

ORAL HISTORY MADE EASY

Week 3 Workbook 3 Applying ethics in oral history

1. Welcome to week 3


1.1 Welcome to week 3 of Oral History Made Easy. Well done for reaching this stage of the course! You are very nearly at the half way point – many congratulations! You are making fantastic progress!


Now that you have weeks 1 and 2 safely under your belt, we can move confidently towards week 3. This is a particularly important week as we are covering essential ethics for the oral historian. When you are clear about the ethical issues you need to observe when practicing oral history, you will feel so much more confident and capable as you begin to plan to do your first oral history recording.

3. Key themes we cover in week 3:

3.1 In week 3 in our ethics session, we cover the following key themes:

The evolution of ethics –the principles of beneficence, malfeasance and knowledge creation. 

Ethics in action for the oral historian: principles of informed consent; assignment of copyright; the participant information sheet; gatekeeper protocol; interviewee summary sheet; consent to use images or other materials; risk assessment; interview dynamics; incentives or bribes? 

Vulnerable participants and research sensitivities. 

Your health and wellbeing as an oral historian. 

4. Your tasks for week 4

4.1 Read the three ethics scenarios below and decide what course of action you would take. Come to class with your reflections on **all three** scenarios.

Your oral history interviewee begins to talk about painful memories from a childhood experience. Your interviewee is showing visible signs of being upset. What should you do?

You have been given the opportunity to post an interview recorded last year on your project web site. The interview was not recorded by you. You have heard that this interview has rich content which would shed new light on the issue you are researching. What should you do?

Your interviewee has said that they can disclose many new insights on the theme you are researching but you would need to keep the information strictly confidential. What should you do?

4.2 Produce a brief project plan, not exceeding one side of A4, to include the following:

Your project title	
Topic/purpose	
Methodology (optional)	
Scope, time and place.	
Possible narrators.	
Planned outcomes.	
Timeframe for completion.	

4.3 Familiarise yourself with the documentation needed to ensure your interview is compliant with legal requirements and ethical threshold for oral historians.

4.4. Finally, make a final decision on who your first oral history interviewee will be. Why you have chosen this person? What opportunities do you think might arise? What challenges do you anticipate? Do you have a contingency interviewee if need be?

Have a great week and I very much look forward to seeing you in week 4!

Best wishes

Angela

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