**Recode a scale variable into categories in SPSS**

In this video we’ll see how we can recode a scale variable into an ordinal variable with groups. So I’m going to use the variable age, I have the participants’ actual ages so there’s no groupings here, and what I want to do is create age groups. So I’m going to go to the transform menu. We’re going to choose this option here- ‘recode into different variables.’ The ‘recode into same variables’ will overwrite your existing data- we do not want to do that, we just want to create a new variable with groups.

Okay, I want to take the variable I want to recode, which is age, and move it to my variables box and go and give it a new name. I’m going to call it Age Groups, and remember you can’t have any spaces or special characters. We can also add a label. I’m going to call it Age Group, and we can add spaces with a label. Go ahead and click ‘change’, and then ‘old and new values.’ The old values box is where we tell SPSS what the current coding is. And in the new value box it’s where we tell SPSS what we want the coding to be. So we have an option here to start with range lowest through value. Now I can use this because I don’t have any missing codes that are less than my lowest age. So I want my fist age group to be 25 and under. I have no missing value codes less than 25, so I can go ahead and use this range. If I did, I would have to use this range option where I specify where I say ages on through 25. Okay, I don’t, so I’m going to go ahead and use this one. So I type in 25, so that means 25 and under and that’s my first age group. Click ‘add’. Now my second group is a range here, so I need to choose this option and it’s going to be ages 26-35. This is Group Two. I’m going to continue this on for the rest of my age groups. So I have ages 36- 45, that’s Group Three. Click on ‘add’, and then I’ve got 46 through 55, that’s Group Four. And now I want to have a group that’s 56 and over, really or over 55. Again, because I don’t have any missing values greater than 55, I can go ahead and use this range through highest option. If you do, like if you download data from a web source such as the Office of National Statistics, you want to be very careful because often, the missing value codes are higher, such as 99.999, things like that so be very careful. So I’m gonna go ahead and say value through highest, so 56 and over. And that’s going to be my last age group- Group Five. Now if I had missing values, so user missing which are coded or if I had System Missing which means empty cells that I want to code, I could also do this now, so if I had any empty data, I could tell SPSS what I want the missing value code to be. I don’t have any missing data so I’m going to go ahead and click ‘continue’ and then ‘okay.’

Now here’s my original variable which we still have, and if we scroll all the way to the right, we can see we have a new variable called Age Groups. We’re going to go ahead and define this in the variable view. So I want to change the decimal places to zero. And I want to give some value labels. This is where I put in the groups that I just created, so 25 and under was my first group, 26-35 was my second one, 36-45, and my last group which is 56 and over. Remember to hit ‘add’ after each time. Go ahead and click ‘okay’, and I don’t have any missing values, but I do need to define the level of measurement, so this variable because it was scale, so there is an order to it, is now ordinal, because it has been grouped. If we go back and have a look at our data view, click on this icon up here if it’s not clicked on already, it’s the value labels, we can see our new age group categories, and if I drag it over here next to age so then I can get a better view, I can compare to make sure my data has been defined correctly.

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