



Young Researcher Network



## Session 3: Research interviewing skills (Stage 5 of YRN Toolkit)



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The National Youth Agency (NYA) is one of three Education Support organisations to receive funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, under the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The Local Government Association (LG Association) has oversight of the NYA's work supported by this funding. The annual funding supports key areas of the NYA's work and promotes the role of local government and its partners in youth policy.



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Time	Programme activities	Resources
5 minutes	<p><b>Icebreaker/energizer</b></p> <p>Spend five minutes on an icebreaker, such as Movie Mania. Ask participants to think of a film that is in some way related to what they'd most like to do or be, e.g. 'Casino Royale' if they'd like to be a spy. Then ask the participants, one by one, to act out the film in the style of charades without speaking, asking the rest of the participants to guess the name of the film. If it isn't obvious, ask the participants why they've chosen that film!</p>	
5 minutes	<p><b>Introduction and aims</b></p> <p>Explain the aims of this session (and write them on a piece of flipchart paper if desired) are for participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To understand when it is appropriate to use interviews to collect data for a research project</li> <li>● To enable participants to prepare for and conduct interviews for their own research project</li> </ul> <p><b>Interviewing for research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain that researchers often use interviews as a way to collect some of their data. It allows researchers to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of others, in just the same way that journalists use interviews to find out information for news stories.</li> <li>● Remind participants of the previous training session. Say that interviews are most often used to collect qualitative, rather than quantitative, data.</li> <li>● Stress that although interviews are a very useful way of collecting data, they should be used in conjunction with other ways of data collection to best support your findings. See Stage 5 in the YRN Toolkit for more information on this. You might also like to talk briefly about focus groups as an alternative way of getting qualitative data.</li> </ul>	Flipchart paper, marker pen

Time	Programme activities	Resources
10 minutes	<p><b>Preparing for the interviews – why?</b></p> <p>Ask the group for ideas about why it is important to prepare for a research interview. Depending on their answers, you might want to say that it is important to prepare to ensure you get the information you want from an interview effectively.</p> <p>As a group, read through the ‘Preparing for a research interview’ handout. Ask if the group if they think there’s anything else they think would be helpful to do in preparing for a research interview. Write down any extra ideas on a piece of flipchart paper, and stick it up on a wall so that participants can refer to it during the next activity.</p>	Copies of ‘Preparing for a research interview’ handout, flipchart paper, marker pens
30 minutes	<p><b>Activity: Practising interviewing for research</b></p> <p>Divide the group into pairs, and ask each pair to decide who is Person A, and who is Person B. Explain that the purpose of the activity is to practise interviewing for research skills by doing a role play. Give all the As the ‘Scenario One’ sheet, and all the Bs the ‘Scenario Two’ sheet. Say that everyone has fifteen minutes to prepare their questions, and then five minutes to conduct their interview. Remind the group to refer to the handout for help in preparing for their interview. You might like to point out that not all of the questions and steps will be relevant here, since some of the decisions (e.g. who is being interviewed and for how long) have already been made.</p> <p>Have the As go first, and just before they do, give the Bs the card explaining who they are and how they should act.</p> <p>Then ask the Bs to conduct their interviews, giving the As their briefing card for the scenario just before.</p>	Research question cards, cut up from Activity Sheet for Session 3: Conducting a Research Interview (one set for each group)

Time	Programme activities	Resources
10 minutes	<p><b>Plenary and conclusion</b></p> <p>Hold an informal plenary discussion, perhaps dividing the discussion into Scenario One and then Scenario Two. With each, start by asking the interviewers how they felt the interview went, and what they would do differently next time. Then ask those being interviewed for their feedback and suggestions.</p> <p>At the end of the session, you might also like to ask the group to write down on post-it notes what they will take away from the session and act on when preparing for and conducting their own interviews. You can then stick the post-it notes on some flipchart paper, and keep it for when the group is planning its own interviews.</p>	Flipchart paper, post-it notes, pens
	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>When it comes for the group to prepare for interviews for their own research project, refer them back to the handout and to Stage 5 of the YRN toolkit to help them. You could hold a practice session for members of the group to practise their interview questions on each other.</p>	

## HANDOUT: Preparing for a research interview

- 1) Gather as much information as you can on the subject of the interview (you should have done this already – see Stage 2 of the YRN Toolkit)
- 2) Decide what information/data you would like to get from interviews
- 3) Who will you need to interview to get this data? How many interviews do you want to conduct?
- 4) What questions will you need to ask to get the data you want? Think about whether you want to use open or closed questions, or a combination of the two
- 5) When and where will you conduct the interviews? How long will you need to conduct the interview? When deciding this, remember to think about the people you are interviewing as well as your research needs – i.e. some groups may not want to spend too long in an interview; or if you plan to interview students during their lunch break, remember that you will be constrained by this.
- 6) Practise! Not only will you gain confidence for conducting your own interviews, but you will get a rough idea about how long it will take to ask all the questions you want to. You may have to modify your list of questions or how long you want the interview to be as a result.

## ACTIVITY SHEET FOR SESSION 3: CONDUCTING A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

### *Scenario One*

#### **For Person A (conducting the interview):**

For your research project, you are investigating how young people are portrayed in the local media. Through analysis of local television news and radio broadcasts, and local newspapers, you have discovered that two thirds of news items concerning young people portray them in a negative light, with the remainder split evenly between positive and neutral coverage. You have arranged to interview the editor of the local paper as part of your project. You are aiming to find out why he thinks the majority of news coverage about young people in your local area is negative, and what can be done about it.

### *Scenario One*

#### **For Person B (being interviewed):**

You are the editor of your local newspaper, and have agreed to be interviewed by a young researcher looking into how young people are portrayed in the local media.

### *Scenario Two*

#### **For Person B (conducting the interview):**

You are part of a group researching young people's attitudes to alcohol in your local area. You are hoping to find out how much young people in your area know about the effects of and dangers of alcohol, and whether or not they perceive under-age drinking to be a problem in your area (and, if so, what can be done about it). You have arranged to interview a local fifteen year-old girl about her views.

### *Scenario Two*

#### **For Person A (being interviewed):**

You are a fifteen year-old girl, and have agreed to be interviewed by a young researcher who is investigating young people's attitudes to alcohol in your local area.



## About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

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