## Exercise: Creative solutions to storytelling challenges

**Overview**

The purpose of this exercise is to provide participants with strategies to address common challenges related to storytelling—specifically the various unanticipated roadblocks one often encounters while collecting content for a story, whether it be an interview, photographs, or other supplemental information.

**Objectives**

1. To generate creative practical, applicable ideas for overcoming common barriers to storytelling.
2. To engage in thoughtful idea-sharing with colleagues working in a range of cultural and geographical contexts.
3. To share experiences and proven solutions to storytelling challenges.

**Time**

Total: 60 minutes

**Implementing the Activity**

This small-group discussion activity will be guided by a handout containing five challenging real-life scenarios. Small groups will have to work together to develop one or more solutions to each challenge, and then all participants will reconvene as a large group to share ideas, feedback, and other relevant experiences.

**Activity Steps**

1. Divide workshop participants into groups of two to four people each.
2. Distribute at least one handout to each group.
3. Groups will have 40 minutes to discuss and develop solutions to the five challenging scenarios described on the handout.
4. For the last 20 minutes of the activity, the large group will reconvene, and groups will share their solutions and provide feedback on and ask questions about each others’ ideas. If time allows, the facilitator may wish to ask participants what other challenging scenarios they’ve encountered as they’ve worked to tell stories, and how they’ve addressed those challenges.

**Exercise Worksheet**

This handout describes several common but challenging scenarios that arise during story collection activities. Please use the next 30 minutes to discuss with your small group how you have—or how you would—overcome these challenges in order to get your story.

1. You’re interviewing an expert in your field—someone your audience really wants to hear from. However, this person is very formal and determined to stick to talking points. She seems unwilling to open up, share her personal perspective, or tell stories. How do you get a story?
2. You’ve traveled several hours to a rural clinic to interview and photograph clinic staff and a few clients who traveled a great distance from their homes to get to the clinic. When you return to the office and look through your content, you realize no one on your team obtained oral or written consent from the clients. What do you do?
3. You have scheduled a 30-minute interview with a person who is essential to a story you’re putting together. He arrives more than 20 minutes late, leaving only about 5 minutes for an interview. How do you get a story?
4. You’re interviewing a key contact who brings an important perspective to your initiative. However, rather than engaging in a dialogue, answering your questions, and focusing on the purpose of the initiative, this person launches into a monologue about a sensitive or unrelated issue. What do you do?
5. You arrive at an appointment to interview and photograph a stakeholder for a story, and immediately upon introduction, the person insults you or your organization and proceeds to belittle the story or project you are working on. What do you do?