



BEST-PRACTICE INTERVIEWING

PLAN THE INTERVIEW

Purposeful questions. Accurate information. Better decisions.

1

WHAT DECISION AM I TRYING TO INFORM?

I am interviewing this person to understand _____
so that _____ can be decided.

2

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED?

WHAT I ALREADY KNOW	WHAT I THINK/INFER	WHAT I STILL NEED TO LEARN

3

REQUIRED DOMAINS

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

4

BOUNDARIES



What is WITHIN my role to determine?



What is NOT mine to determine?



What might require referral/consultation?



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BEST-PRACTICE INTERVIEWING THE QUESTION TOOLBOX

Choose questions that match what you need to learn.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED?

IF YOU NEED TO...	TRY...	EXAMPLE
 Expand	Open narrative	"Tell me what happened from your perspective."
 Clarify meaning	Clarifying	"What did 'threatening' look like?"
 Establish sequence	Timeline	"What happened immediately before that?"
 Identify source	Source	"Did you see that, or did someone tell you?"
 Understand degree	Scaling	"Why a six rather than a three?"
 Shift perspective	Circular	"What would your roommate say happened?"
 Continue the story	Sequencing	"What happened next?"
 Find omissions	Gap closing	"What haven't I asked you that you expected me to?"

DON'T ASK:

"What's the right question?"

ASK:

"What am I trying to learn?"

CLIPBOARD TO CURIOSITY

Instead of:

"Do you have friends?"

Try:

"Who do you actually spend time with?"

Instead of:

"Hobbies?"

Try:

"What helps your brain quiet down?"

GOOD QUESTIONS CREATE CLARITY, CONTEXT, AND CONNECTION.



BEST-PRACTICE INTERVIEWING WHEN THE INTERVIEW GETS DIFFICULT

Repair the rupture. Preserve the relationship. Stay with your information goal.

THE 5-STEP REPAIR

1	NOTICE		What changed?
2	NAME		Describe the shift without assigning motive.
3	REPAIR		Own a process mistake or change the question form.
4	REORIENT		Restate what you still need to understand.
5	RESUME		Try a different route.

OBSERVATION ≠ MEANING

"His voice became quieter after I mentioned the roommate."

Not:

"He was hiding something."

Ask:

"You got quieter just then.
What was happening for you?"



WHEN TO STOP/PAUSE

- Immediate safety or medical need
- Inability to meaningfully participate
- Fairness, accessibility, or consent concerns
- Unclear role or authority
- Unsafe or unmanageable interaction



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BEST-PRACTICE INTERVIEWING

ACCURACY, CLOSING & NEXT STEPS

Finish well. Document accurately. Improve for next time.

OBSERVE → INFER CAREFULLY → DOCUMENT



OBSERVE

What did I actually see/hear?



INFER

What might it mean? What alternatives remain?



DOCUMENT

What was reported, observed, clarified, verified, and unresolved?

MY NEXT INTERVIEW

One habit I want to STOP:

One technique I want to START:

The information goal this will support:

FOUR JOBS OF THE CLOSE



SUMMARIZE

What did I hear?



IDENTIFY GAPS

What remains unresolved?



EXPLAIN NEXT

What happens after this?



CHECK UNDERSTANDING

What does this person need to know before leaving?

CLOSING SCRIPT

““Before we finish, let me summarize what I understand so far. What did I get wrong or leave out?””

**INVITE CORRECTION.
IMPROVE ACCURACY.**

PURPOSEFUL INTERVIEWS LEAD TO BETTER INFORMATION AND BETTER OUTCOMES.