



**PLAN  
CARE  
HEAL**

A guide to working with  
spontaneous memorial collections

# Marking an event without collecting

## Learning Objective

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Exploring ways beyond collecting to honour the context, impact and lives affected by high-profile incidents.

## Scenario Summary

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### ***LOCATION: IN THE OFFICE***

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You are a consultant community curator in a local museum working with the in-house team to refresh the collections galleries. A few months ago, a fire broke out in a historical site of the city, damaging the building and claiming lives. Spontaneous memorials emerged around the site, but the museum decided not to collect them due to their condition.

As the incident had significant public resonance with the loss of lives and heritage, you are exploring alternative ways of honouring it in the museum, as part of your role.

Brainstorm 2-3 possible ideas that map out alternative ways for the museum to contribute to the process of remembrance and to engage the public (e.g. recording oral histories).

## Key Considerations

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- What is the curatorial / interpretive case for the incident to be represented in this museum? What purpose does it serve?
- How will you measure and gauge public feeling towards a) the incident itself b) the museum's plans to mark the event?
- Who are your stakeholders? Who do you need to work with or talk to in order to understand and represent the context, impact and/or lives affected?
- How may the incident be reflected, communicated or embodied in the physical premises and/or digital channels of the museum?

## Further training, support, and key readings

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Miles, E., Corder, S. and Kavanagh, J. (eds) (2020) [\*Contemporary collecting: an ethical toolkit for museum practitioners\*](#)

Society of American Archivists, [Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit](#)

Collections Trust (NPOP Guidance) [Guidance for exhibiting archive and library materials](#)

Heritage Fund: [Oral history good practice guide](#)

Sodaro, Amy. 2018. [\*Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence\*](#), New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press