

## SAMPLE FRAMEWORK TO HELP EMPATHIZE

► **Experiences follow universal patterns, they have a beginning, a middle, and an end, like a narrative arc. They can be described in simple terms such as “before,” “during,” and “after.” Using these temporal prompts, you can organize observations and research findings around a person’s experience.**

Recreating their path helps you understand their actions, avoidances, frustrations, and choices. The visualization of that path is commonly referred to as an experience model (also experience map, customer journey, user journey, patient journey, etc.).

Experience models can be used to document existing activities, or to prototype new ones. Using these models, you can map the impact of a change on an established system by projecting how shifts in one area affect subsequent actions down the timeline. Experience models can describe simple interactions (How does the shopping cart work on a particular mobile application?) or complex events (What exactly happens when a patient visits an emergency room?). At any scale, the key is to document all possible choices and outcomes as the experience progresses through completion.

To create a research analysis framework that will help you empathize with your user, start by outlining simple time-related categories such as “beginning,” “middle,” and “end” or “before,” “during,” and “after.” More complex experiences may require further customization; however, the general tenets remain the same: You are trying to map the experience from the active person’s perspective as they move through a sequence of events. If creative teams identify in advance that experience mapping will be a part of their research plan, they can use pre-established categories to organize field notes and observations. This keeps the researchers organized, thinking of the participant at each interaction, and streamlines future analysis.

► *Event maps can be used by designers to determine the sequence of user behavior in an interactive environment, or even predict navigation of a three-dimensional space.*

*This detail from a patient journey map by The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs outlines the experience of a VA site visit.*

# VA PATIENT EXPERIENCE JOURNEY



The VA Patient Experience Journey Map represents a common set of moments Veterans experience before, during, and after a health care appointment visit. While this map does not represent what happens to every Veteran during every appointment, it is a good starting point to define the ideal patient experience at VA and recognize high impact improvement opportunities. Veterans also identified five key moments that matter during which VA can build trust with Veterans or lose them entirely. VA can and should make sure these moments are done right.

