

Stress Story Interviews

Introduction:

People have devised countless ways to deal with stress. You might play sports, go for runs, practice deep breathing, or create art like the artists on the tour! Sometimes when people are in the throes of stress they may feel like they are alone or isolated. During those times it is important to remember the people in your support network. These can be friends, family members, or trusted adults. Talking your problems out with another person can help you feel better! Hearing how others cope with stressful situations can provide you with advice you can apply to your own life. You can learn from someone's previous experience to help improve your current one.

Activity:

This activity is designed to help you initiate, and make the most of, a talk with a family member or a friend. You will be conducting audio-interviews, with a central theme of overcoming stress. Your goal is to learn how your interviewee overcome a stressor in their life, and to learn how you can apply their advice to your own life. The directions below will provide all the information needed to choose the right interviewee, how to formulate thoughtful questions, and how to record your interview. The interviews you create will be a recorded moment in history similar to an oral history.

Directions:

Part One - The Interviewee

1. Before you can formulate the questions you need to choose a person to interview. They should be:
 - Someone you feel *comfortable talking to*. (because the topic of the interview, stress, is so personal, its best to choose someone you know)
 - Someone you feel you *can learn from*. Maybe your grandparent is always giving you very helpful advice, they may be a perfect fit for this interview.
 - Someone you have *fun listening to*! We all know a good storyteller, people with a flair for storytelling are great to interview. They give the interview pizazz, and make it fun for you to conduct and for others to listen to.
2. After you've found a person you'd like to interview, you need to reach out to them and ask them if they would be willing to be interviewed. Remember that the interviewee is helping you out and doing you a favor by agreeing to be interviewed!

Part Two - The Questions

3. Now is the time to think about the questions you want to ask. These should be:
 - **Specific:** you want your questions to be personalized to the interviewee! You may want to do some digging and find out a bit of background on the person you are interviewing beforehand.
 - **On Topic:** Make sure your questions relate to the major theme for the interview which is stress. Try to tie your questions back to the theme as often as possible so the interview stays on track.
 - **Few:** Make sure that you do not plan too many questions. I like to plan about five minutes a question, and aim for about six questions. This gives you time to talk about the questions, and leaves room for a bit of back and forth.
4. Once you have your six questions written and you feel good about them email them to your interviewee in advance. This may seem odd, but it gives the person you are interviewing a chance to review the questions so they are not caught off guard during the interview.

Part Three – The Interview

5. Before you arrive at the interview make sure you have the following with you:
 - Two printed copies of the questions: Bringing two copies allows you to have the questions to reference, but it also allows for your interviewee to reference them as well. You can also mark off questions as you go, this helps the interview to move along.
 - Device you plan to record on: Bring any device that can record audio. An audio-recorder, a phone, or even a laptop computer all will serve your purposes for this interview. Make sure it is at *full charge*, and bring a charger or batteries with you just in case!
 - Water for yourself and your interviewee: This is a courtesy to both of you, and it shows your professionalism. Water is also nice to have because talking for prolonged periods can leave your throat dry or scratchy!
 - A thank-you card: This is another courteous item that show professionalism and gratitude. Remember the interviewee is doing you a favor, a handwritten card is a nice way to thank them for the favor!

6. During the course of the interview it is important to be flexible. Try to stick to your questions, but if the interviewee is telling you something you want to hear more about, or that you have additional questions about, then ask them! This will add to the depth of your interview! Though do be careful not to go off on tangents, remember the purpose of the interview: to learn how your interviewee overcome a stressor in their life, and to learn how you can apply their advice to your own life.

Final Suggestions

- As mentioned above there are many different devices you can record your audio-interviews on. There are also a series of Apps, and programs you can record through as well. I recommend the StoryCorps App, this nonprofit app is loaded with interview tips, and provides a place for you to record your interview on your phone. To find out more about StoryCorps click on the following link: <https://storycorps.org/participate/storycorps-app/>
- When interviewing, as mentioned in part three, it is important to be flexible. However make sure that you are not going off on tangents. This is a delicate balance and takes time to master, but practice makes you better!
- Be creative with your thank you card. You could make this a mini art project. I like to personalize cards (or paper scraps I turn into cards) by writing out the recipient's name with letter stickers. Remember it's the thought that counts, and your interviewee will be overjoyed to read your card after the interview.

Overcoming Stress Interview

Interviewer: _____ Interviewee: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Questions:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____
