

## **Communication Skills Lab 5: Interviews to Learn about Family Dynamics**



# Communication Skills Lab 5: Interviews to Learn about Family Dynamics

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**Time:** 6 hours

**Module Purpose:** Participants will begin the session with debriefing the structured field observations of child interviews. During this one day lab, participants will practice exploring and focusing skills to learn about family dynamics associated with child safety, using scripts and role play material provided. At the end of this lab, participants will be given a detailed field observation tool to shadow, observe and record interviewing skills to obtain information about all of the information domains. They will also be expected to interview an adult, gathering information through the interview about parenting, approach to discipline, and adult functioning, and prepare a written analysis of information learned. As part of the written analysis, they will identify what other information they would need to learn and who would need to be interviewed to learn that information.



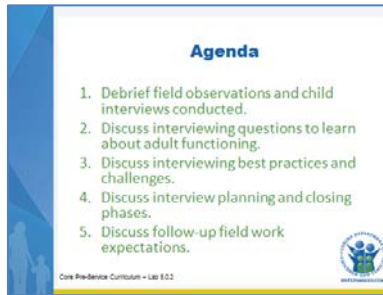
## **Demonstrated Skills:**

1. Identification of questions to learn about all six information domains.
2. Explain the common errors associated with interviewing about family dynamics.
3. Demonstrate the use of exploring and focusing skills to learn about the six information domains.
4. Demonstrate observation skills of interviewing.
5. Explain the purpose of the planning and closure phase of interviews.
6. Discuss the use of family teams and relationship to engagement skills.
7. Demonstrate the correct sorting of information gathered into the six

information domains.

8. Prepare for field observation of interviewing to gather information in all six domains.

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**Agenda:**

1. Debrief field observations and child interviews conducted.
2. Discuss interviewing questions to learn about adult functioning.
3. Discuss interviewing best practices and challenges.
4. Discuss interview planning and closing phases.
5. Discuss follow-up field work expectations.

*Review the agenda with the participants.*

**Materials:**

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG) (Participants should bring their own.)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Markers
- Flip chart paper

**Activities:**

**Unit 5.1**

**Activity 1:** Listening to Neen – 10

**Activity 2:** What questions do I ask to learn about family functioning?  
– 11

**Unit 5.2**

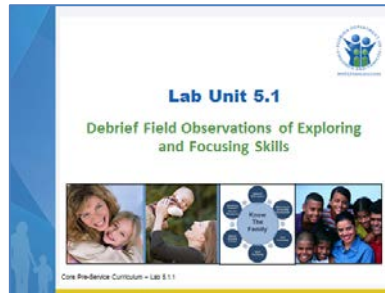
**Activity 3:** Skills Practice – 24

**Unit 5.3**

**Activity 4:** Interview Planning and Closings - 35

# Unit 5.1: Debriefing Child Interview Observations

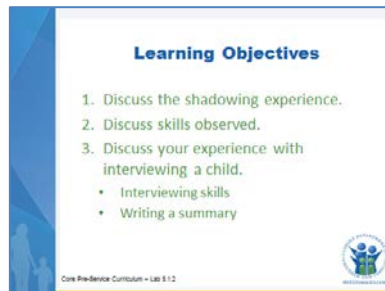
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Time:

**Unit Overview:** The purpose of this unit is to give participants an opportunity to share their experiences with field shadowing as well as their observations of child interviewing skills.

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## Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the shadowing experience.
2. Discuss child interviewing skills observed.
3. Discuss your child interview (interviewing and writing skills).

**Trainer Note:** We know that many current staff have not had the benefit of training around forensic techniques, child language challenges and solutions. It is suggested that the debriefing discussion stick to the main components of the interview, with the additional questions below. Ask if all participants were able to observe an interview of a child. Ask what types of child interviews they

saw (investigation, case manager visit to child home, foster home, etc.) If any participants did have an opportunity to observe a forensic interview with a child at a CPT or CAC, it might be helpful to have them share their observations first.

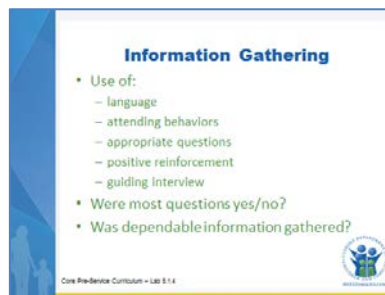
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**Interview openings.** What did you observe in terms of:

- Build rapport with children
- Introduce self and job in simple way
- Explain interview purpose and what will happen after
- Give child chance to ask questions
- Putting child at ease.

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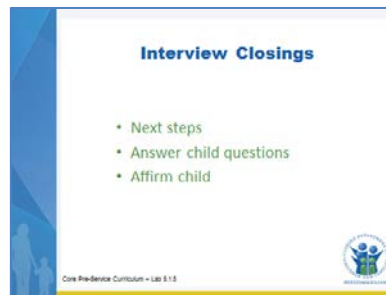


**Information gathering.**

- What did you observe in terms of use of:
  - language
  - attending behaviors
  - appropriate questions
  - positive reinforcement
  - guiding interview.

- Were most questions yes/no?
- Was dependable information gathered?

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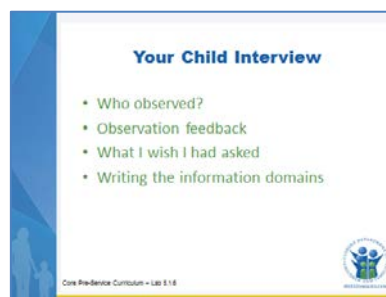


### **Interview closings.**

What did you observe in terms of:

- Next steps were discussed with child, including his/her personal safety
- Child questions were invited and answered in age-appropriate way
- Child was affirmed for participating in interview.

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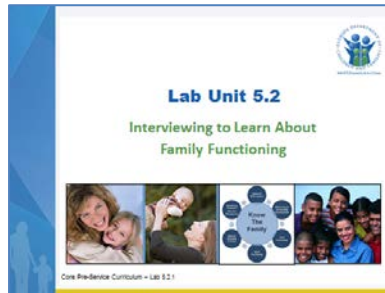
*Ask participants to describe their experiences, going through each of the following points.*

- Who observed? (Was it a person familiar with the child interviewing skills?)

- Observation feedback
  - What skills I am beginning to feel confident with?
  - What skills will take a lot more practice?
- What I wish I had asked the child.
- Writing the information domains
  - Sorting information learned into domain areas—  
lessons learned.

# Unit 5.2: Interviewing to Learn about Family Functioning

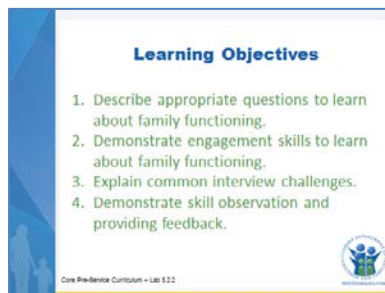
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**Time:**

**Unit Overview:** This unit takes the knowledge that participants are developing about the information domains (what I need to know) and helps them identify how they will go about getting that information in family interviews (what I need to ask), through the use of the right questions and other interviewing skills.

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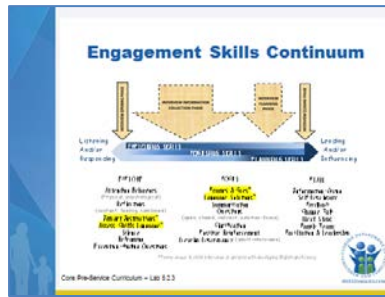


## **Learning Objectives:**

1. Describe appropriate questions to learn about family functioning.
2. Explain common interview challenges.
3. Demonstrate engagement skills to learn about family functioning.
4. Demonstrate skill observation and providing feedback.



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The engagement skills continuum is meant to reflect the major skills that we use in interviews with adults and children to obtain as much dependable information as we can to assess family functioning at any point.

The skills highlighted for child interviews can also be useful in interviews with adults who have limited English language proficiency. This includes adults with developmental disabilities. Such individuals may not have mastered correct pronoun use, have only a limited range of words and are working on simple sentence structures.



**Regardless of the reason for a person's limited English proficiency, which skills in particular do you think would be appropriate? How might they be useful?**

***Endorse all of the skills, including interview instructions and language assessment.***

As was noted in the first Lab, persons from other cultures who are not familiar with our child welfare system might be fearful, and inclined to want to please the interviewer. Using the "instructions" in an adult-appropriate way to assure the person being interviewed that we don't know their situation, and to correct the interviewer if they are not hearing correctly, would be very important. The language

assessment would be good to assess how advanced their English proficiency is so that the right language solutions can be used. We do not want to prejudge anyone's English proficiency. If it is determined that a person's proficiency is not sufficient to proceed with an interview, an interpreter or child welfare professional must be obtained to conduct the interview in the person's language. Using frames and keeping sentences/questions simple will also make the task of interpretation easier when that is necessary.



**What are some of the child interviewing practices that could be generalized to all interviews?**

**Trainer Note:** Use this discussion as a way to review use of exploring and focusing skills, helping participants develop a deeper understanding of guiding all persons in a skilled and helpful way through an interview to learn their stories. This will also support a transition back to the topic of adult interviews.

***Endorse and elicit all of the following points:***

- Every person we interview is the expert on their family, ensure that they know that
- Silence/pause is important to give all people time to reflect and process their answer
- Every family has their own words for people/things and style of talking; good to learn it and use it
- Start with the general, non-sensitive and watch person's affect; see how it changes during difficult parts of interview
- Frames help all persons know what the interviewer needs to learn about next, cues are prompts to "tell me more" about this or that
- Shorter, simpler questions are best
- No leading questions; few yes/no

- If you have to give multiple-choice, give a third option.

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## Activity 1: Listening to Neen

**Time:** 1 hour and 15 minutes

**Purpose:** This is the personal story of Tonier “Neen” Cain, a renowned advocate and educator who experienced a childhood of abuse and neglect followed by two decades of addiction, multiple incarcerations and further trauma. This story of how she overcame devastating life experiences is a powerful message to child welfare professionals as to how we think about and approach the parents we have the opportunity to help. At the end of Ms. Tonier’s narration, she implores the professionals in her audience to see the possibilities in the parents they meet, and ask them to “Tell me what happened.” This provides a motivating transition back to the topic of interviewing parents.

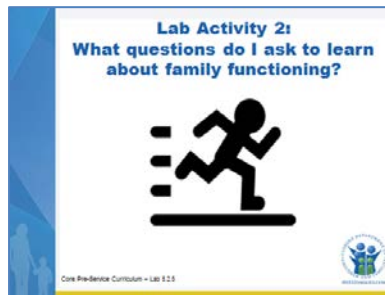
### Trainer Instructions:

- *As participants watch the video, have them take note of the many times that the child welfare system had to intervene in Ms. Cain’s family, as a child and as an adult.*
- *After participants watch the video, conduct a debriefing, building on Ms. Cain’s last question to the audience, “If I were sitting in front of you, at that point just before my last incarceration, would see the potential in me? Would you ask me, what happened?”*



## Activity STOP

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## Activity 2: What questions do I ask to learn about family functioning?

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to have participants craft appropriate, open questions for learning about family functioning in each of the information domain areas. They will see that “cues” are an important way to learn more descriptive details about each topic. Having to think through and develop questions for each of the domains improves their understanding as to what they need to learn, and how to translate that need into the types of questions they should use to obtain the information in an interview. **This is a critical learning step for participants.**

### Trainer Instructions:

- *As there are questions for the domains provided in the participant guide, make sure participants only have their guides open to the information domains for this exercise. They will look at the questions in the PG after they have completed this exercise.*
- *Although a worksheet is provided in the PG for recording their questions, it is recommended that groups put their questions on newsprint so that they can be posted for all to see.*
- *Instruct participants that in small groups of 4-6 participants, they will develop specific, **OPEN** questions that they would ask a parent/caregiver to learn information about the six domains. Within the topics of It is recommended that there be four groups, each assigned as follows:*
  - *adult functioning*
  - *child functioning*

- *parenting and discipline*
- *maltreatment and circumstances surrounding.*
- *After the groups have had sufficient time to develop some questions for their assigned domains, have each group present their questions. Invite other groups to offer feedback if they have any concerns that a question presented needs to be worded differently.*
- *After all groups have reported, have them refer to the questions provided in their participant guides. Conduct a brief review of each domain to see where participants had general alignment, and what topics were missed.*



## Activity STOP

**(Lab PG: 7-14)**

### QUESTIONS TO LEARN ABOUT FAMILY FUNCTIONING

#### MALTREATMENT

- Tell me about the child's injury (or effect of maltreatment.)
  - What treatment did it require?
  - What was child's response to treatment?
  - Is ongoing treatment needed?
- Have other children in the family experienced the same (maltreatment)?
  - Tell me about those times.
- What are your thoughts about (the maltreatment)?
- Who else in your family knows about (the maltreatment)?
  - How did they learn about it?
  - What are their thoughts about it?

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**CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MALTREATMENT**

- How did this happen?
  - Tell me about other times this has happened.
  - Have there been times with similar circumstances and child didn't get hurt?
  - Tell me what was different about those times it didn't happen.
  - How will this affect the child's relationship with (perpetrator)?
- Tell me what you do to protect the child from (person) and (behaviors that resulted in harm)?
  - What was different this time?
  - What needs to happen now?
  - Who in your family could help you keep the child safe from (perpetrator's behavior)

**CHILD FUNCTIONING**

- Tell me about your child.
- What does a typical "day in the life" look like for your child?
- What is he or she good at?
  - What does he or she struggle with?
- Tell me about your child's friends. What kinds of things do

they like to do together?

- What role does your child take when h/she is with his/her friends? Leader, follower, bully, etc.
- How does your child behave/act in general?
  - Does the child have any current or past behavior problems at home, school, or in the community?
  - Any mental health or behavior diagnoses that affect him today?
  - Describe them for me.
- Does the child have any current or past developmental challenges? Educational challenges?
  - Describe them for me.

### **Physical Health**

- How would you describe your child's health?
  - How does your child's size compare to other children his/her age?
  - When did the child last go to the doctor? For what?
  - Are the child's immunizations up to date?
- Does the child have any present or chronic illnesses?
  - Tell me about that.
  - Does the child take any medications? For what, for how long, how often, response, side effects, etc.
- Was there prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs or HIV?
- What stress does any of the child's medical conditions place on the family and how do they deal with it?
- When did the child last go to the dentist? Any present dental needs?
- When did the child last go to the optometrist? Does the child wear glasses? Does the child need glasses?

### **Psychological/Emotional/Mental Functioning**

- Has the child ever received a psychological evaluation? If so, what were the results? When was the testing?
- Has the child ever been hospitalized?
- Is the child currently taking any medication? Ritalin? Adderall? Effexor? etc.?
- How does the child interact with others?
- Who are the child's friends, how often do they interact, what do they do for fun?
- How does the child respond to discipline?
- Is the child's behavior age appropriate?
- Is there a history of problematic behavior?

- How many caregivers has the child had? Explore relationship, time frame and current contact
- Who does the child confide in and discuss personal issues?
- What losses has the child(ren) had - people, placements, relationships, things, health, school, etc.?
- How does the child express anger/hurt/sadness/frustrations/happiness, etc.?
- How does the child show attachment / lack of attachment with caregiver/s?
- How does the child deal with change?
- Does the child demonstrate varied emotions, as appropriate?
- How would the child(ren's) peers describe him her?
- How would other adults describe him? Her?

#### **Educational/Intellectual/Vocational Functioning**

- What grade is the child in?
- Has the child ever failed a grade?
- What are the child's favorite subjects? Least favorites?
- Is the child receiving any special education services from the school?
- What grade level is the child reading on?
- Has the child been tested for special education?
- Is the child involved in any extracurricular activities?
- How often is the child in trouble in school, what is it usually for, what are the usual consequences?

#### **Employment/Military History**

- Has the child been employed previous or currently? If so, describe when, doing what, what skills involved, and how it impacted the child and family.
- Is there a perception that the child needs to be employed? For what reasons?
- Has the child been involved in any military organization? ROTC, etc. Describe this experience.

#### **Legal, Alcohol and Drug History**

- Has the child ever been involved with law enforcement or juvenile court? If so, describe this - when, reason, etc.
- Does the child have a JPO?
- Has there been any indication that the child uses or misuses drugs or alcohol?
- Gotten into trouble with the law because of drugs?



- Gotten really stoned or wiped out on drugs (more than just high)?
- Been accepted into a treatment program because of drug use?
- Treatment history for substance abuse/misuse.

## **ADULT FUNCTIONING**

### **Developmental History**

- Tell me about your childhood
  - Tell me a little about your childhood friends and what you did for fun.
  - When you were growing up, what were ways for members of your family to show: Happiness, Love/Affection, Anger, Disappointment, Frustration, Sadness/Depression, and Stress?
  - Who were you especially close to in your childhood?
  - Who gave you the most difficulty during your childhood?
  - Were you ever afraid at home? Tell me about that.
  - Have you experienced any kind of physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse? Who? When?
  - How were you disciplined as a child?
  - Have you ever been in foster care or were you adopted?
- What do you remember most about your childhood?
  - What would you most want others to know about your childhood?
  - What do you least want others to know about your childhood?
  - What kind of a child did your parents see you as? Tell me about that.
  - How would you compare your childhood to other people's childhood?
  - How did your parents / family solve problems?
  - Did anyone in your family drink or use drugs? Tell me about that.
- When did you leave the home to be on your own?
- What was the biggest disappointment or loss you have had in your life and how did you cope with it?
- Are you in a relationship of which you have been hurt or threatened?

- Have you ever been hit, kicked, or punched by someone close to you
- What weapons are in the home?

### **Physical Health**

- Do you suffer from any serious or chronic health problems?
- Are you or any family member currently under the regular care of a doctor?
- What medications do you take?
- Do you have any type of disabilities that limit what you are able to do?
- How does this affect your ability to meet your children's needs?
- When is the last time you saw a doctor?
- Do you get an SSI check?
- How would you describe your physical health?
- Has a close family member (or close friend) died from a serious medical condition?

### **Employment/Military History**

- What are the monthly financial obligations for the family? Power, Water/Sewage, Garbage, Telephone, Food, Automobile, Insurance, Rent/Mortgage, Other Loans or other expenses?
- What are the amounts of income that are available to the family on a monthly basis from employment, retirement, social security, SSI, Food Stamps, FA/TANF, Child Support
- Tell me about your employment history, beginning with your first job and how long you stayed with the company.
- What are your present needs in regard to your employment?
- Have you ever been in the military or declined from being accepted into the military? Tell about that. Under what grounds were you discharged?
- What kind of barriers do you face with getting/keeping employment?
- What are your hopes and wishes for employment?
- Are other agencies involved in your job placement needs?
- How familiar are you with community programs like The Salvation Army, Red Cross, Mental Health Center or other family resources?
- Assess the availability of resources in the community to

meet the needs of the family. Are there family needs that can be met by referring them to community resources?

- What services have you used in the past? When? Tell me about that.

### **Informal Supports**

- If you needed assistance paying a bill, whom would you turn to?
  - When you need someone to watch the children while you and your spouse are out, whom do you turn to?
  - Which family members do you feel are supportive and that you feel care for your children?
- What is your relationship with your neighbors?
- Who are the friends that you turn to when you need support?
- What role does religion or spirituality play in your life?
- Are there ever times you wish you had someone to talk to, go somewhere with, etc., but don't?
- What ideas do you have to meet new people?
- What are things people do or say to show you they care about you?
- What are some things you can do to show people you care about them?
- Tell me about your relatives-who are they? Where are they? What is your relationship with them?
- Who are three people that can provide further information through their interaction with you? How may I contact them? (Here, my preference is to obtain references three different areas: someone who can provide some historical support for the information I've gained, someone that has knowledge of their childcare practices, and someone who can attest to dependability, honesty and trustworthiness? I look at references as not only being able to provide additional information but to substantiate the information that I have received from the family.)

### **Psychological/Emotional/Mental Functioning**

- How does your family show affection?
- What are the stressors for you and your family?
  - Ever used alcohol? How much? How often? When last? When first
  - Ever used or experimented with any illegal drugs? What kinds? How much? How often? When last?

When first?

- Tell me a little about your friends now. How long friends?  
How often seen?
- What was the highest level completed in school?
  - Where did you attend school?
  - Were you in any special classes while attending school?
  - How well did you perform in school? Were you on grade level? Did you receive any special services?
  - What level are you able to read on? Can you read and understand the words in a newspaper?
  - How would you describe your reading skills?
- How would you describe your feeling emotions on a really good day? On a really bad day?
  - How do you deal with/relieve stress?
  - How do you show anger/ sadness/happiness, etc.?
  - Have you or any relatives ever been hospitalized or treated for depression? Tell me about that.
  - Do you exhibit any of the common signs of depression i.e. changes in appetite, sleep patterns, lethargic? Tell me about that.
  - Oriented to Person, Place, and time?
  - Ever had a psychological evaluation and if so, do you know what the findings were?
  - Have you ever seriously attempted suicide?
- Have you been emotionally abused (severe criticism, verbal cruelty)?
- Have you ever been physically abused?
- Have you ever experienced sexual abuse or attack? Tell me about that.
- Have you ever been arrested? What for? What was the outcome?

### **PARENTING**

- Tell me about your child.
  - What is important to you about being a parent?
  - Describe your daily interactions with your child.
  - What does a typical “day in the life” look like for your child?
- What is the most special thing about parenting your child?
  - The most difficult thing?
- What is he or she good at?
- What does he or she struggle with?

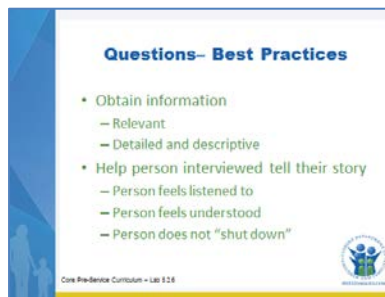
- How does your child behave/act in general?
- Does the child have any current or past behavior problems at home, school, or in the community? Any mental health or behavior diagnoses that affect him today?
  - Describe them for me.
- Does the child have any current or past developmental challenges? Educational challenges?
  - Describe them for me.
- Does the child have any current or past health related problems that affect him today?
  - Describe them for me.
- Tell me about your child's friends.
- How often do you/your children talk with or see your parents/siblings/relatives?
- Where did you learn about parenting?
- Tell me about your child's behaviors that "push your buttons," escalate you, or cause you to feel angry?
  - Under what circumstances?
  - What are the disciplinary approaches you use?
- Tell me about the family that you grew up in.
  - Describe your relationship with your parents/siblings.
  - What types of things did you do?
  - What are some of your fond memories?
  - Your sad or hurtful memories?
  - What did you like best about your parents' upbringing of you?
  - What did you like least?
  - How were you disciplined?
  - What did you get in trouble for growing up?
  - What were the rules or behaviors around drinking and drugs?
  - Hitting?
  - Sex?

### **DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

- What are some of the expectations that you have of your children?
  - How do your children react when you tell them to do things around the home?
  - How do you expect your children to interact with you or with teachers or adults?
  - What are some of the rules in your house?

- What do you think the role or job of a parent is?
- What do you see as your role or responsibility to teach and guide your kids about drinking?
  - Drugs?
  - Hitting?
  - Sex?
  - Stranger safety?
  - Peer pressure?
  - Dating?
  - Safe touching?
- What do you find most challenging about managing your child's behavior?
- How does your family use discipline?
- Can you give me examples of what types of discipline you feel appropriate for: talking back, lying, stealing, children who don't do as they are told?

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Questions meet our need as child welfare professionals to obtain information, information to develop each information domain. Clearly, we would never ask all of the questions in the menus provided, and our interviews are not likely to be “neat and tidy” in terms of staying within each information domain area at a time. Questions are like salt. Although salt brings out the flavor in food, too much salt spoils the pot. Questions should be carefully thought out and judiciously used. Many times child welfare workers think of questions as the only way to get information or encourage people to talk. While we do want to encourage the person to talk, we want to steer the talk so that we are getting useful information, information that is relevant, detailed and

descriptive.

Overuse of questions communicates that the interviewer's needs are more important than the family member's, even though the information sought may be needed to help the family member. While there is no hard and fast rule, most child welfare workers should work to “contain” the number of questions asked and increase the use of other engagement skills, such as reflections, or following-up a parent’s description of a problem with an exception or solution focused question. Different types of questions are used for various purposes throughout an interview. At the most basic level, our questions help all persons tell their story. The adult or child feels that they are being listened to, they are being understood. Most importantly, our questions do not result in a person “shutting down.”

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**What else do we want our questions to help us achieve?**

***Endorse and elicit:***

- Convey to family that we care about them and what happens.
- Help family see the effect of their behavior or conditions on child.
- Help motivate the family to change.



The strategic use of purposeful questions and steering the interview will enable workers to empower and motivate family members. Motivational Interviewing (MI) is not a technique but rather a style, a facilitative way of interviewing. It is a style of interviewing that encourages self-motivation for positive change.

**AUTONOMY-** Responsibility for change is left totally with the parent. Individual autonomy is respected. MI style communicates safety and support, first through an absence of confrontation or persuasion and second, by acceptance of the parent.

When working with families, sometimes we have to watch and wait for even the smallest steps that indicate a family member is beginning to take more responsibility for his or her own life. This is why it is so important to use the “what” questions (what are the exceptions) to immediately acknowledge or praise any statement of a family member that indicates a sign of insight or self-sufficiency. In this way we are more likely to lead people in a positive direction.

**COLLABORATION** - MI requires that the interviewer relate to the parent in a non-judgmental, collaborative manner. The parent's experience and personal perspectives provide the context within which change is facilitated rather than coerced. It is empowering for family members to see their progress and recognize their areas of growth. Solution-focused questions assist family members in seeing their past successes, their current successes and their potential for future successes.

**EVOCATION-** The interviewer's tone is not one of imparting wisdom, insight or reality, but rather of



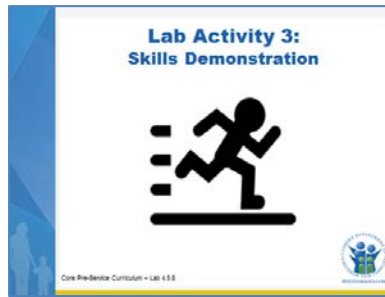
eliciting the parent's internal viewpoint. The interviewer draws out ideas, feelings, and wants from the parent. Drawing out motivation, finding intrinsic motivation for change and bringing it to the surface for discussion is the essence of MI.

Many of the individually-oriented questions we traditional ask family members can be rephrased to help the family understand the interactions or pattern of interactions experienced by the family. Asking family-oriented questions will help the family understand what is happening and the effect on the child, and adults.

Our understanding of the interactions or “dance” within the family is vital to the planning process when all family members will be changing some of their interactions with one another to assure greater safety, permanence and well-being for the children.

**ROLL WITH RESISTANCE-** Opposing resistance generally reinforces it. Resistance, however, can be turned or reframed slightly to create a new momentum toward change. The interviewer does not directly oppose resistance, but rather rolls and flows with it. Reluctance and ambivalence are not opposed but are acknowledged to be natural and understandable. The interviewer does not impose new views or *goals*, but invites the parent to consider new information and offers new perspectives.

Let’s do some interviewing practice.



## Lab Activity 3: Skills Practice

**Time:** 2 hours (allowing 15 minute break at some point between role plays)

**Purpose:** This activity provides opportunities for participants to practice the interviewing skills and questions to learn about the six information domains.

**Handouts:**

- Notes for Jolene's interview, Circumstances Surrounding Alleged Maltreatment
- Notes for Jolene's interview, Adult Functioning
- Notes for Jolene's interview, Child Functioning

Trainer is provided with special handouts for this lab so that each person in each the group has selected information about Jolene. One person has information about the current situation (circumstances surrounding alleged maltreatment), one person will have information about adult functioning, and one person will have information about parenting and discipline. Trainer should give each group their parent role plays, asking them not to share the information with each other. It is only to be revealed during the role plays.

**Trainer Instructions:**

1. *Divide participants into groups of three persons. Participants in each group will take turns as interviewer, parent being interviewed, and observer.*
2. *Each group will practice interviews with Jolene, the mother, focusing on different information domains. The person who role plays Jolene will have some information provided about*

*the information domain they are being interviewed for. If they are asked a question that is not covered in the information they have, the person playing Jolene is invited to be creative.*

- 3. Instruct the groups that the interviewer should only seek information that relates to the domain assigned to person playing the part of Jolene. The interviewer should feel free to practice questions that are provided in their participant guide*
- 4. Instruct each group to take ten minutes of preparation time before each role play, focusing on the following:*
  - Interviewers and Observers should study the skills that they are to observe. In addition, interviewers might want to jot down some of the questions they want to practice using.*
  - Parent performing the role play should study the special handout they have been provided.*
- 5. After preparation, the role play should take 10-15 minutes. The Observer should then provide their feedback, allowing the person who played the part of Jolene to go first.*
  - Jolene- Discuss what made providing information easy; what made you feel defensive.*
  - Interviewer—Discuss what was difficult and what helped to overcome it.*
  - Observer-- Begin with all of the examples and skills observed that were strengths, following the flow of the observation worksheet. Offer any suggested improvements.*
- 6. After all role plays and group debriefs have occurred, conduct a brief discussion with group to identify any common themes.*
  - With what skills are we experiencing beginning proficiency?*
  - What skills will take more practice?*

*Refer participants to **Lab PG: 17**.*

**Hotline Intake and one note from CPI first interview with Jolene:**

Hotline intake pertains to substance misuse/illicit drugs and environmental hazards on a 10, 9 and 7 year-old children. Jolene, the mother of three children, moved to Florida about one year ago and has been homeless for last three weeks. Jolene has no money, food or running water. She sent one of the children to a friend's to get food and has utilized others for bathing and food. Jolene had her children removed in 2004 for drug usage in Indiana. Mom has history of using meth and may be using again.

She is Bipolar and gets a disability check. Report appears legitimate due to the source so services intervention will be needed. Mom has priors out of state; no criminal history is found, however it is reported that she has prior arrests for battery and drug charges.

When CPI arrives at the address provided by hotline, she finds mother and children are living in an upstairs apartment that consists of 3 bedrooms and 1 bath. The apartment is sparsely furnished but clean and child's clothing and toys are well organized when worker arrives. Mother has just returned from food shopping.

*Only one participant in each group gets one of the following handouts:*

**Notes for Jolene's interview, Circumstances Surrounding Alleged Maltreatment:**

There is currently no running water in apartment. Jolene explains that her roommate, Kenny, was responsible for water and cable bill. When roommate temporarily moved out last week, the water was turned off. Apparently he had hooked into the water illegally. Mom called the water company to have it turned back on; however, since it had been used illegally it was going to cost \$500 to have it turned back on. The downstairs neighbor gave mom a large water container and allows her to use their outside water spout to fill the container. The water is used for drinking as well as flushing the toilet.

Jolene and Kenny have been in Florida for the last ten months. They moved from Indiana because Kenny had a job lined up. Once they arrived, the job Kenny thought he had was not going to begin for several more weeks. They lived in a motel for two weeks, stayed with two different friends for two weeks each and moved into their current residence about six weeks ago. Jolene noticed the apartment was for rent and went upstairs to speak with who she thought was the landlady. The lady was cleaning the apartment and complaining that the prior tenant was filthy. She told Jolene the deposit was \$1,400 which Jolene was able to pay. The lady said she would get the lease to her to be signed and never returned.

The real landlady showed up a week later and accused Jolene of moving into the apartment without permission. It was at that time

that Jolene realized the lady who took her money was the prior tenant and took off with Jolene's deposit. Jolene asked the landlady if she could work for her in exchange for the rent. The landlady agreed and Jolene began working for her as housekeeping staff at Twosteps Manor. She was never told how much she was making and the landlady kept the entire check for rent.

Jolene got sick and was unable to work for a week and the landlady gave her a three day notice of eviction. Jolene has been able to have the eviction extended and is hopeful that she can come up with the money to remain in the home. Kenny left for Indiana yesterday in an effort to "straighten out" an issue with his tax return check which is almost \$4,000. Jolene said that money will go toward whatever is owed for rent.

She has told the landlady of their plan and she seems to be okay with allowing them to stay. Due to the water situation, the children have been bathing at Jolene's friends' houses. Jordan bathes at Tima's house since she has girls and the boys shower at Jenelle's since she has two boys.

Jolene also ensures the children are fed even if that means they eat at one of her friends' homes. She also has a friend who has been giving the family rides and food if needed. Jolene normally showers at his apartment. Jolene has contacted Clothes to Kids and has an appointment on August 13th.

Jolene said Kenny will return to Florida within the next week and can be interviewed upon his return.

**Notes for Jolene's interview, Adult Functioning:**

Jolene was raised by her parents who remain married and very supportive. She has contacted them on a couple of occasions since living in Florida for financial help and they have provided for her. She has been diagnosed with ADD, anxiety and depression and is currently prescribed Vyvance and Klonopin. She also takes Oxycodone, 10 mg. 4 times daily for a ruptured T-4, scoliosis and deteriorating disc disease.

Jolene showed CPI her lower back and there was an area that appeared to be protruding. She has Medicaid in Indiana however she lost her ID and has not been able to switch the Medicaid over. Kenny took her paper prescriptions to Indiana with him to have

filled. She is on disability due to her diagnosis and gets paid tonight. Jolene produced the papers that are already filled out to send to Indiana with a \$30 money order to obtain her birth certificate so she is able to get a Florida driver's license as well as Medicaid.

Jolene admitted 'to two charges of DUI as well as an arrest in the early 2000's for cocaine possession and sale of cocaine along with their father. Jolene said Jordan and Tysne were removed after the arrest however after a two week period she was allowed to move in with MGP's who the children were placed with. She stayed MGP's with the children until they were reunified after a six month period. The last time she used cocaine was prior to the arrest. She agreed to a UA and tested positive for opiates and oxy's. Jolene said the children's father has abused her in the past.

The father of the three children has signed over his parental rights and Jolene said Kenny is in the process of adopting them. She and Kenny have known each other for six years and been together for over a year. For discipline she and Kenny will ground the children for normally a day. She and Kenny never hit the children.

**Notes for Jolene's interview, Child Functioning.**

Ten-year-old Jordyne is pleasant child who is happy and healthy. She will be attending Belleaire Elementary School in the 4th grade. Jordyne completed the last month of 3rd grade there as well. She likes living in Florida "a lot, and likes to get ice cream as well as eating out at McDonalds. She helps her mother a lot with taking care of her brothers, making them breakfast and lunch many times if mother is busy. She likes to help her mother fold laundry

Nine-year-old brother Tysne will be attending Belleaire Elementary School and will be in the 3rd grade this fall. Tysne plays football and soccer at school and is normally on the honor roll. Tysne likes living in Florida and has made several friends.

Seven-year-old Talan will be in the second grade at Belleaire Elementary School this fall. Talan loves his mother and said he and Kenny play football together. Talan said him and Tysne bathe at Jenelle's or at their mother's friend Robert's since their water was turned off. They get water from the neighbor downstairs to have in the house. Last night, they ate dinner at Jenelle's. Talan also said he was afraid of some children that live in Greenwood and they avoid that area.

Mother's paramour Kenny gives the children money to spend at the dollar store and takes them bowling. Mother is supposed to be taking the children to the beach this weekend. When the children get into trouble they are grounded for one day. They are never spanked or hit. Kenny has no children of his own and Jolene thinks that is why he gets frustrated so easily sometimes.

**Lab PG: 18-19**

**Skills Observation**

**1. Opening of Interview**

- a. Was greeting respectful? How so?
- b. Was purpose explained?
- c. Was personal expression provided?
- d. Was purpose of meeting explained in an understandable way?
- e. If necessary, were immediate concerns addressed effectively
- f. Any suggested improvements?

**2. Information Gathering**

- a. Was there appropriate use and mix of listening skills (attending behaviors, reflections, reflections, silence, and exception-finding)?  
Examples:
- b. Was there appropriate use and mix of focusing skills (open, closed, indirect, and solution-focused)?  
Examples:
- c. Was there use of additional engagement skills (reframing, positive feedback, developing discrepancy)?  
Examples:
- d. Did the interview have a conversational flow?

**3. Examples of how the interview:**

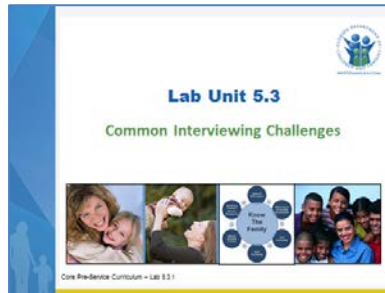
- a. Promoted Autonomy
- b. Promoted Collaboration
- c. Evocation of feelings and beliefs
- d. Rolled with resistance



**Activity STOP**

## Unit 5.3: Common Interviewing Challenges

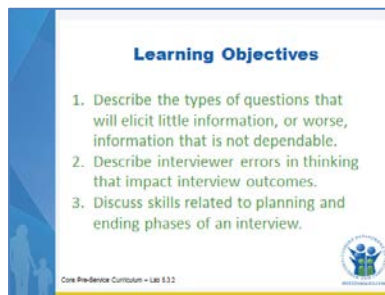
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**Time:**

**Unit Overview:** Review the common challenges observed and experienced with interviewing skills. These challenges are all under the control of the interviewer.

*Display Slide 5.3.2*

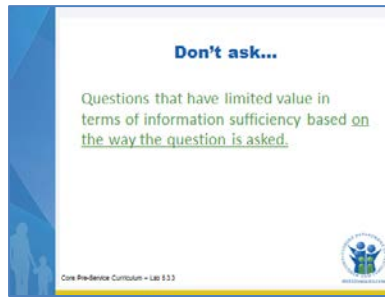


### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Describe the types of questions that will elicit little information, or worse, information that is not dependable.
2. Describe interviewer errors in thinking that impact interview outcomes.
3. Discuss skills related to planning and ending phases of an interview.



Display Slide 5.3.3



At this point, you have had the opportunity to observe many interviews in the field and you have practiced interviewing families in the labs. You are beginning to understand the complexities of the families we encounter, and the challenges we face as interviewers.



**We have learned a number of things about the way not to ask questions. What are some of those basic, do not use or use sparingly, types of questions?**

***Endorse and elicit***, using this opportunity to review why these types of questions have limited value:

- Yes/no
- Closed
- Leading questions
- Questions that begin with “WHY”
- Counterproductive questions
- Multiple-part questions.

Display Slide 5.3.4 (**Lab PG: 20**)





Let's discuss some of the common challenges and traps that are counterproductive to motivational interviewing.

**Labeling Trap.** Diagnostic and other labels represent a common obstacle to change. There is no persuasive reason to use labels, and positive change is not dependent upon acceptance of a label. It is often best to avoid "problem labels" or refocus attention. Adult partners label each other; parents label their children. For example: "Labels are not important. You are important and I would like to hear more about."

Beware of the labels in your own mind, and how they impact your pre-conceived ideas about the family's potential for change. Remember how "labels" impacted the behavior of the professionals who encountered Tonier Cain.

**Premature Focus Trap.** When an interviewer persists in talking about their own conception of "the problem" and the parent has different concerns, the interviewer gets trapped and loses touch with the parent. The parent becomes defensive and engages in a struggle to be understood. To avoid getting trapped start with the parent's concern rather than your own assessment of the problem. Later on, the parents concern may lead to your original judgment about the situation.

**Blaming Trap.** Some parents show defensiveness by blaming others for their situation. It is useful to diffuse blaming by explaining that the placing of blame is not the purpose of the visit. Using reflective listening and reframing you might say "Who is to blame" is not as important as what your concerns are about the situation.

**Expert Trap.** When you give the impression that you have all the answers, you draw the parent into a passive role. In MI the parent is the expert about his/her situation, values, goals, concerns and skills. In MI style interviewing, you seek collaboration and give parents the opportunity to explore and resolve ambivalence for themselves.

**The phenomenon “the need to not know.”** This is related to the interviewer making a decision, sometimes even before the interview begins, that they know what the problem is (or isn’t) and what the solution needs to be. This will have a profound impact on the interviewer’s ability to keep an open mind, and fully explore the parent’s description and assessment of what is happening in their family.

*Display Slide 5.3.5 (Lab PG: 21)*

| Interview Phase       | Purpose  | Skills/Tools and Objectives               |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1. Planning Phase     | a. Interviewer's background information  | 1. Use of interviewing skills             |
| 2. Interviewing Phase | a. Interviewing  | 2. Use of motivational interviewing       |
| 3. Closing Phase      | a. Thank you<br>b. Follow-up information requested<br>c. Expectations of further work<br>d. Appreciation | Answer Questions or Provide Clarification |

Core Child Welfare Pre-Service Curriculum - Lab 5.3.5



We are going to spend the last part of this lab taking a brief look at interview planning and closing activities. You will be spending much more time on these aspects of your work with families and substitute caregivers in your specialty tracks.

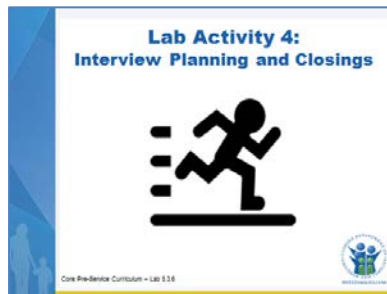
All of the information we gather during the second phase of the interview should lead to agreement as to what the problem is that needs to be solved, and to the extent possible, we will elicit ideas and solutions from the person being interviewed. During the planning

phase, your skills associated with motivational interviewing will be used to help an individual consider their choices, and decide upon a course of action.

Remember the legal foundations discussed at the very beginning of your classroom training, the right to self-determination and least intrusive actions. Dependable information gathering while concurrently building trust sets the stage for what must be planned for, and gaining the family's input.

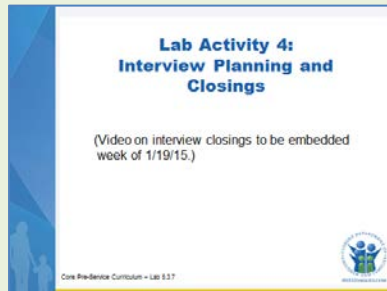
In the planning stage, a summary of the problems to be addressed is provided. In the final phase of an interview, a summary of what has been decided is provided, next steps confirmed, and a personal affirmation to the person who was interviewed.

*Display Slide 5.3.6*



## Activity 4: Interview Planning and Closings

*Display Slide 5.3.7*



**Purpose:** This activity will show participants an example of planning activities that fully engage the person being interviewed to develop the strategies and solutions to be tried. It will also demonstrate an interview closing that provides clarity as to the next steps and expectations that follow.

**Trainer Instructions:**

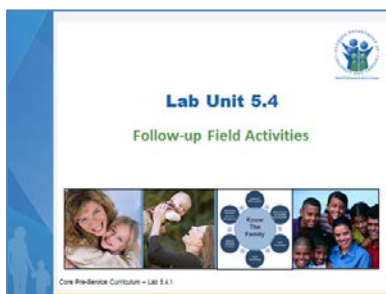
- *Have participants watch the short video segment of the foster care worker and foster parent they met in Lab 3. This is the foster parent who discusses her concerns about a new child in her home who is having nighttime nightmares.*
- *Using the observation sheet in the participant guide, ask participants to jot down the effective interviewing behaviors and skills they observe. They can also record anything they would do differently.*
- *After the video, debrief as a large group.*



## Activity STOP

## Unit 5.4: Follow-up Field Activities

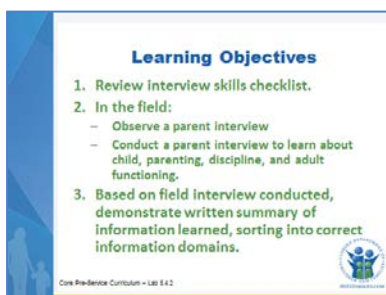
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### Time:

**Purpose:** Participants will be given a detailed field observation tool to shadow, observe and record interviewing skills to obtain information about all of the information domains. They will also be expected to interview an adult, gathering information through the interview about parenting, approach to discipline, and adult functioning, and prepare a written analysis of information learned. As part of the written analysis, they will identify what other information they would need to learn and who would need to be interviewed to learn that information. This field work will be debriefed in their specialty track and will assist trainers with assessment of beginning skill proficiency.

### Display Slide 5.4.2



### Learning Objectives:

1. Review interview skills checklist.
2. In the field, demonstrate an interview to learn about child, parenting, discipline, and adult functioning.

3. Based on field interview conducted, demonstrate written summary of information learned, sorting into correct information domains.

### **Lab PG: 22**

#### **Field Activities for Adult Interviews**

1. Conduct a field observation of a parent/caregiver interview, documenting your observations on the “Adult Interviewing Skills Observations” in your participant guide. Remember to develop a working agreement with the person you observe. Any of the following types of professionals may be observed:
  - CPI
  - Case Manager
  - Adoptions Specialist
  - Independent Living Specialist
  - Child Protection Team/Children’s Advocacy Center forensic interviewer (this would need to be worked out with your supervisor)

Try to “catch” detailed examples of effective skills observed, and some examples of missed opportunities. The goal is not to capture a detailed analysis of all skills observed, just highlights.

2. Conduct an interview of a parent that is observed by another participant from this class, a field support consultant, or other individual as agreed by your trainer and supervisor. The person who observes you is expected to record their observations and conduct a feedback session with you.
3. The interview may be any of the following:
  - A parent who is part of your extended family network, or a family friend.
  - A caregiver such a relative caregiver, foster parent (this would need to be worked out with your supervisor). In such situations, you will need to identify one child in the home who would be the focus for the interview.

The purpose of the interview is to use all of your interviewing skills to learn about the following:

- a. Person’s adult functioning

- b. Child functioning (pick one child in home who parent or caregiver is responsible for)
  - c. Parenting
  - d. Discipline
4. Following the interview, you will develop a written summary of what you learned from the parent, using the “Summary of Parent Interview” provided. The summary will require that you organize what you have learned into the information domains of child functioning, adult functioning, parenting, and discipline. You will be turning in your written summary to the trainer when you begin your specialty track.

*Display Slide 5.4.3 (Lab PG: 23)*

| Phase                    | Skills   | Activities   | Notes |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------|
| 1. Establish rapport     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.2. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.3. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.4. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.5. Establish rapport</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.2. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.3. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.4. Establish rapport</li> <li>1.5. Establish rapport</li> </ul>                     |       |
| 2. Gather information    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. Gather information</li> <li>2.2. Gather information</li> <li>2.3. Gather information</li> <li>2.4. Gather information</li> <li>2.5. Gather information</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. Gather information</li> <li>2.2. Gather information</li> <li>2.3. Gather information</li> <li>2.4. Gather information</li> <li>2.5. Gather information</li> </ul>                |       |
| 3. Analyze information   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1. Analyze information</li> <li>3.2. Analyze information</li> <li>3.3. Analyze information</li> <li>3.4. Analyze information</li> <li>3.5. Analyze information</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1. Analyze information</li> <li>3.2. Analyze information</li> <li>3.3. Analyze information</li> <li>3.4. Analyze information</li> <li>3.5. Analyze information</li> </ul>           |       |
| 4. Summarize information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Summarize information</li> <li>4.2. Summarize information</li> <li>4.3. Summarize information</li> <li>4.4. Summarize information</li> <li>4.5. Summarize information</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Summarize information</li> <li>4.2. Summarize information</li> <li>4.3. Summarize information</li> <li>4.4. Summarize information</li> <li>4.5. Summarize information</li> </ul> |       |

**Trainer Note:**

1. Review summary of follow-up field activities in in PG on page 20. Review field activities expected to be completed prior to the start of their specialty track.
2. Briefly review the interview phases and skills table that was introduced in the first lab, and is the basis for the engagement skills continuum. Ask if there are any questions. Explain that these are the skills which are the basis for the skills observation to be conducted in the field as well as their demonstration of skills. Review the skills observation tool in **PG 22**.



## Interview Phases and Skills

| INTERVIEW PHASE                 | PURPOSE  | BEHAVIORS AND SKILLS REQUIRED  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. OPENING PHASE                | <p><b>A. Establishing rapport</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce self</li> <li>2. Provide personal expression</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Establishing a Working Relationship</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain purpose of visit</li> <li>2. Address immediate concerns (anything prohibiting interview from moving forward)</li> </ol> | <p><b>Demonstrate Core Conditions (ongoing)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Genuineness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Congruence of body language, voice tone, and verbal responses</li> <li>o Being non-defensive</li> <li>o Spontaneous as appropriate</li> <li>o Limited self-disclosure</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Respect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Non-judgmental</li> <li>o Open-mindedness</li> <li>o Recognize strengths</li> <li>o Recognize positive-intent</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Empathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Recognize person's experiences, feelings and nonverbal communication</li> </ul> </li> </ol>   |
| 2. INFORMATION COLLECTION PHASE | <p><b>A. Gathering information</b></p> <p><b>B. Accuracy of Information</b></p>  | <p><b>Demonstrate Interviewing Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of Active Listening Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Physical attending</li> <li>o Psychological attending</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Use of Exploring Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Use of reflections</li> <li>o Use of silence</li> <li>o Use of Exception Finding Q's</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Use of Focusing Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Summarization/Clarifying Q's</li> <li>o Open, Indirect, Solution-focused questions</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Validation of Information</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information needing to be collaborated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Personal observational</li> <li>o Identify additional 2<sup>nd</sup> party sources (collateral contacts)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Information needing to be reconciled</li> </ol> |
| 3. PLANNING PHASE               | <p><b>A. Information Giving and Directions</b></p> <p><b>B. Influencing</b></p>  | <p><b>Demonstrate Interviewing Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of reframing</li> <li>2. Use of Motivational Interviewing</li> </ol>   |
| 4. CLOSING PHASE                | <p><b>A. Check Family Understanding</b></p> <p><b>B. Follow-up Information Requested</b></p> <p><b>C. Expectation of Further Visits</b></p> <p><b>D. Appreciation</b></p>  | <p><b>Answer Questions or Provide Clarification</b></p>  |

**Adult Interviewing Skills--Field Observation**

**Person Conducting Observation**\_\_\_\_\_

**Person Observed**\_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

This tool is for purposes of recording information about skills used during an interview of an adult. The observations should “catch” behaviorally specific details of some positive and negative examples. It is not expected to capture any analysis of every interviewing skill observed, only the highlights.

**1. Opening Phase of Interview**

- a. Build rapport
  - Introduce self and job in simple way
  - Provide a personal expression
- b. Establish a working relationship
  - Purpose of interview
  - Address immediate concerns

**2. Information collection**

- a. Use of Exploring Skills
  - Physical attending
  - Psychological attending
  - Use of reflections
  - Use of silence
  - Use of Exception Finding Q's
- b. Use of Focusing Skills
  - Summarization/Clarifying Q's
  - Open, Indirect, Solution-focused questions

**1. Planning phase**

- a. Information giving and choices
- b. Influencing
- c. Directing

**2. Interview Closing**

- a. Check family understanding
- b. Follow-up information requested

- c. Expectation for further visits
- d. Appreciation

### 3. What I might have done differently

**Lab PG: 26-27**

## Summary of Parent Interview I Conducted

Interviewer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Observing: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe "role" of parent, e.g., birth mom, birth dad, foster mom, etc. (Do not provide name) \_\_\_\_\_

### Written Summary of Information Learned from Parent:

- a. Child functioning
- b. Adult functioning
- c. Parenting
- d. Discipline
- e. Information that I didn't learn, and wished I had asked:

### Assessment of Interviewing Skills

Based on feedback from the person who observed me and my own self-assessment, these are the interviewing skills that:

I am beginning to be proficient with:

I will need much practice with:

**Display Slide 5.4.4**



This concludes the communication lab days for core. In the specialty tracks, additional lab days and structured field experiences will provide participants with knowledge and practice of interviewing skills associated with:

- The information collection protocol (CPI) or information collection standards (case managers)
- Safety planning and safety management (CPI and CM)
- Case planning and progress assessment (CM)
- Child well-being (CM)
- Skills for collateral interviews will be covered.

There will be more depth skill development for case managers about motivational interviewing. During field days, participants will practice all of the interviewing skills with actual children and families involved in the child welfare system.

**Closing:** *Trainer should provide a personal affirmation as to the work effort and progress that participants are making.*