# Collecting stories and interviewing

Example script points when doing one-on-one interviews

* ***Take time to build a connection before collecting a story***

Introduce yourself and thank the participant(s) for coming. If you feel comfortable doing so, make some casual conversation to participant at ease and build rapport.

* ***Explain the purpose of collecting the story(ies) and the details of use***

The background section to the interview is aimed at explaining the purpose of the interview. Let them know a little about who you are, tell them about the interview process and remind them that their consent is voluntary and they can withdraw consent if they no longer feel comfortable. Explain why, how and where the stories will be used. Check that the interviewee is happy for their ‘story’ to be used in this way.

* ***Ethics and informed consent***

Attention must be paid to the ethics of collecting stories from individuals. During an interview, explain:

* The steps you will take keep personal details confidential (i.e. their ‘name’ will not be attached to the information or made public unless they ask for this to happen). However, let them know, even if their name is removed, it may be possible for someone to guess their identity from the information they provide.
* Outline any identified benefits and risks.
* If you wish to use a tape recorder, make sure that they agree to this. Tell them you will turn it off at any time should they request.
* Ask if they would like access to the final report or findings from the evaluation.
* ***Start broad then focus***
1. Ask a few lead open ended questions that are broad about the topic of interest. This just gives them time to reflect. Ask them about their story of change.
* ***Probe do not lead.***
1. Try not to comment or ask leading questions when a participant is telling their story. It is fine to use encouraging probes such as – “*can you give me some more details about how this happened*” or “*can you give me an example of that*”, or “*how did it all begin*?” However if you do have some very specific questions that you want to ask them then wait until the story telling is complete.
* ***Give the participant time and space***
1. Let the participant go at their own pace. Some people warm up immediately; others take time. If you need more detail you can use phrases like “Tell me more about…” or “You mentioned xx, can you give me an example of this?”. If the topic is sensitive be mindful and considerate of this.
* ***Listen***
1. Your role as the interviewer is to suspend your opinion and listen to the interviewee. Acknowledge the time they are spending with you by really listening and making space for their story.
* ***Go back over key points to confirm for accuracy***
1. Reflect back to the interviewee the key points you have heard about their story. Give them the option to modify or change anything, to help it more fully express the essence of what they said.
* ***Thank them***
1. After the interview has finished thank the participant, and tell them what you have learned as a result of the interview. Ask if you can follow up if you have any questions or want to confirm ongoing consent. Let them know you will check the written story with them before finalising.