

## Interviewing Tips and Techniques

### The Do's of interviewing

1. Conduct the interview in person. It is more effective and personal than any other method.
2. Be prompt.
3. Have everything ready.
4. Introduce yourself and explain why you are conducting research on the topic.
5. Be polite.
6. Ask the interviewer for permission to record the interview – a recording can help fill in anything missed through note-taking.
7. Ask the interviewee to sign consent and release forms so the findings can be shared publicly.
8. Provide enough time for the person to answer the question. Sometimes pauses and silence are just an opportunity for the interviewee to remember something important about the topic.
9. Listen carefully to the answers as some of them may suggest follow-up questions or require clarification of the information provided.
10. Take jot notes while listening and underline key words that may help ask follow-up questions.
11. End the interview by thanking the person interviewed.

### Ask the 5W questions:

- When did it happen?
- To whom did it happen? (Who)
- Where did it happen?
- What happened?
- Why did it happen?

Open Response Questions require more than one-word answers. These questions probe deeper and allow the exploration of specific areas or seek additional information. The intent of this type of questioning is to stimulate imaginative and creative thought, or investigate cause and effect relationships. The interviewer needs to be prepared for the fact that there may not be right or definitely correct answers to these questions. Teachers have a tendency to call these essay questions and they are of the following type:

- Why did our family leave Ireland's Eye?
- Describe some of the cases you would treat on a hospital ship?
- What did your parents think about Confederation?
- What do you remember about St. John's during World War II?

Closed Questions require answers that are often within a very finite range of acceptable accuracy and usually require one or two word answers. When asking this type of question, researchers have to follow up with an open question like those in the brackets below.

- When did the Great Fire occur? (How did the Great Fire begin?)
- Did you vote for Joey Smallwood? (Why did you vote for Joey?)
- Do you remember the railroad? (What was it like to ride the Newfie Bullet?)
- Who found the nickel in Voisey's Bay? (Tell me about those first prospectors.)

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## Interview Checklist

- I practiced beforehand with my equipment.
- I brought everything I needed, including extra batteries and tapes.
- I arrived on time.
- I introduced myself and explained the project.
- I tested the equipment before and after the interview to make sure it was recording.
- I began the recording by stating my name, the interviewee's name, the location, and the date.
- I kept my questions focused on the interviewee rather than on my own opinions.
- I did not ask any leading questions that would make my interviewee either agree or disagree with me.
- I asked mostly open questions.
- I used follow-up questions.
- I used effective eye contact and open body language - leaning forward, nodding, and smiling - to indicate that I understood.
- I did not challenge or correct any information that I thought was not accurate.
- I allowed my interviewee moments of silence to facilitate thinking.
- I had my interviewee fill out the consent and release forms.
- I gave the consent and release forms to my teacher.
- I kept my interview to fewer than 90 minutes.
- I politely stopped the interview when I needed to turn over the tape or replace a battery.
- I gave a copy of my taped interview to my interviewee.
- I treated my interviewee with respect at all times.
- I wrote a thank-you note to my interviewee after the interview

## Interview Release Form

### INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM

Project name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Tape number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person(s) interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

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