

Checklist for Interviews

With people with lived experience for Resource Development

This checklist is designed to assist organisations when conducting and recording lived experience interviews. People with lived experience often share very personal details about their lives with organisations and contribute substantially to many and varied projects. It is vital that their wellbeing is paramount throughout this process. When interviewing people with lived experience (participants), it is important to consider the following points:

To arrange before the interview

- Always provide a drink, even if only water.
- Provide a meal, or morning or afternoon tea to show you have considered their needs.
- Ensure participants are able to travel to and from the venue easily and ask them if they need any assistance. This may include providing reimbursement for petrol or public transport or providing taxi vouchers for them and waiting with them for the taxi after the interview.
- Ensure participants understand the purpose of the interview and how their input will be used, including confidentiality issues. Ensure they have ample opportunity to ask questions.
- Be mindful of the time. Allow enough time so the interview is not rushed. Advise participants how long you expect the interview will take, especially if it is likely to be over one hour.
- Consider if you need an interpreter or Auslan Interpreter and arrange if necessary.

To do during the interview

- Let participants know where the toilet is and have an opportunity to use it.
- Let participants know they can use their phone as their families may need to contact them.
- Make sure participants are offered adequate opportunity to have a break *at least* every hour.
- It is likely you will have an interview guide, but remember this is only a guide. It is important that you have a conversation with the interviewee and this may mean you are not able to stick strictly to your prepared questions. You will still be able to get the information you need, but perhaps in a different order or format than you had planned. Be flexible and responsive to participants and consider their needs before the needs of the project.
- Often when you are interviewing someone for the first time they will want to tell you their story and not necessarily stick to the prescribed questions. This is an important process for participants and you will need to carefully balance respectfully hearing their story with gathering the information you require. A good tip for this is to listen to their story and ask them to elaborate on the parts that are relevant to your project.
- Participants will come from a range of backgrounds and have had different experiences and some may have been traumatic. Get to know participants as individuals and respect their ideas and opinions.
- Ensure participants understand they can withdraw from the interview at any time – they simply need to say clearly that they would like the interview to stop.
- Ensure participants understand they can say ‘no’ if they don’t wish to answer certain questions.
- It’s vital to demonstrate empathy. If participants talk about something distressing, acknowledge this and ask if they’re ok. It may take a bit of time to discuss, but their wellbeing is paramount.

- Use language that is easily understandable by everyone; don't isolate participants by using jargon or acronyms. Don't assume people will always know what you are talking about, stop and check with them if you are at all unsure if they have understood what you are asking.
- There is a need for cultural awareness and an acceptance of cultural difference when working with Aboriginal participants and participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). No one knows everything about other cultures; treat participants as individuals and if you are unsure about something ask them.
- People who require interpreters need to feel you value their feedback like anyone else. Make sure you look and talk directly to the participant and not the interpreter. Also break questions down so the interpreter can more easily interpret what you are saying.
- Ensure you take remuneration forms with you and pay participants for their time (which may include preparation time) as well as and travel, parking, childcare or other costs incurred.
- Ensure you take an evaluation form and stamped return address envelope with you. Give this to the participant at the end so they can complete and return it at their convenience. Inform them it is important they let us know if they have any tips to help us do better next time.

To do after the interview

- Follow up on the evening after the interview, or a day or two after when participants have had time to reflect – ask them what they prefer.
- Provide feedback to participants about the outcome of their involvement; take the time to inform participants how their input was used and about the result.
- Remember the importance of trying to do the right thing, learning from your mistakes and trying to do it better next time.

Extra tips for audio and video recorded interviews

- Ask participants to complete a consent form and explain to them clearly how their audio or video footage or transcripts will be used. Make sure participants have an opportunity to include any special conditions.
- If you are interviewing children or young people under 18 years of age their parent or guardian needs to complete the consent form and be aware of the purpose of the interview.
- Discuss confidentiality issues with participants and be aware that although they may be happy to share certain information now, at another time in their lives they may not feel the same way (this can especially relate to young participants). Take time to discuss these issues with participants to enable them to make the right decision for them and their families.
- Ask participants to remember that although they may feel comfortable telling you something, you are recording what they say so they need to remember their audience could be very broad.
- Remind participants that if they say something that on reflection they don't want to be used, they should say so and it can be cut out.
- Ask participants to turn their phone on silent, but make sure participants know they can use their phone if necessary as their families may need to contact them.
- Some participants may become anxious if asked to repeat an action more than once for video. Be mindful if this is affecting participants and try to limit repetitions of filming if possible.
- Ask participants if they would like to view the final video footage before it is produced.