

DOCUMENTING THE CONVERSATION

We've created some guidance to help you collect additional information during the conversation.

Depending on how well you know the interviewee, you may not need this.

Use it as you see fit.



TIMELINE

Sometimes it helps to write down or draw out the timeline of events.
This is a template you can use to document major family events during your conversation.

The image shows a vertical timeline template. A central vertical line is marked with five colored dots: blue, orange, teal, orange, and orange from top to bottom. To the left of the line are three rounded rectangular boxes with blue, teal, and blue borders respectively. To the right of the line are four rounded rectangular boxes with orange borders. The boxes are intended for documenting major family events.

RECORDING THE CONVERSATION

With your interviewees' permission, we encourage you to record the conversation as a momento.

The easiest and most accessible way to record the interview is using your cell phone, as most cell phones have built in voice recording apps that will provide sufficient recording quality. If you require or prefer to have higher quality recordings, handheld recorders and recording equipment is always a great choice.



Below are some quick tips on how to set up your phone as your recorder.

1. Turn your phone to Airplane Mode

So your audio won't be interrupted by calls or texts: Go to Settings>Airplane Mode.

2. Locate your phone's microphone

For example, on the iPhone, the grill on the left is the microphone. The one on the right is a speaker used to play music.

3. Check your levels

Press record. Make sure it is recording and you can see the meter registering sounds. Move your device closer to the interviewee until you are at the correct volume levels.

4. Place phone about four-seven inches from interviewee's mouth

If it's further away, you will get diminished sound quality. Make microphone distance adjustments and check your audio levels throughout the recording.

5. When you are finished, make sure you have a saved audio file

After you hit stop, don't shut off your phone and walk away. Look at the file. Make sure it is recorded and saved. Play some of it back so you can hear it. Then name it so you can find it later.

6. Transfer audio files from your phone to your computer

Some audio apps allow you to edit on your phone. This is great if you want to upload something on the go, but it can be difficult to make clean edits with your thumbs. For best results, transfer your files to your computer and edit it there.

Quick Tip: If you plan to record, before starting, think about anything that may prevent you or your interviewee from focusing on each other or may cause a distraction. If possible, move to a quiet room away from distractions.



ALTERNATE RECORDING TECHNIQUES

If you are unable to record in person with your interviewee (perhaps they live across the country or are not accessible), it is possible to record your interview.

Recording virtually on smartphone or desktop: If you and the interviewee are using the kit remotely, Skype is one option that allows you to make free audio and video calls either by phone or using the built-in recording on your computer. Other free tools to check out are Zoom and Google Voice. Note that the free versions will have limited capabilities.



REMEMBER TO HAVE EMPATHY AND JUST LISTEN

Discussing someone's refugee experience can bring up emotional and traumatic memories. While it goes without saying, respect and be aware of the implications and boundaries of your line of questioning. Give some space and quiet moments if needed. Don't rush the story and let the conversation flow naturally to the pace that is most comfortable for the person.

BOUNDARIES

Respecting boundaries means understanding that the person may choose to withhold information. You will need to be prepared to honor any requests and be cognizant of sensitive subjects.

Meeting locations should be comfortable for both parties. Try to select an environment free from distractions. For example, public spaces may not be the right atmosphere to have an open dialogue.

EMOTIONS

It is not unusual for you or the other person to be emotionally moved by the stories and memories. If appropriate, temporarily stop and allow your time to regain composure. Perhaps even a change of subject. It's okay to ask if he or she is comfortable continuing from where you left off.