

New York Memory Project



NY Memory Project

FABnyc (www.fabnyc.org) is organizing the NY Memory Project. FABnyc is a community arts and culture organization working in the Lower East Side.

NY Memory Project

- New Yorkers share memories and stories
- Topics may include home, childhood, family, work, friends, food
- Story collection and recording can be done by phone
- All participants receive a digital audio copy of their interview
- If permission is given, stories will be shared online and submitted to the NYC Public Library Oral History collection and Story Corps Archive



NY Memory Project - Why

We are all coping with increased isolation.

Connection and conversation can be meaningful -- particularly for those with limited online access.

NY Memory Project features

- Fun, creative, two-person activity during a time of social distancing
- Supports connection and wellness
- Can be done by phone
- Creates a record of memories and stories that can be shared with others



A note on recording and sharing

The NY Memory Project looks forward to building a shared public archive, but we understand that's not for everybody.

You may decide that you like the idea of the project, but do not want to create recordings, or that you want to keep any recordings you make private.

That's fine.

In that case, please use the resources here to create what works for you.



Interviewing: Best Practices

- Conduct the interview call in a quiet location
- Call on time & agree to length of call or ending time
- Remind your interviewee of the purpose of the interview / project
- When you begin recording, tape a lead-in that includes your name, name of person being interviewed, date, and consent questions and answers
- Ask open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and clarification questions
- Be a listener
- Do not push, stay sensitive to interviewee signals, be willing to move on
- At conclusion, thank them for their time and participation.
- If interviews will continue, set a date and time for the next one.



Interviewing tips

Anticipate that each interview will likely last 30 and 45 minutes.

Consider building comfort of interviewee by

- Sharing topic and/or sample question in advance
- Sharing something about yourself / your background at beginning of interview
- Begin interview with light-hearted warm-up question

Invite story-sharing through phrases such as

“Tell me about...” “Did you ever...” “How did you” “Can you describe...”



Stress and Wellness

This is a stressful time. It's possible that feelings may come up, or that interviewees may wish to share experiences with the current situation.

Be a good listener. Be flexible about where the interview goes.

Do not offer medical, psychological, or crisis counseling advice. Recommend that interviewees contact a medical professional with any health questions.

Share information or provide referral info on qualified providers if interviewee is interested.

Note: Several hotlines are listed on page 13.



Preparing for the interview

- Practice with recording app beforehand
- List reminders to secure basic info such as date, participant name, and permissions to record and/or share questions
- Have list of topic / questions for interview
- Be ready to take notes during interview
- If doing a follow up interview, review notes and refresh your memory on earlier material
- Have social service referral numbers handy



Interview Questions

The NY Memory Project has created a list of suggested questions

[NY Memory Project Suggested Questions](#)

Other resources for questions include

[STORY CORPS](#)

[UCLA Center for Oral History Research](#)



Recording phone calls: the REV Call Recorder app

Free Recording App: REV Call Recorder (for IOS) ([LINK](#))

The app records calls as a three way call. Basic steps are...

- 1) Call Rev Call Recorder
- 2) Call person to be interviewed
- 3) When ready to start recording, merge calls

See detailed instructions in the app or [HERE](#).

Suggestions for other recording apps and Android listed in our instructions.



Calls: Recording Protocols

If participant is willing to be recorded for the project

1. Start recording app before call; during call 'merge' to begin recording
2. Record your name, date, and ask interviewee to share their name
3. Let interviewee know you are going to formally request their permission to record the interview
4. Record the questions and answers to the following:
 - a. Do you agree to be interviewed as part of the New York Memory Project?
 - b. Do you agree to the recording of this interview?
 - c. Do you agree that this interview may be shared publicly?



Calls: Recording Notes

- Recording only begins when you merge the two calls.
- Assure participants that they will have another chance at the end of the interview process to review any decision on making the interview public.
- If you have the option to do an interview on a different platform than REV, your digital audio or video recording can still be submitted to the NY Memory Project. This includes Zoom recordings.



Social Service Referrals

Resources continue to change and be updated. Here are some basics:

- **Calling 311** is the simplest way to access up to date info on NYC programs.

Other services available by phone

- Emergency Food Hotline: 866-888-8777
- Mental Health Support / NYC Well: 888-692-9355
- Mutual Aid Groups: 212-979-0611
- NYS Dept of Health COVID-19 Hotline: 888-364-3065



Saving Notes and Recordings

- The REV app will automatically save your recording as an mp3 file.
- We recommend you upload the recording and save it to your own Google Drive or Dropbox files.
- To be consistent with the NY Memory Project, please name your mp3 file as follows:

[Interviewee Full Name]_[MMDDYY]_[Interviewer Full Name].mp3

For example, if I, Maria Clara, am interviewing John Underhill on May 5th, 2020 the file format would be: **John Underhill_050520_Maria Clara.mp3**



Submitting to NY Memory Project

Please submit interviews to the NY Memory Project [HERE](#)

Only submit recordings which have permission to be publicly shared.

Media files will be submitted as a link. Please make sure all links are set to “Anyone with a link can view.”



Plans for Sharing Recordings / Project Completion

We will submit all NY Memory Project interview recordings to

- New York City Public Library's Community Oral History Project.
- Story Corps Archive (preserved by the Library of Congress.)

In addition, we plan to

- Feature rotating collection of recordings on the FABnyc website
- Collect photos from participants to post with recordings
- Create and share transcripts from recordings

At this time, there is no hard ending date. We hope to continue the NY Memory Project as long as social distancing is in place.

Additional Resources

[Deep Listening Strategies](#) - adapted by The Creative Center at University Settlement

[Core Principles for Oral Histories](#) - Oral History Association



Questions or feedback?

Email Patrick at patrick@fabnyc.org or Imani at imani@fabnyc.org





Thanks!

Looking forward to partnering with you on the NY Memory Project

www.fabnyc.org

