

2.1) Using Oral History and Reminiscence to explore Sectarianism

Introduction

Oral history and reminiscence techniques are fantastic way to explore sectarianism. Whether your group chooses to implement an extensive oral history programme or utilises a small selection of the techniques available, exploring the history of sectarianism can really help to add richness to your group's discussion of the topic.

It is also a really great way to engage people who would normally be put off exploring what is often perceived a sensitive issue.

By having an overarching focus on the history of your local community rather than sectarianism, your group can also be encouraged to take part. The topic of sectarianism can then be introduced more gradually, allowing your participants to engage with the topic at their own pace.

Through using this approach you can also choose to introduce different themes in order to give a wider exploration of the topic. This could include: gender, football and religion to name a few.

Depending on the amount of time and resources you have to invest in implementing an oral history and reminiscence skills programme, it is also useful to see what other organisations you may be able to work in partnership with.

By drawing on the expertise and skills of partnering organisations, resources can be shared, helping to preserve the amount of time required to deliver your programme. It also has the added bonus of making your programme more varied and potentially that bit more exciting!

Don't forget it is not only outside agencies that can help you in delivering your programme. Make sure to have a think about what else your organisation offers and if there is anyone available who could facilitate some of the work.

Getting started

What resources you need and the number of things you need to consider, will depend on the size of your programme, how much you want to make use of oral history and reminiscence techniques and the level of knowledge/experience your group has in exploring the topic from an historical perspective.

Generally speaking however, the following list of items should be enough to get most projects up and running:

1. SPACE – first things first, you need a workable space for you group to meet.

Pay particular attention to any disabilities/ additional needs your group may have. Overall though, the space should be big enough for your group to comfortably engage in all your activities. The room should also be well ventilated but still warm enough for your participants to feel comfortable.

2. FLIP CHART/ PENS – This is a staple of any group work environment; make sure you have plenty flip chart and pens to record any comments from your group.
3. CAMERA – Essential for capturing the work of you group in action. A camera is also useful for taking photos of flip charts that your group may have produced. Remember to seek permission from your participants first before taking any pictures!

4. DIGITAL RECORDER – This can be a useful for tool for capturing audio of your group. Listening back to recorded sessions is also a really useful way of evaluating your sessions.

It is also important to have the following forms prepared before running your group. Examples of the following forms can also be found in section [6.2\) Example evaluation forms](#)

1. SESSION PLAN – For each session you deliver a well thought out session plan will be the first step to a successful programme.
2. PROJECT FLYER/ INFORMATION SHEET – In order to promote your project, you should design a flyer and develop an information sheet explaining what your programme will involve.
3. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – In addition to your flyer and general information sheet, it is also important to provide your participants with direct information. This should be in a suitable format and one that clearly explains what the project is about and what is expected of them as participants.
4. PARTICIPANT RELEASE FORM – This is vital for ensuring your participants have given consent to taking part. The form can also cover you for taking photos/video and how you plan to use any evidence captured.
5. ATTENDANCE SHEET – You will need this to record who attends each session.

6. **EVALUATION FORM** – This is integral to how to evaluate each session and will be essential for recording any evidence you capture. Depending on the group you are working with you may want to use more creative ways of evaluating, for example if you are working with young people. For more examples of creative ways to evaluate please see section **6.1) Evaluating your anti-sectarianism project**

Running the sessions

Example programme – *Leith anti-sectarianism Project*

Now that you know the basics of the things to consider when implementing oral history and reminiscence techniques, please check out section **2.2** To **2.8** for some example sessions from the 12-week oral history programme delivered by the Leith anti-sectarianism Project.

Included are session plans for each session and links to useful resources. Please feel free to incorporate into your work any materials that are mentioned.