

Setting up a presence at the memorial site

Learning Objective

Explore different approaches of sensitively setting up a presence at the memorial site with the view to begin the collection process.

Start to consider how to talk to different groups of people about your work (including the public and the press).

Scenario Summary

LOCATION: AT THE MEMORIAL SITE

Following an unexpected tragedy, a large spontaneous memorial has formed in the centre of your town. You and your team have been charged with the task of documenting and collecting the memorial objects left at this site.

You agree that the best course of action is to have a physical presence at the site, from which you can review the site and formulate a collection plan that is not only robust and efficient but also seeks to connect with the community of mourners who visit the site.

You meet with your team to plan your next steps.

Key Considerations

- This scenario mentions a team of people involved in the collection – who do you need in your team? How do you build this team?
- What does a physical presence at the site mean to you and what approach could you take to set this up?
- Considerations are needed around communication with different groups of people? If you have a presence on the site, it is likely that members of the public will be interested to know what you are doing?
- Likewise, your presence may also attract media attention, how would you manage this?

Further training, support, and key readings

[Processing Grief: Archivists, Librarians, and Museum Professionals Help Communities Heal](#)

Pam Schwartz, Whitney Broadaway, Emilie S. Arnold, Adam M. Ware, Jessica Domingo. 2018. [‘Rapid-Response Collecting after the Pulse Nightclub Massacre’](#) in *The Public Historian*, 40:1, pp. 105-114

The National Archives: [Online guidance to rapid-response collecting](#)

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

Arvanitis, K. 2019. [‘The Manchester Together Archive: Researching and Developing a Museum Practice of Spontaneous Memorials’](#) in *Museum and Society*, 17:3, University of Leicester, pp. 510-532