

12-2-2022

Trauma Informed Interviewing: Interviewing with Empathy and Protecting Oral History Narrators

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TRAUMA INFORMED INTERVIEWING

*Interviewing with
empathy and
protecting oral
history narrators*

TRAUMA

- Physical
- Emotional
- Any event or action that is perceived as threat to life (personally or to another person).

EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Spiritual life
- Emotional health
 - Protecting privacy
 - Giving a sense of control
- Social well-being
 - Sharing their story

BE FLEXIBLE!

EVERYONE'S
RESPONSE TO
TRAUMA IS
DIFFERENT!



PRIVACY
RISK
ASSESSMENT
PRE-INTERVIEW

WHAT ARE THE
CONSEQUENCES?

- What kind of trauma are we dealing with?
- Who is at risk of harm if privacy is lost?
 - Narrator
 - Friends & relatives
 - Organizations
 - University & interviewer
- Who do we need to protect the information from?
 - Friends & relatives
 - Employers
 - Governments
 - Enforcement agencies

PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION
& PERSONAL INFORMATION

PII (sensitive information) is information that identifies you and is protected by laws and regulations

- Social security number
- Passport ID

Personal information is information about you that aids in identifying you

- Address
- Place of employment

SENSITIVE (PII) INFORMATION

- Race & ethnicity
- Genetic information
- Health information
- Citizenship status
- Criminal records
- Religious beliefs
- Political party
- Sexual orientation
- Union memberships
- Biometric data

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Birthdate
- Address, Phone number, Email
- Place of employment (including work and break times that are recorded)
- Credit information
- Photographs
- Mobile devices (location information)
- Signature
- IP address
- Voice

THE GDPR

[HTTPS://WWW.GDPREU.ORG/](https://www.gdpreu.org/)

- Processing must be **lawful, fair** and transparent to the EU citizens as data subjects.
- Data can only be processed for legitimate reasons **clearly spelt out to the data subject.**
- **Data minimisation** must be in practice.
- **Data accuracy** and timeliness must be adhered to.
- Storage limitation and purpose limitation on information in that it can only be **kept for the least possible time.** (allow narrator control)
- **All processing of data and data flows must ensure security, confidentiality, and integrity.**
- The data controller is accountable for compliance with GDPR protection privacy laws.

DISSEMINATION & RELEASE FORMS

If your institution has non-flexible rights and dissemination policies, consider not pursuing trauma related oral histories.

- Clearly spell out dissemination policies
 - Who will have access?
 - Video, audio, transcripts
 - IP restrictions, downloadable?
- Release Form
 - The narrator has final say on content
 - They can change their mind
 - Negotiate dissemination
 - Be flexible
- Preservation: are there copies?

GDPR NON- COMPLIANCE

- Less Severe Fines of \$18.4 million or 4% of worldwide revenue (whichever is greater).
- 60+/year
- Over 1 billion in fines in 2021
- Aug. 2021 Amazon fined \$877 million
 - Google, Google Ireland
 - Facebook
 - WhatsApp
 - British Airways
 - H&M

CASE STUDY

BOSTON COLLEGE
HISTORY ARCHIVE
PROJECT ON
THE CONFLICT IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

- Hughes and Price gave interviews with the caveat that the tapes could not be made available until after their deaths
- The interviews implicated the Sinn Féin party leader, Gerry Adams in the killing of Jean McConville
- Brendan Hughes died and parts of his interviews became public
- Belfast Police spent 2 years in a legal battle for the tapes and won
- Dolours Price died of a drug overdose in 2013.
- Gerry Adams was arrested in 2014 (as was Ivor Bell)

LESSONS LEARNED

WHAT ROLE DO
HISTORIANS &
ARCHIVISTS PLAY IN
JUSTICE?

- A police force from a foreign country (or other interested parties) CAN gain access even if not published.
- The mere fact that the tapes existed, published or not, put these people at risk.
- Is it worth the risk?