



**PLAN
CARE
HEAL**

A guide to working with
spontaneous memorial collections

Supporting volunteer groups

Learning Objective

Explore ways of incorporating trauma-informed practices into your work

Consider different ways to provide ongoing emotional and wellbeing support to volunteers working with sensitive collections

Scenario Summary

LOCATION: IN THE ARCHIVE

You and a small team of museum staff have recently completed the removal and collection of a spontaneous memorial that appeared after a local tragedy. The collection itself is large - totalling over 10,000 objects.

You are now considering recruiting volunteer groups from across the community to help with the cataloguing process. However, you have some concerns about the traumatic and sensitive nature of the collection and the impact this might have on people working with the material.

Create a checklist of the actions needed to safeguard and support the emotional wellbeing of volunteers during and after their time working with you and this collection.

Key Considerations

- How would you communicate the extent and level of support on offer to volunteers during the recruitment process?
- How would you structure a care plan for volunteers working on the project? Consider daily, weekly, monthly levels of support and activities like limited exposure, debriefs, counselling.
- How would you respond if a volunteer refused the support on offer?
- Are there any limitations or restrictions on who can volunteer?
- Do you need to build relationships with other support networks from outside of your organisations (i.e. victim support groups, mental health providers etc)?
- How do you prepare, train and look after yourself during this period?

Further training, support, and key readings

Marsden, J. 2020 [Providing Emotional Support For Archive Volunteers: Methods used on the Manchester Together Archive](#)

Collins, H., Allsopp K., Arvanitis, K., Chitsabesan, P., and French P. 2020. '[Psychological impact of spontaneous memorials: A narrative review](#)', *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, Online First Publication, March 19, 2020.

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