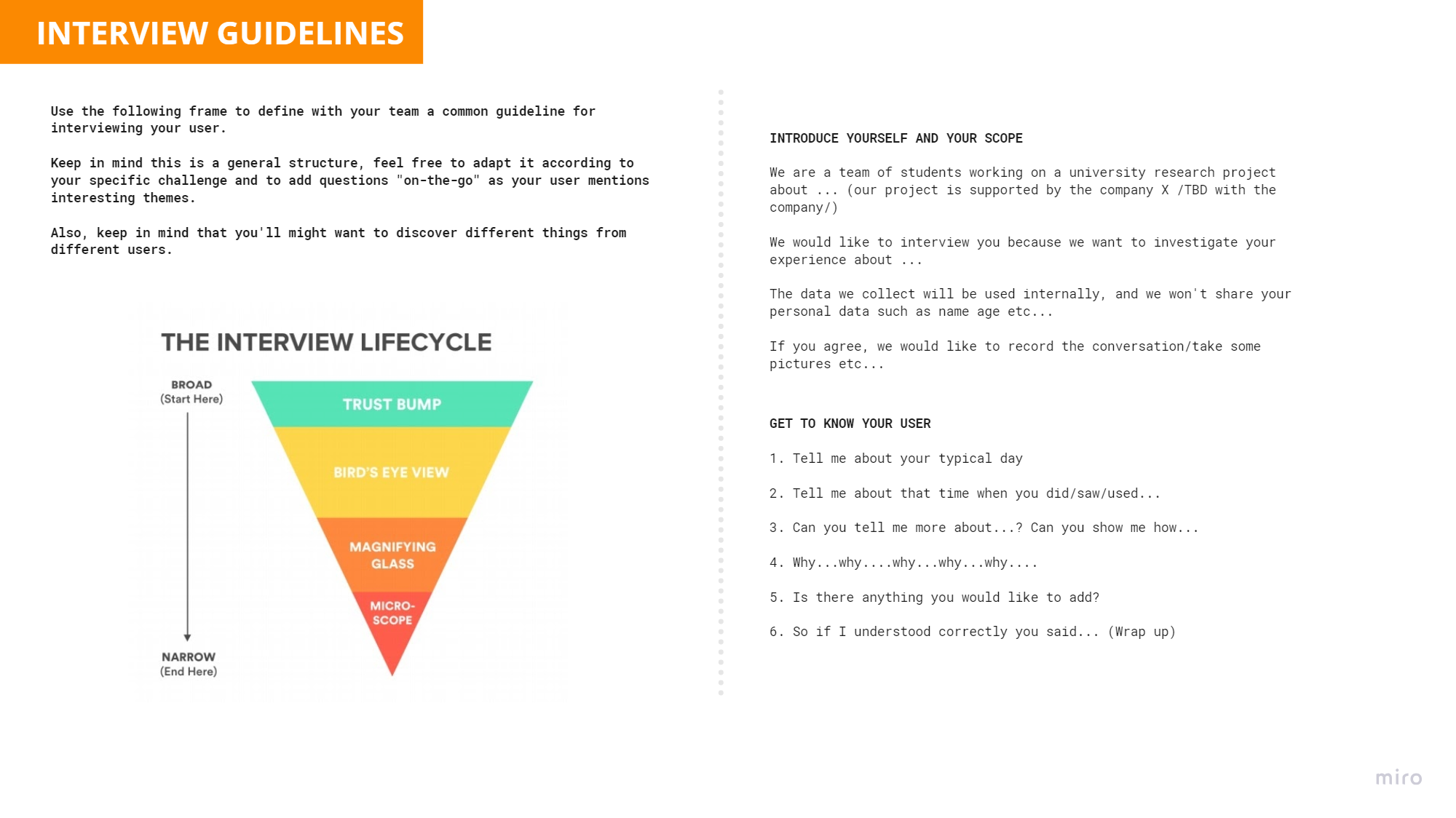
Before starting any research, decide your objectives. Determine some questions that the research should answer. Start by writing down all the questions, from brief ones to those that emerged during the meeting.

Group the questions into categories. Some questions may fall into more than one category!

Maintain the right balance between general and deep questions, such as "What do people think about that service?" and more specific, pragmatic questions, such as "Where is the right place for that service?" or "When do people expect to access that service?"  
These questions can focus on topics like the use of objects in the environment, how environmental conditions affect people's behaviour, how people within the environment interact with each other, or how different types of customers might be classified. Searching for answers to these questions will guide you in data collection.

TIP: Use “how/why/what/where/when/who" to write your research questions.

It doesn’t make sense to spend time rediscovering information that is already known. Study publications, expert interviews, and complete your benchmarking to improve your understanding of the topic. Use what you’ve found to formulate interesting questions that relate the organisation to its context. Go on only when secondary research is complete.



**Activity 2: Observations and Interviews**

Identify some potential users and environments according to what has been learned so far.

TIP: Identify all types of users and make a list of people who might potentially be interesting, then develop strategies for reaching out to them. Also, consider your informal network of friends, family, and colleagues for your interviews. Some of the best insights come from casual conversations.

Prepare and conduct interviews and observations using the toolkit. Doing all types of interviews is not necessary, decide which ones are best suited to the challenge within the team.

TIP: start with the easiest and quickest interviews. You will continue interviews and mapping over the coming weeks.

TIP: Ask for permission to record interviewees and reassure that is for internal research purposes only and will not be published anywhere. Moreover, video and audio recordings of users expressing their needs are very convincing and powerful and are excellent storytelling tools for your final presentation.

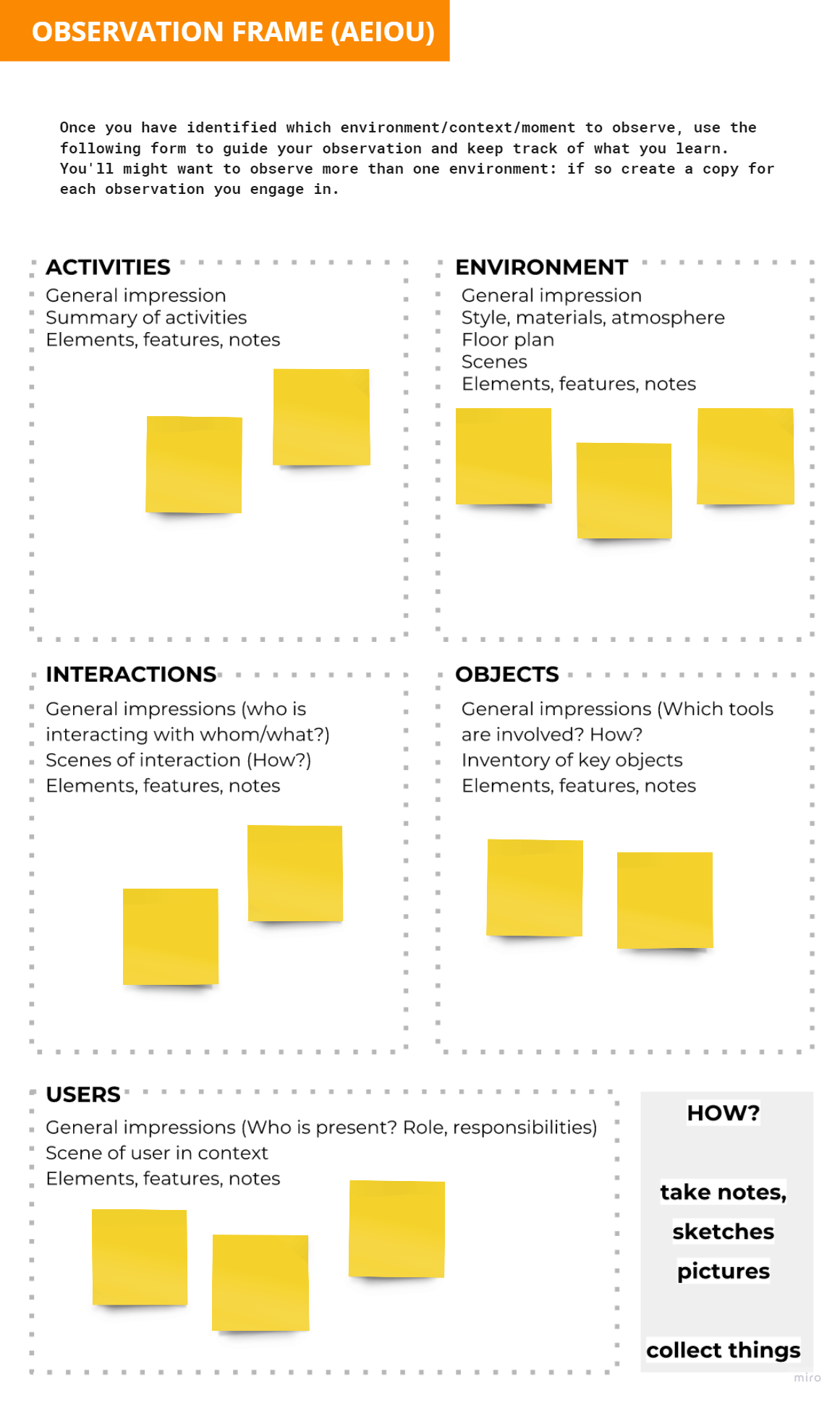
NOTE: It is appropriate to specify in the invitation email or orally the following text

*“The information we collect during the interviews will be considered strictly confidential and kept in absolute secrecy. In particular, the research will be conducted in compliance with the privacy code articles that govern scientific purposes (EU Regulation 2016/679). This regulation ensures that the processing of personal data is carried out respecting the rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual, as well as the dignity of the data subject, with particular reference to privacy, personal identity, and the right to the protection of personal data. The information reported outside the research group will be aggregated, so it will not be possible to trace responses back to any single individual. These aggregated data are intended for identifying design principles for products, services, or systems that may constitute innovation within the research context."*

Capture important quotes: Short “quotes” can be an excellent way to convey the essence of a conversation with a user.

TIP: Write the quotes on sticky notes. Is there a relationship between different quotes?

If you go into the field, use the AIEOU framework to support your observations.

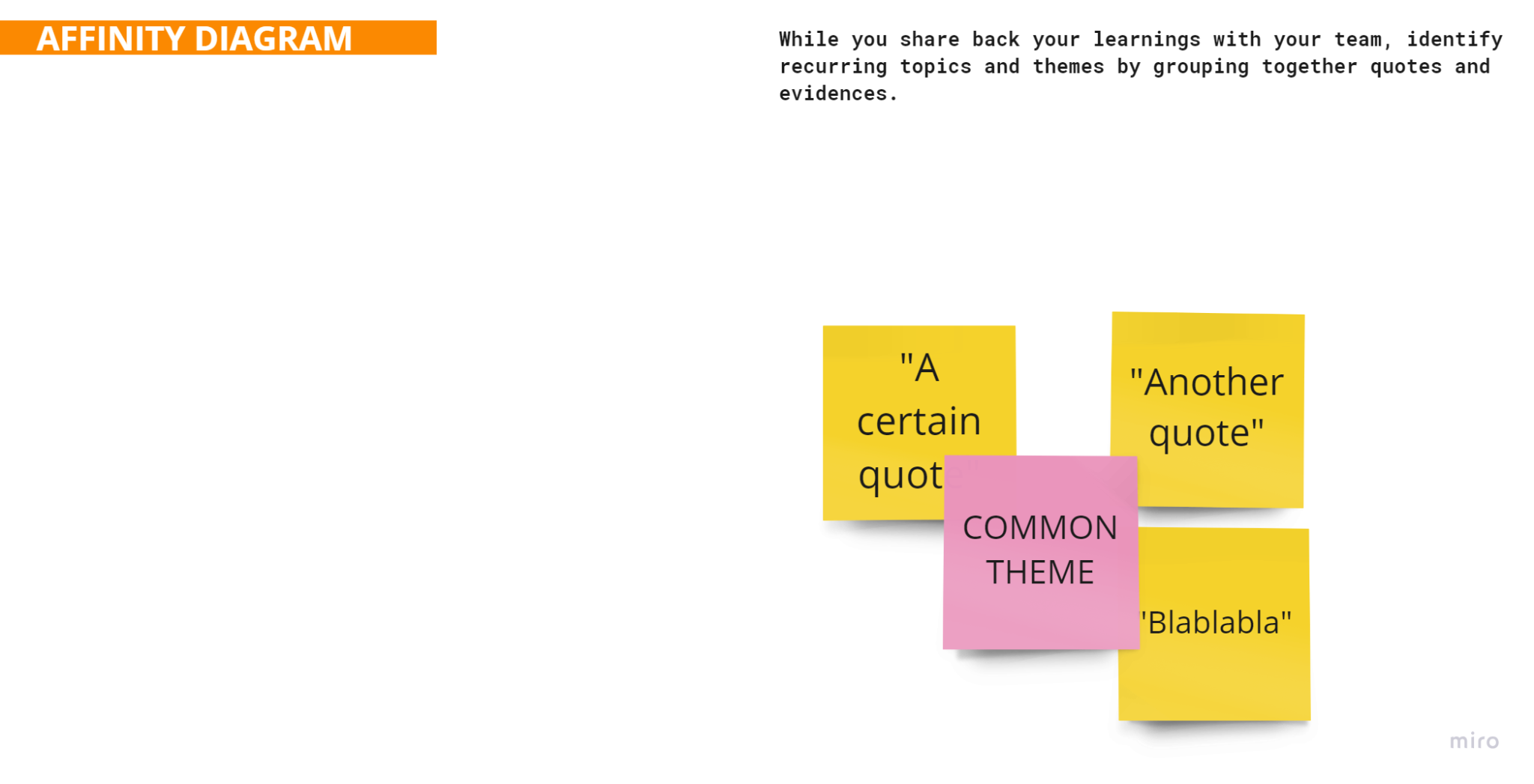
After each interview, take your time to record progress, summarise and evidence interesting quotes (the so-called NUGGETS) and compile the Interview Card.

****

Extract needs from the interviews, translate the information collected into statements that describe people's needs. While some information will inevitably remain in your minds, most of it should be paraphrased into written statements about needs.

**Activity 3: Compile the Affinity diagram**

Needs can be emotional, physical, or practical, explicit or implicit. Interpret, rephrase, and group the individual needs statements. Are there connections? Do patterns emerge? Report them by grouping them together in an Affinity Diagram.

****

**Activity 4: Identify highlights**

After conducting several interviews, you and your team-mates come together to share results and insights. Note specific stories and quotes, rather than general descriptions, that convey your insights.

**Activity 5: Create Personas**

Once you have identified the types of users on which you want to focus your opportunities, you can reorganise the research you've conducted using the Personas tool. This tool is useful for defining a user who will guide you through the design process; it should be a vivid representation drawn from your research, not just an aggregation of psychographic data. Describe their stories, behaviours, habits, needs, and frustrations related to your research question. Feel free to modify and enhance the proposed framework as you prefer. When reading a persona, it should be possible to empathise directly with the users through your research

