Flowchart for Conducting Content Analysis: How to Tell the Whole Story

Once upon a time...

I. Research Questions
What is being investigated?
How will the qualitative findings be used?
How is the data going to be used in this project?

II. Know Your Data
Read and re-read your data.
Check your data quality.
Map your research questions and protocol components.

III. Extracting Themes/Developing Codes
Pull out key pieces of data to create codes.
Begin with protocol.
ID themes from transcripts.

IV. Operationalize Themes/Codes
As a team agree on defining codes.
Develop a codebook with all themes—these are your variables.
Think about “levels” and “degrees” of themes.

V. Code the Data
As a team, you should all agree on the themes for coding.
Decide if you will test for coding reliability—discuss codes with low reliability.
Periodically check in with team members to discuss key findings.

VI a. Summarize & Analyze the Data
Codes with most counts.
Least cited codes.
Codes that turn up in specific instances.

VI b. Summarize & Analyze the Data
What are the key findings?
How do they respond to your research questions?
What are the trends within and between groups?

VIII. Tell Your Story
Interpreting and reporting:
How do you want to present your data? Who is your audience?
Report, brief, presentation, organize by themes and trends?

Throughout your reading and coding, make notes about your thoughts and observation of your data.

Put notable quotes aside throughout your coding.

The End