



HONEST CONVERSATIONS

STEP 2

GATHER STORIES

INTENTION

Collect personal stories from your community members.

OUTCOME

At the end of this step, you'll have a collection of stories submitted in different formats from your community.

CONTENTS

Tips for Gathering Stories; Gather Stories; Script; Consent Form; Fill in the Blank; Media Tips; Capture Your Work

TIME NEEDED

3 - 14 days, asking operational staff or volunteers to attend community gatherings to gather personal stories.





OPTIONAL

Tips for Gathering Stories

One of the most effective ways to convince individuals to take action is to share vulnerable stories from other members of the community who are navigating the same health issues. This section has guidelines, worksheets, and templates to help you gather stories from the community. Below are a few tips to help you prepare.

Review the Full Content

Take time to look through this entire section before you plan on gathering stories. Make a plan about who and when you will invite community members to share their stories about the Season Topic.

Practice With a Friend

We recommend you start by gathering three to seven stories from co-workers or volunteers that can serve as examples and help encourage other members of the community to submit their own stories.

Make Use of the Fill in the Blank

One of the worksheets included in this section is a Fill in the Blank. You can use this Fill in the Blank exercise as a step-by-step interview guide to solicit stories from community members that are powerful yet concise.

Consider Making a Sample Asset

If you decide to gather stories from co-workers or volunteers, you may also want to consider making campaign assets from their stories. This is working ahead a little (Step 3: Make & Share), but it can be helpful to show community members an example of how their final stories might appear once they're shared broadly.



MUST USE

Gather Stories

Work your way through this checklist to collect all the tools you need to gather stories from the community related to your Season Topic. We recommend gathering at least 12 community stories that represent different perspectives.

1 Review Media Tips Before You Leave

- ☐ **Audio Tips:** tips for recording audio stories
- ☐ **Photography Tips:** tips for taking photos of community members
- ☐ **Video Tips:** tips for recording video stories
- ☐ **Writing Tips:** tips for writing down a story told to you

2 Invite Community Members to Share

- ☐ **Printed Script:** to read to community members interested in telling a story
- ☐ **Printed Consent Form:** for community members to sign before sharing

3 Record Community Members' Stories

- ☐ **Sample Stories:** examples that show what the campaign looks like (optional)
- ☐ **Printed Fill in the Blank:** use this to write down community members' stories
- ☐ **Fully Charged Phone:** for capturing audio/video/image
 - ☐ Microphone (optional)
 - ☐ Tripod (optional)
- ☐ **Pens**
- ☐ **Paper**



OPTIONAL

Script

Use this sample script when approaching someone in the community to introduce yourself, explain the campaign, and build trust. Feel free to adapt the script so it feels natural for you to say and share.

Hi my name is **[volunteer's name]** and I'm working with **[Organization]** to create a campaign about health concerns in our community. It's called Honest Conversations. The purpose of this campaign is to surface common community health concerns and help people find resources to address those concerns. The foundation of the Honest Conversations campaign is real stories from members of the community like yourself.

Do you have 10 minutes to talk about your experience with **[current Season Topic]**?

Would you be willing to share your story for the campaign Honest Conversations? We'll ask you to sign a Consent Form, just so that we have your permission to share your story. You only share what you are comfortable sharing. You can choose to make it anonymous or use your name and image.

Let's look through the Fill in the Blanks together and see how the story you just shared with me fits into this Fill in the Blanks story form.

How do you want to share your story with the community?

Thank you so much for you time and vulnerability! Your story is powerful and important to share.



MUST USE

Consent Form

Print this page out and ask every member of the community who shares their story to sign this, so you can honor their wishes as to how their information will be used in the campaign.

I choose to document my participation in (check all that apply):

- ☐ Audio format
- ☐ Written format
- ☐ Video format

By signing this form, I grant **[name of the organization]** permission to use the content produced during this session for the Honest Conversations Campaign.

I consent to use my image in the Honest Conversations Campaign

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

I want my contributions to be anonymous

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION

I certify that I am at least 18 years of age and have the legal right to sign for myself.

I certify that I have read this document completely before signing it and that

I understand and agree to its contents. I, _____,
agree to take part in the Honest Conversations Campaign.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Signature (or thumbprint): _____

Today's Date: ____/____/____

If signing on behalf of a minor, under 18 years:

Minors Name: _____

Minor's Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Name of Legal Guardian: _____



MUST USE

Fill in the Blank

The Fill in the Blank is the heart of your Honest Conversations Campaign. By asking people to share their story in this format, you can create impactful and concise audio messages, video stories, and written posters. The goal of the Fill in the Blank is for people to share their own experience with the Season Topic.

When I first heard about [Season Topic], I thought:

a challenging or uncomfortable truth

I felt:

an emotion (for example: angry, sad, relief, happy, scared)

because:

what was going on for you at that time that caused that emotion

When I reflect on that time, while I lost:

something you've had to grieve

I also gained:

something you learned or a positive outcome

If I could go back in time, I would tell myself:

a message or piece of advice you wish you could give to your past self

For example, this is how a community member from Marin, CA used the Fill in the Blank to share their story about COVID-19 vaccines and boosters:

When I first heard about COVID-19, I thought

*that COVID-19 was not going to spread everywhere.
That it was only in China and affected those who traveled.*

I felt

worried

because

I realized that many people became seriously ill. A large number of people died without being able to be with their loved ones. We were hoping there would be a vaccine, and when the vaccine came out there were many myths.

When I reflect on that time, while I lost

hope

I also gained

strength.

If I could go back in time, I would tell myself

the vaccine and the booster protect you from serious symptoms that can lead to death. That it is better to be safe than sorry.



OPTIONAL

AUDIO TIPS

Prepare Your Equipment and Participant

- You can audio record on your phone with apps that come with your phone (like VoiceMemos on an iPhone or Voice Recorder on Android) or through a chatting app like WhatsApp.
- Make sure your technology is working (phone or recording device) ahead of time and practice with it before you are working with community members.
- Only audio record if the participant has signed consent for audio recording.
- Help the participant fill out the Fill in the Blank so they can use it for their recording.

Sound Quality

- Choose a quiet location with little to no background noise or distractions. Ask to turn off fans and portable heaters or air conditioners if possible.
- If you are recording audio in a new location or with new people, plan to do at least one practice recording to ensure you have captured the intended audio quality.
- Ask participants to speak clearly and at an appropriate volume so their voice is clearly recorded by the microphone. Most people speak too quickly when they are being recorded; it is best to err on the side of speaking too slowly.
- If possible, invest in a good microphone for recording. This can even be something that plugs into a phone and offers higher quality recording.

While Recording

- Have the participant use their Fill in the Blank for the recording. The recording should sound natural and conversational. The best responses are authentic, genuine, and minimally planned. Suggest to whomever is talking to speak as they would speak to a friend.
- Start recording the audio before the person starts speaking, then give them a silent signal to start. Pause for a few moments once they finish speaking and then stop the recording. This will ensure that the person isn't cut off.
- Audio recordings should be 30-90 seconds long or edited down to no more than 90 seconds.

After Recording

- Play back the recording to the participant and ask them if they're happy with it.
- Save the recording with the participant's name and date.



OPTIONAL

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Prepare Your Equipment and Participant

- Get familiar with your camera equipment (this might just be your phone) before taking photos of community members.
- Make a list of photos you want to take. This is called a “shot list.” For example: a close up, a candid shot, a full-body shot.
- Only take a photo if the participant has signed consent for photography.

Image Quality

- Pay attention to the background of the photo. Avoid a background that is cluttered or may be distracting to those looking at the photo—this is about featuring the community member.
- Consider lighting when deciding where to shoot the photo. Make sure the light is coming from the front of them, not from the side or behind. Natural light is always best. If it is a bright day and you are taking photos outside, make sure you aren’t directly in the sun because it could make people look washed out or cause harsh shadows. Instead, find a shady spot.
- Remember to wipe your lens to make sure it’s clean.
- Ensure that the person is in focus and is taking up most of the frame.

Taking the Photo

- Take a range of photos, not just one. Reference your shot list, if you made one.
- Only show the face of someone if you have their signed Consent Form; do not include other family or community members in your participant’s photo unless they have also signed a Consent Form.

After the Photoshoot

- If you want to transfer the image from your phone to a computer device, you can send it as an email attachment.
- Don’t use WhatsApp to send your photo for final production/placement in the template. WhatsApp will reduce the size and quality. If you can’t send it as an email attachment, use SMS/text message.



OPTIONAL

VIDEO TIPS

Prepare Your Equipment and Participant

- Most phones have video recording capability through a native app, or through a chatting app, like WhatsApp.
- Make sure your technology is working (phone or recording device) ahead of time and practice with it before you are working with community members.
- Ensure there's enough memory space on your device before starting to record.
- If possible, invest in a tripod to stabilize the recording. This can even be a table tripod or stack of books.
- Only video record if the participant has signed consent for video recording.
- Help the participant fill out the Fill in the Blank so they can use it for their recording.

Sound and Image Quality

- Choose a quiet location with little to no background noise or distractions.
- Ensure the main source of light is in front of the participant, not behind. For example, do not record participants in front of a window, or their face will be in shadow.
- Pay attention to what's behind the participant. Avoid a background that is cluttered or may be distracting to those watching your video. The participant should take up most of the video screen and be the focus. This might mean recording them in front of a wall or trees.

While Recording

- Feel free to help participants practice prior. The recording should sound and look natural and conversational. The best stories are authentic, genuine, and minimally planned. Coach whomever is talking to speak as they would speak to a friend.
- Ask participants to speak clearly and at an appropriate volume so their voice is clearly recorded by the microphone. Most people speak too quickly when they are being recorded; it is best to err on the side of speaking too slowly.
- Start recording the video before the person starts speaking, then give them a silent signal to start. Pause for a few moments once they finish speaking and then stop the recording. This will ensure that the person isn't cut off.
- Video recordings should be 30-90 seconds long or edited down to 90 seconds.

After Recording

- Play the recording for the participants. Ask them if they're happy with it.
- Save the recording with the participant's name and date.



OPTIONAL

WRITING TIPS**Prepare Your Equipment and Participant**

- Plan to take a direct audio recording of the participant's story and then use the recording to transcribe their story into the Fill in the Blanks. Doing this ensures that you're capturing the participant's own language while avoiding paraphrasing.
- You can record on your phone with apps that come with your phone (like VoiceMemos on an iPhone) or through a chatting app like WhatsApp.
- Make sure your technology is working (phone or recording device) ahead of time and practice with it before you are working with community members.
- Ensure that the participant has signed consent for their story to be shared via a written format.

After Getting the Recording

- When you're transcribing later, use direct language and quotes from the community member.
- It is okay to shorten their story if needed, but make sure you are still capturing the essence and emotions of the story.
- After you've transcribed their story, delete the recording since you only have permission to share their written story, and not their audio recording (unless they also consented to sharing audio on the Consent Form).



OPTIONAL

Capture Your Work

You've made it to the end of Step 2: Gather Stories. Use this page to write down the number of audio, video, and written stories you have for review. Then you'll be ready for Step 3: Make & Share. You are also encouraged to capture this information in the [Data Collection Tool](#).

WE HAVE THIS MANY AUDIO STORIES FOR REVIEW:

Example: 12 audio stories for review.

WE HAVE THIS MANY VIDEO STORIES FOR REVIEW:

Example: 11 video stories for review.

WE HAVE THIS MANY WRITTEN STORIES FOR REVIEW:

Example: 14 written stories for review.



NRCRIM + IDEO.ORG

Thank You!

We'd love to see what you have created.
Please send any materials you feel
comfortable sharing with us at:

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