

Welcome to Living with Difference: Oral Histories of Life and Disability in Kentucky

Living with Difference: Oral Histories of Life and Disability in Kentucky is a project designed to collect the oral histories of those who may experience life differently due to a disability. The Kentucky Oral History Commission, administered by the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) and Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) have partnered to gather and archive this collection to contribute to community awareness regarding living with disability. These oral histories will encourage stories to be told and heard, lending credence to the voice of those who are most qualified to speak about the subject. This project will increase the public's access to a wealth of often hidden knowledge about how a segment of community members live. This continuing oral history collection will be accessible at both at the Kentucky Historical Society and The Eastern Kentucky University Library.

What is an oral history?

For this oral history project, oral history is defined as a recorded conversation between two individuals in which the interviewer's goal is to obtain awareness of the life events and experiences relating to life with disability in the narrators own words.

What is a disability?

The concepts of disability within this project are based on the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health as "an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions" (World Health Organization, 2001,

Connections. Perspective. Inspiration.

p.3). This concept of disability is broad and includes impairments that may be mental, physical, and cognitive and include numerous invisible and unspecified disabilities that affect an individual's participation in life.

Why oral histories of persons living with disability?

Persons with disabilities are often the least vocal members of society. An oral history interview allows persons with disabilities to speak for themselves regarding challenges they face in everyday living. Oral histories provide these narrators a way to talk about the impact of their disability from a firsthand perspective and convey their message to a broad audience. Oral histories can help preserve memories, advocate for those experiencing restrictions in participation and contribute to public awareness of disability. The goal is to create inclusion for all members of the greater community through engagement in these narratives.

Interview Guidelines

How to prepare for your interview:

1. If possible, become familiar with your interviewee's background and culture. This may include details about his or her upbringing, education, significant events, etc., which will guide you through the interview process. Ask follow up questions as needed.
2. Schedule your interview at the interviewee's convenience. Be flexible with scheduling and accommodate to the needs of your interviewee.
3. Create a general list of questions. Choose topics/themes you want to cover during your interview. For example, demographics, childhood into adolescence, adulthood, work, family, and anything else the interview would like to say. Use open-ended questions that help the interviewee elaborate. For example:

- Describe a typical day.
 - Tell me about your childhood, family, friends, work ...
 - How did that make you feel?
 - Can you tell me more about that experience?
4. Be sure to ask the interviewee, “Do you consider yourself disabled? Please explain”.
 5. To familiarize yourself with recording equipment and the interview framework conduct a practice or pre-interview. -After conducting the practice interview, note what worked well and didn’t work well.
 6. Be familiar with your recording equipment. Test it before you begin the interview and be able to know at a glance if sound is being captured. Recordings that clearly capture the audio exchange between interviewer and interviewee in a high quality format for long-term preservation are the goal of oral history practitioners.
 7. Conduct the interview in a setting comfortable for your interviewee – preferably a setting they choose. Listen (and look) carefully for noise sources, such as ringing phones and chiming clocks that will undermine the sound quality of the interview.
 8. Be prepared to meet with the interviewee more than once. These will likely be lengthy interviews.

The Interview

1. Interviewee and interviewer must sign the Kentucky Historical Society Deed of Gift form. This can be done prior to the interview or after the interview. It is essential the interviewer understands the exchange will be recorded and that the interview will be donated to the Kentucky Historical Society and accessible at both KHS and the ECU library.
2. It is important to establish rapport with the interviewee. A sense of trust between interviewee and interviewer helps make a good interview.
 - Take a little time with the interviewee before beginning the interview to talk and relax.

- Always be on time for an interview.
3. After you have organized the interview setting, ask the interviewee if he or she has any questions before the interview begins.
 4. After an equipment sound check, the interviewer will want to begin with a recorded introduction, such as:

“My name is (interviewer name). I will be interviewing you today (date) for an oral history project. This project is to add your voice to the historical record about life in Kentucky. We want to record how people who may be living with a disabling or limiting condition in Kentucky experience life. Everyone who participates in this interview process will be recorded word-for-word. Then the recording will be transcribed and stored at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort and at Eastern Kentucky University. Members of the general public will then have access to what you and everyone else who is participating have to say about how they live their lives.”

6. The interview can begin with background questions:

- This is best kept brief, and is a good way to start an interview because the questions are easy for the interviewee to answer, and it provides a context for evaluating subsequent information the interviewee gives. We will get an audio clip here.
- Some interviewers have found that initial questions about a interviewee’s work experience prove useful in getting a reticent interviewee to relax, open up, and talk freely about past experiences. Insert audio clip here
- Be thoroughly familiar with the topics you intend to pursue. It breaks the rhythm of the interview to be constantly referring to the interview outline or to other notes. We could use a bad example or good one from audio clip

7. Once the interview begins remember to:

- Use open-ended questions: “Tell me about . . .”“Describe . . .”
- Don’t be judgmental or let your own opinions show. The interview is the narrator’s time to tell his or her story.

- Ask about thoughts and feelings. It is the subjective information that helps make oral history rich and informative.
 - Try not to interrupt the narrator. Wait until he or she is finished to ask another question.
 - Be prepared to ask follow-up questions to clarify information.
8. Once the interview is completed thank the interviewee. Make sure you have the Deed of Gift form signed.
 9. Follow this with a written thank-you letter.

After the Interview

1. Make backup copies of your interviews to protect them from inadvertent loss. If no other audio exists, make a copy of the audio portion of video footage.
2. Make sure the Deed of Gift form is complete. It often is filled out as part of the interview process; now is the time to check it over and fill in any missing information.
3. Check the photo, artifact, and manuscript forms. They contain information about memorabilia such as photographs, scrapbooks, and other materials pertaining to the project. If an interviewee has agreed to allow use of materials for the project, the interviewer should develop an itemized list of these materials before leaving the interview, following the instructions on the Artifact Inventory Form. This is the time to make sure you have completed the forms and that the lists are accurate. This also is the time to send the interviewee a copy of the lists if that has not already been done.
4. Review all other interview materials including the correspondence and materials documenting telephone and personal contacts with the interviewee. All paperwork should be ready to turn over to the repository when work on the recording is finished.
5. This is the time to write up notes about the interview. Notes will be mailed in with the interview information forms, deed of gift form, interview recording and transcription. The interviewer's information and insights help future users of the oral history information understand details about interview context and content. For example:
 - Notes about the setting, the narrator's reactions to the interview, the narrator's

Connections. Perspective. Inspiration.

health or other issues that could affect the interview, and speech patterns such as regular use of filled pauses (ums and ahs) or of phrases in more than one language. They need not cover pages; often bullet points are sufficient, but make them as thorough and detailed as possible to provide appropriate context. This will be sent in along with the recorded interview.

6. Transcribe interview verbatim.

7. The Interview Information form provides areas where a synopsis, keywords, and interview setting/location must be completed. Keywords include the interviewee's condition, hometown, interviewee's age, or particular things they emphasized in the interview such as family or work. For example:

- Lupus, Lexington, KY, age 62, childhood memories, teacher, daily routines, hobbies, family, friends, and spirituality.
- ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease, 45, daily routines, bathing, dressing, computer generated voice program, wife, family, caregivers, healthcare and politics, religion, and outlook on disease.

Note: You may want to jot down names as they come up, but wait until the end of the interview to ask the interviewee for spellings, so as not to break up the flow of conversation.

KentuckyHistoricalSociety

Kentucky Oral History Commission

Deed of Gift Agreement

I, _____ (name of donor), hereby give to the Kentucky Oral History Commission/Kentucky Historical Society, in form and content, the following recorded-interview, recorded on _____(date). I understand that the Kentucky Oral History Commission/Kentucky Historical Society will use my recorded interview for such educational purposes as they see fit and that by this conveyance I relinquish:

- All legal title and literary property rights which I have or may be deemed to have in said work.
- All my rights, title, and interest in copyright which I have or may be deemed to have in said work and more particularly the exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, and preparation of derivative works, public performances, and display.

This gift does not preclude any use that we ourselves may wish to make of the information in the recordings and/or subsequent transcripts of such.

This donation shall not be subject to restriction unless noted below:

Signature of interviewer

Signature of Interviewee

Date:

Date:

Address:

Address:

Telephone: _____

Telephone: _____

[Kentucky Oral History Commission](#)

[100 W. Broadway • Frankfort, KY 40601](#)

[502-564-1792 • \(fax\) 502-564-0475 • history.ky.gov](#)

[email: Sarah.Milligan@ky.gov](mailto:Sarah.Milligan@ky.gov)

Kentucky Oral History Commission

Interview Information Form

Interviewee information:

<u>Last Name:</u>	
<u>First Name:</u>	
<u>Middle Name:</u>	
<u>Maiden Name:</u>	
<u>City, State of residence:</u>	
<u>Birth Date (M/D/Y):</u>	
<u>Place of Birth:</u>	
<u>Occupation:</u>	
<u>Mother's Name:</u>	
<u>Father's Name:</u>	

Interviewer information:

<u>Last Name:</u>	
-----------------------------------	--

<u>First Name:</u>	
<u>Middle Name:</u>	
<u>Maiden Name:</u>	
<u>Address:</u>	
<u>City/State/Zip:</u>	
<u>Phone:</u>	
<u>Email:</u>	

Synopsis: Please describe topical content of the interview in 3-5 sentences.

Keywords: Please list 3 or more subjects discussed in the interview.

Interview location (for example, "interviewee's home"; address not necessary):

Format of interview (please check one):

- 60-min. cassette
 90 min. cassette
 120 min. cassette
 mp3
 wav
- MiniDisc
 MiniDV
 DVD
 Other (please)

specify):

Length of interview (in minutes):

Number of tapes or CDs (if applicable):

Interviewee requests a copy of the interview: yes no

Proper Names:

Below, please spell out any proper names (people, places, organizations, etc) that come up during the course of the interview. Note: You may want to jot down names as they come up, but wait until the end of the interview to ask the interviewee for spellings, so as not to break up the flow of conversation.

Equipment/Technology

Many people do not have access to high-quality digital recorders, but you may still be able to take part in this project. If you have a laptop computer, for example, you can use this, along with an external USB microphone, to create a mobile digital recording station. You will need software for audio recording to your computer. One program that can be used to record the interview is Audacity, a free, easy-to-use audio editor and recorder available for many operating systems (Audacity, 2011, para. 1).

You can download Audacity from here: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

*Note: Be sure to download the version that matches your computer operating system.

Here is a tutorial to help you become oriented to the Audacity program and record an interview.

You will need:

- External microphone with USB plug
- Computer with Audacity program installed
- Yourself

Setting Up:

- 1.) Take your external microphone and plug it into the USB port.



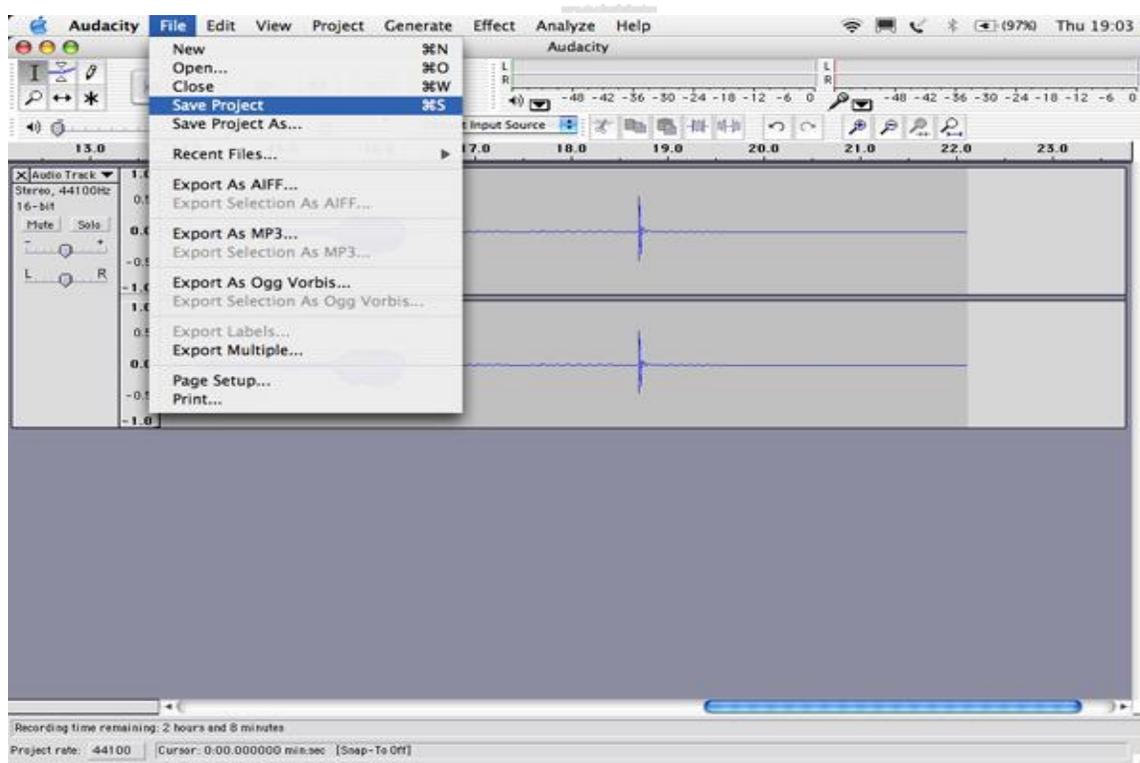
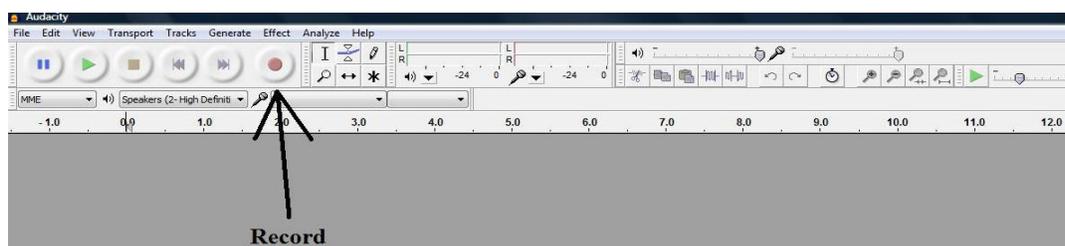
Connections. Perspective. Inspiration.

2.) Place the microphone in close proximity to you. The microphones with stands are beneficial to keep from knocking into the microphone and making excess noise.

3.) Start the Audacity program

4.) Press the record button  and you are ready to begin speaking. Once you are done hit

the stop button 



5.) To hear your recording press play.



6.) When you are finished and are ready to save be sure to click export as wav from the file menu and choose a location to save the file.

If you do have access to digital audio recording equipment this is what is recommended to make sure the recorded interview is of the best quality.

- Digital audio recording equipment that is high quality
 - Should have the following features:
 - At least one external microphone jack
 - A way to visibly monitor recording progress and input levels
 - Manual recording volume (gain) control
 - Ability to record in at least an uncompressed wav files at 44.1kHz 16 bit.
 - Digital storage system, either internal or through a compact flash or secure digital memory card
 - USB interface to allow the recorded files to be uploaded easily to a computer for in a non-proprietary format.
 - On/off switch
 - AC adapter
 - Flash drive or compact discs to provide access copies of the interview on. (Be sure to make multiple copies)
 - An external microphone for better sound quality (Make sure the microphone is omni-directional, so that it will be able to pick up sound from any direction)

Please do not use:

Mini or micro audiocassette recorders or mini digital recorders like micro dictation devices.

Microphone built into a camera or audio recorder, unless necessary.

Ethical and Legal Considerations to Be Shared with the Interviewee

Interviewees and interviewers must sign the Deed of Gift Form for the interview to be included in the project. It is important that they be made aware of all of the legal and ethical ramifications of their participation. Be sensitive to possible vulnerabilities when talking about personal issues or experiences; it is the right of those being interviewed to keep any information confidential that they want to or to refuse to participate at any time during the interview. This narrative can be anonymous to the public meaning names can be excluded from the audio and transcribed interviews. This, ideally, would be indicated at the start of an interview so names can be excluded from the interview or a pseudonym chosen. A note should be made on the Deed of Gift Form specifying what parts of the narrative are to be kept confidential and any other requests necessary for project organizers to know. These confidential segments can be time-sensitive (ie: 10 years) or permanent.

An oral history creates a “copyrighted document” as soon as the interview is finished. Interviewers and narrators will be asked to donate ownership and long-term care of the interview (the physical recording) to the Kentucky Historical Society through the Deed of Gift agreement form. When the narrator signs the Deed of Gift Form, make sure this person recognizes their interview may be made accessible in any format, including written or online publication, by The Connections. Perspective. Inspiration.

Kentucky Historical Society or Eastern Kentucky University.

As an interviewer, keep the following ethical principles in mind:

- Interviews collected should represent an unbiased and fair presentation of a topic.
- The purpose and scope of the project need to be explained clearly to all participants.
- All narrators deserve respect even if the interviewer disagrees with their story or opinion.
- Preparation and training on the topic of disability may be helpful.
- If you want to interview a person with communication issues, you may want to make special accommodations such as considering other means of communicating through writing or drawing, finding a translator, or video recording the participant.

Reminder Form:

Send all of your packet information to:

Dr. Anne Shordike, Project Director

521 Lancaster Avenue

Richmond, KY 40475-3102

Be Sure to Include:

- Information Form
- Deed of Gift Form
- Digital Interview and transcriptions (2 copies if mailing in a cd; one copy is fine if delivering via thumbdrive in person to Anne)