

# Mini Interviews using StoryCorps Connect

## Organizer Guide

A quick recording program inviting pairs of community members to record brief responses to one to two One Small Step questions using the StoryCorps Connect web-based app. This low-commitment activity provides an accessible entry point to sharing personal stories and trying out One Small Step. Though this is framed as a recording-based activity, recording is optional- the goal is 1:1 conversation.

## Advanced Planning: Goals and Steps

### Goals:

- Create a low-barrier entry point to OSS conversation experiences
- Introduce community members to the practice of sharing personal stories
- Build comfort with OSS in a brief, structured format
- Generate shareable content for community engagement (with permission)
- Provide a pathway to deeper OSS participation and skill-building

### Steps:

The first step is identifying a quiet, semi-private area in the venue space where pairs can have a conversation without disturbing others or feeling exposed. The space should have good lighting, power access, and room for a small table with two chairs.

Next, gather the necessary technical equipment, including a tablet or computer with camera, an external microphone (optional, for better sound quality), a headphone splitter, two sets of headphones, and cleaning supplies. The StoryCorps Connect app or webpage should be installed/open and tested on the device.

Print/provide the One Small Step Great Questions Deck or virtual deck (linked below for printing). Create clear instructions for the recording process, including how to tag One Small Step in the archive, and provide OSS one-pager and/or Great Questions Bookmarks for further involvement.

Develop a simple flow to suggest for the recording process: 5 minutes for welcome and orientation, 10 minutes for the actual conversation, and 5 minutes for wrapping up and next steps. This 25-minute format keeps the commitment low while allowing meaningful exchange.

Train staff on both the technical aspects (operating equipment, using the StoryCorps Connect app) and facilitation skills (orienting participants, selecting questions, managing time). Ensure they are comfortable troubleshooting common issues if the participants go to them for help.

Establish a system for scheduling sessions, either through advance sign-ups or as an impromptu activity when appropriate pairs of participants express interest. Create a simple sign-up sheet if using scheduled times.

Take photos of the setup (and with permission, of participants engaged in conversation) to document the program and use in future promotion.

## Marketing

Promote the activity as a quick, easy way to practice skills for meaningful conversation with another person and get to know their beliefs through their stories. Emphasize the low time commitment (25 minutes) and the supportive structure of the guided questions.

Create visible signage near the recording station explaining the purpose and process. Include sample questions to spark interest and illustrate the personal story-centered nature of the conversations.

Feature the program in local newsletters and social media, perhaps sharing brief excerpts from recordings (with permission) to demonstrate the impact of even short conversations.

Position this as an activity that friends, family members, or even strangers can do together to understand something new about each other. Emphasize that differences in perspective are welcome but not required.

## Budgeting

The program requires attention to the following costs:

- Recording equipment, optional (tablet/computer, microphone, headphones): \$0-800 depending on existing supply

- Print materials (question cards, instructions, resource materials): \$10-50
- Bookmarks for participants to take home \$5-10

Tips to cut costs:

- Use existing tablets or computers
- Opt for simpler audio setup initially, upgrading as the program proves successful
- Print materials in-house when possible
- Start with limited hours and expand based on interest

## Day-of-event Activity

On each recording day of recording sessions, test all equipment to ensure proper functioning. Check that the StoryCorps app is working and toggled to "In-Person," microphone is connected, and headphones are clear.

Set up the recording space with comfortable seating, clearly visible instructions (including introduction script & conversation agreements), and an organized display of question cards for easy selection.

Prepare materials for distribution after the recording. Have pens, scrap paper and a timer readily available.

Brief any staff who will be leading the participants scheduled that day to their sessions and any special considerations.

Take photos of the setup and, with permission, of participants engaged in conversation to document the program and use in promotion.

## Program Execution

Begin each session with a warm welcome and brief orientation (5 minutes). Explain the purpose of One Small Step, introduce the StoryCorps app, and help participants select one or two questions that interest them.

Guide participants through a quick equipment check, ensuring they can hear each other through the headphones and understand how the recording will work. Remind them that recording is optional.

Give them the instructions sheet and timer for the 10-15 minute conversation and leave them for their short dialogue. Retrieve them at the end of their appointment time, with a grace period for people who go over time.

After the conversation, assist participants with decisions about archiving their recording (if they chose to record). Help them create appropriate tags and understand how their story will be used if shared (5 mins).

Distribute resource materials about further OSS participation opportunities and collect brief feedback about their experience.

Take photos (with permission) to document engagement and create visual resources for future promotion.

Maintain the recording station between sessions, sanitizing headphones, organizing materials, and resetting the space for the next participants.

## Advice

Keep the technical setup as simple as possible to avoid intimidating participants or creating barriers to participation.

Advise participants to select questions that invite storytelling. The best questions ask about personal experiences, values, or perspectives without requiring political positioning.

Create a warm, welcoming atmosphere that helps participants feel comfortable sharing personal stories. Small touches like a "conversation in progress" sign can help create a sense of privacy.

Allow participants to choose whether to record their conversation. Some may prefer to simply have the guided conversation experience without the recording element.

Offer both scheduled sessions and spontaneous opportunities when appropriate pairs are available. This flexibility maximizes participation opportunities.

Consider creating themed question sets aligned in addition to the deck's questions or community events to create relevant entry points for all kinds of participants.

Take photos throughout the program (with appropriate permissions) to document impact and create visual resources for future promotion.

The primary goal is introducing people to the OSS experience in an accessible way. Even brief conversations can build comfort with sharing across differences.