

INTERVIEWING AN EXPERT

○ *By Wired FM (Ray, Jude and Cillian)*



This activity proposes to organise a meeting with a specialist in the form of a radio show. It is an opportunity for the participants to ask any outstanding questions while learning journalistic techniques.



Duration About 2 to 3 hours, including preparatory work.

Participants 5 to 10 participants. imagining sub-groups of 4 to 5 participants. As many specialists as there are sub-groups.

Objectives

- Discover journalistic methods for conducting an interview
- Learn about specific topics in the field of your topic from a specialist

Material

- Recording equipment (radio studio)
- Chairs
- Pens and paper (the same for all)

Preparation Invite experts in the field of gender identity and sexual orientation who can answer questions from participants. They can be, for example, associations specialised in trans-identity or in the promotion of LGBTQI+ rights, etc. These specialists can be chosen according to the specific needs of the group you are accompanying.

Instructions **PREPARATION FOR THE SHOW**
Together, prepare a thread to lead a discussion of about 30 minutes. For example;

- 5 min
1. → Jingle of the program [4 seconds]
 - Welcome words and introduction to the program (say where we are, what day it is, who the people around the table are, why we are gathered today) [1 minute]
 - Pause [2 seconds]
 - Introduction of the topic [1 minutes]
 - Introduction of the specialist [1 minute]
 - Questions about the specialist's background [5 minutes]
 - Questions about the topic [10 minutes]
 - Musical break [2 minutes]
 - Questions from the audience [5 minutes]
 - Pause [2 seconds]
 - Acknowledgements and conclusion of

the program [2 minutes]

2. Split your group into smaller groups. Ideally 5. Each group has a producer, a presenter, 2 researchers, and finally a technical person. If you have less, participants can double the job. For example, someone can be researcher and technical, or researcher and presenter. Everyone is equally involved in research and production. Each role is as important as the other and every member of the production is equal, but the producer must manage the team and ensure things run according to plan.

3. Decide on your guest. Make contact, and arrange a time for the interview. Then, structure your interview; what do you want to achieve? What is the outcome of the interview? To be more informed about a topic? To explore the interviewee's views or life experiences? How long do we want this interview to be? What do we want listeners to be educated on after listening to it? Do you think there will be enough to talk about with this person? Would a panel discussion with multiple people be better than a one on one interview?

4. Research and prep work. In preparation for the interview, there are different types of research to be carried out. Speaking with your expert beforehand is referred to as primary research. You can find out more about the interviewee prior to recording, by asking broad questions that will aid you in knowing more about the subject, and the expert. All other research is called secondary research. This is researching online, reading articles, looking at news clippings, and YouTube videos etc. Looking at their social media accounts can be highly beneficial here also. Now it's time to construct your questions. Always ask open-ended questions, this puts the onus on the interviewee. Try to avoid closed questions - these are questions that will prompt a one-word answer. You may have to use a room that's not ideal for

20-45 min

20 -25 min



recording. Be aware of every noise that can be picked by the audio recorder. Remember, it is a lot easier to record good audio than try to fix bad audio! There are variations of audio recorders you



can use, but as a rule of thumb, the better the set-up, the better the audio. Depending on the recorder you're using, it might offer you the option of modifying the sound, to enhance your audio recording.



5. Arrival of the expert, recording of the program:

Before beginning your interview, you can ask a generic ice breaker question. Consider this as a warm up for both you and your guest. This allows the technical person to check the mics, the recording levels, and puts both the interviewer and interviewee at ease. Prior to the interview or panel discussion, ensure you have the interviewees correct title, pronunciation and pronouns. Don't be afraid to ask them! Begin the interview. It is very important to actively listen during an interview. Use facial expressions or hand movements instead of your voice. For example, nod your head, instead of saying "Mmm, "yes" or "ok", etc. These reactions sound poor in the recording. Read the set number of questions that you have, but allow yourself room to ask questions you don't have written down. Has the interviewee mentioned something you didn't expect? Ask them about it! This sounds more conversational and natural. While this is happening, it is the producer's job to ensure the allocated time of interview is adhered to. Use visual cues to inform the presenter. (5 fingers for 5 minutes left, 3 for 3 minutes left, etc, rolling hands motion to signal to wrap the interview up, etc). They must keep an eye on sound levels throughout also.

6. Always make sure to thank your guest by name for taking part in the interview! When the interview is finished. Stop and save the recording. Now you



have all the tools to produce a panel discussion or conduct an interview with an expert. The most important thing is to have fun, and enjoy the process.



Variants

① To collect the questions that really interest people, collect them via an anonymous question box. This collection can be done in advance and communicated to the expert so that he/she has time to prepare.

② The role of the journalist can be assumed by several people and the questions determined together. This makes the exercise less stressful.



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If the person is unable to travel, the expert can also be on the phone.

Tips for facilitators

- ① Distribute the attached handout with tips on how to prepare for an interview. You can also give them the sheet on the different roles in a radio show.
- ② Don't hesitate to propose single-sex groups so that participants feel comfortable asking all the questions they want.
- ③ If possible, choose a room with little noise and little echo, in order to make good sound recordings.

Debriefing

At the end of the activity, you can ask participants several questions:

- Did you learn anything during the radio program?
- Was there anything you didn't understand?
- Were there any questions left unanswered?
- How did the reporters feel?
- Was it easy to ask questions and bounce back?