

OUTLINE OF A CODE OF ETHICS FOR ORAL HISTORY PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

(draft document for discussion)

When planning an oral history project

1. Considering any possible harm that the interview process may cause to the interviewee's feelings or reputation or his/her community
2. Acquiring sufficient technical knowledge to conduct an interview of the best possible standard.
3. Obtaining the best possible knowledge on the culture and habits of the interviewee and his/her community.

Before the interview

4. Following a culturally-appropriate protocol when approaching the interviewee and requesting an interview.
- 5 Informing the interviewee of the purpose for which the interview is to be carried out and ensuring that he or she has understood this.
6. Agreeing on the place, time and circumstances of the interview.
7. Agreeing on whether or not the interview should remain confidential and on where and how the interview material will be stored and disseminated. This should be done in writing (release form) or verbally with a record on tape.
8. Agreeing on how the interviewee will benefit from the interview (eg receiving a copy of the tape and transcript / a community celebration). Ensuring that the interviewee do not have no false expectations.

During the interview

9. Respecting the interviewee's style of personal interaction (language, posture, dress, eye contact, etc).
10. Being gender sensitive.
11. Dealing appropriately with painful and emotional issues.
12. Verifying that the interviewee remains comfortable with the interview process and, when necessary, granting him/her the right to withdraw.

When processing the interview

13. Ensuring that the interview is transcribed, indexed, catalogued and made available as agreed with the interviewee.
14. Ensuring that all possible measures are taken to preserve the interview material.
15. Informing the interviewee of any change regarding the storage or dissemination of the interview.
16. Verifying that no part of the interview has a defamatory content.

On completion of the project

17. Reporting back to the interviewee or his/her community and giving them a copy of the recording if an undertaking to do so has been given.
18. Acknowledging the contribution of the interviewee and his/her community in any form of subsequent publication.
19. (*Where applicable*) Sharing with the interviewee or his/her community any form of financial benefit which may accrue to the interviewer.

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