

Interviews are usually conducted on a one to one basis. They can take place face to face, online or over the phone. Interviews are useful for getting detailed information from individual participants, particularly for sensitive subjects. The intimate nature of the interaction can feel overwhelming for some people however, so it is important to think carefully about how you set up and run an interview before you begin.

Before you begin

- Make sure that the location for the interview is quiet, comfortable and confidential.
- Take the time to have a general chat with the person you are interviewing to put you both at ease.
- It is good practice to ask the participant to complete a consent form, and this is particularly important if you are recording the interview or the results are to be published in any format (e.g. used in a report), remember to complete a consent form
- Remind the person of:
 - The aim of the interview and what will happen to the information you collect
 - Their right to take a break or to stop the interview at any point, and to change their mind about the use of the interview up until the point at which it is published
 - Their right to anonymity – for a full guide to data protection rights, see [insert link]

During the interview

- Take regular breaks
- Check in regularly with the interviewee to see if they are ok and happy to continue.
- It is a good idea to go into the interview with a clear plan of the questions you are going to ask, but to remain flexible in your approach so that you can maintain an informal style, and respond to anything the interviewee raises. You can find a bank of questions to use as inspiration in the toolkit.



Interview Questions

- Start with some really open questions. This will help to establish an open and participatory dialogue. For example:
 - Could you tell me about yourself?
 - Could you tell me how you became involved in the project?
 - How did you come to be here today?
- You can then gradually get more specific, asking questions about their experience of mental health stigma and discrimination, e.g.:
 - What have been the best/worst parts of the support you have received?
 - Can you tell me about a time when you felt you were being discriminated against because of your mental health?
- Think about also asking broader questions that allow the person to reflect on their mental health more widely, e.g.:
 - What helps you to feel well?
- It's fine to ask about the barriers and challenges people have faced, but remember that these topics can be difficult. Be alert for signs of distress, and always aim to bring the interview back to a more positive focus. For example, a sensitive approach to questioning might look something like:
 - What do you see as the biggest challenges you have faced in relation to mental health stigma and discrimination?
 - What has helped you overcome these challenges?
 - What has helped for you when you have felt stigmatised or discriminated against?
 - Can you tell me about any positive experiences you have had in relation to mental health stigma and discrimination?
 - What are your hopes/what are you working towards?

